

# **The spoken Irish of sixth-class pupils in Irish immersion schools**

**PhD in Applied Linguistics**

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## **Declarations**

I hereby declare that this thesis, submitted in candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin, has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other university.

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## Summary

The aim of the present study is to investigate the acquisition of Irish by sixth-class pupils in all-Irish primary schools, with a particular focus on the features of their spoken Irish. Although there is a long historical precedent for Irish-medium education, the instructional strategies employed are similar to those in immersion settings throughout the world that seek to maximise contact with the second language (L2).

Chapter 1 presents a brief overview of the current state of the Irish language and its historical role in the education system since the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922. While early State policies in relation to Irish-medium education were successful in many respects, the general public resented its compulsory nature and the number of Irish-medium schools declined in the 1950's and 1960's. The growth of a 'bottom-up' movement during the 1970's that led to the establishment of new all-Irish schools is described and the critical features of these schools are delineated. The role of these schools in the revitalisation of Irish is also explored.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on L2 learning theories from a number of perspectives: the influence of previously acquired languages on the pupils' L2, the manner in which L2 input is processed by pupils, the negotiation of form and meaning in peer-peer interaction, L2 learning from a sociocultural perspective, and the sociolinguistic context in which the L2 is acquired in immersion education. The potential of interlanguage corpora to provide insights into the underlying mental representations and developmental processes that influence L2 production is examined. Research on L2 development in immersion programmes generally and on the acquisition of Irish as a second language is also scrutinised. Specific features of Irish that may present difficulties for immersion pupils are identified.

Chapter 3 describes the main elements of the mixed-method's approach adopted for the study, the main element of which was the compilation and analysis of a 35,000-word corpus of pupils' speech. Samples of the spoken Irish of eighty 11-12 year old sixth-class pupils from nine Irish immersion primary schools throughout the country, as well as from pupils in two Gaeltacht schools, were obtained. Evidence in relation to factors that influence pupils' Irish was obtained by means of stimulated recall sessions, pupil questionnaires and teacher interviews.

Chapters 4 and 5 describe the detailed analysis of the pupils' corpus using WordSmith wordlist and concordance tools. Examination of the corpus revealed that the most common features of Irish that had not yet been mastered by immersion pupils were use of the copula and the syntax associated with the verbal noun. The incidence of code-mixing and the mapping of English syntax onto Irish in the corpus were also established. Other aspects of Irish language use, such as the most frequent words used, were also compared across immersion and Gaeltacht schools.

Chapter 6 describes the stimulated recall process that gave pupils an opportunity to reflect on their use of Irish by viewing video extracts of their participation in the collaborative task. Results show that pupils do not critically monitor their spoken output when speaking with their peers, acquire inaccurate forms embedded in their peers' output, and gradually consolidate these errors in their linguistic repertoire through habitual use.

Chapter 7 describes the results of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery administered to 172 pupils in eight all-Irish schools. While pupils have very positive attitudes and motivation in relation to Irish, and identify with native speakers, these affective factors are not strong enough to motivate pupils to approximate to native-speaker norms.

Chapter 8 gives an account of the analysis of interviews with five sixth-class teachers and seven principals in all-Irish schools. The analysis reveals that all schools have strategies and policies in place to deal with pupils' inaccurate oral production, and that while teachers would like their pupils to be more accurate, remedial practices have had limited success.

Chapter 9 summarises the thesis and sets out the main findings. It outlines the implications for Irish immersion schools and for immersion education more generally. Recommendations are made for future research, and for changes in pedagogic practice, based on the results of the study.

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## Morphological tags

<i>Tag</i>	<i>Description</i>
1P 2P 3P	first, second and third person
ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverb
ADV-PHRS	adverbial phrase
ART	article
CARD	cardinal
CMPD	compound
COND	conditional
CONJ	conjunction
COP	copula
DEF	definite (article)
DEM	demonstrative
DET	determiner
DIR	direction
ECL	eclipsis
EMPH	emphatic form
FEM	feminine
FUT-IND	future indicative
INDF	Indefinite (article)
IMP	imperative
LEN	lenition
LOC	location
MASC	masculine
NEG	negative form
NOUN	noun
NUM	numeral
ORD	ordinal
PART	particle
PAST-IND	past indicative
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PREP	preposition
PREP-PHRS	prepositional phrase
PRES-IND	present indicative
PRON	pronoun
PST-IND	past indicative
Q	interrogative form
REL	relative
SG	singular
VERB	verb
VN	verbal noun



# Introduction

## ***Background to study***

The education system was given a central role in the Irish Free State's Irish language revitalization policy when it was founded in 1922. One of the key policy initiatives at that time was to introduce Irish-medium education wherever there were teachers qualified and competent to teach through the medium of Irish. This early policy initiative has resulted in a long tradition of Irish-medium education in Ireland. There have been periods of growth and decline in the number of schools teaching through the medium of Irish during the intervening years. The last 35 years however, has seen a period of sustained growth in the number of all-Irish<sup>1</sup> schools driven in the main by parental demand this time rather than by state initiative. This all-Irish school movement is viewed by many as one of the most positive enterprises in language promotion in the history of the State (Council of Europe, 2008; Mac Murchaidh, 2008). Despite all this, there is very little in the way of objective evidence about the proficiency in Irish of the pupils that participate in these programmes.

The research data that is available from a number of studies by Harris (1984) and Harris et al. (2006) on all-Irish primary school pupils are very positive regarding the impact of immersion. These studies indicate that all-Irish pupils significantly outperform their peers in English-medium schools in terms of their ability in Irish. Systematic investigation of immersion pupils' Irish and the extent to which it approaches native-speaker norms has been limited. Concern has been expressed from time to time about the grammatical accuracy of pupils' spoken Irish (NCCA, 2006; H. Ó Murchú, 2001). It has been suggested that pupils speak a school dialect which is closer to English than Irish in syntactic terms (Nic Pháidín, 2003). The evidence is largely anecdotal however, and it is not known to what extent the features of the pupils' Irish are linked to immersion specifically or to the nature of the larger sociolinguistic context within which schools operate. Notwithstanding the issue of grammatical accuracy, there is evidence that immersion pupils achieve high levels of

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'all-Irish school' is favoured throughout this report over 'Irish immersion school' or 'Irish-medium school' as this is the term in common use since the 1970's to denote 'scoil lán-Ghaeilge'. These all-Irish schools are similar to immersion centres as opposed to dual-track schools elsewhere. All subjects apart from English are taught through the medium of Irish, hence the term 'all-Irish school'. The term *Gaelscoil*, meaning 'Irish school' has latterly become popular also.

competence in Irish by the end of their post-primary education (Murtagh, 2006) having participated in up to 14 years of an immersion programme.

While one kind of Irish-medium school has been implicitly referred to so far, in reality it is necessary to distinguish between two types of Irish-medium school, *Gaeltacht* (Irish-speaking area) schools and the all-Irish schools already mentioned, outside the *Gaeltacht*. *Gaeltacht* schools are located in Irish-speaking areas where Irish is the community language. These areas are mainly located along the western and south-western sea-board. All-Irish schools are located outside the *Gaeltacht* areas and the vast majority of pupils are monolingual English speakers when they start school. The programme provided can be described as early immersion, where the pupils are immersed in Irish, their second language (L2), from their first day in school. It is pupils in this latter type of Irish-medium school outside the *Gaeltacht* that are the principal focus of the present study. English dominates the lives of these pupils and their contact with Irish is largely confined to the school. Their sociolinguistic background is similar in many aspects to that of French immersion pupils in Canada or to Gaelic immersion pupils in Scotland.

A number of comprehensive studies of the *Gaeltacht* in Ireland have shown that these areas are becoming increasingly bilingual and that the number of native Irish-speaking children in *Gaeltacht* schools has declined (Mac Donnacha, Ní Chualáin, Ní Shéaghdha, & Ní Mhainín, 2005). There are also fewer families in *Gaeltacht* areas transmitting the language to the next generation (Ó Giollagáin, Mac Donnacha, Ní Chualáin, Ní Shéaghdha, & O'Brien, 2007; Ó hIfearnáin, 2007; Romaine, 2008). The potential language revitalization role played by all-Irish schools is all the more critical in the light of this lack of transmission. This critical revitalization role of all-Irish schools distinguishes them from many other immersion programmes where the language of instruction is a widely spoken world language such as English, French, Spanish or Mandarin. The Irish immersion context may be more comparable to the situation pertaining to Gaelic in Scotland or Welsh in Wales. It is in a stronger position however, than Maori in New Zealand (May & Hill, 2005) or the aboriginal language immersion programmes of First Nations in Canada, where there are less than 10,000 speakers of the majority of the languages (M. Richards & Burnaby, 2008). If a French immersion pupil in Ontario fails to acquire target-like features of French from a French immersion programme, the future vitality of the French language is unlikely to be under threat. That pupil also has access to large Francophone populations in other parts of Canada in which they can immerse

themselves in the language should they so wish. The future vitality of the Irish language is more dependent however, on the quality of all-Irish pupils' Irish.

Ó Riagáin (1997) points out that, the education system in general and the immersion schools in particular need to produce substantial numbers of competent bilinguals to compensate for the insufficient rate of intergenerational transmission. Producing competent bilinguals does not guarantee language revitalisation however (Baker, 2001, 2002), and experience over the last 80 years in Ireland bears this out where a language learned in a classroom has: 'not led to its spoken use in everyday life, nor its intergenerational transmission' (Romaine, 2006, p. 456). There is some evidence however, that all-Irish schools are successful: 'in introducing students to Irish language-speaking networks that facilitate maintenance and use of Irish after they leave school' (Murtagh, 2007, p. 450). The fact that all-Irish schools are producing increasing numbers of competent bilinguals gives them a central role in the revitalization of Irish (Harris, 2007; Murtagh, 2003; Shannon, 1999). An important issue arising from this is the extent to which the Irish language skills acquired by these pupils prepare them for participation in the Irish-language speech community (Ó Laoire, 2000, 2004). The greater the level of competence that pupils have in speaking Irish the greater the likelihood that they will participate in Irish-speaking networks in the future (Ó Riagáin, Williams, & Vila i Moreno, 2007). For those that go on to participate in Irish-speaking networks and to set up Irish-speaking families, achieving a high standard of Irish is critical because these speakers have the potential to influence the evolving character of the language. Their opportunities to improve that quality are diminishing however, due to the decline in the number of native speakers referred to above. This in turn places a heavier burden on schools. Evidence from other immersion programmes, discussed below, suggests that immersion schools tend to produce speakers who speak a 'school code' that deviates from native-speaker norms. If this is the case in Ireland, it is likely that the variety of Irish spoken by these new speakers will be different from traditional speakers of the language and the authenticity of this variety will be contested unless it replaces the traditional variety in the future (Romaine, 2006).

The overall aim of the present study is to examine the proficiency in Irish of 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in all-Irish schools in their eighth and final year of a primary school immersion programme. Its structure and scope were determined by a number of factors – the unique role of all-Irish schools in the revival of the Irish language, the lack of clarity about whether the

variety of language spoken by all-Irish pupils is possibly a result of unique aspects of the immersion acquisition context or, in part, due to the nature of the local sociolinguistic context in which all-Irish schools operate. The study adopts a broad-based approach, examining both the variety of Irish spoken by the pupils and the extent to which it deviates from native-speaker norms, establishing the extent to which pupils are aware of and attempt to acquire a native-like variety and the extent to which issues of identity and motivation are involved.

The anecdotal evidence indicates that the Irish spoken by all-Irish school pupils contains non-target like features. If this were correct, a comprehensive analysis of the pupils' Irish would help to inform teachers of precisely which features are not being mastered after eight years of immersion. There are many factors that potentially contribute to a lack of grammatical accuracy in a pupil's speech; including the nature of the immediate immersion context, the pupils' attitude and motivation to learn Irish, their lack of exposure to Irish outside the school and the pedagogical approach adopted in schools. In order to gain insights into these issues the present study sets out to compile a corpus of all-Irish pupils' speech and to analyse it. A collaborative task, that involved groups of pupils working outside an instructional context, was designed to facilitate the compilation of a substantial corpus of pupils' speech. During a subsequent showing of a video-recording of the group interaction to the pupils, they were given an opportunity to express their own opinions and insights into their proficiency in and their use of Irish in a naturalistic context. The attitudes and motivation of pupils to learning and speaking Irish, including proficiency, were gathered by means of a questionnaire. Finally, 6<sup>th</sup> class teachers and principals were interviewed to ascertain their views of the pupils' Irish and the nature of the proficiency typically achieved by them, and the instructional strategies that teachers adopt in class.

## ***Outline of study***

The dissertation is set out in nine chapters. The remainder of this introductory chapter presents a brief overview of the current state of the Irish language in order to place the study in context. The role of the Irish language in education since the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922 is then examined. An account of early State policies in relation to the language is given and the success of these policies is assessed. Particular attention is paid to the role of all-Irish schooling during this period. This is followed by a description of the growth of a new grass

root's movement during the 1970's that saw an interest in all-Irish schools that has continued unabated to this day.

The field of second language acquisition research is wide-ranging and quite diverse. It covers areas such as language learning in naturalistic contexts and in instructional contexts. As it was beyond the scope of the present study to review all of this literature, a number of theoretical perspectives on second language learning that have particular relevance for language learning in immersion programmes, and those that might be relevant to the unique situation in Ireland, are presented in Chapter 2. The theories that underlie that research have been influenced by a variety of perspectives and approaches. Among those are Universal Grammar, socio-cultural, sociolinguistic, cognitive, and interactionist approaches to second language learning.

Chapter 3 describes the design and methodology of the study, indicating the selection of schools for participation in the study and the instruments used for data gathering. The pilot phase of the study conducted in five schools is described with particular emphasis on the development of a collaborative pupil task that was central to the study. This collaborative task was designed to gather speech samples from 65 of the pupils and this provided a corpus for analysis. In order to gain a greater understanding of the features of the pupils' language, the opinions and insights of the pupils in relation to learning Irish and to their proficiency in Irish were gathered. This was done through an Attitude/Motivation Test Battery and through a stimulated recall activity. As it was beyond the scope of the study to include classroom observations, teachers were interviewed to seek their views and an account of their practices in relation to their pupils' proficiency in Irish.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the corpus of pupils' spoken Irish from different perspectives. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the corpus compiled from the speech samples gathered in nine all-Irish schools. It is the first corpus of its type for Irish in the primary school. As there is no standard oral corpus of Irish available for adults or for children it was also necessary to compile a second corpus of native speaker (Gaeltacht) pupils for comparative purposes. The most common words used by pupils in each school-type are identified. The corpus is also analysed for the presence of grammatical errors. This is followed by an account of the pupils' code-mixing and code-switching behaviour.

The analysis is continued in Chapter 5 with the focus on the syntactic and lexical features of the pupils' Irish. Issues such as the pupils' use of the copula and of the substantive

verb in Irish are examined in detail, together with the morphology of the most common verbs used. Instances of indirect speech forms, the use of prepositional pronouns, interrogative pronouns and numbers are then examined. The mapping of English syntax onto Irish is also considered. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the findings and their implications for pedagogy.

Chapter 6 gives an account of the pupils' opinions and insights into their language performance. It outlines the 'stimulated recall' activity where 65 pupils were shown selected excerpts from a video-recording of their interaction while they were engaged in a collaborative task. The excerpts selected contained non-target features of Irish. Each group viewed the excerpts a number of times and were given an opportunity to assess their own proficiency in Irish, to identify what expressions and forms they saw as 'mistakes' and to establish to what extent they were capable, on reflection, of self-correction. The features that the pupils corrected and those that went unnoticed are discussed as they give insights into their underlying competence in Irish. Errors that could be corrected with prompting and pupils' views on code-mixing are also described. The insights gained through this activity will help to inform effective instructional strategies that seek to enable all-Irish school pupils to emulate native-speaker competence.

Chapter 7 describes the analysis of the pupils' responses to the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) that was administered to 172 pupils in the study. The purpose of the AMTB is to provide background information about the nature and strength of pupils' attitude and motivation towards Irish, since positive attitudes can help to support and maintain the motivation to learn Irish over the long period required to attain mastery in that language. A modified and adapted AMTB was used in the present study. Individual items of particular interest to the present study are reported and analysed in greater detail. These areas include the pupils' integrative motivation to learn Irish, the support they receive from their parents, their perceptions of their ability in Irish, their long-term goal in terms of the degree to which they aspire to native-speaker norms and the level of grammatical accuracy desired. There were write-in items that allowed the pupils to express views about learning Irish in their own words.

Chapter 8 describes the interviews conducted with 6<sup>th</sup> class teachers and principal teachers to establish their views about the features of the pupils' Irish. These interviews give insights into the teachers' efforts and strategies as they try to improve their pupils' proficiency in Irish. They provide an opportunity to explore how teachers deal with the non-target like

features of their pupils' Irish and the extent to which they implement best practice in their classes. The professional development needs of teachers in relation to improving their pupils' Irish are also discussed together with the overall implications for their views on pedagogy.

The thesis concludes in Chapter 9 with a summary of the design of the study and its results. The conclusions of the individual chapters are drawn together and are related to emerging issues pertinent to the Irish language, all-Irish immersion and the study of language learning in immersion- and second-language classrooms. The limitations of the study are also outlined. The findings are assessed and their implications for pedagogy in all-Irish schools are outlined. Areas for further research are also delineated.

# **Chapter 1: Irish-medium education in Ireland**

## **1.1. *The Irish language in education***

This chapter will place the study in a broader historical, linguistic and educational context. The first section outlines the role that the education system played in the language revitalization efforts from the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922 to the early 70's. The all-Irish schools established between 1922 and 1972 were for the most part the outcome of an explicit State policy, unlike the all-Irish schools that were established since then and which have arisen from parental demand. This new generation of schools is described in section 1.2. This is followed in section 1.3 by an analysis of the sociolinguistic context in which all-Irish schools operate and the manner in which this influences pupil achievement in Irish.

The Irish language has been in decline since the early seventeenth century. The language revivalists of the late nineteenth century tended to over-simplify the causes of this decline and blamed 'Daniel O'Connell, the Catholic clergy and the National schools' for the decline (Wall, 1969, p. 81). To place a disproportionate blame on these three factors is to overlook the fact that by 1800, the Irish language no longer had a role in political, judicial and civil service business and had ceased to be the language of those who were successful in life or who aspired to be successful (Wall, 1969). The majority of Irish language speakers were relatively poor rural dwellers and the ravages of famine and emigration hit this section of the population particularly hard reducing the number of Irish speakers significantly (Ó Tuathaigh, 2008; Wall, 1969).

There is no doubt that the National schools contributed to the decline of the Irish language, as no Irish was taught in the schools when the National school system was established in Ireland in 1831, not even in the Gaeltacht, the areas of the country where Irish was the only language of the people (Coolahan, 1973; H. Ó Murchú, 2008; Ó Riagáin, 1997). This represented a negation of the identity of Irish speakers (Martí, 2005). Education policy relating to Irish in this era was consistent with the more fundamental British policy, to use the schools to spread the use of the English language by prohibiting the use of the vernacular language in schools (Coolahan, 1981). It is important not to overstate the role of



the National schools in the decline of Irish and to ignore the fundamental language-shift that was already underway before 1831.

The language revival movement in the final quarter of the nineteenth century attempted to stem the tide of decline (Ó Tuathaigh, 2008). The Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language founded in 1876, led a campaign to improve this situation in the National schools and as a result the teaching of Irish as an additional subject after school to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes was permitted in 1878 (Hindley, 1990; Ó Buachalla, 1984; Ó hUallacháin, 1978; H. Ó Murchú, 2003; M. Ó Murchú, 2001). The founding of *Conradh na Gaeilge* (The Gaelic League) in 1893 saw renewed efforts for further progress in this area. The campaign achieved some success in 1904 when the Commissioners for National Education were persuaded to allow the introduction of a bilingual programme in areas where Irish was spoken (Ó hUallacháin, 1978; Ó Riagáin, 1997).

When the Irish Free State gained independence from Great Britain in 1922 the Irish language was seen as critical to the new state's identity. In order to build a new nation the language of the coloniser, English, was to be replaced with the local vernacular, Irish (Romaine, 2008). The National schools were identified by the newly independent Irish Government as central to its policy of reversing the language shift from English back to Irish (Coady & Ó Laoire, 2002; Kelly, 2002; Ó Laoire, 2008; Ó Riagáin, 2007). Early in 1922 the Irish Free State Government announced that Irish would be taught and used as the medium of instruction for at least one hour per day where there were teachers with sufficient Irish to implement this policy (Macnamara, 1966; National Programme Conference, 1922). The government also decided, arising from the National Programme Conference which was organised by the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) in 1921, that Irish should be the sole medium of instruction in infant classes (Coolahan, 1973; Mac Aogáin, 1995; O'Connell, 1969; Ó hUallacháin, 1978). Irish was to be a compulsory requirement for matriculation, for entry to university and for many jobs in the public sector (Baker, 2002; Ó Tuathaigh, 2008).

The emphasis was placed on infant classes initially due to a lack of native-speaker teachers or others with near native-speaker ability (National Programme Conference, 1922). The result of this was that only the infant programme was to be taught entirely through Irish. Irish was to replace English in other classes over time as more teachers became fluent. The conference was influenced by the ideas of the Rev. Timothy Corcoran,

Professor of Education at University College, Dublin (Coolahan, 1973, 1981; Ó Laoire, 2000) who believed that the language shift of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries from Irish to English was brought about mainly through the schools. Corcoran maintained that by totally immersing children in Irish from an early age it would be possible for them to reverse this language shift and to achieve native-speaker competence thus restoring the native language (Corcoran, 1925). This was quite a revolutionary policy even by the standards of the most advanced linguistic theories of the time (Ó Riain, 1994) and represented a complete reversal of the policy of the National Schools of 1831 (Ó Buachalla, 1984). O'Connell (1969) reports that there was some unease with this policy among INTO members at the National Conference but that they acquiesced for the sake of reaching agreement. The evidence from *An Claidheamh Soluis*, a contemporary Irish language newspaper, was that there was overwhelming support for the initiative from teachers even though it placed a heavier burden on them (Uí Chollatáin, 2004).

The extra burden on teachers appears to have been too heavy for some to bear and led to calls for a second national programme conference, convened in 1925. While some parents expressed concerns at the time of the first programme conference, these concerns were ignored: '[A]n early move to take account of the wishes of parents in the matter was quietly discontinued' (Ó Riagáin, 1997, p. 15). Other groups of parents indicated their support for education through Irish for their children when the review of that programme started in 1925 (Uí Chollatáin, 2004). The conference yielded to the representations made by teachers and decided to allow English to be used prior to 10.30 a.m. (Coolahan, 1973). As the report of the second conference stated: 'The work in the infants classes between the hours of 10.30 and 2 o'clock is to be entirely in Irish where the teachers are sufficiently qualified' (National Programme Conference, 1926, p. 22). The reference to teachers' qualifications is important because many teachers did not in fact have sufficient competency in Irish to teach Irish as a subject or to teach other subjects through the medium of Irish. At the time of the report of the second national programme conference in 1926 there were 13,000 national schoolteachers in total in the National schools. 3,414 (26%) of them held Ordinary Certificates in Irish, 2,197 (17%) held Bilingual Certificates and 589 had an *Ardteastas* (Higher) Certificate. The remaining 7,390 (57%) teachers had no qualification in Irish (Coolahan, 1973). By 1935 only 20% of teachers had no qualification in Irish (Coolahan, 1973). One can imagine the difficulties in implementing

the programme for schools where so many teachers lacked the basic competency in the language. Even where teachers possessed an Ordinary or Bilingual Certificate it did not guarantee sufficient competency. O'Connell (1969) believed that much damage was done to the progress of Irish in schools because the authorities deemed a bilingual certificate sufficient to teach through the medium of Irish. One of the steps taken to improve teachers' competency in Irish was to establish six Irish-speaking residential preparatory colleges in Irish-speaking areas, the first four of which opened in 1926 (Coolahan, 1973). Places were reserved in these colleges for pupils that scored highly in oral Irish tests and for pupils who were native speakers of Irish.

Despite the unease of teachers, parents and some TDs (parliamentary deputies) during this period (Kelly, 2002), Tomás Ó Deirg, the Minister for Education from 1932-1948 (with the exception of 1939-40 when Éamonn de Valera held the position) (Ferriter, 2007), reiterated the state's policy in relation to Irish through the *Revised programme of primary instruction* 1934. He took the position that the schools should bear the major responsibility for the revival of the Irish language (Coolahan, 1981). Due to frustration with the progress being made in the use of Irish as the medium of instruction prior to this, Ó Deirg's programme reverted to the 1922 position of Irish only in the infant classes while lightening the load in other curricular areas (Coolahan, 1981; Department of Education, 1934; Kelly, 2002). The policy in relation to the infant classes has been considered very successful in achieving proficiency in Irish as these classes were taught predominantly through the medium of Irish from 1922-1960 (Ó hUallacháin, 1978; Ó Riain, 1994).

Although the government did not succeed in replacing English instruction with Irish in the other more senior classes in all schools, by 1936/37 there were 288 schools outside the Gaeltacht teaching through Irish. There were a further 2,032 schools where Irish was the sole medium of instruction in certain standards (An Roinn Oideachais/The Department of Education, 1937). As a result of Ó Deirg's revised programme, the number of schools teaching through Irish grew to 704 (Gaeltacht and outside of Gaeltacht) in 1939 that was the highest number it reached. That number had decreased to 523 by 1951 (Coolahan, 1981). Mac Aogáin (1995) maintains that the schools achieved excellent results in language proficiency by today's standards due in part to the dedication of teachers and parents towards the national policy which was viewed as essential for the identity of the state.

Notwithstanding the expansion of Irish language teaching led by the Government, there was continual criticism of the State's policy in relation to teaching through Irish particularly from the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO). A motion was passed at the INTO congress of 1936 to establish a committee of enquiry into the use of Irish as a teaching medium to children whose home language was English (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 1941). One of the findings of that committee, which reported in 1941, was that 39.5% of teachers surveyed were in favour of the 'all Irish' policy in infant classes for the sake of the revival of Irish, whereas 60.5% were in favour of the use of both English and Irish in infant classes. The recommendations of the committee were ignored however (Coolahan, 1981). There was criticism from parents also: 'parents ... were wont to say, however groundless the charge, that nothing except Irish was being taught in the schools' (O'Connell, 1969, p. 365). O'Connell (1969) reported that many children did not like Irish which he felt was mainly due to the lack of ability and training of teachers to teach through the medium of Irish. These criticisms fed into the growing public protest against what became known as '*Compulsory Irish*' (O'Connell, 1969, p. 360). The policy of teaching all infants classes through Irish was revisited in 1960 with the issuing of Circular 11/60 which stated that schools were no longer required to teach all subjects through Irish (Ní Fhearghusa 1998).

There was a dramatic decline in the number of schools teaching through Irish from the high point in 1939 to the 1970s' (Ní Fhearghusa 1998). By 1972 there were only 10 all-Irish schools outside the Gaeltacht. Many reasons have been cited for the decline in the number of all-Irish schools and Ó Riain (1994) gives the following:

- the closure of the preparatory colleges which provided candidates for the training;
- colleges with a good standard of Irish;
- the ending of compulsory Irish in infant classes;
- the Macnamara (1966) report which claimed to show that teaching through Irish was having a detrimental effect on the pupils' achievement in English and Mathematics the Primary School Curriculum of 1971;
- the ending of the practice of educating trainee teachers through Irish in the training colleges in the 60s.

Although the Irish language policy in schools was on the surface very successful from 1922 to the 1940s', the revitalization policy was not pursued with the same vigour in other domains. As Ferriter stated: 'The real obstacle to the Irish-language policy was the failure of adults to make the language a part of their daily lives' (2004, p. 351). While the domain of the school is important for language maintenance (Myers-Scotton, 2006), schools can not revive a language without support in other domains (Baker, 2001, 2002; Fishman, 1991; Martí, 2005). They can be overburdened with the implementation of state language policy (Ferguson, 2006), and this does appear to have been particularly the case in Ireland. The schools produced Irish speakers whose opportunities to use the language outside the domain of the school were limited. Enabling children to acquire competence in a language, particularly a minority language, does not guarantee that they will choose to speak it in adult life (Ó Riagáin et al., 2007). May (2001) maintains that without links to a native speaker community, schools may not be able to revive a language that is in decline. A similar sentiment was expressed by Ó Riagáin (1997): 'neither the school nor the community can satisfactorily replace the home as an effective agency in language reproduction' (1997, p. 133). The architects of the State's Irish language policy in 1922 would probably have been very disappointed with the results achieved 50 years later in 1972. They acted most vigorously in the domain in which they had the greatest capacity to influence the use of Irish. The policy may have been more successful if it had been supported by systematic research (Ó Buachalla, 1984).

## **1.2. *All-Irish schools since the 1970's***

The belief grew among the majority of the population during the 1960's and 70's that educating pupils through Irish was detrimental to their English language skills (Cummins, 1978). These views were influenced by the Macnamara (1966) study of 1,000 primary pupils at the time in which it was claimed that the competence in Irish gained by pupils that were taught through the medium of Irish, was being achieved at a cost to English language skills. Despite many people's misgivings in relation to all-Irish schooling in the 1970s' not all parents were averse to them. Cummins's (1977b) critique of Macnamara's findings helped to assuage many parents' fears in this regard (Baker & Hornberger, 2001). Some parents were unhappy with the standard of Irish in English-medium schools and the change in State policy towards the Irish language in the education

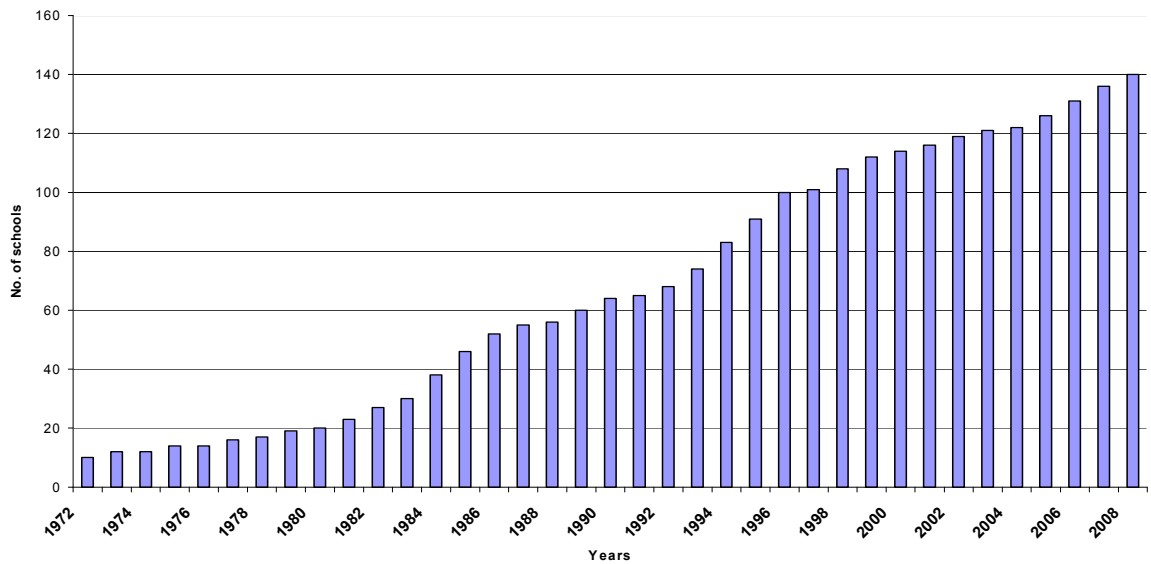
system (H. Ó Murchú, 2008). They wanted to ensure that their children would achieve a reasonable competence in Irish (National Forum for Early Childhood Education Secretariat, 1998). This led to the establishment of parent-led *naíonraí* (Irish-medium pre-schools) (Mhic Mhathúna, 1993) and *gaelscoileanna* (all-Irish schools) (H. Ó Murchú, 2001). In many cases it was the success of the *naíonra* in a community that led to parent demand for the establishment of an all-Irish primary school. This new generation of all-Irish schools represented a new direction in Irish language education (Ní Mhurchú, 1995; H. Ó Murchú, 2003). The schools resulted from the wishes and desires of parents rather than from State policies (Department of Education, 1998; Ní Fhearghusa 2002; Ó Riagáin, 1997). Evidence of that parental support was found by Cummins (1977a) in his small-scale study of reading achievement by all-Irish school pupils. It heralded the beginning of a bottom-up movement as opposed to the top-down approach that had existed for the previous 50 years. The type of bilingual education offered in these schools is described in the research as immersion education (Swain, 2000a).

*Gaelscoileanna*, the co-ordinating body for all-Irish schools, was set up in 1973 and there has been sustained growth in the number of all-Irish primary schools established since then (Ó Baoill, 1999). The growth in relative terms is very dramatic considering it started from a small base in 1972. That growth can be clearly seen in the graph in Figure 1.1

The number of all-Irish primary schools in the Republic of Ireland has grown from 10 in 1972 to 140 in 2008. There were 23,704 pupils attending these all-Irish schools in 2006 (Máirtín, 2006) and a further 9,560 pupils attend Gaeltacht schools (Mac Donnacha, 2005). This means that approximately 7.5% of pupils receive their primary school education through the medium of Irish (Máirtín, 2006). Survey data indicate that there is scope to increase this percentage threefold, as 23.4% of respondents in the Ó Riagáin survey cited above stated that they would send their children to an all-Irish primary school if one were located near their homes (Ó Riagáin, 2007).

These all-Irish schools differ from immersion schools in some other jurisdictions in two key areas. First, they are whole-school immersion centres established under the rules for national schools with an independent board of management. They are not immersion units, tracks or streams within English medium schools. Irish is the first language of

**Figure 1. 1**  
**The growth of all-Irish schools in the Republic of Ireland 1972-2008**



(Source: [www.gael scoileanna.ie](http://www.gael scoileanna.ie))

the school and this is recognised in the curriculum for Irish language (An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta/Department of Education and Science, 2007). Second, while there is a variety of practice in relation to English instruction in infant classes, once instruction in English commences, it amounts to approximately 14% of the school day and remains constant from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes. All other subjects such as history, geography, science, mathematics, music, drama, visual arts, physical education, and social personal and health education, are taught through the medium of Irish. Instructional time through the medium of Irish does not decrease as in some immersion programmes where the proportion of instructional time typically decreases to 50% by Grade 6 (Genesee, 2008). Pupils attending all-Irish schools are educated through the medium of Irish, which for the vast majority of them is their second language.

The majority of all-Irish schools employ an ‘early total immersion’ model where children are immersed in Irish from their first day in school in junior infants (Ní Mhaoláin, 2005). The introduction of English as a subject is usually delayed until some point in senior infants, the children’s second year in school. Some all-Irish schools however, teach English from the start of junior infants for 30 minutes per day (NCCA, 2006; Ní Bhaoill, 2004). Irish is also the communicative language of the school and pupils are expected to converse

in Irish at all times within the school environment including the school playground at break-time (Ní Mhaoláin, 2005). The school curriculum is the same as that for all other schools in Ireland except for the Irish language itself. All teachers are bilingual and pupil exposure to Irish is effectively confined to the school environment. English is the dominant language of the community ensuring that there is adequate support for the pupils' first language.

For the period 1999-2007, the number of contact days per year for primary school pupils Ireland was 177. Pupils attend primary school for eight years. In the case of all-Irish schools, instruction time through the medium of Irish is estimated to be 3.5 hours per day in infant classes and approximately 4.25 hours per day in first to sixth classes. The total number of hour's exposure to Irish in the two years of infant classes, therefore, might be estimated as  $1,239^2$  hours. A similar estimate for the six years of first to sixth classes would be  $4,513^3$  hours. By the end of 6<sup>th</sup> class then, children in primary all-Irish schools will have received approximately 5,750 hours of instruction through the medium of Irish. The comparable figure for Grade 6 French immersion pupils in the Toronto District School Board is 4,830 (Pearce, 2008). It might be expected that children would be able to speak Irish fluently, and with a good degree of accuracy, by the time they are in 6<sup>th</sup> class having received that amount of exposure to Irish. Indeed, the research carried out in this area to date indicates that these schools have been successful in this respect. The research suggests that pupils in 6<sup>th</sup> class in all-Irish schools, in their eighth year of immersion education, appear very successful in their acquisition of basic literacy and conversational skills thus enabling them to function effectively in an Irish-speaking setting and to learn through the medium of Irish (Harris et al., 2006). They often succeed however, in getting their meaning across in a way that is grammatically inaccurate, using language that would not be viewed as appropriate by native speakers. In a recent study of practice in three all-Irish schools (NCCA, 2006) teachers drew attention to this issue. Harris et al. (2006) identify specific areas of concern. Mastery of the objective of *understanding the morphology of verbs* on a listening test, for example, had decreased significantly since a previous study in 1985. The mastery of *control of the morphology of verbs* on a speaking test had also decreased but not significantly. These concerns have also been documented in the literature on immersion

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<sup>2</sup>  $177 \times 3.5 \times 2 = 1,239$

<sup>3</sup>  $177 \times 4.25 \times 6 = 4,513$



education in Canada (Kowal & Swain, 1997), Wales (D. Jones, 1996) and Northern Ireland (Henry, Andrews, & Ó Cainín, 2002).

### **1.3. *The sociolinguistic context of Irish immersion education***

While schools have a very important role to play in the revitalization of Irish, they represent only one domain of children's lives as noted above. Without the support of other domains in children's lives such as family, peer-group and society in general, revitalization efforts are less likely to be successful. This section will examine the sociolinguistic context in which all-Irish school pupils are learning Irish and the current state of the Irish language in general.

The Irish language appeared doomed to extinction in the final quarter of the nineteenth century (Ó Tuathaigh, 2008). That it has survived, and the achievements since then have been described as miraculous by Fishman (1991). There are many outward signs of vitality in the language such as the establishment of TG4 the Irish-language television station in 1996 and the popularity of its innovative programming (Ó Laoire, 2007); the growth of all-Irish schools since the 1970's as described above; the volume of works of prose published in Irish in recent years (Nic Eoin, 2008); the enactment of the *Official Language Act 2003* (Ó Laighin, 2008); the appointment of *An Coimisinéir Teanga* (Language Commissioner) in 2004; the Irish Government statement on the Irish language (Government of Ireland, 2006); the achievement of 'official working language' status for Irish in the European Community in 2007; the 20 year strategy for Irish (Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2008); the naming of housing estates with Irish names; the demand for Irish-language courses for adults and Gaeltacht courses for teenagers; the extended use of Irish by Brian Cowen TD in his first speech as *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister) of Ireland in 2008. These signs combined with new language planning approaches indicate that there is a new vitality in relation to Irish (H. Ó Murchú, 2008).

Behind these outward signs however, there are underlying trends that are less favourable. Irish is a lesser-used language that is in under threat from English and the number of daily-speakers of Irish is relatively small and thinly dispersed. The Irish language has been in competition with English as a community language for centuries and is now categorised as a minority or lesser used language (Ó Catháin, 2001). Even in the Gaeltacht areas in the west of Ireland, Irish is perceived to be under threat (M. Ó Murchú,

2000). Mac Maoláin (1957) noted 50 years ago that the influence of English was evident in the variety of Irish spoken by native speakers in Gaeltacht areas. The situation outside the Gaeltacht, where the all-Irish schools are located, is more fragile. While there are networks of Irish speakers they are quite dispersed and the opportunities for primary school pupils to come into contact with them are very limited. In circumstances where the language is not visible to pupils outside the context of the school their motivation to learn the language may weaken as the language becomes more complex. Pupils may not be able to sustain the effort required to acquire the more difficult structures of Irish if they do not see a practical application for their efforts in their lives outside of school.

An examination of the figures from the 2006 Census of Population reveals the fragility of the Irish language. On a positive note, the number of Irish-speakers was recorded as 1.66 million representing 41.9% of the entire population. Over one million of this 1.66 million however, never speak Irish or speak it less than once per week. This leaves 525,355 speakers who use it on a daily basis. A large proportion of these speakers are primary and post-primary school pupils that study Irish as a subject in school and who may not necessarily speak Irish outside of the school or language learning context. Table 1 below, shows the figures for daily speakers of Irish outside education. When one removes those that speak Irish within the education context only, there are 72,148 daily-speakers of Irish, 22,515 in the Gaeltacht and 49,633 elsewhere.

**Table 1.1**  
**Daily speakers of Irish outside education recorded in the 2006 Census of population.**

	<b>National total</b>	<b>Gaeltacht</b>
<b>5-19 years</b>	17,542	4,460
<b>3-4 and 20+ years</b>	54,606	18,055
<b>Total</b>	<b>72,148</b>	<b>22,515</b>

Sources: Census of Population 2006 (Central Statistics Office, 2007a; Punch, 2008)

In survey data gathered in 2000 and reported by Ó Riagáin (2007), 14.6% of 1,000 randomly selected adults over 18 years in the Republic of Ireland responded that they had a high ability in Irish which included two categories namely ‘most conversations’ and ‘native speakers’. As the survey was confined to adults over 18 years it is likely to have excluded the majority of those in full time education other than those studying Irish at 3<sup>rd</sup> level or

those working in the education sector. This high level of self-assessed ability in Irish indicates that there is potential to expand existing Irish-speaker networks. The ‘20 year strategy for Irish’ (Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2008) seeks to tap that potential and has set a target of 250,000 daily speakers of Irish by the year 2028.

Most active Irish speakers live in social contexts that are heavily influenced by the increasing language contact between Irish and English. The global dominance of English is also increasing the extent of code-mixing of the two languages a common feature of the speech of Irish speakers (Nic Eoin, 2005; Ó Dónaill, 2000). O’Malley Madec noted in her research ‘that fluent native speakers of Irish in all age-groups use a great deal of English words and phrases in their speech’ (2001, p. 260). Her study of English discourse markers led her to classify them as borrowings rather than code-switches (O’Malley Madec, 2007). She also found that the more formal an interaction was, the fewer borrowings there were. Speakers appeared to use English discourse markers to denote a speaker style. This use of English has led writers such as Nic Pháidín (2003), to refer to the Irish as spoken in the Gaeltacht areas as a creole. The language lacks the richness that it once had and is now heavily influenced by English syntax (Ó Baoill, 1981). Mac Mathúna (1997) goes so far as to state that one cannot be certain even that native speakers have a grasp of correct grammatical structures.

Although the number of all-Irish schools is increasing, the pupils in these schools have limited exposure to Irish outside of school or school-based activities apart from some exposure to *TG4*, the Irish language television station. Murtagh (2003) did find however, that pupils who had attended an all-Irish school were more likely to participate in Irish-speaking networks outside of school than pupils who had attended English-medium schools. The variety of Irish spoken by pupils in all-Irish schools has been referred to as *Gaelscoilis* (Mac Mathúna, 2008; Nic Eoin, 2005; Walsh, 2007), a type of interlanguage similar to Lyster’s (1987) ‘immersion speak’ or Hammerly’s (1991) ‘Frenglish’. This interlanguage is characterised by a high level of fluency but a lack grammatical accuracy and with many borrowings from English. This variety of Irish has been described as *Gaeilge liofa lofa* [Fluent Irish with grammatical errors] (Ní Ghréacháin, 2006; H. Ó Murchú, 2001). Although the promotion of fluency may be a necessary first step for immersion pupils, many involved in immersion education believe it must be built on in a structured way throughout the school years (Mac Mathúna, 1997). The lack of grammatical

accuracy has led Ó Cíobháin (1999) to consider the possibility that a new creole will emerge from all-Irish primary and post-primary schools. McCloskey (2001) however, praises the creativity of the language use of these immersion pupils and the variety of Irish that they are creating through a creolisation process.

The comments of these authors illustrate that the issue of errors in Irish usage generally is a topic of greater concern and sensitivity than it might be in other sociolinguistic contexts due to the perceived fragile status of the language. While in other more widely used languages, caregivers are not unduly concerned about developmental errors, there is a heightened sense of alarm that young speakers of Irish may not go on to become fluent accurate speakers (Harrington, 2006). This concern applies to all-Irish school pupils also, particularly since all-Irish schools are the source of more competent bilinguals than the Gaeltacht schools. The evidence from Wales (D. Jones, 1996; G. Jones, 1988), Northern Ireland (Henry et al., 2002), Scotland (Johnstone, Harlen, MacNeil, Stradling, & Thorpe, 1999) and Canada (Lapkin & Swain, 2004; Lyster, 1987; Swain, Brooks, & Tocalli-Beller, 2002) indicates that developmental errors are a feature of immersion programmes and that it is only realistic to expect pupils to achieve a ‘high, though non native-speaker, level of proficiency...’ (Swain & Johnson, 1997) in the target language. Pupils in all-Irish schools may be performing as well as can be expected. The analysis of the corpus of Irish collected and analysed in this study will help to inform that debate.

## **1.4 Summary**

The tradition of Irish-medium education in Ireland has been described in this chapter. It was characterised in the early years of the Irish Free State by top-down policies that were successful at some levels but did not appear to have engendered popular support. Following a period of growth up to the 1940’s the number of schools teaching through Irish declined after that and there were only 10 primary schools, outside the Gaeltacht, teaching all subjects through the medium of Irish by 1972. There was renewed interest in Irish-medium education in the 1970’s and a parent-led demand for these schools. This demand has increased to the present day and there are now 140 primary all-Irish schools teaching

through the medium of Irish outside the Gaeltacht. It is the pupils of these schools that are the subject of the present study.

## **Chapter 2: Literature review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the proficiency in Irish of 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in primary all-Irish schools, to provide a corpus-based comprehensive description of the characteristic features of their variety of spoken Irish and to examine the different factors that may be linked to or help to maintain this variety. These latter factors may include the quality of instruction, pupil attitude and motivation in relation to Irish, the quality and amount of Irish spoken by pupils, support from parents, peer acceptance and support for the variety spoken, the perceived status of Irish more generally, and the extent of their exposure to Irish in the environment outside of school. Although it is not clear how these factors combine to influence all-Irish pupils' second language acquisition it is important to investigate them in any comprehensive description of their language.

There is a large body of research on second language acquisition (SLA) that potentially can inform the present study. SLA research encompasses language learning in a number of different contexts, such as naturalistic acquisition, language learning in core-language (subject-only) classrooms and language acquisition in immersion classrooms where language and content learning are integrated. While research in the latter domain is probably of greatest relevance to the present study, the other areas of research and theory mentioned are also likely to contribute insights. This is especially so in the case of a broad-based approach to the study of a topic that has not to date been extensively investigated.

In addition to this interactional literature, there are also local studies. The research to date on SLA in Irish at primary level has tended to be small-scale in nature with the exception of the assessment studies of Harris (1984) and Harris et al. (2006). Neither has there been a great deal of research on SLA in Irish immersion. As research on the acquisition of Irish is directly relevant to the present study previous, studies in this field must be examined. A review of this literature will help to inform the present study and provide a greater understanding of some of the factors influencing pupils' acquisition of Irish. The patchy nature of this literature suggests that a broad-based approach based on a substantial number of schools would be more useful in order to describe the features of the

pupils' Irish and to understand how the factors outlined above influence the level and kind of proficiency achieved.

The review of the research commences in Section 2.2 with a general overview of different theoretical approaches to second language learning. Specific research topics relevant to the study within each theoretical approach are examined in greater detail. Section 2.3 examines the outcomes of research in immersion education. Section 2.4 examines research in an Irish context, first in relation to the acquisition of Irish as a second language generally, and second in relation to the acquisition of Irish in all-Irish schools. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the issues raised in the research in Section 2.5.

## **2.2 *Second language acquisition research***

The field of second language acquisition research has seen a great deal of activity in the last three decades that has added greatly to our knowledge of how second languages are learned. Much of the research can be categorised into different theoretical approaches such as cognitive, sociocultural, sociolinguistic etc. It is beyond the scope of the present study to describe the different approaches in detail. This study will draw on the main findings from the different approaches and consider where appropriate how they might relate to child second language acquisition in an immersion context. In large part, the purpose will be to identify the features of the second language produced by immersion pupils and to try to explain why these features are present.

The next section (2.2.1) will examine some aspects of child second language acquisition that inform second language acquisition in immersion programmes. This is followed by an account of language processing from a cognitive perspective. Interactionist approaches to second language learning will then be examined. This examination will concentrate of the roles of input and output, and proactive and reactive strategies such as feedback and focus on form. Sociocultural theory as it applies to second language learning will then be outlined with a particular focus on languaging and learner autonomy. Finally, the contribution of sociolinguistic theory will be examined as it applies to learning a second language in a school context, and in the immersion setting in particular, where learners are immersed with other learners with similarly faulty interlanguages.

### **2.2.1 Child second language acquisition**

It is important for the purposes of the present study to examine the extent to which young children in an early immersion programme differ from adults in the way they acquire a second language. Chomsky observed that children appear to acquire their first language relatively quickly and effortlessly and that they could not do so, based on the input that they have received, without some innate language ability (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Cook (1994) maintains that even if second language learners do not achieve native like mastery of the target language an explanation is required as to how learners know more about the language than could be expected from the limited input that they have received. DeKeyser (2003) argues that children's access to Universal Grammar (UG) is outside their awareness, whereas, adults use their analytical abilities to compare structures in the L2 with their L1. A study by Harley & Hart (1997) compared the proficiency in French of continuing early immersion pupils with late immersion pupils in an 11<sup>th</sup> grade class. They found: 'L2 proficiency outcomes from early immersion being more closely associated with memory ability and late immersion outcomes with analytic language ability' (1997, p. 397). While the authors state the need for further research, their findings may provide evidence to support DeKeyser's position that:

Somewhere between the ages of 6-7 and 16-17, everybody loses the mental equipment for the implicit induction of the abstract patterns underlying a human language, and the critical period really deserves its name. (2000, p. 518)

DeKeyser (2000) concludes that children are better at acquiring a language implicitly than adults whereas adults and adolescents are better at figuring out language structures explicitly. He cautions however, that children require a large amount of input to acquire a language implicitly. He suggests that only a total early immersion programme can provide this amount of input. This view may lend support to those writers (Harley, 1989, 1993; Lyster, 1994, 2007; Stern, 1990, 1992) who cite the need for a more analytic approach to immersion pedagogy. It is argued below that a shift in emphasis to analytic strategies may be appropriate towards the end of primary school at ages 10-12.



### **2.2.1.1 Effect of previously acquired languages**

Although young children in an early immersion programme may be able to acquire a language implicitly, a key difference for them when compared to children acquiring their first language is that as second language learners they have already acquired their first language. Because they already know one language, the way in which they experience acquisition of the second language is different to that of native speakers (Henry & Tangney, 1999; Philp, Mackey, & Oliver, 2008). The immersion context puts pressure on the learner to comprehend the input being received. Comprehension is not the same as speech however (Gary & Gary, 1981), a listener may make meaning from the input through vocabulary, lexical information, extra-linguistic information or a combination of these (Krashen, 1982). In speech or production on the other hand the speaker must utilise aspects of grammar such as concord, definite/indefinite distinctions, singular/plural in order to be easily understood (Gary & Gary, 1981). Pupils, using their L1 processing strategies may not pay attention to all the information regarding L2 structures and forms which is available to them in the input as they did when they acquired their L1 (Doughty, 2003; Harley & Swain, 1984).

It could be stated that the learner in an immersion context may be principally decoding while listening but unless those language structures are being encoded also, the learner will not have access to them when speaking. If DeKeyser (2000) is correct then this encoding will happen implicitly. The evidence of early immersion research however, shows that the learners develop their receptive skills to a greater degree than their productive skills (Allen, Swain, Harley, & Cummins, 1990; Harley, 1987; Lapkin & Swain, 2004). Language learning that leads learners to develop their productive skills requires them to attend to relevant language features in the input (Harley, 1998) and on restructuring their knowledge (DeKeyser, 1998). White (1991) suggests that second language learners may need to have their attention drawn explicitly to features of their second language that are not grammatical, as they may be influenced by structures from their first language. One way to achieve this is to focus learners' attention on form, which may lead them to notice a 'hole' or gap in their interlanguage (Swain, 2000b). Interlanguage was the term used by Selinker (1972) to describe the language system constructed by the learner from the linguistic input received.

Some writers such as Chomsky (1965), Canale & Swain (1980) have made a distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance. While this distinction is not accepted universally, White argues that it is: ‘possible that L2 learners’ underlying competence is to some extent hidden by performance factors, such as the demands of processing or parsing’ (2003, p. 37). Limited processing capacity can lead to learners making performance mistakes, which if they had greater time to think, they would be able to correct. Errors on the other hand are features of the second language yet to be mastered by them (Corder, 1967; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

### 2.2.2 Language learning from a cognitive perspective

A cognitive approach to second language learning views language learning as being similar to any other type of learning. The more we know about how the brain processes and learns new information the greater our understanding will be of the process of second language learning (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). This section will draw on the findings of researchers in this field in order to offer an explanation for the incomplete acquisition of the target language in immersion programmes that will be examined later.

VanPatten recognised the role of input in second language acquisition and developed a model for input processing as follows:

**Figure 1.2**  
**VanPatten’s model of processing and acquisition [adapted from VanPatten (1996, p. 41)]**



VanPatten examined how learners process language and his studies have shown that they have a tendency to process input for meaning rather than for form (VanPatten, 1990, 2002). This view is supported by Sharwood-Smith (1993) who maintains that learners attention will be on content words first in order to negotiate for meaning. In VanPatten’s model in Figure 2.1, he explains that if the input is processed successfully it might lead to intake. He defines intake as: ‘the linguistic data actually processed from the input and held in working memory for further processing’ (VanPatten, 2002, p. 757). In order to hold information in the working memory learners need to have sufficient attentional resources available from their limited attentional capacity (Lee & Benati, 2007). VanPatten (2002) was primarily interested in the first stage above where input may lead to intake though he

acknowledges a role for output as well. He wanted: 'to affect the ways in which learners attend to input data' (VanPatten, 1996, p. 2). He devised tasks where learners got processing instruction on how to notice structural features available in the input as well as negotiating for meaning (VanPatten, 1993). This was done by manipulating 'learner attention during IP (input processing) and/or manipulating input data so that more and better form-meaning connections are made' (VanPatten, 1996, p. 763).

The results of research in this area have generally supported VanPatten's theories (Ellis, 1999; Skehan, 2003). While DeKeyser et al. (2002) acknowledge VanPatten's important contribution to the field they caution that there has been overgeneralization and over interpretation of the results. There appears to be agreement however, that if we want learners to process for form, then some pedagogical intervention will be necessary (Doughty, 2003; VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993). This attention to form could be through explicit grammar teaching, explicit error correction or indirectly through input enhancement (DeKeyser, 2003). While VanPatten's theory is useful for the understandings that it provides in relation to incomplete input processing it does not explain how intake may be incorporated into the developing interlanguage system (Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

Schmidt (2001) formulated the noticing hypothesis in which he maintains that learners must pay attention to 'elements of the surface structure of utterances in the input – instances of language' (2001, p. 5). He also believes that noticing can be influenced by instruction and also by frequency and salience and notes that individual differences among learners also play a role in how input is processed. Skehan (1998) suggests that noticing must take place within short-term or working memory. If the learner has sufficient attentional resources available within their working memory to notice form in the input it may be incorporated and coded into long-term memory. The manner in which input processed in this way may have an impact on output will now be examined.

Skehan has examined how learners draw on their developing language system when producing output. One of the most important ways that native speakers are able to speak at normal rates in real time according to Skehan is by drawing on lexical modes of communication. He suggests that in order to maintain a free flow of speech when speaking, that speakers do not create each utterance:

mint fresh ... and so require considerable computational power, we economize by stitching together language chunks which free processing resources during

communication so that planning for the form and content of future utterances can proceed smoothly. (1998, p. 3)

Native speakers' speech according to this view, is derived from a mixture of creativity and prefabricated chunks (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). This has been also been found to be the case with young children, both native speakers (Wray, 2000) and second language learners (Mhic Mhathúna, 2005). Second language learners will initially be more dependent on controlled processing which 'involves the temporary activation of a selection of information nodes in the memory, in a new configuration' (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 100). Lantolf and Thorne maintain that declarative knowledge is converted to procedural knowledge through restructuring and fine-tuning and converted in production rules (2006, p. 298). This procedural knowledge is accessed initially through controlled processing. This places a heavy burden on short-term memory but with repeated practice these rules become automatised and are stored in long-term memory. Once automatised however, these forms are less susceptible to change.

Skehan conceptualises a dual-coding approach to language performance and language learning as he explains:

The dual-coding requires us to account for the use of a rule-based system in economical and parsimonious performance and a memory-based system which provides for fast access. (Skehan, 1998, p. 4)

According to Skehan, the rule-based system follows the pattern of restructuring under the operation of a Universal Grammar or other cognitive process where rules are developed over time as the learner's language capacity develops. The memory-based system on the other hand relies on the accumulation of formulaic language chunks that can be accessed from long-term memory. When coding takes place it can lead to restructuring in the interlanguage system. The use of language chunks frees up time for planning the rest of what a speaker wishes to say which may entail shifting to analytic mode. Exemplar-based representations can also become rule-based (McLaughlin & Heredia, 1996). Unanalysed chunks that learners have memorised may be analysed at a later stage and lead to productive rules (Mitchell & Myles, 2004; Myles, Hooper, & Mitchell, 1998).

Skehan cautions that these memorised chunks drawn from the exemplar-based system may not necessarily be coded correctly. If optimum language learning conditions

prevail more accurate forms will replace premature lexicalisations. However, if the learner finds these lexicalisations useful and communicatively effective then:

‘...the erroneous exemplar may survive and stabilize, and become a syntactic fossil. In this case paradoxically, it is the usefulness in communication of a premature lexicalization that is the source of the enduring problem.’ (Skehan, 1998, p. 61)

If the language chunks that learners draw upon are deviant forms of the target language, there may be a danger that habitual practice of these will lead them to become rule-based prematurely. This can lead to a degree of permanence or stabilisation as suggested by Skehan that is difficult to modify even if there is ample contrary evidence in the input. Learners may continue to produce these deviant features particularly if they do not cause a communicative difficulty (Doughty, 2003).

Many researchers have noted the fluency of immersion pupils (Harley, Cummins, Swain, & Allen, 1990; Lyster, 2004a; Nadasdi, Mougeon, & Rehner, 2005) and commended the creative way in which they use the target language (McCloskey, 2001). One aspect of this creativity is the manner in which young L2 learners will draw on features of their L1 to produce structures in the L2 that are too complex for their level of proficiency in the L2 at that point. One example of this is the way that children may carry L1 word order into their L2 (Nicholas & Lightbown, 2008). If these structures become embedded in the memory-based system, it may appear at a later stage that the learners are translating from their L1 although this may not be the case.

Hammerly (1989) has been more critical of the language use of immersion pupils however, suggesting that it would be more desirable if pupils were made to think before speaking so that their utterances might be more accurate. The communicative demands of the immersion classroom put pressure on pupils to express ideas and concepts that are sometimes ahead of their second language ability (Stern, 1990). In such situations, their limited processing capacity may be directed more towards communicating their intended meaning than towards its form. Skehan (1998) maintains that learners are more likely to access their exemplar-based system in these situations. Interlanguage change on the other hand, is more likely to occur when accessed through the rule-based system rather than the exemplar-based system. Thus second language use or output cannot be guaranteed to lead to language change.

In terms of production practice Skehan's dual-coding system calls for the need for two types of practice: controlled practice and communicative practice (Lyster, 2007). Communicative practice can be effective for promoting fluency and confidence but tends not to engage the learner's language awareness, reducing the likelihood of changes to the interlanguage system (Skehan, 1998). Controlled practice on the other hand can engage learners' language awareness and rule-based system, reducing over-reliance of communicative strategies and effecting change in interlanguage (Rannta & Lyster, 2007). Controlled practice, which tends to take place in context-reduced situations can provide opportunities for learners to practice new knowledge available in declarative form leading to automaticity and its conversion to procedural knowledge (Anderson, 1983). Lyster (2004a) argues that prompts also assist in the transition from declarative to procedural knowledge. The role of feedback, together with output and practice will be discussed further in the next section. In conclusion, the evidence from classrooms and from processing theories suggest that learners need to have their attention drawn to form at certain times, to direct their limited attentional resources to form rather than meaning (Lightbown, 1990).

## **2.2.3 Interactionist approaches to second language learning**

### **2.1.3.1 Interaction hypothesis**

Interactionist approaches to second language learning are interested in second language input, second language output and the interaction between learners and other others (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Krashen (1984) developed the input hypothesis where he argued that if language learners receive sufficient comprehensible input in the target language, then they should be able to acquire that language. This was conditional to some extent on the affective filter hypothesis that the learner could allow the language in for processing (Krashen, 1982). The fact that the speaking and writing skills of the French immersion students were different from their francophone peers caused Swain and others to question Krashen's input hypothesis (Harley & Swain, 1984; Swain, 1985, 1995, 2000a, 2005). This led Swain to develop the output hypothesis that will be discussed below. Before that however, we will examine the Interaction Hypothesis.

Long (1996) put forward the interaction hypothesis as a development of Krashen's input hypothesis. He examined the interaction between native-speaker (NS)-non-native

speaker (NNS) and NS-NS dyads. From his examination of these type of interactions he maintains that not only does conversation provide an opportunity for learners to practice specific language features but is also a means through which learning takes place (Gass, 2003). It is negotiation for meaning in particular that provide the best opportunities for learning as he explains:

...environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learner's developing L2 processing capacity, and that these resources are brought together most usefully, although not exclusively, during negotiation for meaning. Negative feedback obtained during negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of L2 development... (Long, 1996, p. 414)

Links can be made with this formulation of the interaction hypothesis and the contribution of the cognitive approach discussed above in relation to the learners 'selective attention' and 'processing capacity'. One of the difficulties with interaction studies is to determine if learning has actually taken place as a result of the interaction. One study that claimed to demonstrate that learning had taken place was a study by Swain and Lapkin (1998) with Grade 8 French immersion students where the analysis of one pair of pupils demonstrated that their interaction had mediated learning.

### **2.1.3.2 Output hypothesis**

The Swain & Lapkin (1998) study arose from the output hypothesis put forward by Swain (1985). The output hypothesis will be briefly described in this section although Swain locates her hypothesis in a sociocultural approach to language learning (Swain, 2000b; Swain & Lapkin, 2002). Producing language or output has a role in developing fluency. As noted in the discussion of the cognitive approach, controlled processing of different structures can lead to automatisisation that in turn can aid fluency. Producing language alone however, will be insufficient in developing accuracy. Swain (1985, 1993, 1995, 2000b, 2005) has demonstrated the important role that output plays in second language acquisition. This role goes beyond merely that of practice (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). When learners have to produce language they are required to 'create linguistic form and meaning, and in so doing, discover what they can and cannot do' (Swain, 2000b, p. 99).

The type of output that Swain advocates is a 'pushed' output where pupils are required to reflect on their language use and to produce the target language accurately.

Swain (2000a, 2005) contends that output is not just the product of language learning but is in fact part of the learning process. She describes three functions of output to illustrate this:

- i) *the noticing or triggering function* which she claims may cause a learner to notice gaps in their linguistic knowledge when they go to convey something precisely in the target language.
- ii) *the hypothesis testing function* allows the learner to try out ways of expression to see if they work
- iii) *the metalinguistic (reflective) function* is the use of language to reflect on the language produced by self or others and she claims that the process of doing this mediates second language learning. (Based on Swain, 2005)

Her claim is based on collaborative tasks designed to encourage pupils to engage in dialogue where they are engaged in problem-solving and knowledge-building. She traced the language used by pupils at a later stage, back to dialogues that occurred when these pupils were engaged collaboratively on a task. The dialogues involved pupils talking about their own language output and represents second language learning in progress (Swain, 2000a). The pupils were ‘pushed toward the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately’ (Swain, 2005, p. 473). It has been disputed however, whether these processes have any ‘long- or short-term impact on IL (interlanguage) development and L2 internalization’ (Shehadeh, 2002, p. 612).

Another role of output is that of providing an opportunity for pupils to produce language that contains errors. These errors are to be welcomed and recognised as part of the learning process. They give an indication of the current state of learners’ interlanguages and their understanding of the rules of the target language (Bobb Wolff, 2000; Harley, 1987). By monitoring pupils’ output teachers can design and adapt their programmes to address pupils’ needs and also give corrective feedback (Nig Uidhir, 2001). This could be considered a proactive approach to developing pupils’ interlanguages (Lyster & Mori, 2008). In the next section we will examine reactive approaches (Lyster, 1998b) to weaknesses in learners’ target language use.

### **2.1.3.3 Role of error correction and feedback**

One aspect of interaction that has received a lot of attention from researchers is negotiation for meaning. Many who subscribe to an interactionist approach believe that



negotiation for meaning can lead to second language acquisition (Adams, 2007). It facilitates second language acquisition because: 'it provides language learners with three elements crucial for L2 acquisition success-namely comprehensible input, comprehensible output and feedback' (Oliver, 2002, p. 97). It has been argued that negative feedback available in interaction may have a role in the development of second language skills (Gass, 1997; Gass & Mackey, 2006; Long, 1996).

Oliver (1998) in a study of 8-13 year old pupils paired in 92 dyads found that when presented with a communicative task that they negotiated for meaning just as adults do in similar situations. Some differences were noted when compared to adults however. The children were more inclined to focus on constructing their own meaning rather than facilitating that of their partners. Notwithstanding this the communicative tasks provided the child language learners with exposure to the three elements of comprehensible input, the opportunity to manipulate comprehensible output and feedback (Mackey, Oliver, & Leeman, 2003; Oliver, 1998). It was not possible to prove however, that such negotiation resulted in acquisition.

Another type of negotiation is negotiation of form. A quasi-experimental study was conducted by Van den Branden (1997) to investigate the effects of negotiation on pupils output and the extent to which they negotiate for form or meaning. The participants were forty-eight 11-12 year old learners of Dutch divided into three groups of sixteen. Each group contained both NS and NNS pupils. They were paired into NS-NNS dyads to perform a communicative task where there was an information gap. It was found that the pupils: 'negotiate on each other's output on the levels of meaning and content, but not on the level of form ... (they) modify their output when confronted with negative feedback, irrespective of whether this feedback is provided by a peer or a teacher' (Van den Branden, 1997, p. 626). The pupils in the study sought clarification when they failed to negotiate the meaning of what their partner had said but were not concerned with ungrammatical utterances, as long they understood the meaning. Van den Branden also found that those pupils who were pushed to produce a greater quantity of output outperformed their peers when asked to participate in the same task with a new partner in a post-test. These negotiations had no effect on syntactic complexity or grammatical correctness however. Dalton-Puffer (2007) got similar results from a quantitative analysis of content and language integrated classes where students according to her either do not notice or do not

care about phonological or morphosyntactic errors. She also found that many language errors went uncorrected by teachers also. This contrasted with factual errors which resulted in content repair in 90% of cases.

Shehadeh (1999) examined the hypothesis-testing role of output using a picture description task with 16 participants in 8 NS-NNS dyads. He defined a hypothesis-testing episode as:

‘any utterance or part of an utterance in which the learner externalizes and explicitly experiments with his or her hypotheses about the target language by (a) verbalizing these hypotheses to test which sounds better or (b) explicitly testing hypotheses against the competences of the (NS) interlocutor by means of (1) requesting confirmation or (2) appealing for help. (Shehadeh, 2002, p. 634)

He found that the NS interlocutors only provided feedback to 13% of the learner hypothesis testing episodes and these were occasions where the NNSs appealed for help or sought clarification. In situations where the NNS receives no feedback it is possible that their hypotheses will be confirmed and may lead to internalisation. It can be seen then that even when L2 learners seek feedback it may not always be forthcoming and may lead to internalisation of incorrect forms. In both Van den Branden’s and Shehadeh’s studies above, although the L2 learners had access to native speakers with which to negotiate or to test their hypotheses, they did not always receive feedback which might alert them to non-target forms in their interlanguage.

The corrective feedback that teachers provide to learners in classroom discourse is deemed to be reactive. A study of immersion teachers’ use of feedback found that ‘47% of all signs of approval occurred immediately after errors’ (Lyster, 1998b, p. 70). This happens where a teacher acknowledges the content of a pupil’s utterance without drawing attention to a linguistic inaccuracy. The actions of a teacher in this situation may be quite understandable but they are likely to be a source of confusion for pupils. A similar pattern was noted in an observational study of nine Grade 3 and ten Grade 6 classes in French immersion schools. It was found that only 19% of grammatical errors were corrected and that there was ‘a lack of consistent and unambiguous teacher feedback’ (Harley, 1987, p. 12). Thus, teachers are unable to provide feedback for every inaccurate utterance of the pupils and often show signs of approval that can be at best misleading and at worst detrimental to pupil learning (Allen et al., 1990).

In another study Lyster & Rannta (1997) investigated learner uptake in response to feedback in four Grade 4-6 immersion classes. They identified six different types of feedback provided by the teachers in their study that they defined as follows:

*Explicit correction* refers to the explicit correction of the correct form.

*Recasts* involve the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error.

*Clarification requests* indicate to students either that their utterance has been misunderstood by the teacher or that the utterance is ill-formed in some way and that a repetition or reformulation is required.

*Metalinguistic feedback* contains either comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form.

*Elicitation* refers to at least three techniques that teachers use to directly elicit the correct form from the student...elicit completion...elicit correct forms...ask students to reformulate their utterance.

*Repetition* refers to repetition, in isolation, of the student's erroneous utterance.

(Lyster & Rannta, 1997, pp. 46-48)

They calculated an error rate of 34% in the pupils' utterances, which include unsolicited use of the L1. The predominant type of feedback provided by teachers were recasts. When they focused on pupil-generated repair of their utterances they found that:

...recasts do not account for any repairs, while elicitation is responsible for 43% of all student-generated repairs. Metalinguistic feedback, clarification requests, and repetition account for the remaining self-generated repairs: 26%, 20% and 11% respectively. (Lyster & Rannta, 1997, p. 55)

The type of feedback provided by the teacher is important then if the goal is that pupils will be able to correct their own errors. This is not to conclude however, that negotiation of form in this way leads to L2 learning.

One of the difficulties for teachers in providing negative feedback is that although this can be implemented in a 45-minute language lesson, it may not be feasible for an immersion teacher to continually correct pupils' target language errors throughout the school day as this could disrupt the flow of a lesson and impair content learning (Pica, 2002). Lyster (1998c, 2002) found from his classroom observation data that none of the feedback types described in their study impeded the flow of classroom interaction.

#### **2.1.3.4 Focus on form**

Many researchers have suggested that focus on form activities can help focus learners' attention of the desired features in the input (Nassaji & Fotos, 2007). By encouraging learners to pay attention to form it is argued that it may influence the degree to which the input is processed and thus lead to uptake (Doughty & Williams, 1998; R. Ellis, 1994).

Although as we have seen it may not be possible for teachers to correct all the pupil target language errors that they hear, they must nonetheless address the learners' linguistic weaknesses in a systematic way. It could be argued that the immersion context produces a natural focus on language use and on meaning but it appears to lack a focus on form. Cummins (1999) maintains that if pupils are to acquire more target-like forms in the L2 then teachers must focus on language also. Within this he includes awareness of language forms. The challenge however, is to determine the most effective way in which to focus on form.

Doughty & Williams (1998) maintain that focus on form type of activities are useful in drawing learners' attention to grammatical errors as they occur incidentally in classroom use. They found that a combination of communicative pressure such as the need to use particular forms in reporting experiments and narrowly focused frequent recasts, were effective in drawing learners' attention to form. The type of focus on form activity that is being referred to here is located within an immersion context where there is a content based approach to language teaching (Harley, Howard, & Hart, 1998). It is different from explicit focus on forms in decontextualised grammar lessons and rule presentation which some claim have not been shown to be successful (R. Ellis, 1994). Long (1996) agrees that focus on form type activities in the context of meaningful interaction are far more beneficial than decontextualised grammar lessons. Long & Robinson (1998) suggest that 'focus on form often consists of an occasional shift of attention to the linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students – triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production' (1998, p. 23). This view is supported by others and many studies (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Nassaji & Fotos, 2007; Spada & Lightbown, 1993; Swain & Lapkin, 2001) have found evidence that incidental correction that is carried out regularly in context was more effective than explicit form-focused instruction. Harley and Swain (1984) believe however, that there needs to be more than merely incidental correction and that

explanation of some selected forms is required bearing in mind the maturity of the learners and their metalinguistic ability.

The results of a research synthesis and quantitative meta-analysis by Norris & Ortega (2000) are interesting in light of the research findings above. They concluded from their analysis of 49 studies in instructed second language acquisition in the period 1980-1998 that:

On average, instruction that incorporates explicit (including deductive and inductive) techniques leads to more substantial effects than implicit instruction...In addition, instruction that incorporates a focus on form integrated in meaning is as effective as instruction that involves a focus on forms. (2000, p. 500)

While focus on forms may be as effective as focus on form in a meaningful context, it may not be as easy to implement focus on forms instruction with young children in an early immersion programme. It is interesting to note that explicit techniques are more effective than implicit ones. If pupils receive help in focusing on the information present in the input, i.e. making it more explicit they may be enabled to process it in a different way and to acquire the target structures. This has been described as moving the learner from semantic to syntactic processing (Kowal, 1997, 1998; Kowal & Swain, 1997). In order to master the L2 structures, their existing knowledge must be reorganised in order to accommodate the new knowledge and pupils will require analytical learning strategies in order to do this (Little, 1991). Indeed there are certain features of the target language where comprehensible input alone, which of its nature is implicit, will not suffice. These are the features of the target language which are 'semantically lightweight, and/or perpetually nonsalient, and/or and cause little or no communicative distress' (Long & Robinson, 1998, p. 23). Although Skehan (1994) does not refer directly to immersion education in his article, it appears that the system as currently structured fosters an emphasis on semantic processing to the detriment of syntactic processing.

A critical issue for teachers in early immersion programmes is the timing of the introduction of these types of activity. While it may not be appropriate to introduce these activities in the early grades, at a later stage however, when pupils have attained basic communicative competence, error correction and feedback could be used to encourage them to reflect on their language use. Harley et al. (1998) conducted research with Grade 2 French immersion classes in five schools. They hypothesised that if the gender of French

nouns was made more salient that they would be noticed more by the pupils in the input leading to more effective learning of this form. Age-appropriate materials such as games, songs and the creation of personal dictionaries were designed for use in the experimental classes over a five-week period. At the end of the school-year when the results of delayed post-tests were examined it was found that the pupils in the experimental classes were more successful in assigning correct gender to familiar nouns indicating item-learning. There was no evidence however, that they could generalise this knowledge and apply it to new nouns unfamiliar to them. While the later result may be disappointing, the overall outcome of the study indicates that focus on forms such as noun gender in French can be an effective learning experience for relatively young children in Grade 2.

#### **2.2.4 Sociocultural theory and second language learning**

Some second language theorists believe that interaction has a more important role than merely providing input for processing. For social constructivists interaction and living together in a society are the ‘nucleus and foundation for all mental and personal development’ (Stetsenko & Arieviditch, 1997, p. 161). Their theories are based on the work of Vygotsky (1978) who hypothesised that language was a mediating tool in mental processes. According to this view learning is also a mediated process (Saville-Troike, 2006).

Vygotsky maintained that both language and learning were socially derived as Stetsenko and Arieviditch explain: ‘Psychological processes emerge first in collective behavior, in co-operation with other people, and only subsequently become internalised as individual’s own “possessions” (1997, p. 161). One of the concepts of most relevance to the present study is that of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which Vygotsky defined as:

The distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (1978, p. 86)

Of note here is the distinction between what has already been completed and possibilities for future development (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The social nature of the process is also evident from the interaction with others. Teachers can make use of ZPD as a

conceptual tool to identify pupils' emerging capacities and to create the learning conditions conducive to the acquisition of new knowledge (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Vygotsky stated that:

‘an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes...Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement. From this point of view, learning is not development; however properly organized learning results in mental development. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90)

It is clear from this that Vygotsky sees development as following learning only if the learning is internalised. Recalling the first definition of ZPD, the child can carry out tasks and activities under the guidance of others through a process of other regulation. The adult can assist the process through scaffolding. If these processes are internalised the child may progress to self-regulation (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). When applied to second language learning it is suggested that second language development can be enabled during teacher-pupil interaction. Studies such as Spielman-Davidson (2000) and those examined by Mitchell and Myles (2004) claim to show that effective scaffolding and feedback appropriate to the learner's ZPD is more effective than randomly selected feedback. As with other second language research not all are in agreement with the causal explanations provided for these research outcomes.

#### **2.1.4.1    Languaging**

The role of output was discussed above in the context of interaction approaches to second language learning. Swain (2000b) however, locates her output hypothesis within a sociocultural framework. She argues that the productive skills of speaking and writing are cognitive tools that we use to mediate learning (Swain & Lapkin, 2005). Regardless of whether it is the first, second or third language, we use these tools to learn about all areas of the curriculum be it mathematics, science or language. These are the tools that we use to solve language problems for example. Swain and colleagues have examined L2 learners engaged in dialogue on collaborative tasks. They claim that this dialogue on linguistic data can become part of their own mental activity and mediate learning (Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Tocalli-Beller & Swain, 2005). They elaborate further that by verbalising thinking in speech (and or writing), ideas can be crystallised and sharpened and inconsistencies

become more obvious (Swain & Lapkin, 2005). This type of activity has more recently been termed ‘*linguaging*’ by Swain as she explains: ‘*linguaging serves as a vehicle through which thinking is articulated and transformed into artifactual form*’ (2006, p. 97). The implication for second language learning is that conditions should be created through for example jigsaw or dictogloss tasks, where learners are enabled to externalise their thinking about language related issues. These externalised thoughts can become objects on which to reflect and mediate internalisation creating new knowledge (Swain, 2000b, 2006; Swain & Lapkin, 2005).

#### **2.1.4.2     Learner autonomy**

Learner reflection also plays a key role in learner autonomy. Sociocultural theory has been applied to this area and one of its proponents is David Little (1991, 2000, 2002). The application of sociocultural theory led Little to suggest that three interacting principles govern success in second language teaching: ‘*learner involvement, learner reflection and target language use*’ (2007, p. 23). This can only happen if facilitated by the teacher however. According to Little (1991), learners need to be enabled to become autonomous learners who gradually take ownership of their own learning. He defines autonomy as ‘*a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action*’ (Little, 1991, p. 4). This may appear daunting for a five-year-old pupil in an immersion class but as Little argues the promotion of language learning: ‘*requires us to grant learners freedoms that can be sustained only if they take charge of their own learning*’ (2007, p. 27). While this is a challenging proposition it is one that may have to be realised if immersion is to be more successful particularly in a context where learners may perceive the target language speech community as being quite remote.

The early years in immersion schools promote acquisition and fluency in a naturalistic way. While this may be appropriate initially, as pupils acquire literacy skills they must be enabled to assess and critically reflect on their language learning. It is also important to ensure that the content is targeted towards the communicative needs of the children. Little (1991) maintains that the target language is often seen as the content of second language classes but not the medium. It could be argued that the target language is often the medium of the immersion class but not the content. A greater emphasis may need to be placed at appropriate times on the target language forming an equally important part



of lessons in immersion schools as the subject content in order to facilitate syntactic processing. The role of enhanced input (Sharwood Smith, 1993), focus on form (Doughty & Valera, 1998) and negative feedback (Lyster & Mori, 2006) to help pupils acquire the structures which cause them difficulty may be warranted and merit further investigation. A more fundamental requirement however, for these strategies to be effective may be to encourage learners to be more autonomous. Immersion programmes facilitate implicit language learning through language use in communicative contexts. There may be a need to supplement this with: 'reflection by which we review what we have learnt and decide what we need to learn next' (Little, 2000, p. 19).

Returning to Little's (2007) three interacting principles of learner reflection, learner involvement and appropriate target language use. It is argued here that immersion pedagogy involves the learner in his/her learning and this is done entirely through the target language. The weaknesses identified below in immersion pupils' grammatical accuracy appear to indicate however, that there may not be sufficient opportunities for learner reflection in current immersion pedagogy. According to constructivist learning theories, new knowledge is created by examining what we already know in relation to new information, ideas and experiences (Little, 2007). Enabling the language learner to reflect on previous conceptions of the L2 in the light of new input may lead to the restructuring of their existing interlanguage and lead to the creation of new knowledge.

## **2.2.5 Sociolinguistic perspectives on second language learning**

The final area to be examined is that of the sociolinguistic perspective. Of concern here is the study of language in use and the context in which second language learners learn the target language, and immersion pupils in particular. The two areas that will be discussed are the acquisition of a second language in a school setting, and the effect on outcomes of immersing pupils with others who have similarly faulty interlanguages.

### **2.1.5.1 Acquisition in a school setting**

The school setting is limited in that it does not provide the wide range of language functions in the target language that a child acquiring its first language encounters in its speech community (Harley, 1993; Lyster, 1998b; Ó Laoire, 2000, 2003; Schinke-Llano, 1990). Where exposure to the L2 is confined mainly to the school and the classroom one

cannot expect that there will be the same opportunities for output or for the diversity of input required (Willis, 1990). It has been found in relation to input that teachers, not just in immersion classes, mainly use the present tense and imperative verb forms in linguistically unplanned talk which provides little exposure to other tenses (Harley, 1993). In such situations of limited and restricted target language exposure it is highly unlikely that pupils will achieve native-like competence (Genesee, 1986). Even some of the target language features which may be relatively common in teacher talk may not be perceptually salient to the pupils (Harley, 1993). In these situations the pupils may be learning the content but failing to learn the linguistic features of the L2.

In relation to output it has been observed that the teacher does most of the talking in content-oriented classes with pupils having little opportunity for sustained production (Andrews, 2006; Harley, 1993). Pupils' production results almost exclusively from teachers' questions and tends to be from one or two words in length to a single clause (Allen et al., 1990). Myers-Scotton (2006) concludes that:

‘becoming bilingual mainly (or exclusively) by learning and using the minority language in the school system means that children will be unlikely to have complete mastery of the grammar of that language. And what school learners often miss learning are the styles more associated with informal situations. (2006, p. 96)

Baker noted in this context that the vernacular of the street is different to the language of the curriculum and that in bilingual education in a minority language there is a danger: ‘that the language becomes a language of school but not of play; a language of the content delivery of the curriculum but not of peer culture’ (2003, p. 101). Thus while immersion schools in a minority language context can play an important role in language maintenance they cannot deliver such maintenance in isolation (Baker, 2002). Another limitation in the school setting for acquiring a second language and particularly a lesser used language is that the integrative social motivation is absent as there is little or no exposure to the language outside of school (Council of Europe, 2008). If the language is to live outside the school context then it is vital, difficult as it may be, that plans are put in place to extend its use in the community (Baker, 2003).

### **2.1.5.2 Pupils immersed with other learners with similar faulty interlanguages**

Hammerly (1991) maintains that weaknesses in the immersion school context for language acquisition are further compounded because the pupils in an immersion class are interacting with other pupils with similarly faulty interlanguages which only compound the difficulties of achieving greater accuracy. Ó Baoill (1989) cites a similar situation in relation to learners of Irish also where the learners' peers have the greatest influence of acquisition. In a situation where pupils are influenced by their peer group, these social factors can 'govern the learners' choice of reference group, which affects the variety of target language they choose as their model' (R. Ellis, 1994, p. 239). Although the teacher may wish that pupils would be enabled to integrate with the Irish speech community, that community is quite remote from primary all-Irish school pupils. The speech community of the classroom is more immediate and influential. It appears that as long as pupils can communicate with one another in the target language that grammatical errors do not concern them (Mac Corraidh, 2008; Maguire, 1991; Ní Chaisil, 2000; Ní Mhaoláin, 2005; Walsh, 2007).

Long & Robinson (1998) observed that if an incorrect form does not cause a breakdown in communication, such a feature will be difficult for the learner to notice. Thus after three to four years in the programme, when pupils have reached the point where they can make themselves understood by teachers and peers, 'there is little impetus for them to be more accurate in the form of the language they are using to convey their message' (Kowal & Swain, 1997, p. 285). There may be a lack of sociopsychological motivation within the immersion setting for the pupils to change and adjust their grammar (Baker, 2001; Day & Shapson, 1987).

A comparative study by Baetens Beardsmore & Swain (1985) demonstrated the limitations of acquiring a second language exclusively at school compared to a situation where there is also some exposure to the target language outside of the school. This study compared pupils in French second language medium programmes in Brussels with those in Canada. The pupils in the Brussels's school were exposed to French outside the classroom and school whereas the pupils in Canada were not. The study revealed that the pupils in Brussels achieved comparable proficiency in French in half the time it took the pupils in Canada to achieve the same level (Baetens Beardsmore & Swain, 1985).

In summary it appears that pupils in immersion education are very successful in achieving high levels of proficiency in the second language particularly in their receptive skills of listening and reading. They are unlikely however, to achieve native like proficiency in their productive skills of speaking and listening if their only exposure to the second language is confined to the school setting.

### **2.1.5.3 The role of attitudes and motivation in second language learning**

It was suggested in the previous section that pupils may lack the motivation to continue to modify their interlanguages and to speak with accuracy. Motivation has been shown to be one of the key variables in individual differences that significantly affect success in second language learning (Dörnyei, 2005, 2006; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003). The role of motivation is also recognised in the official curriculum documents for Gaeilge (Irish language) where one of the stated teaching aims is to promote a positive attitude towards the Irish language (Department of Education and Science, 1999).

Much of the research work on motivation was first carried out by Robert Gardner and his colleagues in Canada (Dörnyei, 2006). A key element of Gardner's (1985a) social-psychological model was pupil attitude towards the L2 community. Dörnyei & Skehan (2003) suggest that the former makes sense as few learners will master the language of a community with low status. Gardner (1985a) divided language learner goals into two broad categories, integrative orientation and instrumental orientation. Integrative orientation concerned a positive interpersonal disposition toward the target language group and a desire to interact and even become similar to respected members of that group. Instrumental orientation was associated with personal gains that might accrue to an individual such as a better job or higher salary. It was suggested that these categories determine an individual's motivation to learn a second language (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). It is the former area of integrative motivation that has seen the greatest level of research and is according to Dörnyei & Skehan made up of three major components:

- (i) *integrativeness*, subsuming integrative orientation, interest in foreign languages, and attitudes toward the L2 community;
- (ii) *attitudes towards the learning situation*, comprising attitudes toward the teacher and the course;
- (iii) *motivation*, which according to Gardner is made up of motivational intensity, desire to learn the language, and attitudes towards learning the language. (2003, p. 613)

It was these components and their constituent parts that informed the development of Gardner's (1985a) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery. Research on learner motivation continued to develop through the 1980's and 1990's. The original conceptualisation of motivation was no longer sufficient as the following statement indicates: 'The old characterisation of motivation in terms of integrative vs. instrumental orientation is too static and restricted' (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993, p. 4). Gardner & MacIntyre's (1992, 1993) research, demonstrated the dynamic nature of motivation showing a reciprocal causation between motivation and achievement. Prior to that point motivation had been conceptualised as a cause or a product of success in second language learning (Ushioda, 1996). Ushioda (1996) argues that within institutionalised contexts, motivation is associated more with flux than stability and that it changes over time.

Dörnyei & Skehan proposed a process model of learning motivation comprising the three stages of pre-actional, actional and post-actional (2003, p. 619). They did not reject Gardner's (1985a) concept of integrativeness, but maintain his approach is of most relevance to the pre-actional stage but is less useful for predicting actual L2 behaviours in the classroom which tend to be rooted in situation-specific characteristics of the learning context (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003, p. 618). Dörnyei (2005) conceived a new approach to L2 motivation which he termed the 'L2 Motivational Self System'. Within this system he equates integrativeness and integrative motivation with an 'Ideal L2 Self'. As he explains:

If one's ideal self is associated with the mastery of an L2, that is if the person that we would like to become is proficient in the L2, he/she can be described ... as having an 'integrative' disposition. (Dörnyei, 2006, p. 53)

L2 motivation according to this model is seen as the desire on the part of the learner to bridge the gap between the actual self and his/her ideal self. Another facet of this model is the notion of an '*imagined community*' (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 102). The idealised self can be seen as a member of an imagined community. It is interesting to note in the context of the present study that the vitality of the L2 community influences both attitudes to L2 speakers and instrumental motivation (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005). Another point of interest is the distinction that Dörnyei & Csizér (2002) make in the context of the global status of English between world-language-learning and non-world-language-learning where they consider the L2 motivational self system to apply more to the former than the latter.

Notwithstanding these developments, Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test battery (AMTB) is a well developed and tested instrument for survey type approaches to pupil attitude and motivation where the concern is in-school and across-school factors in relation to the target language. The modification and use of the AMTB described below (Chapter 3), takes these issues into consideration.

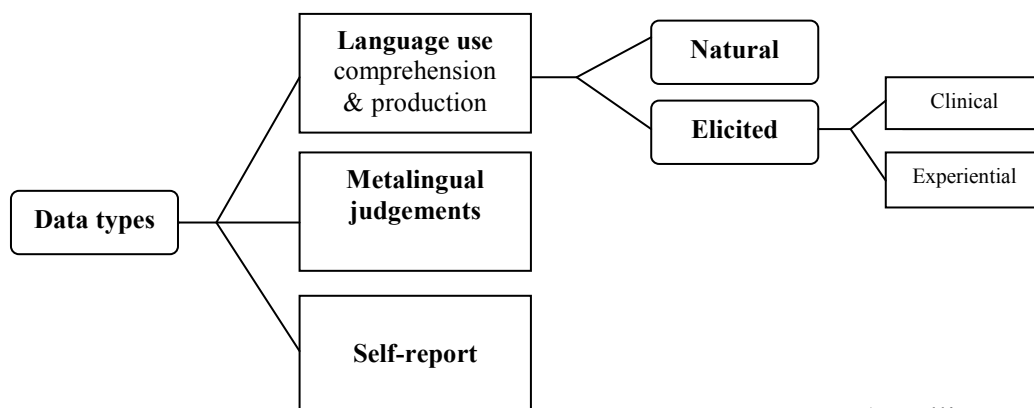
### **2.2.6 Interlanguage corpora and second language learning**

The language produced by learners provides a valuable object of study where researchers wish to explore the underlying mental representations and developmental processes that may influence second language production (Myles, 2005). One of the difficulties in the past has been in collecting this type of data due to the labour-intensiveness of the work. This was particularly true in the case of oral data that were more difficult to gather than written data. With the advent of computer technology, this process has become considerably more manageable. The compilation of large datasets of learner language can help to inform not only linguistic research but it can also help to inform the content of second language curricula (Granger, 1998). As Granger maintains: 'The availability of large scale tagged interlanguage corpora will allow much more effective and systematic cross-checking of curriculum proposals against what is known about learner development' (2004, p. 669). With the aid of computer technologies large amounts of data can now be reduced to manageable lists and concordances which can facilitate the identification of patterns in the text (Scott & Tribble, 2006). The identification of these patterns can enable generalizations about learner development and Myles identifies oral data above written data as being particularly useful in this regard:

... an important window into learners' underlying mental grammars, and may be relatively freer of metalinguistic interference than written data, which is complicated by additional layers of learnt knowledge and monitoring processes. (2005, p. 375)

Ellis (1994) distinguishes three types of data for second language acquisition research as shown in Figure 2.2: language use, metalingual judgments and self-report data.

**Figure 2.2**  
**Data types for second language acquisition research**



(R. Ellis, 1994, p. 690)

As Granger (2002) notes, much of the data used by researchers to date tends to favour elicited introspective and experimental data. One of the reasons Granger cites for this is: ‘the difficulty in controlling the variables that affect learner output in non-experimental contexts’ (2002, p. 6). One of the disadvantages associated with experimental data is that they tend to be based on limited numbers of subjects, as it is difficult to conduct this type of research with large numbers. This results in research findings being reported from a narrow empirical base (Granger, 2002). A beneficial aspect of compiling learner corpora is that they provide samples of learner output for analysis that can be collected in relatively natural contexts, and so redress the balance with experimental data.

Granger (2002) describes two approaches to linguistic analysis of learner corpora, Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA) and Computer-aided Error Analysis. The former usually compares learner output to that of other learners or native speakers. This enables the identification of deviations from native speaker norms and also the under representation or over representation of particular phrases or structures. In the case of immersion education for example, CIA can help to identify the over use of so-called ‘high-coverage’ items. Granger (2002) acknowledges that not all researchers agree with a comparative model and that interlanguage should be studied in its own right. She argues that this model can provide an understanding of the underlying interlanguage system while at the same time providing an indication of the extent of deviation from native-speaker norms.

Computer-aided error analysis involves either identifying a particular error and searching for it in the corpus, or alternatively tagging and coding all errors so that the

corpus can be searched systematically. The latter is obviously the most comprehensive approach but is also time-consuming. Software such as CHILDES contains parts of speech tagging and error tagging for many world languages. Researchers of lesser-used languages do not enjoy these advantages however. Granger (2002) once again acknowledges that error analysis is not favoured by many researchers but argues that it can provide teachers and material designers with vital information on what can be expected of learners at different stages. In the case of immersion education, it may highlight features that are not acquired by pupils that might benefit from focussed instruction. Chaudron (2003) cautions that the evidence offered by corpora is more reliable for high frequency items than for low frequency items.

Another benefit of learner corpora identified by Myles (2005) is their utility in documenting and explaining learner development over time which can be facilitated by longitudinal oral corpora. It must be remembered however, that the evidence from corpora on underlying L2 competence is indirect (Mitchell, 2008). Myles (2005) is critical of many of the studies that she reviewed because the majority of them had merely documented differences between learner and native language but had made no attempt to explain them. It is clear nonetheless that good quality oral corpora, longitudinal if possible, have a contribution to make to research in second language acquisition. While the aim of the present study is to describe the features of immersion pupils Irish, it also explains some of the underlying reasons why these features manifest themselves in the pupils' target language use.

## **2.3 *Research and pedagogy in immersion education***

### **2.3.1 Background and features of immersion education**

Immersion education is the term used to describe second language programmes that were introduced in 1965 in Montréal in Québec, Canada (Genesee, Holobow, Lambert, & Chartrand, 1989). Parents of English-speaking children felt that their children were not achieving sufficient proficiency in French in order to participate fully and function in a French-speaking community (Fortune & Tedick, 2008; Genesee, 1985, 1998; Swain & Johnson, 1997) and to compete for jobs with their Francophone peers (Lyster, 2007). It could be described as a pedagogical approach that promotes second language learning



rather than a particular teaching methodology (Bernhardt, 1992; Genesee, 1985). Instead of just teaching the second language, the second language itself becomes the medium through which all other subjects are taught (Mac Corraidh, 2001; Stryker & Leaver, 1997). In early total immersion programmes, all subjects are initially taught in the early grades through the second language, with the percentage taught through the L2 decreasing grade by grade to 50% (Harley, 1993) as pupils progress through the programme, depending on the policy in different countries and regions. Pupils learn subject matter and the target language simultaneously (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Baker & Jones (1998) include immersion education in their typology of bilingual education, classifying it as a strong form of bilingual education.

In French early total immersion programmes in Canada, for example, pupils enter the immersion program in senior kindergarten and no English is taught until grades two, three or four, depending on the region, and pupils are introduced to literacy in French before English (Genesee, 1998). Immersion education was not an entirely new phenomenon however, in 1965 as teaching through the medium of a second language has been part of education systems for many centuries (Kenner & Gregory, 2003; Lyster, 2007). It was also a feature of the Irish education system since 1922 as was discussed above.

Immersion education has a number of defining features however, which distinguish it from merely teaching through the medium of a second language or bilingual education. These features have been defined as follows:

1. The L2 is the medium of instruction
2. The immersion curriculum parallels the local L1 curriculum
3. Overt support exists for the L1
4. The program aims for additive bilingualism
5. Exposure to the L2 is largely confined to the classroom
6. Students enter with similar (and limited) levels of L2 proficiency
7. The teachers are bilingual
8. The classroom culture is that of the local L1 community.

(Swain & Johnson, 1997, pp. 6-8)

Although there are numerous similarities between an immersion school and one that teaches through the first language, in terms of structure, curriculum content and culture. It can be seen that immersion schools place language at the centre of the process. Baker (2001) maintains that immersion education has been successful because of the above features and also because of the optional nature of the programme and the

acknowledgement of the pupils home language. These features have been subject to change however, in different contexts in recent times. The changes in the ethnic diversity of pupils in immersion schools in Canada in the last decade, for example, have led Swain and Lapkin (2005) to revise these core defining features somewhat. The main revisions are that as the immersion language is often the third or fourth language of the pupils, statement 1 above has been revised, as ‘the immersion language is the medium of instruction.’ In the case of French immersion pupils that come from a non-English speaking home, there may not be overt support for English in the home. This has implications for pedagogy and thus statement 3 becomes ‘overt support needs to be given to all home languages.’ The culture of the school may no longer reflect that of the pupils from ethnically diverse backgrounds and so statement 8 becomes ‘the classroom culture needs to recognise the cultures of the multiple immigrant communities to which the students belong.’

There has been a large increase in immigration to Ireland in the past decade also (Central Statistics Office, 2007b) and this has impacted on pedagogy and language support in schools (McGorman & Sugrue, 2007). There is no evidence to date, however, that a substantial number of parents from diverse ethnic backgrounds are choosing all-Irish schools for their children. This may change however, in the near future and so Canadian experiences and thinking may become more significant.

## **2.3.2 Academic achievement of pupils in immersion programmes**

### **2.3.2.1 Target language proficiency**

Probably the most defining feature of immersion education as quoted above is that of additive bilingualism (Genesee, 2008). This implies that by the end of the programme: ‘L1 proficiency should be comparable to the proficiency of those who have studied through the L1. In addition, a high, though not native-speaker, level of proficiency is achieved in the L2’ (Swain & Johnson, 1997, p. 7). Immersion pupils achieve high levels of fluency in the target language and their receptive skills of listening and reading are close to those of native speakers (Allen et al., 1990; Baker & Jones, 1998; Day & Shapson, 1996; Harley, 1987, 1993; Lazaruk, 2007; Lyster, 1987; Nadasdi et al., 2005; Swain, 2000a). Their productive skills of speaking and writing however, contain many non target-like forms that appear to persist over time (Baker, 2001; Genesee, 1985; Hammerly, 1991; Harley, 1993; Kowal & Swain, 1997; Lyster, 1987; Mitchell & Myles, 1998; Neil, Nig Uidhir, & Clarke,

2000; Rebuffot, 1993; Salomone, 1992; Swain, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1982, 2008). Harley (1991) for example, noted that the productive skills of pupils at the end of grade 6 had not reached native-speaker levels on grammatical and sociolinguistic measures. Lapkin et al. (1990) found that second level students were well behind their francophone peers in the acquisition of these skills also. Bibeau (1984) maintained that the French of immersion students contained many syntax and vocabulary errors of a serious nature which resembled an artificial language or code. This code is used for communication but it is not like a real language with social and cultural value (Calvé, 1986). While recognising that immersion pupils achieve high levels of fluency and communicative competence in the target language, these writers have highlighted areas of concern.

Studies that have investigated French immersion pupils' second language development have shown them to have the following characteristics:

- they have excellent understanding of the target language in context,
- they extract unanalysed meaningful chunks from the input they receive and use them correctly in their production,
- they make use of “high coverage” items (e.g. *choses* ‘things’ or general verbs such as *aller* or *faire* in French) which they stretch to cover a variety of contexts,
- they are adept at using communication strategies which allow them to circumvent their lack of a word with for example mime, gesture or the substitution of an English word,
- they can produce certain forms in the target language that have been learned as formulas without necessarily understanding their functional range. In other words, they do not wait until they fully comprehend a structure before they start producing it. This indicates that comprehension and production may be developing simultaneously.
- there is mother tongue influence on French language use.

Based on Harley (1991, p. 15).

Some studies in Canada have attempted to measure the error rates of French immersion pupils over time. One such study was that of Spilka (1976). She examined the second language proficiency of 20 early immersion pupils in Grade 5 and Grade 6, after 6 and 7 years of French immersion respectively. She recorded their speech throughout the grades so that she could monitor their progress. She followed the same procedure with a francophone control group for comparative purposes. She found that the immersion pupils in Grades 5 and Grade 6 made more errors than they had in Grade 1. The Francophone pupils on the other hand made fewer errors as they progressed through grades one to six.

When she calculated the rates of error in the immersion pupils' sentences she got a rate of 52.2% compared to just under 7% for the Francophone pupils. Spilka concluded that there was little evidence of improvement in the grammaticality of immersion pupils between grades one and six. Calculating a rate of error in mathematical terms could be considered a limited measure of assessment as it does not account for fluency or complexity (Skehan, 1998).

Another study by Adiv (1980) examined a French and a French/Hebrew immersion programme. She found a lack of grammatical development over the grades from grades one to three. It was her belief that the continual pressure on the pupils to produce output did not facilitate grammatical development. Finally, a study by Pellerin and Hammerly (1986) that interviewed Grade 12 French immersion pupils after 7,000 hours and 13 years of immersion found that they had an error rate in their sentences of 53.8%. This figure is very close to the 52.2% of Spilka study above. The findings of these studies and others appear to challenge Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis which claimed that learners would acquire the target language and its grammar if they received sufficient naturalistic input. Despite the prolonged exposure to the target language of these immersion students their output contains a high percentage of errors.

It appears then that early immersion programmes are successful in achieving their aim of additive bilingualism where content learned through a second language has no adverse affect on first language skills (Nig Uidhir, 2001). They are also very successful in producing second language speakers who are very fluent in the target language. Where they are less successful is in the area of grammatical accuracy that is non-target like and there is some evidence that it does not develop over time. Classroom observation studies of immersion classrooms have also found that teachers tend not put sufficient pressure on their pupils to speak with grammatical accuracy (Genesee, 1987; Swain, 1998).

If immersion pupils are not required to speak with grammatical accuracy, they may be operating from Skehan's (1994) 'least effort' principle where the learner says what is necessary to communicate but feels little pressure to adhere to native speaker norms and grammaticality. Their output is not of the 'pushed' variety advocated by Swain (2005). When pupils commence an early total immersion education programme, there is pressure on them to communicate meaning through the target language. Skehan (1994) argues that situations such as this can lead to fossilisation as the pressure to extract meaning and to

express oneself overrides the motivation to restructure the interlanguage system. Pupils may lack opportunities for reflection partly because they may be too young to engage in such reflection and also because of pressure on the teacher to implement all aspects of the school curriculum. The emphasis in the early years of immersion is focussed on encouraging the pupils to produce language that communicates meaning. Teachers may not see error correction and feedback that requires learners to reflect on language structures, as appropriate or crucial at this stage.

If the pupils in an immersion programme are truly to discover what the target language norms are, they may need feedback that alerts them to forms that are incorrect or opportunities to reflect on their output. The pupils may communicate successfully with one another, but if they do not receive feedback as to whether their message has been ‘conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately’ (Swain, 2005) they are likely to continue to communicate in this way and not to develop their interlanguages. There is little motivation for them to stretch their use of language and they tend to restrict themselves to syntax and lexis that they are comfortable and familiar with and thus gain little in terms of language learning (Turnbull, 2002).

Vygotsky (1987) has suggested that knowledge is constructed as learners engage in social interaction and that this knowledge can be internalised at a later stage. It could be argued that in order for learners to be operating in the zone of proximal development (ZPD) they need to be interacting with other learners or a teacher who has greater linguistic expertise than them. In a study that has relevance for all-Irish schools, Genesee et al. (1989) compared the attainments in French of English L1 pupils in all-French schools in Quebec with those of English L1 pupils in early immersion schools. The all-French schools resemble all-Irish schools in that English language arts were not introduced until Grade 4 and only amounted to 2.5 hours per week until the end of Grade 6. All other subjects were taught through the medium of French. It was found that the early immersion pupils performed as well as the pupils in the all-French school on French proficiency tests. While it might have been expected that the all-French pupils would have outperformed their peers in the early immersion schools due to greater exposure to French in the school context, Genesee et al. suggested that:

These results raise the possibility that an upper limit may exist to the second language proficiency that can be attained in school programs that do not provide substantial opportunities for peer interaction in the second language (1989, p. 260).

In other words, the early immersion exposure may have been sufficient to gain the maximum impact from this type of programme. The type of interaction that he envisaged was with French native speaker peers. There is some evidence to support the merit of this suggestion from the study of Harris & Murtagh (1987). They administered tests of mastery of various objectives in spoken Irish to pupils and Grades 2 and 6 in both all Irish and Gaeltacht schools. The objectives covered the broad areas of general comprehension of speech, understanding the morphology of verbs in listening and control of the morphology of verbs in speaking. They expected that: 'roughly equal percentages would obtain mastery of the objectives in spoken Irish appropriate to their grade level' (Harris & Murtagh, 1987, p. 116). While this expectation was confirmed for all-Irish school pupils, the mean percentage attaining mastery in Gaeltacht schools increased significantly. They offer as the most plausible explanation for this:

'... that children from English-speaking homes will be motivated to acquire native-like competence in Irish where there are substantial numbers of native Irish speakers in the class or where Irish is the dominant language in the community outside the home' (Harris & Murtagh, 1987, p. 119).

Due to the small number of native Irish speakers, and the remoteness of most all-Irish schools from Gaeltacht areas, it is difficult to imagine how this interaction could be facilitated on a large scale for all-Irish school pupils. The use of electronic media and class trips to the Gaeltacht could provide some possibilities. However, as Genesee et al. concluded: If the goal is native-like second language proficiency, then serious consideration needs to be given to how to extend the language environment of programs that lack peer models (1989, p. 262). Other possibilities emerge from a consideration of pedagogical studies discussed in the section 2.3.3 below.

### **2.3.2.2 First language proficiency**

Many parents with children in immersion programmes are attracted by the claim of additive bilingualism. Notwithstanding this, they are often concerned initially that not only will their children acquire competency in the L2 but that their L1 skills will not suffer

(Genesee, 2008). Many studies have been conducted to investigate this area particularly in Canada and the results have shown consistently that not only do L1 skills not suffer but that their skills may even be better than their monolingual peers (Monique Bournot-Trites & Tellowitz, 2002; Neil et al., 2000). The following findings are typical of those studies:

In Kindergarten through grade 3, immersion students lag behind their peers in the regular program in some aspects of English language skills ...Such results are not surprising, since no formal English language instruction is provided before grade 2, 3 or sometimes 4. By the end of grade 5, however, immersion children perform as well as, or better than, their English-educated peers on all aspects of English language skills measured by standardized tests. (Swain & Lapkin, 1982, p. 36)

The studies in Canada examined the effect of French, a world language, on the pupils' English language skills. The situation regarding Gaelic-medium education in Scotland is closer to that which pertains to Irish in Ireland where both Irish and Scots Gaelic could be described as language in the process of obsolescence (M. C. Jones, 1998). A comprehensive study of the attainment of Gaelic-medium P7 pupils concluded that:

At the very least it may be claimed that children educated through the medium of Gaelic are not disadvantaged in comparison with their counterparts who are educated through the medium of English and that in the process they have gained the advantage of becoming bilingual and bicultural. (Johnstone et al., 1999, p. 67)

The researchers also stated that it was in the area of English that the Gaelic-medium pupils' attainments were most encouraging.

Reference was made to the Macnamara (1966) study in 1.3 above where it was claimed that teaching through Irish the weaker language, was having a detrimental effect on the pupils' achievement in English. When these data were re-examined by Cummins (1977b, 1978) it was found that the immersion pupils had the same level of attainment in English as the non-immersion pupils. These results were replicated in another study of attainments in English reading of 167 Grade 3 pupils (91 all-Irish and 76 English-medium) (Cummins, 1982).

The Department of Education in Ireland carried out a national reading survey of the attainments of primary school pupils in English reading in 1988. There were 476 pupils in fifth class in all-Irish schools at that time, all of who were tested as part of this survey. When these pupils were compared to the national sample it was found that the pupils in the all-Irish schools gained higher scores (Department of Education, 1991). One must be

careful however, in interpreting these results as neither the socio-economic status of the children nor their intelligence levels were not controlled for. A more recent study of the English reading attainment of 1,881 second-class, and 1,471 fifth-class all-Irish pupils, revealed that their Sten scores were significantly above the national average on standardised tests (Ó hAiniféin, 2007).

The ‘interdependence’ or ‘common underlying proficiency’ principle developed by Cummins (1984) helps to explain how pupils learning through the medium of their L2 can attain skills in their L1 equal or better than their peers who have been educated through their L1 (Baker, 2000, 2001). According to the interdependence principle: ‘transfer across languages of conceptual knowledge and academic skills (such as learning and reading strategies) compensates for the reduce instructional time through the majority language’ (Cummins, 2000, p. 186).

### **2.3.2.3 Academic achievement in other areas of the curriculum**

A number of studies have examined the academic achievement of immersion pupils relative to their English-medium peers. A large-scale early study was the Bilingual Education Project in Toronto and Ottawa of Swain & Lapkin (1982). They compared the achievement of early immersion pupils in Mathematics, Science and English at primary level with English programme students in the same school or school board. The tests were administered in English. When they controlled for IQ and socio-economic variables they found that no significant differences between the two groups for almost all comparisons. More recent studies comparing the scores of immersion pupils on Mathematic tests with their peers in English-medium schools confirmed Swain and Lapkin (1982) findings. There were no significant differences in the pupils’ mean scores even where the tests were administered in English although French was the medium of instruction (Monique Bournot-Trites & Reeder, 2001; Turnbull, Lapkin, & Hart, 2001).

Similar findings emerged from a study in Wales that compared the achievement of Welsh-medium pupils in Mathematics and Science of Key Stage 3 (11-14 yrs) with English-medium pupils. No significant differences were found between the two groups for the majority of comparisons (Bellin, 1996). In the comprehensive study of the attainment of Gaelic-medium pupils in Scotland cited in relation to English above, the researchers also examined attainment in mathematics and science. One of the measures used was data from



the Assessment of Achievement Programme (AAP) of pupils in P4 (Grade 4) and P7 (Grade 7). In relation to mathematics it was found that the average attainment scores of the Gaelic-medium pupils in both P4 and P7 were significantly higher than the national average and they also performed better than the English-medium pupils in the same schools (Johnstone et al., 1999). The attainments in science were less impressive from an immersion perspective. While the P4 pupils' average attainment scores matched the national average, they were significantly below the average scores for English-medium pupils in the same schools. At P7 level, the Gaelic-medium pupils were still significantly behind their English-medium counterparts in the same schools, although their attainments were close to the national average (Johnstone et al., 1999). A possible explanation for the poorer results in science offered by the research team was that there may have been difficulties with the vocabulary for science and that the AAP assessments were conducted in English whereas the medium of instruction was Gaelic.

Overall, the results of the studies reported here indicate that learning curriculum content in the areas of science and mathematics through the medium of a second language does not hinder pupil attainment.

### **2.3.3 Language acquisition and pedagogy in immersion education**

Three of the main weaknesses of immersion programmes that may be linked to unsatisfactory pupil linguistic outcomes have been identified:

- (i) an over-reliance on comprehensible input where pupils acquire the target language without reflection and analysis of target language structures
- (ii) acquisition takes place in a school setting that cannot provide the range of language functions required for full mastery of the language
- (iii) pupils with faulty interlanguages are immersed with other pupils with similar linguistic errors and the sociopsychological pressure to speak more accurately is not there as a result.

In order to explore the possible origins of these weaknesses it is necessary to examine how pupils acquire the target language in an immersion setting. This section will outline the type of pedagogy adopted in immersion education and its impact on target language acquisition is then examined.

### **2.3.3.1 Experiential and analytic teaching approaches**

In an early total immersion programme, pupils are exposed to the target language from the first day that they enter the programme placing the language in an authentic context (Harley, 1986). The teaching and learning that takes place is content-based where language and content are integrated (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000; Met, 2004; Snow, 1987; Walker & Tedick, 2000). While pupils are engaged in learning about a particular topic, they are acquiring the second language simultaneously (Mac Corraidh, 1999). They also acquire literacy and academic skills in two languages, which is the additive bilingual dimension of the programme (de Courcy, 2002; Ó Baoill, 1980; Swain & Johnson, 1997). Teachers in immersion schools act as both content teachers and language teachers. They attempt to create the naturalistic conditions in which first language learning takes place (Genesee, 1985; Mac Corraidh, 2008). This type of teaching has been described as an experiential teaching strategy where there is a meaning oriented teaching focus and the L2 is used naturally for subject-matter content (Allen et al., 1990; Hammerly, 1987; Harley, 1994; Harley et al., 1990; Harley & Swain, 1984; Mac Corraidh, 2008). The interaction between the teacher and the pupils plays a key role in their second language acquisition. The pupils are required to interpret the meaning of the teacher's verbal utterances and the nonverbal clues of the classroom context and it is through this negotiation of meaning that they acquire the second language (Genesee, 1985). It requires great skill on the part of the teacher to implement such a programme (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2003). It is achieved by choosing themes which are of interest to the pupils which in turn expose them to authentic language use because the content excites their interest above and beyond the language itself (Harley, 1993).

Genesee cautions however, that: 'an exclusive focus on meaning or functional use in dual language programs may not be optimal for developing students' competence in the target language' (2008, pp. 32-33). Unless increasing demands are made on the learner's developing language system, continuous growth cannot be guaranteed (Genesee, 1987). In the absence of this increased demand, the type of learning in a meaning oriented programme leads to the development of implicit knowledge which is 'knowledge that learners are only intuitively aware of and that is easily accessible through automatic processing' (Ellis et al., 2006, p. 340). While an experiential approach leads to the development of good fluency in the target language and near native-like ability in the

receptive skills of reading and writing, it is less successful in developing grammatical accuracy (Allen et al., 1990; Harley et al., 1990; Lyster & Mori, 2008; Mac Corraidh, 2008; Stern, 1990). What appears to be lacking in immersion programmes are the analytical strategies for organising that learning in a more conscious way or more explicit learning: ‘where the individual makes and tests hypotheses in search for a structure’ (N. C. Ellis, 1994, p. 2). Arising from the Allen et al. (1990) study that examined the teaching strategies in both French immersion and core French classes, Stern (1990) made a tentative recommendation that more attention should be paid to analytic strategies in immersion programs. He emphasised that both analytic and experiential strategies should be viewed as complementary and part of a continuum. Other writers have suggested that older learners can cope with a more analytic approach (Philp et al., 2008).

Following Stern (1992), Lyster (1998a) suggested that teachers should endeavour to create contexts within the classroom that are most conducive to learning. In an immersion programme he maintains that the integration of an experiential and analytic approach will be most beneficial. He has refined this recommendation over time and this led to the counterbalance hypothesis:

Instructional activities and interactional feedback that act as a counterbalance to the predominant communicative orientation of a given classroom setting will be more facilitative of interlanguage restructuring than instructional activities and interactional feedback that are congruent with the predominant communicative orientation. (Lyster & Mori, 2006, p. 294)

In an early immersion programme where the predominant focus is on meaning then an analytic approach is likely to be more successful in focusing learner’s attention on form. When this hypothesis is applied to feedback then teacher prompts such as elicitation, metalinguistic clues, clarification requests and repetition are likely to be more effective than recasts or explicit correction (Lyster & Mori, 2008). Reflection on communication can also be a critical component in focussing the learner’s attention on form: ‘Such interplay between communication and reflection upon communication may be the key to effective analytic language teaching in the predominantly experiential context of French immersion’ (Lyster, 1998a, p. 209). The context for this reflection on communication could be a jigsaw task as in Lyster’s (1998a) study or a Dictogloss (Wajnryb, 1990) task as other studies such as (Kowal, 1997) have demonstrated. These tasks have proved effective in engaging

learners in reflection on their language use. Some aspects of this approach are studied in the present investigation into all-Irish pupils' use of Irish.

## **2.4 Research on the acquisition of Irish as a second language**

Many of the studies on the acquisition of Irish as a second language to date have been small-scale in nature and have tended to have a narrow focus. This section will examine the different studies and their relevance to the present one. Section 2.4.1 reports on studies of second language learners' mastery of Irish in early immersion settings, in primary schools and in post-primary schools. A number of studies have examined the errors of Irish L2 learners in written production. Although the focus of the present study is on immersion pupils' oral production, the account of these studies may give an indication of the typical errors that L2 learners of Irish are likely to make. The section concludes with an account of a number of studies on the acquisition of Irish in immersion settings.

### **2.4.1 Mastery of Irish in early immersion education**

The influence of *naíonraí* (Irish-medium pre-schools) in creating a demand for the new generation of all-Irish schools was referred to in Chapter 1. The first *naíonra* was opened in 1968 (Mhic Mhathúna, 1993) and by 2006 there were a total of 233 *naíonra*, 70 in the Gaeltacht and 163 outside the Gaeltacht (H. Ó Murchú, 2008). A number of studies have been conducted on how children learn Irish in *naíonraí*, most notably Hickey (1997) and Mhic Mhathúna (2005).

#### **2.4.1.1 Hickey study**

The Hickey (1997) study reports on data gathered as part of a comprehensive census of 190 *naíonra* sessions<sup>4</sup> in 1993. As well as gathering information on the number of *naíonraí* in operation at that time and statistics regarding the children, questionnaires were administered to parents, *stiúrthóirí* (leaders), *stiúrthóirí cúnta* (assistant leaders) and *comhairleoirí* (advisors to the *stiúrthóirí*). The census was distributed to all *naíonraí* in the Republic of Ireland and there was a response rate of 96% from 182 sessions. 225 children (58 in Gaeltacht, 167 outside of Gaeltacht) were randomly selected and tested for

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<sup>4</sup> A number of *naíonraí* had more than one session per day, hence the use of this term.

achievement in comprehension, production and imitation in Irish and it is this aspect of the study that is reported here.

Table 2.1 shows the test scores of the children by home language. Columns 2 and 3 show that almost all children regardless of home language could answer 40% of the comprehension items successfully with all the ‘Irish only homes’ children scoring at least 75%. Just over half (54%) of the ‘Irish and English’ group scored 75% or more but just over one-third (35%) of the English only group scored 75% for *Comprehension*. There was greater variation in the *Production* scores where just over half (53%) of the ‘English only’ scored 40% but only 6% scored 75% or more. These items were obviously more demanding as only 72% of the ‘Irish only’ group scored 75% or more. There were higher scores in general for the *Imitation* items compared to *Production* but they followed the pattern that would be expected in terms of home language.

**Table 2.1**  
**Achievement test scores of naíonra children by home language**

Home language	Comprehension		Production		Imitation	
	% reaching 40%	% reaching 75%	% reaching 40%	% reaching 75%	% reaching 40%	% reaching 75%
<b>English only (N=142)</b>	96	35	53	6	73	35
<b>Irish and English (N=71)</b>	93	54	67	25	88	40
<b>Irish only (N=12)</b>	100	100	100	72	100	68

(Hickey, 1997, p. 114)

As Hickey states:

These results show that the children’s achievement is appreciable, with the overwhelming majority developing basic comprehension, and more than half having relatively advanced comprehension and a limited ability to express themselves in Irish. (Hickey, 1997, p. 115)

The children from these naíonra that continue Irish-medium education in an all-Irish primary school may find the transition easier because of the comprehension skills they have acquired in Irish and in general the ability gained in Irish can only be advantageous to them.

#### **2.4.2.2 Mhic Mhathúna study**

Mhic Mhathúna (2005) investigated the role of storytelling as a vehicle for facilitating second language acquisition in naíonraí. She studied and recorded storytelling

sessions in an in-depth study of one naíonra, over a sixth-month period, using a case-study approach. She transcribed 11 hours of recorded data and based on her analysis, she found that the preschool teachers facilitated children's participation in the sessions and that the input received led in time to acquisition of Irish. The teachers read the same stories repeatedly and this enabled the children to acquire formulaic utterances that they were able to segment at a later stage and to use creatively. The language of each story tended to be associated with that story only by the children, and features such as prepositional phrases did not transfer from one story to another. Where the teacher used language from the stories in interactional routines however, the children did transfer formulaic utterances in that case. It was evident from later recordings that the children had made significant progress in acquiring Irish. Children who had substantial exposure to Irish at home and experience of being read to benefited from the language input that they received in the naíonra and made considerable progress. Although the focus here has been on the language acquired from storytelling sessions, Mhic Mhathúna (2005) found that the children were enriched in many ways by the experience of the storytelling sessions.

## **2.4.2 Mastery of Irish in primary school**

### **2.4.2.1 English-medium schools**

The most comprehensive studies in the mastery of Irish have been the evaluation studies of primary school pupils conducted by Harris and his associates over a period of years dating back to the late 1970's (Harris, 1982, 1984, 2002; Harris et al., 2006; Harris & Murtagh, 1987, 1999). Harris devised criterion referenced tests based on the curricular objectives of the *Nuachúrsaí* [new courses] programme in use in schools at that time and which continued to be used until the advent of the current *Curaclam na Gaeilge* (Department of Education and Science, 1999). The tests were administered to pupils in second, fourth and sixth grade. The results of the first study in the late 1978 revealed that on average about one-third of pupils in English-medium (ordinary) schools attained mastery of the objectives, another one-third on average made at least minimal progress, while the remaining one-third failed to make even minimal progress in the objectives at each grade (Harris, 1984). A subsequent study in 1985 showed modest but statistically significant gains in the mastery of the sixth-grade objectives over the intervening seven year period (Harris & Murtagh, 1988).

A further national survey of achievement in Irish at 6<sup>th</sup> grade was conducted in 200 primary schools in 2002, seventeen years after the 1985 study. The latter study was more comprehensive as it included a new test of reading in Irish. As with the 1985 study it included English-medium schools, all-Irish schools and Gaeltacht schools. The results for the English medium schools reveal that there has been a significant decline the level of achievement since 1985. While it is beyond the scope of the present study to report the results of the 2002 study (Harris et al., 2006) in detail, Table 2.2 below is included here as representative of the scale of the decline in terms of the objectives on the speaking test. It can be seen from the differences in the fourth column that there has been a statistically significant decline in seven of the eight objectives. The decline in the first two objectives, *Communication (second grade objective)* and *Fluency of oral description* are the most significant.

**Table 2.2**  
**Percentage of sixth-grade pupils in ordinary schools who attain mastery on each objective on the Irish Speaking Test in 1985 and 2002**

<b>Ordinary Schools</b>	<b>Attain Mastery</b>		<b>Difference</b>
<b>Irish Speaking Objectives</b>	1985	2002	(2002-1985)
<b>Communication (second grade objective)</b>	54.0% a (2.98)	32.9% (2.80)	<b>-21.1%</b>
<b>Fluency of oral description</b>	50.3% a (2.69)	29.9% (2.69)	<b>-20.4%</b>
<b>Speaking vocabulary</b>	22.8% b (2.56)	8.8% (1.27)	<b>-14.0%</b>
<b>Control of the morphology of verbs</b>	12.1% b (1.71)	3.7% (1.06)	<b>-8.4%</b>
<b>Control of the morphology of prepositions</b>	28.0% b (2.30)	14.1% (1.84)	<b>-13.9%</b>
<b>Control of the morphology of qualifiers</b>	27.3% b (2.52)	21.6% (2.74)	-5.7%
<b>Control of the morphology of nouns</b>	21.9% b (2.17)	15.8% (2.12)	<b>-6.1%</b>
<b>Control of the syntax of statements</b>	19.7% a (1.92)	7.5% (1.24)	<b>-12.2%</b>

Significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) are printed in bold. Standard errors are printed in italics. N 1985: a = 1043, b = 1112; N 2002 = 950. The Irish Speaking Test was divided into two halves, with each half being administered to alternate pupils in 1985.

(Harris et al., 2006, p. 56)

#### 2.4.2.2 All-Irish schools

The results on the Irish Speaking Test for the same objectives in all-Irish schools are presented in Table 2.3 below. They reveal that the all-Irish schools maintained, to a large degree, the attainment levels of 1985 with the exception of *Control of the morphology of verbs in speaking* and *Control of the syntax of statements*. Harris et al. (2006) note that in

the case of the former objective that a relatively small segment of the cohort switched from mastery to minimal progress between 1985 and 2002. They caution however, that while this change is not statistically significant it is a cause of concern. The decline in the *Control of syntax in statements* is statistically significant however, with a decline of 34.2% in attainment levels. The third column in the final row reveals that 59.6% achieve mastery of this objective. The comparable figure for minimal mastery is 26.9% and for failure is 7.6%. This level of failure is a cause for concern.

More generally, the performance of all-Irish schools was quite satisfactory given the increase in the percentage of this school type from 1.1% in 1985 to 5% in 2002 (Harris et al., 2006). The sociolinguistic background of pupils attending all-Irish schools had also very likely changed substantially since the emergence of the new generation of all-Irish schools in the mid 1970's. For example, Ó Riagáin and Ó Gliasáin (1979) found that 51% of fathers with children enrolled in all-Irish schools in Dublin used Irish in their jobs as State employees. That situation is unlikely to pertain today. Coady & Ó Laoire (2002), found in their study that the number of pupils from Irish-speaking homes had fallen from 24% in 1974 to 9% in 2000.

**Table 2.3**  
**Percentage of sixth-grade pupils in all-Irish schools who attain mastery on each objective on the Irish Speaking Test in 1985 and 2002**

<b>All-Irish Schools</b>	<b>Attain Mastery</b>		<b>Difference</b>
<b>Irish Speaking Objectives</b>	1985	2002	(2002-1985)
<b>Communication (second grade objective)</b>	99.3% a (0.67)	94.6% (3.59)	-4.7%
<b>Fluency of oral description</b>	95.2% a (2.21)	87.6% (5.0)	-7.6%
<b>Speaking vocabulary</b>	72.0% b (5.17)	66.4% (6.44)	-5.6%
<b>Control of the morphology of verbs</b>	65.0% b (5.73)	50.2% (6.32)	-14.8%
<b>Control of the morphology of prepositions</b>	85.4% b (2.81)	78.7% (5.48)	-6.7%
<b>Control of the morphology of qualifiers</b>	68.2% b (7.95)	66.5% (5.25)	-1.7%
<b>Control of the morphology of nouns</b>	49.0% b (9.87)	50.3% (5.48)	+1.3%
<b>Control of the syntax of statements</b>	93.8% a (2.94)	59.6% (4.51)	<b>-34.2%</b>

Significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) are printed in bold. Standard errors are printed in italics. N 1985: a = 145, b = 156, N 2002 = 208.

(Harris et al., 2006, p. 62)



#### **2.4.2.3 Effect of parental social class, ability in Irish and frequency of use of Irish**

A notable finding in the Harris studies is that social class, parental ability in Irish and the frequency of use of Irish at home were all significantly correlated with pupil achievement in Irish (Harris, 2002; Harris et al., 2006; Harris & Murtagh, 1988, 1999). Use of Irish at home was also found to make a significant contribution to pupils' Irish attitude and motivation (Harris & Murtagh, 1999). These findings are important for the present study as parents in all-Irish schools generally come from higher social classes as measured by the number of parents with Medical Cards. The respective percentages for medical cards in both school types is 12.8% for all-Irish schools and 19.5% for English-medium schools (Harris et al., 2006). Similarly parental ability in Irish is higher in all-Irish schools with for example 20.3% of parents understating most conversations or having native speaker ability compared to 5.9% for the same categories in English-medium schools (Harris et al., 2006). In the case of use of Irish, all-Irish parents again use the language more often with 52% using it 'sometimes', 'often' or 'always' compared to 21.9% for parents in English-medium schools. These findings indicate that the location of an all-Irish school in terms of social class will influence attainment in Irish. This conclusion is supported by the research of Ó Fathaigh (1991) in English-medium second-level schools also.

#### **2.4.2.4 Pupils' attitude and motivation in relation to Irish**

The role of attitude and motivation in second language learning were discussed in 2.2.5.3 above. These issues were studied by Harris & Murtagh (1999) in relation to Irish. Their study, also known as the *Twenty Classes Study*, examined 6<sup>th</sup> class pupil attitude/motivation in twenty English-medium schools. The instrument used was an adapted Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) developed by Gardner (1985a) for use with French second language learners in Canada. Among the findings from their study was:

... that pupils were reasonably well disposed towards the Irish language itself and towards the idea of integrating with the Irish-language-speaking 'group'. But motivation, or actual commitment to learning Irish, is less positive. Pupils with better motivation and attitudes are more successful in learning Irish. (Harris, 2002, p. 88)

Pupil attitude and motivation in the context of all-Irish schools will be discussed further in 3.4.3 below.

### 2.4.3 Linguistic errors in learners' written Irish

Because of the limited number of studies of linguistic errors in learner Irish, it is useful to consider the studies of Ó Domhnalláin & Ó Baoill (1978, 1979), and Ó Baoill (1981) even though they deal with written errors. More recent studies by Walsh (2005, 2007) and Ó Conchubhair<sup>5</sup> (O'Connor, 2002; Ó Conchubhair, 2003) also investigating written errors, will then be examined.

#### 2.4.3.1 Ó Domhnalláin and Ó Baoill studies

Ó Domhnalláin & Ó Baoill (1978, 1979), and Ó Baoill (1981) analysed the examination scripts of a sample of 200 pupils that sat the Leaving Certificate Irish examination in 1975. These pupils were drawn from both all-Irish and English-medium schools. The Leaving certificate examination is the terminal examination at the end of second-level education in Ireland. The study examined the students' errors in their essays on Paper 1 of that examination. The sample was evenly distributed between girls and boys and those that sat the higher-level paper and the ordinary-level paper. Of particular interest are the type of errors identified and the manner in which they were categorised for analysis. That study used the following categories:

- verbs
- nominal words
- qualifying words
- prepositional words
- pronouns
- particles
- interrogative words and conjunctions
- syntax

In relation to verbs the most striking aspect is that the substantive verb *bíonn*, habitual present tense 'to be', was the verb used incorrectly most often. Of the times when a verb was used, this verb was used 7.4% of the time. However, within that use it was incorrectly used 51% of the time (Ó Domhnalláin & Ó Baoill, 1978). The verb '*Bí*' is obviously one that is used frequently and its incorrect use will increase proportionately the number of errors a learner will make.

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<sup>5</sup> O'Connor is the Anglicisation of Ó Conchubhair

When the syntactic errors were examined it was found that 76% or just over three quarters of them could be traced to the influence of English. This English influence was sub-categorised as follows: direct translation, words omitted, the copula '*Is*', words in the wrong order, direct and indirect speech, incorrect words and a miscellaneous sub-category (Ó Baoill, 1981).

Errors in use of the copula represented 10.3% of all errors. When students used the copula in their essays they used it correctly 76% of the time i.e. with an error rate of 24%. Ó Baoill (1981) describes the copula as an inherent part of the Irish language which frightens learners. He ascribes learners' lack of grasp of this feature of the language as being the result of a lack of practice in natural speech and an overdependence on English as a criterion.

#### **2.4.3.2 Walsh study**

The Walsh (2005) study, examined the errors in written texts collected from 17-18 year old 6<sup>th</sup> year pupils in six second level all-Irish schools in Dublin. She sought sample essays from the five to six pupils most proficient in Irish in each school, one Irish (as a subject) essay and another essay written in Irish from a different subject area. From the 60 essays that she received she analysed a total of 31 of them, 16 Irish essays and 15 in other subject areas. These samples were the work of 15 different pupils. She estimated that her analysis was based on 6,000-9,000 words of text. When she analysed the essays she found 752 errors in total, 369 from the Irish essay and 383 in the essays from a different subject area.

Table 2.4 shows the top 15 errors in frequency order in the Irish essays. These errors represent 89% of the error types in the analysis and there were 28 types in total. Some of these errors such as spelling pertain to writing only and either do not arise or are less obvious in the analysis of spoken language. Difficulties with lenition, eclipsis and the genitive case account for a significant percentage of errors (38%). Regarding the genitive case and adjectives some writers have called for a restandardisation and a simplification of the rules associated with their use and acknowledge that the genitive case and the inflection of adjectives is undergoing change in everyday use by native speakers (Ó Baoill, 2000; Williams, 2002). Other aspects that are relevant to the present study are difficulties with

the use of numbers, the use of the verb in general, translation from English, inappropriate preposition usage, the verbal noun and the copula/substantive verb.

In contrast to the Ó Domhnalláin & Ó Baoill study above, the error rate associated with the copula and the verbal noun is considerably lower in the Walsh study. Walsh (2007) had hypothesised that there would have been a greater error rate in the case of the copula. This may be an indication that these features have been mastered by all-Irish school pupils by this stage. Alternatively, the Ó Domhnalláin & Ó Baoill scripts were Leaving Certificate examination scripts, written under pressure, without time for reflection. Possibly, Walsh's were written in a more relaxed, reflective context. As shown later below, reflection and time to become aware of errors can improve accuracy. It was also the case that the sample essays collected from each school were from the pupils most competent in Irish.

**Table 2.4**  
**The errors in 6<sup>th</sup> year pupils' Irish essays in frequency order**

<b>Errors</b>	<b>Frequency order N=369</b>	
<b>Lenition and eclipsis associated with prepositions and other features</b>	74	20%
<b>Genitive case</b>	65	18%
<b>Adjectives</b>	22	6%
<b>Difficulties with case and with use of numbers</b>	21	6%
<b>Use of the verb in general</b>	20	5%
<b>Translation from English</b>	19	5%
<b>Incorrect noun gender</b>	17	5%
<b>Inappropriate preposition usage</b>	14	4%
<b>Verbal noun</b>	14	4%
<b>Influence of oral pronunciation on spelling</b>	13	4%
<b>Words omitted</b>	12	3%
<b>Inaccurate or inappropriate phrases or words</b>	12	3%
<b>Errors arising from spoken Irish</b>	10	3%
<b>The verb – the copula/substantive verb</b>	9	2%
<b>The language of teenagers</b>	7	2%
<b>Total</b>	329	89%

Adapted and modified from Walsh (2007, p. 34)

### 2.4.3.3 The Ó Conchubhair study

Another study that examined the use of the copula in Irish was Ó Conchubhair (2003). He designed focus on form type tasks to teach the copula to secondary school pupils in 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years in English-medium secondary schools. He administered pre-tests, post-tests and delayed post-tests to the pupils. The tests were written tests as he

thought that this would give the pupils a greater chance of success than oral tests. Following the focus on form activities the pupils made significant gains in their mastery of the copula and these gains were in most cases maintained in the delayed post-test. The area that showed the greatest decline in the delayed post-test was the negative form of the copula. The positive results of the Ó Conchubhair study suggest that focus on form activities may be beneficial in teaching this feature of Irish. The pupils in O'Conchubhair's study were enabled to use forms of the copula in communicative contexts that may have given them practice in using these forms correctly and aided retention.

#### **2.4.4 Errors in the conversational speech of all-Irish pupils**

This section will report on the findings of a number of studies that examined features of the conversational speech of all-Irish school pupils in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The first study was an in-depth investigation of the features of Irish in one all-Irish school in Belfast. The second set of studies reports on all-Irish pupils' acquisition of word order or syntax in Irish. The final set of studies concern the acquisition of the copula and other features of Irish by all-Irish school pupils.

##### **2.4.4.1 Henry, Andrews and Ó Cainín study**

Henry et al. (2002) documented the variety of Irish spoken by pupils in one Irish immersion school in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The aim of that study was 'to identify the areas of difficulty, to explore why these particular areas cause problems, and to consider how progress in these aspects of the language might be improved' (2002). Data were gathered from 21 pupils that came from English-speaking homes and were drawn from classes P3-P5 or children in the 7-10 year age range. A research assistant engaged pairs of pupils in conversations that were recorded.

They found that the pupils in the selected school become highly competent communicators, who were able to speak Irish fluently and willingly. Most of the major aspects of Irish grammar were acquired effectively through the use of Irish in the classroom, without the need for specific grammar instruction. They found little evidence of interference from English in most major grammatical structures and many of the early errors that the pupils make appear to disappear without specific instruction. There were a small number of target language errors however, that tended to persist for a considerable

period. They found no evidence that these errors were the result of errors in teacher input. Rather the errors arise as part of the language development process itself. The specific areas, which they identify as having a tendency to fossilise, are the incorrect use of the substantive verb in place of the copula, issues concerning syntax associated with the verbal noun, incomplete mastery of pronouns and prepositions.

#### **2.4.4.2 Word order: Henry and Tangney, and other studies**

A number of studies have examined this aspect of the acquisition of Irish and all have found that children acquire this feature without difficulty and there does not appear to be any interference from English, the learners' first language. Henry & Tangney (1999) examined children in Belfast acquiring Irish at an early age in Irish-immersion preschools and primary schools. These children had no contact with native speakers of Irish outside of the school setting and their input was received from highly competent but not native speakers. The immersion pupils in the Henry et al. (2002) study had no difficulty in acquiring the VSO order in Irish. They displayed the ability to reset parameters for word order in this case. Owens (1991), who conducted a case study on her daughter's acquisition of Irish in an all-Irish school in Dublin, also found that she acquired the VSO word order without apparent difficulty. Ní Súilleabháin (1986) in her study observed that pupils in immersion schools absorb 'internal NP word order and the different determiner systems with ease' (1986, p. 149).

Henry & Tangney (1999) argue 'that language acquisition involves tension between the drive to create a maximally simple grammar in Universal Grammar (UG) terms and the need to adopt a grammar that covers the input data' (1999, p. 239). They believe that learners will only adopt a more complex grammar where the input they receive has strong evidence to support this. It appears that immersion pupils in all-Irish schools receive strong and consistent evidence regarding Irish NP word order and that they acquire it without difficulty. This may not be the case with other features of the language.

#### **2.4.4.3 Various studies that examined the copula in Irish and other features**

The acquisition of the copula in Irish does not appear to be as consistent however, as for word order. Sentences with *Tá*, present tense of the substantive verb *Bí* 'be', follow the expected word order VSO described above. In the case of the copula however, 'the

predicate precedes the subject, which is marked with accusative case' (Henry & Tangney, 1999, p. 245). Learners may not be able to reset their parameters to take account of this variation particularly when one structure in their first language (English) has two counterparts in Irish (Odlin, 1989).

Maguire (1992) examined the variety of Irish acquired by children and young adults aged 8 to 18 in a small urban Gaeltacht in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The children were raised by parents who had learned Irish as a second language and educated in an Irish-medium school by teachers who had also learned Irish as a second language. The families had limited access to other Gaeltacht areas and Irish speaking communities. Maguire notes that it is hardly surprising then that the linguistic output of these children revealed many linguistic features associated with second language learners. One 17 year old in the study reflected on a trip to the Gaeltacht. He stated that the people spoke too quickly, with peculiar accents and used words that he had never heard. He continued as follows:

Tógann tú do chineál nósanna cainte féin agus usann tú na focail a bheidh a dhíth ort agus ní bhacann tú le rud ar bith eile. Bhuel is maith an rud é go dtí go dtagann tú chuig áit nó duine a mbacann leis an cineál rud sin ... (Maguire, 1992, p. 50)  
[*You construct you own speaking habits and you use the words that you need and you don't bother with anything else. Well that is all right until you come to a place or to a person that does care about that sort of thing...*]

It appears that the features of the Irish that he spoke with his family and friends were communicatively sufficient for their context but that when he was confronted with native speakers using Irish as their daily language, his concept of his own language competence was challenged. This reflects the situation in immersion education many of whose learners do not have an opportunity to interact with native speakers other than the teacher. Maguire (1992) observes however, that there was a monitoring system within the group of children in Belfast and that they would not tolerate certain irregularities. If one speaker introduced an aberrant form another member of the group would supply the accepted form in a natural inconspicuous way.

Another study which gathered data on the proficiency of pupils in all-Irish schools was that of Ó Catháin (2001). He included data from a study of the symptoms of contemporary Irish gathered in 1997, from six pupils who were in 6<sup>th</sup> class at the time in five different all-Irish schools in the greater Dublin area. The speech samples were collected in interviews by the researcher with the subjects. Among the features that Ó

Catháin (2001) observed in these learners was; the inappropriate use of the substantive verb ‘*Tá*’ instead of the copula ‘*Is*’, which was also noted by Henry et al. (2002) above. Other features which he found were the use of incorrect syntax, English words directly translated into Irish without being Gaelicised, Irish idioms being replaced by English ones. He notes that these examples are not unique to the interlanguage of all-Irish school pupils but that similar examples can be found in the speech of monolingual native speakers going back 150 years. While Ó Catháin acknowledges that language change is natural and that languages are constantly changing, Ó Dónaill (2000) maintains that the case of Irish as a minority language is not the same as that of major languages.

## **2.5 Summary and conclusions**

Second language learning theories were examined from a number of perspectives to help identify the critical elements in the second language acquisition of pupils in an early immersion programme. The examination of UG revealed that the knowledge of previously acquired languages can influence the learning of further languages. The cognitive perspective on second language learning offers explanations as to how second language input is processed. The concept of limited attentional resources is central to L2 learners’ ability to process input that may lead to language development. It was shown that L2 learners negotiate first for meaning rather than form, they may not pay attention to all the information available in the input. This can lead to the coding in long-term memory of non-target like interlanguage forms. When pressurised to communicate learners may draw on these automatised forms to free up attentional resources to focus on the content of their utterances. If these inaccurate forms prove useful in communication they may stabilise with habitual practice and may not be susceptible to change. The interactionist perspective also confirmed that child L2 learners tend not to negotiate for form.

In order to get learners to notice form in the input that they receive, some pedagogic intervention is required. This is particularly relevant for features that are semantically lightweight, non-salient and do not lead to a breakdown in communication. Such intervention could be error correction and feedback, or focus on form activities that draw learners’ attention to particular features. A difficulty highlighted with teacher correction is that not every error is corrected, particularly in content classes and the feedback that pupils receive can be contradictory. Another intervention that has been shown to be effective in



experimental studies is providing opportunities for pupils to produce ‘pushed output’. This type of output can help to draw learners’ attention to form in their output leading to interlanguage development. This concept has been further developed as ‘linguaging’ within a sociocultural framework. Pupils working collaboratively with others can be scaffolded and given feedback appropriate to their zone of proximal development (ZPD). The process of verbalising their thinking about their L2 can mediate learning. Just as linguaging requires reflection on language use so too does learner autonomy. It has been argued that successful second language learning depends on learner involvement, target language use and learner reflection. It is the latter element that may be missing from immersion programmes.

The limitations of learning a second language in a school environment were also examined. In the case of a minority language where there is little or no contact with the language outside of the school, acquisition of native like ability may be too high an expectation. The speech community of the classroom exerts its own norms also which may militate against acquiring target like forms. The features of immersion pupils’ L2 have been documented in many studies. The experiential nature of immersion programmes have been cited as promoting negotiation for meaning rather than form. It has been suggested that a more analytic approach is required where pupils would have opportunities to reflect on their interlanguage hypotheses. This could be done through interactional feedback and tasks such as Dictogloss and jigsaw tasks. Lyster (2007) proposed the counterbalance hypothesis to deal with the over-emphasis of experiential approaches in immersion programmes and an over-emphasis on analytic approaches in traditional language classes.

The research on Irish as a second language highlighted areas that learners find difficult to acquire. The acquisition of the copula and verbal noun are two areas that have been shown to be problematic. In the research on immersion education in an Irish context the pupils have been shown to attain high levels of achievement relative to their peers who learn Irish as a core-subject in English medium schools. They use non-target like forms in their interlanguage however, and these forms persist over time similar to the findings of the general body of research in immersion programmes. No study to date in the Republic of Ireland has provided a detailed examination and description of the features of all-Irish pupils’ Irish in a range of immersion schools while engaged in peer-peer naturalistic task-based communication. If the nature of the non-target like features is to be understood the

first step is to document them. This study aims to not only document the features of all-Irish pupils' Irish, but to provide comprehensive analyses of them and their frequency of use in unplanned oral production. A suitable method identified to analyse these features is to compile an oral corpus. This can facilitate an understanding of pupils' underlying language development. In order to take account of the differences between language performance and underlying competence, pupils were given an opportunity to reflect on their language output by means of a stimulated recall activity. The insights gained from pupils in this way add to the understanding of their language development by clarifying the level of mastery of certain features. Attitude and motivation towards the target language has also been shown to affect attainment levels and these issues were investigated using a modified AMTB. Finally, instructional issues and how teachers seek to improve pupils' proficiency in Irish were investigated through teacher interviews. Many factors influence second language acquisition and it is not clear how they combine. The second language learning theories examined briefly here from a number of different perspectives give a better understanding of why immersion pupils' interlanguages develop in the manner documented in research studies. It is through this type of understanding that teachers may be enabled to improve their pupils' interlanguage development. The findings of the present study should help teachers to make more informed judgements in relation to their pedagogy in immersion classes.

## **Chapter 3: Design of study**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlining the design of the study consists of four sections. Section one, this introductory section, provides an overview of the chapter and lists the objectives of the study. Section two gives an account of the different methods used in the study. This is followed in Section three by a description of the participant pupils and schools, the manner in which they were selected, and the underlying rationale for this selection. Finally, section four reports on the data gathering instruments employed in the study.

Since the core aim of the study is to describe and analyse the linguistic features of the spoken Irish of Irish immersion pupils in a naturalistic interactive context, a collaborative task was designed to gather speech samples from pupils. This task, and its evolution, is described in some detail in Section four. The level of detail given was deemed necessary in order to give an understanding of the context in which the speech samples were gathered. It may also help to inform the design of tasks in the future to study task-based language use in immersion contexts and to facilitate the replication of this particular task in future studies.

The study set out to obtain a broad picture of the pupils' Irish, the range and nature of the linguistic errors encountered and to investigate pupils' awareness of and attitudes to the features of the Irish spoken by them and of the extent to which it deviates from native speaker norms. A key focus of the research was to investigate the broader communicative and sociolinguistic context within which this variety of Irish develops. To try to identify the source of these errors including the possibility that their occurrence might be linked to the kind of exposure to and use of Irish by pupils, the availability of good models of correct language use, and the social stimulus to correct the errors that they were aware of. Ultimately it was intended that the study would provide the foundation for a preliminary programme or the outline of a pedagogic approach that would improve the quality of Irish immersion pupils' Irish. Finally, it was hoped that the study would help to define more clearly the kind of programme of research that is needed to provide a comprehensive account of the particular variety of Irish spoken by immersion pupils.

## **3.2 Methodology**

### **3.2.1 Objectives**

In order to obtain a broad picture of the pupils' linguistic features a range of objectives were identified as follows:

- to develop a collaborative task that could be administered in any all-Irish school in order to elicit typical peer-to-peer interaction
- to gather speech samples from 6<sup>th</sup> classes pupils in a range of all-Irish schools in order to describe the features of the Irish spoken by them
- to compile a corpus of the speech of 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils and to perform a lexical and syntactic analysis on this corpus leading to a documentation of the most common linguistic errors made by them
- to distinguish between those errors which pupils are capable of correcting when stimulated to reflect on them and those which are more fundamental in character (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; 2006)
- to establish the attitudes and motivation of the participating pupils to learning Irish by means of an attitude motivation questionnaire based in part on the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 1985a)
- to ascertain the judgements of teachers on the kind of proficiency acquired by their pupils (using a semi-structured interview)
- to obtain the assessments of native Irish-speaking teachers of the spoken Irish of pupils engaged in the collaborative task.

A number of different research methods were employed including both quantitative and qualitative approaches to achieve these objectives. While much of the data gathered in the study was through qualitative methods, quantitative methods were used to analyse that data where appropriate. An ethnographic approach was adopted in analysing the pupils spoken Irish while they were engaged in a collaborative task and in the stimulated recall. The AMTB represents a primarily quantitative approach to establishing the attitude and motivation of pupils in relation to Irish. A phenomenological approach was deemed to be most suitable in order to interview the teachers and to explore their views and experiences

of the grammatical accuracy in pupils' spoken Irish. We will now look briefly at the merits and demerits of the different research approaches represented in the present study.

### **3.2.2 Ethnomethodology: collaborative task and stimulated recall**

The approach to the study of pupil's Irish was ethnomethodological in character. This approach derives from social anthropology where an attempt is made to describe the situation from the perspective of the group members (Coolican, 2004). The data were gathered through the audio and video recording of the peer-peer interaction as the pupils worked on a collaborative task. The context created was one that was as close as possible to typical peer-to-peer interaction. The researcher did not participate in the discourse other than for clarification purposes where requested, placing him at the non-participant end of the participant observation continuum (Coolican, 2004; Patton, 2002). As there was full disclosure to the pupils of the purpose of the study in the consent letter that they received, a 'Hawthorne effect' may have occurred to some extent, i.e. the pupils' performance may have been affected by the knowledge that they were being observed (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1964). It is also likely that some or all the teachers would have encouraged the pupils, before the researcher arrived, to use only Irish while they were working in their groups.

The data collected in these recordings provide, for the first time, an extensive corpus of Irish immersion learner language. The focus of the analysis of the data here is on lexical and syntactic items (Mackey, Gass, & McDonough, 2000) and the pupils' language use rather than on a conversational analysis and communicative interaction type approach. It is necessary to exercise care when these observable data are being analysed however, as it may not always accurately reflect the underlying linguistic knowledge of the pupils. Pupils engaged in the type of collaborative task used in this study may make grammatical errors because their attention is on the task in hand and on communicating their thoughts rather than on the linguistic form in which they are communicating them. An initial perusal of the corpus may lead the reader to assume that the pupils only have access to a narrow range of vocabulary. Seedhouse (2004) however, maintains that when two or more people interact, they do not express every single aspect of their intended meaning, but rely on mutually understood features of the context and background. He further draws attention to

the fact that ‘utterances are not treated literally but are understood by reference to context and assumptions about the other party’ (p. 6). The collaborative task in the present study is located in the here and now and it facilitates the use of non-verbal messages. It is often in these non-verbal messages between the interactants that meaning is relayed (Brown & Rodgers, 2002).

In order to explore the pupil’s insights and the thought processes underlying their own linguistic performance while they engaged in the collaborative task, a stimulated recall was utilised. The use of a stimulated recall enables the pupils to correct any mistakes that they made in the chosen extracts. This allowed a thorough exploration of the limits of their underlying communicative competence. Stimulated recall has been described as an introspective method that can be used as ‘a means of eliciting data about thought processes involved in carrying out a task or activity’ (Gass & Mackey, 2000, p. 1). Groups of pupils in each school were chosen to view a recording of themselves participating in the collaborative task. They were given an opportunity to reflect on what thought processes they might have used while engaged in the task. They were also asked to give their opinions on their linguistic performance and on their knowledge of Irish grammar. The stimulated recall methodology is explained in greater detail in section 3.4.2.

### **3.2.3 Quantitative approach: pupil questionnaire and analysis of pupil speech**

The pupil questionnaire was designed to gather data from pupils on their attitude and motivation to learning and using Irish. The stimulated recall activity outlined above enabled a small number of pupils at each sampling site to express attitudes and opinions about their own performance on the DVD recording. The use of a questionnaire allowed for the gathering of structured information from a larger sample of pupils that would be statistically analysed at a later date (Coolican, 2004). The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) is a validated instrument that has been used with 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in all-Irish schools previously and was deemed to be suitable for the purposes of the present study also. The fact that it had been used previously, enabled the comparison of results from this study with that of Harris and Murtagh (1999). The pupil questionnaire will be described in greater detail in section 3.4.3.

The samples of the pupils' speech gathered through the collaborative task were analysed using WordSmith tools (Scott, 2004). This analysis, which is described in detail in Chapter 5, enabled the most common features of the pupils' spoken Irish to be quantified providing a list of the high frequency words used by the pupils while engaged in the task, and a comparison of the correct and deviant use of these words.

### **3.2.4 Phenomenology**

The objective of the interviews with principal and class teachers was to explore their views and experiences of grammatical inaccuracy and deviation from native speaker norms and related problems in the speech of Irish immersion pupils. A phenomenological design (Denscombe, 2003), that focuses on the human experience of the teacher in the classroom and school, was adopted. The grammatical inaccuracy on the part of immersion pupils has been reported in the research literature as outlined in Chapter 2. The possibility of teachers having different reactions to these is suggested by the fact that studies of teachers in general have revealed significant differences in their reactions to errors (James, 1998). Adopting a phenomenological approach opened up the possibility of developing a greater understanding of 'immersion speech' in all its complexity within the environment of individual classrooms and schools (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The semi-structured nature of the interviews facilitated not just the exploration of what was happening in classrooms but also the teachers' understanding of why and how it was happening.

## **3.3 Participants**

The pilot phase of the study involved all-Irish school pupils from classes ranging from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, boys and girls about 9-12 years of age, and the main study concentrated on pupils' in 6<sup>th</sup> class, boys and girls about 11-12 years of age. As the data gathering in the main study occurred before the 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils had completed their eighth year in immersion, they would have experienced approximately 5,000 hours of instruction through the medium of Irish prior to the study. The purpose of the pilot phase was to identify ways in which samples of pupils' speech could be gathered in a reasonably naturalistic way that would capture typical language behaviour. This section gives an account of the participants in both phases of the study.

### **3.3.1 Pilot phase and main study**

In the pilot phase of the study data were gathered in five different schools. Four were all-Irish schools and the fifth was a Gaeltacht school where a high proportion of the pupils were native speakers. The four all-Irish schools chosen represent a cross-section of different types of all-Irish schools from the greater Dublin area and surrounding counties. While the schools differ in many ways, the complex range of educational and sociodemographic variables which each represents can be suggested by the following labels (a) urban disadvantage, (b) urban mixed social class, (c) commuter town and county town. They had been in existence for periods ranging from a little more than ten years to nearly forty years. The Pilot phase was used to test out the approach to studying pupils' Irish and to experiment with different versions of the collaborative task and the stimulated recall.

The number of schools was increased for the main study and eleven schools in total were selected for data collection. Nine of these schools were all-Irish schools and two were Gaeltacht schools. Two schools from the pilot phase were included in the main study, one all-Irish school and one Gaeltacht school. The two schools from the Pilot Phase that were included in the main study were those where the collaborative task had taken the final form used in the main study.

#### **3.3.1.1 Population and sample of schools**

In order to select a sample of all-Irish schools, the list of schools on the *Gaelscoileanna* website [www.gaelscoileanna.ie](http://www.gaelscoileanna.ie) was examined. *Gaelscoileanna* is the coordinating body for all-Irish schools in the Republic of Ireland. Nine all-Irish schools were chosen from the list of 130 such schools in the Republic of Ireland in the academic year 2006-07. The schools selected represent the full range of different types of all-Irish school found in the Republic of Ireland. The schools were carefully chosen against a set of criteria that would represent the different educational and sociodemographic variables present in all-Irish schools. Those criteria were:

- school size
- geographical location
- number of years established
- socioeconomic status of school community
- proximity or otherwise to a Gaeltacht heartland area



- access or not to a post-primary all-Irish school.

These were all variables that might be expected to relate in one way or another to the kind of educational and sociolinguistic circumstances determining pupils Irish in each school. Selecting a simple random sample of schools would not have ensured that variations in these important factors were represented in the sample of schools chosen for the present study.

The sample includes two Gaeltacht schools, from Irish-speaking heartland areas, to enable a direct comparison of the linguistic output of pupils in immersion schools located in the main English speaking area of Ireland, with that of native speaker pupils of the same age and stage of development living in Gaeltacht communities. In a similar fashion, Day and Shapson (1996; 1987) used a Francophone comparison group when assessing the oral communicative skills of French immersion pupils in the province of British Columbia, Canada. The Gaeltacht schools included in the present study were chosen from areas where 67% or more of the community speak Irish on a daily basis. Areas with this level of daily Irish usage have been identified by Ó Giollagáin et al. (2007) as the strongest areas in which Irish is spoken. They recommend in their study that these areas be classified as '*Category A Gaeltacht communities*' (2007, p.41). That categorisation has been adopted in Table 3.1 below to identify the two all-Irish schools chosen because of their proximity to a 'strong' Gaeltacht area.

Table 3.1 presents background information on the schools chosen for the study. While the goal here is to present all the relevant information about each school, data had to be omitted in a few cases where they might serve to identify a particular school. As can be seen in Table 3.1, the all-Irish schools are located in cities and small towns. This is where the vast majority of all-Irish schools are situated, as it requires a critical mass of parents to create the demand for an all-Irish school. It was not possible to list the geographical regions in which the schools were located, as it might have identified some of the schools. It can be stated however, that of the nine schools, one is located in Ulster, two in Connacht, two in Munster, two in Leinster outside of Dublin and two in Dublin.

Three schools were selected from those included in the Department of Education and Science's DEIS (Delivering Equality Of Opportunity In Schools) (2005) action plan for disadvantaged communities. Two schools were selected from DEIS Band 2 schools and one from DEIS Band 1. The schools in DEIS Band 1 are deemed to be schools in communities

of greatest need. The two Gaeltacht schools selected have been included in the DEIS action plan for rural schools. They are deemed representative of Gaeltacht schools as the majority of Gaeltacht schools are located in isolated rural areas and are included in the DEIS action plan.

### **3.3.1.2 Variables on which schools differ**

The schools chosen have been in existence for a varying number of years, some greater than 10 years and others greater than 30 years. Schools that were established in the last 10 years were excluded, as they were less likely to contain sufficient numbers of 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils. It generally takes seven years for the first cohort of pupils to reach 6<sup>th</sup> class and a number of years after that to have a full complement of pupils in that class. All schools are co-educational and employ an early immersion policy. Some of the schools adopt an early total immersion policy where no English is taught to the pupils until sometime in senior infants or first class i.e. their second or third year in school. Other schools adopt an early partial immersion approach where English is taught for 2.5 hours per week in infant classes with all other subjects being taught through the medium of Irish. Following the pupils' two years in infant classes all schools teach English as a subject for approximately 3.5 hours, or 12.5% of the school week.

The all-Irish school pupils that participated in the study were drawn from 6<sup>th</sup> class and ranged in age from 11-13 years. They would have been exposed to approximately 5,500 hours of instruction through the medium of Irish prior to the study. The pupils featured in the transcripts have little or no contact with Irish outside of school activities and come from English-speaking homes. The Gaeltacht school pupils follow the same curriculum and the majority of those featured in the transcripts come from Irish-speaking homes.

### **3.3.2 Invitation to participate in the study**

In order to invite schools to participate in the study the information letter in Appendix 3.1 was drafted for school principals. This letter was posted and was followed by a telephone call to the principals. All principals contacted agreed to participate in the study and were very supportive of the project. A date for data collection was selected and letters were drafted for parents (Appendix 3.2) and pupils (Appendix 3.3) giving them information

about the study and seeking their consent to participate in it. An information letter was also prepared for the class teacher (Appendix 3.4).

**Table 3.2**  
**Background information on schools selected for the study**

School ID	Accessible to 2 <sup>nd</sup> level all-Irish school	Location: Urban/Rural	No. of years established	No. of pupils in school	Proximity to a Gaeltacht heartland area	Disadvantaged status
<i>All-Irish schools</i>						
School 1	X	Town	<20 yrs	200-300	-	-
School 2	✓	City	<20 yrs	200-300	0-15 km	-
School 3	✓	City	> 30 yrs	>300	-	-
School 4	✓	City	> 30 yrs	200-300	-	DEIS Urban 2
School 5	✓	Town	20-30 yrs	>300	30-45 km	-
School 6	X	Town	<20 yrs	<200	-	DEIS Urban 2
School 7	✓	Town	20-30 yrs	>300	-	-
School 8	✓	City	20-30 yrs	200-300	-	DEIS Urban 1
School 9	X	Town	20-30 yrs	200-300	-	-
<i>Gaeltacht schools</i>						
School 10	✓	Rural	> 30 yrs	<200	Category A	DEIS Rural
School 11	✓	Rural	> 30 yrs	<200	Category A	DEIS Rural

### 3.4 The research instruments

An account is given in this section of the research instruments used to gather data in the study. The following instruments were used:

- collaborative task for pupils
- stimulated recall exercise for a subgroup of pupils
- pupil questionnaire
- interviews with principal teacher and class teacher

The principal method of gathering data in the study was by means of a collaborative task that was developed in the pilot phase of the project. This section commences with an account of its development and administration. The account continues with a description of the use made of excerpts from the video recordings of this task as a stimulated recall exercise. Other instruments were also used to gather data in the study and they are then described. A modified Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire was administered to pupils in the participating schools to ascertain their attitude and motivation towards learning and using Irish. The school principal and class teacher in each school were

interviewed, where they gave their consent, to explore their judgements concerning their pupils' proficiency in Irish. Finally, a group of native Irish-speaking teachers were shown excerpts of the pupils' speech from the transcripts and asked to mark utterances containing errors.

### **3.4.1 Collaborative tasks**

#### **3.4.1.1 Background**

A number of interactive tasks were developed and tested during the course of the pilot phase. The methods used for gathering the data in the different locations and the changes made in tasks and procedures as the project progressed are described below. The purpose of each task was to set pupils an assignment that would require them to work independently of the teacher in collaborative groups. While they worked in their groups they were to engage in purposeful communication with one another that would as far as possible capture the typical peer-peer dialogue in which they engage. The tasks provided a meaning-focused context in which to generate oral production in the target language. The tasks were designed in this way in order to replicate the pupils' immersion environment where their primary focus in performing the task is on communicating meaning to one another.

These tasks differ significantly from typical teacher-pupil dialogues that often generate an initiation-response-feedback pattern generally controlled by the teacher. The dialogues generated have a much looser structure involving unfinished utterances and switches of topic (Maybin, 2006). They give insights into the features of the pupils' Irish while engaged in communicating with one another in situations not supervised by a teacher. The tasks designed are in keeping with a sociocultural view of learning where '[...] learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups...' (Olsen & Kagan, 1992, p. 8). They differ from those referred to by Swain (2005) where 'collaborative dialogues were a source of language learning' (p. 478). The emphasis in the present study was on peer-peer communication where the pupils were not pushed to communicate with a high level of grammatical accuracy unless they chose to do so as this was not the purpose of the exercise. The samples of learner language gathered through the collaborative tasks do however, give an insight into the communicative performance of the pupils and will provide rich data for the stimulated recall at a later

stage. This in turn will provide greater insights into the communicative competence of the pupils.

The tasks were conducted during regular class time and all the pupils in each class participated in them. Similar tasks could be easily replicated in any classroom. The pupils were assembled in different group sizes during the pilot phase. Groups of two, three and five pupils were set up in different versions of the task. Groups of three proved to be the optimal size in that this number seemed to generate a reasonable amount of interaction among the pupils and it was possible to distinguish between the different voices on the recordings. Arising from the pilot phase, pupils were organised in groups of three in the present study, unless circumstances militated against this such as insufficient space in a classroom or a class grouping not divisible by three.

#### **3.4.1.2 Development and modification of the collaborative tasks**

This section describes the development of the collaborative tasks that were designed to elicit typical task-based peer-to-peer interaction in spoken Irish. Each task is described together with the manner in which it was administered in each school. The schools were visited in order A to E. The accounts of the recording and analysis in each school are laid out in chronological order.

##### *Garden planning task*

Pilot school A: All-Irish school

The pupils in 6<sup>th</sup> class in this school had already been engaged in a class project to design a school garden. It seemed that this existing task might lend itself to gathering typical peer-to-peer interaction because it involved the pupils working collaboratively on the garden plan. The pupils worked in groups of three. The teacher and pupils had discussed the location of the garden and the range of plants that could be used there, prior to the session at which the recording took place. The class teacher directed the class during the recording session and the researcher adopted the role of a non-participant observer (Swann, 2001). The children were very enthusiastic about the garden-planning task and were prepared to put a good deal of effort into it. The task required them to use their language skills in order to negotiate and communicate their ideas to one another, to reach a consensus as to the best plan and to co-operate to complete the task.

Recording took place while the pupils drew a design for their garden on a sheet of A3 paper. Executing the drawing generated an animated discussion among the pupils. As the pupils remained seated it facilitated the recording process. As with Swann (2001), the presence of a video recorder in this case also appeared to intrude more than that of an audio recorder, on the spontaneity of the pupils. It was not felt however, that it intruded unduly. The audio and video recordings were later transcribed and the speech of the pupils was analysed with a particular focus on the nature and the extent of the use of borrowings from English and grammatical errors in Irish.

### *'Bridge' task*

#### Pilot school B: All-Irish school

While the collaborative task just described above was considered specific to that particular school, it seemed that it might be suitable for the purposes of the present study. Unfortunately, it was embedded in the work of that school and might well be too ambitious to be easily replicated elsewhere. It was decided therefore that a more generic task was required for future settings. The new task that the pupils were set was to construct a bridge made entirely from newspaper and clear sticky tape, a bridge that would span a gap of 30cm between two tables. The pupils worked in groups of three on this task also. The purpose of the task from a communicative linguistic perspective was to engage the children in a problem-solving activity where the focus of their attention would be on achieving a solution, i.e. the construction of a bridge, rather than on the form of language that they were using.

#### Initial use of 'bridge' task

The task was tried with a 6<sup>th</sup> class in the first instance where all children in the class were divided into groups and engaged in the task simultaneously. The researcher explained the task to the groups and as such adopted a participant observation role. There was no preparation of the language required to complete the task. The class teacher remained in the classroom and assisted the researcher in directing the activities. The recording equipment used consisted of one video camera, one mini-disc recorder and three tape-recorders. One group succeeded in constructing a bridge quite quickly and the majority of the other groups in the class copied their effort. As a result, very little discussion was generated within the

groups in the course of completing the task. When the recordings were scrutinised it was clear that the task had failed to yield any sustained interaction. There was also a good deal of background noise on the tapes and disks generated by the nature of the task, which would have made any transcription very difficult.

#### Revised procedure for 'bridge' task

The same task was next given to pupils in 4<sup>th</sup> class in the same school. On this occasion however, the groups of pupils were withdrawn from the class one group at a time. The researcher explained the task to each group and adopted a participant observation role. The groups consisted of three pupils. Video recordings were later transcribed and the speech of the pupils was analysed with a particular focus on use of English, the children's first language, and on linguistic errors in Irish.

The task proved more effective with this class, as each group worked independently without distraction from other groups as they endeavoured to find their own solution to the problem. Some of the groups successfully completed the task while others did not. The task however, did not generate the desired discourse, as the pupils did not discuss possible solutions before they tried them. If one pupil had an idea, then that idea was generally tried uncritically, without much discussion.

The presence of the researcher may have been more intrusive in this instance as the groups were withdrawn from the classroom to an open area on an adjacent landing. The researcher was present with each group as they carried out the task. This experience made it clear that it was more suitable for the purposes of this study to administer the task in whole class situations where possible.

#### *Final task: Playground design*

##### Pilot school C: All-Irish school

In light of the experience in pilot schools A and B, a new task was designed for use in all subsequent data gathering in the pilot phase and in the present study. The task designed was similar to that used in school A but reconfigured in such a way that it could be used in any school without exceptional preparation on the part of the pupils. The pupils were asked to design a playground for children in a school in Zambia. A story about a girl called Maggie attending a school in Zambia was read to the pupils (Appendix 3.5). The

maps and photographs in Appendix 3.6, a copy of which was given to each group, supported the story. The story was chosen in order to introduce an affective dimension into the task. The girl in the story was of a similar age to the children but her life experience had been very different to that of children in a developed country.

The children in pilot school C were informed in advance that there would be a prize for the best design and that the winning group would be chosen by the children in school D, the next school to be visited. This introduced an element of competition into the task, which it was felt would help to motivate the children to engage more fully with it. The experience in pilot school E however, where no such inducement was offered, was that the pupils appeared to engage in the task with equal enthusiasm. Following the story the pupils were asked to design a playground for Maggie's school within a budget of €3,000. A list of equipment and prices was supplied together with a map of the playground as in Appendix 3.7. The pupils had to bear in mind the ages of the children the weather in Zambia and safety issues, as they designed the playground.

The pupils in pilot school C were in 5<sup>th</sup> class and they worked in groups of five on this task. Although groups of three pupils are viewed as optimal in order to transcribe the discourse more accurately, the teacher had pre-arranged the pupils in groups of five and it was decided not to change this arrangement. There were six groups of five in the classroom with some space between the groups to ensure that they worked independently. By and large the groups did work independently with occasional enquiries made to one another regarding how much money that they had spent or the number of swings that they had included for example.

Recording took place while the pupils drew a design for the playground on a sheet of A3 paper that was supplied to each group. An A4 copy of this sheet is contained in Appendix 3.8. The recording equipment consisted of one video camera, one mini-disc recorder and four tape-recorders. The task generated an animated discussion among the pupils and was deemed suitable for eliciting samples of their speech in as naturalistic a situation as possible. The recordings were later transcribed and the speech of the pupils was analysed with a particular focus on their use of English, the children's first language, and grammatical errors in Irish. (See Appendix 3.9. transcripts of pilot school C.)

Because of the success of this task in providing an authentic context for peer-to-peer interaction, in motivating pupils to focus their attention on the task and to engage with it in



an enthusiastic way, it was decided to use it for future data-gathering. It differed from the first two tasks piloted since it could be used in any immersion school and as it facilitated the recording process of the peer-to-peer interaction.

#### Pilot school D: *Gaeltacht* or Native speaker school

School D is located in a *Gaeltacht* or Irish-speaking heartland area in which Irish is the main language of communication for the majority of the population. School D was chosen in order to have samples of native speakers of the same age performing the same task as pupils in all-Irish schools with which to compare the linguistic discourse generated by the two types of speakers. This ensures an accurate comparison with actual native speaker data rather than the researcher's intuitions about what constitutes native speaker data (Harley, 1991). As stated above, because the task employed in pilot school C proved successful, it was decided to use the same task in pilot school D. The pupils therefore, were set the task of designing a school playground for Maggie and her friends in Zambia. They were drawn from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes. The analysis of the data however, was confined to 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> classes. Due to the small number of pupils in this school it was necessary to include 5<sup>th</sup> class pupils in the analysis. The recording equipment consisted of one video camera, one mini-disc recorder and six tape-recorders.

The recordings were later transcribed and the speech of the pupils was analysed with a particular focus on the linguistic expressions used, Irish syntactic patterns, use of the copula *Is*, code-mixing, and grammatical errors in Irish. Pilot school D is identified as School 10 in the present study.

#### Pilot school E: All-Irish school

A further school was chosen in order to replicate the task of designing a playground, and also to pilot the stimulated recall process after completion of the task (See 3.4.2 below). The researcher administered the task under the same conditions as employed in pilot schools C and D. The pupils in this school however, were chosen from 6<sup>th</sup> class, which differed from school C where they were in 5<sup>th</sup> class. The task proved successful once again in eliciting peer-peer interaction. The children were grouped in threes. This facilitated easier transcription of the recordings. The recording equipment consisted of one video

camera, one mini-disc recorder and six tape-recorders. Pilot school E is identified as School 9 in the present study.

#### **3.4.1.3 Recording of peer-peer interaction**

The pupils worked in groups and their peer-peer dialogue was audio and video-recorded for analysis at a later stage. The recordings were made initially with one mini-disc recorder, one cassette recorder and one video recorder. This enabled the recording of three groups at any one time. Further equipment was purchased in order to record a greater number of groups. In the present study, three video recorders, one mini-disc recorder and six cassette recorders were used. This enabled the recording of up to ten groups at any one time, which was sufficient for all class sizes in the study.

#### **3.4.1.4 Transcription**

Experience in the pilot phase of the study established that video recordings were easier to transcribe than the audio recordings, as it was possible to see which pupil was speaking and on occasions, to lip-read, which considerably increased the accuracy of the transcription. The video recordings also facilitated the stimulated recall as described in 3.4.2. For the purpose of generating a corpus of the pupils' speech, it was decided to transcribe the first twenty minutes of the video recordings in each school. The first twenty minutes were chosen, as this was the period, which from experience, generated the greatest level of energy and discussion from the pupils. After this period there were a greater number of pauses where the pupils concentrated on the drawing of their design. It would also have been prohibitive in the context of this study to transcribe and analyse the entire recording for each group, which averaged 35 minutes. By choosing the first twenty minutes, it was possible to generate up to 60 minutes of speech in each school i.e. three groups of twenty minutes each. This target was achieved in the majority of the schools. On a number of occasions, due to difficulties with camera settings or a microphone cable loosening, not all recording was successful. In total however, 6 hours and 20 twenty minutes of the pupils' speech in all-Irish schools was successfully recorded and transcribed. A further 60 minutes of pupils' speech in Gaeltacht schools was also recorded in order to enable a comparison between the all-Irish schools pupils and native speakers of a similar age.

The transcripts of the pupils' speech were subsequently compiled into a corpus. The recordings were transcribed initially using regular orthography and sentence punctuation. They were presented in this fashion, as they were used as a stimulated recall exercise for pupils whom it was felt would be most comfortable with regular orthography. As the focus of the analysis was on lexical and syntactic items this format was retained for the final corpus. The transcription conventions as set out in Appendix 4.1 were developed for schools D and E. They are based on the work of ten Have (1999) in particular with modifications drawn from the work of Cameron (2001), Harris and Murtagh (1999), and Swann (2001). The excerpts selected in the text have been translated into English but it was beyond the scope of this research to translate all the transcribed speech.

### **3.4.2 Stimulated recall**

One means of allowing a subject to reflect on their language use is to video-record them and to show them the video-recording a short time after the data gathering exercise. These recordings can then be used to ask participants to explore their perceptions while they were performing the task (Sato & Lyster, 2007). This type of study can be classed as a retrospective study (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). This is where the exploration takes place after the data gathering. The retrospective method used in this study has been called a stimulated recall (Chaudron, 2003; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Mackey, 2002; McDonough, 1995; Polio et al., 2006). In a stimulated recall the researcher can prompt participants regarding thoughts they had while engaged in a task (Gass & Mackey, 2000). While asking 11 and 12 year old pupils to explore their states of consciousness may not be possible or reliable (Brown & Rodgers, 2002) the recorded extracts allow the pupils to reflect on their performance of the task and on the language used. The stimulated recall presents the pupils with his/her own speech as an object upon which to reflect. The researcher attempts to help the learner to externalise his/her thinking and to gain insights into the current state of the learner's interlanguage. The pupils are given an opportunity to reflect on their output and to correct it upon reflection thus giving more reliable evidence of their underlying linguistic competence. This provides richer data than would be available if one relied merely on the evidence of the linguistic performance in the initial recording.

The interactive tasks designed for this study focussed pupils' attention on the completion of the exercise itself rather than on the language being used. The stimulated recall process allows the researcher to seek clarification of issues which might not otherwise be capable of interpretation (Polio et al., 2006). The issues the learners notice in a stimulated recall are also important as it gives an indication of where their attention was focussed during the interaction. Polio et al. (2006) caution against drawing conclusions from what is not noticed in the transcripts. In such cases it may be necessary to draw the pupils' attention to grammatical errors in order to check their understanding of the correct forms.

Following transcription of Group I in Pilot school E in this school, which had been video-recorded, it was noted that pupils failed to use the copula *Is* 'is' when appropriate. Instead, they over used the substantive verb *Bí* 'to be'. It was decided to explore this and other aspects of the pupils' communicative performance with them in order to gain a greater insight into their understanding of these aspects of Irish grammar. The researcher returned to the school and the pupils in this group were invited to participate in a stimulated recall of excerpts of their group work.

There were three phases to the stimulated recall activity. In the first phase the pupils viewed recorded video excerpts and gave their general thoughts on the extracts. As they cited language related issues the researcher focussed the reflection on these issues easing them into the activity in a non-threatening way and to gain their confidence and trust. In this way they were enabled to share their observations and insights into their thought processes with an interested enquirer. In the second phase the pupils were given a transcript of the excerpt that they had just viewed and shown the recording a second time. After the second viewing they were invited to correct any mistakes that they had noted in the recording or in the transcript. The third phase focussed on the mistakes that the pupils corrected. The issue of why they made mistakes when they knew the correct form was explored with them together with their thought processes as they were engaged in the collaborative task. As it transpired the pupils engaged in the process with enthusiasm and appeared to enjoy the experience. The stimulated recall activity was replicated in all school in the main study. Excerpts from the transcripts of the stimulated recall sessions are examined in detail and the results are reported in Chapter 6.

### **3.4.3 Pupil questionnaire**

#### **3.4.3.1 Introduction**

This section describes the development of a 57-item questionnaire to measure various aspects of all-Irish school pupils' attitude and motivation in relation to Irish. The scales developed include:

1. Integrativeness scales
  - a. Attitude to Irish speakers (7 items)
  - b. Integrative orientation to Irish (4 items)
2. Motivation scales
  - a. Desire to learn Irish (5 items)
  - b. Motivational intensity to learn Irish (4 items)
  - c. Attitude to learning Irish (8 items)
3. Other scales
  - a. Instrumental orientation to Irish (3 items)
  - b. Parental encouragement (7 items)
  - c. Irish-ability self-concept (8 items)
  - d. All-Irish school scale (11 items)

It was noted in Chapter 2 that pupil attitude towards the learning situation and integrativeness can affect an individual's motivation to learn a second language (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Although a causal connection cannot be demonstrated between attitudinal variables and proficiency and these affective variables can help to support and maintain motivation to learn a second language over the long period required to attain mastery in the second language (Harris & Conway, 2002). As noted by Ushioda (1996) motivation can change over time and the responses of the pupils in the present study capture their attitude and motivation as they come to the end of their primary education.

Pupils in all-Irish schools may be motivated to attain communicative competence in Irish but may lack sufficient motivation to acquire the level of attainment necessary to speak with grammatical accuracy. The stimulated recall activity in School E as described above revealed interesting insights about the pupils' perceptions of their own proficiency in Irish. Arising from this experience it was deemed desirable to try to measure the attitudinal variables and the integrativeness of the pupils in the study. The instrument chosen to

measure these was the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) developed by Gardner (1985a) in Canada. This AMTB was adapted by Harris and Murtagh (1999) and it was further adapted for the purposes of this study. As the merits of administering an AMTB arose at the end of the pilot phase it was only administered to Schools 1-8 in the present study but not to School 9, which was part of the pilot phase. A total of eight schools then and 172 pupils participated in this section of the research. The AMTB and stimulated recall activity are seen as complementary to one another particularly in relation to the issue of motivation. Ushioda maintains that:

a more introspective type of research approach is needed to explore qualitative developments in motivational experience over time, as well as to identify the contextual factors perceived to be in dynamic interplay with motivation. (1996, pp. 240-241)

The use of the two instruments provided both quantitative and qualitative data on the issue of pupil motivation and the factors that affect it.

An AMTB consists of item-stems or statements to which the pupils are required to indicate their response. Whereas the original AMTB developed by Gardner et al. (1979) uses either a seven-point Likert (1932) type format or a multiple-choice format. A five-point response format ranging from *Easaontaím go mór* 'strongly disagree' to *Aontaím go mór* 'strongly agree' has been used in the present study following the approach adopted by Harris and Murtagh (1999). The Harris and Murtagh (1999) AMTB is divided in two sections. Section one contains 77 items of the five-point Likert type response format. Section 2 contains three open-ended responses where pupils could give their opinions of the learning situation. Their study used an Irish version and an English version of the questionnaire depending on whether it was an Irish-medium or an English-medium school. The Irish version was used in this study, as every school was an all-Irish school. The pupils could look for clarification however, if they did not understand any item. Where clarification was sought the item was explained using different terminology in Irish or was translated into English where it was deemed necessary. An English version of the AMTB was referred to on such occasions to ensure consistency of translation.

### 3.4.3.2 Piloting of questionnaire

The 77 items in the Harris and Murtagh (1999) study were adapted and extra items were added to suit the purposes of this study. Items 28 and 61 for example, were omitted, as they were deemed less relevant to the all-Irish school context:

- 28. I get nervous and mixed up when I am speaking Irish in my Irish class.
- 61. During the Irish lesson, I wish that only Irish was spoken.

The following 20 items were designed to give a greater insight into the attitudes and motivation of all-Irish school pupils. The focus of these new items was the pupils' Irish-ability self-concept, their use Irish outside of school and the importance that they attach to speaking Irish with grammatical accuracy. In composing these items the development of Gardner's (1985a) model as proposed by (Dörnyei, 2005) was taken into account. They attempt to assess the pupils' willingness to communicate in the target language (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003) and include items associated with the 'Ideal L2 Self' (Dörnyei, 2006):

#### Irish-ability self-concept (8 items)

<u>Items as they appeared in questionnaire:</u>	<u>English translation of items:</u>
81. <i>Dá dtabharfainn cuairt ar an nGaeltacht, bheinn ábalta treoir a lorg agus a leanúint i nGaeilge chun mo bhealach a fháil.</i>	If I visited the Gaeltacht, I would be able look for directions and follow them to find my way.
82. <i>Dá mbuailfinn le cainteoir dúchais Gaeilge, thuigfeadh sé/i mo chuid Gaeilge gan aon fhadhb.</i>	If I met a native Irish speaker, s/he would understand my Irish without any difficulty.
86. <i>Labhraim Gaeilge cosúil le cainteoir dúchais.</i>	I speak Irish like a native speaker.
88. <i>Tá feabhas an-mhór tagtha ar mo chuid Gaeilge ó bhí mé i rang 3.</i>	My Irish has improved greatly since I was in 3 <sup>rd</sup> class.
90. <i>Cheapfadh cainteoir dúchais go raibh Gaeilge an-mhaith agam.</i>	A native speaker would think that my Irish was very good.
91. <i>Tá sé i bhfad níos deacra orm Gaeilge a labhairt ná Béarla.</i>	It is much more difficult for me to speak Irish than English.
92. <i>Tuigim cainteoirí dúchais gan aon fhadhb nuair a bhíonn siad ag labhairt Gaeilge.</i>	I understand native speakers without any difficulty when they are speaking Irish.
95. <i>Tá sé deacair an Ghaeilge a labhairt an t-am go léir ar scoil.</i>	It is difficult to speak Irish at all times in school.

#### Use of Irish by all-Irish school pupils (12 items)

<u>Items as they appeared in questionnaire:</u>	<u>English translation of items:</u>
---	--------------------------------------

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 53. <i>Faighim leabhair i nGaeilge ar iasacht ón leabharlann uaireanta.</i>   | I often borrow Books in Irish from the library.  |
| 60. <i>Bainim taitneamh as an léitheoireacht mar chaitheamh aimsire.</i>  | I enjoy reading as a pastime.  |
| 61. <i>Taitníonn sé liom go bhfuil mé go maith ag an nGaeilge mar gur féidir liom cabhair a thabhairt do pháistí eile atá á foghlaim.</i> | I like being good at Irish because I can help other children that are learning it.                     |
| 66. <i>Ba mhaith liom freastal ar mheánscoil lán-Ghaeilge.</i>  | I would like to attend a second-level all-Irish school.  |
| 83. <i>Bheinn míchompordach ag labhairt Gaeilge le mo chairde scoile taobh amuigh d'imeachtaí scoile.</i>                                 | I would be uncomfortable speaking Irish to my school friends outside of school activities.             |
| 84. <i>Is rud tábhachtach dom é Gaeilge a labhairt gan aon bhotúin nuair a bhím ag caint leis an múinteoir.</i>                           | It is important for me to speak Irish without mistakes when I am speaking to the teacher.              |
| 85. <i>Labhraím Gaeilge go minic lasmuigh d'am agus d'imeachtaí scoile.</i>   | I often speak Irish outside of school and school activities.   |
| 87. <i>Tuigim go ndéanaim botúin uaireanta nuair a bhím ag labhairt Gaeilge ach bheadh an iomarca trioblóide ann iad a cheartú.</i>       | I know that I make mistakes when I am speaking Irish but it would be too much trouble to correct them. |
| 88. <i>Tagann feabhas ar mo chuid Gaeilge de réir mar a labhraím í níos minice.</i>   | The more I speak Irish the more it improves.   |
| 93. <i>Is rud tábhachtach dom é Gaeilge a labhairt gan aon bhotúin nuair a bhím ag caint le mo chairde ar scoil.</i>                      | It is important for me to speak Irish without mistakes when I am speaking to my friends in school.     |
| 94. <i>Ceapaim go dtiocfadh athrú mór ar mo chuid Gaeilge dá rachainn chun cónaithe sa Gaeltacht.</i>                                     | I think that my Irish would change greatly if I went to live in the Gaeltacht.                         |
| 96. <i>Ba mhaith liom a bheith in ann Gaeilge a labhairt cosúil le cainteoir dúchais.</i>   | I would like to be able to speak Irish like a native speaker.  |

The addition of these 20 items and other amendments resulted in there being a total of 96 items in Section 1. There were three open-ended questions in Section 2 of the Harris and Murtagh (1999) AMTB to which a further question was added for the present study namely: 100. '*Seo iad na rudaí a spreagann mé le Gaeilge a labhairt ...*' (These are the things which encourage me to speak Irish ...).

The AMTB as described was administered for the first time in School 1. A questionnaire was distributed to each pupil in the class and a set of instructions (Appendix 7.4) was read out. When it was clear that the pupils understood the practice questions each of the items 1-96 was read aloud, and repeated where necessary. This was done to ensure



that no pupil would be unable to participate due to reading difficulties and this was the approach adopted by Harris and Murtagh (1999). The questionnaire together with the percentage of pupils choosing each response option is shown in Appendix 7.1. The items have been grouped under the appropriate scales for the sake of clarity. The items in the actual pupil questionnaire were presented in numerical order, which resulted in the scales being scrambled.

### 3.4.3.3 Revision of questionnaire

The pupils in School 1 found the questionnaire rather long and became tired as they approached the end of the exercise. As a result, it was decided to analyse the responses of these pupils and to examine ways in which the questionnaire could be modified to make it shorter.

The questionnaires from School 1 were analysed and items that had a high ‘*neodrach*’ (neutral) response were examined with a view to removing them. An example of such an instance was item 72:

*Tá mé níos fearr ag scríobh na Gaeilge ná an chuid is mó de na daltaí i mo rang.*

‘I am better than most pupils in my class at Irish writing.’

Seven pupils out of 11 chose the neutral response for this item.

Another example was item 48:

*Ba mhaith liom aithne a chur ar níos mó daoine a labhraíonn Gaeilge.*

‘I would like to get to know more people that speak Irish.’

Six out of 11 pupils chose the neutral response for this item.

There were three items in the Harris and Murtagh (1999) AMTB that dealt with use of Irish at home. Items 55, 64 and 74.

55. My mother sometimes speaks Irish at home.

64. My father sometimes speaks Irish at home.

74. No one at home ever speaks Irish.

As the pupils’ exposure and use of Irish are viewed as important factors in the pupils’ acquisition of Irish it was deemed necessary to elicit more information about this aspect of Irish use. For the purposes of the pilot questionnaire items 55, 64 and 74 were omitted and three new items were added (63,69,54) in an attempt to get a clearer picture of Irish use in the home:

54. *Labhraímid Gaeilge sa bhaile cuíosach minic.* We speak Irish at home fairly often.  
 63. *Labhraímid Gaeilge sa bhaile uaireanta.* We speak Irish at home sometimes.  
 69. *Labhraímid Gaeilge sa bhaile i gcónaí nach mór.* We speak Irish at home almost always.

When the responses were analysed however, it was difficult to interpret them as to the actual use of Irish at home. It was decided therefore to insert a new item on page one which gathered background information about the respondents. The inclusion of the item in this format also enabled a comparison with two other Irish studies where a similar item was used. The studies in question are Murtagh (2003) and Ó Riagáin & Ó Gliasáin (1994). The new item is item iv:

	Riamh	Go hannamh	Anois is arís	Go minic	An-mhinic	I gcónaí
iv. Labhraímid Gaeilge sa bhaile	o	o	o	o	o	o

As this was a new item added for School 2 and subsequent schools, there are only 161 responses to this item.

Other items, upon further examination, were considered less central to the purposes of this study and in some cases more relevant to pupils learning Irish as a subject in an English-medium school and were consequently removed. It was important however, not to compromise the integrity of the instrument in such a way that it would not be possible to compare the attitudes and motivations of pupils in the present study with pupils in the Harris and Murtagh (1999) study. The ten items associated with interest in second/foreign language were removed, as were the five items associated with Irish lesson anxiety. The items on Irish-ability self-concept were reformulated to reflect more closely the experiences of pupils in all-Irish schools. The number of items for parental encouragement was reduced from ten to seven. Following the amendments described above 57 of the original 96 items were retained with the same four open-ended questions at the end. The results of the AMTB are presented and discussed in Chapter 7.

#### 3.4.4 Principal and class teacher interviews

On the first visit to each school the principal and 6<sup>th</sup> class teacher were invited to take part in semi-structured interviews (Dörnyei, 2007) that were scheduled to take place on

the second visit to the school. Seven principal teachers and five 6<sup>th</sup> class teachers agreed to be interviewed giving a total of 12 interviews.

Participants were given a Plain Language Statement (Appendix 8.2) and an Informed Consent Form (Appendix 8.3) so that they were fully aware of the format of the interview and the issues that were to be discussed. A reasonable estimate of the time commitment required was offered. The issue of confidentiality was discussed and participants were assured that no information would be disclosed to a third party without their consent. All records and data were kept at a secure location and all identifiable details were altered to ensure that disclosure of participants was avoided and to safeguard their privacy. Consent was obtained in writing having ensured that participants had a full understanding of what the study involved. The consent explained that participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

## **Chapter 4: Description of corpus of pupils' speech**

### **4.1 Introduction**

One of the main purposes of the present study was to gather speech samples from 6<sup>th</sup> classes pupils in all-Irish schools in order to describe the features of their spoken Irish. A collaborative task was designed for this purpose as described in section 3.3.1. Recordings were made of sixty-five 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in nine all-Irish schools throughout the country and it is these recordings that form the basis of the corpus that is analysed in this chapter. The corpus also includes recordings of 15 pupils in two Gaeltacht schools for comparison purposes. The Gaeltacht schools chosen are situated in Irish-speaking heartland areas where there are substantial numbers of native speakers of Irish amongst the children. The Gaeltacht school recordings were made with both 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils, unlike the situation in the all-Irish schools where only sixth classes were used. This was due to the multi-grade classes in the Gaeltacht schools.

The remainder of this chapter contains five sections. The first section commences with a description of the corpus and provides a quantitative analysis of the data. This description and analysis is complemented by a more qualitative analysis in Chapter 5. The first section of the present chapter describes how the corpus was compiled and the methods used to analyse it. The second section generates word-lists that compare the 50 most common words used by Gaeltacht and all-Irish school pupils to see if there are differences in the words used by each school type. This is followed in the third section by an error analysis where the number of utterances with errors will be calculated with a view to providing a general description of the corpus.

Section four examines the pupils' behaviour in both school types in relation to code-mixing and code-switching. An examination is made of the of word-lists generated in section two to see whether the English words used by the pupils fall into the code-mixing or code-switching category. This section also investigates pupils' responses to their peers' code-mixing and code-switching. The corpus will be searched for instances on language related episodes where pupils self-correct, correct others or question the language use of another pupil. The chapter will conclude with a summary and discussion of the findings.

## **4.2 Description of corpus**

### **4.2.1 Analytic systems**

The data gathered and transcribed in the pilot phase of the present study were analysed manually. This method was satisfactory for the initial stages of the study when the quantity of data was manageable and the approach was primarily qualitative. As the combined corpus of pupils' speech in all-Irish and Gaeltacht schools in the present study contains 35,340 words however, it was necessary to supplement a qualitative analysis with a more comprehensive quantitative analysis using computer software. It is relatively easy for a competent speaker to identify the frequently occurring deviant features in the pupils' speech as they readily capture the reader's attention. It was important to determine however, if there was evidence in the corpus that pupils used these same features correctly at other times and to be able to quantify the relative frequency of correct and incorrect use. A tool was sought that would compile all examples of each feature of interest in the data together, to provide a basis for counting the correct and incorrect instances. In this way an accurate picture of the pupils' mastery of each feature could be gleaned.

The other type of analysis that was required was one that would allow a comparison of the language of the Gaeltacht school pupils with the all-Irish school pupils. It might be expected that native speaker pupils would use a wider range of vocabulary and structures than all-Irish immersion pupils, for example. By performing a word count and computing a type-token ratio analysis it is possible to accept or reject this hypothesis for the present corpora.

A number of software tools was examined in an effort to find the most suitable one. WordSmith (2004) was examined to see if it suited the purposes of the present study. WordSmith has been used extensively in the analysis of language corpora (Scott & Tribble, 2006). It contains two tools in particular, which were deemed suitable. The first tool is WordList. WordList can produce word frequency lists that enable a comparison of the range of vocabulary used by the Gaeltacht school pupils and the all-Irish school pupils. It also counts the number of tokens (words) and types (distinct words) in a selected text. It will calculate the percentage of each word in the text together with a type/token ratio. The other WordSmith tool that is particularly useful is Concord. This tool allows a search of the corpus by word or phrase. With this tool it is also possible to view the local linguistic

context in which each word or phrase was used and helps to describe and possibly explain the conditions under which the correct and incorrect forms were used i.e. the concordances. WordSmith has the ability to reduce large amounts of language to manageable lists and concordances which can facilitate the identification of patterns in the text (Scott & Tribble, 2006). WordSmith was selected then as the most appropriate tool to provide suitable quantitative analysis to complement the qualitative analysis.

Before settling on WordSmith two other analytic tools were considered - AnnoTape (Jackson, 2000) and CHILDES (MacWhinney, 2000). AnnoTape is an analytic tool that enables a researcher to listen to recorded data and to code it without the necessity of transcribing all of the data. It was felt however, that the transcription of the data was central to the present study. Since one of the main purposes of the present study was to provide a corpus of pupils' speech that could be used for analysis in the present and in future studies. To fully exploit the opportunity provided by this transcription, WordSmith was considered to be more suitable. The following analysis provides a substantial amount of quantitative data on all-Irish pupils' speech that adds to the understanding of the features of their speech in considerable detail for the first time. This analysis would not have been possible without having the transcribed data available.

The other tool examined was CHILDES. This is a powerful analytic tool that has been widely used by researchers to analyse the language of children. It contains a number of analytic features that would potentially have been suitable for the purposes of this study. Many of these features however, have only been automated for major languages and Irish is not one of them. The task involved in modifying the CHILDES tools for Irish, and in the transcription of the data to conform to CHILDES conventions, was beyond the scope of this study, which is broad in nature and contains other elements apart from the compilation and analysis of the corpus.

To implement the analysis using WordSmith, the transcripts of the pupils' speech were first saved in plain text format and imported into WordSmith. The WordList tool was used to compile a wordlist for each school. Table 4.1 summarises the statistics from these wordlists. Columns 1-3 identify the school, the number of pupils whose speech was transcribed and the length in minutes of the transcripts. It will be recalled that following the pilot phase the expectation was that about 40 minutes or more of pupils' speech would be required in each school. This aim was achieved in most locations. In the case of School 3 a

microphone became disconnected and no audio signal was recorded. Another group in this school completed the task very quickly with the result that only 26 minutes of speech needed to be recorded in that school. In School 8 one group was inhibited by the presence of the camera and whispered or used gestures to avoid being recorded on the videotape. The transcription of this group was not included in the final corpus. The recordings in School 9 and School 10 were conducted as part of the pilot phase when only one video-recorder was in use. As a result only 21 and 17 minutes of speech were transcribed in School 9 and School 10 respectively.

#### **4.2.2 Preliminary type/token analysis**

Column 4 in Table 4.1 shows the number of tokens (words) transcribed in each school. This figure ranged from 1,274 (School 9) to 5,438 (School 4). The number of types (distinct words) is shown in column 5. This ranged from 274 (School 9) to 648 (School 4). As the texts were of different lengths it was necessary to use a standardised type/token ratio (STTR) in order to compare them. The tokens in this case are the number of words in the text, and the types are the different or distinct words. WordSmith was set to compute the type/token ratio every 1,000 words as it goes through each text file. A running average is thus calculated, and the average type/token ratio is based on consecutive 1,000-word chunks of text (Scott, 2004). This allows a comparison of the STTR where there are texts of differing lengths. It can be seen then in column 6 that the STTR for all-Irish schools ranges from 22.0 (School 1) to 25.4 (School 4), and the average, when all texts were combined for these schools, was 23.3. In the case of the Gaeltacht schools the STTR ranges from 23.4 to 29.2, and the average, when all texts were combined was 24.9. The overall average for the two school types does not appear to differ greatly at 23.3 and 24.9 for all-Irish and Gaeltacht schools respectively. The only STTR that stands out in column 6 is 29.2 (School 10). This may indicate that the pupils in this school had greater lexical density than the other schools. Scott (2004) cautions however, that the STTR value is a rather crude measurement of lexical density.

Column 7 gives a value for the mean length of sentence, as measured by the number of words, used by the pupils. A range of four to six words may appear rather short for 11-13 year old pupils. It must be remembered however, that the focus of the task is on interaction and short utterances would be expected in this type of unplanned conversation.

Due to the concrete nature of the task it was possible for the pupils to point to the plan that they were designing and to the list of equipment that they could buy without naming every object. This proved true in both the Gaeltacht and all-Irish schools.

Table 4.1 gives summary statistics for each school type based on the results of the analysis of the WordList tool in WordSmith, the next section will compare the 50 most common words used by school type.

**Table 4.1**  
**School by school summary of the basic features of the corpus of all-Irish and Gaeltacht pupils' spoken Irish**

School ID	No. of pupils whose speech was transcribed	No. of minutes transcribed	No. of tokens (words) transcribed	No. of types (distinct) words	Standardised type/token ratio	Mean length of sentence (in words)
<b>All-Irish schools</b>						
School 1	6	40	2,504	348	22.0	4
School 2	9	55	4,286	523	23.1	5
School 3	6	26	2,933	395	23.9	6
School 4	9	60	5,438	648	25.4	6
School 5	9	56	4,334	453	22.8	5
School 6	11	51	4,144	489	22.0	6
School 7	6	40	3,482	428	22.6	6
School 8	6	31	2,388	396	23.0	5
School 9	3	21	1,274	274	23.2	5
<b>Total all-Irish schools</b>	65	380 (6 hrs. 20 mins.)	30,783	1,527	23.3	5
<b>Gaeltacht schools</b>						
School 10	6	17	1,451	330	29.2	6
School 11	9	43	3,106	408	23.4	6
<b>Total Gaeltacht schools</b>	15	60	4,557	556	24.9	6
<b>Total for both school types</b>	80	440 (7 hrs. 20 mins.)	35,340	1,680	23.5	5

### **4.3 50 most common words: Variations by school type**

The purpose of comparing the 50 most common words used by each school type is to see if there are any significant variations or patterns to be found in word usage between Gaeltacht schools and all-Irish schools. The composite list for all-Irish schools in the study will be compared to the Gaeltacht schools. This list is based on the combined transcripts of the nine all-Irish schools in the study analysed together. This may highlight similarities or



differences between the pupils in the two school types that would merit further investigation. It might be expected for example that native Irish-speaking pupils would use a wider range of verbs in completing the task than their peers in all-Irish schools. As noted in Chapter 2, immersion pupils have been found to use a number of high-coverage items and stretch these to meet their needs in a variety of contexts (Harley, 1992; Harley et al., 1990; Johnstone, 2002; McKendry, 2007). It should be borne in mind however, in the context of the present study that the two subcorpora were based on a similar task and were thus constrained by the subject matter and context of the discourse. The native-speaker pupils may not have been extended in the context of the task to display the full range of their ability.

One method of checking if this is the case in the corpus in the present study is to compare the most common words used by pupils in each school type. Another area of interest is the pupils' use of English discourse markers and words borrowed from English. The compilation of common word lists may also shed light on this area. Table 4.2 below presents the 50 most common words used by the Gaeltacht pupils in order of frequency and the percentage usage of each word is compared with that of the all-Irish school pupils. The use by the all-Irish school pupils of those 50 most common words is also presented in Table 4.2. While it is acknowledged that it is quite ambitious to try to show 50 words in the one table and that the table is quite dense, it was considered important to display them in one table as they represent a relatively high proportion of all the words used by the pupils.

Column 1 in Table 4.2 shows the 50 most common words used by the Gaeltacht pupils. We can see the frequency order of the words used in column 2. The number of times each word was used is shown in columns 3 and 6 for Gaeltacht and all-Irish school pupils respectively. The figures that are of immediate interest in this table are the percentages in columns 4 and 7. Column 4 gives the percentage of the number of times each word was used out of the total corpus for Gaeltacht schools. Column 6 gives a similar figure for the all-Irish schools. The total percentages are given at the bottom of columns 4 and 7. We can see then in column 4 that the 50 most common words used by the Gaeltacht school pupils represent 56.4% of all the words spoken in their corpus. An examination of column 7 reveals that the same 50 words represent 51.0% of all the words spoken by the all-Irish school pupils. It appears from this analysis that there is a large degree of similarity between the two school types in their frequency of usage of these 50 words.

It may be of interest to note that some of the 50 most common words in the Gaeltacht school list appear further down the frequency order in the case of all-Irish schools. The corresponding frequency order for all-Irish schools is given in column 5. The words from the all-Irish school corpus that do not appear in the Gaeltacht list for the 50 most common words are listed in Table 4.3 below. The analysis at this point is confined to the 50 words in column 1 of Table 4.2.

When the frequency percentages in columns 4 and 7 in Table 4.2 are compared for individual words a number of notable differences emerge. These differences are listed below and highlighted in the table with an asterisk \*:

- The personal pronoun *acu* ‘at them’ is used almost thirty times more frequently by the Gaeltacht pupils (1.83%) than the all-Irish school pupils (0.06%) as can be seen in row 6 for example.
- The eclipsed number *gcéad* (*céad*) ‘hundred’ is used almost three times as frequently by the Gaeltacht pupils (0.94%) as compared to the all-Irish school pupils (0.33%) in row 23.
- The personal pronoun *é* ‘it’, is used almost twice as frequently by the all-Irish school pupils (4.06%) as compared to the Gaeltacht pupils (2.29%) in row 4. Although there are many other words used twice as frequently by one school compared to the other, *é* is significant because of its high placing in the frequency order for both school types.
- The personal number *beirt* ‘two’ in row 24 is used just over seven times more frequently by the Gaeltacht pupils (0.87%) than the all-Irish school pupils (0.12%).
- If we combine rows 29 and 34 the numbers *míle* ‘thousand’ and its lenited form *mhíle*, they are used twice as often by the Gaeltacht pupils (1.21%) as by the all-Irish school pupils (0.62%).
- The verbal noun *iarraidh* ‘try’ is used over three times more frequently by Gaeltacht pupils (0.50%) than the all-Irish school pupils (0.14%) in row 47.

**Table 4.2**  
**The 50 most common words in frequency order as used by the Gaeltacht pupils compared to the all-Irish immersion pupils'**

Words	Gaeltacht schools			All-Irish schools		
	Frequency order	No. of times used	%	Frequency order	No. of times used	%
sin	1	251	5.47	1	1859	6.03
tá	2	176	3.84	4	998	3.24
an	3	150	3.27	2	1433	4.65
é*	4	105	2.29	3	1252	4.06
a	5	85	1.85	6	570	1.85
acu*	6	84	1.83	216	20	0.06
agus	7	84	1.83	5	758	2.46
againn	8	77	1.68	30	200	0.65
chéad	9	77	1.68	9	440	1.43
sé	10	74	1.61	8	499	1.62
ag	11	71	1.55	11	421	1.37
ceann	12	66	1.44	22	250	0.81
bhfuil	13	57	1.24	14	329	1.07
so	14	54	1.18	13	335	1.09
dhá	15	53	1.16	10	427	1.39
yeah	16	50	1.09	7	535	1.74
seo	17	46	1.00	29	213	0.69
ar	18	45	0.98	16	301	0.98
go	19	45	0.98	18	279	0.91
níl	20	45	0.98	19	277	0.90
no	21	45	0.98	12	350	1.14
rud	22	45	0.98	15	350	1.14
gcéad*	23	43	0.94	67	103	0.33
beirt*	24	40	0.87	158	37	0.12
le	25	40	0.87	49	129	0.42
trí	26	37	0.81	41	144	0.47
cúig	27	35	0.76	27	215	0.70
beidh	28	31	0.68	45	139	0.45
míle*	29	31	0.68	83	83	0.27
ó	30	30	0.65	26	236	0.77
bord	31	29	0.63	60	111	0.36
cad	32	29	0.63	33	184	0.60
euro	33	29	0.63	50	128	0.42
mhíle*	34	29	0.63	63	107	0.35
fágtha	35	28	0.61	53	123	0.40
right	36	28	0.61	55	121	0.39
na	37	27	0.59	21	255	0.83
sleamhnán	38	27	0.59	47	132	0.43
fá*	39	26	0.57	114	59	0.19
fhios	40	26	0.57	93	78	0.25
seacht	41	26	0.57	91	81	0.26
ach	42	25	0.55	56	118	0.38
atá	43	25	0.55	80	84	0.27
ansin	44	24	0.52	17	294	0.95
mise	45	24	0.52	48	130	0.42
tú	46	24	0.52	20	266	0.86
iarraidh*	47	23	0.50	144	44	0.14
agam	48	22	0.48	84	82	0.27
caithfidh	49	22	0.48	61	110	0.36
choinne*	50	22	0.48	184	28	0.09
Total		2,587	56.4%	15,717		51.0%

- Finally the usage of *fá* ‘by’ or ‘for’ in row 39 (26 times) and *choinne* in row 50 (22 times) by the Gaeltacht pupils are related. There is a compound preposition in Ulster Irish *fá choinne* ‘for’, and this compound preposition was used 22 times by the pupils in School 11. This explains the higher percentage of *choinne* (0.48%) for the Gaeltacht pupils compared to the all-Irish school pupils (0.09%) in row 50.

As we have seen in Table 4.2 while there are many similarities in the most common words used by pupils in the two school types, differences that merit further examination have been highlighted. Among the differences are the use of prepositional pronouns *acu* ‘at them’ and *againn* ‘at us’, the use of the pronoun *é* ‘it’ and the use of numbers such as *beirt* ‘two’, *gcéad* ‘hundred’ and *míle* ‘thousand’. These and other differences that emerge will help to inform the qualitative analysis in Chapter 5.

Table 4.3 shows words that were in the 50 most common words used by the all-Irish school pupils but not in the top 50 for Gaeltacht schools. There were 17 words in total in this category. Column 2 shows the frequency order for the all-Irish schools and this can be compared to column 5 that shows the frequency order for the Gaeltacht schools. Similarly the percentage usage in columns 4 and 7 can also be compared. When these columns are compared the striking features that emerge are the following:

- The preposition *mar* ‘like’ or ‘as’ (frequency order 23) and the English borrowing ‘like’ (frequency order 37) are both used five times more frequently by the all-Irish school pupils than the Gaeltacht pupils.
- The present form of the copula *Is ea* ‘is’ is used almost ten times more frequently by the all-Irish school pupils than the Gaeltacht pupils.
- The verbs *Cuir* ‘to put’, *Déan* ‘to do’ and *Faigh* ‘to get’ (frequency order 38, 39 and 40 respectively) are used almost twice or three times more frequently by the all-Irish school pupils than the Gaeltacht pupils.
- Finally, the English borrowing ‘okay’ (frequency order 24) and the preposition *i* ‘in’ (frequency order 36) are used almost twice as often by the all-Irish school pupils as by the Gaeltacht pupils.

These differences from Table 4.3 together with those previously observed from Table 4.2 will be analysed in greater depth in Chapter 5.

Table 4.3

A comparison by school type of the most common words used by the all-Irish immersion pupils which were not in the top 50 words used by the Gaeltacht pupils (Table 4.2 above)

All-Irish schools				Gaeltacht schools		
Word	Freq. order	No. of times used	%	Freq. order	No. of times used	%
mar*	23	250	0.81	151	7	0.15
okay*	24	246	0.80	59	19	0.41
mé	25	241	0.78	53	21	0.46
sea*	28	214	0.69	242	3	0.07
just	31	196	0.64	87	13	0.28
dréimire	32	187	0.61	56	19	0.41
aon	34	182	0.59	258	2	0.04
eile	35	170	0.55	64	18	0.39
i	36	170	0.55	91	12	0.26
like*	37	169	0.55	180	5	0.11
cuir*	38	165	0.54	145	7	0.15
déan*	39	159	0.52	119	9	0.20
faigh*	40	154	0.50	90	12	0.26
ní	42	143	0.46	65	18	0.39
ehm	43	141	0.46	77	14	0.31
amháin	44	140	0.45	66	17	0.37
túr	46	136	0.44	51	22	0.48
Total		3,063	9.9%	218		4.7%

Table 4.4 summarises the statistics in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 is columns 4 and 7 in each table. When the totals for the percentage usage of the 50 words in Table 4.2 and the 17 words in Table 4.3 are added we get a total of 60.9% for the all-Irish schools and 61.1% for the Gaeltacht schools. These 67 words then represent a very similar proportion of the corpus for each school type. It is the relative difference in percentage usage of each word however, that is most informative for the analysis in the present study.

Table 4.4  
67 words in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 as percentage of corpus for each school type

All-Irish schools			Gaeltacht schools	
	No. of times used	%	No. of times used	%
50 words in Table 4.2	15,717	51.0%	2,587	56.4%
17 words in Table 4.3	3,063	9.9%	218	4.7%
Total	18,780	60.9%	2,805	61.1%

#### **4.4 Analysis of corpus for the presence of errors**

The description of the corpus above was supplemented with a manual analysis for the presence of linguistic errors<sup>6</sup> at a lexical and syntactic level. Deviations from native speaker norms were marked for further investigation. The Gaeltacht school corpus was also examined for errors and it was found that while there were some errors they were very few in number (see Table 4.6 below). It will be recalled that the Gaeltacht schools chosen were in Irish-speaking heartland areas defined as Category A areas where over 67% of the population speak Irish on a daily basis (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007). The groups whose speech was selected for transcription were those whom the teacher considered to contain the pupils with the strongest home background in Irish. Due to the prevalence of immigration to Gaeltacht areas (Mac Cóil, 2003; Ó Riagáin, 2008) it was not possible to ensure that every child recorded and transcribed was a native Irish speaker from birth.

The impressionistic view that the reader gets from reading through the all-Irish school corpus is that there are many deviations from native speaker norms in the pupils' speech. The purpose of the error analysis in this section is three-fold:

- (1) to quantify the error rates in all-Irish and Gaeltacht schools
- (2) to have native speakers (NS) judge which utterances deviate from native speaker norms and to compare this to the judgements of a competent L2 speaker
- (3) to establish if there were significant variations in the error rate from school to school.

The procedure adopted was that three excerpts, from three different schools, were selected from the corpus and sent to three adult native Irish speakers. These excerpts combined contained 3,260 words representing 10.6% of the total all-Irish school corpus. As the native speakers were engaging in this exercise on a voluntary basis it was felt that a sample of this size was sufficient for the purposes of the present study. Each of the native speakers represents one of the three main dialects of Irish in Munster, Connacht and Ulster. It was considered important to have each dialect represented, as there are features of Irish that would be acceptable in one area that would not be acceptable in another. The excerpts were selected from a school in Ulster, a school in Connacht and a school in Leinster. Two

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<sup>6</sup> Although a distinction has been made between mistakes and errors all deviations from native speaker norms are treated as errors in this stage of the analysis.

of the schools, one in Connacht (School 2) and one in Ulster<sup>7</sup> (School 5) were deemed to have characteristics of the dialect of their region and were selected for that reason. The third school, located in Leinster (School 4) was representative of schools that are not situated close to a Gaeltacht area.

The excerpts, each containing 190 utterances, were sent to the three native speakers and they were asked to underline an utterance that contained an error. The presence of borrowings from English in an utterance was not to be considered an error. When the excerpts were returned, an utterance was considered to contain an error if each of the three native speakers marked it as having one. In some cases two of the native speakers considered an utterance to be incorrect but not the third. This arose where an utterance although not grammatically correct according to the official standard, may be acceptable in a particular Gaeltacht area. Where an utterance contained two or more errors it was simply counted as being incorrect for the purposes of the analysis in the present study.

Table 4.5 presents the error analysis done by the three native speakers. There was a relatively high level of agreement between the judgements of a competent L2 speaker and the native speakers. Column one identifies the school, group and region in which the school is located. Column two shows the number of errors in each excerpt from a total of 190. When the number of utterances is divided by the number of errors we see in column three that the overall percentage of errors is 33.0% or almost one in three utterances contains an error. It is also noteworthy that the percentage by school varies from 24.2% (School 2) to 41.6% (School 4). Column four shows the number of errors marked by the researcher, a competent second language Irish speaker. The number of errors judged by the L2 speaker is fewer than the native speakers in all cases.

Whether judged by L2 or NS, there was a considerable variation in the number of utterances with errors across the three schools. It was considered useful therefore to select one group from each of the six remaining schools and to calculate the number of utterances with errors per school. The researcher, using the same criteria as those used by the native speakers, made the judgements in this case. The first 190 utterances of the transcript were examined for each group selected. It was the first group from each school that was selected

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<sup>7</sup> Although this school is in the Ulster dialect region it is not in one of six counties of Ulster that form Northern Ireland.

with the exception of School 3 and School 6 where the first group's transcript only contains 165 and 186 utterances respectively.

**Table 4.5**  
**Error analysis by three native speakers (NS) and competent L2 speaker of selected excerpts (N=190 utterances) from three schools**

<b>School and Group</b>	<b>No. of utterances with errors as judged by NS</b>		<b>No. of utterances with errors as judged by competent L2 speaker</b>	
<b>School 2 Grp 01</b> (Connacht)	46/190	24.2%	43	22.6%
<b>School 4 Grp 01</b> (Leinster)	79/190	41.6%	76	40.0%
<b>School 5 Grp 02</b> (Ulster)	63/190	33.2%	59	31.1%
<b>Total</b>	188/570	33.0%	178	31.2%

Column two in Table 4.6 shows the number of utterances with errors in each excerpt of 190 utterances. Columns 3 and 4 show the percentage of incorrect and correct utterances respectively. Based on the total figure for all-Irish schools in Column 3 we can expect to find errors in almost every three utterances out of ten in the corpus (29.2%). There is a substantial difference in the percentage of errors across the schools. School 1 Group 2 for example, has 20.0% of errors whereas School 4 Group 1 has 41.6% of errors. This is not to imply that the quality of the pupils' Irish in School 4 is twice as poor as those of School 1. It does however, as stated at the outset, give a measurement of the number of pupil errors and confirm the impressionistic view that there are many deviations from native speaker norms in the all-Irish school corpus.

The final two rows of Table 4.6 report the results of two Gaeltacht school groups. It can be seen that there were very few errors in the Gaeltacht school corpus. No errors were found in School 10 Group 2 and there were only five errors in School 11 Group 1. It is interesting to note that it was the same pupil that made all five errors in School 11 Group 1. This pupil may not have a strong home background in Irish.



**Table 4.6**  
**Error analysis of selected excerpts (N=190 utterances) from the nine all-Irish schools and two Gaeltacht schools**

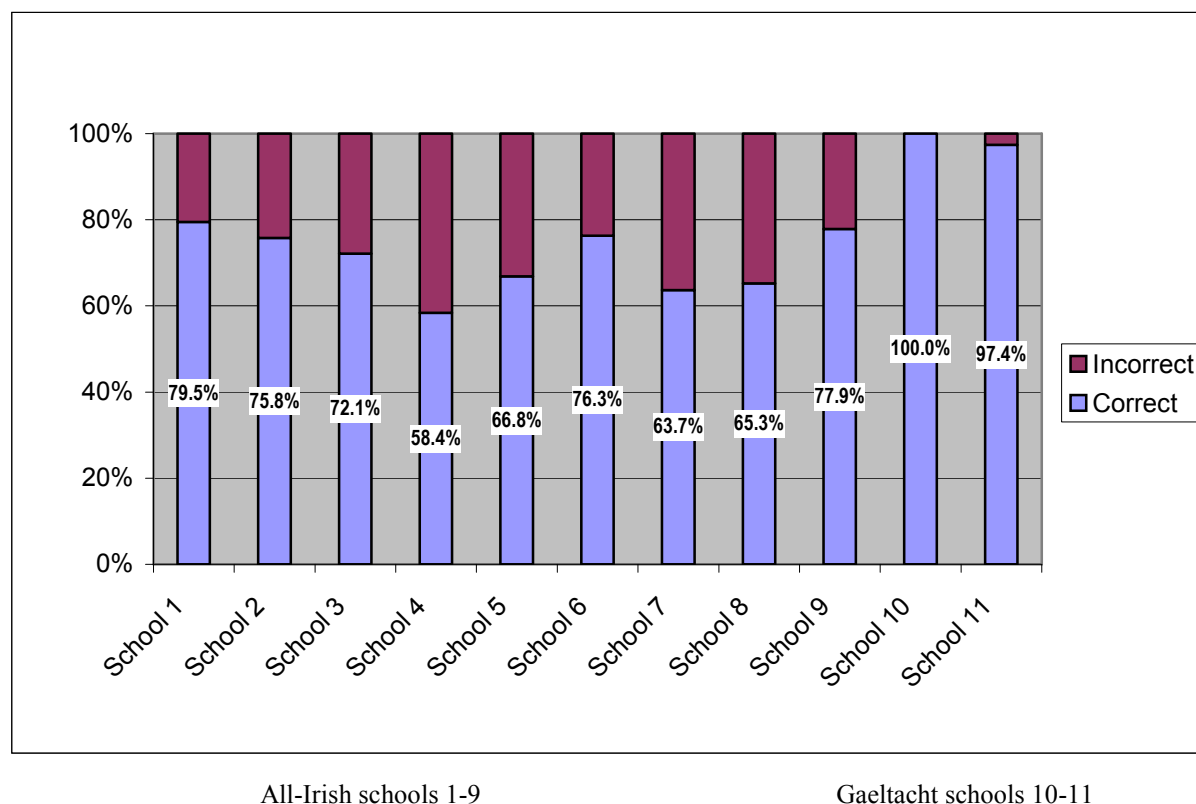
<b>School and Group</b>	<b>No. of utterances with errors</b>	<b>% of utterances with errors</b>	<b>% of utterances without errors</b>
<b>All-Irish schools</b>			
School 1 Grp 2	39**	20.5%	79.5%
School 2 Grp 1	46*	24.2%	75.8%
School 3 Grp 3	53**	27.9%	72.1%
School 4 Grp 1	79*	41.6%	58.4%
School 5 Grp 2	63*	33.2%	66.8%
School 6 Grp 1	45**	23.7%	76.3%
School 7 Grp 1	69**	36.3%	63.7%
School 8 Grp 1	66**	34.7%	65.3%
School 9 Grp 1	42**	22.1%	77.9%
<b>Total all-Irish schools</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>70.8%</b>
<b>Gaeltacht schools</b>			
School 10 Grp 2	0**	0%	100%
School 11 Grp 1	5**	2.6%	97.4%

\* Judged by native speakers \*\*Judged by competent L2 speaker

Figure 4.1 below compares the percentage of correct and incorrect utterances by school and school type. Five of the all-Irish schools fall within a band of 72.1% to 79.5% (Schools 1, 2, 3, 6 and 9) correct utterances and the remaining four all-Irish schools fall within a band of 58.4% to 66.8% (Schools 4, 5, 7 and 8). The excerpts from Gaeltacht schools 10 and 11 had very few if any errors in them.

This error analysis exercise enabled a quantification of the number of deviations from native speaker norms that exist in the all-Irish and Gaeltacht school corpus. The all-Irish pupils have a mean error rate of 29.2%, which is close to three incorrect utterances in every ten. This error rate varies substantially from school to school with four out of ten utterances in School 4 containing errors compared to two out of ten in School 1. It is not intended however, to equate a lower rate of errors with a greater proficiency in Irish. The next chapter will examine the features of those errors in greater detail.

**Figure 4.1**  
**School by school variations in the proportion of errors in the utterances of all-Irish and Gaeltacht pupils**



## 4.5 Code-mixing and code-switching

An examination of the corpus reveals that pupils from both school types use English words while speaking Irish. This phenomenon is quite common among bilinguals (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2006) and we distinguish between code-mixing and code-switching in pupils' use of English. For the purposes of the present study, code-mixing will be taken to mean 'the use of various linguistic units (words, phrases, clauses and sentences)... within a sentence' (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2006, p. 337) or intrasentential use. Code-switching is understood as 'the use of various linguistic units (words, phrases, clauses and sentences)... across sentence boundaries within a speech event' (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2006, p. 337) or intersentential use. The next section looks at the use of English words in general. This is followed by an examination of the code-mixing behaviour of pupils with a particular focus on the most common English words used by the pupils in each school type.

#### 4.5.1 Intrasentential use: The 25 most common English words

The word-list generated by WordSmith was examined to find the most common English words used by pupils in each school type. A systematic examination of the all-Irish school word-list revealed that there was a pattern to English word usage. The words fall into three frequency groupings. The first comprises the seven words in Section A of Table 4.7. The second group comprises the 18 words in Section B of Table 4.7. The third group comprises all the other English words used and can be examined in appendices 4.3 and 4.4. The analysis in this section will concentrate on the first two groups, which are the 25 most common English words used by the pupils in both school types.

It can be seen from the first section of Column 1 in Table 4.7 that there are seven English words that are used more frequently than the remainder. The seven most common words are, ‘yeah’, ‘no’, ‘so’, ‘okay’, ‘just’, ‘like’ and ‘right’. The first two (‘yeah’, ‘no’) will be termed here as affirmative or negative (aff./neg.) particles and the remaining words (‘so’, ‘okay’, ‘just’, ‘like’ and ‘right’) as discourse markers. Discourse markers have also been termed pragmatic markers (Andersen, 2001), but it is the former term that will be employed here.

These seven words represent 6.34% of the total all-Irish school corpus and 4.69% of the Gaeltacht school corpus (Subtotal A Table 4.7). The difference in percentages is perhaps smaller than might have been anticipated given the differences in the language background of the two groups. The relatively high percentage usage of the aff./neg. particles ‘yeah’ and ‘no’ may be determined by the fact that there are no simple words in Irish for ‘yes’ and ‘no’. For agreement/disagreement conversationally in Irish it is normal to echo the positive or negative form of the verb or to use the copula (Mac Congáil, 2004). Even if this factor influences the all-Irish school children who are L1 English speakers, it does not however, explain the high usage of the particles by Gaeltacht pupils who are L1 speakers of Irish. The practice of prefacing their answers in Irish with the aff./neg. particles ‘yeah’ and ‘no’ has however, been noted in the speech of Gaeltacht speakers in Connacht e.g. *‘beidh tú ag goil ann? No, ní bheidh.* [you will be going there? No, I won’t.] (Ó hUiginn, 1994, p. 608). The use of these particles may be for stylistic reasons and to add emphasis rather than due to a lack of vocabulary.

The remaining 18 English words in Section B of Table 4.7 are used less commonly by the Gaeltacht school pupils (0.55%) than their peers in the all-Irish schools (1.12%).

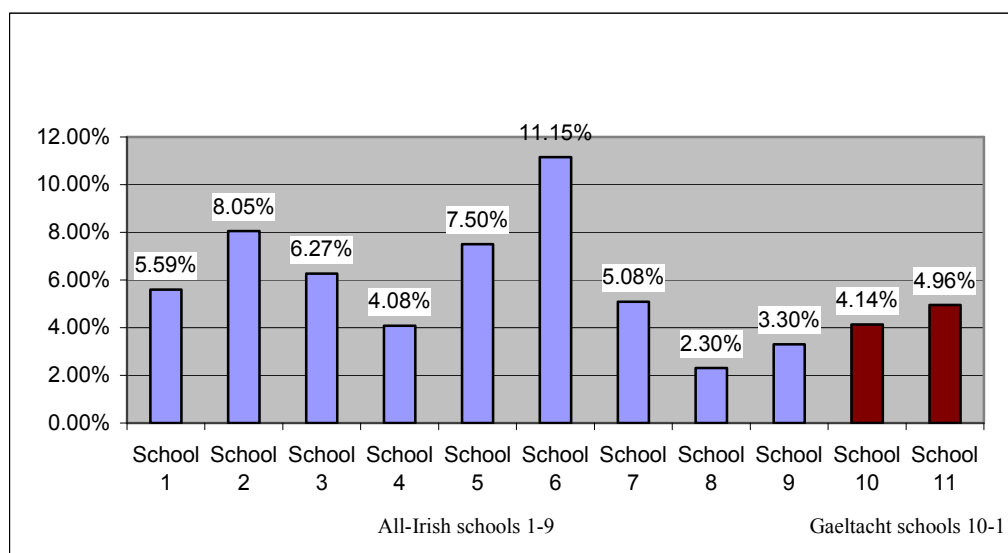
**Table 4.7**  
The 25 most common English words used by all-Irish and Gaeltacht school pupils divided into two groups by order of frequency

Word	All-Irish schools			Gaeltacht schools		
	Frequency order	No. of times used	% of corpus	Frequency order	No. of times used	% of corpus
<b>yeah</b>	7.	535	1.74	16	50	1.09
<b>no</b>	12.	350	1.14	21	45	0.98
<b>so</b>	13.	335	1.09	14	54	1.18
<b>okay</b>	24.	246	0.80	59	19	0.41
<b>just</b>	31.	196	0.64	87	13	0.28
<b>like</b>	37.	169	0.55	180	5	0.11
<b>right</b>	55.	121	0.39	36	28	0.61
	<b>Subtotal A</b>	<b>1,952</b>	<b>6.34%</b>		<b>214</b>	<b>4.69%</b>
<b>‘cos/be cause</b>	176.	37	0.12	132	8	0.17
<b>you</b>	182.	29	0.09	N/A	0	N/A
<b>but</b>	189.	26	0.08	153	6	0.13
<b>what</b>	199.	24	0.08	555	1	0.02
<b>here</b>	208.	22	0.07	453	1	0.02
<b>know</b>	209.	22	0.07	157	6	0.13
<b>then</b>	226.	19	0.06	538	1	0.02
<b>on</b>	232.	17	0.06	N/A	0	N/A
<b>only</b>	233.	17	0.06	N/A	0	N/A
<b>and</b>	235.	16	0.05	N/A	0	N/A
<b>do</b>	244.	15	0.05	N/A	0	N/A
<b>it</b>	246.	15	0.05	N/A	0	N/A
<b>of</b>	248.	15	0.05	482	1	0.02
<b>tent</b>	252.	15	0.05	534	1	0.02
<b>hang</b>	258.	14	0.05	N/A	0	N/A
<b>the</b>	266.	14	0.05	N/A	0	N/A
<b>wait</b>	267.	14	0.05	N/A	0	N/A
<b>see</b>	275.	13	0.04	N/A	0	N/A
	<b>Subtotal B</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>1.12%</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>0.55%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,296</b>	<b>7.46%</b>		<b>239</b>	<b>5.24%</b>

The examination of the corpus revealed evidence of differences in the frequency of use of English aff./neg. particles and discourse markers across schools and school type.

WordSmith concordance tools were used to search the transcript of each school for these words and the results of that search are presented in Figure 4.2 below. It can be seen that the all-Irish schools vary from 2.3% (School 8) to 11.15% (School 6). The two Gaeltacht schools on the other hand are relatively close at 4.14% and 4.96%.

**Figure 4.2**  
**Gaeltacht and all-Irish pupils' use of English affirmative/negative particles and discourse markers as a percentage of all words by school**



The percentages presented in Figure 4.2, although quite high in some cases, contrast with the findings of Mac Fhlannchadha (1999). In his study of 7-8 year old pupils in 2<sup>nd</sup> Class in one all-Irish school, he found that single lexical items accounted for 63.25% of all English words used, whereas aff./neg. particles and discourse markers only accounted for 13.87% of these.<sup>8</sup> Thus a large proportion of the switches were accounted for by nouns, verbs, adjectives etc. that the pupils probably did not know in Irish. This signalled a lack of lexical knowledge on the part of the pupils in his study. The pupils in all-Irish schools in the present study however, do not show any evidence of this. Mac Fhlannchadha studied pupils that were on average four years younger than the pupils in the present study and the infrequency in the use of single lexical items by the older pupils suggests perhaps that there may be significant language acquisition in those four years of immersion. This is in keeping with research findings that the code-mixing of bilingual children decreases with age (Genesee, 2001). Their language behaviour may indicate that they use discourse markers

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that the English word usage percentages presented in this study are of all the words used whereas Mac Fhlannchadha's above, are as a percentage of all English words.

and other features at an unconscious level which meet their communicative needs (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2006). Analysis in the next section throws further light on this.

#### **4.5.2 Code-switching: Use of larger chunks in English**

We have seen from the previous sections that code-mixing accounts for the majority of English word usage by pupils in both school types in the present study. The tendency with code-mixing is for single English words to be used intrasententially. In this section we will examine the use of English words in whole phrases or sentences where there appears to be a switch from Irish to English. For the purposes of quantifying code-switches instances where there were complete utterances in English such as ‘No, no, no’ or ‘No, no, okay’ or ‘Right, right, right’ were not regarded as switches. But, ‘*Just anseo will we, no I don’t know?*’ can be regarded as a code-switch.

The number of switches in the all-Irish school corpus was counted. There are 64 utterances in total as illustrated in the second column of Table 4.9. Approximately one in one hundred utterances (1.07%, Column 5) contain a code-switch, which is a relatively low number and confirms that the use of English words by all-Irish school pupils tends to be for code-mixing purposes. It can also be noted that the number of code switches varies across schools. Schools 1 and 3 did not present any evidence of code-switching and the percentages in the fifth column reflect this.

When the code switches were being counted it was noted that certain pupils had a tendency to code-switch significantly more often than their peers. Two pupils in School 2 for example account for 15 of the 23 code switches, and similarly in School 8, two pupils account for all the code switches.

Table 4.8 shows that School 8 had the greatest number of code switches. School 8 (Table 4.7) made the least use of aff./neg. particles and discourse markers (2.30%). School 5, which had the highest usage of aff./neg. particles and discourse markers (11.15%) only has 1.45% of code-switches. No evidence could be found for a relationship between code-mixing and code-switching for the schools in the present study. The only school that had a high instance of both code-mixing and code-switching, 8.05% and 2.71% respectively was School 2.

**Table 4.8**  
**The code-switching behaviour of all-Irish school and Gaeltacht pupils**

School ID	No. of code switches	% of pupils that code switched	No. of utterances per school	% of code switches per utterance
<b>All-Irish schools</b>				
School 1	0	0	549	0
School 2	23	66.6	849	2.71
School 3	0	0	495	0
School 4	1	11.1	962	0.01
School 5	7	44.4	925	0.76
School 6	11	45.4	761	1.45
School 7	5	66.6	626	0.80
School 8	16	33.3	479	3.34
School 9	1	33.3	296	0.34
<b>Total all-Irish schools</b>	64	35.4%	5,968	1.07%*
<b>Gaeltacht schools</b>				
School 10	2	33.3	283	0.70
School 11	1	11.1	606	0.16
<b>Total Gaeltacht schools</b>	3	20%	889	0.33%*

\*Calculated on the basis of the totals for Column 2 out of the totals for Column 4 (64 out of 5,968 and 3 out of 889)

### 4.5.3 The general use of English words

The use of English words is a feature of the recorded speech of the pupils in both school types in the present study. In order to examine the code-mixing and code-switching behaviour of all-Irish school pupils a search was conducted for all the English words used by the pupils in the corpus using the WordList tool in WordSmith. A full listing by each school type is attached in appendices 4.3 and 4.4 for all-Irish and Gaeltacht schools respectively. Table 4.9 presents a summary of that search. It can be seen from the second row of the table that the all-Irish school pupils used 415 different words in English on 3,087 occasions and that this represented 10.03% of their corpus. The Gaeltacht pupils used 54 different words on 305 occasions and this represented 6.65% of their corpus.

**Table 4.9**  
**Gaeltacht and all-Irish school pupils' use of English words by school type**

	No. of words in English	No. of times used	% of English words in school corpus
<b>All-Irish schools</b>	415	3,087	10.03%
<b>Gaeltacht schools</b>	54	305	6.65%

It can be seen that the all-Irish school pupils used an English word for one out of every ten words and this was just over 50% more often than their Gaeltacht school peers. In her study of two Gaeltacht communities O'Malley Madec (2007) found that adult speakers in the core Irish-speaking heartland community, used English words 2.7% of the time in her corpus. The figure of 6.65% for the use of English words by Gaeltacht pupils in schools 10 and 11 in the present study is almost two and a half times this rate. This difference may be explained by the nature of the task in the present study that elicited speech in fairly densely interactive, task-based communication. O'Malley Madec's sample on the other hand was drawn from informal discourse with adults. It is important nonetheless that when we examine the spoken production on all-Irish school pupils that we compare them with their peers of a similar age engaged in the same task.

#### 4.5.4 Pupil-pupil exchanges: Language related episodes

When the pupils' speech in the collaborative task was being transcribed for the corpus it was noted that on the occasions where pupils code-mixed or code-switched that their peers corrected them and displayed their disapproval either verbally or with gestures. (1) below illustrates a typical example of this type of exchange. In this case Pupil L uses the word 'swing' instead of the Irish equivalent *luascán*, a word that was available on the sheet with the list of equipment. A peer (F) discreetly corrects Pupil L by pointing to the word on the sheet. Pupil C says the correct form and then Pupil L says the correct form and apologises.

##### (1) 09\_01\_126-129

- L *Scríobh isteach cad a bhfuil sé (sic), ó agus cuir na swings anseo.* [Write in what it is, oh and put the swings here.]  
 C *Ceart go leor.* [All right]  
 C <F points to the Irish word for swing on the sheet> *Na luascáin.* [The swings]  
 L *Na luascáin, tá brón orm.* [The swings, I'm sorry.]

In (2) when pupil S says 'exactly enough' he is immediately reminded of the school norm of speaking Irish by pupil E.

##### (2) 04\_01\_207-208

- S *Tá exactly enough ag muidne.* [We have exactly enough.]  
 E *Gaeilge!* [Irish!]



A similar instance was recorded in Gaeltacht School 10 as can be seen in (3). Pupil P uses the word ‘idea’ and pupil D supplies the Irish equivalent *smaoineamh*. Pupil P then rephrases in Irish to show that he has accepted the feedback. Pupil A joins in with the reprimand *Ná abairt (sic) Béarla*. And Pupil P rephrases once again.

**(3) 10\_04\_35-39**

- P    *D tá idea agam, tá idea agam.* [D I have an idea, I have an idea.]  
 D    *Smaoineamh, tá smaoineamh agat.* [Idea, you have an idea.]  
 P    *Tá smaoineamh agam.* [I have an idea.]  
 A    *Ná abairt (sic) Béarla.* [Don’t speak English.]  
 P    *Tá smaoineamh agamsa.* [I have (with emphasis) an idea.]

These type of instances where learners ‘question their language use, or correct themselves or others’ (Swain & Lapkin, 1998, p. 326) have been referred to as ‘language-related’ episodes. A thorough search of the corpus revealed that there were 10 instances in total of this type of episode in the all-Irish school corpus and one [(3) above] in the Gaeltacht corpus. In all 11 cases a pupil was corrected for using English. In no instance in the seven hours and twenty minutes of transcription in the corpus was a pupil corrected by another for making an error in Irish. The only instance that was found that did not relate to the use of English was (4) below where Pupil J engages in a hypothesis-testing episode (Shehadeh, 2002) where he checks the initial mutation of the word *picnic* by repeating *Don phicnic*. Pupil S confirms that he was correct in the first place.

**(4) 03\_03\_250-252**

- J    *... mar caithfidh sé bheith ar an áit don phicnic.* [...because it has to be on the place for the picnic.]  
 J    *Don phicnic?* [For the picnic?]  
 S    *Don phicnic.* [For the picnic]

This type of interaction is typical of what might be expected in negotiation of meaning type tasks where errors may be ignored in order to create an effective social interaction (Swain, 2000b). It may also be that because the errors in Irish did not interfere with the speakers’ message and did not lead to a breakdown in communication, attention was not drawn to them (García Mayo & Pica, 2000). When pupils code-mix or code-switch

however, they are immediately corrected because it is against the school norms. These findings are in keeping with those of Oliver (1998, 2002) and Van den Branden (1997) where it was found that children did not negotiate for form in interactions with their peers.

#### **4.6 Discussion of results**

The recording of the 65 pupils in all-Irish schools has led to the compilation of a substantial corpus of immersion pupils' spoken Irish. The analysis of that corpus and of the 15 pupils in Gaeltacht schools in this chapter has yielded some interesting results. There is a considerable degree of similarity in key linguistic features in the spoken Irish between the two school types despite the differences in language background. One indication of this was the standardised type/token ratio for both school types. The 50 most common words used by the pupils in both school types were also similar and when a further 17 common words used by the all-Irish school pupils were added, it was found that these 67 words accounted for 60.9% of all words used by all-Irish school pupils and 61.1% by Gaeltacht pupils. At a word level then, no major differences emerged between the two school types. Although the most common words may have been very similar, Chapter 5 examines the syntactic features of the pupils' Irish to ascertain if this aspect of their language use distinguishes the two school types.

An error analysis of the utterances from three sample groups by three native speakers revealed that almost one in three utterances contained an error. This analysis was extended to samples from all schools by the researcher and it was found that almost three out of every ten utterances (29.2%) by all-Irish school pupils contained an error. The presence of errors in the Gaeltacht examples was very few however (2.6%). The error rate of 29.2% for all-Irish school pupils after 5,000 hours of instruction through Irish may appear high. Chapter 2 recalled that a study of Grade 12 immersion students, were reported to have an error rate of 54% after about 7,000 hours of instruction in French (Pellerin & Hammerly, 1986). This figure is very close to the 52.2% error rate found in a study of Grade 5 and Grade 6 early French immersion pupils (Spilka, 1976). A further study in the French immersion context carried out by Lyster and Rannta (1997) got an error rate of 34% in student to teacher turns. This also included unsolicited uses of the L1. It is not suggested that it is possible to directly compare these results, as they were the product of different

studies using different methods. It does however, give an indication of the extent of immersion pupils' errors.

In the present study, English words accounted for 10.03% of the all-Irish school corpus and 6.65% of the Gaeltacht school corpus. While the all-Irish school rate is 50% higher than the Gaeltacht school rate, a previous study of native-speaking adults in the Gaeltacht only found a 2.7% rate of English word usage (O'Malley Madec, 2007). This reinforces the importance of comparing all-Irish pupils with native speakers of their own age performing a similar task.

The code-mixing behaviour of pupils was then examined. It was found that seven words 'yeah' and 'no' (affirmative/negative particles), 'so', 'okay', 'just', 'like' and 'right' (discourse markers), accounted for the majority of the code-mixing and for the English words used by pupils in both school types. These seven words accounted for 6.35% all words used by all-Irish school pupils and 4.66% of all words used by Gaeltacht pupils. Although the all-Irish school pupils engaged in code-mixing so did their native speaking peers in the Gaeltacht. While it was speculated above that the all-Irish pupils' English L1 and the fact that there is no direct way of translating 'yes' and 'no' in Irish, may influence the all-Irish school pupils' code-mixing, it could also be linked to a language contact issue where they use the same discourse markers in Irish as they use when speaking English.

Code-switching was found to account for a small percentage of utterances and it tended to be engaged in by particular pupils rather than by all pupils, and two schools had no instances of code-switching. A significant finding resulting from the analysis of the corpus was that there were very few examples of language related episodes where pupils corrected one another's Irish. In all instances where correction took place it was for code-mixing or code-switching. In no case did a pupil correct another for using an incorrect form in Irish. The school norm of speaking Irish appears to exert a strong influence on the pupils and their interpretation of this is, not to speak English or use any English words. It does not appear to extend to speaking Irish with accuracy. This may confirm that when pupils have reached a level of communicative sufficiency in Irish, they lack the sociopsychological motivation to improve on this level (Day & Shapson, 1987; Kowal, 1997).

The analyses reported in this chapter, which are generally at the macro-level, are complemented by a more detailed analysis of the linguistic features of all-Irish pupils' Irish in the Chapter 5. That analysis examines the syntactic and lexical features of the pupil's

Irish at a micro-level. Differences that emerged in Table 4.2 relating the use of words by Gaeltacht and all-Irish school pupils helped to inform the analysis. Those issues include use of the personal pronoun *acu* ‘at them’, use of the personal pronoun *é* ‘it’ and the use of numbers such as *beirt* ‘two’, *gcéad* ‘hundred’.

## **Chapter 5: The syntactic and lexical features of all-Irish school pupil's Irish**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 4 the similarities between the pupils in all-Irish and Gaeltacht schools regarding the words that they used in performing the task assigned to them, and in the manner in which they code-mixed were noted. They differed greatly however, in the number of utterances that contained errors. Given that three out of every ten utterances of the all-Irish school pupils in the present study contain errors, it is important to analyse more closely the features of the pupils' Irish. A description will be given of the features present in the most common errors. An examination will be made of the number of instances where particular aspects of Irish are used correctly or incorrectly. By presenting the features in this way it is intended to inform teachers and schools as to the features that in general, are not being acquired before 6<sup>th</sup> class in all-Irish schools and to inform pedagogical practice.

Before reporting on that analysis it is necessary to explain some aspects of Irish linguistics that are relevant in the context the errors made by the pupils. This is not intended to be a comprehensive account of linguistic differences between Irish and English but a brief account that will help to anticipate some of the deviant features of the all-Irish school pupils' Irish and provide a greater insight into why such deviations are present in the pupils' speech.

### **5.2 Syntactic and morphological features of Irish**

The main areas that will be dealt with in this section are initial mutations in Irish. The word order or syntax in main clauses and subordinate clauses in Irish will then be examined. This will be followed by an explanation of the operation of the copula *Is* and the substantive verb *Bí*. Initial mutations in Irish will then be explained. The characteristics of the use of irregular verbs by pupils as they pertain to the present study will then be examined. Other areas such as the use of numbers, indirect speech, prepositional pronouns, interrogative pronouns and the pronoun *é* 'it' will be explained in the introduction to the analysis of those features as they occur in Section 5.3.

### 5.2.1 Initial mutations in Irish

Initial consonants in Irish can undergo mutation under certain circumstances. This is also a feature of other Celtic languages. The two mutations that are of interest in the context of the present study are lenition and eclipsis. Lenition is represented orthographically by the insertion the letter ‘h’ after the initial consonant and it is said to soften the sound of the consonant. One function of lenition is to distinguish gender in Irish nouns. In the following example the noun is feminine and feminine nouns in nominative singular are lenited after the definite article. E.g. *bean* ‘woman’, *an bhean* ‘the woman’. A masculine noun on the other hand in genitive singular is lenited e.g. *barr an bhoird* ‘the top of the table’. Some possessive pronouns also cause lenition such as *mo pheann* ‘my pen’. Another instance of lenition is that triggered by certain preverbal particles such as *ní* in *ní chuireann tú* ‘you don’t put’.

The effect of eclipsis is to suppress the sound of the initial consonant and replaces it with a new sound. It is represented orthographically by the insertion of the letter of the new sound in front of the initial consonant. E.g. *An bord* ‘the table’ *Ar an mbord* ‘on the table’, the letter ‘m’ is inserted before the initial consonant ‘b’ in the latter case. Certain numbers such as *seacht*, *ocht*, *naoi* and *deich* (seven, eight, nine, and ten) also trigger eclipsis which is of interest in the present study. Another relevant aspect is that certain preverbal particles such as *an* ‘is’, an interrogative particle also triggers eclipsis.

### 5.2.2 Word order principles in main clauses

Canon Peter O’Leary, whose papers were collected by T. F. O’Rahilly in 1922, stated that syntax is critical for the successful revival of Irish:

By far the most important matter for consideration in connection with the revival of our language is the syntax. *If the syntax be good, we have good Irish, even if half the words were foreign. If the syntax be bad, the language is not Irish at all, even though each separate word be the purest Irish.* (Italics in original) (O’Leary & O’Rahilly, 1922, p. 85)

While this statement might be regarded as quite unscientific it gives an indication of the critical role of correct syntax in the acquisition of Irish. The typical subject, verb and object (SVO) order that applies to English and many other languages is different in Irish. Basic sentences in Irish have a VSO order where the verbs come before the subject (Bloch-Trojnar, 2006; Genée, 1998; Hickey, 1992; Mac Cóil, 2003; Mac Congáil, 2004; Stenson,

1981) and the verb raises out of verb phrase (VP) (Henry & Tangney, 1999). Another aspect of Irish, which is different to English, is that adjectives generally follow the noun (Stenson, 1981), and Irish has a high incidence of prepositional pronouns that are inflected (H. Ó Murchú, 2008).

### 5.2.3 Word order principles in verbal noun clauses

Another feature of Irish that differs considerably from English and other languages is the word order of verbal noun clauses. This type of clause has been described as ‘one of the most complex categories of Irish grammar’ (Bloch-Trojnar, 2006, p. 15). In order to illustrate this see sentence (a) below, its Irish translation and the morpheme-by-morpheme gloss. In English the object comes after the verb, that order is reversed in Irish with the insertion of the preposition *a* + lenition (Bloch-Trojnar, 2006). Thus the syntax in Irish is: object+*a* (preposition)+verbal noun (Na Bráithre Críostaí, 1960, p. 249).

- (a) We are going to put them beside the school.  
*Táimid chun iad a chur in aice na scoile.*  
*Táimid chun iad a*  
 be+Verb+PresInd+1P+Pl to+Prep+Simp them+ Pron+Pers+3P+Pl to+Prep+Simp  
*chur ...*  
 put+Verbal+Noun+VB+Len

In order to translate ‘to put’ into Irish in the sentence above, we use the verbal noun *cur* preceded by the preposition *a*. This preposition causes initial mutation of the verbal noun where possible, hence *a chur*. Other phrases that are followed by the verbal noun in this way are: *Caithfidh ...* ‘I have to’ and *An bhfuil cead agam...?* Have I permission to...? When the substantive verb *Bí* follows *Caithfidh ...* or *An bhfuil cead agam...?*, the following structure is used:

- (b) It must be with the tower.  
*Caithfidh sé bheith leis an túr.*  
*Caithfidh sé bheith leis*  
 must+Verb+PresInd+2P+Sg be+Verbal+Noun+VB with it+ Pron+Pers+3P+Pl  
*an túr.*  
 the+DefArt tower+Noun+Masc+Com+Sg

When *caithfidh* is followed by other verbs such as *déan*, *cuir*, *tarraing* the object must be placed before the verbal noun with the insertion of the preposition *a* as in (a) above.

- (c) We have to draw a picture.  
*Caithfimid pictiúr a tharraingt.*  
*Caithfimid pictiúr a*

must+Verb+PresInd+1P+Pl picture+Noun+Masc+Com+Sg to+Prep+Simp  
*tharraingt*  
draw+Verbal+Noun+VB+Len

As noted by Bloch-Trojnar (2006, p. 63) this configuration is also found in other modal constructions expressing ability, success or failure. Where the pupils use the following verbs similar configurations would be expected e.g. *Is féidir liom...* ‘I can...’, *Tá orm...* ‘I must...’, *Ba mhaith liom...* ‘I would like ...’ and *D’éirigh liom* ‘I succeeded...’.

Another aspect of the verbal noun that can cause difficulties is where a pronoun is the object of the verbal noun. An example of this would a pupil expressing ‘doing it’ in Irish as *ag déanamh é* instead of *á d(h)éanamh*. This construction has been found in the early speech of native L1 Gaeltacht children (Harrington, 2006) and may be a developmental error rather than the influence of English.

#### 5.2.4 The copula *Is* and substantive verb *Bí*

A further area of difficulty for English speakers who are second language learners of Irish is the use of a substantive verb and a copula to express ‘to be’. Irish is similar to Spanish in this respect in that there are also two verbs in Spanish to express ‘to be’, *ser* and *estar* (Genée, 1998; O’Connor, 2002). The two lexical items in Irish to express the verb ‘to be’ are *Bí* and *Is*. Many writers have remarked that the use of the copula is an aspect of the language which is difficult for learners to master (Ó Domhnalláin & Ó Baoill, 1978). The difficulty for learners of Irish whose first language is English is that the verb ‘to be’ in English is expressed by two different verbs in Irish. There is the copula *Is* ‘is’ and the substantive verb *Bí* ‘to be’ (Stenson, 1981). Research on post-primary school pupils, in both all-Irish and English-medium schools, revealed that many of them had difficulty with the correct use of the copula and substantive verb (O’Connor, 2002; Walsh, 2005). It might be anticipated then that this aspect of Irish would emerge as a difficulty for the pupils in the present study. An understanding of the forms of the copula and the substantive verb described below is crucial for the investigation of how Gaeltacht and all-Irish pupils use these forms and the analysis that follows.

The substantive verb *Bí* can be used to express ‘it is ...’ or ‘he is ...’ in cases such as the following, where temporary states are being described:

It is raining. = *Tá sé ag cur báistí.*  
He is in the house. = *Tá sé sa teach.*



It cannot be used however, where a permanent state is being described such as for classificatory purposes where one wishes to describe what ‘a noun or a pronoun is or is not’ (Mac Congáil, 2004, pp165). In such instances the copula *Is* must be used.

He is a teacher. = *Is múinteoir é.*

It’s a ball. = *Is liathróid í.*

To make matters more complicated for the learner, when the copula is used with the demonstrative pronoun *sin* ‘that’, the copula and the personal pronoun can be omitted (Na Bráithre Críostaí, 1960; Stenson, 1981). Thus the following three sentences are all acceptable ways to express the same thing i.e. ‘That is the table’.

Sentence (a) contains the copula *Is* and the personal pronoun *é*:

- (a) *Is é sin an bord.*  
*Is é sin an bord*  
 is-COP it-M-3SG that-DEM the table-M-SG

Sentence (b) omits both the copula *Is* and the personal pronoun *é*:

- (b) *Sin an bord.*  
*Sin an bord*  
 that-DEM the table-M-SG

Sentence (c) omits the copula *Is* but contains the personal pronoun *é*:

- (c) *Sin é an bord.*  
*Sin é an bord*  
 that-DEM it-M-3SG the table-M-SG

In summary then, the substantive verb *Bí* should be used to express temporary states. The copula should be used to describe permanent states. When the copula is used with the demonstrative pronoun *sin* ‘that’, the copula *Is* or the copula *Is* and the pronoun *é* can be omitted.

### 5.2.5 Irregular verbs

As well as the substantive verb *Bí* which is irregular, there are 10 other irregular verbs in Irish (Mac Murchaidh, 2002; Rannóg an Aistriúcháin, 1975). The main verbs that are of concern to the present study are *déan* ‘to do’ or ‘to make’ and *faigh* ‘to get’ as they were the most common irregular verbs used by the all-Irish school pupils in completing the task in the present study. A verb is considered irregular if its root changes from tense to tense (Mac Congáil, 2004). In the case of *déan* the root changes in the past tense and there is both an independent (*rinne*) and a dependent form (*dearna*) (Na Bráithre Críostaí, 1960). There is also an alternate dialect form, *dhein* that is also acceptable. *Faigh* is subject to

greater change than *déan* as its root changes from *faigh* to *fuair* in the past tense and there are different dependent and independent forms in the past tense (*fuair*, *bhfuair*), future tense (*gheobhaidh*, *bhfaighidh*) and conditional mood (*gheobhadh*, *bhfaigheadh*) (Mac Giolla Phádraig, 1963). The analysis of the pupils' use of these verbs will examine all forms of the verbs used by them paying particular attention to the irregular forms of these verbs.

The acquisition of these aspects of syntax will be described in the context of the studies below, some of which examined written and conversational errors in both immersion and non-immersion contexts.

### **5.3 The syntactic and lexical features of all-Irish pupils' Irish**

This section will examine the features of the all-Irish pupils' Irish with a focus on lexical and syntactic issues. The data summarised in Table 4.2 (Chapter 4) on the most common Irish words used by the Gaeltacht and all-Irish pupils will be examined from a qualitative perspective. If, as has been noted, there are similarities between the words used, it was hypothesised that those words were used in different ways by the pupils in each school type in order to account for the differences in the error rate. The following categories were chosen in order to analyse the features of the pupils' Irish. These categories emerged from two sources, firstly the differences tabulated in Table 4.2 (Chapter 4) and secondly the pilot phase of the study where many of the most common features were identified:

- word order
- use of copula *Is*
- use of substantive verb *Bí*
- morphology of the other most common verbs
- indirect speech
- prepositional pronouns
- use of numbers
- interrogative pronouns
- pupils use of pronoun *é* 'it'
- mapping of English syntax onto Irish

Each feature will be examined in detail and exemplified with evidence from the corpus. As this is the first time that the task of compiling a comprehensive account of all-

Irish school pupils’ oral production has been undertaken, the analysis will include a description of between-school variation of the main features identified. While the primary focus will be on the all-Irish school corpus, reference will be made to the Gaeltacht school corpus where relevant. In some instances the comparison with the Gaeltacht school corpus will be very informative and will be dealt with in great depth. Where no reference is made to the Gaeltacht school corpus it can be assumed that the Gaeltacht pupils used a particular feature correctly as would be expected.

### 5.3.1 Layout of glosses

Examples of pupils’ speech will be selected from the pupils’ corpus to illustrate how the pupils used the different features listed above. The examples are presented in four-line or five-line glosses as in (Example 1) below. These glosses are based on the ‘Leipzig Glossing Rules’ developed by Comrie et al. (2008). The first line presents the utterance under consideration preceded by the identification of the speaker. Thus in utterance (1) in the next section, ‘01\_’ is School 1, ‘02\_’ is group 2 in that school, ‘256\_’ is the line number in the text and ‘A’ is the initial of the pupil. This enables the reader to locate the utterance in the corpus in Appendix 4.2. Line one in the gloss presents the utterance, line two separates the utterance into morphemes, line three provides a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss. Line four provides a translation in normal speech (Lehmann, 1982). If the utterance deviates from native speaker norms it is preceded by a star ‘\*’ symbol, and the target form is provided on line five.

**(Example 1) School\_Group\_Line no.\_Pupil initial**

- Line 1\* *Pupil utterance as it appears in corpus.*
- Line 2 *Pupil utterance separated into morphemes.*
- Line 3 Morpheme-by-morpheme gloss.
- Line 4 English translation.
- Line 5 Target form where the original deviated from native-speaker norms.

### 5.3.2 Syntactic features of pupils’ Irish

The evidence from the transcribed data is that the children in all-Irish schools in the study succeed in mastering word order of Irish without difficulty i.e. VSO. English, as L1, does not appear to interfere with the syntax of Irish in their spoken production in Irish. This

may be because this aspect of Irish is salient in the input and is acquired in the early stages of acquisition.

The other aspect that differs from English is noun adjective order. There are not many examples of the use of adjectives in the transcribed data, but where there are, they are used correctly. The final two words, *páistí beaga* ‘small children’, in (1) below illustrate a pupil using the correct noun adjective order.

(1) 01\_02\_256\_A

...i gcomhair na páistí beaga?

i gcomhair          na          páistí          beaga

for-PREP PHRASE   the-DEF-PL   children-M-PL   small-PL

'...for the small children?'

Successful mastery of verb subject object and noun adjective order was also noted in the study of pupils in all-Irish schools in Northern Ireland (Henry et al., 2002). These rules are quite consistent in Irish and although they are the reverse of the pupil's first language, they do not appear to require specific instruction.

### 5.3.3 Use of the copula ‘/s’

As discussed above in 5.2.3, the acquisition of the copula can prove to be difficult for second language learners and the all-Irish school pupils in the present study are no exception to this. An examination of Table 4.2 in Chapter 4 reveals that the demonstrative pronoun *sin* ‘that’ is the most commonly used word in the corpus of pupils’ speech. This is true for pupils from both school types and represents 5.51% of the Gaeltacht pupils’ speech and 6.03% of the all-Irish pupils’ speech. Although the copula is continually referred to as *Is*, it should be noted that the word *Is* does not appear in the 50 most commonly used words. *Is* was only used 11 (0.24%) times by the Gaeltacht pupils and 70 (0.23%) times by the all-Irish school pupils<sup>9</sup>.

Due to the complexities of copula use in Irish, an examination of how pupils used the two words *Is* and *sin* will be central to this section. Another aspect that will also be important in the analysis is the use of the substantive verb *Bí* ‘to be’. When the all-Irish school pupils’ corpus was examined it was found that there were many examples of pupils

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<sup>9</sup> The word *is* appears more often than this in the corpus for both school types. In the other instances however, it is used as a contraction *is=agus* ‘and’.

using the substantive verb *Bí* incorrectly instead of the copula. As will be discussed in greater detail below, the most common reasons for these errors was using the substantive verb to describe permanent states or inserting *Tá* ‘be’ (3SG-PRS of *Bí*) where the copula ‘*Is*’ was omitted. The analysis of pupils’ speech that follows will focus in particular on these features and on the different ways all-Irish school pupils and Gaeltacht school pupils deal with these aspects of the copula.

### 5.3.3.1 Use of copula for classificatory purposes

The examples of the pupil errors in (2)-(5) are all instances of the employment of the substantive verb *Bí* for classificatory purposes. They represent four errors of this type. The first in (2) is the inappropriate insertion of the substantive verb *Tá* where the copula has been omitted.

#### (2) 08\_02\_83\_A

\* *Tá sin an pháirc síos ansin.*

*tá sin an pháirc síos ansin*

is-PRS that-DEM the-DEF park-F-SG down- ADV-DIR there- ADV-LOC

‘That’s the park down there.’

*Sin an pháirc thíos ansin.*

The second error in (3) is the use for the substantive verb *Tá* for classificatory purposes where the copula *Is* should have been used.

#### (3) 09\_01\_18\_C

\* *Tá sé bord mór.*

*tá sé bord mór*

be-PRS it-M-3SG table-M-SG big-M-SG

‘It is a big table.’

*Is bord mór é sin.*

In (4) the error is similar to (3) except that the negative form of the substantive verb was used where *ní*, the negative form of the copula, should have been used.

#### (4) 04\_02\_113\_G

\* *Níl sin túr.*

*níl sin túr*

not-PRS-NEG that-DEM tower-M-SG

‘That’s not a tower.’

*Ní túr é sin.*

Finally in (5), the dependent form of the substantive verb *bhfuil* ‘be’ has been employed where the interrogative form of the copula *an* should have been used.

(5) 01\_02\_315\_S

\* *An bhfuil sin gaineamh?*

*an bhfuil sin gaineamh*

is-Q be-PRS that-DEM sand-M-SG

Is that sand?

*An gaineamh é sin?*

### 5.3.3.2 Use of *Is* - the present form of the copula

The target forms presented in (2)-(5) above represent basic forms of copula use in the present tense. WordSmith (Scott, 2004) concordance tools were used to search the corpus of pupils’ speech for instances of correct use of the copula for both all-Irish and Gaeltacht school pupils. The all-Irish school pupils used the present form of the copula *Is* in 70 utterances and the Gaeltacht pupils used it in 11 utterances. Table 5.1 summarises the different uses of the copula *Is* by the pupils in both school types. It can be seen in the second column of Table 5.1, that the majority of them comprise phrases such as *Is féidir liom*. ‘I can/I am able to’ (54), *Is maith le* ‘I like’, *Is breá liom* ‘I really like’, *Is fearr liom* ‘I prefer’, *Is cuma liom* ‘I don’t mind/care’. There is evidence from the work of Mhic Mhathúna (2005) that these structures are acquired at an early stage in an immersion context as formulas or unanalysed chunks. By 6<sup>th</sup> class the children have learned to manipulate these structures by interchanging the noun and prepositional pronoun. It is not clear however, that they recognise them as copular structures. Apart from these phrases there are nine other utterances that contained the copula *Is*. None of these use the copula for classificatory purposes.

The corpus of the pupils’ speech in Gaeltacht schools was examined to ascertain how native speaker pupils’ use the copula *Is*. Column 3 of Table 5.1 shows that the Gaeltacht pupils used it 11 times. Four of them were of the form *Is.... le/liom*, the form most common in the all-Irish pupils’ use. Examples of the remaining six utterances are listed in the lower half of Column 3. It is interesting to note the frequent use of the structure

*Is féidir* ... ‘can/able to’ by the all-Irish school pupils whereas the Gaeltacht pupils do not use this structure at all. This may have been one of the ways in which the all-Irish pupils expressed a possibility while avoiding the conditional mood.

**Table 5.1**  
Use of present form of copula *Is* by all-Irish and Gaeltacht school pupils

Phrases containing copula <i>is</i>	All-Irish school pupils - no. of instances	Gaeltacht school pupils - no. of instances
<i>Is féidir liom/linn</i> ‘I can/I am able to, We can etc.’ <i>Is maith le/is breá liom</i> ‘He/she likes’/‘I really like’ <i>Is cuma...</i> ‘It doesn’t matter’	61	4
<b>Other forms of copula <i>is</i></b>		
<i>Cé chomh hard is atá sé?</i> ‘How high is it?’	1	-
<i>Sea is...</i> ‘Yes it is...’	1	-
<i>Is é.</i> ‘It is’	2	4
<i>Is le C é.</i> ‘It is C’s/It belongs to C.’	1	1
<i>...an ceann is fearr</i> ‘...the best one’	3	-
<i>Cuir an cinn is mó.</i> ‘Put the biggest one.’	1	-
<i>Is dócha/dóigh...</i> It is likely/probable	-	2
<b>Total</b>	70	11

Following the concordance for *Is*, similar concordances were run for the following, which represent the other principal forms of the copula (Na Bráithre Críostaí, 1960): *ní*, *gur(b/bh)*, *nach*, *an*, *ba*, *b’*, *ab*, *nár*, *ar(b/bh)*, *ba níor(bh)* and *nár(bh)*. The results from the all-Irish school corpus reveal that in no instance is any form of the copula used for classificatory purposes. Indeed very few examples of the copula are to be found other than ones similar to those mentioned above such as, *Ní féidir liom* ‘I can’t/I am not able to’, or *Ní maith liom* ‘I don’t like’.

The only other examples in the data where these forms of the copula were found are the following two cases in (6)-(7)

**(6) 04\_01\_180\_D**

\* *An é seo an áit...?*

*an é seo an áit*

is-Q it-3SG this-DEM the-DEF-ART place-F-SG

Is that the place?

*An í seo an áit...?*

(7) 02\_01\_219\_A

*An é sin...?*

*an é sin?*

is-Q it-3SG that-DEM

Is that... ?

Similar findings emerged from the Gaeltacht school corpus. It was found that the Gaeltacht pupils in the present study did not generally use these forms of the copula for classificatory purposes. As the all-Irish school pupils experienced difficulty with this structure as seen in (2)-(5) above it was necessary to establish exactly how the Gaeltacht school pupils classified objects for use in their design. The next section reports on the results of that search.

**5.3.3.3 Use of copula by Gaeltacht school pupils with demonstrative pronoun *sin***

When the Gaeltacht school corpus was searched it was found that they used the demonstrative pronoun *sin* ‘that’ and omitted the copula *Is* ‘is’ and the personal pronoun *é* ‘it’ in order to classify objects. Although the copula is omitted in these instances it is implied. WordSmith concordance tools were used to search for the demonstrative pronoun *sin* ‘that’ in the Gaeltacht pupils’ corpus. The following examples, (8)-(10) were found where the copula and/or the pronoun *é* were omitted.

Pupil D could have said in (8) *Sin é an geata* (inserting pronoun *é*) or *Is é sin an geata* (inserting both pronoun *é* and copula *Is*). He chose to omit both instead. The meaning in each case would have been the same: ‘That is the gate’.

(8) 10\_01\_62\_D

*Sin an geata isteach chuig an scoil.*

*sin an geata isteach chuig an scoil*

that-DEM the-DEF gate-M-SG in-ADV to-PREP the-DEF school-F-SG

That is the gate into the school.

In (9) Pupil L could have said *Is sleamhnán fada é sin* (inserting the copula *Is*). Had she done so the meaning would not have changed.

(9) 11\_01\_35\_L

*Sin sleamhnán fada...*



*sin sleamhnán fada...*  
 that-DEM slide-M-SG long-ADJ  
 That's a long slide...

In (10) Pupil A could have said ...*sin an bealach isteach* (omitting the pronoun *é*) or ...*Is é sin an bealach isteach* (inserting the copula *Is*). Once again the meaning would have remained the same.

**(10) 10\_04\_26\_A**

...*sin é an bealach isteach.*  
*sin é an bealach isteach*  
 that-DEM it-3SG the-DEF way-M-SG in-ADV  
 That is the way in.

It should be noted that in no instance did a Gaeltacht school pupil use the substantive verb *Bí* inappropriately in place of the copula. The ability to use this feature correctly is one that differentiates the pupils in the two school types and is fundamental to mastery of Irish.

**5.3.3.4 Deviant use of copula by all-Irish school pupils with demonstrative pronoun**

***sin***

It will be noted in (8)-(10) above that the demonstrative pronoun *sin* is followed by a noun, a personal pronoun, a cardinal number or the definite article. WordSmith concordance tools were used to search the all-Irish school corpus for examples of the demonstrative pronoun '*sin*'. Utterances (11)-(13) show examples of the demonstrative pronoun *sin* 'that', where *sin* is followed by the definite article *an* 'the' and a noun. These were the only correct forms to be found using *sin*, where a noun or a pronoun followed *sin*.

**(11) 05\_03\_197\_S**

...*sin an* tent...  
*sin an* tent  
 that-DEM the-DEF tent-M-SG  
 ...that's the tent...

**(12) 04\_02\_242\_G**

*Sin an áit ...*

*sin an áit*  
 that-DEM the-DEF place-F-SG  
 That's the place...

**(13) 07\_01\_149\_D**

*...sin an rud atá mar suí sá.*  
*sin an rud atá mar suí sá*  
 that-DEM the-DEF thing-M-SG be-PRS-REL like-PREP see-saw-M-SG  
 ...that's the thing that is like a see-saw.

(14)-(17) demonstrate examples of pupils' incorrect use of the substantive verb *Bí* 'to be' with the demonstrative pronoun *sin* 'that'. Pupil D in (14) used the dependent present indicative form (*bhfuil*) of the substantive verb *Bí* 'to be'. Had the personal pronoun *é* 'it' been used instead of *bhfuil* 'is', the utterance would have been correct.

**(14) 01\_02\_189\_D**

\* *Ach an bhfuil sin an taobh...?*  
*ach an bhfuil sin an taobh...*  
 but-CONJ is-Q be-PRS that-DEM the-DEF side-M-SG  
 But is that the side...?  
*Ach an é sin an taobh...?*

In (15) pupil C has repeatedly used the present indicative *Tá* 'is' of the substantive verb *Bí* 'to be'. Had *Tá* been omitted then the utterance would have been correct.

**(15) 08\_01\_141\_C**

\* Now, *tá sin an slí isteach, tá sin an geata, tá sin an siúltán agus tá sin an scoil.*  
*now tá sin an slí isteach tá sin an geata*  
 now be-PRS-IND that-DEM the-DEF way-F-SG in-ADV be-PRS-IND that-DEM the-DEF gate-M-SG  
*tá sin an siúltán agus tá sin an scoil*  
 be-PRS-IND that-DEM the-DEF corridor-M-SG and-CONJ be-PRS-IND that-DEM the-DEF school-F-SG  
 Now, that is the way in, that is the gate, that is the corridor and that is the school.  
*Anois, sin an tslí isteach, sin an geata, sin an siúltán agus sin an scoil.*

Similarly had pupil T in (16) omitted the present indicative *Tá* 'is' of the substantive verb *Bí* 'to be' and the personal pronoun *é* 'it', the utterance would have been correct.

**(16) 06\_04\_35\_T**

\* *Tá é sin seacht...*

*tá            é            sin            seacht...*

be-PRS-IND it-3SG that-DEM seven-M-SG

That is seven...

*Sin seacht...*

Again in (17) it can be seen that if pupil C had omitted the relative form of the present indicative *atá* 'is' of the substantive verb *Bí* 'to be', this aspect of the utterance would have been correct.

**(17) 01\_02\_152\_C**

\* *Cad atá é sin, an bord picnic?*

*cad    atá            é    sin            an    bord picnic*

What-Q be-PRS-REL it-3SG that-DEM the-DEF picnic-table-M-SG

What is that, the picnic table?

*Cad é sin, an bord picnice? or An bord picnice é sin?*

Excerpts (2)-(5) and (14)-(17) above demonstrate the manner in which all-Irish pupils use the copula incorrectly. When these examples are compared with the Gaeltacht school pupils in excerpts (8)-(10) we see that there are three manifestations of this type of error:

- I. the insertion of the substantive verb *Bí* 'to be' instead of the copula *Is*.
- II. the failure to omit the copula.
- III. the failure to omit the personal pronoun *é* when appropriate.

I. can be illustrated most clearly when we re-examine and compare (8) with (15) below. Pupil D, a Gaeltacht school pupil, said: *Sin an geata ...* which is the correct form, whereas pupil C, an all-Irish school pupil, said: *...tá sin an geata...* inserting the present form of the substantive verb *Tá*.

**(8) 10\_01\_62\_D**

*Sin an geata isteach chuig an scoil.* [That is the gate into the school.]

**(15) 08\_01\_141\_C**

\* *... tá sin an geata... [...that is the gate...]*

Three forms of the copula are acceptable when used with the demonstrative pronoun *sin* ‘that’. The form most commonly used by the Gaeltacht pupils to perform the task assigned in the present study was the form in which the copula *Is* and the personal pronoun *é* are omitted as in (8) above. It appears that the pupils in all-Irish schools may not be cognisant of this form or if they are, they do not think to use it. They tend to insert the substantive verb *Bí* before *sin* as in (15). In order to quantify the extent of this deviant form WordSmith concordance tools were used to search the corpus for pupils’ use of the copula in different contexts.

The first feature examined was the pupils’ use of the form of the copula where the demonstrative pronoun *sin* ‘that’ is followed by the definite article *an* ‘the’. This is the form of the copula where the copula *Is* and the personal pronoun *é* are omitted. The first set of columns in Figure 5.1 below show that there were 56 instances of *sin an* ‘that is’ in the all-Irish school corpus. The pupils used this form correctly in 34 utterances and incorrectly in 22 utterances. Where it was used incorrectly it was preceded in almost all cases by some form of the substantive verb *Bí* such as the example above in (15) above.

Due to the nature of the task set for the pupils they were required to compute the amount of money spent which required them to talk about numbers. The pupils’ use of the demonstrative pronoun *sin* with numbers was the next feature examined. There were 196 instances where the pupils used the demonstrative pronoun *sin* followed by a number as in (16) above. The second set of columns in Figure 5.1 show that in 137 cases they used this form correctly and in 59 cases it was used incorrectly. (16) is an example of incorrect use where the substantive verb *Bí* has been inserted before *sin*. As with the previous example the inappropriate insertion of some form of the substantive verb *Bí* was the most common feature of incorrect usage.

The number *dhá chéad* ‘two hundred’ was then examined to see how the pupils handled its use with the copula. Two hundred was chosen because *dhá* and *chéad* ‘two’ and ‘hundred’ were the 15<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> most commonly used words respectively, by the pupils (see Table 4.2 in Chapter 4). There were 196 instances of *dhá chéad* in the corpus. 49 of these involved the use of the copula. The third set of columns in Figure 5.1 shows that the pupils correctly used the copula in 35 instances and incorrectly in 14 instances. In every case where it was used incorrectly, the pupils inserted some form of the substantive verb *Bí*.

One further aspect of the pupils' use of the copula was then investigated. This concerned the manner in which pupils used the copula with nouns for classificatory purposes. In order to design the playground the children discussed the different types of equipment that they would buy. WordSmith concordance tools were used to search for instances of the following words in the all-Irish school corpus:

<i>balla</i> 'wall'	<i>bonn</i> 'tyre'	<i>bord</i> 'table'	<i>capaillín</i> 'horse'
<i>díon canbháis</i> 'canvas roof'	<i>dréimire</i> 'ladder'	<i>fonsa</i> 'fence'	<i>fráma</i> 'frame'
<i>gaineamh</i> 'sand'	<i>luascán</i> 'swing'	<i>rópa</i> 'rope'	<i>sleamhnán</i> 'slide'
<i>túr</i> 'tower'			

In most cases the pupils used demonstrative pronoun *sin* and it is included in this section for that reason. There were however, six examples similar to (18). In these cases, had the pupils used the demonstrative pronoun *sin*, they would have been correct.

**(18) 09\_01\_131\_L**

\* *Tá sé an dréimire.*

*tá sé an dréimire*

be-PRS-IND it-M-3SG the-DEF ladder-M-SG

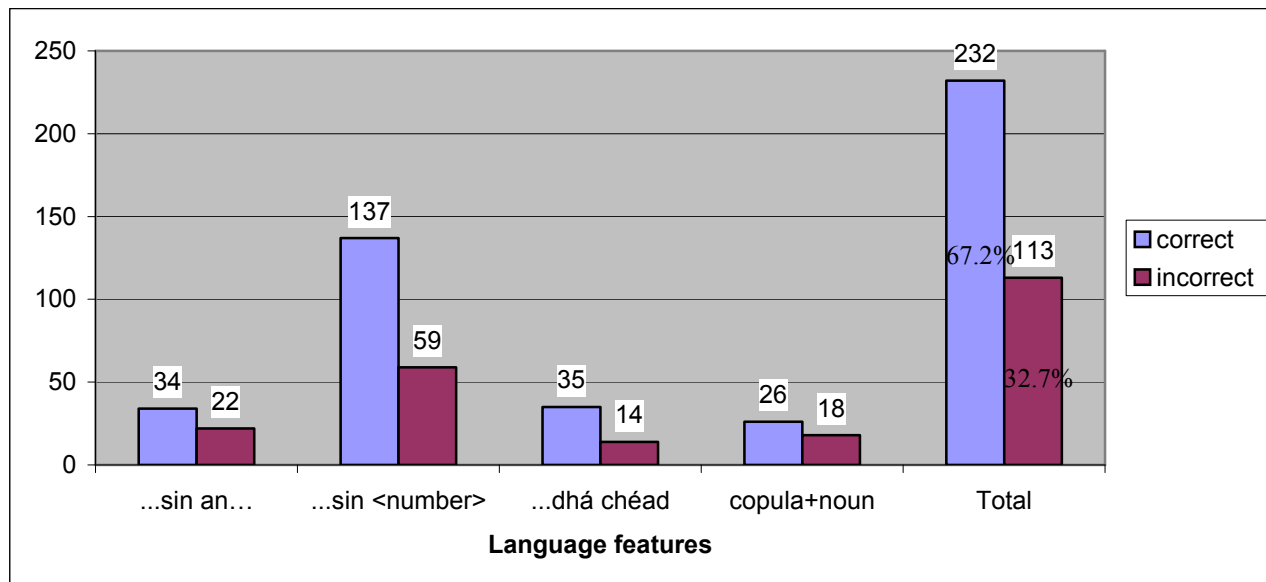
It is the ladder.

*Sin an dréimire.* or *Is é sin an dréimire.* or *Sin é an dréimire.*

It can be seen then, in the fourth set of columns in Figure 5.1 that the pupils in the present study used the copula with nouns on 44 occasions. They used it correctly 26 times and incorrectly 18 times. Once again where the copula was incorrectly used the pupils inserted some form of the substantive verb *Bí*.

The analysis of these four features revealed that pupils used them correctly more often than incorrectly. When the total number of instances of these features is calculated we see in the fifth set of columns that pupils used them correctly just over twice as often as they used them incorrectly.

**Figure 5.1**  
**All-Irish school pupils' use of certain aspects of copula**



### 5.3.3.5 Summary of copula use by all-Irish school pupils

The all-Irish school pupils in the present study demonstrate partial mastery of the copula *Is* in Irish. The facility to compare their use of this structure with the Gaeltacht school pupils proved very revealing as it was found that neither group of pupils made use of *Is* for classificatory purposes to any great extent. Part of the difficulty for the all-Irish school pupils in attaining mastery of the copula may be that the information in the input is not salient. Although grammar books such as (Mac Congáil, 2004; Mac Giolla Phádraig, 1963; Mac Murchaidh, 2002) and the official standard for Irish (Rannóg an Aistriúcháin, 1975) refer to the copula *Is*, the word *Is* was rarely used by the native speaker pupils in the unplanned oral production required for the task in the present study. For the L1 English speaking all-Irish school pupil '*sin an geata*' may appear to be incomplete as it translates literally as 'that the table'. They may not be aware that the copula *Is* is implied. They may be inserting the substantive verb *Tá* to complete the utterance resulting in errors such as (15) *Tá sin an geata* [that is the gate]. The analysis of the corpus in the present study suggests that the input received by the pupils may not be salient enough for them to notice this form.

### 5.3.4 The substantive verb *Bí*

There are 998 instances of *Tá* the present tense independent form of *Bí* in the all-Irish school corpus (Table 4.2). When the other tenses of the substantive verb *Bí* are added, there are 2,023 instances representing 6.57% of the corpus. An analysis of how the pupils used the substantive verb will add to the understanding of the features of their Irish. As the present form *Tá* was used so often by the pupils this form will be analysed separately, this will be followed by an analysis of *bhfuil* the present dependent form which was used 329 times. The examination of the substantive verb will conclude with an analysis of all the remaining forms together.

#### 5.3.4.1 Present tense *Tá* and *Níl*

WordSmith concordance tools were used to search for all the instances of *Tá* and *Níl* in the all-Irish school corpus. Figure 5.2 shows that there were 1,275 instances of *Tá* and *Níl*. The first column in Figure 5.2 shows that *Tá* and *Níl* were used correctly with different structures 735 times. As there are such a large number of instances, and they were used correctly in the majority of cases, it was not possible to categorise all the uses of *Tá* and *Níl*. It was considered more informative for the purposes of the present study to categorise the cases where there were errors. As was seen in the previous section, where errors were found it was the inappropriate use of the substantive verb in place of the copula that led to the errors in the majority of cases. These errors are quantified in columns two to eight in Figure 5.2. There were 175 errors in total of this type out of 365. These errors were similar to those in (15) and (16) above. (19) demonstrates a typical error of this type with the negative form *Níl*.

(19) 07\_02\_152\_J

\* ... *níl sin aon rud*.

*níl*                      *sin*              *aon*              *rud*

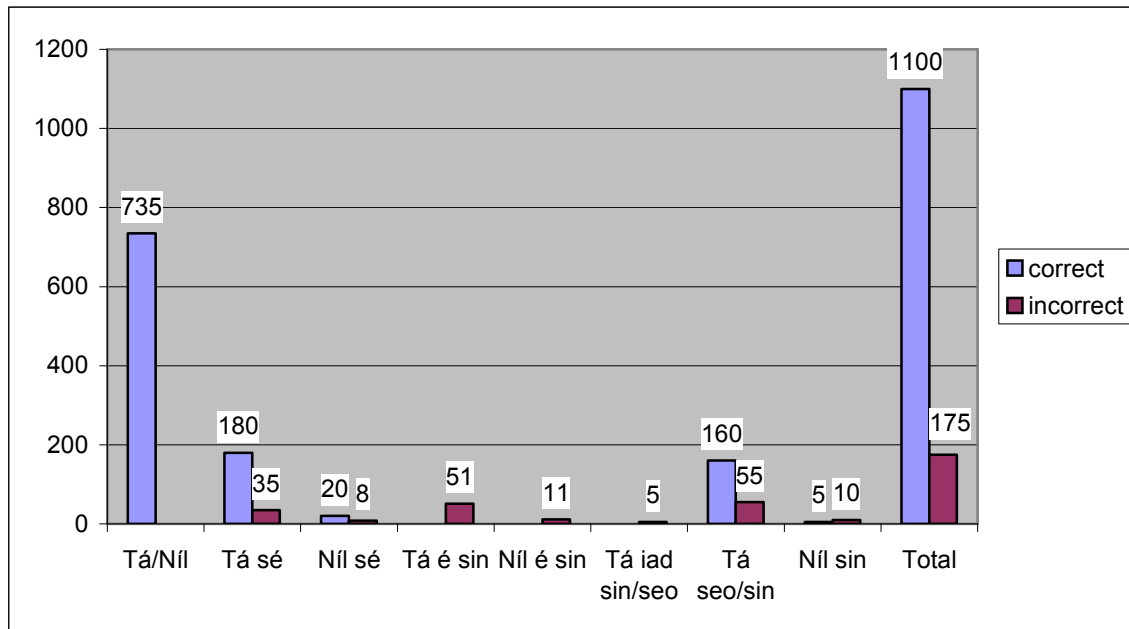
be-PRS-IND-NEG that-DEM any-INDF thing-M-SG

... that is nothing.

...*ní haon rud é sin*.

The final set of columns in Figure 5.2 compares the number of errors of this type with all uses of *Tá* and *Níl* in the corpus. There were 175 (12.1%) errors out of a total of 1275 instances for *Tá* and *Níl*.

**Figure 5.2**  
All-Irish school pupils' use of *Tá* and *Níl* - The present tense positive and negative form of the substantive verb *Bí*



If we exclude the inappropriate use of the substantive verb with the copula we see that the pupils in the present study appear to have mastered the other forms of *Tá* and *Níl*.

#### 5.3.4.2 Present tense dependent form *bhfuil*

The present tense dependent form of the substantive verb *Bí* which is *bhfuil* will now be examined. There are 329 instances of *bhfuil* in the all-Irish school corpus. The pupils handled most forms of *bhfuil* without difficulty as can be seen in the first four sets of columns in Figure 5.3. *Cá bhfuil* 'where', *go bhfuil* 'is', and *nach/muna bhfuil* 'is not', all had very few errors. Where errors were made in the case of *an bhfuil*, the interrogative form of *bhfuil*, the pupils used the substantive verb instead of the copula as in (20).

(20) 09\_01\_123\_D

- \* *An bhfuil sin díon canvas?*  
*An bhfuil sin díon canvas*  
 is-Q be-PRS that-DEM roof-M-SG canvas  
 Is that a canvas roof?



*An dion canbháis é sin?*  
dependent)

(DEP =

The other area that caused even greater difficulty is shown in the fifth set of columns, *a bhfuil*. The most common error that the pupils made here was to use the dependent form of the verb *bhfuil*, instead of the independent form *Tá* as in (21).

(21) 03\_02\_110\_S

\* *Cé mhéad a bhfuil fágtha againn?*

*cé mhéad a bhfuil fágtha againn*  
how-Q much-M-SG-LEN to-PREP be-PRS-IND-DEP-Q left-ADJ at us-1PL

How much do we have left?

*Cé mhéad atá fágtha againn?*

(LEN =

lenited)

The final area to examine in relation to *bhfuil* is the seventh and final set of columns. It will be recalled from 5.2.1 above that certain structures in Irish such as *An bhfuil cead...?* require the use the verbal noun preceded by the preposition *a*. The all-Irish school pupils failed to use the correct structure on 15 occasions following *An bhfuil cead...?* ‘Have I permission to...’ as in (22).

(22) 05\_01\_234\_J

\* *An bhfuil cead agam déan pictiúr?*

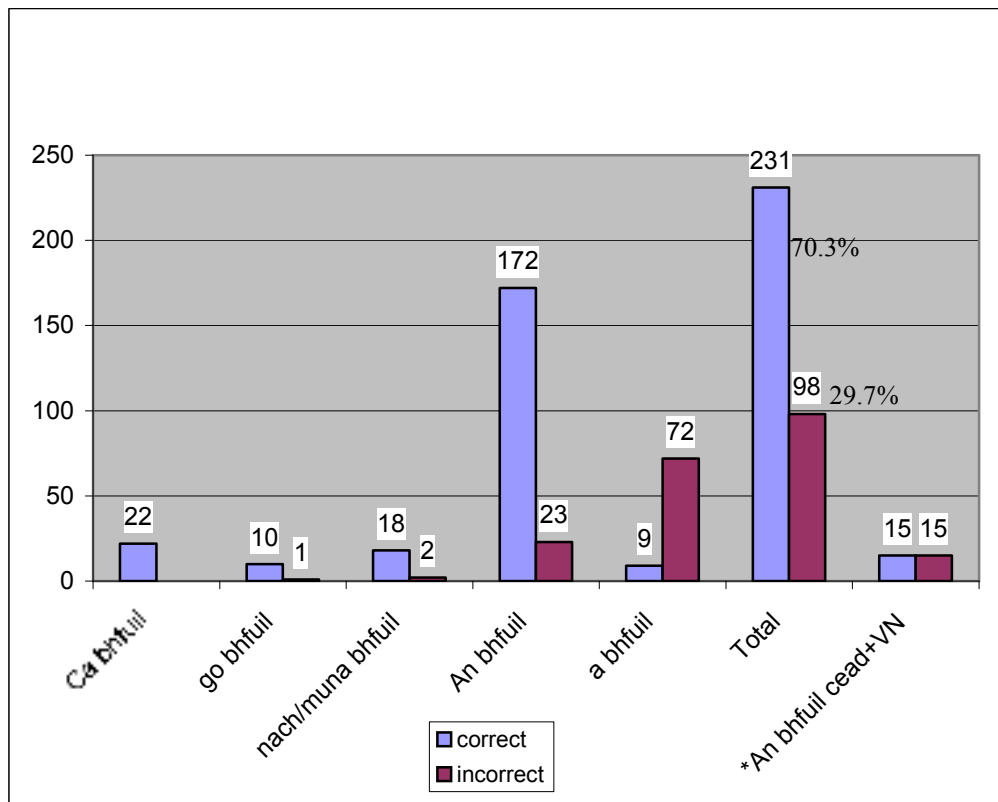
*an bhfuil cead agam déan pictiúr*  
is-Q be-PRS permission-M-SG at me-1SG do-PRS-IND picture-M-SG

Have I permission to do a picture?

*An bhfuil cead agam pictiúr a dhéanamh?*

As this error pertains to the verbal noun that follows *bhfuil* in certain structures is was left to the final column and not counted in the total in column 6. While the all-Irish pupils use *bhfuil* correctly in 70.3% of cases it can be seen that they use it incorrectly in three cases out of 10. This is a higher error rate than for *Tá* above (Table 5.2).

**Figure 5.3**  
All-Irish school pupils' use of *bhfuil* the present tense dependent form of the substantive verb *Bí*



\*VN = Verbal noun

#### 5.3.4.3 Past tense, future tense, conditional mood, verbal noun and present tense relative form of the substantive verb *bí*

Figure 5.4 presents the all-Irish school pupils' use of past tense *bhí* (independent form), *raibh* (dependent form), the future tense *beidh*, the conditional mood *bheadh*, the verbal noun *bheith* and the present tense relative form *atá* of the substantive verb *Bí*. In general it can be seen from the total column that the pupils used these forms correctly three times out of four. The areas where they had difficulty were the inappropriate use of the substantive verb instead of the copula as in (23), and the failure to use the dependent form where appropriate as in (24) which involves eclipsing the verb after the interrogative verb particle *an*.

(23) 06\_04\_20\_N

\* *Bhí é sin ceithre chéad.*

*bhí*                      *é*                      *sin*                      *ceithre*                      *chéad*

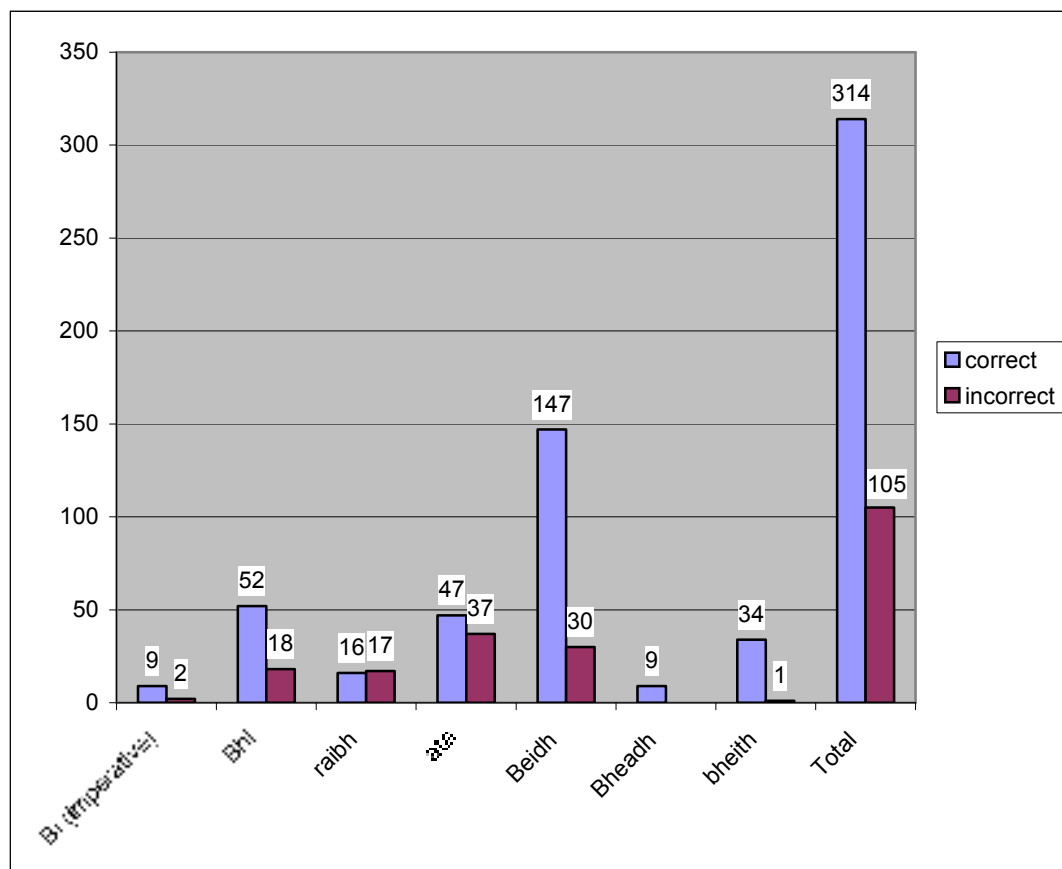
be-PST-IND-LEN    it-M-3SG    that-DEM    four-M-SG    hundred-M-SG

That was four hundred.  
*B'in ceithre chéad.*

(24) 02\_01\_149\_Á

- \* An beidh spás...?  
*an beidh spás*  
 is-Q be-FUT-IND space-M-SG  
*An mbeidh spás...?*  
 Will there be space...?

**Figure 5.4**  
**All-Irish school pupils' use of the following forms of the substantive verb: *Bí, Bhí, raibh, atá, Beidh, Bheadh* and *bheith***

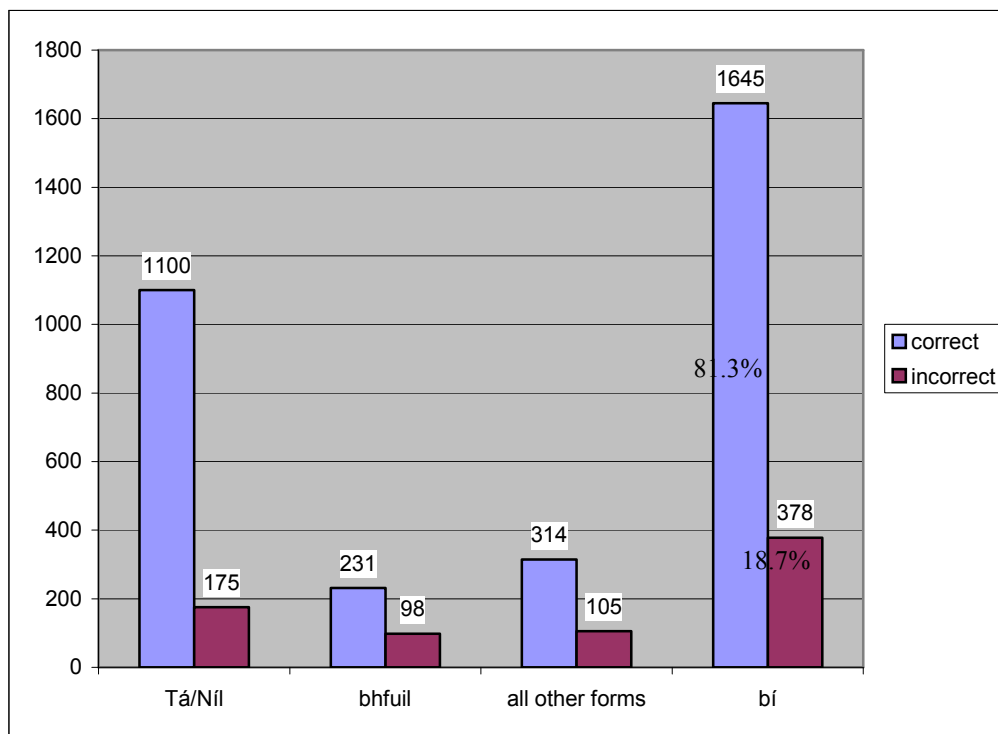


#### 5.3.4.4 Summary of substantive verb use by all-Irish school pupils

The evidence from the analysis of the all-Irish school corpus is that the pupils have reasonable mastery of the independent forms of the substantive verb *Bí* in its different tenses and forms. They have greater difficulty with the dependent forms however. As we saw in the analysis of the copula, they often use the substantive verb incorrectly on occasions where the copula should be used. They have mastered the use of the verbal noun

*bheith* but have difficulty with structures where the form of the verb which follows the substantive verb is the verbal noun form as in (22) above. When the totals for the substantive verb *Bí* in Figures 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 are combined, we see in Figure 5.5 that there were 1645 correct uses (81.3%) and 378 incorrect uses (18.7%).

**Figure 5.5**  
All-Irish school pupils' use of the of the substantive verb *Bí*



### 5.3.5 Morphology of the verbs *cuir*, *caith*, *déan* and *faigh*

In order to examine the all-Irish school pupil's mastery of other verbs in Irish, the list of the 50 most common words in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 (Chapter 4) were examined to see which verbs the pupils used most often. Apart from the various forms of substantive verb *Bí* the most common verbs were *cuir* 'to put', *déan* 'to do', *faigh* 'to get', numbers 38, 39 and 40 in Table 4.3 respectively. As both *déan* and *faigh* are irregular verbs in Irish, the wordlist containing the 100 most common words used the all-Irish school pupils (Appendix 4.4) was examined to find the next verb on the list which was *caith* 'to spend' or 'to have to' in certain phrases (No. 61 on wordlist). This verb is also a regular verb. The next most common verb used was *b'fhéidir* 'maybe' (No. 71 on wordlist). *B'fhéidir* was considered as

it is only used with the copula and it would be interesting to examine the pupils' mastery of this verb form.

### 5.3.5.1 The regular verb *cuir* 'to put'

WordSmith concordance tools were used to search the corpus for all forms of the verb *cuir*. There were 380 uses of some form of this verb and as can be seen from the final set of columns in Figure 5.6, they were used correctly 281 times by the pupils. When usage is categorised by mood and tense we see in the first set of columns that the imperative mood was used correctly by pupils 165 times out of 181 times. Where it was used incorrectly it was where the pupils pronounced it with a velarised sound as in (25) rather than a palatalised sound.

#### (25) 04\_02\_193\_D

- \* *Cur é sin isteach.*  
*cur é sin isteach*  
 put-IMP it-M-3SG that-DEM in-ADV  
 Put that in  
*Cuir isteach é sin.*

It can be seen from the second, third and fourth sets of columns when combined, that the pupils used *cuir* in the past, future and present tenses correctly 80 times out of 118 times. The 38 times where they failed to use it correctly it were, in the interrogative form (15 times), failure to lenite the verb (12 times), failure to use the dependent form of the verb after *cén áit* 'where' (11 times) as illustrated in (26), (27) and (28) respectively.

#### (26) 01\_02\_57\_C

- \* *An cuir tú isteach sleamhnán gearr?*  
*an cuir tú isteach sleamhnán gearr*  
 is-Q put-IMP you-3SG in-ADV slide-M-SG short-ADJ  
 Did you put in a short slide?  
*Ar chuir tú isteach sleamhnán gearr?*

#### (27) 04\_02\_103\_D

- \* *... cad a cuirfimid isteach?*  
*cad a cuir -fimid isteach*  
 what-Q to-PREP put-FUT we-3PL in-ADV

...what will we put in?  
... *cad a chuirfimid isteach?*

(28) 07\_01\_262\_D

- \* *Cén áit a chuirfimid an dréimire?*  
*cén áit a chuir -fimid an dréimire?*  
what-Q place-F-SG to-PREP put-FUT we-3PL the-DEF ladder-M-SG  
Where will we put the ladder?  
*Cén áit a gcuirfimid an dréimire?*

As explained in 5.2.1 above, certain structures, where there would be an infinitival clause in English, require a rearrangement in the word order in Irish. In these cases the object is placed before the verbal noun and the preposition *a* is inserted between the object and the verbal noun. The fifth set of columns in Figure 5.6 shows that the pupils incorrectly used the verbal noun 42 times out of 78 as shown in (29).

(29) 02\_01\_288\_A

- \* *Táimid in ann cur an díon canbháis...*  
*tá -imid in ann cur an díon canbháis...*  
be-PRS we-1PL able-ADV-PHS put-VN the-DEF roof-M-SG canvas-ADJ  
We can put the canvas roof...  
*Táimid in ann an díon canbháis a chur...?*

An examination of the Gaeltacht school corpus revealed that the verbal noun of *cuir* was incorrectly used on two occasions out of eleven. It was pupils from School 11 on both occasions. One of these instances is given in (30)

(30) 11\_08\_110\_M

- \* *Thig linn cur na rudaí sin...*  
*thig linn cur na rudaí sin...*  
can-PRS we-1PL put-VN the-DEF -PL things-M-SG that-DET  
We can put those things...  
*Thig linn na rudaí sin a chur...*

There were only three examples of indirect speech using the verb *cuir* and the all-Irish school pupils used them incorrectly on all occasions as shown in the sixth set of

columns in Figure 5.6 and in (31). When the verb *cuir* is preceded by *b'fhéidir*, the dependent form of the verb must be used.

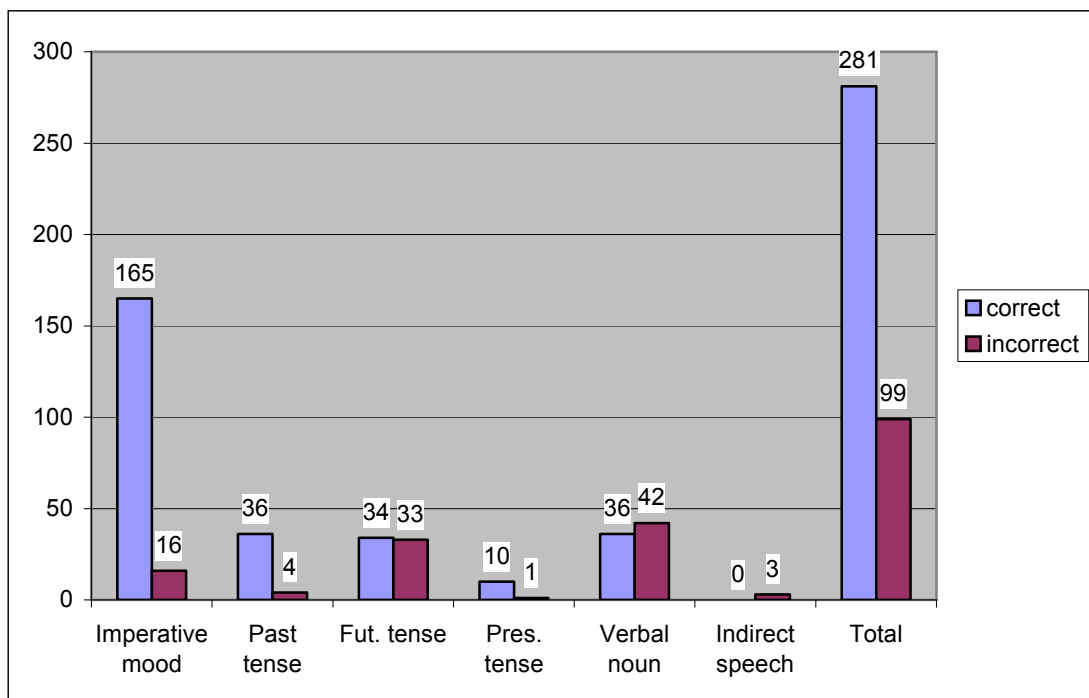
(31) 09\_01\_122\_F

\* *B'fhéidir cuireann tú gach rud...*

*b' fhéidir cuireann tú gach rud*  
is-COP-PST maybe-COND put-PRS you-2SG every-DET thing-M-SG  
Maybe you put everything...

*B'fhéidir go gcuireann tú gach rud...*

Figure 5.6  
All-Irish school pupils' use of the regular verb *cuir* 'to put'



It appears from the evidence in the corpus that the pupils demonstrate reasonable mastery of the morphology of the regular verb *Cuir*. The aspects of it that have not been mastered are the use of the verbal noun, the interrogative forms and the correct use of the dependent form where appropriate.

### 5.3.5.2 The regular verb *caith* - 'to spend', 'to have to' or 'to throw'

The verb *caith* can have a number of meanings in Irish depending on the context. The pupils in the present study used it to mean, 'to spend', 'to have to (must)', 'to throw' and 'to wear'. Where the verb *caith* is used to express a need as in the case of 'to have to', the future form of the verb must be used to express both present and future time (Na

Bráithre Críostaí, 1960). It can be seen from Figure 5.7 that on many occasions pupils did not use the future form of the verb for this purpose.

As was noted above in the discussion on word order in 5.2.1, the verb *caith* when it means ‘to have to’ must be followed by another verb for example:

*Caithfidh mé dul...* = I have to (must) go...

or by the verbal noun preceded by the object and the preposition *a*:

*Caithfidh mé peann a fháil.* = I have to (must) get a pen.

It is the latter form that is by far the most common in the all-Irish school pupils’ corpus. It should be noted that where they have a difficulty, is not with the verb *caith* itself, but with the verb that follows it and this needs to be borne in mind in the analysis below.

Using the WordSmith concordance tools it was found that the verb *caith* was used in various forms 291 times in the all-Irish school corpus. On 252 of those 291 times it was used to express a need such as ‘to have to’. This explains why the fourth and sixth set of columns in Figure 5.7 i.e. the future tense and infinitival clause are so high. The imperative mood, conditional mood, verbal noun and indirect speech are the four sets of columns with the lowest incidence of usage for *caith* in the corpus. Because of this low usage it is not possible to draw any conclusions about these aspects of the pupils’ use. The third set of columns shows that the past tense of *caith* was used correctly 16 times out of 24 by the pupils. In the eight cases where it was used incorrectly it was the failure to use the verb in the future tense that led to the error as illustrated in (32).

(32) 08\_02\_63\_A

\* *Agus caitheamar é a tharraingt anois.*

*agus caith -eamar é a tharraingt anois*

and-CONJ have to-PST we-1PL it-3SG to- PREP draw-VN now-ADV

And we have to draw it now.

*Agus caithfidimid é a tharraingt anois.*

The fourth set of columns shows that the pupils used the future form of *caith* correctly on 83 out of 90 occasions. Where they failed to use it correctly it was generally due to a failure to eclipse the interrogative of the verb as (33) illustrates. This difficulty also manifested itself with the verb *cuir* above in Figure 5.6.



(33) 01\_02\_71\_S

- \* *An caithfidh tú an bonn agus an slabhra a fháil?*  
*an caithfidh tú an bonn agus an slabhra*  
*a fháil*  
is-Q have to-FUT you-2SG the-DEF tyre- M-SG and-CONJ the-DEF chain- M-SG  
to- PREP get-VN  
Do you have to get the tyre and chain?  
*An gcaithfidh tú an bonn agus an slabhra a fháil?*

The sixth set of columns in Figure 5.7 is the one that is of greatest concern. The pupils failed to use the correct syntax with the verbal noun after *caith* on 123 occasions out of 162. The difficulty in (34) is not with the verb *caith* but with the verb *tóg* that follows it. Pupil M failed to use the verbal noun of *tóg* and to adjust the syntax of the sentence accordingly.

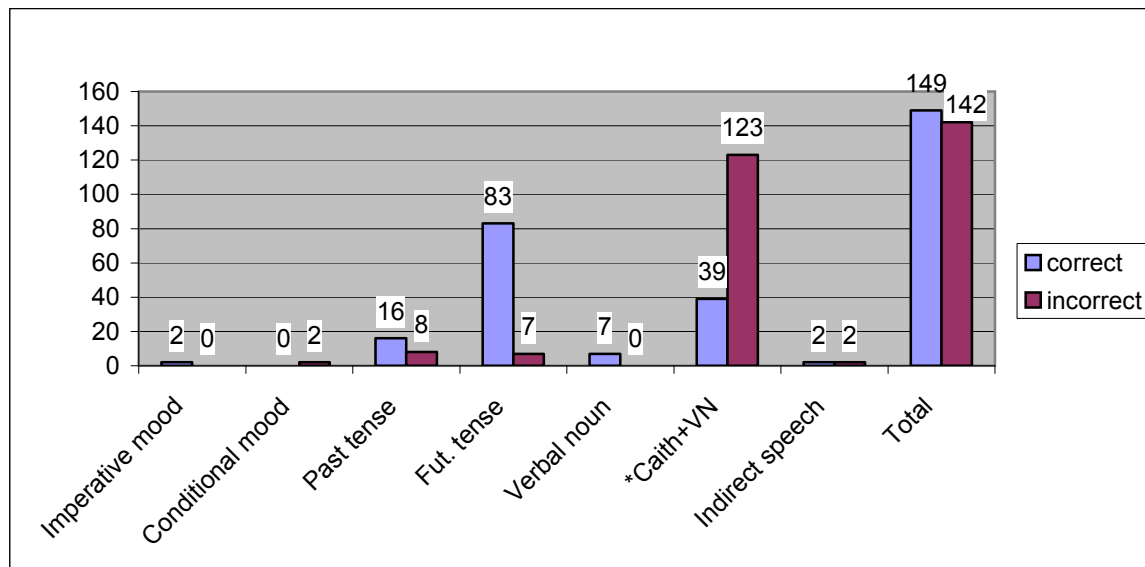
(34) 06\_01\_125\_M

- \* *Caithfimid tóg amach é seo.*  
*caith -fimid tóg amach é seo*  
have to-FUT we-1PL take-IMP out-ADV it-3SG this-DEM  
We have to take this out.  
*Caithfimid é seo a thógáil amach.*

This difficulty also manifested itself with the verb *cuir*. The proportion of errors is greater in this case however. If we include these structures which require the use of the verbal noun after *caith* in the totals, we see in the eighth set of columns that the correct and incorrect usage of *caith* are almost equal.

When the Gaeltacht school corpus was examined it was found that the verbal noun following *caith* was incorrectly used nine times out of twenty-six. It was pupils in School 11 in all cases that made the nine errors. This may be an indication the structure: *caith*+*a*+verbal noun, is difficult to master.

Figure 5.7  
All-Irish school pupils' use of the verb *caith* - 'to spend' 'to have to' or 'to throw'



\*VN = Verbal noun

### 5.3.5.3 The irregular verb *déan* 'to do'

The all-Irish school pupils' use of the verb *déan* 'to do' or 'to make', which is one of the 10 irregular verbs in Irish (Mac Giolla Phádraig, 1963; Mac Murchaidh, 2002), will now be examined. Its root changes in the past tense and there is both an independent (*rinne*) and a dependent form (*dearna*). When WordSmith concordance tools were used it was found that various forms of the verb *déan* were used 535 times by the pupils in all-Irish schools. Aside from the substantive verb *Tá* it was the most commonly used verb.

The first set of columns in Figure 5.8 reveals that the pupils used the imperative mood of *déan* 136 times and correctly used it on 118 of those times. Where they failed to use it correctly, they lenited the verb *déan*, inserting a 'h' *dhéan* as in (35).

(35) 06\_02\_242\_D

\* *Dhéan an fráma in aice leis.*

*dhéan an fráma in aice leis.*

do-IMP the-DEF frame-M-SG beside-CMPD PREP it-3SG

Do the frame beside it.

*Déan an fráma in aice leis.*

The conditional mood was only used five times by the pupils and it was incorrectly used on all of these occasions as illustrated in the second set of columns in Figure 5.8.

The pupils used the past tense correctly 65 times out of 84 as can be seen from the third set of columns. A higher error rate might have been expected here due to the irregular nature of the verb *déan* as discussed above. When these 65 correct instances of past tense use of *déan* are examined we find that the independent form *rinne* was used in 53 of these and the dependent form *dearna* in the remaining 12 instances.

Where the children failed to use the past tense of *déan* correctly it was due in most cases to either not using the past tense root (*rinne*) as in (36) or failing to use the dependent root (*dearna*) as in (37).

**(36) 04\_01\_212\_G**

- \* *Ach déan mé é sin go maith.*  
*ach déan mé é sin go maith.*  
 but-CONJ do-PRS me-1SG it-3SG that-DEM well-PART-ADV  
 But I did that well.  
*Ach rinne mé é sin go maith.*

**(37) 05\_03\_277\_S**

- \* ... *lig, mar ní rinne sé rud ar bith.*  
*lig mar ní rinne sé rud ar bith*  
 let-IMP because-CONJ not-PART do-PST he-3SG thing-M-SG any-PRP PHRS  
 ...let, because he didn't do anything.  
 ... *lig, mar ní dhearna sé rud ar bith.* .

The evidence from the corpus indicates that the pupils have reasonable mastery of the past tense root *rinne* but have yet to master dependent root *dearna*.

There were only five instances of the present tense of *déan* in the corpus and it was incorrectly used on all these occasions. On four of these occasions the pupils failed to lenite the present form *déanann* when preceded by *a* as in (38)

**(38) 03\_02\_40\_A**

- \* ...*conas a déanann tú é sin?*  
*conas a déanann tú é sin*  
 how-Q to-PRP do-PRS you-2SH it-3SG that-DEM  
 ...how do you do that?

*...conas a dhéanann tú é sin?*

When we examine the pupils' use of the future tense of *déan*, the fifth set of columns reveals that it was used correctly in 51 out of the 78 instances. When the errors were examined it was found that 22 of the 27 instances of incorrect usage were caused by the pupils leniting the future root of *déan* as in (39).

(39) 03\_03\_305\_S

- \* ... *dhéanfaidh mise an ceann eile.*  
*dhéanfaidh mise an ceann eile*  
do-FUT I-1SG-EMPH the-DEF one-M-SG other-DEM  
...I'll do the other one.  
... *déanfaidh mise an ceann eile.*

As the future root of *déan* is regular this difficulty would not have been anticipated. This error is similar to the one that was made with the imperative mood of *déan* also where the root was incorrectly lenited as in (38) above.

Another area that caused difficulty for the pupils was the use of the verbal noun *déanamh*. As illustrated in the sixth set of columns in Figure 5.8, the all-Irish school pupils failed to use the correct form *déanamh* 117 times. This form caused difficulties for them in a number of ways. The first case is where the pupils used a pronoun as a direct object of the verbal noun as in (40). This structure is not permitted in Irish however (Mac Congáil, 2004). A possessive adjective must be placed before the noun as in the corrected form in (40).

(40) 03\_03\_207\_S

- \* ... *an bhfuil tú ag déanamh é sin?*  
*an bhfuil tú ag déanamh é sin*  
is-Q be-PRS you-2SG doing-VN it-3SG that-DEM  
...are you doing that?  
...*an bhfuil sé sin á dheánamh agat?*

The second aspect of the verbal noun that caused difficulty was the same as that experienced with *caith* and *cuir*, where the object and the preposition *a* must be placed before the verbal noun. This was the error in (41).

(41) 05\_01\_122\_J

- \* ... *thig linn déanamh sin.*  
*thig linn déanamh sin.*  
can-PRS-IND we-1PL do-VN that-DEM  
...we can do that.  
... *thig linn é sin a dhéanamh.*

The third difficulty was where the pupils failed to lenite *déanamh* after the preposition *a*, and on other occasions they lenited *déanamh* when there was no need. The number of errors made by pupils in their use on the verbal noun *déanamh* demonstrates a lack of mastery of this form.

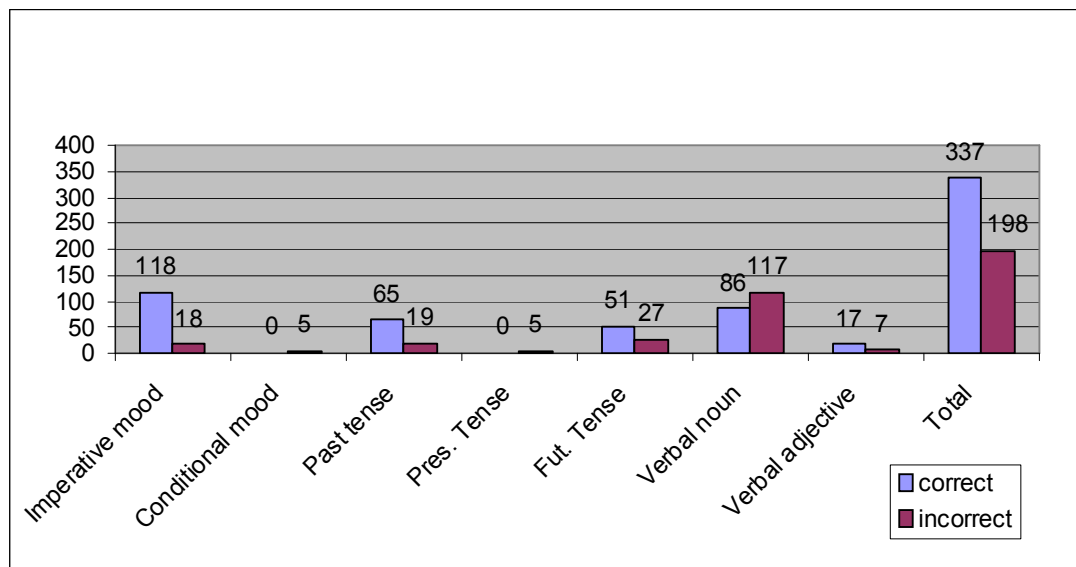
The final area illustrated in Figure 5.8 is the verbal adjective *déanta* in the seventh set of columns. The incidence of this form was quite low and was used correctly in 17 out of 24 cases. A typical error was where a pupil used the verbal noun instead of the verbal adjective, as was the case in (42).

(42) 06\_02\_179\_E

- \* ...*tá sé sin dhéanamh againn.*  
*tá sé sin dhéanamh againn.*  
be-PRS-IND he-M-3PL that-DEM do-VN at us-1PL  
...we have done that.  
...*tá sé sin déanta againn.*

When the Gaeltacht school corpus was searched three errors were found in School 11, on two occasions the verbal noun of *déan* had not been applied after the verb *caith*. Both of these instances were captured in the discussion under the verb *caith* above. And on the other occasion there was a failure to use the verbal noun after *thig linn* ‘we can’.

Figure 5.8  
All-Irish school pupils' use of the irregular verb *déan* 'to do'



#### 5.3.5.4 The irregular verb *faigh* 'to get'

The verb *faigh* is another one of the ten irregular verbs in Irish. It is subject to greater change than *déan* above as its root changes from *faigh* to *fuair* in the past tense and there are different dependent and independent forms in the past tense, future tense and conditional mood.

When the WordSmith concordance tools were used to compile the usage of the various forms of *faigh* it was found that there were 394 instances in the all-Irish school corpus. The first set of columns in Figure 5.9 shows that the pupils used the imperative mood correctly in 82 out of 86 cases and appeared to have mastered this aspect of the verb. The second set of columns shows that they used the past tense forms correctly 64 times out of 86. When it was used incorrectly it was generally due to a failure to distinguish between the dependent and independent forms. In (43) for example, the pupil failed to eclipse the verb in the interrogative form. It is interesting to note that the pupil used the correct preverbal particle *an* where *ar* would be the regular form for the past tense.

(43) 06\_02\_68\_T

\* *An fuair tú ...?*

*an fuair tú*

is-Q get-PST-IND-DEP- you-M-2SG

Did you get...?

*An bhfuair tú ...?*

The third set of columns reveals that pupils had difficulties with the future tense of *fuair*. Again it was a failure to distinguish between the dependent and independent forms in the future tense that caused the difficulties. In (44) for example the pupil used the independent form where the dependent form should have been used.

**(44) 03\_03\_123\_N**

\* *An gheobhaimid fráma dreapadóireachta eile?*

*an gheobh -aimid fráma dreapadóireachta eile*

is-Q get-FUT-IND-DEP we-1PL frame-M-SG climbing-ADJ other-DEM

Will we get another climbing frame?

*An bhfaighimid fráma dreapadóireachta eile?*

The present tense of *faigh* also presented difficulties for the pupils as shown in the fourth set of columns in Figure 5.9. The most common error was a failure to lenite the verb after the particle *a*. An example of this can be seen in (45).

**(45) 02\_01\_243\_K**

\* *Conas a faigheann tú suas?*

*conas a faigheann tú suas*

how-Q to-PREP get-PRES-IND you-2SG up-ADV

How do you get up?

*Conas a fhaigheann tú suas?*

The use of the verbal noun was the area that caused greatest difficulty for pupils as illustrated in the fifth set of columns. The pupils failed to use it correctly on 103 occasions out of 152. As with the other verbs discussed above there were two common errors with this aspect of the verb. The first was a failure to use the correct form of the verbal noun as in (46) and the second was the incorrect use of a pronoun as a direct object of the verbal noun as in (47).

**(46) 05\_03\_204\_S**

\* *... thig leo faigh isteach.*

*thig leo faigh isteach*

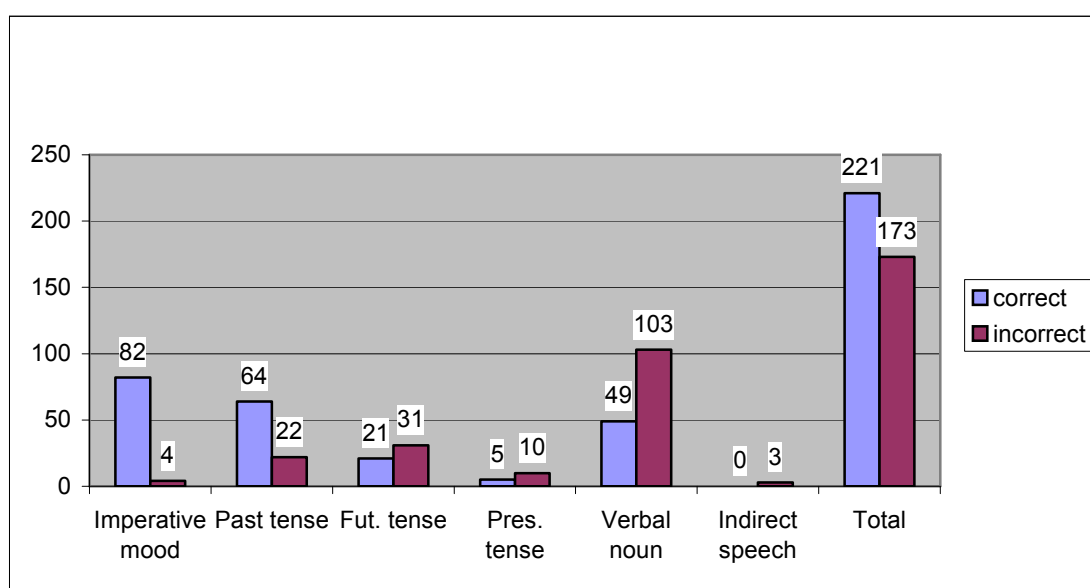
can-PRS-IND they-3PL get-IMP in-ADV

...they can get in  
 ... *thig leo fáil isteach.*

#### (47) 07\_01\_15\_D

\* ...*táimid ag fháil é sin...*  
*tá -imid ag fháil é sin...*  
 be-PRS-IND we-1PL getting-IMP it-3SG that-DEM  
 ...they can get in?  
 ...*tá sé sin á fháil againn...*

**Figure 5.9**  
**All-Irish school pupils' use of the irregular verb *faigh* 'to get'**



The verbal noun also caused difficulties for the Gaeltacht pupils in School 11. There were 30 instances of the verbal noun in the Gaeltacht school corpus. The pupils made errors in 13 of these. All 13 errors were made by five of the nine pupils whose speech was transcribed in School 11. The errors made were similar to (46) above where the syntax of the sentence was not adjusted to place the object and the preposition *a* before the verbal noun. The verbal noun itself varied with three different forms: *Thig linn fáil*. *Thig linn fháil*. *Thig linn faigh* (we can get).

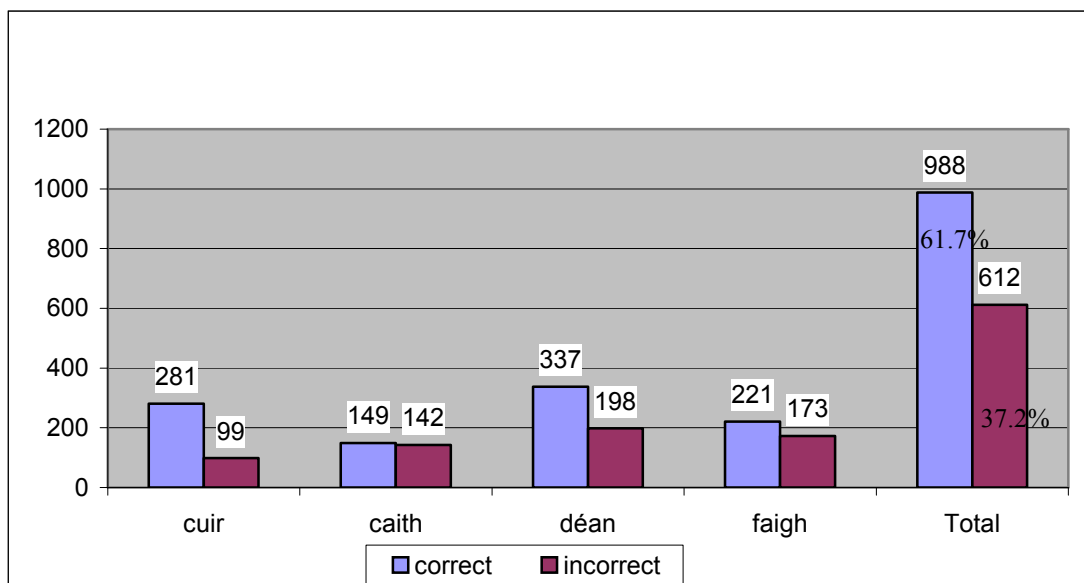
#### 5.3.5.5 Summary of the morphology of the verbs *cuir*, *caith*, *déan* and *faigh*

The four verbs most commonly used by the pupils, apart from the copula *Is* and the substantive verb *bí*, were examined in this section. They were the verbs *cuir* 'to put', *caith* 'to have to, to spend', *déan* 'to do', and *faigh* 'to get'. Figure 5.10 provides a summary of



the correct and incorrect usage of those verbs. It can be seen from the total column on the right that the pupils used the correct forms on 1,060 occasions out of 1,674. This represents a correct usage of 61.7% and an incorrect usage of 37.2%.

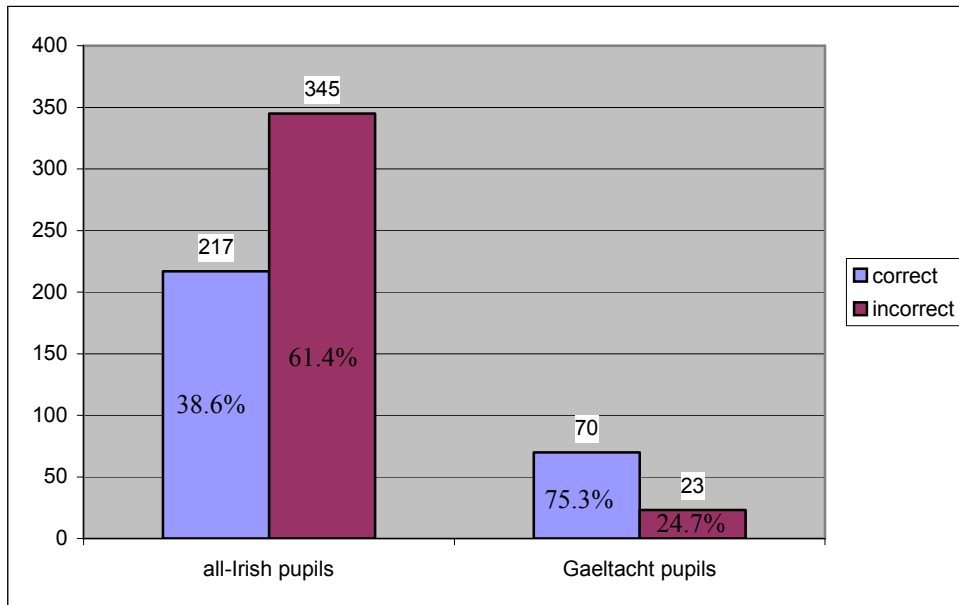
**Figure 5.10**  
**The four most common verbs used by the all-Irish school pupils in the corpus**



The aspect of these verbs that caused the greatest difficulty was the correct use of the verbal noun. It was even found that some of the Gaeltacht pupils in School 11 had difficulty with this aspect. Ó Curnáin (2007) has also noted this phenomenon in the speech of native speakers in the area of *Iorras Aithneach*, an Irish heartland district in Connemara. Figure 5.11 presents the statistics in relation to verbal noun use by pupils in both school types. It can be seen that the all-Irish school pupils have difficulty with this feature just over six times out of ten (61.4%). The Gaeltacht school pupils fail to use it correctly in just under a quarter of cases (24.7%). It should be noted that it was Gaeltacht School 11 that accounted for all of these 23 errors.

When the statistics on the all-Irish school pupils presented in Tables 5.10 and 5.11 are examined it can be seen that they made 612 errors (Figure 5.10) with these four verbs. It can be seen from Figure 5.11 that 345 (56.4%) of those errors are accounted for by the failure to use the verbal noun correctly. If this feature could be mastered it would greatly improve the accuracy of their Irish. The other areas for improvement highlighted in this section are the correct use of the dependent and independent forms of the four verbs.

**Figure 5.11**  
**The all-Irish and Gaeltacht school pupils' use of the verbal noun for the verbs *cuir*, *caith*\*, *déan* and *faigh***



\*The use of the verbal noun in structures required by the verb *caith* are also included except in the cases where *caith* is followed by the verbs *cuir*, *déan* or *faigh*

### 5.3.6 Indirect speech

The mastery of indirect speech in Irish involves the use of a verb such as *abair* ‘speak’, *fiafraigh* ‘ask’, *iarr* ‘ask’ etc. and making changes to the words that are to be retold (Mac Murchaidh, 2002). The verbs *ceap* ‘to think’ and *b’fhéidir* ‘maybe’ also cause a similar change in syntax. There are relatively few examples of indirect speech in the all-Irish school corpus. There is an interesting example in (48) where Pupil L has failed to insert the verbal particle *go* after *ceapaim* ‘I think’. He has however, attempted to insert a verb particle after *dúirt* ‘said’ which was the correct thing to do. Unfortunately in this case he chose the past form of the verbal particle *gur* instead of the present form *go*.

(48) 09\_01\_138\_L

\* *Ach ceapaim dúirt an fear sin gur bhuaileann na luascáin...*

*Ach ceap -aim dúirt an fear sin gur*

but-ADV think-PRS-IND I-1SG said-PST the-DEF that-DEM man-M-SG that-DEM that-PART-PST

*bhuaileann na luascáin*

hits-PRS-IND the-DEF-PL swings-M-PL

*Ach ceapaim go ndúirt an fear sin go mbuaileann na luascáin...*

In (49) we see a structure with *b'fhéidir*. In this case the past form of verbal particle *gur* was required.

(49) 03\_03\_168\_J

\* *B'fhéidir is féidir linn...*

*B' fhéidir is féidir linn*

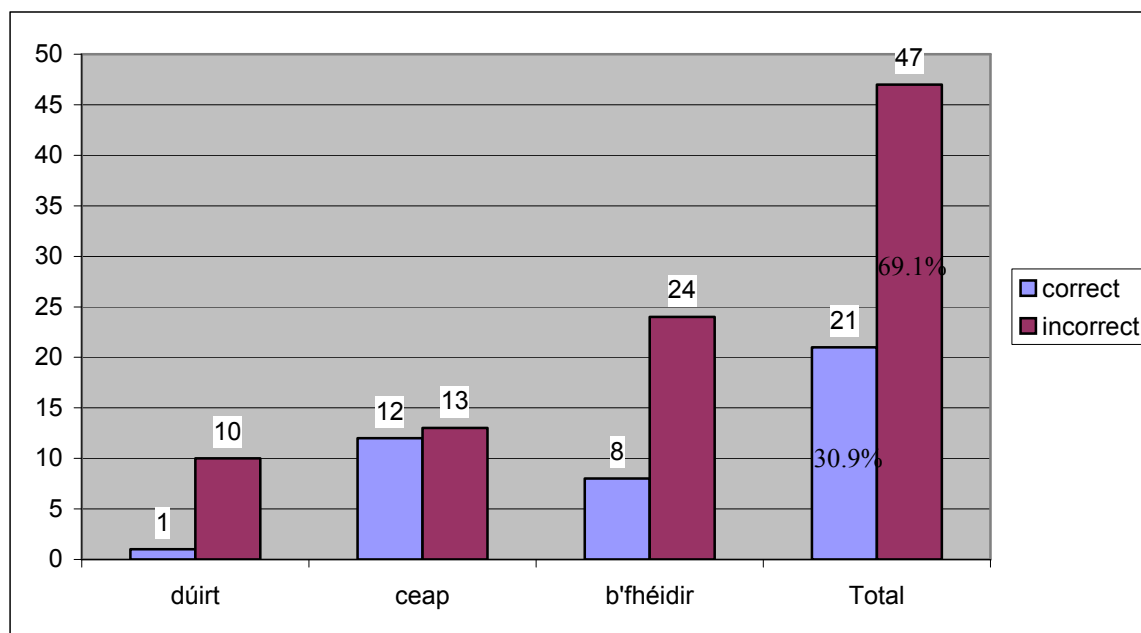
is-COP-PST maybe-COND is-COP-PRS can-PRS-IND with us-1PL

Maybe we can...

*B'fhéidir gur féidir linn...*

Figure 5.12 illustrates that the pupils failed to insert the verb particle after *dúirt* in 10 cases out of 11. There was more success with *ceap* where they were correct in 12 cases out of 25. When we examine the third set of columns for *b'fhéidir* we see that the pupils were incorrect in 24 cases out of 32. The total columns confirm that in general, the all-Irish school pupils have not yet mastered this type of structure in Irish.

Figure 5.12  
All-Irish school pupils' use of verbs following *dúirt*, *ceap* and *b'fhéidir*



### 5.3.7 Prepositional pronouns

There is a category of pronoun in Irish termed prepositional pronouns. A preposition such as *le* 'with' is joined to a personal pronoun *tú* 'you' and the synthetic form becomes *leat* 'with you', unlike English where they remain separate (Mac Congáil, 2004).

The most common prepositions used by the all-Irish school pupils in the corpus were *ag* ‘at’, *do* ‘for’, *le* ‘with’ and *ar* ‘on’ as shown in Table 5.2. Each preposition is inflected and can form seven prepositional pronouns: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> (masc.+fem.) person singular and 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural (H. Ó Murchú, 2008). These prepositional pronouns account for 719 words in the corpus or 2.33% of all the words, with *ag* and *le* being the most common. It will be noted that the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person (masc) singular and 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural are the most common forms used.

**Table 5.3**  
**The four most common prepositional pronouns used by all-Irish school pupils and the no. of times used**

Pronoun	No. of uses	Pronoun	No. of uses	Pronoun	No. of uses	Pronoun	No. of uses
ag		do		le		ar	
agam	86	dom	16	liom	39	orm	5
agat	32	duit	5	leat	43	ort	2
aige	3	dó	57	leis	82	air	56
aici	0	dí	0	léi	1	uirthi	1
againn	200	dúinn	0	linn	50	orainn	3
agaibh	0	daoibh	0	libh	3	oraibh	0
acu	20	dóibh	10	leo	2	orthu	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>341</b>		<b>88</b>		<b>220</b>		<b>70</b>

Henry et al. (2002) noted in their study that pupils in all-Irish schools in Northern Ireland sometimes failed to join the preposition and the pronoun and this was noted in the corpus in the present study also. This practice among all-Irish school pupils was also observed by Nic Pháidín (2003). The most common instances that were found in the present study were ones such as *le é/iad* ‘with it/them’, *faoi é* ‘about it’, *ar é* ‘on it’, *thar é* ‘over it’, *de é/iad* ‘of it/them’. WordSmith concordance tools were used to search the corpus for instances of these and the findings of those searches are summarised in Figure 5.13 below.

The first set of columns in Figure 5.13 shows the pupils’ use of *le/leis é* and *le/leis iad*. The correct forms of these are *leis* ‘with it/him’ and *leo* ‘with them’ respectively (Na Bráithre Críostaí, 1979). The main difficulty that the pupils appear to have here is the insertion of the personal pronoun *é* ‘it’ where it is not required as we can see in (50). The pupils made this type of error 17 times out of 25 instances.

(50) 04\_02\_274\_D

\* ....stop ag pleidhcíocht leis é sin.

...stop            ag pleidhcíocht leis            é            sin  
 stop-PRS-IMP    messing-VN            with it-3SG    it-3SG    that-DEM  
 ...stop messing with that  
 ...stop ag pleidhcíocht leis sin

The second set of columns reveal how the pupils handled *faoi an* ‘under the’ and *faoi é* ‘under it’. *Faoi* and *an* are generally joined in Irish as *faoin*. The pupils did this correctly on three occasions in the corpus and failed to do so on 11 occasions. In the case of *faoi é* ‘under it’, the ‘it’ is understood in *faoi* and there is not need to insert it after *faoi*. The pupils inserted it seven times in the corpus and used it correctly twice. When the two types of usage of *faoi* are combined we see that the pupils used it correctly 5 times out of 18. It will be noted that the insertion of *é* was a difficulty with *leis* in (50) above also.

The third set of columns in Figure 5.13 presents the pupils use of *ar é* ‘on it’ and *air* ‘on it’. The latter of these is actually the correct form and *ar é* is not used for this purpose. The pupils used the correct form *air* on 51 occasions out of 100. We see in (51) an example of incorrect use where the pupil says *ar é* instead of *air*.

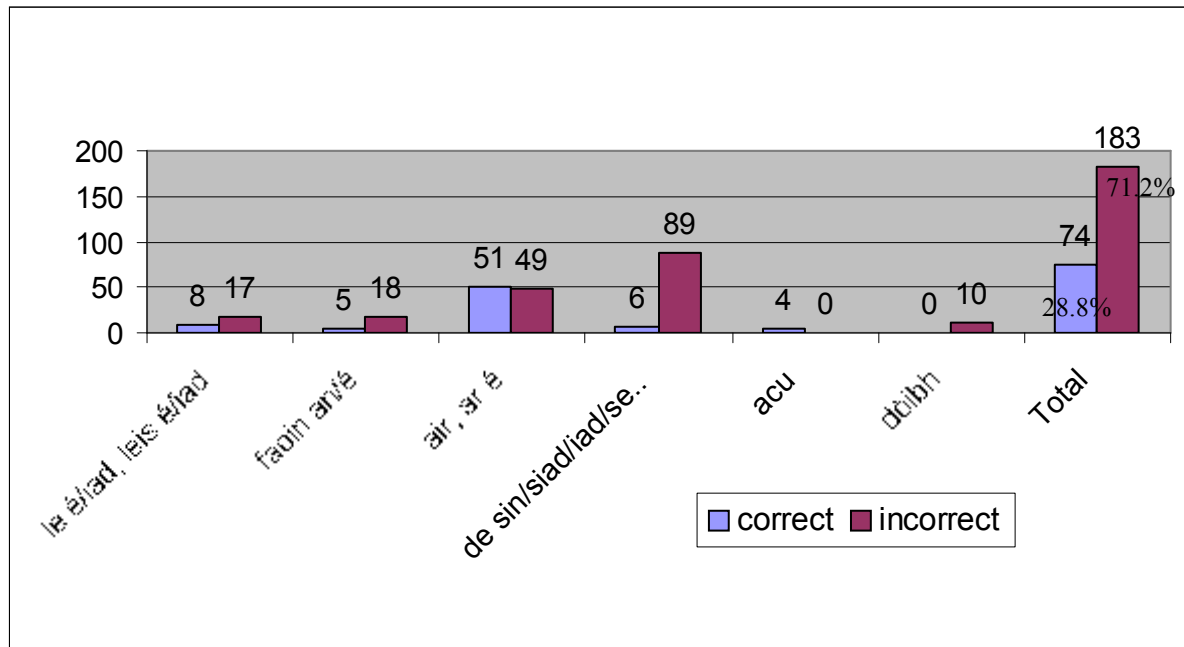
**(51) 07\_01\_155\_D**

\* ...cuir díon ar é.  
 cuir      díon            ar            é  
 put-IMP   roof-M-SG   on-PREP   it-3SG  
 ...put a roof on it.  
 ...cuir díon air.

The next set of columns in Figure 5.13 deals with the pupils’ use of *de* ‘of’. The pupils used different ways to say ‘of them’ and most of them were incorrect. ‘One of them’ can be expressed in Irish as *ceann díobh sin* or *ceann acu sin*. The most common incorrect forms in the corpus were *de é sin* (12 times), *de iad sin* (9 times), *de seo* (4 times), *de sin* (35 times) and *de siad* (10 times). There were 4 correct examples of *acu sin* as can be seen in the fifth set of columns in Figure 5.13. The sixth set of columns in Figure 5.13 show the pupils’ use of *dóibh* ‘for them’. On ten occasions pupils had incorrectly used this form in place of *díobh* ‘of them’, the correct form. There were only two correct examples of *díobh* in the corpus and it is this prepositional pronoun above all others that created the greatest number of errors.

It was noted in Row 4 of Table 4.2 that the Gaeltacht pupils used the prepositional pronoun *acu* ‘at them’ almost thirty times as frequently (1.83%) as the all-Irish school pupils (0.06%). It was the form *acu sin*, which the Gaeltacht pupils used to express ‘of them’. It is clear that the all-Irish pupils in the present study have not acquired this form.

Figure 5.13  
All-Irish school pupils' use of the prepositions *le*, *faoi*, *air*, *de*, *acu* and *dóibh*



### 5.3.8 Use of numbers

The forms of numerals in Irish differ from English in so far as there are different cardinal numbers depending on whether the number is immediately followed by a noun or not (Mac Congáil, 2004) and there are different forms for personal and ordinal numbers also. Due to the nature of the task, as noted in the examination of *dhá chéad* ‘two hundred’ above in 4.4.3.2, numerals were used quite frequently by the pupils in calculating the amount of money that they had spent in their playground design. We saw in Figure 4.3 that the pupils used the copula with two hundred – *sin dhá chéad* ‘that’s two hundred’, correctly on 35 occasions out of 49.

The issues that are of particular interest in this section are first, how the pupils handled *dhá* ‘two’ and *ceithre* ‘four’ because there are other forms of cardinal numbers for these when not followed by a noun. These are *dó* and *ceathair* respectively. The second area of interest is to compare the word *céad* ‘hundred’, when preceded by a number, as

there are different initial mutations to it (*chéad/gcéad*) when preceded by the numerals 2-6 and 7-10. The final area to be examined will be how the pupils used the word *ceann* ‘thing’ after *dhá*. *Dhá cheann* is the correct form however, it was noted in the examination of the corpus that pupils used *dhá cinn* on occasions.

The evidence from the first set of columns in Figure 5.14 is that the pupils chose the correct form of the numeral *dhá* ‘two’ to precede a noun in almost every situation. This contrasts with the second set of columns where *ceathair* ‘four’, the incorrect form to precede a noun was chosen 45 times out of 80.

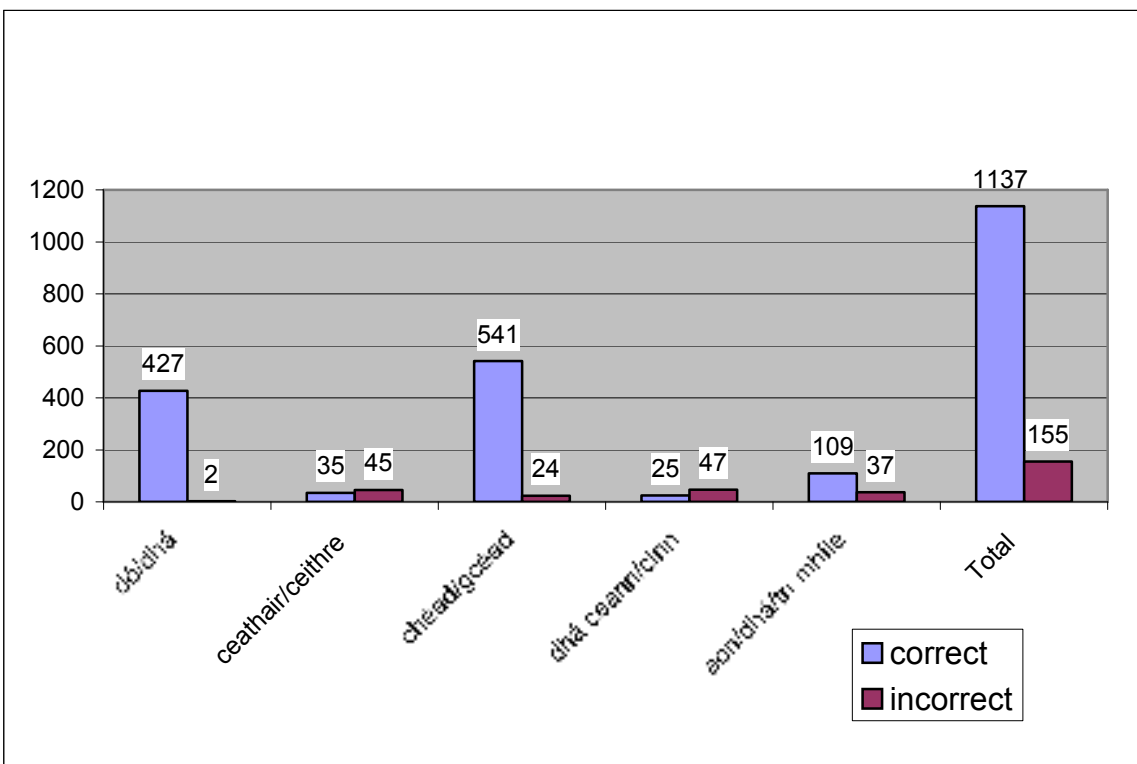
The third set of columns indicates that the pupils used the appropriate form of *chéad* ‘hundred’ after the numbers 2-6 and *gcéad* ‘hundred’ after the numbers 7-9 in the vast majority of cases (541 out of 565). Although it was noted in Row 23 of Table 4.2 that the Gaeltacht pupils used *gcéad* ‘hundred’ almost three times as frequently the all-Irish school pupils, there is no evidence that the all-Irish pupils were incorrectly using another form when they should have been using the eclipsed form *gcéad*.

In relation to *dhá cheann* ‘two things’, the correct form was used in 25 cases out of 72 as can be seen from the fourth set of columns in Figure 5.13. This form may be difficult for the pupils to master, as it is an exception to the regular form of nouns after *dhá*. An alternate form *beirt* ‘two’ is to be found in the Ulster dialect and this explains why the personal number *beirt* ‘two’ was used just over seven times as frequently by the Gaeltacht pupils as it is by the all-Irish school pupils (Row 24, Table 4.2).

Finally, in the fifth set of columns it can be seen that the pupils chose the lenited form *mhile* correctly 109 times out of 146. This still represents an error rate of 25.3%. It was noted in 4.3 (Chapter 4) that Gaeltacht pupils used *mile* and *mhile* twice as frequently as the all-Irish school pupils. There was no obvious reason to be found in the corpus for this difference.

Overall the mastery of the numbers examined in the corpus was good with particular areas that have exceptions in Irish being more difficult to acquire accurately such as *dhá cheann* ‘two things’, the different forms of four *ceathair* and *ceithre*, and the lenition of nouns after *aon* ‘one’, *dhá* ‘two’ and *trí* ‘three’.

Figure 5.14  
All-Irish school pupils' use of the numbers: *dó/dhá*, *ceathair/ceithre*, *chéad/gcéad* and *dhá cheann/cinn*



### 5.3.9 Use of interrogative pronouns *Cad*, *Cad é*, and *Céard*

The next area to be examined in relation to the pupils' use of Irish in the all-Irish school corpus is their use of the interrogative pronouns *cad*, *cad é* and *céard*. These are the three most common forms in Irish used to express 'what' in English. They each have the same meaning and are associated with the three main dialects in Irish: *cad* with Munster Irish, *céard* with Connacht Irish and *cad é* with Ulster Irish. The difficulty that English L1 speakers learning these forms in Irish have is that they tend to use them to translate all forms of 'what' in English. As noted by Mac Murchaidh (2002) *cad* may not be used as a relative particle in Irish as in (52). In fact there was no need for the pupil to use the word *cad* at all in his utterance as one can see from the correct form in line five. The pupil appears to be translating the utterance from English almost word for word whereas this type of statement actually uses the past form of the copula *ba*.



**(52) 09\_01\_291\_L**

\* *Sin cad a dúirt mé.*

*sin cad a dúirt mé*

that-DEM what-Q to-PREP say-PST-IND I-1SG

That's what I said.

*B'in a dúirt mé.*

There is a different type of translation illustrated in (53). The pupil appears to be trying to say, 'What are you like?' and translates it directly from English.

**(53) 01\_02\_297\_S**

\* *Cad atá tú mar?*

*cad atá tú mar*

what-Q be-PRS-REL you-2SG like-PREP

What are you like?

*Cén sórt ceann thú féin?* or *Cad atá tú ag smaoineamh air?*<sup>10</sup>

The first set of columns in Figure 5.15 shows that were 14 examples of this type of construction where *cad/cad é/céard* was used to directly translate 'what' in the all-Irish school pupils' corpus.

The investigation of verbs in Irish above illustrated that there is an independent and a dependent form. In the case of the substantive verb *Tá* and the irregular verbs *faigh* 'to get' and *déan* 'to do' the pupils had difficulty in choosing the correct form to use and generally used the independent form. When a verb follows *cad*, *cad é* or *céard* it is the independent form of the verb that should be used. The second set of columns in Figure 5.14 shows that the pupils incorrectly used the dependent form on 53 occasions out of 80. (54) Exemplifies this error. Pupil C uses the dependent form *bhfuil* of the substantive verb in this case and also fails to use the correct verbal noun *rá* 'saying', and the correct syntax.

**(54) 08\_01\_164\_C**

\* *Cad a bhfuil tú ag abairt?*

*cad a bhfuil tú ag abairt*

what-Q to-PREP be-PRS-DEP you-2SG saying-VN

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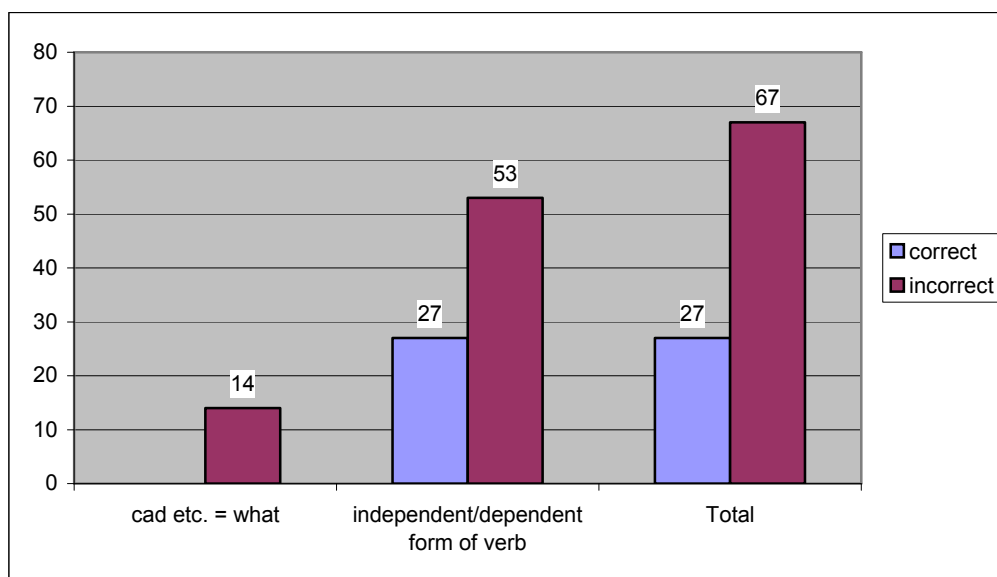
<sup>10</sup> Pupil S offered this version in a stimulated recall session that followed a week later. These stimulated recall sessions are the subject of Chapter 6.

What are you saying?

*Cad 'ta á rá agat?*

Although there are less than 100 utterances containing *cad*, *cad é* or *céard* in this way, the pupils fail to use them correctly on 67 occasions out of 94. This is illustrated in the total column in Figure 5.15.

**Figure 5.15**  
**The all-Irish school pupils' use of *cad*, *cad é* and *céard* 'what'**



### 5.3.10 Pupils' use of the pronoun *é* 'it'

One issue that emerged from the examination of different categories above was the pupils inappropriate use of the pronoun *é* 'it' or the failure to use it in certain structures. The latter was the case in (14) for example we saw how pupil D used *an bhfuil sin*, instead of, *an é sin*. In (16) it was the former where pupil T said *Tá é*, which was not required as the copula is was implied.

#### (14) 01\_02\_189\_D

\* *Ach an bhfuil sin an taobh...?*

*ach an bhfuil sin an taobh...*

but-CONJ is-Q be-PRS that-DEM the-DEF side-M-SG

But is that the side...?

*Ach an é sin an taobh...?*

(16) 06\_04\_35\_T

\* *Tá é sin seacht...*

*tá            é            sin            seacht...*

be-PRS-IND it-M-3SG that-DEM seven-M-SG

That is seven...

*Sin seacht...*

Table 4.2 (Chapter 4) revealed that the Gaeltacht pupils used *é* 77 times, which represented 1.69% of their corpus. The all-Irish school pupils on the other hand used it 1,252 times, which was 4.06% of their corpus or more than twice as often then as the Gaeltacht school pupils. WordSmith concordance tools were used to compile all the instances of *é* in the all-Irish school corpus. It was found when they were examined that 368 (30.8%) utterances containing *é* were incorrect. This level of error is very similar to the number of utterances containing errors in Table 4.5 (Chapter 4), which was found to be 29.2%. It can be stated then that three in ten utterances containing the pronoun *é* ‘it’ have errors. If all-Irish school pupils could master how to use this pronoun correctly it would lead to significant improvements in their accuracy.

In order to examine the difficulties that the pupils have with the pronoun *é* ‘it’, WordSmith concordance tools were used to form three word clusters containing *é*. Table 5.3 shows some of the resultant clusters that highlight their difficulties. Rows 1, 6, 7, 9 and 10 for example, show the use of forms of the substantive verb *bí* where the copula *Is* should have been used as discussed in 5.3.3 above. Rows 3 and 5 show the difficulties that the pupils had with the verbal noun as discussed in the morphology of verbs above (5.3.5). Rows 4, 8, 11, 13, 14 and 17 show the difficulties that the pupils had with the prepositional pronouns as discussed in 5.3.7 above. Although *cuir é ansin* ‘put it there’ (line 18) is not strictly speaking incorrect, it would be more natural, from an Irish syntax point of view, to say *cuir ansin é* unless the speaker wished to emphasise the word *é*.

**Table 5.4**  
**Clusters containing the pronoun *é* 'it' used by all-Irish school pupils**

Three word clusters with <i>é</i>	Frequency
1. tá <i>é</i> sin	62
2. mar <i>é</i> sin	23
3. ag faigh <i>é</i>	19
4. de <i>é</i> sin	15
5. ag déanamh <i>é</i>	14
6. bhfuil <i>é</i> sin	12
7. níl <i>é</i> sin	12
8. le <i>é</i> sin	10
9. an bhfuil <i>é</i>	7
10. atá <i>é</i> sin	7
11. faoi <i>é</i> sin	7
12. except for <i>é</i>	6
13. go dtí <i>é</i>	6
14. ó <i>é</i> sin	5
15. déan <i>é</i> 3-d	5
16. sin mar <i>é</i>	5
17. ceann de <i>é</i>	5
18. cuir <i>é</i> ansin	5
Total	225

It is clear from an examination of these clusters that the pronoun *é* 'it' cannot be dealt with in isolation but much be discussed in the context of the other features that were examined above such as correct use of copula, morphology of verbs and the correct syntax with the verbal noun.

The issue of mapping English syntax onto Irish will be discussed in the next section (5.3.11) below. At this point it is worth noting however, the influence that the English pronoun 'it' appears to have on the pupils' Irish syntax. In (55) below, it can be seen how the pupils place *é* 'it' immediately after the verb, as an English speaker would do – 'Will we leave it...?' It should be noted that this form is quite acceptable in Irish but would normally be used in this way in order to emphasise the object *é* 'it'. In (56) the Gaeltacht

pupil places *é* ‘it’ at the end of a similar utterance where emphasis is not required. This form is more in keeping with the syntax of Irish.

**(55) 09\_01\_1\_F**

\* *An fágfaimid é mar sin...?*  
*an fág -faimid é mar sin*  
 is-Q leave-FUT-IND we-1PL it-3SG like-PREP that-DEM  
 Will we leave it like that...?  
*An bhfágfaimid mar sin é...?*

**(56) 11\_01\_200\_M**

*Fágfaimid go dtí an deireadh é.*  
*fág -faimid go dtí an deireadh é*  
 leave-FUT-IND we-1PL until-CMPD PREP the-DET end-M-SG it-3SG  
 We will leave it until the end.

Issues such as this will be examined in greater detail in the next section.

### **5.3.11 Mapping English syntax onto Irish**

As English is the first language of the vast majority of the all-Irish school pupils in the present study, the transcripts were examined for evidence of interference from English. Notwithstanding the mastery of verb-subject-object (VSO) order and noun-adjective order, as discussed in 5.3.2 above, there is evidence that other structures in Irish present more difficulties to the pupils.

Some samples from the data suggest that on certain occasions the pupils may be mapping English syntax onto Irish. This practice has also been observed in French immersion pupils in Canada (Lapkin & Swain, 2004). The influence of the English pronoun ‘it’ was discussed in the last section and is exemplified in (55). The all-Irish school corpus was examined for other examples of English influence on Irish syntax. The examples found can be divided into two categories. The first is where there is English influence on Irish idiom (Mac Mathúna, 2008) and there appears to be a literal translation from English to Irish and the second is where a sentence appears to be partially translated with the insertion of Irish words and a syntactic structure that is closer to English than to Irish.

### 5.3.11.1 Translation from English

The utterances (52) and (53) discussed above demonstrated examples where the interrogative pronouns *cad*, *céard* and *cad é* are being used to translate the English word ‘what’. They represent one form of translation from English that would grate on a native speaker’s ear. (57)-(60) below show other examples of the influence of English idiom on Irish where pupils employ phrases that are not native to Irish phrases to translate their thoughts. Although these utterances do not sound native to Irish they do demonstrate the creativity of the all-Irish speakers in complying with the school norm of speaking Irish and of communicating their thoughts at the same time. In (57) Pupil D literally translates ‘doing my head in’.

(57) 04\_03\_132\_D

- \* *Tá mise faigh confused le sibhse, tá an bheirt de sibh ag déanamh mo cheann isteach.*  
*tá            mise            faigh   confused le            sibhse            tá*  
*an            bheirt*  
be-PRS-IND I-1SG-EMPH get-IMP confused with-PREP you-2PL-EMPH be-PRS-IND  
the-DET two-F-SG  
*de            sibh            ag déanamh mo            cheann            isteach*  
of-PREP you-2PL doing-VN    my-1SG head-M-SG in-ADV  
I’m getting confused with you, the two of you are doing my head in.  
*Tá sibh ag cur mearbhaill orm, cuireann an bheirt agaibh soir mé.* (Possible translation)

In (58) Pupil S literally translates ‘over’, but the Irish word *thar* means ‘over’ in a different context.

(58) 03\_03\_9\_S

*Ag déanamh troid thar an balla dreapadóireachta.*  
*ag déanamh troid            thar            an            balla            dreapadóireachta*  
doing-VN    fight-F-SG over-PREP the-DET wall-M-SG climbing-ADJ  
Fighting over the climbing wall.  
*Ag troid mar gheall ar mballa dreapadóireachta.*

In (59) Pupil A employs *mhaith le* which can mean would like in other contexts but does not have the same meaning in this context.

(59) 08\_02\_71\_A

*Cé mhaith le tharraingt?*

*cé mhaith le tharraingt*  
 who-Q like-COND to-PREP draw-VN  
 Who wants/would like to draw.  
*Cé tá ag iarraidh tarraingt?*

Pupil E, a Gaeltacht school pupil in (60) translated the discourse marker ‘like’ but retained the English syntax in her utterance. The structure required here in Irish is the type discussed in 5.2.1 where the object and the preposition *a* should be placed before the verbal noun.

(60) 11\_02\_121\_E

\* *Thig linn déan cosúil le, áit fá choinne bord picnic...*  
*thig linn déan cosúil le áit fá choinne bord*  
*picnic...*  
 can-PRS-IND we-1PL do-IMP like-ADJ to-PREP place-F-SG for-PREP-CMPD picnic-  
 table-M-SG  
 We could do like, a place for the picnic table.  
*Thig linn áit a dheánamh fá choinne bord picnic...*

### 5.3.11.2 Partial translation

There are numerous examples in the corpus of what appears to be code-mixing behaviour as discussed in 4.5 (Chapter 4). In many cases however, it is not the insertion of an English borrowing into an Irish sentence, rather the insertion of Irish words into English sentences. It can be seen in (61) for example that the Pupil A’s utterance retains English syntactic structure.

(61) 05\_03\_228\_A

No ‘cos already *fuair muid sin*.  
 no ‘cos already *fuair muid sin*  
 no ‘cos already get-PST-IND we-1PL that-DEM  
 No because we already got that.  
*Nílimid, mar fuaireamar é sin cheana féin.*

Similarly in (62) although there is only one English word in her utterance this Gaeltacht school pupil retains much of the English syntax. The exception is her partial translation of ‘good idea’ as idea *maith* where she employs Irish noun-adjective syntax.

(62) 11\_01\_80\_R

*Sílimse go bhfuil an túr idea maith.*

*Sí*                    *-imse*                    *go bhfuil*                    *an*                    *túr*  
idea maith.

think-PRS-IND I-1SG-EMPH be-PRS-IND-DEP the+DefArt tower+Noun+Masc+Com+Sg  
idea good-ADJ

I think that the tower is a good idea.

*Sílimse gur smaoineamh maith atá sa túr.*

There are many more examples of this type of structure to be found in the pupils' corpus (Appendix 4.2 and 4.3). They illustrate the influence that English has on their oral production in Irish.

### **5.3.11.3 Summary of mapping English syntax onto Irish**

An examination of the features of the all-Irish school pupils' Irish would not have been complete without reference to the influence of English on both lexical choice and on syntax. Many of the features identified in previous sections such as the verbal noun, the use of the pronoun *é* 'it', indirect speech and copula use, involve issues of syntax and the influence of English syntax. It was seen in this section that the pupils in one Gaeltacht school were also influenced by English syntax. If the proficiency in Irish of all-Irish school pupils is to be improved a narrow focus on particular features and structures is unlikely to be successful without attention being paid to the broader issue of the influence of English on their lexical and syntactic choices.

## **5.4 Discussion**

The recordings that have been transcribed in the all-Irish school corpus reveal that pupils in the present study have developed a high level of communicative ability having spent over seven years in an immersion setting. They give an insight into the success of Irish-medium education in producing pupils that are fluent in Irish and that can communicate with one another with ease. They demonstrated the ability to access the vocabulary required to carry out the task assigned to them effectively. On average 70.8% of their utterances are accurate although they may be subject to the influence of English syntax and may contain English discourse markers. The areas identified in this chapter where the pupils deviated from native speaker norms will now be summarised and discussed. A focus of that discussion will be to highlight the main areas that contribute to



the 29.2% error rate in the all-Irish school pupils' utterances and general suggestions as to how they might be remediated.

#### 5.4.1 Morphology of verbs

The first area examined was the pupils' incorrect use of the substantive verb *bí* 'to be' instead of the copula *Is* 'is'. This manifested itself where pupils used the substantive verb *bí* instead of the copula for classificatory purposes and where they failed to use the correct form of the copula with the demonstrative pronoun *sin*. The examination of how Gaeltacht pupils handle this feature of Irish revealed that the copula *Is* is omitted in many cases and that this feature may not be salient enough in the input for all-Irish school pupils to notice. There was an error rate of 32.7% in the aspects of the copula examined in the analysis.

The other verbs addressed in the analysis were the verbs *cuir* 'to put', *caith* 'to have to, to spend', *déan* 'to do', and *faigh* 'to get'. These were the next most common verbs used by the all-Irish school pupils apart from the copula and substantive verb. There were two areas in particular where the pupils experienced difficulty, the first was the correct use of the dependent and independent forms. This difficulty manifested itself with the two irregular verbs *déan* 'to do', and *faigh* 'to get' in particular. The second area was the correct use of the verbal noun. Overall across the four verbs the verbal noun was incorrectly used just over six times out of every ten (61.4%). When all aspects of these verbs were taken together there was an error rate of 37.2%.

As with the substantive verb and the copula above improvements in these rates of error would have a significant impact on all-Irish pupils accuracy in Irish. The difficulty of this task should not be underestimated as some of the Gaeltacht pupils in School 11 were also found to have difficulty with the verbal noun. Walsh (2007) found that sixth year pupils in all-Irish post-primary schools continued to have difficulties with both the copula and the verbal noun.

There were only a small number of cases where the pupils used indirect speech in the corpus. Where they did use it they made errors in almost every seven cases out of ten (69.1%). This is obviously a difficult form for the all-Irish pupils to acquire and could be dealt with in the wider context of verb usage and in the context of dependent and independent forms of the verb in particular.

The pupils' use of the interrogative pronouns *cad*, *cad é* and *céard* 'what' also highlighted difficulties with the dependent and independent forms of verbs with pupils incorrectly using the dependent form instead of the independent form after these pronouns.

#### 5.4.2 Prepositional pronouns

The use of prepositional pronouns was another area that presented difficulties for the all-Irish school pupils. When the six most common prepositional pronouns used by the all-Irish school pupils were examined it was found that they used them incorrectly 71.2% of the time with the pronoun *de* 'of' being incorrectly used most frequently. It is obvious from the data that the pupils have acquired the *de* form but appear to be unable to conjugate it with accuracy. Once again it may be that the information in the input is not sufficiently salient for the pupils to notice it. The all-Irish school pupils used forms such as *de é sin*, *de iad sin*, *de sin* and *de siad* to express 'of them'. When the Gaeltacht school corpus was examined it was found that they used *acu sin* to express 'of them'. The all-Irish school pupils' attention needs to be drawn to this form and other common forms of prepositional pronouns. This could best be done perhaps through focus on form activities.

#### 5.4.3 Use of numbers

In general the pupils had achieved a good level of mastery of most of the forms of numbers examined in the corpus. Not surprisingly it was the forms that differ the most from the English number system or those with exceptions in Irish that caused the greatest difficulty. There were two main sources of error in the features examined in the all-Irish school corpus. They were the ability to differentiate between *ceathair* 'four' when counting and *ceithre* 'four' when followed by a noun, as in *ceithre bhord* 'four tables' for example. The other area of difficulty was the lenition of nouns after *aon* 'one', *dhá* 'two' and *trí* 'three'. When *aon* 'one', *dhá* 'two' and *trí* 'three' were followed by *míle* 'thousand' the pupils failed to lenite it 25.3% of the time.

The fact that the pupils learn mathematics through the medium of Irish probably helps with the mastery of numbers in Irish. The areas identified that cause difficulty for the pupils could be remediated in focus on form activities as part of the mathematics class.

#### 5.4.4 Influence of English

A common theme throughout the analysis is the influence of English. This manifested itself in different ways in the corpus. As discussed in 4.5 (Chapter 4) the all-Irish school pupils engaged in code-mixing and code-switching. It was also evident in their use of the interrogative pronouns *cad*, *cad é*, and *céard* for ‘what’. There were 14 examples in the corpus where pupils used one of these forms to express ‘what’ in an inappropriate context.

The pupils incorrect use of the pronoun *é* ‘it’ also illustrated the influence of English on the pupils’ Irish. This pronoun was only used 77 times (1.69%) by the Gaeltacht school pupils but it was used 1,252 times (4.06%) by the all-Irish school pupils. When the corpus was examined it was found that 30.8% of the utterances with *é* were incorrect. The difficulties with the pronoun *é* intersect with other areas such as, incorrect copula use, incorrect syntax and the failure to use the verbal noun correctly being the principal ones. The three word clusters generated using WordSmith concordance tools revealed that the English pronoun ‘it’ was exerting a strong influence on the use of the pronoun *é* in Irish. In many cases the pupils inserted *é* where it was not required as it was understood or contained as part of another word such as a prepositional pronoun in Irish.

The code-mixing and code-switching behaviour of pupils was discussed in Chapter 4. It was viewed from a different perspective in this chapter however. Examples were provided in 5.3.11 above from the pupils’ corpus of this type of language use. It was illustrated how the use of English words interfered with Irish syntax. Although discourse markers represent 6.35% (Table 4.6) of the all-Irish school corpus it is when the literal translation and partial translation impose English syntax on the pupils Irish that gives rise to the greatest cause for concern (Nic Pháidín, 2003).

#### 5.4.5 Analytic teaching methodology

The principal sources of the 29.2% error rate of all-Irish school pupils in the present study have been identified as difficulties with the copula, the morphology of verbs, prepositional pronouns, some aspects of number use and the influence of English. These features of the pupils’ Irish all involve syntactic difficulties that deviate from the natural flow of the Irish language. They are likely therefore to grate on native speakers’ ears and to

lead to disparaging descriptions of the pupils' Irish as *Gaelscoilis*. Pedagogic practice needs to address the high incidence of errors if pupils' accuracy in Irish is to be improved. It is suggested that a dependence on a largely experiential approach to language acquisition is unlikely to bring about the required improvement. Continuing to teach the copula as it has traditionally been presented in grammar books is unlikely to help pupils acquire the correct form when used with the demonstrative pronoun *sin*. A programme in which there are 'focus on form' activities, opportunities for 'pushed' output and a more analytic approach in general may help to improve pupils' accuracy in Irish.

It is also suggested that the targeting of particular features needs to take place at an earlier stage in pupils' acquisition of Irish in order to guard against their fossilisation. Walsh (2007) found in her study, that pupils in sixth year in post-primary all-Irish schools still had difficulty in mastering correct use of the copula and of the verbal noun. Continuing with current practice in the hope that the non target-like features identified in the present study will eventually be accurately acquired over time is unlikely to be effective. Recommendations regarding pedagogy will be discussed again later in the context of the overall findings of the present study.

## **Chapter 6: Pupils' reflections on their communicative performance in Irish**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the stimulated recall sessions (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Polio et al., 2006) where groups of pupils in each school viewed a video recording of excerpts of their work on a collaborative task. This reflective activity has a number of purposes:

1. to facilitate pupils' reflection and comment on the quality of the language that they used;
2. to investigate the underlying communicative competence of all-Irish school pupils with a particular focus on identifying the errors that they recognise and can correct, as opposed to those they do not recognise as errors;
3. to create an environment where the pupils' observations could be the starting point for a collaborative exploration of why their language contains the lexical and syntactic features identified in Chapter 5.

The data gathered in this phase of the study enabled the construction of a richer interpretation of the data than would have been available had the findings been based solely on the evidence of the linguistic performance in the initial recording and analysis in Chapters 4 and 5.

Pupils in each of the nine all-Irish schools engaged in a stimulated recall activity based on video-excerpts of their group work (Gaeltacht schools were not included in this part of the study). This gave the participants in each school an opportunity to reflect on their language use and to self-correct the mistakes that they noticed. The terms 'recall sessions' and 'reflective activity' will be used interchangeably throughout the chapter to refer to the stimulated recall sessions. This process will be described in the next section. An account of the pupils' perceptions of the quality of their Irish follows in section 6.3. The pupils were provided with an opportunity to correct their mistakes and the results of this are reported in section 6.4. A further phase explored pupils' insights into the deviant features of their Irish and this is described in section 6.5. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings in section 6.6.

## **6.2 *Stimulated recall activity***

The transcribed speech in the all-Irish school pupils' corpus resulted from the recordings of the pupils as they engaged in a collaborative 'playground design' task. Up to three groups of pupils in each school, were video-recorded as they engaged in this activity. All groups (22 in total) that were successfully video-recorded in the nine all-Irish schools engaged in the stimulated recall. Excerpts of video recordings containing examples of the most frequent deviant features analysed in Chapter 5 were chosen for presentation to pupils to give them an opportunity to reflect on them. These features were, the copula, the verbal noun and code-mixing. The rationale for choosing the most frequent features was that they provide the most reliable evidence of linguistic competence compared to low frequency items (Chaudron, 2003). In general, the extracts for any one group lasted no more than three minutes and the sessions were conducted within seven to ten days of the initial recording.

The stimulated recall sessions were conducted with the pupils assembled in their original groups of three pupils each. The pupils were withdrawn from the classroom for this purpose, to a quiet location in the school and the sessions were also audio-recorded. There were three stages in the process. The first stage involved the pupils in viewing the selected excerpts on a laptop computer, in an attempt to capture their initial thoughts and reactions to the video excerpts and to the quality of their Irish in particular. A relaxed, collaborative atmosphere was created at this point where pupils could reflect on their use of Irish. Many of the groups were quite animated during the first viewing and commented on the strangeness of their voices and there was occasionally some mild embarrassment for pupils in looking at themselves on screen. Following this first viewing, the pupils were invited to comment on their initial impressions about their voices, how they had worked on the task as a group and particularly on the general quality of their Irish. On a small number of occasions where a group was particularly animated the excerpt was played again before these topics were explored.

During the second stage, the pupils were provided with a transcript of the excerpts and asked to view the video recording again checking the accuracy of the transcript. They were encouraged in this way to enter the role of assisting the researcher in ensuring that their utterances had been captured correctly. This had the effect of focusing the pupils'

attention on the language used in the playground design task. Following the clarification of issues concerning the accuracy of the transcription, the pupils were invited to correct any mistakes that they now detected on reflection and to comment on the quality of the Irish that they had used. Ability to later correct mistakes was of interest as this might indicate that their underlying competence was better than their performance on these tasks demonstrated. As they self-corrected some of their mistakes the discussion progressed to the third stage of the process which focussed on the pupils' linguistic performance.

During the third stage, the observations of the pupils were used to focus the discussion on the causes of the non-target like features that they had identified in their Irish. This approach advanced the process in a non-threatening way and gained their confidence and trust. Some groups required very little prompting in order to get them to engage in this process and to reveal interesting insights. A small number of groups, on the other hand, were more reluctant to go beyond commenting in a general way on the text of the transcript. Some pupils found it quite easy to notice their mistakes and to self-correct whereas others had to be prompted to do so. While all pupils engaged enthusiastically in the process some were more forthcoming than others with insights into their linguistic performance.

The recordings of the recall sessions were transcribed at a later date and the instances where pupils commented on their linguistic performance and general use of language were noted. These data were analysed using the NVivo software package (L. Richards, 2005). The transcripts were read and the pupils' contributions were coded and grouped into categories. Particular themes emerged from these groups. Examples from the transcripts are used in this chapter to illustrate the pupils' views and insights. These examples are identified in a similar fashion to Chapter 5 where 07\_03 represents School 7, Group 3. The letter on the left before each utterance identifies the pupil in question, thus A represents Pupil A [see (1) below]. Where the comments and reflections of the pupils contained linguistic errors, attention was not drawn to them, as this was not the purpose of the exercise. An English version of the exchanges has also been provided but without the morphological glosses.

The analysis of the pupils' thoughts and insights is of a qualitative nature. Due to the time constraints involved in revisiting schools and withdrawing pupils from class it was not possible to go exhaustively through each error and count how many times an error was

corrected or not. The non-target like features that were self-corrected and the insights provided by the pupils do however, give a clearer picture of some aspects of their underlying communicative competence and may have implications for how that competence might be improved. Three major areas that emerged from the analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 were the use of (i) the copula, (ii) the verbal noun and (iii) code-mixing and code-switching. As these were also the three main areas of focus and comment by pupils in the stimulated recall sessions the analysis of the data in this chapter will confine itself to them also. The three stages of the stimulated recall are now described in more detail.

### **6.3 Pupils' perceptions of the quality of their Irish**

The pupils generally responded in one of two ways in assessing the quality of their Irish after the first viewing of the video excerpt. The first response was where they were generally satisfied. As Pupil A stated in (1):

(1) 07\_03

A *Tá sé ceart go leor.*

It's all right.

In the second type of response, the pupil is quite critical of his Irish and it appears to be a revelation to him:

(2) 09\_01

F *Cheap mise go raibh an Ghaeilge, ní raibh sé go maith. Ceapaim go raibh sé níos fearr nuair atá tú ag caint le duine.*

I thought that the Irish, it wasn't good. I thought that it was better when you are talking to someone.

In many cases, the pupils were still more critical of the quality of their Irish when they viewed it a second time in combination with the written transcript. It appears in some cases that until they saw their speech written down, they did not realise the level of code-mixing and the number of mistakes:

(3) 03\_03

J *Mar cheap mé go raibh Gaeilge maith againn.*

I thought that we had good Irish.

N. *Yeah, nuair a féachann tú ar an scáileán agus atá tú in ann tú féin a chloisteáil.*

Yeah, when you see it on the screen and when you can hear yourself.



S. *Agus ansin nuair a bhfuil sé scríofa amach.* And then when it is written out.

There were many other groups in the present study that made similar comments. Indeed Pupil N was very critical:

(4) 04\_03

N. *Má tháinig duine éigin isteach agus má chonaic sé é seo agus ní raibh a fhios aige cé raibh sé, bheadh sé ag rá níl aon Ghaeilge ag na daoine seo ... Déarfadh siad tá siad i rang 3 nó rud éigin.* If someone came in and if he saw this and didn't know who it was, he would say that these people have no Irish ... He would say they are in 3<sup>rd</sup> class or something.

As the pupils made comments of this kind, they were asked to say *in what way* their Irish was not as good as they had thought it was. Pupil I identified the presence of English words:

(5) 05\_03

R <sup>11</sup>	<b><i>Céard a shíl sibh faoi sin?</i></b>	<b>What did you think of that?</b>
A	<i>Coinnigh mé ag rá 'what'.</i>	I kept saying 'what'.
R	<b><i>An raibh fhios agat?</i></b>	<b>Did you know? [Were you aware?]</b>
A	<i>Ní raibh.</i>	No.
R	<b><i>Cad é a shíleann sibh anois?</i></b>	<b>What do you think now?</b>
A	<i>Tá sé níos measa ná a shíl mé.</i>	It is worse than I thought.
I	<i>Thig leis a bheith níos fearr.</i>	It could be better.
R	<b><i>Cén bealach, níos fearr?</i></b>	<b>Better in what way?</b>
I	<i>Gan na foclaí Béarla isteach san abairt.</i>	Without the English words in the sentence.

The presence of English words was the focus of greatest dissatisfaction. Pupil A in School 6 said:

(6) 06\_03

A *Tá a lán focail Béarla istigh ann.* There are a lot of English words in it.

The other feature highlighted by the pupils was the presence of mistakes and grammatical errors.

---

<sup>11</sup> R. stands for researcher unless otherwise stated and is represented on bold type.

(7) 09\_01

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| R | <i>Cén bealach nach bhfuil sé chomh maith?</i>   | <b>In what way is it not as good?</b>                     |
| L | <i>Bhí cúpla mistakes ... botúin ghramadach.</i> | There were a couple of mistakes ... grammatical mistakes. |

The use of the stimulated recall process enabled the pupils to reflect on their language use and to comment on it. In general, they were quite critical of their performance, identifying code-mixing as the feature that was of greatest concern but also commenting on grammatical mistakes.

#### **6.4 Correction of mistakes following reflection on output**

In the second stage of the stimulated recall process, the pupils were invited to correct the mistakes that they noticed. They were asked to focus on their own utterances in particular, but the collaborative nature of the process allowed other pupils in the group to offer suggested improvements if they wished. As stated above, it is not intended in this analysis to provide an in-depth account of the correction of every error type. The description will focus on the correction of the copula, verbal noun, and the code-mixing and code-switching behaviour of pupils. The correction of those mistakes will be described below under those general headings.

First, an example of a corrected extract will be presented. The pupils made the ‘corrections’ verbally and were later transcribed by the researcher. In extract (8) below from School 3, Group 2, the text that the pupils corrected is struck out and the new text inserted is shown in red type. Lines 10 and 26 show the insertion by the pupils of the Irish word for ‘slide’ and ‘there’ respectively. Lines 17, 18 and 27 show the correction by the pupils of the use of numbers with the word *céad* ‘hundred’ correctly eclipsed (*gcéad*) after *seacht* ‘seven’ and *naoi* ‘nine.’

In Line 4 the utterance is improved by pupils but the personal pronoun *dóibh siúd* ‘for them’ is still not what is required in the context of the sentence. A correct version *díobh sin* ‘of them’ was suggested to the pupils by the researcher and they were asked if they noticed a difference or if one version was more correct. They responded that they did not know.

In Line 11 Pupil J made a number of changes to the sentence that improved it. Pupil S however, offered a complete restructuring which was accepted by the group as being more appropriate.

(8) 03\_02

- 2 A Tá ... tá spás againn anseo agus...
- 3 J B'fhéidir.
- 4 S B'fhéidir is féidir linn ceann dóibh ~~sin ceann sin~~ **siúd** a cheannach.
- 5 A Sea.
- 6 J Sea sin díreach framaí dreapadóireachta má chaithfimid é sin isteach níl sé ach céad eile.
- 7 A Is féidir linn an sleamhnán sin a chur isteach freisin.
- 8 S *No*, mar tá dréimire air sin.
- 9 A Ó.
- 10 S B'fhéidir is féidir linn é seo agus an ~~slide~~ **sleamhnán ...**
- 11 J ~~No you see~~ **má ... má rinn muid rinneamar**, má ~~fuar~~ **faigh** muid an túr ~~eh~~ **beidh, beidh muid beimis** in ann ~~ceann dóibh siúd~~ **sleamhnán fada a faigh fháil** gan dréimire **agus é a cheangail don túr.**  
**S. Má fuaireamar an túr beimid in ann sleamhnán a fháil gan dréimire.**
- 12 A Gan dréimire, dréimire.
- 13 S *No*, tagann sé le dréimire.
- 14 J *No*, gan dréimire.
- 15 A *No*, gan dréimire.
- 16 S Ceart go leor, sin smaoineamh.
- 17 A *So* seacht **gcéad** agus dhá chéad.
- 18 S Seacht **gcéad** agus dhá chéad.
- 19 S *Okay*, anois caithfimid na rudaí a chur isteach anois.
- 20 S *So*, A an **n** déanfaidh tú é sin?
- 21 J *So*.
- 22 A Sleamhnán.
- 21 S *Yeah*.
- 24 A Agus é sin. Níl mé go maith ag tarraingt.
- 25 S Sin ceart go leor, níl, níl sé ach plean.
- 26 A ~~There~~ **Ceart go leor.**
- 27 J Tá fós naoi **gcéad** fágtha againn.
- 28 A Dhá cinn.
- 29 S Níl dhá cinn.
- 30 A Ó ceart go leor.
- 31 S ~~Ó wait~~ an **gceannaímid?** *No*.

32 J Tá fós naoi gcéad fágtha againn.

The corrected extract above from School 3, Group 2 then was typical of the second stage of the stimulated recall process.

## 6.4.1 Correction of specific mistakes

### 6.4.1.1 Deviant forms of copula

It was shown in Chapter 5 that the all-Irish school pupils used incorrect forms of the copula 32.7% of the time and there was a somewhat lower rate of error for other verb forms depending on the form of the verb used. The stimulated recall sessions offered an opportunity to see if some of these incorrect forms were mistakes or evidence of underlying errors. Many of the extracts selected for the stimulated recall sessions contained examples of incorrect use of the copula. These generally involved the incorrect use of the substantive verb *Bí* 'to be'. In almost every stimulated recall session, pupils failed to notice these incorrect forms as mistakes. Polio et al. (2006) caution against drawing conclusions from what was not noticed and consequently pupils' attention was specifically drawn to these errors when they did not notice them themselves. Pupil A in (9) was able to use the copula instead of the substantive verb when her attention was drawn to it.

(9) 02\_01

- |    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| R. | <i>An bhfuil bealach eile chun, 'Tá sin an scoil,' a rá?</i> | <b>Is there another way to say 'That is the school' (using substantive verb)</b> |
| A. | <i>Is é seo an scoil.</i>                                    | <b>This is the school. (using copula)</b>  |

In (10) Pupil J in School 7, Group 1, produced the following utterance in Line 225:

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| J. | <i>Agus tá sin an airgead go dtí an méid a bhí ceadaithe againn.</i> | <b>And that is (substantive verb) the money to the amount that was allowed.</b> |
|----|--|---|

When he did not notice the error himself his attention was drawn to it by way of an analogous example to establish that he had an awareness of the copula. As can be seen from the exchange below he could use a more suitable version when he was prompted. It is also interesting to note his final comment about learning from mistakes.

(10) 07\_01

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| R. | <i>Má deir tú leis an múinteoir 'Tá sin an peann luaidhe' Céard a déarfadh sí?</i> | <b>If you said to the teacher, 'That is the pencil.' (using substantive verb) What would she say?</b> |
|----|--|---|

J.	<i>Is peann luaidhe é sin.</i>	‘That is a pencil.’ (using copula)
R.	<i>An bhfuil bealach níos fearr chun ‘Tá sin an airgead’ a rá.</i>	<b>Is there a better way to say? ‘That is the money.’</b> (using substantive verb)
J.	<i>Sin an méid airgid a bhí ceadaithe.</i>	That is the amount of money that was allowed. (using copula)
J.	<i>Caithfidh tú foghlaim ó do bhotúin.</i>	You have to learn from your mistakes.

It was found that the pupils could correct their deviant use of the copula in about 85% of cases but only when their attention was drawn to the error and they were prompted to do so. This includes School 8 where the pupils were unable to correct any errors of this type despite the provision of prompts. The prompts followed the pattern used in (10) above, where the pupils were asked what their teacher would say if they used a form such as *Tá sé ríomhaire/peann luaidhe* ‘it is a computer/pencil.’ When prompted in this way they generally reformed their original utterance using the copula.

It was noted earlier (Section 5.3.3), that the Gaeltacht pupils omitted the copula *Is* and the pronoun *é* in utterances with the demonstrative pronoun *sin*. When the all-Irish pupils were prompted in the stimulated recall to rephrase sentences where the substantive verb *bí* was used instead of the copula, they used *Is é* ‘it is’ in almost every case as in (9) above. Pupil J in (10) above was an exception to this pattern as he said *sin an méid* ‘that is the amount’ when he rephrased his original utterance. It appears that the majority of all-Irish pupils may not have access to or be aware that this form of the copula is acceptable. The language input that the all-Irish pupils receive may not be sufficiently salient for them to acquire this form of the copula where there is not a single map from English onto Irish. This may indicate a need to change the way in which the copula is taught. Based on the evidence of the pupils’ corpus and the stimulated recall sessions, it appears that 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in all-Irish schools have partially mastered the use of the copula with the demonstrative pronoun *sin*. In general, when they are prompted in a particular way they can produce the correct form but it appears that it has not been internalised as part of their unmonitored spontaneous output.

#### 6.4.1.2 Correction of deviant forms of verbal noun

The use of the verbal noun was noted as another area of difficulty for the all-Irish school pupils and indeed on some occasions for the Gaeltacht pupils in 5.3.5. This issue was explored with the pupils in the recall sessions in a similar way to the copula above.

In (11) Pupil K's attention was drawn to the utterance in Line 179. She was able to correct the utterance without prompting and as can be seen she also replaced one instance of 'okay.'

(11) 02\_02\_179

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>K. <del>Okay</del> <i>Ceart go leor, ní cheapaim go bhfuil muid <del>ag faigh</del> <b>chun</b> é sin <b>a fháil</b>, okay fan soicind</i></p> | <p>Okay, I don't think that we are going to get that, okay, wait a second.</p> |
|---|--|

Similarly, in (12) Pupil I's attention was drawn to her utterance in Line 120 and she was able to correct it.

(12) 05\_03\_120

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <p>I. <i>Agus thig linn <del>fháil</del> sin <b>a fháil</b></i></p> | <p>And we can get that.</p> |
|---|-----------------------------|

Pupil A's attention was drawn to Line 147 in (13) and asked if there was a better way to express it. When she did not respond she was prompted by the researcher with a similar structure that was likely to be familiar to her from routine classroom conversation. She was able to rephrase this question correctly and on hearing this Pupil D offered the correct form for 'You can draw it.'

(13) 08\_01

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>A. <i>Is féidir leat tarraingt é...</i><br/>147</p>  | <p>You can draw it.</p>   |
| <p>R. <i><b>Dá mba rud é go ndúirt tú leis an múinteoir 'An bhfuil cead agam faigh leabhar?' Céard a déarfadh sí?</b></i></p> | <p><b>If you said to the teacher, 'Have I permission to get a book?' (said in incorrect form) What would she say?</b></p> |
| <p>A. <i>An bhfuil cead agam leabhar a fháil?</i></p>   | <p>Have I permission to get a book?</p>   |
| <p>D. <i>Is féidir leat é a tharraingt.</i></p>   | <p>You can draw it.</p>   |

In general, the pupils were able to 'self-correct' their incorrect use of the verbal noun approximately 50% of the time once their attention had been drawn to it. On the other occasions when they were prompted by the researcher with a similar phrase that used the same structure in a context that they would be familiar with, they managed to see the connection and correct the verbal noun structure. The exchange in (14) gives an insight into the pupils' awareness of their mistakes. Pupil J's attention was drawn to line 17 in the original transcript and she manages to correct it. She was then questioned as to why, in her spontaneous speech, she makes mistakes like that when she knows the correct form. It

appears from her response that on occasions, mistakes are made because they are not monitoring their output and as Pupil A states once their attention is drawn to a problematical feature they know immediately that it is wrong.

#### (14) 07\_01

J. *Caoga agus sin d'fhéadfadh muid*  
17 *faigh an, an dréimire rópa a fháil.*

C. Like 'an bhfuil cead leabhar a fháil',  
*deireann tú é sin mícheart, déarfadh*  
*sí. 'Abair sin arís.'*

R. ***Cén fáth a ndéanann tú botún mar***  
***sin nuair atá an rud ceart ar eolas***  
***agat?***

J. *B'fhéidir tá tú ag iarraidh deir é just*  
*chun faigh é amach agus níl tú ag*  
*thabhairt a lán smaoineamh air.*

R. ***Nuair atá sé ráite an mbíonn a fhios***  
***agat féin go bhfuil sé mícheart?***

A. *Tá sé mar an gcéanna le obair scríofa,*  
*má tá rud éigin mícheart, ghlaonn an*  
*múinteoir ort agus an nóiméad a*  
*féachann tú air tá fhios agat tá sé*  
*mícheart.*

Fifty and then we could get the rope  
ladder.

Like have I permission to get a book,  
you say that wrong, she (the teacher)  
will say. 'Say it again.'

**Why do you make a mistake like**  
**that when know the correct thing?**

Maybe you are just trying to say it to  
get it out and you are not giving it a  
lot of thought.

**And when you have said it do you**  
**know yourself that it is wrong?**

It is the same with written work, if  
something is wrong, the teacher calls  
you and the minute you look at it you  
know it is wrong.

This issue of pupils not monitoring their output in spontaneous production and not attending to form is a theme that arose repeatedly throughout the recall sessions and it is one that will be returned to later. In relation to the verbal noun it appears that it is a structure that has only been partially mastered by the pupils. As seen in Figure 5.11 the verbal noun was incorrectly used 61.4% of the time by the all-Irish school pupils in the corpus. The evidence from the recall sessions is that the pupils needed to have their attention drawn to the mistake before they noticed it and even at that, they could not correct it in many cases without significant prompting.

### 6.4.2 Pupils' perceptions of code-mixing

Turning now to the issue of code-mixing, it will be recalled that Table 4.6 (Chapter 4) showed that the 25 most common English words accounted for 7.46% of the all-Irish school corpus. Of those 25, the vast majority of them were accounted for by two affirmative/negative particles ('no', 'yeah') and five discourse markers ('so', 'okay', 'just',

‘like’ and ‘right’). This section describes the pupils’ reaction to this relatively high use of English words as they engaged in the playground design task.

One of the schools with a high rate of code-mixing was School 2 where the 25 most common English words accounted for 8.05% (Figure 4.2) of their corpus. Group 2 from that school was invited to correct mistakes and make improvements to their output. Some of the corrections that they made are shown in (15) below. It can be seen that the pupils suggested that most of the English words be deleted and offered the correct form for the verbal noun in Line 56 for example.

(15) 02\_02

- |    |   |   |  |
|----|---|---|--|
| 37 | D | <del>Let's see</del> <i>Fan go bhfeicfimid</i>  | Wait till we see.  |
| 41 | B | <del>Ó, how about like connect like</del><br><del><i>cuireann tú</i></del> <i>Céard faoi má cuirifimid</i><br><i>gach rud le chéile é seo, é seo le é seo</i>   | How about if we put everything together this, this with this.  |
| 48 | K | <del>Yeah, beidh sin class</del> <i>go maith/hiontach</i>   | That will be great.  |
| 49 | K | <i>Agus ansin faigh muid like déanfaimid</i><br><del>like rud éicint like park</del> <i>mar páirc do</i><br><i>daoine beaga, páirc do daoine móra</i><br><del>agus say</del> <i>deir muid...</i>  | And then we will get like, we will do like something as a park for the small people, a park for the big people and say...  |
| 56 | K | <del>So literally</del> <i>caithfimid fáil</i> <del>rud éicint</del><br><del><i>atá</i></del> <i>a fháil</i> <i>i gcomhair gach duine agus</i><br><i>má tá sé rud éicint mar atá</i> <del>like</del> <i>faigh</i><br><i>muid rud éicint mar</i> <del>like,</del> <i>b'fhéidir rud</i><br><i>mar sin so.</i> | So we have to get something for everyone and if it is something like, we'll get something like maybe a thing like that so. |
| 58 | K | <del>Yeah, beidh sin so class</del> <i>go hiontach.</i>   | That will be great.  |

School 6 had the highest rate of code-mixing at 11.15% for the 25 most common English words. Pupil A in Group 3 commented in (6) above that ‘*there are a lot of English words in it.*’ When they were questioned about this in (16), Pupil E stated that they were not aware that they were using them and that it was a ‘habit’. It is interesting to note that the six word sentence giving her assessment and reflection, itself contained four English words ‘no’, ‘just’, ‘like’ and ‘habit’, which serves to highlight how unaware the pupils are of code-mixing.

(16) 06\_03

- |    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| A. | <i>Tá a lán focal Béarla istigh ann.</i> | There are a lot of English words in it.  |
| C. | ‘Like’, ‘oh my God’, ‘yeah’, ‘probably’. | ‘Like’, ‘oh my God’, ‘yeah’, ‘probably’. |



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| R. <i>An raibh a fhios agaibh go raibh siad sin á húsáid agaibh?</i> | <b>Did you know that you were using them?</b> |
| E. No, <i>tá sé</i> just like habit.                                 | No, it is just like habit.                    |

The pupils in Group 4 in School 6, were also questioned about code-mixing and Pupil C's response in (17) indicates that they are not aware of it and that it is a practice that they are used to, confirming the notion of 'habit' expressed in the (16).

(17) 06\_04

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| R. <i>Cén fáth a bhfuil focail Bhéarla istigh ann?</i>       | <b>Why are there a lot of English words in it.</b> |
| C. <i>Táimid an-used to it.</i>                              | We are very used to it.                            |
| R. <i>An mbíonn a fhios agaibh go bhfuil sé sin ar siúl?</i> | <b>Did you know that this is happening?</b>        |
| E. <i>Ní bhíonn a fhios againn.</i>                          | No, we don't know.                                 |

The responses of the pupils in Schools 2 and 6, the schools with the highest rate of code-mixing, were typical of all the other schools. The pupils repeatedly stated that they were not aware that they used so many English words and it was this aspect above all others that disappointed them regarding the quality of their Irish. It will be recalled from section 4.5.4, that the only language related episodes found in the corpus were ones where a pupil was reminded by a peer to use a particular word in Irish or to speak in Irish if the pupil had code-switched.

## **6.5 Pupils' insights into the deviant features of their Irish output**

Using the reflections from stages one and two as a starting point, the third stage of the recall sessions engaged the pupils in considering the reasons, in a more general context, why they had not spoken as accurately as they were capable of and why their Irish contained so many English words. The results of those discussions will be reported under the following six headings: monitoring of output, correction of inaccuracies by peers, recycling of learner errors, translation from English, focus on forms and exposure to Irish outside of school. It will be noted that some of the collaborative tone of the discussion can get lost when isolated excerpts are selected for transcription.

### 6.5.1 Monitoring of output

Pupil J in (14) (reproduced below) was asked why she made a mistake when she knew the correct form.

(14) 07\_01

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|--|---|
| <p>R. <i>Cén fáth a ndéanann tú botún mar sin nuair atá an rud ceart ar eolas agat.</i></p> <p>J. <i>B'fhéidir tá tú ag iarraidh deir é just chun faigh é amach agus níl tú ag thabhairt a lán smaoineamh air.</i></p> | <p><b>Why do you make a mistake like that when know the correct thing?</b></p> <p>Maybe you are just trying to say it to get it out and you are not giving it a lot of thought.</p> |
|--|---|

This was a typical response from all groups and the issue of ‘not thinking’ arose repeatedly in the stimulated recall sessions. The discussion between Pupils E, S and D in (18) illustrates this also. Pupil E is particularly critical of their Irish and has no difficulty in admitting that she was not monitoring her output and used the English version of words she clearly knew in Irish. She also observed that on occasions in class when she is writing, she monitors what she writes more carefully than when speaking. It is interesting that Pupil S noted that she forgot about the presence of the camera, indicating that she was implicitly capable of better ‘performance’ if she had been more aware of its presence.

(18) 04\_01

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|--|--|
| <p>E. <i>Tá sé saghas uafásach an Ghaeilge a d'úsáid muid.</i></p> <p>R. <i>Nach bhfuil sé chomh maith is a cheap sibh?</i></p> <p>S. <i>Níl. Tá sé go maith nuair atá tú ag scríobh é i cóipleabhar.</i></p> <p>E. <i>Yeah mar tá tú ag smaoineamh ar céard a bhfuil tú ag scríobh síos.</i></p> <p>D. <i>Ach nuair atá tú ag caint thagann sé amach.</i></p> <p>S. <i>Like rinne mise dearmad bhí an ceamara ansin agus ...</i></p> <p>E. <i>Like, focail atá fhios agam, bhí mé ag rá iad as Béarla fiú amháin má bhí fhios agam an Ghaeilge orthu mar ní raibh mé ag smaoineamh.</i></p> | <p>It was kind of awful the Irish we used.</p> <p><b>Is it not as good as you thought it was?</b></p> <p>No. It is good when you are writing it in your copybook.</p> <p>Yeah because you are thinking about what you are writing.</p> <p>But when you are talking it comes out.</p> <p>Like I forgot the camera was there and ...</p> <p>Like, words I know, I was saying them in English, even if I knew the Irish for them because I wasn't thinking.</p> |
|--|--|

The pupils in School 7, Group 2 again explain that they ‘don’t think’ but elaborate on why (See 19). Pupil J explains it by referring to the use of English outside of schools

with her friends. They were also asked if they thought more about what they were saying when speaking to the teacher:

(19) 07\_02

R. *Cén fáth a ndeir tú an rud mícheart nuair atá an rud ceart ar eolas agat?*

J. *Mar nuair atá tú ag dul timpeall le do chairde is Béarla a bíonn á labhairt agat agus ansin nuair a thagann tú ar scoil is é Gaeilge agus caithfidh tú smaoineamh faoi.*

R. *Aon tuairim agatsa A?*

A. *Ní smaoinionn tú.*

R. *An mbíonn tú ag smaoineamh níos mó nuair a bhíonn tú ag caint leis an múinteoir nó le do chairde?*

J. *Leis an múinteoir mar muna deir tú an rud ceart, beidh sí, déarfadh sí tá sé mícheart.*

**Why do you say the incorrect thing when you know the correct thing?**

Because when you are going around with your friends it is English that you speak and when you come to school it is Irish and you have to think about it.

**Have you any opinion A?**

You don't think.

**Do you think more when you are talking to the teacher or to your friends?**

With the teacher because if you don't say it correctly, she will be, she will say it is incorrect.

Similar ideas were expressed by other groups (See 20 and 21):

(20) 04\_02

C. *Nuair a bhíonn tú ag caint leis an múinteoir, roimh téann tú suas, bíonn tú ag smaoineamh ar cad a bhfuil tú chun rá leis. Like roimh cuireann tú do lámh suas caithfidh tú smaoineamh. Cad é an Ghaeilge ar an rud atá tú ag iarraidh?*

When you are talking to the teacher, before you go up, you are thinking about what you are going to say to him. Like before you put up your hand you have to think. What is the Irish for the thing you are looking for?

(21) 04\_02

D. *Déanann muid iarracht mór sa rang leis an múinteoir ach sílim nuair atá muid lenár cairde nach ndéanaimid iarracht chomh maith.*

We make a big effort in class with the teacher but I think when we are with our friends that we don't make as big an effort.

It is clear from these comments that the norm of speaking Irish as accurately as possible with the teacher is well established. It is also clear that it requires extra effort on the part of the pupils to maintain this 'standard' and that they are not as inclined to do so when speaking to their friends at school. This was also borne out in the AMTB, the results of which are presented in Chapter 7, where 53.5% of pupils strongly agreed that it was

important for them to be able to speak Irish without mistakes when speaking to the teacher compared to 23.3% when speaking with their peers.

### 6.5.2 Correction by peers

As noted in 4.5.4 and 6.4.3 above there were no instances in the corpus of pupils correcting a peer's inaccurate use of Irish. Notwithstanding this, many groups were asked if they ever corrected each other. When the researcher asked the pupils in Group 2, School 4 about this, Pupil G responded:

(22) 04\_02

R. *An gceartaíonn sibh a chéile riamh?*

**Do you ever correct one another?**

G. *Ní it depends. B'fhéidir if tá tú ag caint Béarla a lán, beidh tú ceartaithe.*

No, it depends. Maybe if you are speaking English a lot you will be corrected.

Pupil J in School 3 responded that you would sometimes correct a peer. She went on to explain how she would notice a peer's inaccuracy whereas it was more difficult to hear her own inaccuracies.

(23) 03\_03

R. *An gceartaíonn sibh a chéile riamh?*

**Do you ever correct one another?**

J. *Uaireanta.*

Sometimes.

J. *Cloiseann tú nuair atá daoine eile ag labhairt Gaeilge nach bhfuil cruinn. Ach ní chloiseann tú nach bhfuil tú féin ag labhairt go cruinn.*

You hear it when someone else speaks Irish that isn't accurate. But you don't hear that you are not speaking accurately yourself.

S. *Sea.*

Yes.

Pupil N in (24) also referred to 'not noticing'. This is interesting because earlier in the conversation Pupil B had given as a reason for making mistakes as *mar níl muid ag éisteacht linn féin* [because we are not listening to ourselves]. This group spoke about there being two types of Irish, *Gaeilge na leanaí* 'the Irish of young children' and *Gaeilge mhaith* 'good Irish':

(24) 04\_03

R. *Nuair a bhíonn tú ag caint le do chairde an mbeadh siad riamh dod cheartú?*

**When you are speaking to your friends would you ever correct one another?**

B. *Sea, uaireanta.*

Yes, sometimes.

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|----|---|--|
| N. | <i>Ní thugaim faoi deara é.</i>   | I don't notice it.   |
| D. | Only <i>faigheann tú an Ghaeilge maith i</i><br>like <i>rang 6 agus tá tú</i> used to <i>an</i><br><i>Gaeilge eile.</i> | You only get good Irish in 6 <sup>th</sup> class<br>and you are used to the other Irish. |
| N. | <i>Nuair a léann tú an gramadach bíonn</i><br><i>níos mo Gaeilge maith agat.</i>  | When you read the grammar you<br>have more good Irish.                                   |
| R. | <b><i>An gceapann sibh go bhfuil feabhas</i></b><br><b><i>tagtha ar bhur gcuid Gaeilge.</i></b>                         | <b>Do you think that your Irish has</b><br><b>improved?</b>                              |
| N. | <i>Sea, feabhas mór.</i>  | Yes, a big improvement.  |

The pupils in (25) were asked if they minded being corrected by their peers in class. It is clear from their responses that there is a degree of sensitivity about the manner in which they might be corrected:

**(25) 03\_02**

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|----|---|---|
| J. | <i>Uaireanta cuireann sé isteach ort má</i><br><i>tá duine sa rang ceapann siad go</i><br><i>bhfuil a fhios acu gach rud ... Má</i><br><i>cheartaíonn do chairde thú beidh siad</i><br><i>díreach ag rá leat bí cúramach ag</i><br><i>labhairt mar sin mar gheobhaidh tú i</i><br><i>dtíoblóid. Mar tá do chairde ag</i><br><i>féachaint amach duit, i mBéarla</i><br>looking out for you. <i>Níl a fhios agam é</i><br><i>seo i Gaeilge. Mothóidh tú</i><br>embarrassed, <i>mar tá gach duine</i><br><i>timpeall agus ceartaigh duine thú.</i> | Sometimes it upsets you if there is a<br>person in the class who thinks that<br>they know everything ... If your<br>friends correct you they will be just<br>telling you to be careful speaking like<br>that because you will be in trouble.<br>Your friends are looking out for you,<br>in English 'looking out for you'. I<br>don't know this in Irish. You will feel<br>embarrassed, because everyone is<br>around and someone corrects you. |
| R. | <b><i>Níl sé go deas a bheith ceartaithe os</i></b><br><b><i>comhair do chairde.</i></b>  | <b>It is not nice to be corrected in</b><br><b>front of your friends.</b>   |
| S. | <i>Nó os comhair an rang.</i>   | Or in front of the class.   |

These comments underlie the difficult task that immersion teachers have in striking a balance between encouraging pupils to speak the target language and in correcting their inaccuracies, which may cause embarrassment. Similarly, it is difficult for pupils to correct their peers' inaccuracies as they may worry that they might be seen as policing their peers. 'Looking out' for your friends however, legitimises drawing their attention to the use of English words. It may also be the case that the immersion variety of Irish spoken by the pupils is seen as legitimate and the accepted norm and that pupils see no more need to correct it than they would correct a peer's English.

### 6.5.3 Recycling of learner errors

The effect of being exposed to incorrect Irish was also commented on by Pupil K in (26). She explains how she ‘picks up’ on the incorrect forms from her peers and uses them herself. She goes on to explain that she would not correct her peers when they use an incorrect form because she understands what they are trying to say. The emphasis is on communicating the message.

(26) 02\_01

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| R. <i>Ach uaireanta b'fhéidir go ndeir sibh an rud mícheart an ea?</i>   | <b>But sometimes you might say the incorrect thing, is that so?</b>  |
| K. <i>Mar cloiseann tú daoine ag rá na rudaí mícheart agus you know just piocann tú suas ar na rudaí sin. Agus just abraíonn tú iad.</i> | Because you hear people saying the wrong things and you just pick up on those things. And you just say them.                   |
| R. <i>Nuair a bhíonn tú ag caint eadraibh féin, má deir mise “Tá sé ríomhaire” leat. Ní bheifeá do mo cheartú.</i>                       | <b>When you are speaking among yourselves, if I say, ‘It is a computer’ (using substantive verb). You wouldn’t correct me.</b> |
| K. No. <i>Mar tá a fhios agam cad a bhfuil tú like ag iarraidh a rá, so ní dheir mé aon rud.</i>   | No. Because I know what you are like, trying to say, so I don’t say anything.  |

In the exchange above Pupil K reveals that she has an insight into one of the reasons that immersion pupils do not speak the target language accurately, which is that they are immersed with other learners who also speak an interlanguage and that they acquire one another’s errors [cited also by writers such as Hammerly (1991)]. She also explains why they do not by and large correct each other because the focus is on deriving meaning from the utterances of others and once this communicative need is fulfilled, accuracy is not important. It appears that once the pupils’ output conforms to the implicit norms of their variety of Irish, then a peer will not comment on it.

### 6.5.4 Translation from English

Another issue raised with pupils was translation from English. Some pupils such as Pupil K in (27) responded:

(27) 02\_01

- K. *Nuair a thosaigh muid ag labhairt Gaeilge just bhí orainn like smaoineamh. Céard é an focal seo? Céard é an focal sin? Ach anois tá sé just mar ag labhairt Béarla.*

When we started to speak Irish just, we had to like think. What is this word? What is that word? But now it's just like speaking English.

The pupils in (28) recognize that they translate words from English in some contexts when the source of their conversation is in English such as a television programme in English or when doing a crossword:

(28) 04\_02

- R. *An mbíonn sibh ag aistriú ó Bhéarla go Gaeilge?*  
G. *Uaireanta nuair atá tú ag déanamh like say crossword nó aon rud, beidh tú ag féachaint ar é as Gaeilge agus ag féachaint ar as Béarla ins do cheann agus dúirt sin é.*  
C. *Say má tá tú ag caint le do chara faoi clár teilifís agus say má tá an clár teilifís i Béarla. Caithfidh tú é a aistriú i do ceann roimh a deireann tú é le do cara. Ach má tá tú just ag caint le do cara úsáideann tú Gaeilge. Tá tú just ag smaoineamh ar na focail i do cheann.*  
R. *Má tá tú ag smaoineamh faoi rud a tharla as Béarla.*  
C. *Caithfidh tú é a aistriú.*  
R. *Ach an gnáthchaint sa scoil agus sa chlós tá tú ag smaoineamh...*  
C. *Trí Ghaeilge.*

**Do you translate from English to Irish?**

Sometimes when you are doing like say a crossword or anything, you will be looking at it in Irish and looking at it in English in your head and say that's it.

Say if you are talking to your friend about a television programme and say if the programme is in English. You have to translate it in your head before you say it to your friend. But if you are just talking to your friend you say it in Irish. You are just thinking of the words in your head.

**If you are thinking about something that happened in English.**

You have to translate it.

**But the everyday language in the school and in the yard you are thinking...**

Through Irish.

This use of English is a type of 'translanguaging' where pupils hear or read something in English and produce it in Irish (Baker, 2001). Pupil C in (29) also reported translating from English when doing an essay in Irish.

(29) 01\_02

- C. *I aiste as Gaeilge bhí mé ag smaoineamh ar rud i Béarla agus*

I was thinking about something in English in an Irish essay and then I

<i>ansin aistriú mé é go Gaeilge ach ní raibh an gramadach ceart.</i>	translated it to Irish but the grammar wasn't correct.
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Although it was noted in 5.3.11 that the pupils appeared to map English syntax onto Irish, the evidence from the responses of the pupils above and the other groups that participated in the stimulated recall is that the pupils do not consciously translate from English to Irish in the course of their everyday conversation. Thus, where the influence of English is detectable, it is very likely an embedded unconscious influence, not a transient effect of 'translation'. The only exception to this is where they are referring to material that occurred in English. The influence of English idiom on the pupils' Irish appears to be at a subconscious level. If this is indeed the case then the pupils' attention may need to be drawn to it in order to change it. Once again it is suggested that an experiential approach may not be sufficient to get the pupils to speak a more native-like variety of Irish.

### 6.5.5 Focus on forms

It was observed that the pupils in Schools 3 and 4 referred to grammar lessons more frequently than pupils in other schools. In the case of School 3 it emerged that their teacher engaged in 'focus on forms' lessons with a particular emphasis on the irregular verbs in Irish. While it is beyond the scope of this study to assess the efficacy of these lessons, it was notable that the pupils from these schools displayed a greater sense of awareness of the importance of grammatical accuracy than pupils from the other schools in the recall sessions. This awareness may not have translated into practice, as School 4 was the school with the highest rate of errors (41.6%) in Table 4.6.

Pupil D, School 4 in (24) above stated that:

(24) 04\_03

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|--|---|
| D. Only <i>faigheann tú an Ghaeilge maith i</i> like <i>rang 6 agus tá tú</i> used to <i>an Gaeilge eile</i> . | You only get good Irish in 6 <sup>th</sup> class and you are used to the other Irish. |
|--|---|

Pupil N from the same school expressed the view that:

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| N. <i>Tá Gaeilge agus ansin tá Gaeilge níos fearr. Tá Gaeilge i gcomhair leanai agus Gaeilge níos fearr.</i> | There is Irish and then there is better Irish. There is Irish for young children and better Irish. |
|--|--|



It was evident from her other comments that she had come to this realisation through the focus on forms activities of the teacher in 6<sup>th</sup> class.

Pupil N, School 3 in (30) thought that despite the fact that they were learning aspects of the grammar of Irish that they did not always apply them:

**(30) 03\_03**

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| <p>N. ... nuair a bhíonn tú ag labhairt ní bhíonn tú ag iarraidh an graiméar a chur isteach, mar uaireanta bíonn tú leisciúil.</p> <p>N. Tá an iomarca rudaí sa graiméar mar an tuiseal ginideach sa chéad díochlaonadh agus an dara díochlaonadh.</p> | <p>... when you are speaking you don't want to put in the grammar, because you are lazy sometimes.</p> <p>There are too many different things in the grammar like the genitive case in the first declension and second declension.</p> |
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In response to Pupil N, Pupil S added in (31) that you forget some of the aspects of grammar when you are speaking naturally. Pupils S's second comment implies that learning grammar is like simple habit formation:

**(31) 03\_03**

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| <p>S. Déanann tú dearmad ar cúpla de na rudaí sin nuair a bhfuil tú ag caint go nádúrtha. Caithfidh sé a bheith an-soiléir i do cheann.</p> <p>S. Is dóigh liom go bhfuil sé mar ag traenáil madra le an graiméar, thugann tú milseán dóibh agus ansin dhéanann siad an rud i gceart.</p> | <p>You forget some of those things when you are speaking naturally. It must be very clear in your mind.</p> <p>I think that it is like training a dog with grammar, you give them a sweet and then they do it right.</p> |
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Although the pupils in schools 3 and 4 had a heightened sense of awareness of certain features of Irish relative to their peers in the other schools in the study, it did not appear to translate into their communicative performance. It may be the case however, that this was an important first step in helping them to notice the gap in their accuracy (Skehan, 1998). It was noted that the pupils in School 3 outperformed all other schools in their ability to notice mistakes in the transcripts and to correct those mistakes.

### 6.5.6 Exposure to Irish outside of school

The lack of exposure to Irish outside of school was offered as a reason why the pupils' Irish contained errors and words in English. In (32) the pupils in School 7, Group 2 were asked why they thought that their Irish contained mistakes when they knew the correct form. Pupil J responded as follows:

(32) 07\_02

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|---|---|
| J. <i>Mar nuair atá tú ag dul timpeall le do chairde is Béarla a bíonn á labhairt agat agus ansin nuair a thagann tú ar scoil is é Gaeilge agus caithfidh tú smaoineamh faoi.</i> | Because when you are going around with your friends you speak English and when you come to school it is Irish and you have to think about it. |
|---|---|

The pupils in School 6, Group 3 were questioned about their code-mixing behaviour:

(33) 06\_03

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|--|--|
| A. <i>'Cos táimid i gcónaí like ag caint Béarla agus nuair atáimid ar scoil táimid ag caint Gaeilge.</i>                             | 'Cos we are always like speaking English and when we are at school we speak Irish.                             |
| C <i>Níl aon Ghaeilge againn tá sé just Béarla sa bhaile.</i>  | We have no Irish, it is just English at home.  |
| C <i>Níl aon like Ghaeilge in aon áit sa bhaile seo, just an Ghaeltacht like a bhíonn tú ag labhairt Gaeilge lasmuigh den scoil.</i> | There is no Irish anywhere in this town, it's just the Gaeltacht like where you speak Irish outside of school. |

These views were shared by pupils in other schools who confirmed that they had no exposure to Irish outside of school and mentioned it as a reason why their Irish contained errors and English words. While the pupils' language behaviour in school was influenced by their home use, some pupils commented on the sometimes powerful influence of school use of Irish at home. Pupil J in (34) reported that:

(34) 05\_01

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| J. <i>Cúpla t-am nuair atá mé sa bhaile caintim Gaeilge mar thimpiste le mo Mham agus níl a fhios aici cad é atá mé ag rá.</i> | A couple of times when I am at home I speak Irish to my Mom by accident and she doesn't know what I am saying. |
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Similarly Pupil J in (35) comments:

J. *An rud a chuireann saghas scanrúil orm, nuair a bhíonn mé sa bhaile, déanann tú d'obair bhaile i Béarla, like aistríonn tú like fadhbanna agus an rud is scanrúla ná uaireanta caithfidh tú comhaireamh suas, déanann mé i Gaeilge in ionad Béarla agus sin saghas scanrúil.*

The thing that kind of scares me is, when I am at home, you do your homework in English, like you translate problems like and the most scary thing is sometimes you have to count up, I do it in Irish instead of English and that's kind of scary.

On the whole then the pupils experience little exposure to Irish outside of school other than through homework and this, in their opinion, affects their ability to speak Irish accurately in school.

## 6.6 Discussion

The pupils in the selected groups were quite critical of their own Irish when they were given an opportunity to view a video-recording of their interaction and to see it transcribed. The aspect that they were most critical of was code-mixing. They failed to notice many grammatical errors unless their attention was drawn to them. It was reported in Table 4.7 that 10.03% of the all-Irish school corpus was accounted for by borrowings from English and English discourse markers. It appears from the recall sessions that the pupils code-mixed considerably more than they were aware of. Indeed they expressed surprise and disappointment at the number of English words that were present in the transcripts. When pupils were given an opportunity to correct their Irish on reflection, their most common response was to replace the English words. When they were questioned as to why they used so many English words they responded that it was just a 'habit' and that they were not monitoring what they were saying as they were focused on the task rather than on the form that they were using. They also cited a lack of exposure to Irish outside of school as a reason for the presence of so many English words.

Apart from code-mixing, the recall sessions focused on two other features of the pupils' Irish namely the copula and the verbal noun. When the pupils were given an opportunity to correct mistakes involving these two features in the transcripts, they rarely noticed any problem until their attention was specifically drawn to possible alternative forms. In the case of the copula they could correct the error if prompted in a particular way using a structure similar to the one in the transcript. They had more success with the verbal

noun, correcting about 50% of the errors when their attention was drawn to them. The fact that the pupils were able to correct many of the mistakes that they had originally made while engaged in the playground design task when their attention was drawn to them, may indicate that they have an underlying communicative competence that may not always be fully displayed in their communicative performance.

Other issues that formed part of the analysis in Chapter 5, such as the morphology of verbs, indirect speech, prepositional pronouns, numbers and interrogative pronouns (*Cad/Céard/Cad é* ‘What’) incorrectly used, also arose in the stimulated recall sessions. Pupils’ attention had to be specifically drawn to these issues and the pupils were unable to correct these errors unless prompts were provided. When attention was drawn to the use of *ceathair* ‘four’ with a noun for example, pupils did not correct it. When the alternative *ceithre* ‘four’ was provided and they were asked did they notice any difference they responded that *ceithre* sounded better. The pupils’ may have been led by the question however, in this case. Regarding indirect speech, the pupils were unable to notice their error and correct it even when prompted. When the pupils were presented with their incorrect use of the interrogative and dependent forms of verbs they still failed to perceive them as errors in the recall sessions and could only correct errors of this type when provided with suitable prompts.

There was evidence in the recall sessions that pupils monitor their output more carefully when they are speaking to the teacher rather than to their peers. Use of Irish with the teacher, therefore, represents ‘pushed output’ (Swain, 2005) where the pupils know that their inaccuracies will be corrected. There is a degree of inhibition of incorrect forms by the pupils involved here which Hammerly (1989) suggests is desirable. The pupils, for their part, express the view that they do not like being corrected by their peers or by the teacher in front of others, and that it can lead to embarrassment. They rarely negotiate for form in interaction with their peers. This is in keeping with the research findings of other interaction studies with child and teenage L2 learners in ESL and CLIL<sup>12</sup> contexts (Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Oliver & Alison, 2003; Van den Branden, 1997). In the cases where Irish immersion pupils do negotiate for form, it is generally in instances where there is code-mixing or code-switching.

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<sup>12</sup> ESL (English as second language), CLIL (Content and language integrated learning)

A factor that the pupils believe may affect the level of errors in their output is that they acquire inaccurate forms that they hear so often from their peers. As these deviant forms are comprehensible, they can go unnoticed or are tolerated, when the emphasis is on meaning rather than on form. The role of the teacher therefore, is critical in providing feedback to the pupils, as they are not exposed to native speakers outside of school who might fulfil the role of maintaining the kind of implicit social pressure that promotes native speaker norms.

With reference to Skehan's (1998) rule-based analytic and formulaic exemplar-based systems, the unmonitored language output of the Irish immersion pupils may result from incorrect language chunks that have been stored in their memory-driven formulaic exemplar-based system and are retrieved automatically by the pupils. When prompted by the teacher or in anticipation of negative feedback if they make a mistake, pupils may draw on their analytic rule-based system. It is the former however, that appear to be easiest for them to retrieve, whereas in the case of the latter, it requires a conscious effort to retrieve the correct form. This may indicate that monitoring their language output requires resources from working memory that reduces the attentional capacity (Skehan, 1996) at their disposal to plan for the content and form of the remainder of the utterance. If this is the case, there are implications for immersion pedagogy in raising pupils' awareness that would lead to a restructuring of inaccurate forms in their underlying interlanguage. It would also be helpful to understand how these incorrect forms are initially miscoded, if this is indeed is what is happening.

There were examples in the transcripts shown to the pupils where it appeared that English syntax was being mapped onto Irish. When the pupils were questioned about this they stated that they did not consciously translate from English to Irish unless the source data were in English, in which case they engaged in a form of 'translanguaging' (Baker, 2001). This may indicate that the deviant forms of copula and verbal noun that they use are forms that have stabilised in their interlanguage. If this is the case it may be more difficult for them to notice and to internalise the correct forms available to them in the input and may require specific pedagogic intervention. The research suggests that focus on form activities may help learners attend to form, leading to change in their underlying interlanguage (Lyster, 2004a, 2007; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; VanPatten, 2002). If this issue

is not addressed, then the all-Irish pupils' propensity to habitually produce inaccurate forms may become embedded and lead to a degree of permanency (Hammerly, 1989).

The recording of pupils for the purposes of the reflective activity proved very effective in drawing the pupils' attention to their code-mixing behaviour. While it is not suggested that teachers should replicate this activity with their pupils, they could nonetheless record their pupils engaged in different activities and provide opportunities for the pupils to view the recordings. The pupils could be asked to transcribe short extracts of their dialogue and then be provided with a reformulation of this dialogue by the teacher. Various research studies (Lynch, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2008) have shown that these strategies lead the pupils to notice gaps in their own interlanguage and this has led to longer term learning of targeted structures.

## **Chapter 7: Pupils' attitude and motivation in relation to Irish**

### ***7.1 Introduction***

This chapter presents the results of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) administered to the pupils at each site in the data gathering process. The purpose of the AMTB in the present study is to provide background information about the nature and strength of pupils' attitudes and motivation in relation to Irish. As discussed in Section 2.2.5.3, learners' integrative and instrumental orientation determine an individual's motivation to learn a second language (Gardner, 1985a). Although a causal connection cannot be made between proficiency and attitude, a significant correlation between them has been established in a previous study (Harris & Murtagh, 1999). These attitudinal variables can help to support and maintain motivation to learn a second language over the long period required to attain mastery in the second language (Harris & Conway, 2002).

Numerous studies have shown, as discussed in Chapter 2, that immersion pupils make sustained progress initially in the target language but that after four to five years their interlanguage appears to stabilise and certain non-target like features tend to persist over time. This was shown to be the case in the present study through the deviant features identified in the corpus analysis in Chapter 5. While pupils may have the general motivation to improve and achieve native proficiency in Irish, the reflections of the pupils in the recall sessions in Chapter 6 reveal that in the context of a communicative task they 'don't think' about the accuracy of the forms they are using. Nevertheless, it is clearly important to understand the broader personal affective and motivational contexts within which pupils engage with the task of learning Irish and improving their proficiency. The AMTB can provide data on the strength of pupil's motivation to continue to improve their competence in Irish in order to ultimately achieve native-like proficiency.

The data obtained from the AMTB also enables a comparison between the schools, in the present study, with each other that might indicate broad differences in their attitudes and motivation. Should significant differences between schools exist these may have to be considered as potentially determining factors in relation to error rates and differences in the

features of the pupils' Irish in the selected schools. Finally the data may also be compared with similar studies in Ireland that used an AMTB.

There are two parts to the AMTB. Part 1 consists of 57 item-stems or statements and pupils were invited to indicate their responses to these items using a five-point Likert-type (1932, p. 13) scale. The author used SPSS software to analyse the pupils responses to these items. Data relating to the results from these items are reported in Section 7.2 below. The reliability of the data will also be discussed in this section. Part 2 consisted of four write-in items for the pupils to complete at the end of the questionnaire. This part gathered data on the pupils' perceptions of the language-learning process itself and the factors that motivate them to speak Irish. Data relating to the results of these items are reported in Section 7.3 below. The instructions given to pupils, on how to complete the AMTB, can be seen in Appendix 7.5.

## **7.2 Pupil questionnaire – quantitative data**

This section is divided into three parts. The first section reports on the reliability of the scales used in the AMTB. This is important in the context of the present study as some of the scales were modified and others were devised specifically for the study. The second section compares the mean scores across schools and other Irish studies that used an AMTB. The third section examines the results for individual items within and across scales for all schools together.

### **7.2.1 Mean scores and reliability of pupil questionnaire scales**

A five-point response format ranging from *Easaontaím go mór* 'strongly disagree' to *Aontaím go mór* 'strongly agree' was used. Some scales contain a mixture of positively and negatively stated items (Appendix 7.1). When calculating a total score for each scale the negatively worded items were reoriented. Thus, a score of 5 indicating '*Aontaím go mór*' (strongly agree) on a negatively-worded item was converted to a score of 1, a score of 4 on the same item was converted to 2, etc. to make them equivalent to positively-worded items.

Table 7.1 gives mean scores and reliability estimates for each of the nine scales used in the questionnaire with all-Irish school pupils. The reliability estimate used is Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951). This coefficient measures the internal consistency of



each scale or the extent to which each item within the scale is measuring the same trait or dimension, taking account of the number of items in the scale (Hinton, 2004). Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is calculated on the basis of the average inter-item correlation and the number of items in each scale. It was considered important to calculate the reliability of each scale particularly in the context of the present study where seven of the scales were modified from the Harris and Murtagh (1999) study and two new scales were added.

Hinton (2004) maintains that an  $\alpha$  value of 0.7 or greater indicates that the scale is reliable. An examination of column seven in Table 7.1 reveals that five of the seven scales have an  $\alpha$  value greater than 0.7, with two more quite close (0.68 and 0.65). The two scales *Motivational intensity to learn Irish* and *Instrumental orientation to Irish* have  $\alpha$  values of 0.37 and 0.34 respectively. These low  $\alpha$  values may have been caused by the reduction in the number of items and the modifications made from the original Canadian version (Pallant, 2001). It should also be noted that the pupils in the present study are learning a second language in an immersion setting that differs from the Harris and Murtagh (1999) study where the vast majority of pupils were learning Irish as a subject for a limited period each day. All-Irish pupils might tend to be at the more positive end of most scales. The value for the new *Use of Irish by all-Irish school pupils* scale is satisfactory at 0.7. The new items for the *Irish-ability self-concept* scale are less satisfactory at 0.65.

Table 7.1  
Mean scores and reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) for AMTB-based scales in the present study and alpha values from studies using comparable scales

Pupil Questionnaire	Present study					Reliability (Cronbach Alpha)	Alpha* ranges Pupils learning Irish	Alpha** Canadian students learning French
	N pupils	N items	Item mean score (1-5)	Min, max scores	Mean			
AMTB								
Irish Attitude /Motivation scales								
Integrativeness scales								
1. Attitude to Irish speakers	166	7***	4.2	(7,35)	29.7	4.0	.70	.84-.88
2. Integrative orientation to Irish	170	4	4.2	(4,20)	16.7	3.2	.76	.78-.85
Motivation scales								
3. Desire to learn Irish	170	5***	3.6	(5,25)	18.2	4.1	.68	.77-.87
4. Motivational intensity to learn Irish	171	4***	3.3	(4,20)	13.2	3.1	.37	.71-.85
5. Attitude to learning Irish	163	8***	4	(8,40)	32.2	5.7	.80	.91-.95
Other scales								
6. Instrumental orientation to Irish	171	3***	4.1	(3,15)	12.4	2.1	.34	.51-.56
7. Parental encouragement	166	7***	4.2	(7,35)	29.1	4.7	.76	.89-.91
Non-AMTB based scales								
8. Irish-ability self-concept	167	8	3.7	(8,40)	29.4	4.5	.65	(different items) ****
9. Use of Irish by all-Irish school pupils	163	11	3.4	(11,55)	37.3	6.6	.70	(new items)

\* 6<sup>th</sup> Class primary pupils learning Irish as a subject (Harris & Murtagh, 1999) \*\*Canadian students learning French (Gardner et al., 1979) \*\*\* Reduced number of items as compared to Harris and Murtagh (1999). \*\*\*\* The items for this scale were revised as the context in which all-Irish pupils learn Irish is different to the scale for the pupils in the Harris and Murtagh (1999) study.

## **7.2.2 Comparison of AMTB mean scores across schools and other Irish studies**

Two types of data will be examined in this section, firstly, comparisons will be made of the mean scale scores and mean item scores for the different schools and secondly, the pupils' responses to selected individual items (Appendix 7.1) and groups of items will be presented.

### **7.2.2.1 Comparison of mean scores**

Table 7.2 presents the item mean score for the AMTB scales by school and the total item mean score for each scale in column 9. The responses to five-point scale were used as an informal way to interpret the mean item scores as tending to be positive, negative or neutral. Thus a mean item score of '1' or '2' on a positively-worded item would indicate a generally negative attitude, a score of '3' neither positive or negative and '4' or '5' a positive attitude.

It can be seen that, in general, the item mean scores are very positive with only two scores for School 1 falling below a value of 3. Many of the scores are greater than 4 indicating strong agreement with the statements in the questionnaire. Indeed when the item mean scores for all schools in the study are totalled in column nine, five of them have scores greater than 4. When these totals are compared with the Harris and Murtagh (1999) study it can be seen that the total scores in the present study are more positive. This is as might be expected as the all-Irish school pupils in the present study are being compared with pupils that were learning Irish as a subject. Figure 7.1 shows the mean scores for the present study compared to the mean scores for the Harris and Murtagh (1999) study in bar-chart format. It will be noted that there are only seven scales shown in Figure 7.1 as these were the scales that were common to both studies.

### **7.2.2.2 Calculating statistical significance between schools**

On initial inspection of columns 1-8 in Table 7.2, it appears that the item mean scores for School 1 are consistently lower than all other schools with just one exception, *Parental encouragement* for School 6. School 4 on the other hand has consistently equal or higher scores than all other schools with the exception of *Irish-ability self-concept* for

School 5 and School 6. This indicates that of the eight schools, School 1 has the lowest attitude/motivation scores in relation to Irish and School 4 has the highest.

**Table 7.2**  
**Item mean score by school for AMTB scales and in comparison with another Irish study**

	Schools in Present Study										Pupils* learning Irish
Pupil questionnaire	School ID**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	
Irish Attitude/Motivation scales											
Integrativeness scales											
1. Attitude to Irish speakers	3.7	4.1	4.2	4.6	4.3	4.5	4.1	4.0	4.2	3.7	
2. Integrative orientation to Irish	3.5	3.9	3.8	4.6	4.6	4.3	4.0	4.6	4.2	3.6	
Motivation scales											
3. Desire to learn Irish	3.0	3.4	3.6	4.3	3.9	4.0	3.5	3.1	3.6	3.0	
4. Motivational intensity to learn Irish	2.7	3.1	3.2	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.2	
5. Attitude to learning Irish	3.4	3.7	4.0	4.6	4.2	4.3	4.1	3.7	4	3.3	
Other scales											
6. Instrumental orientation to Irish	3.6	3.9	4.0	4.7	4.3	4.5	4.1	3.9	4.1	3.2	
7. Parental encouragement	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.5	4.5	3.7	4.0	4.4	4.2	3.5	
Non-AMTB based scales											
8. Irish-ability self-concept	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.7	(different items)	
9. Use of Irish by all-Irish school pupils	2.6	3.3	3.2	3.9	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.4	(new items)	

\* 6<sup>th</sup> Class primary pupils learning Irish as a subject (Harris & Murtagh, 1999) \*\* School ID was the number assigned to each school in Table 4.1 (Chapter 4)

**Figure 7.1**  
**Item mean scale scores for the present study (immersion pupils) compared to Harris and Murtagh (1999) (Irish as a subject pupils)**

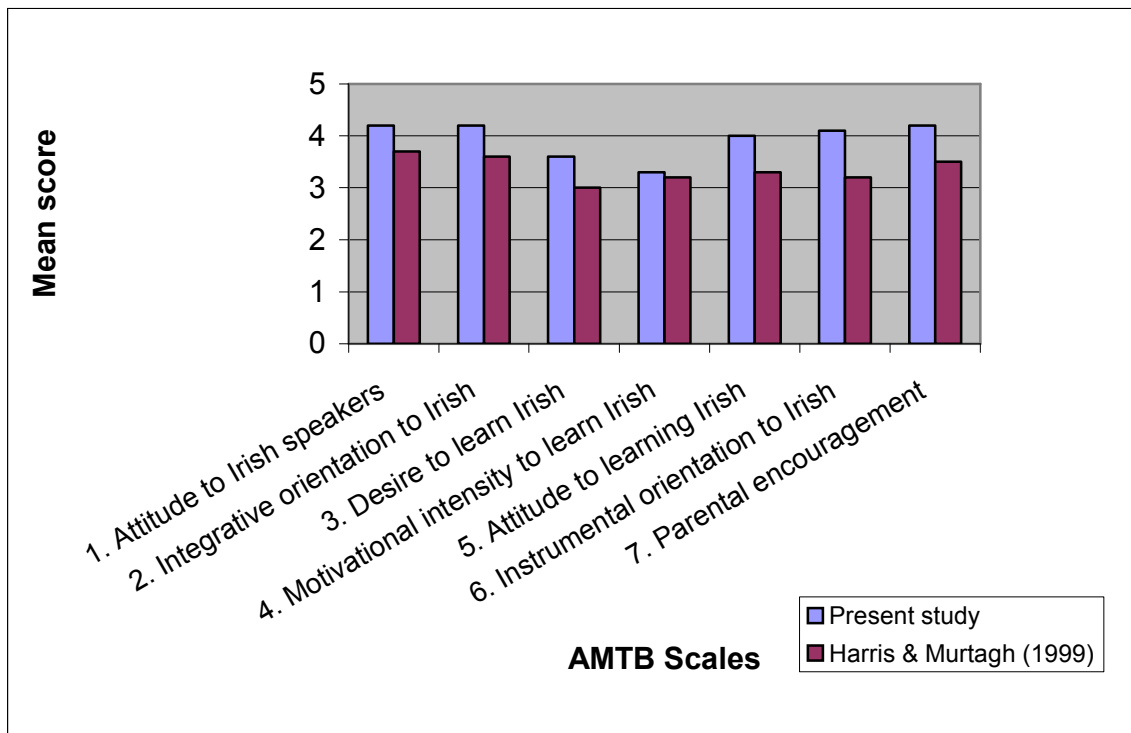


Table 7.3 shows the asymptotic significance for each of the nine scales against the school variable. Column 2 reveals that scales 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9 have alpha values <0.0055. Thus, there is a statistically significant difference between the schools for seven of the nine scales. The exceptions to this are the two scales *Motivational intensity to learn Irish* and *Irish-ability self-concept*.

A Kruskal Wallis<sup>13</sup> one-way analysis of variance was chosen to analyse the variance in scales between schools. Before judging the statistical significance of the results from the Kruskal Wallis test it was necessary to examine the alpha or significance level. Because the test involved a number of different comparisons it was advisable to control for the risk of Type 1 errors where the null hypothesis might be rejected when it was actually true (Hinton, 2004). In order to do this a Bonferroni correction<sup>14</sup> was made (Field, 2000). This gives a new alpha value of 0.0055 (Column 3) to judge the statistical significance of differences in the mean scores of the eight schools.

When the *Integrative orientation to Irish* scale in Table 7.2 is examined, it can be seen that the mean scores range from 3.5 to 4.6. This indicates that there are substantial differences between the schools in the extent to which pupils identify with the Irish language community even though all are generally positive. The Kruskal Wallis test confirmed that this difference is statistically significant.

The scores for scale 8 *Irish-ability self-concept* on the other hand range from 3.3 to 4.0. This indicates that the differences between the schools for this scale are not as substantial as for scale 2. While the scores are generally positive they are not as positive as they were for *Integrative orientation to Irish*, indicating that pupils are less positive about their ability in Irish. The Kruskal Wallis test in this case deemed the difference not to be statistically significant.

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<sup>13</sup> A MANOVA test was considered for this purpose as it has similar assumptions to an ANOVA test (Field, 2000). One of the assumptions required for an ANOVA test is 'homogeneity of variance' and as this was violated on a Levene's test of equality of error variances (Pallant, 2001), a MANOVA test was deemed unsuitable in this instance.

<sup>14</sup> The alpha value 0.05, was divided by the number of comparisons to be made, nine in this case, as there are scales:  $0.05/9 = 0.0055$  (Hinton, 2004).

**Table 7.3**  
**Kruskal Wallis Test**

<b>Irish Attitude/Motivation scales</b>	<b>Asymptotic significance</b>	<b>Statistically significant (alpha &lt;.0055)</b>	<b>Degrees of freedom (df)</b>	<b>Chi-Square</b>
<b>Integrativeness scales</b>				
1. Attitude to Irish speakers	<0.001	Yes	7	28.4
2. Integrative orientation to Irish	<0.001	Yes	7	43.4
<b>Motivation scales</b>				
3. Desire to learn Irish	<0.001	Yes	7	41.2
4. Motivational intensity to learn Irish	<0.01	No	7	19.7
5. Attitude to learning Irish	<0.001	Yes	7	38.6
<b>Other scales</b>				
6. Instrumental orientation to Irish	<0.001	Yes	7	34.4
7. Parental encouragement	<0.001	Yes	7	29.9
<b>Non-AMTB based scales</b>				
8. Irish-ability self-concept	<0.01	No	7	19.5
9. Use of Irish by all-Irish school pupils	<0.001	Yes	7	35.4

### 7.2.2.3 Calculating the effect size of statistical differences

As it was confirmed that seven of the nine scales have statistically significant differences in the mean scores, the significance of these differences was examined by calculating the effect size<sup>15</sup> for these seven scales using a post hoc Tukey HSD<sup>16</sup> (honestly significant difference) test (Coolican, 2004).

A detailed example for the *Attitude to Irish speakers* scale can be seen in Appendix 7.2. That example shows that there were statistically significant differences between schools for the *Attitude to Irish speakers* scale. The effect size of these differences was small between schools when they were ranked in homogeneous groups but there was a medium-to-large effect between the top ranked school and the bottom ranked school.

A similar procedure was followed for the remaining six scales and the same pattern emerged for all scales, there was a small effect size between ranked schools and there was a medium-to-large effect between the top ranked school and the bottom ranked school for each scale.

<sup>15</sup> The effect size 'd' is calculated using the formula  $d = Z/\sqrt{N}$  (Coolican, 2004), where Z is calculated by the Mann Whitney test and N is the total sample.

<sup>16</sup> The Tukey HSD test compares the means for each pair of conditions to see if the difference is significant (Hinton, 2004). This will indicate how large the effect size is between the schools in the sample.

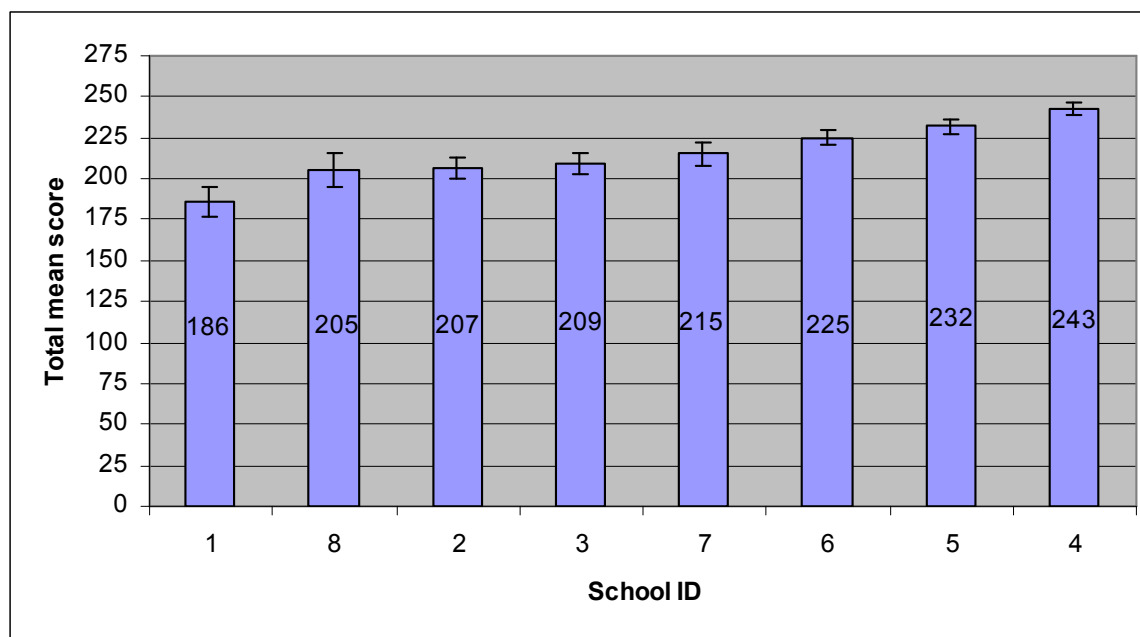
#### **7.2.2.4 Comparison of mean scores across schools**

The implication of these results is that there were significant differences in pupils' attitude and motivation between the schools selected for participation in the study using the criteria described in 3.3.1.1. Figure 7.2 represents these differences in chart format. The chart shows the total mean score for each school, in rank order, for all 57 items in the pupil questionnaire. The standard error of mean is displayed at the top of each column. It can be seen that School 1 has the lowest mean score and School 4 the highest. The Tukey HSD test revealed that there was a medium-to-large effect between School 1 and School 4 for each of the seven scales tested. A small effect resulted when for example; School 3 and School 7, two adjacent schools in the Figure 7.2 were compared for each of the seven scales.

It was noted in Table 4.6 that School 1 had an error rate of 20.5% and School 4 had an error rate of 41.6%. With higher mean scores for attitude and motivation, School 4 might have been expected to have a lower rate of error than School 1. This was not the case however. When discussing error rate it was noted that examination of errors was only one aspect of language ability and other factors such as fluency and complexity need to be considered also when assessing language proficiency (Skehan, 1998). In the stimulated recall sessions described in Chapter 6 it was found that the pupils in School 4 had a greater awareness of their errors and engaged in the correction of those errors with greater enthusiasm than the pupils in School 1.

The statistically significant differences between the schools identified in the present study may be an indication that the selection of schools in the study is representative of differences that exist in the larger population of all-Irish schools. Differences between schools in other aspects of the study will be referred to in subsequent sections and chapters.

**Figure 7.2**  
**Total mean score by school for 57 items in AMTB**



N=153

### 7.2.3 Results of individual items and scales

The questionnaire examines a broad range of issues concerning pupils' attitude and motivation to Irish. This section examines individual items from different scales for all schools together and compares them. The areas below were deemed most relevant to the present study and will form the focus of the discussion. Where there were items from more than one scale it was not possible to retain the scale title and a new title was composed:

- pupils' attitudes to Irish speakers
- pupils' perceptions of their parents' attitudes to Irish
- pupils' use of Irish outside of school and school activities
- pupils' reading habits in Irish and viewing of television programmes in Irish
- pupils' perceptions of improvements in their Irish
- pupil's perceptions of their own and native speakers' Irish
- pupils' perceptions of their difficulties in speaking Irish
- pupils' attitude to learning Irish and to speaking Irish accurately.



### 7.2.3.1 Pupils' attitudes to Irish speakers

The mean score for pupils' *Attitudes to Irish speakers* was very positive at 4.2 as shown in column 8 in Table 7.2. Table 7.4 presents some of the individual items from that scale i.e. items 6, 12 and 25. 75.4% of pupils strongly agreed with the statement in item 6 that: *The Irish language is an important part of Ireland and the Irish people*. A similar percentage 73.7%, strongly agreed with the statement in item 12 that: *If Ireland lost the Irish language and the Irish way of life, it would really be a great loss*. A high percentage of pupils also agreed with item 25 that: *People in our country who only speak English should try harder to learn the Irish language*, 55% of them strongly and 28.7% of them slightly. It can be seen from these responses that the pupils in the study have a very positive attitude to Irish speakers.

**Table 7.4**  
**Responses to items 6, 12 and 25 regarding pupils' attitudes to Irish speakers**

6. The Irish language is an important part of Ireland and the Irish people. (n=171)			12. If Ireland lost the Irish language and the Irish way of life, it would really be a great loss. (n=171)		25. People in our country who only speak English should try harder to learn the Irish language. (n=171)	
Response items	%	CI	%	CI	%	CI
Strongly disagree	1.8	2.0	2.3	2.3	3.5	2.8
Slightly disagree	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Neutral	5.3	3.4	8.8	4.4	10.5	4.8
Slightly agree	15.2	5.8	12.9	5.4	28.7	8.0
Strongly agree	75.4	12.9	73.7	12.8	55.0	11.1

CI = Confidence interval

### 7.2.3.2 Pupils' perceptions of their parents' attitudes to Irish

Table 7.5 shows pupils' responses to the item regarding use of Irish in the home. 39.8% of pupils seldom or never speak Irish at home, while 44.1% sometimes speak Irish. 13% speak Irish very often and a further 3.1% of pupils speak Irish very often or always at home. It appears then that 16.1% of the pupils in the study have a reasonable exposure to Irish at home while the remaining 83.9% have a limited if any exposure to Irish. This information is important as it confirms that the vast majority of pupils in the study have little exposure to Irish at home.

These findings will now be compared with those from other studies in columns 6, 7 and 8 in Table 7.5. It must be noted first however, that the subjects and the items were different in this study compared to the other three studies. The primary school pupils in the

present study were asked to respond to the item '*We speak Irish at home...*'. The item in the Murtagh (2003) study and the Ó Riagáin & Ó Gliasáin (1994) study was '*How often, if ever, is Irish used by anyone in your home at present?*' The latter item could be viewed as being a weaker item than the one used in the present study in so far as 'anyone' is less inclusive than 'we'. The subjects in the Murtagh (2003) study were 6<sup>th</sup> year second-level all-Irish students and the subjects in the Ó Riagáin and Ó Gliasáin (1994) study were adults drawn from the public generally. The item in the Harris et al. (2006) study was '*How often do you speak Irish to your child?*' and the subjects were parents of children in primary all-Irish schools. The item chosen for the present study was deemed to be closer to the life experience of 6<sup>th</sup> class primary pupils.

Bearing these factors in mind, it can be seen that 25.5% of pupils in the Murtagh (2003) study reported that Irish was used often, very often or always by someone in their homes. The parents in the Harris et al. (2006) study responded that they spoke Irish often, very often or always 21.9% of the time. The Ó Riagáin & Ó Gliasáin (1994) national survey found that only 3% of respondents reported that Irish was used often, very often or always by someone in their homes. It can be seen then that there is a lot more Irish usage in the homes of the all-Irish pupils in the present study than there was in the 1993 national survey of adults. The 16.1% of pupils in the present study that reported using Irish at home 'often', 'very often' or 'always', is substantially less however, than the 25.5% of second-level pupils in Murtagh's (2003) study and also less than the 21.9% of parents in the Harris et al. (2006) study. Some of this difference may be explained by the differences in the items.

Although only 16.1% of children speak Irish at home often, very often or always, pupils perceive their parents to be very supportive of Irish and of their children's efforts to learn the language. Table 7.6 summarises responses relating to pupils' perceptions of their parents' attitudes to Irish. 73.2% of pupils agreed that: *My parents try to help me with my Irish*. 68.6% of pupils strongly agreed with item 9 that: *My parents think that I should try hard to study Irish at school*. A further 16.9% slightly agreed with this statement. 65.9% of pupils agreed with the statement in item 5 that: *My parents feel that because we live in Ireland, I should study Irish*. These responses are in keeping with a very positive mean score of 4.2 for the *Parental encouragement* scale as reported in Table 7.2 above.

**Table 7.5**  
**Percentages of pupils responding to the statement: iv. *Labhraímid Gaeilge sa bhaile*. ‘We speak Irish at home.’ compared to similar data from other Irish studies**

Response options	Present study			6 <sup>th</sup> Year second level all-Irish school pupils** (n=51)	All-Irish parents frequency with which they speak Irish to children*** (n=609)	Percentage of respondents in 1993 National Survey**** (n=976)
	N	%	CI			
Never	28	17.4%	6.4	13.7%	8.4%	71%
Seldom	36	22.4%	7.3	21.6%	25.5%	16%
Occasionally	71	44.1%	10.2	39.2%	43.4%	10%
Often	21	13.0%	5.5	13.7%	15.6%	3%*****
Very often	4	2.5%	2.4	11.8%*****	6.3%*****	
Always	1	0.6%	1.2			
Total	N=161*	100%				

CI = Confidence interval

\*This statement was added to the questionnaire for Schools 2-8 hence the responses of the 11 pupils in School 1 are not included. \*\* Murtagh (2003, p. 66) study. \*\*\* Harris et al. (2006, p. 139) \*\*\*\* Ó Riagáin and Ó Glasáin (1994, p. 13). \*\*\*\*\*This figure includes ‘Very often/Always. \*\*\*\*\*This figure includes responses from ‘Often’ to ‘Always’.

**Table 7.6**  
**Responses to items 1, 9 and 5, pupils’ perceptions of their parents’ attitudes to Irish**

Response options	1. My parents try to help me with my Irish. (n=172)		9. My parents think that I should try hard to study Irish at school. (n=172)		5. My parents feel that because we live in Ireland, I should study Irish. (n=170)	
	%	CI	%	CI	%	CI
Strongly disagree	8.1	4.2	0.6	1.2	8.8	4.4
Slightly disagree	4.7	3.2	5.2	3.4	5.9	3.6
Neutral	14.0	5.6	8.7	4.4	19.4	6.6
Slightly agree	36.0	8.9	16.9	6.1	26.5	7.7
Strongly agree	37.2	9.1	68.6	12.3	39.4	9.4

CI = Confidence interval

### 7.2.3.3 Pupils’ use of Irish outside of school and school activities

Table 7.7 presents the responses of the pupils to items relating to their use of Irish outside of school and school activities. 30.4% of pupils agree with the statement in item 56 that: *I often speak Irish outside of school and school activities*. A similar number 32.3% disagree with the statement in item 40 that: *I would be uncomfortable speaking Irish to my school friends outside of school and school activities*. Item 10 reveals that 41.2% of pupils agreed that: *If there was a chance to speak Irish outside school, I would like to try to speak it*. Finally 66.9% of pupils responded positively to item 54 that: *If there were Irish-speaking families living near me, I would like to speak Irish to them*.

**Table 7.7**  
**Responses to items 56, 40, 10 and 57 regarding pupils' use of Irish outside of school and school activities**

	<b>56. I often speak Irish outside of school and school activities. (n=171)</b>		<b>40. I would be uncomfortable speaking Irish to my school friends outside of school and school activities. (n=170)</b>		<b>10. If there was a chance to speak Irish outside school, I would like to try to speak it. (n=172)</b>		<b>54. If there were Irish-speaking families living near me, I would like to speak Irish to them. (n=172)</b>	
<b>Response options</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>CI</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>CI</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>CI</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>CI</b>
Strongly disagree	26.9	7.7	19.4	6.6	14	5.6	8.1	4.2
Slightly disagree	19.9	6.7	12.9	5.4	14.5	5.7	9.9	4.7
Neutral	22.8	7.1	27.6	7.9	30.2	8.2	15.1	5.8
Slightly agree	24.6	7.4	22.4	7.1	23.8	7.3	32.6	8.5
Strongly agree	5.8	3.6	17.6	6.3	17.4	6.2	34.3	8.7

CI = Confidence interval

The picture that emerges from the analysis presented in Tables 7.4, 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7 is that the pupils in the present study have a very positive attitude to Irish speakers. Their parents also have a positive attitude to Irish and encourage them to work hard at learning Irish. Just under one third (30.4%) of them often speak Irish outside of school and school activities and more of them report that they would like to speak Irish if they had the opportunity.

#### **7.2.3.4 Pupils' reading habits in Irish and viewing of television programmes in Irish**

Two areas where pupils could use the Irish that they have learned are; reading in Irish, and watching television programmes in Irish. Table 7.8 shows the responses of pupils to items concerning these two areas. 63.5% of pupils disagreed with item 3 that *I sometimes read books in Irish that are not schoolbooks*. A similar number, 59.6% disagreed with item 38, that *I sometimes borrow books in Irish from the library*. It appears from these responses that about one fifth (20.9%) sometimes read books in Irish other than schoolbooks, and about one third (35.7%) borrow books in Irish from the library. 27.9% agreed that: *I make a special effort to watch programmes in Irish on the television* in item 49.

**Table 7.8**  
Responses to items 3, 38 and 49 regarding pupils' reading in Irish and viewing of television programmes in Irish

	3. I sometimes read books in Irish that are not schoolbooks. (n=170)		38. I sometimes borrow books in Irish from the library. (n=172)		49. I make a special effort to watch programmes in Irish on the television. (n=172)	
Response options	%	CI	%	CI	%	CI
Strongly disagree	39.4	9.4	41.5	9.6	30.8	8.3
Slightly disagree	24.1	7.3	18.1	6.3	19.2	6.5
Neutral	13.5	5.5	22.8	7.1	22.1	7.0
Slightly agree	20	6.7	12.9	5.3	19.8	6.6
Strongly agree	2.9	2.5	4.5	3.2	8.1	4.2

CI = Confidence interval

It is interesting to compare the responses of pupils to items 3 and 49 above with item 23. Table 7.9 compares the responses of these items. When pupils were asked to respond to item 23 that *It is important for me to improve my Irish because it will help me to read Irish books and to understand Irish songs, stories and television programmes*, 83.2% agreed with this statement. If items 3 and 49 are examined however, it can be seen that a substantially smaller percentage of pupils actually read books in Irish (22.9%) or make a special effort to watch television programmes in Irish (27.9%).

**Table 7.9**  
Responses to items 3, 38 and 49 regarding pupils' reading in Irish and viewing of television programmes in Irish

	23. It is important for me to improve my Irish because it will help me to read Irish books and to understand Irish songs, stories and television programmes. (n=172)		3. I sometimes read books in Irish that are not schoolbooks. (n=170)		49. I make a special effort to watch programmes in Irish on the television. (n=172)	
Response options	%	CI	%	CI	%	CI
Strongly disagree	2.9	8.3	39.4	9.4	30.8	8.3
Slightly disagree	3.5	6.5	24.1	7.3	19.2	6.5
Neutral	10.5	7.0	13.5	5.5	22.1	7.0
Slightly agree	22.7	6.6	20	6.7	19.8	6.6
Strongly agree	60.5	4.2	2.9	2.5	8.1	4.2

CI = Confidence interval

### 7.2.3.5 Pupils' perceptions of improvements in their Irish

Some items that shed light on pupils' motivation to improve their standard of oral Irish will now be examined. Table 7.10 summarises the responses of pupils to items 42 and

52 in relation to improvements in pupils' Irish. The responses to item 42 indicate that the vast majority of pupils, 94.1%, agreed that *My Irish has improved greatly since I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> class*. 87.8% agreed with item 52 that: *The more I speak Irish the more it improves*.

**Table 7.10**  
**Responses to items 42 and 52 regarding pupils' perceptions of improvements in their Irish**

42. My Irish has improved greatly since I was in 3 <sup>rd</sup> class. (n=172)			52. The more I speak Irish the more it improves. (n=172)	
Response options	%	CI	%	CI
Strongly disagree	0.6	1.2	1.7	1.9
Slightly disagree	2.4	2.3	1.7	1.9
Neutral	2.9	2.5	8.7	4.4
Slightly agree	11.2	5.0	33.1	8.6
Strongly agree	82.9	13.5	54.7	11.0

CI = Confidence interval

#### 7.2.3.6 Pupil's perceptions of their own Irish compared to native speakers

The responses to item 29 in Table 7.11 reveal that 73.7% of pupils agree that: *I would like to be able to speak Irish like a native speaker*. 81.7% of them, as shown in item 33, agree that: *I think that my Irish would change greatly if I was to go to live in the Gaeltacht*. It is not clear how the pupils perceive that their Irish would change as only 39.2% of pupils disagree with the statement in item 50 that: *I speak Irish like a native speaker*. Indeed 32.2% of pupils agree that they speak Irish like native speakers. There was a relatively high neutral response to item 50 that may indicate uncertainty among the pupils in relation to this.

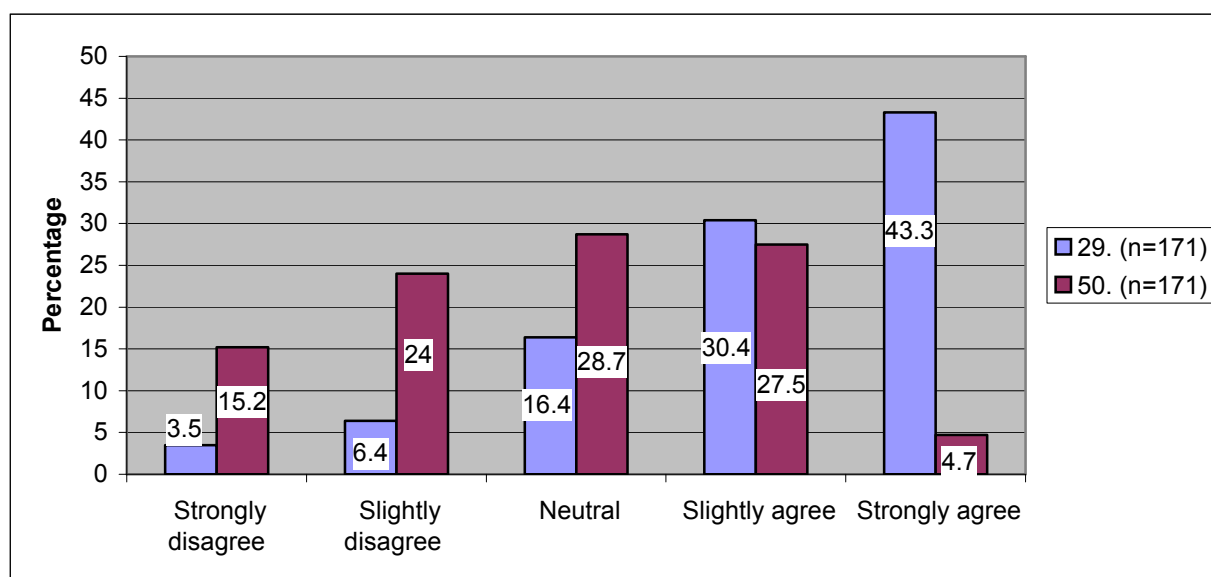
Figure 7.3 shows that there is a substantial gap between those who agree strongly that *I would like to be able to speak Irish like a native speaker* (43.3%) and those who agree strongly that *I speak Irish like a native speaker* (4.7%). This indicates that a substantial number of pupils realise that the variety of Irish they speak is not like that of a native speaker but that their 'ideal self' (Dörnyei, 2006, p. 53) is associated with the native speaker variety of Irish.

**Table 7.11**  
**Responses to items 29, 33 and 50 regarding pupils' perceptions of their own and native speakers' Irish**

	29. I would like to be able to speak Irish like a native speaker. (n=171)		33. I think that my Irish would change greatly if I was to go to live in the Gaeltacht. (n=170)		50. I speak Irish like a native speaker. (n=171)	
Response options	%	CI	%	CI	%	CI
Strongly disagree	3.5	2.8	3.5	2.8	15.2	5.8
Slightly disagree	6.4	3.8	4.1	3.0	24.0	7.3
Neutral	16.4	6.0	10.6	4.9	28.7	8.0
Slightly agree	30.4	8.2	28.2	7.9	27.5	7.8
Strongly agree	43.3	9.8	53.5	10.9	4.7	3.2

CI = Confidence interval

**Figure 7.3**  
**Comparison of responses to Items 29 and 50. I speak/would like to speak Irish like a native speaker**



### 7.2.3.7 Pupils' perceptions of their difficulties in speaking Irish

Table 7.12 shows pupil responses in relation to their perception of the difficulty in speaking Irish. 51.8% of pupils agree in item 44 that: *It is much more difficult for me to speak Irish than English*, which is not surprising given that Irish is their second language. Indeed it is probably more surprising that 12.8% of pupils disagree strongly with this statement given that only one pupil of the total 172 pupils speaks Irish at times at home. Similarly 48% of pupils agree with item 28 that: *It is difficult to speak Irish all the time at school*.

**Table 7.12**  
**Responses to items 44 and 28 regarding pupils' perceived difficulty in speaking Irish**

44. It is much more difficult for me to speak Irish than English. (n=172)			28. It is difficult to speak Irish all the time at school. (n=171)	
Response options	%	CI	%	CI
Strongly disagree	12.8	5.3	21.7	6.9
Slightly disagree	15.7	5.9	17.0	6.1
Neutral	19.8	6.6	14.0	5.6
Slightly agree	28.5	7.9	31.0	8.3
Strongly agree	23.3	7.2	17.0	6.1

CI = Confidence interval

### 7.2.3.8 Pupils' attitude to learning Irish and to speaking Irish accurately

Table 7.13 summarises issues pertaining to pupils' accurate use of Irish. The responses to item 37, *I want to learn as much Irish as possible*, have been included to illustrate pupils' general attitude to learning Irish. 80.2% of pupils agree that they want to learn as much Irish as possible. In response to item 51 however, *I know that I make mistakes when I am speaking Irish but it would be too much trouble to correct them*, 48% of pupils agree with this statement with almost 39% disagreeing. It appears then that although four-fifths of pupils want to learn as much Irish as possible, only two-fifths disagree with the statement that it would be too much trouble to correct the mistakes that they make when they are speaking.

While only 51.8% of pupils agree with item 32 that: *It is important for me to speak Irish without mistakes when I am speaking to my friends at school*, this figure increases to 81.7% in item 55; *It is important for me to speak Irish without mistakes when I am speaking to the teacher*. If the strongly agree responses for items 32 and 55 are compared it can be seen that the percentages are 23.3% and 53.5% respectively. It appears from this that the pupils make a greater effort to speak Irish accurately to their teacher than to their peers.

Of the 169 pupils that responded to both item 32 and 55, 73 pupils gave the same response category to both items. The remaining 96 pupils gave different responses and the trend was towards less agreement, as can be seen in Figure 7.4.

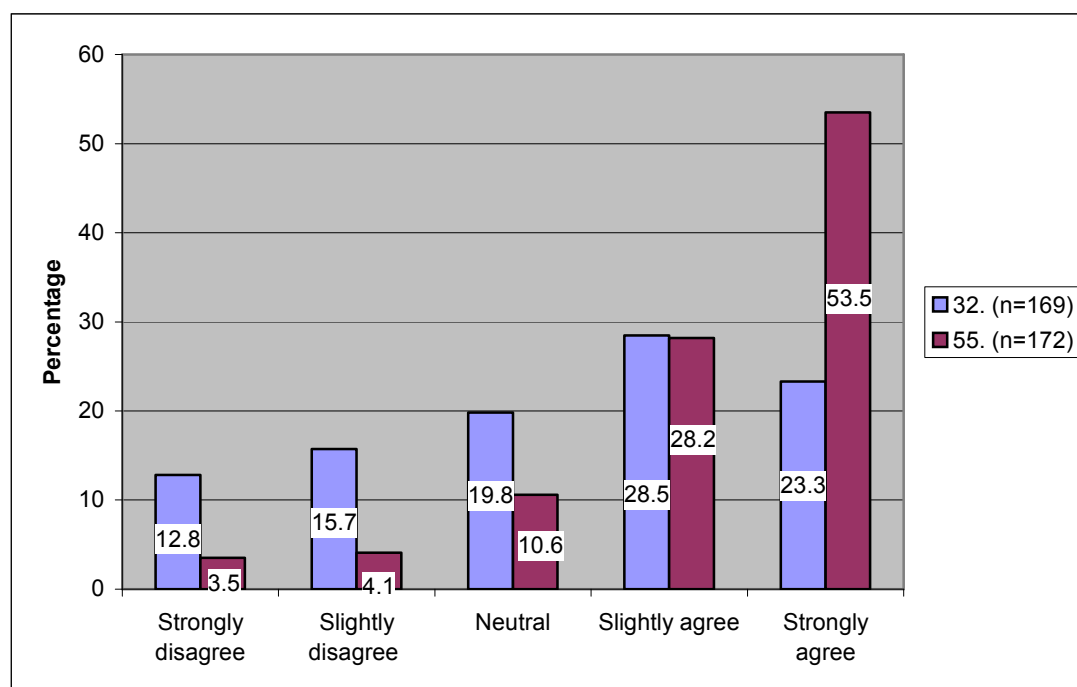


**Table 7.13**  
Responses to items 37, 51, 32 and 55 concerning pupils' attitude to learning Irish and to speaking accurately

	37. I want to learn as much Irish as possible. (n=172)		51. I know that I make mistakes when I am speaking Irish but it would be too much trouble to correct them. (n=171)		32. It is important for me to be able to speak Irish without mistakes when I am speaking with my friends at school. (n=169)		55. It is important for me to be able to speak Irish without mistakes when I am speaking with the teacher at school. (n=172)	
Response options	%	CI	%	CI	%	CI	%	CI
Strongly disagree	1.2	1.6	21.7	6.9	12.8	5.4	3.5	2.8
Slightly disagree	4.7	3.2	17.0	6.1	15.7	5.9	4.1	3.0
Neutral	14.0	5.6	14.0	5.6	19.8	6.7	10.6	4.8
Slightly agree	33.7	8.6	31.0	8.3	28.5	8.0	28.2	7.9
Strongly agree	46.5	10.1	17.0	6.1	23.3	7.2	53.5	10.9

CI = Confidence interval

**Figure 7.4**  
Comparison of responses to Items 32 and 55. Important to speak Irish without mistakes with friends/teacher



A Wilcoxon <sup>17</sup>T was used to evaluate these differences (Coolican, 2004). A significant preference was shown for speaking Irish, without mistakes, to the teacher over

<sup>17</sup> T = 1,087.5, p < .000003

their friends at school. The teacher then appears to be a significant motivating factor for many pupils' accurate use of Irish. This was borne out in the stimulated recall, described in Chapter 6, where the pupils reported monitoring their output more carefully when speaking to the teacher.

### **7.3 *Pupil questionnaire – qualitative data***

#### **7.3.1 Analysis and coding of responses**

This section presents an analysis of the views expressed by the pupils in their own words on their experiences of learning Irish and the factors that motivate them to speak Irish. These were their responses to four write-in items in the final section of the pupil questionnaire (Appendix 7.3).

All 172 pupils that completed the questionnaire were asked to respond to the following four items:

- The things I like about the way I learn Irish in school ...
- The things I dislike about the way I learn Irish in school ...
- I would enjoy the way I learn Irish in school more if ...
- These are the things that motivate me or make me want to speak Irish ...

##### **7.3.1.1 Instructions to pupils**

The pupils were encouraged to respond to the four write-in items. It was explained to them that their opinions would be very valuable but not to feel compelled to respond in detail to any item if they did not wish to. The purpose of this was not to achieve a 100% response rate but to encourage the pupils to complete as fully as possible the items where they had a contribution to make. They were reassured that their responses would be confidential and would not be seen by anyone in their school.

##### **7.3.1.2 Coding of responses**

The following sections present the pupils' responses in table format to each of the four write-in items. This will be followed in section 7.3.3 by a discussion of the broad themes that emerged from the data. The pupils in Schools 1-8 completed 172 questionnaires. The hand-written responses of the pupils in each school were transcribed without editing into one typed document per school and checked for accuracy of

transcription. The responses from each of the eight schools were then sorted by question resulting in four new documents containing what the pupils liked, disliked or would like to change about the way they learn Irish and the things that motivate them to speak Irish. Each of these documents was examined in turn and the responses were divided into thematic categories.

Tables 7.15 - 7.18 set out the percentages of pupil responses for each of the thematic categories. In general all pupils responded to at least one of the questions. In many cases the pupils had no suggestions as to things that they would like to change or there were no issues about the way they learned Irish that they did not like. Where pupils' responses contained elements from more than one theme, those responses were divided into the relevant thematic categories. Thus, while 172 pupils completed the questionnaires it is possible that there were more than 172 responses to individual items, as the responses of a pupil could have fallen into a number of categories. The discussion related to the analysis of the pupil responses will focus in particular on the issues that are relevant to the present study on the features of the pupils' Irish.

### **7.3.1.3 What the pupils like about the way they learn Irish**

Table 7.14 shows that the two most frequent thematic responses, by 10.8% of the pupils in the case of each theme, were: 'Factors associated with the teacher' and 'Learning their native language.' In the case of the teacher, the factors the pupils referred to were; the manner in which the teacher helped the pupils to learn Irish, how he/she explained things, corrected them when they made errors and did so in a kind and humorous way. All of these things made an impact on one-tenth of the pupils. Similarly just over one in ten pupils cited the fact that they were learning their native language as one of the things that they like about learning Irish.

Row 3 shows that 9.8% of pupils responded that they like the fact that they had a good standard of Irish, they like improving it and learning new words and grammar. Almost the same percentage, 9.7%, mentioned learning other subjects through Irish as a thing that they liked. In many cases it was the subject that the pupils felt that they were good at. 9.2% of pupils responded that they enjoy speaking Irish and that learning Irish gives them the opportunity to do so.

The next two categories in rows six and seven pertain to different types of activities. Over 6% of pupils enjoy activities such as songs, poetry, music and debates while the same percentage mentioned reading books and stories or writing stories and essays. In Row 8 it can be seen that just over 6% found learning Irish: fun, enjoyable and easy and got prizes for it sometimes.

Over 5% of pupils in Row 9 like the fact that they were learning a second language. Row 10 shows that 2.6% of pupils liked being able to speak Irish in situations where others could not understand it. Similarly, 2.6% of pupils liked the fact that it would give them advantages in later life and in secondary school.

A further 7.2% of responses did not fall into any of the above categories and these can be found in Appendix 7.4. Finally 12.3% of pupils did not respond to this item.

**Table 7.14**  
**‘Likes’: Percentage distribution of pupils’ responses by thematic category**

<b>‘The things I like about the way we learn Irish at school’</b>	<b>% of responses (n=172)</b>
<b>1</b> Factors associated with the teacher	10.8%
<b>2</b> Learning their native language	10.8%
<b>3</b> Having a good standard of Irish and improving it, learning new words and grammar	9.8%
<b>4</b> Learning other subjects through Irish	9.7%
<b>5</b> Speaking Irish	9.2%
<b>6</b> Activities (songs, poetry, music and debates)	6.7%
<b>7</b> Reading, books, stories, essays	6.7%
<b>8</b> Fun enjoyable easy to learn, and get a prize	6.2%
<b>9</b> Learning a second language	5.6%
<b>10</b> Being able to speak a language that others cannot understand	2.6%
<b>11</b> Advantages for later in life or secondary school	2.6%
<b>12</b> Other	7.2%
<b>13</b> No comment	12.3%
	100%

#### **7.3.1.4 What the pupils dislike about the way they learn Irish**

Although the categories may not be exactly the same it will be seen that some themes were common to both ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’. Table 7.15 shows that the aspect that pupils disliked most about learning Irish was Irish grammar with a response rate of 19%. This was closely followed by Irish sometimes being ‘difficult to learn’ and ‘boring’ (18.6%). This contrasts with the 6.2% of pupils who liked learning Irish (Table 7.14)

because it was fun, enjoyable and easy to learn, and there was the possibility of getting a prize. In Row 3, 14.8% of pupils disliked learning other subjects through Irish. These first three categories represent the majority of all the ‘dislikes’ at 52.4%. It is interesting to note that 9.7% of pupils (Table 7.14) responded positively to learning other subjects through Irish compared to the negative response of 14.8% for this item. Similarly while 9.8% (Table 7.14) of pupils like having a good standard of Irish and improving that standard, learning new words and grammar, it can be seen in Table 7.15 that 19% of pupils dislike learning Irish grammar.

The next set of responses in Row 5 is interesting because almost one tenth of pupils (9.5%) indicated that there was nothing about the way they learned Irish at school that they disliked. 8.6% of pupils disliked having to speak Irish at all times in school. It will be recalled from Table 7.14 that a slightly larger percentage of pupils (9.2%) indicated that they enjoy speaking Irish.

The lack of suitable reading material in Irish was cited by 4.8% of pupils as one of the things that they disliked about learning Irish. A related category in Table 7.14 namely ‘Reading, books, stories, essays’, drew a response rate of 6.7%. This may be an indication that although some pupils enjoy reading in Irish, suitable books may not always be available.

Factors associated with the teacher accounted for 3.8% of responses. This compares with 10.8% (Table 7.14) for the ‘likes’ item, which is nearly three times greater. Overall then the input of teachers is viewed more positively than negatively.

3.3% of pupils mentioned homework as one of the things they disliked about learning Irish. A further 2.9% felt that there were gaps in their learning because they lacked the vocabulary and terminology in English for other subjects. The responses to this item may have been influenced by the pupils’ choice of post-primary school particularly if the pupil intended going to an English-medium second level school. In Row 10 it can be seen that 2.4% of pupils expressed a dislike for writing in Irish.

It was not possible to categorise 1.9% of responses (see Appendix 7.4) Finally 10.5% of pupils did not respond to this item.

**Table 7.15**  
**‘Dislikes’: Percentage distribution of pupils’ responses by thematic category**

	<b>‘The things I dislike about the way we learn Irish at school’</b>	<b>% of responses (n=172)</b>
<b>1</b>	Irish grammar	19.0%
<b>2</b>	Learning Irish is difficult and boring sometimes	18.6%
<b>3</b>	Learning other subjects through Irish	14.8%
<b>4</b>	There is nothing about learning Irish that I do not like	9.5%
<b>5</b>	Having to speak Irish at all times in school	8.6%
<b>6</b>	Lack of books and their suitability	4.8%
<b>7</b>	Factors associated with teacher	3.8%
<b>8</b>	Homework	3.3%
<b>9</b>	Gaps in learning	2.9%
<b>10</b>	Writing	2.4%
<b>11</b>	Other	1.9%
<b>12</b>	No comment	10.5%
		100%

### **7.3.1.5 The aspects that pupils would like to change about the way they learn Irish**

Aspects of learning Irish that pupils would like to change often mirror data in the ‘likes’ category. It can be seen from the first row in Table 7.16 that the pupils would like to learn Irish more through games, debates, sport and music. This was by far the most common response from pupils with almost one in three pupils (28.6%) suggesting this type of activity.

The theme of books and resources, which surfaced in the ‘likes and dislikes’ items, arises again here. 7.1% of pupils would like more books and resources in Irish as some of the books are unsuitable for their age or are uninteresting. This compares with 4.8% of pupils who cited a lack of books in Table 7.15 and 6.7% of pupils who liked ‘Reading, books, stories and essays’ in Table 7.14.

7.1% of pupils would prefer to have more emphasis on Irish in general and on speaking Irish in particular. Table 7.14 showed that 9.2% stated that speaking Irish was one of the things that they liked about learning Irish while 8.6% in Table 7.15 disliked that they had to speak Irish all the time in school.

5.2% of pupils responded that they would not like to change anything. This compares with 9.5% in Table 7.15 that responded that there was nothing about learning Irish that they did not like.

The responses in Rows 5-7 are related in that it appears from the pupils' responses that they would like to make learning Irish easier. In Row 5 it can be seen that 4.8% of pupils would like to study other subjects through English. Mathematics was mentioned by a number of pupils in this context who stated that they did not understand it in Irish sometimes. This theme also emerged in Tables 7.15 and 7.16 where 9.7% liked the fact that they study other subjects through Irish in the former and 14.8% disliked it in the latter. Opinion appears to be divided on this issue and it may be the case that some pupils perceive that they struggle in other subjects due to the fact that they study them through the medium of Irish.

In a similar way in Row 6, 4.3% of pupils wished that learning Irish was easier. A further 3.8% would like to spend less time studying Irish grammar, as it was perceived to put pressure on them. It will be recalled from Table 7.15 that Irish grammar was the aspect of learning Irish most disliked by 19% of the pupils.

3.8% of pupils would like to spend more time studying subjects other than Irish and 3.3% would like to be permitted to speak more English. The pupils' perception in these two categories appears to be that the amount of time spent learning Irish reduced the time available to study other subjects and to speak English. It will be recalled that 14.8% of pupils dislike learning other subjects through Irish in Table 7.16 while 9.7% like learning other subjects through Irish in Table 7.14. Opinion appears to be divided on this issue and may be influenced by feelings of success or failure in other subject areas.

In Row 10 it can be seen that 3.3% of pupils wanted learning Irish to be more fun and interesting. It will be recalled from Table 7.14 that 6.2% of pupils liked learning Irish because it was fun, enjoyable, easy to learn and there was the possibility of getting a prize.

2.9% of pupils mentioned factors, associated with the teacher that they would like to change. This compares with 3.8% of pupils in Table 7.15 that included such factors as 'dislikes' and Table 7.14 where 10.8% considered these factors as 'likes'.

Finally, 5.2% of the responses did not fall into any particular category and 20.5% of pupils did not respond to this item.

**Table 7.16**  
**‘Changes’: Percentage distribution of pupils’ responses by thematic category**

	<b>‘I would enjoy the way we learn Irish more if ...’</b>	<b>% of responses (n=172)</b>
<b>1</b>	Activities: games, debates, sport and music	28.6%
<b>2</b>	Books and resources	7.1%
<b>3</b>	More emphasis on Irish and on speaking Irish	7.1%
<b>4</b>	Do not change anything	5.2%
<b>5</b>	Study other subjects through English	4.8%
<b>6</b>	Make it easier	4.3%
<b>7</b>	Grammar	3.8%
<b>8</b>	Spend more time studying other subjects	3.8%
<b>9</b>	Have more English	3.3%
<b>10</b>	Make it more fun and interesting	3.3%
<b>11</b>	Factors associated with teacher	2.9%
<b>12</b>	Other	5.2%
<b>13</b>	No comment	20.5%
		100%

#### **7.3.1.6 The factors that motivate pupils to speak Irish**

Table 7.17 presents the responses of the pupils regarding the things that motivate and make them want to speak Irish. The first two rows show that the influence of parents and family are as important as the influence of teachers and school. These two categories together amount to slightly under one third (33.2%) of all responses to this item. It will be recalled from Table 7.14 that 10.8% of pupils cited factors associated with the teacher as one of the things that they liked about learning Irish.

The fact that ‘Irish is the native language of Ireland’ was a motivating factor for 14.9% of pupils. It was reported in Table 7.14 that 10.8% of pupils liked the fact that they were learning Irish because it was the native language of Ireland. A further 11.6% of responses mentioned other Irish speakers as motivating them to speak Irish.

9.5% of responses referred to Irish language television, Irish culture and to other activities in Irish as things that motivate them. In Row 6, 7.1% of pupils mentioned their friends as being a motivating factor. Row 7 shows that the ability to speak another language was a motivation for 4.6% of pupils.

The issue of learning a second language was mentioned as a reason why pupils like learning Irish in Table 7.14. In Rows 9 and 10 of that table 5.6% liked the fact that they



were learning a second language and a further 2.6% like learning a language that others could not understand. These issues were also mentioned as being motivating factors.

2.1% of responses (Table 7.17) referred to advantages in later life such as, securing a good job as being the thing that motivated them. A similar percentage (2.6%) gave this as one of the reasons that they like learning Irish (Table 7.14). It can be seen in Row 9 that 5% of responses did not fall into any particular category and finally 12% of pupils did not respond to this item.

The most important factors that motivate the pupils to speak Irish then, according to their response to this item, are those associated with home and school. These responses highlight the important influence of family and of parents in particular in the successful acquisition of Irish in an all-Irish school. They also demonstrate the critical role of the teacher and the school ethos in this process also. These and other factors will form part of the discussion on the four write-in items that follows.

**Table 7.17**  
**‘Motivation’: Percentage distribution of pupils’ responses by thematic category**

‘These are the things which motivate or make me want to speak Irish’	% of responses (n=172)
1 Parents and family	16.6%
2 Teachers and school	16.6%
3 Irish is the native language of Ireland	14.9%
4 Other Irish speakers	11.6%
5 Irish television, culture and other activities	9.5%
6 Friends	7.1%
7 Ability to speak a second language	4.6%
8 Advantages for later life	2.1%
9 Other	5.0%
10 No comment	12.0%
	100%

### 7.3.2 Discussion of responses to four write-in items

A number of broad themes emerge from the pupils’ responses to the four write-in items:

- Ease or difficulty of learning Irish
- Learning other subjects through Irish
- Learning their native language
- Supply of suitable books and materials

- Irish grammar
- Speaking Irish and learning a second language
- Influence of home, school and other Irish speakers

These themes differ from those of the pupils in the Harris and Murtagh (1999) study of sixth class pupils in main-stream English-medium primary schools where the pupils' responses were focussed more on the Irish lesson. It is evident from the pupils' responses in the present study that they view the learning of Irish as permeating all aspects of school life and as not being confined to just one subject.

In many instances the same basic theme takes different forms in each of the different items (like, dislikes, changes and motivation). Consistent with this, a proportion of pupils (10.8%) like the fact that they are learning their native language and this was shown to be a motivating factor for 14.9% of pupils in the fourth item. A measure of disagreement emerges sometimes when the responses to the different questions are compared. For example, 9.7% of pupils 'like' learning other subjects through Irish while 14.8% 'dislike' this aspect. A further 4.8% would like to 'change' the way that they learn Irish so that they could study other subjects through English. These issues will be taken into consideration in the discussion that follows.

#### **7.3.2.1 Ease or difficulty of learning Irish**

It is evident that while 9.8% of pupils like, 'Having a good standard of Irish and improving it, learning new words and grammar' and a further 6.2% associate it with, 'Fun, enjoyment, easy to learn and get a prize', not all pupils are in agreement with these views. 18.6% of pupils responded that 'Learning Irish is difficult and boring sometimes'. When the suggested changes that pupils would like to see are examined it can be seen that 4.3% would like to 'Make it easier', 3.3% to 'Make it more fun and interesting' and 3.3% to 'Have more English'. A substantial proportion of pupils (28.6%) would like to learn Irish through activities such as games, debates, sport and music. These contrasting responses may reflect the perceptions of success in mastering Irish on the part of some pupils whereas others may experience greater difficulty, and consequently would like to spend less time studying it and more time on English.

### 7.3.2.2 Learning other subjects through Irish

Similarly, views are divided on the issue of studying other subjects through Irish, with 9.7% liking this aspect and 14.8% disliking it. Indeed 4.8% of pupils wanted to ‘study other subjects through English’. The issue for those who dislike this aspect of immersion education appeared to be that it was more difficult: *Ní maith liom a bheith ag foghlaim na staire i nGaeilge, mar tá sé deacair é a thuiscint leis na focail ar fad.* [I don’t like learning history through Irish, as it is difficult to understand with all the words.] It is interesting to note that history and mathematics are the two subjects mentioned most frequently by the pupils in their comments.

### 7.3.2.3 Learning their native language

There was greater agreement among pupils in relation to the theme of learning the native language of Ireland with 10.8% liking this aspect and 14.9% of pupils citing it as a motivating factor. It is evident from their responses that the pupils are aware that they are keeping an important part of the Irish heritage alive and that they are special in certain ways: *Nuair a fheicim daoine nach bhfuil in ann Gaeilge a labhairt ag féachaint orm agus ag smaoineamh dóibh féin – “Ba bhreá liom a bheith in ann é sin a dhéanamh.”* [When I see someone who can’t speak Irish looking at me and thinking to themselves – “I would love to be able to do that.”]

### 7.3.2.4 Supply of suitable books and materials

While 6.7% of pupils like ‘Reading, books, stories and essay’, the lack of books and their suitability was mentioned as a ‘dislike’ by 4.8% of pupils. This issue also emerged under the changes category with 7.1% citing ‘Books and resources’. The following response captures the sentiments of many of the pupils: *Ní maith liom na leabhair scoile mar níl siad suimiúil agus tá siad scríofa i gcomhair daoine nach labhraíonn Gaeilge go maith. Tá na novels faoi dhaoine mar ‘Anne’ agus ‘Nellí’ agus dá mbeadh siad i mBéarla bheadh siad i leabharlann Rang 1.* [I don’t like the schoolbooks because they are not interesting and they are written for people who don’t speak Irish well. The novels are about people like ‘Anne’ and Nellí’ and if they were in English they would be in the library for first class.]

### 7.3.2.5 Irish grammar

The subject of grammar was another area on which pupil opinion was divided and it is one that is central to the present study. It was mentioned as a ‘like’ by 9.8% of pupils in the context of ‘Having a good standard of Irish and improving it, learning new words and grammar’. It was also the issue cited much more frequently however, as a ‘dislike’ by 19% of pupils and a further 3.8% raised it as something that they would like to change. The number of pupils disliking grammar is higher than the 16.3% of English-medium pupils in the Harris and Murtagh (1999) study who disliked grammar, possibly because the all-Irish pupils study more of it. The following response encapsulates the views expressed by many of the pupils: *Is fuath liom an gramadach Gaeilge. Tá an iomarca ann.* [I hate Irish grammar. There is too much in it.] Part of the difficulty with grammar may lie in the manner in which it is presented. It emerged from the stimulated recall sessions described in Chapter 6 that the pupils in School 3 were engaged in a ‘focus-on-forms’ approach to grammar with their teacher. It was the pupils from this school that accounted for 50% of the ‘dislike’ responses to Irish grammar in the second write-in item. A ‘focus-on-form’ approach in a communicative context may meet with less resistance from the pupils but it might require further research to evaluate the relative merits of each approach in an Irish immersion context. Despite the dissatisfaction expressed by the pupils in School 3, the stimulated recall sessions (6.5.5) showed that they had a greater awareness of their importance of grammatical accuracy than most of the other schools and were more adept at correcting their mistakes in the transcripts presented to them in the stimulated recall sessions. If grammatical accuracy is to improve, there may need to be an acknowledgement on the part of pupils that this will require effort as the response from one pupil in School 3 indicates: *Sílim an tslí a múintear Gaeilge sa scoil is slí maith é. Ach caithfidh tú bheith réidh chun oibriú ar do chuid botún.* [I think that the way that the way Irish is taught in this school is a good way. But you have to be ready to work on your mistakes.]

### 7.3.2.6 Speaking Irish and learning a second language

While 9.2% of pupils responded that ‘Speaking Irish’ was an aspect they like about learning Irish, 8.6% disliked ‘Having to speak Irish at all times in school’. This illustrates resistance on the part of some pupils to the compulsory nature of the school norm of speaking Irish at all times. The response from one pupil appears to be a call to keep this

issue in perspective: *Is maith liom caint as Gaeilge ach má labhraíonn mé Béarla tá mé i dtrioblóid mór. Uaireanta smaoiníonn mé nach bhfuil ann ach teanga.* [I like to speak Irish but if I speak English I am in big trouble. Sometimes I think that it is only a language.]

The fact that they were learning a second language is viewed positively by 5.6% of pupils and a further 2.6% like the fact that they can speak a language that others cannot understand. This was cited as a motivating factor by 4.6% also.

### **7.3.2.7 Influence of home, school and other Irish speakers**

Finally, the two most important motivating factors for pupils in speaking Irish were ‘Parents and family’ and ‘Teachers and school’ at 16.6% each. The important role that parents play in motivating their children to learn Irish is in keeping with the findings of Harris et al. (2006) and it is positively associated with attainment levels (Harris & Murtagh, 1999). While both home and school are within the immediate environment of primary school pupils, 11.6% also responded that they were motivated by other Irish speakers, indicating a desire to integrate into the Irish-speaking community.

## **7.4 Summary and discussion of main findings**

The pupils in the present study were shown to have a very positive attitude and motivation as measured on the nine scales in the AMTB test battery. Indeed when compared to the Harris and Murtagh (1999) study, the mean scores of the pupils in all-Irish schools were more positive than the pupils learning Irish as a subject for all comparable scales. When the mean scores for the schools in the present study were compared with one another it was found that there were significant differences between them. When the statistical effect size of these differences was measured it was found that the effect size was small for adjacent schools when they were ranked together, but moderate to large for the top and bottom ranked schools in each scale.

Among the most positive scales were the two integrativeness sub-scales, *Attitude to Irish speakers* and *Integrative orientation to Irish* with mean scores of 4.2 in both cases. These positive attitudes also emerged from the write-in items where pupils viewed other Irish speakers as a motivating factor in speaking Irish. Such attitudes are important not only in supporting the attempts to promote bilingualism in Ireland (Harris & Murtagh, 1999), but also in maintaining the motivation required to master a second language over a long period

(Gardner, 1985b). This indicates that pupils have a very positive attitude to the Irish language itself and would be favourably disposed to integrating with a network of Irish speakers or a native-speaker community.

In contrast to this, two of sub-scales that comprise the motivation scales, *Desire to learn Irish* and *Motivational intensity to learn Irish*, had mean scores of 3.6 and 3.3 respectively. While still positive, these scores are less so than the integrativeness scales. This may indicate that when it comes to actually learning Irish, their commitment may not be as strong. This appears to be borne out in the new scale *Use of Irish by all-Irish school pupils*, which had a mean score of 3.4. Again it must be stated that this is positive but less so than almost all the other scales. While 73.7% of pupils agree that they would like to be able to speak Irish like a native speaker (item 29) and 68% of pupils would like to attend a second level all Irish school (item 48), only 32.2% of pupils disagreed with item 40 that they would be uncomfortable speaking Irish to their school friends outside of school or school activities. The complex sociolinguistic reasons why a substantial number of all-Irish school pupils feel ‘uncomfortable’ speaking Irish to their school friends outside of school has yet to be explored in any depth. It may be that Irish is perceived as the language of the curriculum but not the language of peer culture. As noted by Baker (2002), it is difficult to extend the use of a minority language learned at school from the school to the community.

It should be noted that the third motivation sub-scale *Attitude to learning Irish* is almost as positive as the integrativeness scale with a mean score of 4. Large percentages of pupils report that they enjoy learning Irish, that it is an important subject and that they want to learn as much Irish as possible. The mean score for the *Parental encouragement* scale was equally positive at 4.2 indicating that pupils receive support and encouragement from their parents in learning Irish. The seven positively worded items in the *Parental encouragement* scale elicited responses from pupils in agreement with the items. Parental and family support also emerged as an important motivating factor in the fourth write-in item (7.3.3.7). The lowest response being 65.9% agreement to item 5 that *My parents feel that because we live in Ireland, I should study Irish*. When it comes to speaking Irish in the home however, results revealed that 39.8% of pupils come from homes where Irish is seldom or never spoken. This may indicate that parents support the efforts of their children and the school in relation to learning Irish but that they themselves may lack the competence, confidence or commitment to replicate that effort in the home.

One theme that emerges from the data and which was also found in the Harris and Murtagh (1999) study is that items that require passive support for Irish receive a more positive response from pupils while those requiring more active support receive a less positive response from pupils. Although 83.2% agreed that it was important to improve their Irish so that they could read and watch television programmes in Irish (item 23), only 22.9% actually read books in Irish sometimes, and only 27.9% of pupils make a special effort to watch television programmes in Irish. Some of this difference may be explained, by a perceived lack, on the part of the pupils, of interesting reading material or television programmes in Irish. There was evidence to support this from their responses to the write-in items in 7.3.2. Teachers in all-Irish schools have also called for a greater supply of suitable reading material in Irish for this age-group (NCCA, 2006). A study of dual immersion pupils found that they tended not to read for pleasure in the non-English language (Lindholm-Leary, 2005). Notwithstanding these factors, the differences appear to be substantial.

Further examples of this passive/active distinction are to be found in items 37 and 51, which were compared in Table 7.13 above. While 80.2% want to learn as much Irish as possible (item 37), 48% of pupils admit to making mistakes when they speak Irish but that it would be too much trouble to correct them (item 51). This finding has implications for changes in immersion programmes that might seek to remediate pupils' language errors. Similarly in the write-in items in relation to improving their Irish, 19% of pupils dislike Irish grammar and a further 18.6% find learning Irish difficult and boring sometimes. This may indicate that pupils are less willing to expend the effort required to learn to speak Irish with accuracy. The pattern of active /passive support has also been a feature of attitudinal surveys to Irish in Ireland in recent decades where strong support for Irish language policies does not translate into actual language use (Ó Riagáin, 2008).

Table 7.13 above also reported the responses to items 32 and 55, which relate to the pupils accurate use of Irish. It will be recalled that the Wilcoxon T test revealed that it is more important for a significant number of pupils to speak Irish without mistakes when speaking to their teacher (81.7%) than to their friends (51.8%) at school. The pupils expressed similar opinions in the recall sessions (Chapter 6) where they reported monitoring their Irish more carefully when speaking to the teacher. These findings supports the belief discussed in Chapter 2, of children making less effort to improve their

target language competence when communicative sufficiency has been reached due to an absence of sociopsychological motivation and pressure from their peers to change and adjust their grammar (Day & Shapson, 1987). It may also be related to feelings of embarrassment, expressed by pupils in the recall sessions, when the teacher corrects their Irish errors in front of the class. When this finding is compared to Item 52 (Table 7.10) where 87.8% of pupils agreed that the more they speak Irish the more it improves, one might question the manner in which the pupils' Irish is improving. Worthy of note here also is that 8.6% of pupils 'dislike' having to speak Irish at all times in school as shown in Table 7.15.



## **Chapter 8: Principal and class teacher interviews regarding their pupils' proficiency in spoken Irish**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the views of teachers and principals regarding their pupils' proficiency in spoken Irish. Chapters 4 and 5 of the present study identified weaknesses in the syntactic and lexical features of all-Irish pupils' spoken Irish. In order to better understand the origins and possible causes of those distinctive characteristics it is important to ascertain the views of their teachers and principals on the topic. As noted by Lapkin et al. (2006), very few studies have focussed on the views of teachers in this area. The collaborative design task employed in this study enabled the recording of the unplanned oral production of selected groups of pupils engaged in the task over a twenty-minute period. The teachers and principals have opportunities to observe their pupils' progression and development in Irish over the course of a school year and throughout their time in primary school. They are likely then, to have valuable insights to offer into the characteristics of their pupils' Irish, the grammatical errors they make, and the educational, social and linguistic factors that shape its emergence. The presentation of their views in this chapter will concentrate on the issues that emerged from the interviews, focussing in particular on how they perceived the grammatical inaccuracies of the pupils' Irish.

The objectives of this phase of the study were:

- to ascertain the attitudes of all-Irish school principals and sixth class teachers towards their pupils' proficiency in Irish
- to investigate the remedial strategies adopted by teachers when students make grammatical errors
- to identify the teachers' assessments of the nature and range of those grammatical errors
- to explore the teachers' views of the factors influencing pupils' grammatical accuracy in Irish and the plans that they have in place to improve it.

The chapter is divided into four main sections. This first section describes the background and purpose of the interviews. Section two describes the selection of participants and the data analysis. Section three gives an account of the main themes that arose in relation to the teachers' attitudes towards and their interpretation of the origins of the pupils' particular variety of Irish. The chapter concludes with a discussion of these themes in Section 4.

## **8.2 Method**

### **8.2.1 Study sample**

Table 8.1 below shows that twelve teachers were interviewed (seven principals and five class teachers). No distinction is made between the views of teachers and principals in the discussion of emerging themes that follows, and all are referred to as teachers. Their names have been changed in order to maintain confidentiality. They have varying degrees of experience teaching in an all-Irish school, ranging from less than five years to greater than twenty. Eight of them are native speakers and the remaining four have attained a near native-level of proficiency in Irish. One principal has completed a master's degree. The selection of teachers for interview was determined by the purposive sample of schools invited to participate in the collaborative design task (Chapter 3). The fact that eight of the twelve teachers (66.6%) that agreed to be interviewed are native speakers means that there is a higher concentration of native speakers in this group than in the national average for all-Irish schools of 25% (Máirtín, 2006).

### **8.2.2 Interviews of teachers**

Data were collected in seven all-Irish schools on the second visit to each school. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with teachers, to explore all dimensions of their experiences relating to their pupils' spoken Irish. The interviews took from 25-35 minutes to complete. An interview schedule (Appendix 8.1) was drawn up to ensure that the same information was obtained from each participant and to maintain its intended focus. The drafting of the schedule was informed by a combination of the issues identified in the literature review and a similar study conducted by the researcher with French immersion teachers in Ontario in January 2007 (Ó Duibhir, 2008). Each interview lasted between 25 and 35 minutes and was conducted in the participant's school. All the

interviews were audio-recorded with the agreement of the participants. This allowed the researcher to ensure that information supplied by the teachers was fully understood and all responses captured accurately.

**Table 8.1**  
**Background information on principals and class teachers selected for interview**

<b>Teacher pseudonym</b>	<b>Role and School</b>	<b>Language background</b>	<b>No. of years teaching in all-Irish school</b>
<b>Ciara</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> class teacher, School 1	NS*	1-5
<b>Seán</b>	Principal teacher, School 1	NNS**	16-20
<b>Ciarán</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> class teacher, School 2	NS	6-10
<b>Mairéad</b>	Principal teacher, School 2	NS	11-15
<b>Sinéad</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> class teacher, School 3	NNS	1-5
<b>Eoghan</b>	Principal teacher, School 3	NS	6-10***
<b>Diarmaid</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> class teacher, School 4	NNS	>20
<b>Daithí</b>	Principal teacher, School 4	NS	>20
<b>Nóirín</b>	Principal teacher, School 5	NS	11-15
<b>Tomás</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> class teacher, School 6	NS	6-10
<b>Áine</b>	Principal teacher, School 6	NS	6-10
<b>Caitríona</b>	Principal teacher, School 7	NNS	>20

\*NS = Native speaker    \*\*NNS = Near native speaker    \*\*\* Has a Master's degree

### 8.2.3 Data analysis

A qualitative approach was adopted for the analysis of the interviews. They were transcribed and imported into NVivo (L. Richards, 2005) software package for analysis using an interpretive phenomenological approach (Coolican, 2004). The transcripts were coded and grouped into categories and certain themes emerged from these (Dörnyei, 2007). Analysing the data in this way made it possible to become immersed in the data in order to adequately reflect the experiences, thoughts and ideas of the teachers. Representative quotations from the teachers have been included in the account and combined with the researcher's interpretation to produce an interpretive-descriptive account (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The researcher's experience as a teacher and principal in an all-Irish school, and as a teacher educator, helped to inform this interpretation. All identifiable

details have been altered to ensure that disclosure of participants is avoided and to safeguard their privacy.

### 8.3 Results

Five main categories emerged from the analysis of the teachers' interviews: teachers' general satisfaction with their pupils' proficiency, specific weaknesses in the pupils' spoken Irish identified by the teachers, pupil willingness to speak Irish, school planning to address identified weaknesses, and teachers' professional development needs in order to better address weaknesses in the pupils' Irish. These categories as shown in Figure 8.1, will be described in the following sections with excerpts from the interview transcripts as appropriate.

**Figure 8.1**  
**Outline of main categories and related subcategories**

<i>Teacher satisfaction with students' proficiency in Irish</i>
Good fluency and ability to communicate but need for improvement
<i>Features of pupils' spoken Irish</i>
Most common errors
Influence of English and peers on pupils' Irish
Strategies adopted by teachers to improve proficiency and to correct errors
<i>Prompts and other signals</i>
<i>Grammar instruction</i>
<i>Limitations in the teacher's approach due to pressure from other subject areas</i>
Teaching materials and resources
Exposure to Irish outside of the school context
<i>Pupil willingness to speak Irish</i>
General encouragement of pupils in inculcating a positive attitude to Irish
Easier to learn through English
Incentives and sanctions
<i>School planning and staff meetings in relation to pupils' proficiency in Irish</i>
Whole-school approach
<i>Teachers' professional development needs</i>
Courses to improve teachers' own proficiency in Irish
Courses on immersion education methodology

#### 8.3.1 Teacher satisfaction with students' proficiency in Irish

##### 8.3.1.1 Good fluency but need for improvement

In general, teachers felt that their pupils were quite proficient in Irish but that the standard could be improved. As Seán stated:

*Ní bheinn sásta go hiomlán leis le bheith  
firinneach faoi.*

I wouldn't be entirely satisfied with it  
to be honest.

One of the strengths that all teachers identified was their pupils' fluency and their ability to communicate their ideas without any apparent difficulty. Caitríona raised other issues:

*Go cinnte tá siad líofa, ach ba bhreá linn  
go mór dá mbeidís níos cruinne. Éiríonn  
siad leisciúil nuair a éiríonn siad líofa.*

They are certainly fluent but I would like them to be more accurate. They become lazy as they become fluent.

The picture that emerges more generally from the teachers' comments is one of virtually all pupils having very good communicative ability in Irish. They are able to get their meaning across with relative ease but this is achieved in a way that lacks grammatical accuracy and does not conform to native speaker norms. Some of the teachers felt that this situation was as good as one could expect given the lack of support for Irish outside of school in the pupils' homes and wider community. Others were more critical and felt that it should be possible to improve the situation. These latter views are broadly in keeping with the findings of the present study, that it should be possible to improve the accuracy of pupils' Irish with the evidence available from the comprehensive analysis of the pupils' corpus.

### 8.3.2 Features of pupils' spoken Irish

#### 8.3.2.1 Most common errors

The teachers identified the following as the most frequent errors:

- the structure of the pupils' sentences in Irish are influenced by English syntax
- the substantive verb used incorrectly instead of the copula
- the imperative form of verbs used instead of the verbal noun.

These were also among the most common errors identified in the analysis of the all-Irish school corpus in Chapter 4 and they were the subject of the stimulated recall sessions in Chapter 6. These errors were reported by the teachers to be a feature of all-Irish pupils' Irish from an early stage, and many of them, in their experience, persist over time and are difficult to eradicate. As Ciarán said:

*An ghramadach, do na páistí is é an rud  
is deacra ó thaobh na Gaeilge de le  
foghlaim, an ghramadach, agus an  
struchtúr. Bheadh na focla acu ach dá  
smaoineoidís air, bheadh sé acu san ord  
ceart.*

Grammar, is the most difficult thing for the children to learn, the grammar and the structure. They would have the words and if they thought about it, they would have them in the right order.

Eoghan added the following:

*Tá na botúin chéanna ann agus glacaim leis go bhfuil cúiseanna doimhne teangeolaíochta leo gurb iad na botúin chéanna a thagann amach arís agus arís eile.*

The same errors are there and I assume that there must be deep linguistic reasons that the same errors emerge again and again.

When the teachers were asked why they thought that the errors persist over time and are difficult to eradicate, many believed that while the pupils knew the correct form, that they did not monitor their output in unplanned communication. Cairtriona offered the following explanation:

*...ní bhíonn siad ag smaoineamh. Glacann siad leis nuair a bhíonn siad líofa nach bhfuil aon ghá leis an gcruinneas agus ní bhíonn orthu smaoineamh ó thaobh an Bhéarla de – tagann an ghramadach go nádúrtha chucu. Is aistriúchán díreach a bhíonn ann an chuid is mó den am, ach is leisce é gan aon cheist.*

...they are not thinking. They assume that once they are fluent that there is no need for accuracy. They don't need to think about English grammar, it comes to them naturally. It is direct translation most of the time, but it is certainly laziness.

Ciarán, in his comment above, also referred to the phenomenon of 'not thinking' and the pupils, in the stimulated recall sessions described in Chapter 6, also admitted to 'not thinking' about the form of their utterances when they were engaged in the playground design task. The strategic goal of pupils seems to be to produce an utterance that does not lead to a breakdown in communication; the question of the structure of the utterance and whether it conforms to target norms appears secondary. The evidence from the collaborative task on the use of the substantive verb instead of the copula is a good example of this attitude. To ascribe this phenomenon to laziness may be unfair to the pupils however. The reason for them not monitoring their output may be related to excessive demands on their processing power during online communication.

### **8.3.2.2 Influence of English and peers on pupils' Irish**

Another reason offered by the teachers for the persistence of errors was the influence of English on the pupils' Irish. Diarmaid explained that:

*... nach mór gach duine acu is as cúla Béarla dóibh, labhrann siad Béarla go nádúrtha sa bhaile agus déanann siad*

... almost every one of them is from an English speaking background, they speak English naturally at home and

*aistriúchán an-tapa agus an-nádúrtha  
agus sin a thagann uathu níos mó ná  
conas a déarfá sin i gceart as Gaeilge.*

they translate very quickly and naturally and that is what emerges from them more than how would you say that correctly in Irish.

Sinéad thought from her experience that even the pupils that spoke Irish at home were influenced by their peers:

*... cloiseann siad an rud mícheart  
minic go leor agus ansin go dtéann sé  
isteach ina n-intinn.*

... they (L1 Irish speakers) hear the incorrect thing often enough and then it goes into their minds.

The pupils also mentioned ‘picking up’ one another’s errors in the stimulated recall sessions. While acknowledging the influence of English however, they did not agree that they were normally ‘translating’ from English in any active, dynamic way, unless they were speaking about something they had experienced through English.

### **8.3.2.3 Strategies adopted by teachers to improve proficiency and to correct errors**

Teachers were asked about the strategies they adopted when they were confronted with grammatical errors. It was evident from the responses that all teachers used a variety of different strategies depending on the situation. The strategies ranged over humour, continuous correction, grammar lessons and peer correction. No teacher expressed the opinion that any particular strategy was better than another but that they had a battery of strategies which they drew upon depending on a range of factors such as the context in which the error occurred, the student that made the error and the focus of the lesson. This section describes many of the different strategies adopted by teachers as they try to improve the proficiency of their students.

A number of teachers had a way to signal to the pupils by means of a prompt that there was something not quite right about what they had just said. In Tomás’s case he would say:

*“Gabh mo leithscéal céard é sin arís?”  
Agus ansin bheadh fhios acu go bhfuil  
rud éigin déanta acu, agus formhór den  
am bíonn sé ar eolas acu.*

“Excuse me, what is that again?”  
And then they would know that they  
have done something (incorrect), and  
most of the time they know it.

Many teachers like Diarmaid use humour:

*Is dócha go n-úsáidim greann níos mó*

I suppose I use humour more than

*ná aon rud eile chun iad a spreagadh. B'fhuath liom an fonn nádúrtha a bhíonn ag an chuid is mó acu a lot in aon slí.*

anything else to encourage them. I would hate to damage in any way the natural enthusiasm that most of them have.

It is evident from Diarmaid's comment and from many of the other teachers that they strive to maintain a balance between correction and ensuring that there is a positive atmosphere in the class and school that encouraged the pupils to speak Irish.

When the teachers are correcting their pupils they tend not to use recasts but instead use prompts such as the humour referred to by Diarmaid or a phrase such as "Excuse me" in the case of Tomás. As Caitríona explained:

*... an frása "abair i gceart é" tagann sé arís agus arís eile nó tugann tú seans dóibh é a rá i gceart, seachas an rud ceart a thabhairt dóibh, iad féin a chur ag smaoineamh. Muna bhfuil an freagra acu b'fhéidir ceist a chur ar dhuine éigin eile sa rang. Spreagaimid na páistí eile chun cabhrú lena chéile chun na botúin choitianta a cheartú.*

... the phrase "Say it correctly" it comes again and again. You give them a chance to say it correctly instead of giving them the correct form, to get them to think. If they don't know the answer you might ask someone else in the class. We encourage the other children to help one another to correct the common errors.

In some schools there is a whole-school focus on particular phrases that cause difficulties for the pupils as explained by Áine:

*... cuirtear timpeall frása na seachtaine timpeall gach Luan agus dírimid ar an rud atá i gceist, an rud atá á lorg.*

... the phrase of the week is sent around every Monday and we concentrate on the correct form being sought.

A strategy adopted by one teacher as described by Mairéad was to focus on the language needs of the pupils for a particular context:

*Sula dtéann siad amach sa chlós go ndéanann siad plé faoin nGaeilge, go dtugann sí méid áirid dóibh agus go dtagann siad ar ais aici i ndiaidh an chlóis agus go ndéanann siad plé arís ar aon fhocal nach raibh acu.*

Before they go out to the playground they discuss the Irish, she (the teacher) gives them a certain amount and they come back to her after break and they discuss again any words that they didn't have.

Other teachers adopted this type of approach where the language needs of the students determine the content of their programme. One strategy that all teachers reported



using was to teach grammar formally. The errors that the pupils made were noted and ‘focus on forms’ type lessons were taught in an attempt to correct them.

A challenge for all teachers was trying to find the time to deliver 11 curriculum subjects (NCCA, 2005, 2008) through the medium of Irish and at the same time focusing on developing pupils’ Irish. Caitríona did not think that it was feasible to correct every error:

*Dá mba rud é go ndúirt duine éigin rud cosúil le “Tá sé fear” i lár rang staire. Stopfainn ar an bpointe agus cheartóinn iad - rud an-bhunúsach, ach ní fhéadfá gach uile cheann a cheartú.*

If someone said something like “He is man” in the middle of a history lesson I’d stop immediately and correct it – something very basic, but you couldn’t correct every single error.

This comment brings into focus the dual nature of the immersion teacher’s role in being both a language and a content teacher. The challenge for teachers is to strike a balance between the two roles. The teachers’ comments reveal that they strive to achieve that balance in a way that is sensitive to the feelings of the pupils as well. Teachers certainly do not ignore student language errors and whether they are dealt with immediately on the spot or later in a form-focussed lesson, all teachers had strategies for dealing with them.

#### 8.3.2.4 Teaching materials and resources

An issue that most teachers commented on was that of teaching materials. They were delighted with *Séideán Sí*<sup>18</sup>, the integrated Irish programme for all-Irish and Gaeltacht schools, but regretted that it was not yet available for 6<sup>th</sup> class. As Seán stated:

*Ach tá a lán fadhbanna ann freisin ó thaobh easpa acmhainní sna hardranganna. Tá sé an-deacair teacht ar rud éigin suimiúil don léitheoireacht ach go háirithe.*

But there are a lot of problems as well regarding resources for the senior classes. It is very difficult to source interesting reading materials in particular.

This makes it difficult for teachers and schools to plan a structured programme for implementation in senior classes. It also presents difficulties in developing the pupils’ standard of Irish if there is a lack of suitable reading material. It was noted for example, in the responses to the pupil questionnaires in Chapter 7 that only a minority of pupils

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<sup>18</sup> *Séideán Sí* is the title of an integrated teaching and learning package for Irish in designed specifically for all-Irish and Gaeltacht schools.

(22.9%) sometimes read books in Irish that are not schoolbooks. The pupils were also critical about the lack of suitable reading material in Irish.

### 8.3.2.5 Exposure to Irish outside of the school context

Many teachers like Mairéad raised the issue of all-Irish pupils' exposure to Irish:

*Tá sé an-deacair ar pháiste, feiceann siad na cairde seo ar scoil agus labhrann siad Béarla ag imirt peile leo ar an bpáirc sa bhaile agus nuair a thagann siad ar scoil, an duine céanna a mbíonn siad ag caint Béarla leo le linn na deireadh seachtaine, caithfidh siad an cnaipe seo a bhrú agus tosú ag labhairt leo i nGaeilge.*

It is very difficult for a child, they see these friends at school and they speak English to them playing football on the field at home and when they come to school, the same person that they were speaking English to at home at the weekend, they have to press this button and start speaking to them in Irish.

Eoghan expressed reasonable satisfaction with some aspects of the pupils' ability to speak Irish:

*Labhraíonn siad í sa suíomh ranga, amuigh sa chlós den chuid is mó, an áit a dteipeann orainn ná an teanga lasmuigh den scoil. Ní labhraítear focal lasmuigh den scoil agus níl fhios agam an féidir linn tionchar a imirt ansin.*

They speak it (Irish) in the classroom, out in the yard for the most part. The place where we fail is the language outside of school. Not a word is spoken outside of school and I don't know if we can have an influence there.

Diarmaid thought that:

*Ach i ndáiríre, gan an tacaíocht ón mbaile agus ón taobh amuigh tá teorainn leis an méid gur féidir le aon scoil a dhéanamh ba chuma cad é an leabhar nua iontach nó modh nua iontach nó pé rud.*

Realistically, without support from home and outside there is a limit to what any school can achieve regardless of what great new book or great new method or whatever.

Clery then, although it may be desirable that pupils would be exposed to Irish outside of school, the reality is that in most instances they are not to any great extent and it may be unrealistic to expect it. Some teachers expressed the desire for more support from parents in this regard and wished that the Irish language skills of parents could be improved. Notwithstanding this, many of the schools organise trips to the Gaeltacht and participate in events and activities for Irish-medium schools. In other areas, pupils have access to Irish youth clubs. While these activities and visits appear to have a positive effect

on the pupils' attitudes to speaking Irish, and in many cases demonstrate to the pupils that Irish is a language that is alive outside of the school context, it is difficult to judge if it results in an improvement in pupils' accuracy in Irish. The pupils cited their lack of exposure to Irish outside the school as influencing their code-mixing behaviour and general accuracy in Irish in the recall sessions.

### 8.3.3 Pupil willingness to speak Irish

#### 8.3.3.1 General encouragement of pupils and inculcating a positive attitude

It was evident from the responses of teachers that they expend a large amount of energy in maintaining Irish at all times in the school. The effort required to do this should not be underestimated and it may partly explain why grammatical accuracy and the influence of English are relegated to second place. All the teachers were questioned about their pupils' willingness to speak Irish and it elicited a variety of responses, some positive and some negative depending on the school. Ciara for example who teaches in School 1, the school with the lowest mean score for attitudes and motivation in relation to Irish, stated that:

*Bíonn orm iad a spreagadh i gcónaí cé go bhfuil siad i nGaelscoil, cailleann siad é agus téann siad ar ais go dtí an Béarla arís nuair nach bhfuil tú ag éisteacht nó ag féachaint orthu ... an-deacair iad a spreagadh go háirithe sna hardranganna.*

I always have to encourage them (to speak Irish) even though they are in an all-Irish school, they lose it and they revert to English again when you are not listening to them or looking at them ... it's very difficult to motivate them especially in the senior classes.

Áine noted in her school that an attitude can emerge among the pupils in 6<sup>th</sup> class:

*Tagann an dearcadh sin i rang 6 "it's not cool" Gaeilge a labhairt a thuilleadh.*

That attitude arises in 6<sup>th</sup> class where "it's not cool" to speak Irish any longer.

While Sinéad stated that:

*Ceapaim go mbíonn siad dearfach nuair a bhíonn iachall orthu. Nuair a bhíonn siad ar scoil agus fhios acu go bhfuil riail ann, ní dóigh liom go bhfuil aon duine diúltach ach toisc go bhfuil sé níos éasca dóibh a bheith ag labhairt as Béarla, sin an rud a dhéanann siad*

I think that they are positive when they are compelled to do it. When they are in school and they know that there is a rule, I don't think that any of them are negative but because it is easier for them to speak English, that is what they do when they meet each

*nuair a bhuaileann siad lena chéile  
taobh amuigh.*

other outside.

It is evident from Mairéad's response that encouraging the pupils to have a positive attitude and a willingness to speak Irish is quite complex

*Go dtí seo ceapaim go raibh an bhéim  
ar ... caithfidh siad an Ghaeilge a  
labhairt ach anois b'fhéidir gur gá  
dúinn breathnú ar cén chaoi a ndéanann  
muid an dearcadh sin leo. Ceapaim go  
gcaithfidh tú suas go dtí rang 3 ... ina  
dhiaidh sin caithfidh tú rud éigin eile a  
dhéanamh chun iad a thabhairt leat  
agus chun go mbeadh siad sásta í a  
labhairt as a stuaim féin gan duine fásta  
a bheith ag faire orthu an t-am ar fad.*

Up to this, I think that the emphasis was that they had to speak Irish but now maybe we have to look at how we create that attitude with them. I think that you have to up to third class ... after that you have to do something else to bring them with you and so that they will be happy to speak it of their own accord without an adult monitoring them all the time.

### 8.3.3.2 Easier to learn through English

The ease or difficulty of learning through English was raised by a number of teachers. Ciarán said:

*Ach sin mo thuairimse, dá mbeadh  
seans acu, go mb'fhearr leo é a  
dhéanamh i mBéarla.*

But that is my opinion, if they had a chance that they would prefer to do it in English.

Diarmaid shares this view to some extent:

*Is minic a chuirim ceist orthu anseo cad  
a cheapann siad faoin nGaeilge agus  
foghlaim as Gaeilge agus tuigimid go  
léir agus tuigeann siad, tá sé níos  
deacra dóibh foghlaim trí Ghaeilge  
dúinn féin tá sé níos deacra leis  
múineadh tríd an dara teanga ... Ó  
thaobh a bheith ag obair tríd go  
praiticiúil, is dócha cosúil linn go léir  
is maith linn uilig saol bog go pointe.'*

I often ask them (the pupils) here what they think about Irish and learning through Irish and we all understand and they understand that it is more difficult for them to learn through Irish and for us too it is more difficult to teach through a second language ... I suppose like all of us, in terms of working through it practically, we all like an easy life to some extent.

The views of these teachers echo those of the pupils in the recall sessions and in the response to the AMTB where a substantial number of pupils acknowledge that they do not make the extra effort required to speak with accuracy. While 9.7% of pupils liked learning other subjects through Irish in the AMTB write-in items, 14.8% disliked it, and 4.8% of pupils wanted to study other subjects through English.

### 8.3.3.3 Incentives and sanctions

All teachers reported that their schools use incentives to encourage their pupils to speak Irish particularly in the junior classes. Many schools operate a system where each class teacher chooses a ‘*Gaeilgeoir na seachtaine*’ [Irish speaker of the week]. Some schools have a system of sanctions in conjunction with the incentives. Ciara described the system in her school as follows:

*Tá cárta cainte acu agus faigheann siad síniú ag deireadh gach lá má tá an Ghaeilge le cloisteáil uatha an lá sin agus ag uimhir 18 tá duais bheag agus ag uimhir 25 ansin beidh duais éigin níos mó chun iad a spreagadh.*

They have a ‘speaking card’ and they get a signature at the end of the day if they have been heard speaking Irish that day and when they reach 18 there is a small prize and at 25 there will be a bigger prize to motivate them.

Mairéad’s school also uses incentives where each teacher chooses four pupils each week that are seen to be making a good effort to speak Irish and they get a small prize from the principal. She explained the system:

*Úsáideann muid na cártaí ó rang 3 go rang 6. Tá muid ag iarraidh an spreagadh a dhéanamh ó rang na naionán go rang. Tar éis rang 2 tá an teanga acu, níl aon leithscéal acu, agus bíonn muid ruainne beag níos géire ó thaobh smacht orthu féin.*

We use the cards from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class. We are trying to do the encouraging in Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> class. After 2<sup>nd</sup> class they have the language, they have no excuse and we are a little bit harder on them in terms of self-discipline.

Where sanctions are imposed many schools operate a system where the principal is informed if a pupil is speaking English. A note might follow this to the pupil’s parents informing them of the problem if it is persistent. Many teachers like Sinéad noted that they are continually seeking new and improved ways to motivate their pupils to speak Irish:

*Oibríonn sé sin go maith sna meánranganna agus sna bunranganna ach ceapaim le rang 6 gur éirigh siad tuirseach de le tamaillín. Tá siad ró-shean nó rud éigin.*

That works well in the middle and junior classes but I think that 6<sup>th</sup> class got tired of it recently. They are too old or something.

It was evident from the responses of all the teachers including Caitríona that there was a far greater emphasis on incentives than on sanctions:

*Déarfainn, an rud a choimeád dearfach, gan a bheith anuas ar na Béarlóirí, ach na Gaeilgeoirí a spreagadh agus rud iontach a dhéanamh as sin seachas rud diúltach a dhéanamh as an Bhéarla.*

I would say to keep it positive, not to be down on those speaking English but to encourage those speaking Irish and to make something wonderful out of that rather than to make something negative out of the English.

All schools in the study have a policy where pupils are expected to speak Irish at all times except during English classes. Most teachers stated that they would not accept English from pupils after 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> class, as they would expect them to have a sufficient command of Irish by that stage. The school policies are supported by incentives and sanctions to encourage the pupils to comply with them. In general, the teachers appeared satisfied with the willingness of the pupils to speak Irish but reported that it was an area that they had to continually promote and attend to. This applied in particular to the pupils' compliance with speaking Irish at break-time in the playground. It was also evident that the teachers expend a good deal of time and energy in devising incentive schemes and in implementing policy in this area.

The teachers recognize that the vast majority of the pupils live their lives outside of school through English, and that as a result, it is easier for them to speak English. There appeared to be a delicate balance to be struck between the imposition of rules to speak Irish on the one hand and inculcating a positive attitude in the pupils towards speaking Irish on the other. Many teachers were reluctant to overcorrect the pupils in case they undermine the pupils' confidence in their ability to speak Irish or turned them against the language. This appears to be a wise approach when one recalls the response of the pupil quoted in Section 7.3.3.6 concerning the things he likes about Irish:

*Is maith liom caint as Gaeilge ach má labhraíonn mé Béarla tá mé i dtrioblóid mór. Uaireanta smaoiníonn mé nach bhfuil ann ach teanga.*

I like to speak Irish but if I speak English I am in big trouble. Sometimes I think that it is only a language.

### **8.3.4 School planning and staff meetings in relation to pupils' proficiency in Irish**

#### **8.4.3.1 Whole-school approach**

All teachers reported that the pupils' proficiency in Irish was regularly discussed at staff meetings. It was also clear from their responses that this issue was central to school planning as is clear from Caitríona's comment:

*Is beag cruinniú nach mbíonn caint éigin faoi, mar sin bunchloch na scoile dáiríre.*

There are very few meetings where it is not discussed, as that is really the foundation-stone of the school really.

Many of the teachers reported having a school plan that monitored the pupils' progress throughout the school to ensure that they were improving all the time. As Caitríona explained:

*Sa phlean scoile an rud atá againn, tá samplaí de na rudaí go mba chóir a bheith cruinn ceart sna haoisghrúpaí éagsúla agus bíonn na múinteoirí dírithe ar na botúin sin do na tréimhsí sin agus ag iarraidh iad siúd a ghlanadh amach.*

What we have in the school plan is examples of the things that should be exactly right in the different age-groups and the teachers are focused on those errors for those periods and trying to eradicate them.

Mairéad referred to language enrichment in her school's plan:

*An rud a mbeinnse buartha faoi ná nach bhfuil a dhóthain saibhris ag teacht ó na meán ranganna suas go dtí na hardranganna, go bhfuil tú ag cur leis an saibhreas. Sin é an dúshlán ... Ní bheidh tú riamh réidh leis. Ní bheidh tú riamh ag rá okay tá an Ghaeilge go breá inár scoil, sin é.*

The thing that I would be worried about is that there is not enough language enrichment from the middle to the senior classes, that you are adding to the richness. That is the challenge ... You will never be finished with it. You will never be saying okay, the Irish in our school in great, that's it.

It is evident from Caitríona's and Mairéad's responses that there are whole-school approaches to monitoring the pupils' progress in Irish in their schools and this was the position with the majority of teachers in the study. While some schools regularly discussed progress and issues of concern in others as Daithí stated:

*Níl sé déanta againn chomh foirmiúil sin is dócha go mba chóir go mbeadh. Tá sé pléite againn anois is arís ach is de réir mar a chloiseann múinteoir botún is dócha go gcoimeádann sé /sí súil orthu.*

We haven't done it that formally yet I suppose we should have. We have discussed it now and again but it is as a teacher hears an error I suppose that he/she keeps an eye on it.

As initiative in Nóirín's school was to enlist the support of 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in helping the younger pupils:

*Duine ar bith a bhíonn ag iarraidh dul ar Choiste na Gaeilge téann siad air, cuidíonn siad sin rudaí beaga Gaeilge a dhéanamh sa scoil agus má tá na páistí beaga neamartach, iad a cheartú agus mar sin de.*

Anyone who wants to go on the Irish Committee goes on it, that helps to organise little Irish activities in the school and if the younger children are negligent to correct them.

While the non target-like features of the pupils in all-Irish schools are a persistent phenomenon it is evident from the responses of the teachers in this study that these features were not ignored and that all schools had plans in place to address these weaknesses. It was an area that was prioritised by all schools and many different strategies had been devised to deal with it. Despite this some of the teachers recognised that perhaps it was not possible to eradicate all errors as Mairéad observed:

*Tá Gaelscoileanna cinnte faoin aidhm atá acu ach tá sé an-deacair orthu mar gheall ar an timpeallacht ina bhfuil siad agus an tacaíocht atá ann dóibh, an líofacht fhoirfe seo a bhaint amach.*

All-Irish schools are clear about the aim that they have, but it is difficult for them because of the environment in which they exist and the support that is there for them, to achieve this perfect fluency.

Others such as Seán think that:

*Fágann na páistí le líofacht áirithe ach níl muid ag rá go bhfuil siad ullamh ansin – tá gá le tógáil air.*

The children leave with a certain fluency but we're not saying that they are ready – there is need to build on it.

Many of the teachers stated that the work they do with their pupils in primary school is part of a process, and that as long as the pupils continue with education through Irish, which the vast majority of them do, then they will become more accurate over time. This is the experience of many of them regarding past pupils that return to visit their school or that they meet socially.

### **8.3.5 Teachers' professional development needs**

#### **8.3.5.1 Courses to improve teachers' proficiency in Irish**

The teachers expressed a variety of views in relation to their professional development needs and improving their pupils' proficiency in Irish. Sinéad for example was concerned about her own accuracy in Irish:

*An rud a chuireann an méid is mó buairt ormsa ná mo chuid Gaeilge féin, nach mbeinn in ann an ghramadach chruinn cheart a chur trasna an t-am ar fad ... Cúrsaí le feabhas a chur ar Ghaeilge na múinteoirí agus ina dhiaidh sin é a fhágáil ag leibhéal na scoile.*

The thing that worries me the most is my own Irish, that I wouldn't be able to get across precisely the correct grammar all the time ... Courses that would improve the Irish of the teachers and after that to leave it at the level of the school.



It can be seen that Sinéad's focus was on her own professional development needs as a teacher and was obviously confident about the expertise within her school to deal with other aspects of pupils' proficiency in Irish. Caitríona was in agreement with this latter point:

*... is dócha go bhfuil cuid againn anseo leis na blianta agus go bhfuil na cleasanna foghlamtha againn agus go bhfuil na ceisteanna curtha againn ar dhaoine i nGaelscoileanna eile agus mar sin de.*

... I suppose that some of us have been here for years and we have learned the tricks and we have asked the questions of people in other all-Irish schools and so forth.

### 8.3.5.2 Courses on immersion education

Eoghan, on the other hand, thought that there was a need for a specific course:

*Measaim go bhfuil gá le hinseirbhís maidir le múineadh na Gaeilge do pháistí Gaelscoileanna mar tá an cur chuige cumarsáideach ann agus an-mhaith agus béim ar an gcumarsáid agus cúis mhaith aici, ach tá an chumarsáid againn i rith an lae agus tá gá le i bhfad níos mó béime ar an múineadh foirmeálta, ar an ngramadach, ar an scríbhneoireacht agus a leithéid sin.*

I think that there is a need for in-service regarding the teaching of Irish to children in all-Irish schools because the communicative approach is there and it's very good with the emphasis on communication and for good reason. But we have communication during the day and there needs to be a much greater emphasis on teaching vocabulary, on grammar, on writing and the like.

This view was shared by Seán:

*Tá géarghá le modúl inseirbhíse nó ionduchtú ar an tumoideachas mar tá rudaí áirithe is dóigh liom nach dtuigeann múinteoirí.*

There is an urgent need for an in-service or an induction module on immersion education because I think that there are certain things the teachers don't understand.

Overall it appears that teachers would welcome professional development opportunities matched to their perceived needs. These needs vary from school to school and from teacher to teacher, which is in keeping with previous research in this area (Ó Duibhir, 2006).

## 8.4 Discussion

The purpose of interviewing teachers was to ascertain their judgements in relation to the spoken Irish of their pupils and to explore with them the factors that influence this

level of proficiency. The sample consisted of five sixth class teachers and seven principals located in all-Irish schools throughout the country. As the sample is relatively small the results may not represent the views of the entire body 6<sup>th</sup> class teachers and principals in all-Irish schools.

The teachers in the study appear to be reasonably satisfied with their students' proficiency in Irish but would like it to improve. Some of them thought that it was probably as good as could be expected under the circumstances in which all-Irish schools operate where the pupils have little exposure to Irish outside of school. Others thought that this standard could be improved. Many of them mentioned that the pupils live in an English-speaking world outside of school and that this impacts on their language behaviour in school. While the pupils acquire a good level of fluency in Irish it was acknowledged that this needs to be built on in their post-primary schooling.

The most common pupil errors that emerged from the corpus analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 were the same as those identified by the teachers. Many teachers experience a certain level of frustration that some errors seem to recur despite the strategies that they adopt to correct them. All teachers adopted strategies for correcting their pupils when confronted with errors. In the main these took the form of prompts that encouraged the pupil to pause and rephrase what had been uttered. The extent to which this happened however, was hampered by the burden of implementing curricular content in all areas. Despite the teachers' best efforts, they felt that once their students could communicate with them and with one another that they appeared to lack the motivation to do so in a way that was always grammatically accurate. This view is supported by the pupils' responses in the AMTB and the opinions they offered in the recall sessions. Day and Shapson (1987) found a similar pattern in their study of French immersion students in Canada.

Teachers were dissatisfied with the range of teaching materials that they had at their disposal for teaching Irish. This problem was particularly acute in senior classes as they awaited the *Séideán Sí* materials for this age-group. This dearth of resources applied to reading material also and echoes the complaint of the pupils in the AMTB.

Some of the teachers find it a continual challenge to encourage their pupils to speak Irish while others did not appear to experience the same level of difficulty. This finding was also reflected in the pupils' responses to the write-in items in the AMTB where 8.6% of pupils disliked having to speak Irish at all times in school. All teachers reported that they

insist that their pupils speak Irish at all times in the school with the exception of English classes. The teachers acknowledged that it would be easier for the pupils to speak English and they had a range of incentives and sanctions to help them counteract this and to encourage them to speak Irish. The teachers appeared to spend a lot of time and energy in ensuring that pupils complied with the school norm of speaking Irish and were quite innovative in this regard. Some teachers felt that while incentives were necessary for younger pupils, a different approach may be required for senior pupils. The responses of the pupils to the write-in items on the AMTB highlight the importance of the positive approach adopted by the teachers. There was evidence of resistance to the school norm from some pupils and an element of embarrassment when corrected in front of their peers.

The issue of pupils' proficiency was central to school planning in each school and time was spent at staff meetings formally discussing and developing plans in this area. There were plans in place for improving pupils' proficiency in Irish. It appeared that the proactive strategies adopted for specifically addressing the errors identified by the teachers and by the corpus analysis in the present study consisted of formal grammar lessons. The review of research (Chapter 2) indicated that this may not be the most effective strategy.

The teachers in the study had a variety of professional development needs with some wishing to improve their own standard of Irish while others required specific courses on immersion education. The themes that emerged from the teacher interviews in this study were very similar to those of 14 French immersion teachers interviewed in Toronto and Ottawa (Ó Duibhir, 2008). Their pupils acquire good fluency in the target language, but despite the efforts of both sets of teachers in different immersion contexts, the pupils lack grammatical accuracy.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusions and recommendations**

### **9.1 Introduction**

The aim of the present study was to investigate the variety of Irish spoken by 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils' in a range of all-Irish primary schools. It was a corpus-based study, that gathered speech samples of pupils' Irish in naturalistic communication in the course of collaborating on a task with other pupils. It sought to document and describe those features and to ascertain the opinions and insights of the pupils about the quality of their Irish and the errors it contained, and to investigate their level of awareness about its relationship to the Irish of native speakers, through a stimulated recall activity. In order to account for some of the factors that influence this acquisition process, further data were gathered from other sources. First, the pupils' attitude and motivation in relation to Irish were collected through a modified and adapted version of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). Second, the pupils' class teachers and the principals of their schools were interviewed to explore their opinions about pupils' proficiency in Irish and the strategies they adopt at the level of classrooms and schools to improve their proficiency. Third, a corpus of Gaeltacht (native speakers) pupils Irish was compiled in order to compare the spoken Irish of all-Irish pupils with their native-speaker peers. A mixed-method's approach was adopted in the study that was guided by second language learning theories and by research in immersion settings in particular. The broad-based approach provided rich data for analysis that has given a deeper understanding of the features of all-Irish pupils' Irish at the end of primary school and the context in which these features are acquired.

While the present study was comprehensive in terms of its multi-method approach it does have some limitations. Only 65 pupils in nine all-Irish schools participated in the study and these pupils were chosen from a purposive sample of 9 schools out of a total of 130 such schools. While every effort was made to ensure that the schools chosen would fairly represent the different variables present in these schools, the results obtained may not be generalisable to the full spectrum of all-Irish schools. Another limitation is that the presence of the researcher in the classroom while the children were being recorded may have influenced the pupils' output. Similarly, during the stimulated recall session the presence of the researcher may have had a bearing on the opinions expressed by the pupils. The corpus of pupil speech

compiled in the study may be considered to be relatively small at over 35,000 words when compared to corpora of world language such as English or French, nonetheless, it is the first of its kind in Irish for primary school pupils. It is based on oral data only gathered in a relatively naturalistic setting but lacking spontaneous speech samples. The samples of pupil speech gathered through the task may also have been limited by the nature of the task itself. Future studies will determine how representative the corpus in the present study is of all-Irish and Gaeltacht pupil speech.

The remainder of this chapter briefly reviews the theoretical background to the study, its methodology and execution and summarises its main findings. It concludes with a series of recommendations based on these findings in relation to research and practice in all-Irish schools and in immersion in general, with a view to improving overall proficiency of pupils in the target language and stimulating them to progress further towards native-speaker speech norms.

## **9.2 Conclusions**

### **9.2.1 Irish-medium education in the Republic of Ireland**

It was shown in Chapter 1 that there has been a long tradition of Irish-medium education in Ireland since the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922. The initial efforts by the State were characterised by a top-down approach which enjoyed varying degrees of success until the 1940's when the number of schools teaching through the medium of Irish started to decline (Coolahan, 1973). The education policy in these schools was driven by a political agenda to revitalize the Irish language by producing a generation of competent bilinguals who would go on to speak Irish in their daily lives. More attention was paid to the language outcomes of the pupils than to the educational methods in use in the schools. The complaints of parents and teachers about aspects of the system were ignored, with the result that many pupils grew to dislike the compulsory nature of learning Irish. By 1972 there were only 10 primary schools, outside the Gaeltacht, teaching all subjects through the medium of Irish.

A new generation of Irish-medium schools, known as all-Irish schools, began during the 1970's and have continued to grow ever since. These new all-Irish schools developed from a bottom-up movement, motivated in the main by parental demand for higher standards of Irish for their children. There are currently 140 primary all-Irish schools distributed

throughout the country, serving both urban and rural communities with a broad social-mix of pupils attending them. These schools could be classified as adopting ‘early immersion’ approach where language and content are integrated. Despite the parental support for all-Irish schools, the pupils have little exposure to Irish outside the school context. This, combined with the fact that Irish is declining in Gaeltacht areas, places a greater onus on the all-Irish schools to ensure that pupils are as proficient as possible in Irish.

### **9.2.2 Second language learning theories and immersion research**

Many studies have shown that immersion pupils’ acquire high levels of ability in the second language at no cost to their L1 skills (Johnstone et al., 1999; Swain & Lapkin, 1982). Their receptive skills of listening and speaking reach native-speaker levels in the target language but their productive skills do not. The purpose of this study was to investigate the oral productive skills of Irish immersion pupils in naturalistic peer-peer communication as they collaborated on a task. It set out to describe the non target-like features of their Irish. Chapter 2 examined second language learning theories that would help to inform the study. Second language learning theories relevant to the immersion context generally and to the sociolinguistic context of all-Irish schools in particular were considered from a number of perspectives. A specific focus of that examination was to explore theories and studies that might explain why immersion pupils in general acquire non-target like forms that appear to persist over time despite extended exposure to the target language and the efforts of their teachers to correct them.

The literature revealed that L2 learners may have difficulty with structures in the second language that do not correspond to structures in their L1. An example of this is the copula in Irish, where one structure in English (verb ‘to be’) has two counterparts in Irish (substantive verb *Bí* ‘to be’ and copula *Is* ‘is’). A review of cognitive approaches to second language learning gave insights into how second language input is processed by learners and the role of attentional resources in that process. Studies have shown that L2 learners negotiate for meaning in second language interactions and as long as they understand the message being communicated they tend to ignore form (VanPatten, 2002). Thus, they may not pay attention to all the information available in the input. This can cause them to code non-target like forms in long-term memory. If these forms prove useful in communication and do not lead to communicative breakdown they may become automatised and difficult to correct. In

unplanned oral production learners may draw on these automatised forms to free up attentional resources to focus on the content of their utterances (Skehan, 1998).

Interactionist studies confirm that child L2 learners in a school context do not tend to negotiate for form (Oliver, 2002). Other studies (Long & Robinson, 1998; Nassaji & Fotos, 2007) have shown that ‘focus on form’ activities in a communicative context are an effective way to get learners to become conscious of the nature of their speech output and can be effective in second language acquisition. Teacher feedback and error correction can also be effective in drawing pupils’ attention to form. The manner in which the feedback is given is important however. Lyster (2007) has demonstrated that elicitation requests are more effective in leading to learner repair than recasts or explicit correction. Teacher correction was also shown to be provided inconsistently where teachers frequently affirmed the content of an utterance even though it contained a grammatical error.

Swain (2005) demonstrated the critical role that output plays in second language acquisition. The output that Swain proposed goes beyond merely that of practice. It is output where pupils are required to reflect on their language use and to produce the target language accurately. Opportunities for this type of ‘pushed output’ can help to draw learners’ attention to form by reflecting on their use of language. This concept has been developed further developed as ‘*linguaging*’ within a sociocultural framework where learners articulate their thinking and thus transform it into artefactual form (Swain & Lapkin, 2005). Contexts need to be created that require learners to externalise their thoughts and to engage in reflection on their language. This is an activity that does not seem to be sufficiently emphasised in immersion programmes, with their experiential, meaning-focussed approach to language use. The ‘*counterbalance hypothesis*’ was proposed by Lyster (2007) to counter this experiential approach in immersion. Lyster suggests that instructional activities and interactional feedback that act as a counterbalance to the predominant communicative orientation of the classroom are more likely to lead to reflection on language use by learners than activities in line with the predominant communicative orientation. For this reason he proposed the need for a more analytic approach in immersion classroom to counterbalance the predominantly experiential orientation.

The sociolinguistic context in which many immersion language learners acquire their second language may be limited if there is a lack of exposure to the L2 outside the school. In such situations there can be an over-dependence on the school, which is limited in the range

and richness of language it can expose pupils to. Lack of exposure to the L2 outside the school can also affect motivation where the second language is associated with the curriculum but not with peer culture (Baker, 2003). The speech-community of the classroom can also exert its own norms on the pupils, where non-target forms are quite acceptable if they do not lead to a breakdown in communication. There may even be implicit pressure to conform to these norms, which may not be helpful in acquiring target forms.

The general picture that emerges from the overview of the literature, when the insights it provides are applied to the immersion context, is that it may be difficult for immersion pupils to achieve native-like proficiency in their productive skills. Certain structures that do not have a single map from their L1, such as the copula in Irish, may not be sufficiently salient for them to notice. If deviant forms are automatised, they can be difficult to modify particularly if they serve a communicative function and do not lead to a breakdown in communication. These forms can become the norm for peer-to-peer interaction and, when habitually practiced, can lead to permanency. The experiential orientation of immersion classrooms is unlikely to lead to the kind of restructuring of learners' interlanguages that would be required to eliminate these forms.

Research on the acquisition of Irish as a second language has identified the features of Irish that appear to be difficult for second language learners in general to acquire. It is these features that are also likely to cause greatest difficulty for Irish immersion pupils. The acquisition of the copula, verbal noun and dependent forms of verbs have been shown to be particularly problematic. Although there is anecdotal evidence, and limited findings from some small-scale studies, there is a lack of comprehensive knowledge about the features of all-Irish school pupils' Irish and their grammatical accuracy. This study aims to contribute to this area by providing a comprehensive analysis of the features all-Irish pupils' Irish in a wide range of immersion schools and in Gaeltacht schools for comparison purposes.

The research on immersion pupils' attainments in other areas of the curriculum such as science and mathematics, show that they perform as well as their peers educated through their L1. The limited number of immersion studies in Ireland supports this view. Irish immersion pupils have been shown to achieve high levels of ability in Irish relative to their peers in English-medium schools and at no cost to their English-language skills (Harris et al., 2006). Immersion programmes appear to be extremely effective in enabling pupils to reach a level of communicative competence that is sufficient to successfully learn curriculum content through



the medium of a second language. Partial mastery of certain target forms is routinely achieved but once these forms have stabilised they can be difficult to eliminate later.

### **9.2.3 Mixed-method's approach**

Chapter 3 described the research methods used in the present study. Due to the limited studies on Irish immersion education to date, a broad-based approach was adopted, using mixed methods. The rationale for this was that, while a comprehensive description of the features of all-Irish pupils' Irish in a range of schools would be useful and add considerably to the knowledge base in this field, its value would be greatly enhanced by exploiting the opportunity to collect information on the acquisitional context, the perspectives of the pupils on the nature and quality of their Irish, and teachers' views on their pupils general proficiency in Irish. A purposive sample of nine all-Irish schools was selected to represent the different contexts in which they operate under the following criteria: school size, geographical location, number of year's established, socio-economic status, proximity to a Gaeltacht area and access to a post-primary all-Irish school. In addition, two Gaeltacht schools from Irish-speaking heartland areas were also selected for comparison purposes.

In order to better understand the possible causes of the fossilisation and embedding of non target-like features, data were gathered from a number of sources. A collaborative design task was developed that would facilitate the recording of pupils' peer-peer interaction in a relatively naturalistic setting. 202 pupils (172 all-Irish, 30 Gaeltacht) were audio- or video-recorded while engaged in the task. Of that 202, 80 pupils were video-recorded (65 all-Irish, 15 Gaeltacht).

The first twenty minutes of each of these video-recordings were transcribed and compiled into a corpus of pupils' speech for analysis. This amounted to seven hours and twenty minutes of transcription. While a further 16 hours of pupils' speech was available for transcription, it was found from the pilot phase of the study that the selection of twenty minutes of speech from a representative sample in each school yielded the most common features and further sampling did not add to the range of errors detected. When the groups of pupils were being formed for the collaborative task, the all-Irish class teachers were requested to identify any pupils with exposure to Irish at home, and these pupils were audio-recorded but not video-recorded.

In a similar way in the Gaeltacht school, only pupils from Irish-speaking homes were video-recorded. The remainder of the pupils participated fully in the collaborative task and were audio-recorded. The purpose of differentiating pupils by home language in this way was to focus the attention of the study, and speech samples for the corpora, on all-Irish pupils acquiring Irish principally in the instructional context of the school and to compare these with native speakers whose home language is Irish.

The 65 all-Irish pupils that had been video-recorded, were given an opportunity to engage in a reflective stimulated recall activity. The recall sessions consisted of three phases where the pupils were enabled to i) comment on the quality of their Irish having viewed selected excerpts on DVD, ii) correct any mistakes that they noticed in their output, iii) discuss why their Irish contained non target-like features.

The attitudes and motivation in relation to Irish, of all 172 all-Irish pupils, were explored through the AMTB. Sixth class teachers and principals in the all-Irish schools were also interviewed to ascertain their views about their pupils' proficiency in Irish. The data gathered in these ways has provided rich data for analysis that is summarised briefly in the sections that follow.

#### **9.2.4 Features of all-Irish pupils' Irish**

Chapters 4 and 5 described and analysed the corpus of pupils' speech gathered through the collaborative design task. The corpus is comprised of over 35,000 words (all-Irish 30,700 words, Gaeltacht 4,500 words) gathered from the 80 pupils. It is the first of its kind for primary school pupils' Irish and is based on oral data gathered in a relatively naturalistic setting in nine all-Irish schools and two Gaeltacht schools. While no claim is made that the all-Irish school sample is strictly representative of the entire sixth class population of these schools, every effort was made to choose a representative sample of schools which take account of the variables listed in 9.2.3 such as socioeconomic status of school population, school size, and number of years established. All speech samples were gathered from one type of task only.

The corpus was analysed using the concordance and wordlist tools of WordSmith software. A word frequency analysis of the 50 most common words used by the all-Irish pupils showed a high level of consistency when compared to their Gaeltacht peers. The main differences were found to be syntactic in nature. When a representative sample of the

utterances of all-Irish pupils was examined, 29.2% of them were found to contain errors. These errors did not include code-mixing or code-switching. The use of English words in code-mixing and code-switching accounted for a further 10% of all words.

The most common errors of the all-Irish pupils' were; (1) the use of the substantive verb *Bí* instead of the copula *Is* for classificatory purposes, (2) difficulties with the use of dependent form of all verbs and the irregular verbs in particular, (3) the use of incorrect syntax with the verbal noun, (4) incorrect morphology of verbs in indirect speech, prepositional pronouns, numbers and interrogative pronouns (*Cad/Céard/Cad é* 'What') incorrectly used, (5) a tendency to map English syntax onto Irish. The mapping of English syntax onto Irish while inappropriate, was not counted as an error if the utterance, in at least some context, conformed to an acceptable form in Irish.

While the all-Irish pupils used 10.03% of English words, it was found that the Gaeltacht pupils had a rate of 6.65%. When the corpus was further analysed it was found that seven words; 'yeah', 'no', 'so', 'okay', 'just', 'like' and 'right' accounted for 6.35% of all words used by all-Irish school pupils and 4.66% of all words used by Gaeltacht pupils. Thus the use of English discourse markers is a common practice among pupils of both school types.

The compilation of the pupil corpus has broadened and clarified issues raised in other Irish studies (Henry et al., 2002; Ó Baoill, 1981; Ó Domhnaill & Ó Baoill, 1978, 1979; Walsh, 2005). It has identified the specific errors of all-Irish pupils' spoken Irish. In common with other immersion programmes, while there are errors that are specific to each individual language, the influence of the pupils' L1 together with non-salient features where there is not a single map from the L1 to the L2 appear to lead to the majority of the non target-like forms (Harley, 1991; Lyster, 2007).

### **9.2.5 Stimulated recall activity**

Chapter 6 described the stimulated recall sessions that facilitated the pupils in reflecting and commenting on the quality of their Irish. They did this by viewing video-excerpts of themselves that were recorded while they were engaged in the collaborative design task. These excerpts were shown in the nine all-Irish schools seven to ten days after the original recording. The excerpts lasted no more than three minutes in total and contained examples of the most common deviant features as described above (e.g. copula and verbal noun). A collaborative

atmosphere was created for these recall sessions where the pupils were assigned the role of assisting the researcher in his investigations rather than placing a focus on the errors in their Irish. Initially, pupils commented spontaneously on the mistakes that they noticed and as each session developed their attention was drawn to other common errors, that were not initially noticed, and they were prompted to see if they could correct them.

#### Code-mixing and code-switching

The pupils' initial reaction to viewing these excerpts was one of disappointment, expressing surprise that the quality of their Irish in the recording was not as good as they had thought it was. They were particularly disappointed with the number of English words that they had used, and stated that they were not aware that they used them so frequently. They cited the lack of exposure to Irish outside the school as being the main reason that they used so much English and added that it had become a 'habit'.

#### Copula

An analysis of all-Irish pupils' use of various aspects of the copula revealed that they used them correctly 67.2% of the time. Because of the nature of the task, the pupils in both school types used the demonstrative pronouns *sin* 'that' frequently. A search of the corpus for instances of use of the copula *Is* and demonstrative pronoun *sin* showed that there were very few examples of this type. Further analysis of the Gaeltacht pupils' corpus revealed that the form of the copula they used in utterances with the demonstrative pronoun *sin* 'that' was where the copula *Is* 'is' and the pronoun *é* 'it' are understood but not uttered (e.g., *Sin an geata*. 'That's the gate'). When the all-Irish pupils wanted to communicate a similar idea, they frequently said: *Tá sin ...* 'It is ...' (e.g. *\*Tá sin an geata*. 'That's the gate.'). using the substantive verb incorrectly.

It appears that the all-Irish pupils may be inserting the substantive verb not realising that the copula can be omitted. When the all-Irish pupils were prompted in the stimulated recall to rephrase these deviant sentences such as *Tá sin an geata*, they replaced *Tá* with *Is é* 'it is' in almost every case (e.g. *Is é sin an geata*). They did this after significant prompting from the researcher, where the prompts would have led them to a correct form. The form commencing *Is é* is a permissible but more formal form. The provision of prompts in this way

enabled the pupils to correct about 85% of the errors with the copula that their attention was drawn to.

Because of the centrality of the copula in the syntax of Irish (O'Leary & O'Rahilly, 1922), this is a key finding of the present study and has implications for pedagogy. The input that the all-Irish pupils receive may not be salient enough for them to notice that although the copula is omitted in utterances of this type, it is implied. They may not realise that *Sin an geata* is perfectly acceptable. Based on the evidence of the pupils' corpus and the stimulated recall it appears that 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in all-Irish schools have partially mastered the use of the copula with the demonstrative pronoun *sin*. They had to be prompted in a particular way for them to produce the correct form. The pupils appear to be unaware of the aspects of discourse that trigger the use of the copula and it was only when they were alerted to these by the researcher's prompts that they were able to correct their errors.

#### Verbal noun clause

The verbal noun clause (e.g. *Caithfidh mé peann a fháil.* = I have to (must) get a pen.) was the other most frequent deviant feature identified in the corpus analysis. The all-Irish school pupils were shown to use this feature incorrectly just over six times out of ten (61.4%). Further analysis revealed that of the 612 errors made by pupils with the four verbs *cuir* 'to put', *caith* 'to have to/to spend', *déan* 'to do' and *faigh* 'to get', 345 (56.4%) of these were errors with the verbal noun. If this feature could be mastered it would greatly improve the accuracy of their Irish.

Verbal noun clauses were explored with the pupils in the stimulated recall. In general, the pupils did not notice these errors on viewing the video-recording or the written transcript. When their attention was drawn to them however, they were able to correct their deviant use of the verbal noun clause approximately 50% of the time. This compares to 85% for the copula. Following the correction of a number of utterances, the pupils were asked why they thought they used these incorrect forms when they knew the correct forms. The most frequent responses given were that they were 'not thinking', that it was a 'habit' and that they 'pick up' errors from their peers. When questioned as to how the teacher would react if they used these deviant forms with him/her they replied that they were more careful when speaking to the teacher, that they thought about the content of their utterances before speaking to the teacher. A number of pupils in different schools offered the explanation that it was only since they had

entered sixth class that they realised that the Irish they had spoken up to that point was ‘not good Irish’ and that a habit had formed that was difficult to break.

#### Other features

When the pupils’ attention was drawn to errors in other features such as personal pronouns (e.g. *\*do é* instead of *dó* ‘for him’) and dependent forms of verbs (e.g. *\*An fhanfaidh...? An bhfanfaidh ...?* ‘stay’-FUT), they were unable to correct the errors. It was more difficult to provide prompts for these errors without giving the pupils the correct form, than was the case with the copula and the verbal noun above. It was noticeable that the pupils in School 3 however, were able to correct substantially more errors than all the other schools.

#### Peer correction

There were no instances in the corpus of pupils correcting one another’s inaccurate use of Irish. When questioned about this during the stimulated recall, they stated that they would not correct inaccurate Irish as long as they understood the meaning. There appears to be no sense of a peer social sanction, as it were, attaching to errors, perhaps because there is not an established community, apart from the teachers, to which the pupils might feel pressure to conform. They ‘are’ the norm group effectively, as they constitute the majority. This confirms the findings of other research studies that child L2 learners do not tend to negotiate for form.

All-Irish pupils do however, correct their peers for speaking English. Intervention of this kind was often understood as or couched as ‘looking out’ for your friends as there might be a sanction from the teacher if overheard. Many pupils commented that it was embarrassing to be corrected in front of friends or in front of the class.

### 9.2.6 Pupils’ attitude and motivation in relation to Irish

The modified and extended AMTB used in the present study was completed by 172 all-Irish pupils and was described in Chapter 7. The purpose of using an AMTB was to a measure of the strength of pupils’ attitudes to the Irish language, to Irish speakers and to learning Irish. Positive learner attitudes to the L2 are associated with motivation to learn the target language over an extended period. In the case of all-Irish pupils it was particularly important to gain as much information as possible about the motivation to speak Irish accurately.

There were nine scales in the AMTB and the pupils had positive mean scores on all scales. Their mean scores were higher than those in a previous study of English-medium pupils (Harris & Murtagh, 1999), possibly due to the immersion context in which they are learning Irish and parental support. Among the most positive scales were the two integrativeness sub-scales, *Attitude to Irish speakers* and *Integrative orientation to Irish* with mean scores of 4.2 in both cases. *Instrumental orientation to Irish* and *Parental encouragement* were also very positive at 4.1 and 4.2 respectively. *Attitude to learning Irish* is almost as positive with a mean score of 4. In contrast to these, the remaining scales although positive had mean scores of less than 4, *Desire to learn Irish* 3.6, *Motivational intensity to learn Irish* 3.3, *Use of Irish by all-Irish school pupils* 3.4 and *Irish-ability self-concept* 3.7. When the mean scores were compared across schools it was found that there were statistically significant differences between the schools in terms of pupil attitude and motivation. When these differences were compared to the error rate across schools, no correlation was found. These results indicate that all-Irish pupils are keen to identify with the ‘Irish-speaking group’, they receive a lot of support from parents and they are motivated by instrumental factors. While their attitude to learning Irish is very positive, they are less positive in relation to both their desire and motivational intensity to learn Irish. Their use of Irish is also less positive. These factors may have a bearing on their motivation to speak Irish accurately.

Previous studies have shown that parental support and encouragement is positively associated with higher attainment levels in Irish. The pupils in the present study report that their parents have positive attitudes to Irish and that they encourage them to work hard at learning Irish. This is supported by pupils’ responses to the write-in item on motivation where ‘parents and family’ together with ‘teachers and school’ emerged as the most important influencing factor in motivating the pupils to speak Irish. In relation to the level of Irish spoken at home, 16.1% reported speaking Irish at home ‘often’, ‘very often’ or ‘always’. This compares with just under one third (30.4%) of pupils that responded to Item 56 that they often speak Irish outside of school and school activities. A further 41.2% (Item 10) agreed that would like to speak Irish outside school if they had the opportunity, while 40% (Item 40) would be uncomfortable speaking Irish to their school friends outside of school and school activities. This indicates that while there is potential to increase pupils’ opportunities to speak Irish and to raise the level of exposure to Irish if community support and a range of activities could be put in place, some of them may be inhibited from participating in these activities.

11.6% of pupils responded to the write in item, that they were motivated to speak Irish by other Irish speakers, indicating a desire to integrate into the Irish-speaking community.

The write-in items in general were interesting in that the views of pupils were often divided. A number of examples are given here to illustrate this. While 16% of pupils associate having a good standard of Irish or associate it with fun, 18.6% thought that learning Irish was difficult and boring. Among the changes that some pupils suggested were to make it easier, make it more fun and to have more English. On the theme of 'more English', 9.7% of pupils enjoy studying other subjects through Irish while 14.8% dislike it, with 4.8% of pupils wanting to study other subjects through English. In a similar vein 9.2% of pupils responded that 'Speaking Irish' was an aspect they like about learning Irish, 8.6% of pupils disliked 'Having to speak Irish at all times in school'.

Opinion was also divided in relation to grammar. While 9.8% of pupils enjoy having a good standard of Irish and improving it, learning new words and grammar, 19% of pupils dislike grammar. This latter figure is a relatively high one considering that these were the unprompted comments of the pupils about aspects of learning Irish that they did not like. They are higher indeed than (16.3%) those found in a study of English medium pupils (Harris & Murtagh, 1999), possibly because all-Irish pupils learn a greater quantity of grammar.

On further examination it emerged that half of all the responses about disliking grammar came from just one school, School 3. These pupils were being instructed in the irregular verbs of Irish in a 'focus-on-forms' programme by their teacher. The pupils in this school had a greater awareness of the importance of grammatical accuracy than most of the other schools and were more adept at correcting their mistakes in the transcripts presented to them in the stimulated recall sessions. While there may have been a difficulty in the way that grammar was taught to these pupils, if grammatical accuracy is to improve, there may need to be an acknowledgement on the part of pupils that this will require effort. The school for its part may need to find more learner centred approaches to grammar.

There was greater agreement among pupils in relation to the theme of learning the native language of Ireland with 10.8% liking this aspect and 14.9% of pupils citing it as a motivating factor. In general, it was found that items that require passive support for Irish receive a more positive response from pupils than those requiring more active support. One example of this was that while 80.2% agreed that they want to learn as much Irish as possible, 48% of pupils admit to making mistakes when they speak Irish but that it would be too much



trouble to correct them. Similarly in the write-in items as noted above, 19% of pupils dislike Irish grammar and a further 18.6% find learning Irish difficult and boring sometimes. This may indicate that pupils are less willing to expend the effort required to learn to speak Irish with accuracy.

Other responses indicate that there may be resistance on the part of some pupils to the compulsory nature of the school norm of speaking Irish at all times. Another manifestation of the challenge facing teachers was the finding that significantly more pupils agreed that it was important to speak Irish accurately when speaking with their teacher (81.7%) compared to speaking Irish with their friends (51.8%) at school. This confirms the finding that the pupils make a greater effort to speak with accuracy when speaking to the teacher. These opportunities for ‘pushed output’ when speaking to the teacher may however, contribute to improving pupils’ language accuracy.

Overall then, pupils’ attitudes and motivation in relation to Irish are very positive. They enjoy learning Irish and studying other subjects through Irish. They are supported in their learning by parents and teachers. They see that learning Irish, the native language of Ireland, is important and this is a motivating factor.

An issue that requires further investigation is how the positive attitudes of all-Irish pupils can be harnessed in such a way that they will be motivated to expend the effort required to acquire a more target-like form of Irish. The role of the wider school community and Irish-speaking community in this regard also needs to be considered as the all-Irish pupils recognise that there is insufficient exposure to Irish in their lives in order for them to acquire a more accurate form of Irish free from grammatical errors.

### **9.2.7 Principal and class teacher interviews**

Chapter 8 described the semi-structured, 25-35 minute interviews that the all-Irish schoolteachers and principals were invited to participate in, to discuss their pupils’ proficiency in Irish. A total of twelve teachers agreed to be interviewed, five 6<sup>th</sup> class teachers and seven principals.

The teachers in the study appear to be reasonably satisfied with their students’ proficiency in Irish but felt that there was room for improvement. Bearing in mind the limitations of learning a language in a school setting, some of them thought that the standard of pupils’ Irish was probably as good as could be expected, particularly where the pupils have

little exposure to Irish outside of school. The fact that the pupils live in an English-speaking world outside of school was seen to impact on their language behaviour in school. The teachers sought to maximise the pupils' opportunities to be exposed to Irish by organising trips to the Gaeltacht and participation in inter-school activities through Irish. While the pupils acquire a good level of fluency in Irish it was recognised that there was a need for further improvement that should continue at post-primary level.

The teachers identified the most common pupil errors and this was consistent with those identified in the corpus analysis. Difficulties with Irish syntax were seen as the fundamental problem. Many felt that the pupils directly translated from English and that this caused the underlying problem. They also thought that the pupils 'did not think' about the form of their utterances and that they 'pick up' errors from their peers. This mostly echoes the pupils' responses in the Stimulate Recall, although the pupils emphasised that they did not actively or consciously translate except in very particular circumstances. It was clear that the influence of English on their speech arose from its being embedded more fundamentally in the variety of Irish they heard from their peers every day. They simply picked up this English-influenced variety of Irish through routine exposure. All teachers had strategies for dealing with these errors when they arose, i.e. they use prompts and elicitation requests rather than recasts. Despite this, there was evidence of a degree of frustration among teachers that the errors persisted. They cited the lack of suitable teaching materials for teaching Irish as a particular problem that made their job more difficult. They also mentioned the lack of suitable reading material in Irish for pupils.

The burden of teaching content in ten other curricular areas meant that teachers felt unable to correct all errors. They were also conscious of the need to remain positive, to affirm pupils spontaneous communication in Irish and not to undermine confidence through over-correction. This was also part of a more general concern to promote positive attitudes to Irish among the pupils. Most schools had incentives to encourage the pupils to speak Irish particularly for the younger pupils. But some teachers felt that a different approach might be needed for 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils, where a greater degree of self-motivation in relation to speaking Irish was required. Sanctions were imposed in some schools where pupils spoke English outside of English language classes. Some teachers felt that fluency and willingness to speak Irish were more important than accuracy. Many teachers also expressed the view that once the pupils could communicate their meaning in Irish, that it was difficult to motivate them to make

the further commitment to be grammatically accurate. This view is supported by the comments of the pupils in the stimulated recall, in the responses to the AMTB and by research in other immersion studies (Day & Shapson, 1996; Genesee, 1987, 2008).

The pupils' proficiency in Irish was a central element of school-planning and was regularly discussed at staff-meetings in almost all schools. Most schools have a whole-school approach to addressing pupils' proficiency in Irish. It was evident from the teachers' statements that deviant features were not ignored. Many of the strategies identified by the teachers were reactive in nature, however, and it was not clear what proactive plans are in place to address the non-target like features that they identified.

In relation to professional development, many teachers did not feel that they had any needs at all in this area. Where needs were identified, two were notable. First, some expressed the view that they needed to improve their own competency in Irish and would welcome courses to enable them to do this. Second courses which would help teachers to develop a better understanding of immersion education more generally and to identify the most effective strategies for developing proficiency in an Irish immersion context.

### **9.3 Recommendations**

A number of findings emerge from the present study that increases the understanding of second language acquisition in Irish immersion education and in the wider immersion context more generally. It has been confirmed that all-Irish pupils speak a variety of Irish that resembles a code in that it contains non target-like forms and is resistant to change. It may not be a code in the strictest sense however, as there is inconsistency in the deviant forms that the pupils produce as evidenced by the analysis in Chapter 5. The variety of Irish is perfectly acceptable for peer-peer communication and the norm of 'no peer correction' is well established, despite the fact that the pupils realise that their output contains grammatical errors. All-Irish schools are very effective in promoting Irish as the communicative language of the school and this extends to the playground, an outcome not achieved in every immersion setting. The effort and dedication required by teachers to maintain this context for authentic Irish use should not be underestimated and any recommendations in relation to improving pupil accuracy must bear this in mind.

A number of recommendations are made below in relation to practice and research in immersion. If the ultimate goal of an immersion programme from a language perspective is to

enable pupils to participate in the speech-community of that language then a high level of competency in the language would seem to be a desirable outcome. The following recommendations are made in the context of that ultimate goal, bearing in mind that pupils in 6<sup>th</sup> class in primary school have many more years of formal education remaining in which to improve their Irish.

### **9.3.1 Pedagogical practice**

#### **9.3.1.1 Analytic approach to language**

Convincing arguments have been made in the research literature for a more analytic approach to L2 learning in immersion (Genesee, 2008; Lyster, 2007; Stern, 1990). The findings of the present study suggest that the current, strongly experiential, approach does not lead to grammatical accuracy by the end of primary school. In an analytic approach, there is a shift in attention from meaning to language form. As teachers identify emerging deviant features, they could be the forms to be focussed on. While not advocating extensive explicit teaching of grammar, some explanation of grammatical elements adjusted to the maturity level of the pupils may be warranted (Lyster, 2004b; Lyster & Mori, 2008; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 2008).

#### **9.3.1.2 Reconceptualise school norm to include the accurate use of Irish**

The stimulated recall activity showed that all-Irish pupils interpret the school norm of speaking Irish as ‘not using English words’. This interpretation may be sufficient in the early years of immersion until pupils gain basic interpersonal communication skills in Irish. Once this has been achieved the emphasis needs to shift to affirming pupils, not only for speaking Irish, but also for the quality of their Irish. Reconceptualising the school norm as speaking Irish accurately may involve sacrificing a degree of fluency initially, but may be worth it in the context of achieving greater accuracy in the longer term. To continue the current policy is to give pupils practice that is making ‘permanent’ rather than ‘perfect’ (Hammerly, 1991). By not addressing particular features at the appropriate time there is a danger that the deviant forms are being stored in long-term memory and are becoming automatised (Skehan, 1998). These forms are thus less susceptible to change. Perhaps a monitored pilot programme in a number of schools, starting perhaps with those which are longer established, could help to identify challenges and solutions in implementing such an approach.

Another area worthy of investigation in this context is that of empowering pupils explicitly to take greater responsibility for improving the quality of their Irish. The AMTB revealed that motivational factors play a role in pupils' accurate use of Irish. Motivational factors combined with peer norms may operate counter to the efforts of the teacher and school in promoting accurate use of the target language. While the extrinsic motivation of rewards and sanctions may be effective in junior classes, enabling pupils in senior classes to become more autonomous learners might be more fruitful (Little, 2007). It is suggested that motivational factors need to be considered in any pedagogical intervention to improve pupil accuracy in the target language.

#### **9.3.1.3 Record pupils engaged in language use**

A significant finding of this study was that the all-Irish pupils were unaware of extent of their code-mixing behaviour. This highlighted the benefits of collaborating with pupils in exploring their use of Irish, using video recordings of the pupils engaged in real tasks as an object upon which to reflect. Pupils could be recorded and provided with short extracts of their speech and asked to transcribe perhaps 30 seconds of it. The transcription element seems to enhance critical reflection. In the stimulated recall study reported here, it was when pupils saw the written transcript that they detected deviant forms most readily. Transcription of collaborative dialogues in other research studies have also shown that it facilitates pupils in engaging in 'languaging' (Swain, 2006; Swain et al., 2002).

#### **9.3.1.4 Provide opportunities for 'pushed output'**

The pupils revealed in the stimulated recall, and this was reinforced by their responses in the AMTB, that they monitor their output more critically when they speak to the teacher than when they speak to their friends. This type of 'pushed output' has been shown to be effective in shifting learners from semantic to syntactic processing (Kowal & Swain, 1997; Swain, 2005). Teachers should seek to maximise the opportunities for the production of 'pushed output' by setting tasks for pupils which involve the preparation of oral presentations and materials for real audiences. These tasks require pupils to reflect on what they want to say and teachers can assist them in choosing the most appropriate language forms. Tasks such as these also enable the teacher to integrate language and content objectives more effectively.

### **9.3.1.5 Whole-school approach to deviant features of pupils' Irish**

In order to deal more effectively with the deviant features of all-Irish pupils' Irish, it is recommended that teachers would monitor, on a whole-school basis, the emergence of these non-target forms, in order to identify the optimum time to intervene. The input that pupils receive should also be monitored to ensure that the critical forms are salient. Where the latter is not the case there will be a need for enhanced input. A significant factor to emerge from the present study was the manner in which the Gaeltacht pupils used the copula with the demonstrative pronoun *sin* 'that'. This form of the copula needs to be explicitly taught to all-Irish pupils, as it is either a form that teachers do not use or it is not sufficiently salient in the input that pupils receive. Teachers should be encouraged to use this form if they do not do so at present and to draw pupils' attention to it as an alternative.

## **9.3.2 Further research**

### **9.3.2.1 Corpus-based research**

The features of all-Irish pupils' Irish that deviate from native speaker norms are being acquired through a largely experiential approach with a certain amount of 'focus on forms'. The type of 'focus-on-forms' work appears, from the comments of the pupils and teachers, to emphasise the manipulation of forms rather than relating them to meaningful communication. Further corpus-based research with both younger and older all-Irish pupils would help to identify the developmental patterns associated with the acquisition of these features. It might indicate when the need for these forms emerges in the general instructional context or in discourse between pupils and so enable the explicit teaching of the correct forms to be embedded in authentic communicative contexts. It could also emerge that some of the deviant features are mastered when the pupils are older although the evidence from the small number of studies reviewed in this area suggest that many of the features remain at the end of post-primary education (Walsh, 2007).

### **9.3.2.2 Integration with Irish-speaker networks**

Since one of the aims of teaching Irish in schools is to produce competent bilinguals who could integrate into Irish-speaking networks in later life. The present study has highlighted that the majority of opportunities that all- pupils have for speaking Irish is with their peers in school. There is very little motivation for them to significantly increase their

grammatical accuracy in this situation. Opportunities could be provided in selected schools on a pilot basis for pupils to integrate with Irish-speaker networks through participation in age-appropriate Irish-medium activities in their immediate community or through contact with Gaeltacht peers by means of email and video-conferencing. Such initiatives should be evaluated to measure their effectiveness in increasing grammatical accuracy and in reducing the impact of English on their Irish usage.

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## Appendix 3.1 Letter to school principal

Coláiste Phádraig  
Droim Conrach  
Baile Átha Cliath 9  
<Date>

<Name of principal>  
Príomhoide  
<Address of school>

### Tionscadal taighde ar Ghaeilge na bpáistí i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge

A < >, a chara,

Táim ag obair mar léachtóir le Teagasc na Gaeilge i gColáiste Phádraig, Droim Conrach le tamall anuas. Tá tionscadal taighde ar siúl agam i gColáiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath faoi láthair mar chuid de chéim PhD. Tá do chabhair agus cabhair duine de na múinteoirí i do scoile ag teastáil uaim. Is í aidhm an taighde ná staidéar a dhéanamh ar chumas Gaeilge na bpáistí i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge d'fhonn tuiscint níos fearr a fháil ar na tosca a chuirfeadh feabhas ar a n-inniúlacht.

Má thoilíonn tú cead a thabhairt dom, ba mhaith liom cuairt a thabhairt ar <name of school> go luath mar chuid den tionscadal. Teastaíonn uaim samplaí de chaint na bpáistí i rang 6 a bhailiú i suíomh chomh nádúrtha agus is féidir. Ní scrúdú a bheadh i gceist agus ní bheadh aon ullmhúchán le déanamh acu roimh ré. Thabharfainn tasc do na páistí rud éigin a dhearadh i ngrúpaí beaga. Bheadh orthu comhoibriú lena chéile chun an tasc a chur i gcrích. Bheadh sé i gceist agam taifeadadh fise agus fuaime a dhéanamh ar na páistí ionas go bhféadfainn anailís a dhéanamh ar a gcuid cainte ina dhiaidh. Lorgóinn a gcead siúd agus cead a dtuismitheoirí chun é seo a dhéanamh.

D'fhillfinn ar an scoil an tseachtain ina dhiaidh sin chun cuid de na píosaí a rinne mé taifeadadh orthu a thaispeáint do ghrúpaí páistí. Lorgóinn a gcuid tuairimí faoi na píosaí. D'iarrfainn ar na páistí uilig sa rang ceistneoir a líonadh an dara lá chomh maith chun a ndearcadh agus i n-inspreagadh i leith foghlaim na Gaeilge a mheas chomh maith.

Bheadh fáilte romhat aischothú a fháil ar an tionscadal nuair a bheadh sé críochnaithe agam. Ní bhainfí úsáid as ainmneacha na bpáistí nó as ainm na scoile in aon tuairisc ar an tionscadal sa chaoi is nach féidir iad a aithint agus choimeádfaí na taifeadtaí in áit daingin. Creidim gur tionscadal fiúntach atá ann agus go gcuirfidh sé lenár dtuiscint ar an gcaoi a fheidhmíonn scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge.

Cuirfidh mé glaoch ort i gceann cúpla lá chun an taighde a phlé leat agus aon cheisteanna a bheadh agat a fhreagairt.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

---

Pádraig Ó Duibhir  
<Mobile phone no. and email address>

## Appendix 3.2 Letter to parents

Coláiste Phádraig  
Droim Conrach  
Baile Átha Cliath 9  
<Date>

### Tionscadal taighde ar Ghaeilge na bpáistí i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge

A Thuismitheoir, a chara,

Is léachtóir le Teagasc na Gaeilge mé i gColáiste Phádraig, Droim Conrach, Baile Átha Cliath. Chaith mé roinnt mhaith blianta roimhe sin ag múineadh i scoil lán-Ghaeilge. Tá tionscadal taighde ar siúl agam i gColáiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath faoi láthair mar chuid de PhD agus tá <Name of principal> agus <Name of class teacher> sásta cabhrú liom. Is í aidhm an taighde ná staidéar a dhéanamh ar chumas Gaeilge na bpáistí i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge d'fhonn tuiscint níos fearr a fháil ar na tosca a chuirfeadh feabhas ar a n-inniúlacht.

Beidh mé ag tabhairt cuairte ar <Name of school> ar an <Date> mar chuid den tionscadal. Tabharfaidh mé tasc do na páistí rud éigin a dhearadh i ngrúpaí beaga. Beidh orthu comhoibriú lena chéile chun an tasc a chur i gcrích. Tá sé i gceist agam taifeadadh físe agus fuaimne a dhéanamh ar na páistí, le do chead agus le cead na bpáistí, ionas gur féidir liom anailís a dhéanamh ar a gcuid cainte ina dhiaidh. Fillfidh mé ar an scoil an tseachtain ina dhiaidh sin chun cuid de na píosaí a rinne mé taifeadadh orthu a thaispeáint do ghrúpaí páistí. Lorgóidh mé a gcuid tuairimí faoi na píosaí. Iarrfaidh mé ar na páistí go léir sa rang ceistneoir a líonadh an dara lá chun a ndearcadh agus i n-inspreagadh i leith foghlaim na Gaeilge a mheas.

Tá fáilte romhat aischothú a fháil ar an tionscadal nuair a bheidh sé críochnaithe agam. Ní bhainfear úsáid as ainmneacha na bpáistí nó as ainm na scoile in aon tuairisc ar an tionscadal sa chaoi is nach féidir iad a aithint agus coimeádfar na taifeadtaí in áit daingin.

Creidim gur tionscadal fiúntach atá ann agus go gcuirfidh sé lenár dtuiscint ar an gcaoi a fheidhmíonn scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge. Bheinn buíoch díot dá bhféadfá an fhoirm thíos a shíniú ag tabhairt cead do do pháiste a bheith páirteach sa taighde. Tá litir faighte aige/aici chomh maith ag lorg a c(h)ead.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Pádraig Ó Duibhir  
<email address>

.....  
Tugaim cead mo pháiste a bheith páirteach sa tionscadal taighde ar an nGaeilge i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge.  
Ainm an pháiste/Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Síniú/Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



St. Patrick's College  
Drumcondra  
Dublin 9  
<Date>

### Research project on children's Irish in all-Irish schools

A Thuismitheoir, a chara,

I am a lecturer in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin where I lecture in teaching methods for Irish. Prior to this, I worked as a teacher in an all-Irish school for many years. I am currently carrying out a PhD related research project in Trinity College, Dublin and <Name of principal> together with your child's teacher <Name of class teacher>, have kindly agreed to help. The aim of the research is to study the ability in Irish of children in all-Irish schools with a view to gaining a better understanding of the factors that would lead to improvements in proficiency.

I will be visiting <Name of school> on <Date> as part of my research. I will ask the children to design something in small groups. They will have to cooperate together to complete the task. With your permission the children will be video and audio recorded so that I can analyse their speech afterwards. I will return to the school the following week in order to show some of the groups excerpts of themselves which I video-recorded and to get their views on the pieces. I will also ask all the children in the class to fill out a questionnaire to assess their attitude and motivation to learning Irish.

You are welcome to receive feedback on the project on its completion. In any reports on the project, individual children's names or the school name will not be used in order to safeguard anonymity and all recordings will be kept in a secure location.

I believe the project is a very worthwhile one and will contribute to our understanding of how education in all-Irish schools operates. I would be most grateful if you would give permission for your child to participate in this project by completing the form below and returning it to the school. Your child has also received a letter seeking his/her permission.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pádraig Ó Duibhir  
<email address>

.....  
I give permission for my child to take part in the research project on Irish in all-Irish schools.

Ainm an pháiste/Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Síniú/Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3.3 Letter to pupils

Coláiste Phádraig  
Droim Conrach  
Baile Átha Cliath 9  
<Date>

### *Tionscadal taighde ar Ghaeilge na bpáistí i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge*

A Chara,

Is léachtóir le Teagasc na Gaeilge mé i gColáiste Phádraig, Droim Conrach, Baile Átha Cliath. Chaith mé roinnt mhaith blianta roimhe sin ag múineadh i scoil lán-Ghaeilge. Tá tionscadal taighde ar siúl agam i gColáiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath faoi láthair agus tá do chabhair ag teastáil uaim. Teastaíonn uaim a fháil amach cé chomh maith is atá páistí i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge ag an nGaeilge.

Tá Múinteoir <Name of teacher> sásta cabhrú liom freisin. Beidh mé ag teacht go dtí an scoil ar an <Date> agus tabharfaidh mé tasc duit rud a dhearadh i ngrúpaí beaga. Déanfaidh mé taifeadadh oraibh ag obair le chéile.

Fillfidh mé ar an scoil an tseachtain ina dhiaidh sin chun píosaí den taifeadadh a rinne mé ar chúpla ghrúpa a thaispeáint dóibh siúd chun a gcuid tuairimí a fháil fúthu. Ní thaispeánfar na píosaí ach do na grúpaí sin amháin. Iarraidh mé ar gach dalta ceistneoir a líonadh an dara lá faoina dtuairimí i leith foghlaim na Gaeilge.

Ba mhaith liom insint do mhúinteoirí agus do dhaoine eile faoi na torthaí a fhaighim. Ní bhainfidh mé úsáid as d'ainm sa chás seo. Ní chaithfidh tú páirt a ghlacadh sa tionscadal seo muna dteastaíonn uait ach má ghlacann tú, sílim go mbainfidh tú taitneamh as.

Líon an fhoirm thíos le do thoil má tá tú sásta páirt a ghlacadh sa tionscadal.

Míle buíochas,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pádraig Ó Duibhir

.....  
Tá mé sásta páirt a ghlacadh sa tionscadal taighde ar an nGaeilge i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge.

Síniú: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3.4 Letter to class teacher

Coláiste Phádraig  
Droim Conrach  
Baile Átha Cliath 9  
<Date>

### *Tionscadal taighde ar Ghaeilge na bpáistí i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge*

A <Name of teacher>, a chara,

Is léachtóir le Teagasc na Gaeilge mé i gColáiste Phádraig, Droim Conrach, Baile Átha Cliath. Chaith mé roinnt mhaith blianta roimhe seo ag múineadh i scoil lán-Ghaeilge. Tá tionscadal taighde ar siúl agam i gColáiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath faoi láthair mar chuid de chéim PhD agus tá do chabhair ag teastáil uaim. Is í aidhm an taighde ná staidéar a dhéanamh ar chumas Gaeilge na bpáistí i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge d'fhonn tuiscint níos fearr a fháil ar na tosca a chuirfeadh feabhas ar a n-inniúlacht.

Ba mhaith liom cuairt a thabhairt ar <Name of school> mar chuid den tionscadal. Teastaíonn uaim samplaí de chaint na bpáistí a bhailiú i suíomh chomh nádúrtha agus is féidir. Ní scrúdú atá i gceist agus níl aon ullmhúchán le déanamh acu roimh ré. Tabharfaidh mé tasc do na páistí rud éigin a dhearadh i ngrúpaí beaga. Beidh orthu comhoibriú lena chéile chun an tasc a chur i gcrích. Tá sé i gceist agam taifeadadh físe agus fuaime a dhéanamh ar na páistí le cead na dtuismitheoirí, ionas gur féidir liom anailís a dhéanamh ar a gcuid cainte ina dhiaidh. Déanfaidh na páistí an tasc mar chuid dá ngnáth obair ranga i ngrúpaí de bheirt nó de thríúr agus ba cheart go mbeadh gach rud curtha i gcrích taobh istigh d'uair an chloig. Bheinn buíoch díot dá bhféadfás na grúpaí a eagrú ar an lá. B'fhearr liom más féidir é páistí le cumais éagsúla a bheith measctha le chéile sna grúpaí ach páistí a labhraíonn Gaeilge sa bhaile a choinneáil scartha amach ó na grúpaí eile (i mbealach discréideach!). Beidh mise ag díriú ar na páistí a shealbhaigh an Ghaeilge scoil don chuid is mó.

Fillfidh mé ar an scoil an tseachtain ina dhiaidh sin chun cuid de na píosaí a rinne mé taifeadadh orthu a thaispeáint do ghrúpaí páistí. Lorgóidh mé a gcuid tuairimí faoi na píosaí. Iarrfaidh mé ar na páistí go léir i Rang 6 ceistneoir a líonadh an dara lá chun a ndearcadh agus i n-inspreagadh i leith foghlaim na Gaeilge a mheas chomh maith. Ba mhaith liom agallamh a chur ort féin chomh maith an lá sin má bhíonn tú sásta.

Tá fáilte romhat aischothú a fháil ar an tionscadal nuair a bheidh sé críochnaithe agam. Ní bhainfear úsáid as ainmneacha na bpáistí nó as ainm na scoile in aon tuairisc ar an tionscadal sa chaoi is nach féidir iad a aithint agus coimeádfar na taifeadtaí in áit daingin. Creidim gur tionscadal fiúntach atá ann agus go gcuirfidh sé lenár dtuiscint ar an gcaoi a fheidhmíonn scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

---

Pádraig Ó Duibhir  
<Mobile phone no. and email address>

## Appendix 3.5 Maggie's story

### Scéal Mhaggie

Faoin am go raibh Maggie 9 mbliana d'aois bhí a hathair agus a máthair tar éis bás a fháil den ghalar AIDS. Bhí Maggie ina cónaí lena haintín agus a cuid col ceathracha, Bright agus Dinda.

Ach tamall ina dhiaidh sin, cailleadh a haintín agus b'éigin do Mhaggie, Bright agus Dinda dul chun cónaí lena Mamó i Kitwe. Bhí an bia an-ghann cé gur oibrigh siad go crua sa gharraí nuair ba chóir dóibh a bheith ar scoil. Chodail siad ina gcuid éadaí gioblacha ar urlár crua i dteach Mhamó gan bhlaincéad ná braillíní orthu.

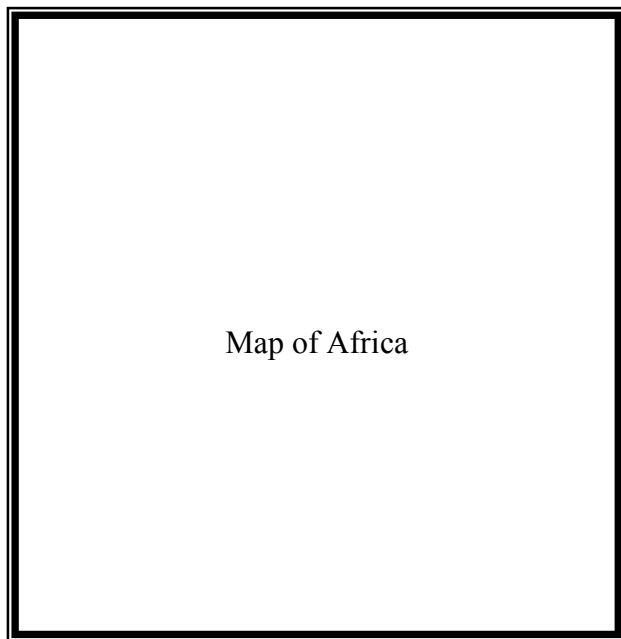
Bhí mamó eile ag Maggie a raibh Eleanor uirthi. Bhí an-imní ar Eleanor faoi Mhaggie faoina bheirt col ceathrar. Cé go raibh Eleanor ina cónaí i bhfad ó Kitwe agus go raibh sí deich mbliana agus trí scór, shocraigh Eleanor dul ar chuairt chucu. Bhailigh sí an méid airgid a bhí aici le chéile chomh maith le roinnt éadaí. Ansin nuair a bhí an ghrian ag éirí chuaigh sí ar an seanbhus agus chaith sí an lá ar fad ag taisteal go mall ar na drochbhóithre nó gur shroich sí Kitwe.

Bhí ríméad ar Mhaggie agus ar a col ceathracha Eleanor a fheiceáil. Bhí Maggie sásta don chéad uair le fada. Bhí siad in ann bia a cheannach leis an airgead a thug Eleanor dhóibh. Chuaigh chun cainte le heagras carthanachta (cosúil le Trócaire) agus thug siad sin cúnamh dhóibh. Thug siad blaincéid agus leapacha dhóibh. Thug siad síolta agus uirlisí feirme dhóibh. Thug siad leabhair agus pinn dóibh le go bhféadfadh na gasúir dul ar ais ar scoil.

‘Tá mé chomh sásta gur tháinig mo Mhamó le cúnamh a thabhairt dhúinn,’ a deir Maggie. ‘Is breá liom a bheith ar ais ar scoil le mo chairde arís. Caithim a bheith ag obair go crua sa gharraí nuair a bhím ag baile ach ar a laghad bíonn am spraoi agam nuair a bhím ag an scoil.’

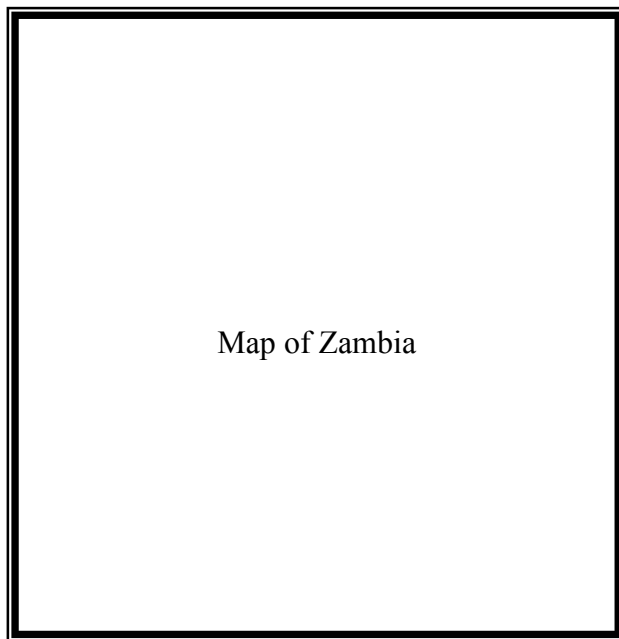
## Appendix 3.6 Maps of Africa and Zambia, photograph of pupils

1.2 Léarscáil den Afraic



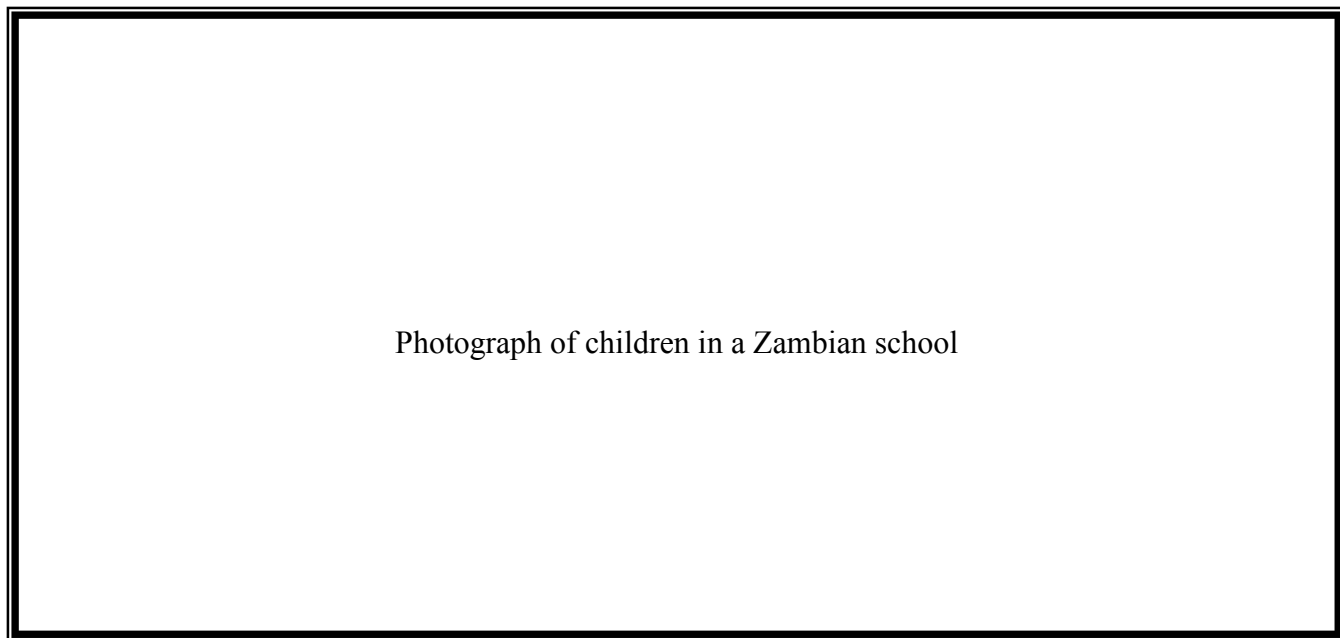
Map of Africa

Léarscáil den tSambia



Map of Zambia

*Gasúir scoile, Kitwe,*



Photograph of children in a Zambian school

## Appendix 3.7 Playground design instructions

### Ionad spraoi a dhearadh

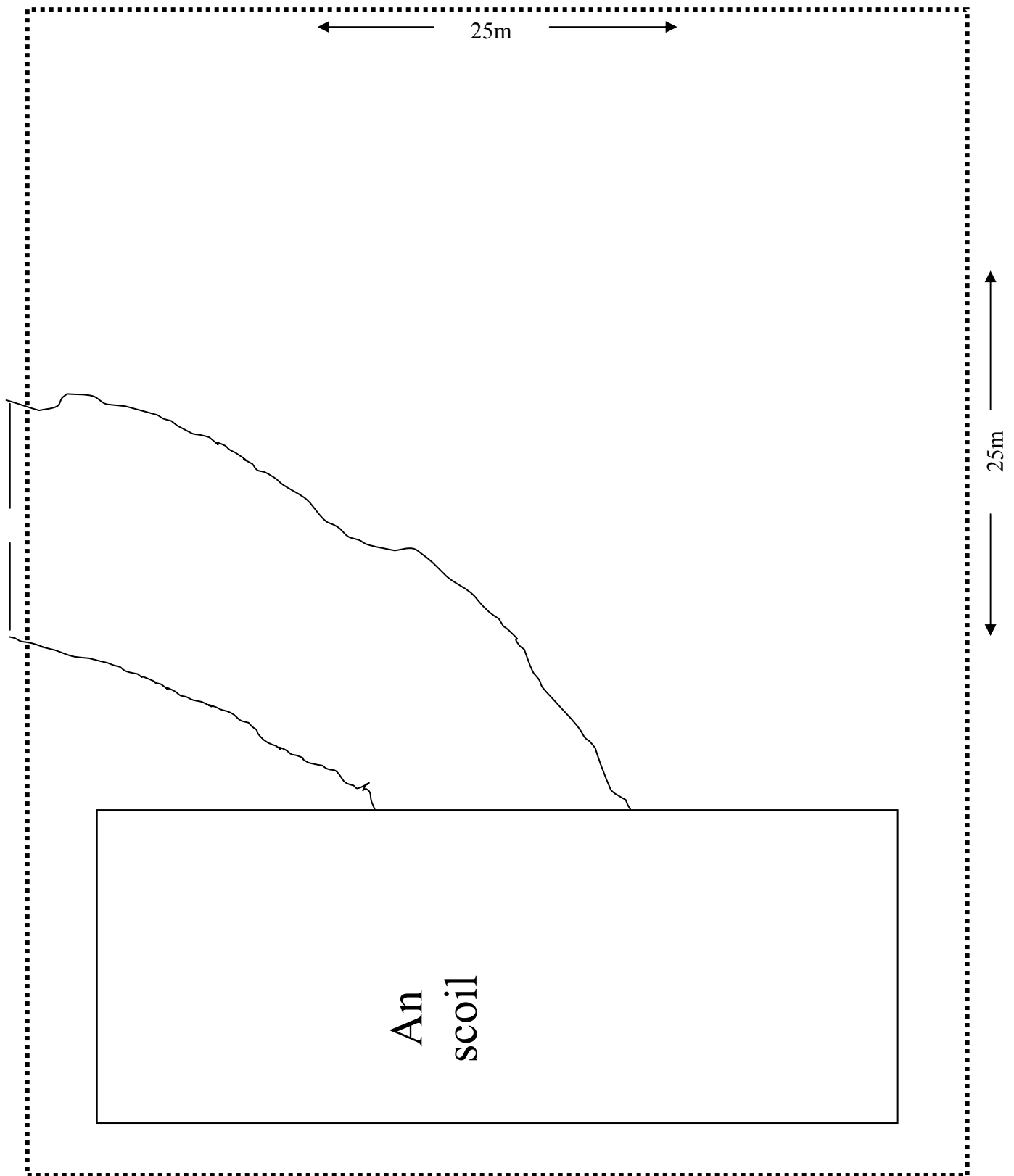
Téann na gasúir sa ghrianghraf ar scoil i mbaile ar a dtugtar i Kitwe i Sambia. Ceantar bocht atá ann agus fághtar go leor gasúr ann gan tuismitheoirí toisc go bhfaigheann siad bás den ghalair AIDS. Tá 300 páiste ag freastal ar Scoil Mhargaret Bell agus iad idir 3 agus 12 bliain d'aois.

Dá mbeadh €3,000 agat an bhféadfá ionad spraoi a dhearadh dóibh? Cuimhnigh ar aoiseanna na bpaistí, ar chúrsaí sábháilteachta, ar an gcostas agus ar an aimsir agus tú á dhearadh.

Tugtar anseo thíos praghasanna cuid den trealamh a d'fhéadfaí a úsáid. Bain úsáid as do chuid samhlaíochta féin!

			
luascán – do bheirt €500 - do cheathrar €1000	sleamhnán fada €400	bord picnice €200	dréimire €100 rópa dreapadóireachta €200
			
dréimire rópa €60	balla dreapadóireachta €200	bonn agus slabhra €50	túr €700
			
fráma dreapadóireachta €600	capaillín €100	sleamhnán gearr €200	rópa dreapadóireachta €15
			
fráma 4m €200		díon canbhais €50	

## Appendix 3.8 Plan for playground design



## Appendix 3.9 Transcript of School C – Pilot phase

School C      Group A      5<sup>th</sup> class

Pupils working in groups of five designing a playground for schoolchildren in Zambia

7 minutes transcribed. O = Pupil 1, J = Pupil 2, P = Pupil 3, R = Pupil 4 S = Pupil 5

- A 1 J Sé agus dó ocht agus a haon, trí agus a seacht ...
- A 2 R Tá muid chun dul thar ceapaim.
- A 3 O B'fhéidir.
- A 4 J Sé agus a dó.
- A 5 O Yeah probably owe caoga euro.
- A 6 J Sin a naoi agus a hocht, a sé déag, ocht déag, fiche dó ..
- A 7 S Agus thóg like an rud sin as.
- A 8 J Fiche dó
- A 9 P What the hell? Cad a bhfuil tú doing?
- A 10 J Fiche ceathair.
- A 11 R Á yeah tá muid ag dul thar.
- A 12 S Trí mhíle ceathair céad is a caoga.
- A 13 R Caithfimid thógáil rud éigin as
- A 14 O Thóg em sin le haghaidh le haghaidh beirt.
- A 15 R No. Thóg sin as nó sin.
- A 16 J Ná yeah, mar caithfidh siad sin le haghaidh a lónaí.
- A 17 S Thóg é sin as agus then cuir ceann eile do sin.
- A 18 P Yeah, céard a dhéanann é sin? Ní thuigim.
- A 19 J Céard a bhfuil an pointe?
- A 20 R Tá sé like téann tú suas agus trasna agus tá dréimire ag dul síos agus tá tú in ann.
- A 21 S An bhfuil sé sin go maith though?
- A 22 O Yeah.
- A 23 P No beidh sé saghas leadránach.
- A 24 R Tá sé níos fearr ná bord picince.
- A 25 P Cad faoi sin?
- A 26 R Picnic mar níl like.
- A 27 P Pic-in-ice!
- A 28 O Caithfidh siad iad sin le haghaidh a lón.
- A 29 R Tá siad in ann. Ach tá siad in ann suí ar an talamh. Tá sé níos fearr suí ar an talamh.



- A 30 O No níl mar beidh sé all salach agus gach rud.
- A 31 R Ach caithfimid rud éigin a ghearradh siar.
- A 32 S Cad faoi. Bain sé chéad agus cuir é ar é seo like dhá chéad. B'fhéidir go mbeidh é sin faoi.
- A 33 R An gcuirfimid é sin ar an túr?
- A 34 J *Okay.*
- A 35 P Bain sé chéad.
- A 36 O *No* ní théann.
- A 37 R Ceapaim téann sé sin ar an taobh eile den túr, mar ... ó b'fhéidir.
- A 38 P Bain sé chéad.
- A 39 S Níl a fhios agam.
- A 40 J Agus níl tú in ann dhéan é sin.
- A 41 O An bhfuil?
- A 42 J 5 agus 0 sin 5. Yeah agus a ceathair.
- A 44 P *All something.*
- A 45 J Dhá mhíle ocht caoga.
- A 46 P *Yes!*
- A 47 R Yeah ach caithfimid...
- A 48 J Agus má cuir muid dhá chéad air fós beimid caoga euro.
- A 49 P Á caoga euro.
- A 50 O Táimid in ann thóg an...
- A 51 R Céard faoi sin? No níl aon áit leis é sin a chur though.
- A 52 O Cúig déag euro.
- A 53 R Caithfimid.. an bhfuair sibh cinn de sin, iad sin?
- A 54 S *no* (.) cad a bhfuil sé le haghaidh *anyway*?
- A 55 R Caithfidh tú cur iad sin air agus iad sin air agus rudaí...
- A 56 O Tá sin againn le haghaidh sin. Sin le haghaidh sin.
- A 57 S Faigh ceann eile do é sin.
- A 58 J *Lets* cuir é seo le an dá cinn, an bheirt daoine.
- A 59 O *Yeah* mar *like*.
- A 60 S *Just* faigh dhá cinn.
- A 61 J *So.*
- A 62 P *Yeah.*
- A 63 S *So* bain cúig chéad.
- A 64 R Is maith le páistí luascán *though*.
- A 65 J Ó *yeah* tóg, nó dein...
- A 66 O A lán rudaí.
- A 67 S Plus dhá chéad agus bain cúig chéad.

- A 68 P Agus anyway tá sé sin. No wait an bhfuil é sin againn?
- A 69 J Ok, trí mhíle caoga cúig.
- A 70 R Ach níl áit againn.
- A 71 S No mar tá sé trí mhíle euro.
- A 72 R Caithfimid rud éigin.
- A 73 J Dhá mhíle trí chéad caoga.
- A 74 P Agus tá an dhá chéad eile.
- A 75 J Agus é seo.
- A 76 S Yeah. So scríobh é síos just...
- A 77 J Yeah ach an téann sé ar é sin?
- A 78 S Yeah, ach tá seo againn.
- A 79 S Tá seo againn.
- A 80 P Ach féach, féach ar sin.
- A 81 R Ach sin díreach an túr leis féin.
- A 82 S Féach an sin, féach ansin sin ar é sin.
- A 83 O Yeah so.
- A 84 S Féach ansin tá é sin ar é sin.
- A 85 P Yeah féach ansin.
- A 86 J Yeah yeah yeah. Téann é seo ar taobh é.
- A 87 O Ar an taobh é.
- A 88 R Ar an taobh eile.
- A 89 P Ar an taobh é, há! há!
- A 90 R An rud eile ná an mbeidh spás againn?
- A 91 J Dha mhíle cúig chead is a caoga.
- A 92 R Tá sé sin go maith..
- A 93 S Agus táimid in ann faigh dhá cinn de é sin mar tá a lán daoine.
- A 94 R Cé mhéad cinn de é sin a fuair muid?
- A 95 S Ceann amháin.
- A 96 R Faigh ceann eile.
- A 97 O Yeah.
- A 98 P Yeah.
- A 99 J Agus...
- A 100 S Agus ceann amháin so yeah agus then caoga leis freisin.
- A 101 O Okay cuir.
- A 102 R An mbeidh spás againn ... é sin ar fad a chur?
- A 103 J Ó yeah.
- A 104 O Cuir like iad sin in aice lena chéile agus sin in aice leis sin agus sin in aice leis sin agus sin you know.

A 105 J Dhá mhíle seacht gcéad agus dhá cinn d'iad sin so.  
 A 106 S Yeah, so dhá chéad.  
 A 107 R Iad sin ag dul?  
 A 108 J Dhá mhíle ocht gcéad.  
 A 109 O Like thar na rudaí sin agus thar an bord.  
 A 110 S Like caithfidh tú iad...  
 A 111 O Agus sin so...  
 A 112 R Tá dhá cinn againn.  
 A 113 P Conas an bhfuil tú in ann suí anseo?  
 A 114 J Agus caoga, no wait.  
 A 115 S Agus céad.  
 A 116 J Agus caoga agus caoga you know like just ...faigh dhá cinn. Náid agus deich.  
 A 117 S Tá sé ocht gcéad agus...  
 A 118 O Ocht gcéad.  
 A 119 S Sin ceart go leor. Tá sé mo turn.  
 A 120 P Ó! hó! hó! hó!  
 A 121 R Tá sé ceart go leor.  
 A 122 P Yeah há! há! há!  
 A 123 S Agus cuir muid <ainm ainm ainm> Cuir muid na rudaí sin thar na dhá rudaí sin agus sin.  
 A 124 R Ach tá díreach ... cheap mé go raibh díreach.  
 A 125 P <Laugh>  
 A 126 R Em, scríobh síos céard a bhfuil muid chun a fháil.  
 A 127 J Déanann mé dearmad.  
 A 128 S an bhfuil tú ag iarraidh faigh ceann eile de iad sin agus *then* beidh sé *exactly* trí chéad, trí mhíle.  
 A 129 S Á! Yeah.  
 A 130 P Yeah.  
 A 131 O Yeah.  
 A 132 R Ach níl aon rud le cur thar é sin.  
 A 133 S Yeah é sin, cuir na rudaí sin.  
 A 134 O *no just* cuireann tú agus tá na rudaí, na adhmaid *so* fan sé suas agus...  
 A 135 J Trí mhíle euro agus...  
 A 136 R Trí mhíle.  
 A 137 P Yeah ach...  
 A 138 J An bhfuil tú ag iarraidh dul thar céard a fuaireamar ar an <\*> arís?  
 A 139 R Yeah mar níl fhios agam.

- A 140 J So cúig chéad é sin.
- A 141 S Yeah.
- A 142 R Luascán dhá cinn, an bhfuil sé?
- A 143 J Luascán do bheirt daoine.
- A 144 S Yeah, fuair muid dhá luascán.
- A 145 P Dhá luascán.
- A 146 R Cé mhéad?
- A 147 O No luascán do bheirt daoine.
- A 148 R Cúig chéad?
- A 149 S Agus fuair muid le dréimire nach bhfuil (ainm)?
- A 150 P Yeah fuair muid.
- A 151 S Le dréimire, sleamhnán fada le dréimire.
- A 152 O Agus sleamhnán beag.
- A 153 S Dhá picnic.
- A 154 J No ceann amháin, fuair muid ceann amháin.
- A 155 S No dhá cinn. Fuair muid dhá cinn.
- A 156 R Ehm ceithre chéad.
- A 157 S No.
- A 158 J Yeah.
- A 159 J Dhá bhord picnic.
- A 160 R Sin ceithre chéad.
- A 161 O Céard mhéad de na rudaí sin a fuair muid?
- A 162 S Fuair muid.
- A 163 O Cé mhéad a fuair muid?
- A 164 R Cé mhéad a raibh an bord picnic.
- A 165 J Ceithre chéad.
- A 166 S Ceithre chéad le haghaidh na dhá cinn.
- A 167 P Agus scríobh fá dó.
- A 168 R Yeah just cuir mé ceithre chéad, ceart go leor mar dúirt mé dhá bhord picnic.
- A 169 S Okay.
- A 170 R An bhfuair muid cinn de sin?
- A 171 P No.
- A 172 O An dúirt tú dhá luascán? Tá sé luascán do bheirt daoine not dhá luascán.
- A 173 S Balla dreapadóireacht, balla dreapadóireacht.
- A 174 O Fuair muid, fuair muid ceann amháin é sin ceapaim.
- A 175 P No fuair muid trí cinn.
- A 176 O Trí cinn.

A 177 S An bhfuair muid an tyre?  
A 178 J Bonn agus slabhra?  
A 179 S An bhfuair muid é sin?  
A 180 R Ehm no.  
A 181 S Fuair muid ehm an túr.  
A 182 P Fuair...  
A 183 J Seacht gcéad.  
A 184 S Seacht gcéad.  
A 185 P Huh ó!  
A 186 R Okay.  
A 187 O Em agus fuair...

## Appendix 4.1 Transcription conventions

- . a full stop is used at the end of an utterance where the utterance is considered to have ended
- ... three dots are used at the end of an utterance where the utterance is considered to have been incomplete
- ? a question mark is used at the end of an utterance where an interrogative meaning is considered to have been intended
- ! an exclamation mark is used at the end of an utterance considered to have an exclamatory intention
- A-B-C letters separated by a hyphen are used where a speaker spells a word aloud
- italics* English words and phrases are printed in italics
- <laugh> verbal description of the speaker's behaviour
- (word) a word in brackets represents the best guess of the transcriber
- ( \*\*\*) asterisks in brackets indicate unclear speech, each asterisk denotes one unclear word

Cameron, D. (2001) *Working with spoken discourse*. London: SAGE.

ten Have P. (1999) *Doing Conversational Analysis: a Practical Guide*. London: SAGE.

Harris, J. and Murtagh, L. (1999) *Teaching and learning Irish in primary school*. Dublin: Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann.

Swann, J (2001) Recording and transcribing talk in educational settings. In Candlin, C. (eds) *English language teaching in its social context*. London: Routledge.

## Appendix 4.4 100 most common words by school type

	All-Irish school pupils	Gaeltacht school pupils		All-Irish school pupils	Gaeltacht school pupils
1	sin	sin	41	trí	seacht
2	an	tá	42	ní	ach
3	é	an	43	ehm	atá
4	tá	é	44	amháin	ansin
5	agus	a	45	beidh	mise
6	a	acu	46	túr	tú
7	yeah	agus	47	sleamhnán	iarraidh
8	sé	againn	48	mise	agam
9	chéad	chéad	49	le	caithfimid
10	dhá	sé	50	euro	choinne
11	ag	ag	51	leor	túr
12	no	ceann	52	is	bhuel
13	so	bhfuil	53	fágtha	mé
14	bhfuil	so	54	caoga	péire
15	rud	dhá	55	right	do
16	ar	yeah	56	ach	dréimire
17	ansin	seo	57	rópa	maith
18	go	ar	58	ceart	naoi
19	níl	go	59	anseo	okay
20	tú	níl	60	bord	picnic
21	na	no	61	caithfimid	tarraingt
22	ceann	rud	62	cén	ann
23	mar	gcéad	63	mhíle	díon
24	okay	beirt	64	do	eile
25	mé	le	65	fráma	ní
26	ó	trí	66	gcomhair	amháin
27	cúig	cúig	67	gcéad	b'fhéidir
28	sea	beidh	68	caithfidh	ceathair
29	seo	míle	69	céard	fháil
30	againn	ó	70	anois	is
31	just	bord	71	b'fhéidir	linn
32	dréimire	cad	72	de	ceithre
33	cad	euro	73	capaillín	dreapadóireacht
34	aon	mhíle	74	déanamh	leor
35	eile	fágtha	75	féidir	cé
36	i	right	76	gach	de
37	like	na	77	cé	ehm
38	cuir	sleamhnán	78	cinn	luascán
39	déan	fá	79	isteach	siad
40	faigh	fhios	80	atá	suas

	<b>All-Irish school</b>	<b>Gaeltacht school</b>
	<b>pupils</b>	<b>pupils</b>
81	céad	thiocfadh
82	déag	tusa
83	míle	anois
84	agam	anseo
85	leis	ceathrar
86	siad	gheobhaidh-muid
87	dreapadóireachta	just
88	iad	cá
89	in	dhíobháil
90	maith	faigh
91	seacht	i
92	ann	picnice
93	fhios	tarraing
94	picnic	agamsa
95	féach	breathnaigh
96	cur	cuirfimid
97	fan	déag
98	bhí	déanamh
99	chun	fada
100	dhéanamh	fan



## Appendix 4.5 English words used by all-Irish school pupils

	Freq. order	Word	No. of times used	% of corpus
1	7	yeah	535	1.73797%
2	12	no	350	1.13699%
3	13	so	335	1.08826%
4	24	okay	246	0.79914%
5	31	just	196	0.63672%
6	37	like	169	0.54900%
7	55	right	121	0.39307%
8	176	cos	30	0.09746%
9	182	you	29	0.09421%
10	189	but	26	0.08446%
11	199	what	24	0.07797%
12	208	here	22	0.07147%
13	209	know	22	0.07147%
14	226	then	19	0.06172%
15	232	on	17	0.05523%
16	233	only	17	0.05523%
17	235	and	16	0.05198%
18	244	do	15	0.04873%
19	246	it	15	0.04873%
20	248	of	15	0.04873%
21	252	tent	15	0.04873%
22	258	hang	14	0.04548%
23	266	the	14	0.04548%
24	267	wait	14	0.04548%
25	275	see	13	0.04223%
26	284	over	12	0.03898%
27	285	slide	12	0.03898%
28	310	look	10	0.03249%
29	313	now	10	0.03249%
30	314	one	10	0.03249%
31	316	say	10	0.03249%

	Freq. order	Word	No. of times used	% of corpus
32	343	already	8	0.02599%
33	349	class	8	0.02599%
34	354	hundred	8	0.02599%
35	361	rough	8	0.02599%
36	368	that's	8	0.02599%
37	373	because	7	0.02274%
38	379	draw	7	0.02274%
39	381	for	7	0.02274%
40	384	if	7	0.02274%
41	389	my	7	0.02274%
42	390	really	7	0.02274%
43	395	trampoline	7	0.02274%
44	396	tyre	7	0.02274%
45	397	we	7	0.02274%
46	398	work	7	0.02274%
47	404	canvas	6	0.01949%
48	423	perfect	6	0.01949%
49	427	swap	6	0.01949%
50	429	that	6	0.01949%
51	430	there	6	0.01949%
52	433	will	6	0.01949%
53	434	yoke	6	0.01949%
54	435	about	5	0.01624%
55	436	actually	5	0.01624%
56	450	except	5	0.01624%
57	455	God	5	0.01624%
58	458	let's	5	0.01624%
59	469	sum	5	0.01624%
60	470	sure	5	0.01624%
61	471	swings	5	0.01624%
62	474	two	5	0.01624%

	Freq. order	Word	No. of times used	% of corpus
63	475	whatever	5	0.01624%
64	478	all	4	0.01299%
65	481	anyway	4	0.01299%
66	482	at	4	0.01299%
67	488	big	4	0.01299%
68	498	confusing	4	0.01299%
69	499	connect	4	0.01299%
70	505	did	4	0.01299%
71	509	enough	4	0.01299%
72	510	even	4	0.01299%
73	513	get	4	0.01299%
74	516	have	4	0.01299%
75	518	house	4	0.01299%
76	520	I'll	4	0.01299%
77	521	ladder	4	0.01299%
78	522	little	4	0.01299%
79	525	me	4	0.01299%
80	526	meerkat	4	0.01299%
81	530	out	4	0.01299%
82	537	slanted	4	0.01299%
83	539	spring	4	0.01299%
84	545	this	4	0.01299%
85	547	to	4	0.01299%
86	548	tree	4	0.01299%
87	550	yes	4	0.01299%
88	551	add	3	0.00975%
89	553	am	3	0.00975%
90	554	attach	3	0.00975%
91	557	be	3	0.00975%
92	569	calculator	3	0.00975%
93	588	drawing	3	0.00975%
94	591	exactly	3	0.00975%
95	605	give	3	0.00975%
96	611	kind	3	0.00975%

	Freq. order	Word	No. of times used	% of corpus
97	616	make	3	0.00975%
98	618	meerkats	3	0.00975%
99	625	not	3	0.00975%
100	629	park	3	0.00975%
101	632	please	3	0.00975%
102	634	plus	3	0.00975%
103	635	probably	3	0.00975%
104	640	rub	3	0.00975%
105	643	second	3	0.00975%
106	644	skinnier	3	0.00975%
107	645	something	3	0.00975%
108	646	sorry	3	0.00975%
109	648	start	3	0.00975%
110	655	thousand	3	0.00975%
111	656	three	3	0.00975%
112	658	trace	3	0.00975%
113	660	yard	3	0.00975%
114	664	alone	2	0.00650%
115	665	amateur	2	0.00650%
116	667	another	2	0.00650%
117	669	are	2	0.00650%
118	670	around	2	0.00650%
119	673	background	2	0.00650%
120	675	bankrupt	2	0.00650%
121	684	brother	2	0.00650%
122	688	buy	2	0.00650%
123	689	by	2	0.00650%
124	693	caterpillars	2	0.00650%
125	714	come	2	0.00650%
126	717	crap	2	0.00650%
127	721	definitely	2	0.00650%
128	728	doing	2	0.00650%
129	729	drape	2	0.00650%
130	737	edge	2	0.00650%

	Freq. order	Word	No. of times used	% of corpus
131	739	end	2	0.00650%
132	740	facing	2	0.00650%
133	749	four	2	0.00650%
134	761	he	2	0.00650%
135	763	head	2	0.00650%
136	765	hose	2	0.00650%
137	768	I'm	2	0.00650%
138	769	imagine	2	0.00650%
139	772	its	2	0.00650%
140	777	least	2	0.00650%
141	779	leave	2	0.00650%
142	788	mean	2	0.00650%
143	789	microphone	2	0.00650%
144	797	off	2	0.00650%
145	798	painting	2	0.00650%
146	800	part	2	0.00650%
147	801	pencil	2	0.00650%
148	808	put	2	0.00650%
149	809	quick	2	0.00650%
150	810	quiet	2	0.00650%
151	818	ropes	2	0.00650%
152	819	rúléir	2	0.00650%
153	821	sad	2	0.00650%
154	823	save	2	0.00650%
155	828	she	2	0.00650%
156	834	slant	2	0.00650%
157	836	small	2	0.00650%
158	838	split	2	0.00650%
159	839	still	2	0.00650%
160	841	swing	2	0.00650%
161	847	testing	2	0.00650%
162	848	thing	2	0.00650%
163	854	try	2	0.00650%
164	860	up	2	0.00650%

	Freq. order	Word	No. of times used	% of corpus
165	862	well	2	0.00650%
166	863	where	2	0.00650%
167	864	whole	2	0.00650%
168	865	wizard	2	0.00650%
169	867	yokey	2	0.00650%
170	869	accessorise	1	0.00325%
171	870	actual	1	0.00325%
172	871	adding	1	0.00325%
173	872	adhmaad	1	0.00325%
174	878	ain't	1	0.00325%
175	879	aka	1	0.00325%
176	880	alive	1	0.00325%
177	888	ana-cool	1	0.00325%
178	889	ana-like	1	0.00325%
179	890	ana-mór	1	0.00325%
180	891	ana-oddly	1	0.00325%
181	894	an-cute	1	0.00325%
182	906	anything	1	0.00325%
183	907	anywhere	1	0.00325%
184	909	architect	1	0.00325%
185	911	area	1	0.00325%
186	913	asking	1	0.00325%
187	914	attached	1	0.00325%
188	915	attach-muid	1	0.00325%
189	916	away	1	0.00325%
190	917	awful	1	0.00325%
191	918	backwards	1	0.00325%
192	919	bad	1	0.00325%
193	925	balcony	1	0.00325%
194	926	ball	1	0.00325%
195	927	banjaxed	1	0.00325%
196	928	bar	1	0.00325%
197	930	basically	1	0.00325%
198	931	battery	1	0.00325%

	Freq. order	Word	No. of times used	% of corpus
199	932	begging	1	0.00325%
200	933	better	1	0.00325%
201	934	bhath	1	0.00325%
202	953	bit	1	0.00325%
203	954	bits	1	0.00325%
204	955	blank	1	0.00325%
205	956	boing	1	0.00325%
206	958	bored	1	0.00325%
207	968	buffalo	1	0.00325%
208	979	call	1	0.00325%
209	1004	champion	1	0.00325%
210	1012	check-muid	1	0.00325%
211	1019	chop	1	0.00325%
212	1029	climb	1	0.00325%
213	1030	climbing	1	0.00325%
214	1035	coils	1	0.00325%
215	1037	colours	1	0.00325%
216	1040	concerned	1	0.00325%
217	1041	confused	1	0.00325%
218	1044	conway	1	0.00325%
219	1045	cool	1	0.00325%
220	1050	could	1	0.00325%
221	1051	crack	1	0.00325%
222	1052	cross	1	0.00325%
223	1064	deadly	1	0.00325%
224	1073	demo	1	0.00325%
225	1074	detail	1	0.00325%
226	1089	distracting	1	0.00325%
227	1090	doesn't	1	0.00325%
228	1091	donate	1	0.00325%
229	1092	don't	1	0.00325%
230	1093	down	1	0.00325%
231	1097	dress	1	0.00325%
232	1098	drinks	1	0.00325%

	Freq. order	Word	No. of times used	% of corpus
233	1105	easier	1	0.00325%
234	1107	easy	1	0.00325%
235	1114	enjoy	1	0.00325%
236	1115	entertainment	1	0.00325%
237	1117	equals	1	0.00325%
238	1118	ever	1	0.00325%
239	1119	face	1	0.00325%
240	1124	fall	1	0.00325%
241	1125	fatter	1	0.00325%
242	1126	feelings	1	0.00325%
243	1127	feet	1	0.00325%
244	1137	flying	1	0.00325%
245	1141	footprints	1	0.00325%
246	1143	frame	1	0.00325%
247	1144	from	1	0.00325%
248	1146	fun	1	0.00325%
249	1149	gate	1	0.00325%
250	1163	girlfriend	1	0.00325%
251	1165	glad	1	0.00325%
252	1167	goalposts	1	0.00325%
253	1168	goals	1	0.00325%
254	1169	goes	1	0.00325%
255	1170	going	1	0.00325%
256	1171	good	1	0.00325%
257	1174	grand	1	0.00325%
258	1175	greannmhar	1	0.00325%
259	1177	guinea	1	0.00325%
260	1179	guys	1	0.00325%
261	1183	hair	1	0.00325%
262	1186	hammer	1	0.00325%
263	1187	hand	1	0.00325%
264	1188	handle-ies	1	0.00325%
265	1189	hanging	1	0.00325%
266	1190	harm	1	0.00325%

	<b>Freq. order</b>	<b>Word</b>	<b>No. of times used</b>	<b>% of corpus</b>
267	1192	hey	1	0.00325%
268	1195	holiday	1	0.00325%
269	1196	how	1	0.00325%
270	1200	ideas	1	0.00325%
271	1203	inches	1	0.00325%
272	1204	included	1	0.00325%
273	1205	incredible	1	0.00325%
274	1206	indoors	1	0.00325%
275	1208	instead	1	0.00325%
276	1212	it's	1	0.00325%
277	1213	joking	1	0.00325%
278	1215	label	1	0.00325%
279	1220	lay	1	0.00325%
280	1230	lets	1	0.00325%
281	1231	lightly	1	0.00325%
282	1232	limit	1	0.00325%
283	1237	listening	1	0.00325%
284	1238	literally	1	0.00325%
285	1239	live	1	0.00325%
286	1242	long	1	0.00325%
287	1243	loompas	1	0.00325%
288	1245	lower	1	0.00325%
289	1249	maguire	1	0.00325%
290	1250	m'ainm	1	0.00325%
291	1253	making	1	0.00325%
292	1255	map	1	0.00325%
293	1257	marker	1	0.00325%
294	1258	massive	1	0.00325%
295	1259	matter	1	0.00325%
296	1260	maybe	1	0.00325%
297	1266	meant	1	0.00325%
298	1269	melt	1	0.00325%
299	1270	messing	1	0.00325%
300	1271	metres	1	0.00325%

	<b>Freq. order</b>	<b>Word</b>	<b>No. of times used</b>	<b>% of corpus</b>
301	1273	millimetre	1	0.00325%
302	1276	more	1	0.00325%
303	1277	mouse	1	0.00325%
304	1279	multimedia	1	0.00325%
305	1280	mute	1	0.00325%
306	1281	nah	1	0.00325%
307	1282	nail	1	0.00325%
308	1283	name	1	0.00325%
309	1286	need-muid	1	0.00325%
310	1287	news	1	0.00325%
311	1288	nice	1	0.00325%
312	1289	nine	1	0.00325%
313	1293	obvious	1	0.00325%
314	1295	oompa	1	0.00325%
315	1304	ow	1	0.00325%
316	1305	oz	1	0.00325%
317	1306	pain	1	0.00325%
318	1309	pen	1	0.00325%
319	1310	permanently	1	0.00325%
320	1316	pig	1	0.00325%
321	1317	penguins	1	0.00325%
322	1319	place	1	0.00325%
323	1320	playground	1	0.00325%
324	1323	poking	1	0.00325%
325	1324	pole	1	0.00325%
326	1329	prices	1	0.00325%
327	1330	private	1	0.00325%
328	1332	putting	1	0.00325%
329	1333	questions	1	0.00325%
330	1340	recorder	1	0.00325%
331	1341	reporting	1	0.00325%
332	1344	ring	1	0.00325%
333	1352	room	1	0.00325%
334	1354	rope	1	0.00325%

	Freq. order	Word	No. of times used	% of corpus
335	1356	roughly	1	0.00325%
336	1360	safety	1	0.00325%
337	1361	said	1	0.00325%
338	1365	scarlet	1	0.00325%
339	1369	score	1	0.00325%
340	1370	scrap	1	0.00325%
341	1371	scraps	1	0.00325%
342	1372	scribble	1	0.00325%
343	1383	sec	1	0.00325%
344	1384	section	1	0.00325%
345	1386	selection	1	0.00325%
346	1387	separate	1	0.00325%
347	1388	seriously	1	0.00325%
348	1389	seven	1	0.00325%
349	1391	shade	1	0.00325%
350	1392	shaking	1	0.00325%
351	1393	shaped	1	0.00325%
352	1397	shots	1	0.00325%
353	1398	shut	1	0.00325%
354	1399	side	1	0.00325%
355	1403	site	1	0.00325%
356	1406	six	1	0.00325%
357	1407	size	1	0.00325%
358	1408	skinny	1	0.00325%
359	1410	slides	1	0.00325%
360	1413	smartest	1	0.00325%
361	1417	space	1	0.00325%
362	1420	spell	1	0.00325%
363	1421	spelled	1	0.00325%
364	1422	spend	1	0.00325%
365	1424	springs	1	0.00325%
366	1425	square	1	0.00325%
367	1426	squiggly	1	0.00325%
368	1430	stabbing	1	0.00325%

	Freq. order	Word	No. of times used	% of corpus
369	1432	stand	1	0.00325%
370	1433	state	1	0.00325%
371	1434	step	1	0.00325%
372	1435	stepi	1	0.00325%
373	1438	stuck	1	0.00325%
374	1443	suitable	1	0.00325%
375	1444	sums	1	0.00325%
376	1445	suss	1	0.00325%
377	1452	take	1	0.00325%
378	1454	talented	1	0.00325%
379	1461	them	1	0.00325%
380	1462	these	1	0.00325%
381	1463	they	1	0.00325%
382	1464	thin	1	0.00325%
383	1465	thine	1	0.00325%
384	1466	think	1	0.00325%
385	1476	top	1	0.00325%
386	1481	traitors	1	0.00325%
387	1487	tulip	1	0.00325%
388	1489	turn	1	0.00325%
389	1490	twirly	1	0.00325%
390	1491	tyres	1	0.00325%
391	1497	under	1	0.00325%
392	1501	using	1	0.00325%
393	1502	victorian	1	0.00325%
394	1503	village	1	0.00325%
395	1504	voices	1	0.00325%
396	1505	walloping	1	0.00325%
397	1506	want	1	0.00325%
398	1507	way	1	0.00325%
399	1508	wee	1	0.00325%
400	1509	weird	1	0.00325%
401	1510	we'll	1	0.00325%
402	1511	what's	1	0.00325%

	<b>Freq. order</b>	<b>Word</b>	<b>No. of times used</b>	<b>% of corpus</b>
403	1513	which	1	0.00325%
404	1514	why	1	0.00325%
405	1515	won	1	0.00325%
406	1516	wooden	1	0.00325%
407	1517	worth	1	0.00325%
408	1518	would	1	0.00325%
409	1519	wreck	1	0.00325%
410	1520	writing	1	0.00325%

	<b>Freq. order</b>	<b>Word</b>	<b>No. of times used</b>	<b>% of corpus</b>
411	1521	wrong	1	0.00325%
412	1523	yokeybob	1	0.00325%
413	1524	your	1	0.00325%
414	1525	you're	1	0.00325%
415	1526	zero	1	0.00325%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>3087</b>	<b>10.03%</b>

## Appendix 4.6 English words used by Gaeltacht school pupils

	Freq. order	Word	No. of times used	% of corpus
1	14	so	54	1.178%
2	16	yeah	50	1.091%
3	21	no	45	0.982%
4	36	right	28	0.611%
5	59	okay	19	0.415%
6	87	just	13	0.284%
7	104	alright	10	0.218%
8	153	but	6	0.131%
9	157	know	6	0.131%
10	178	idea	5	0.109%
11	180	like	5	0.109%
12	184	really	5	0.109%
13	188	swing	5	0.109%
14	211	or	4	0.087%
15	216	anyway	3	0.065%
16	250	yes	3	0.065%
17	252	actually	2	0.044%
18	255	already	2	0.044%
19	257	anyways	2	0.044%
20	282	down	2	0.044%
21	285	exactly	2	0.044%
22	324	upside	2	0.044%
23	348	black	1	0.022%
24	349	bloody	1	0.022%
25	384	class	1	0.022%
26	386	clue	1	0.022%
27	387	complimenter	1	0.022%
28	388	confusing	1	0.022%
29	391	cripes	1	0.022%
30	431	for	1	0.022%
31	450	God's	1	0.022%
32	453	hell	1	0.022%
33	454	here	1	0.022%
34	457	jeanie	1	0.022%
35	468	mackers	1	0.022%
36	476	men	1	0.022%
37	481	not	1	0.022%
38	482	of	1	0.022%
39	486	pathway	1	0.022%
40	489	play	1	0.022%

	Freq. order	Word	No. of times used	% of corpus
41	490	please	1	0.022%
42	494	rewindáil	1	0.022%
43	500	rope	1	0.022%
44	501	rubber	1	0.022%
45	504	sake	1	0.022%
46	516	skipping	1	0.022%
47	523	sums	1	0.022%
48	524	suppose	1	0.022%
49	534	tent	1	0.022%
50	538	then	1	0.022%
51	540	think	1	0.022%
52	542	though	1	0.022%
53	552	twirly-bout	1	0.022%
54	555	what	1	0.022%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>6.65%</b>



## Appendix 7.1 Pupil Questionnaire

### *Ceistneoir an dalta - Pupil Questionnaire*<sup>19</sup>

#### Item-response data<sup>20</sup>

*Líon isteach na ciorcail mar seo - Fill in the circle like this: 0*

<b>Scoil School</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>No. of pupils</b>	11	28	26	25	29	11	26	16
			<i>Rang 5</i> 5 <sup>th</sup> class	<i>Rang 6</i> 6 <sup>th</sup> class				
i. <i>Cén rang ina bhfuil tú?</i> Class			0	172				
			<i>Buachaill</i> Boy	<i>Cailín</i> Girl				
ii. <i>An buachaill nó cailín tú?</i> Boy or girl.			83	89				
			10 bl.	11 bl.		12 bl.	13 bl.	
iii. <i>Cén aois thú? Age</i>			0	37.2%		59.9%	2.9%	
			<i>Riamh</i> Never	<i>Go hannamh</i> Seldom	<i>Anois is arís</i> Occasionally	<i>Go minic</i> Often	<i>An-mhinic</i> Very often	<i>I gcónaí</i> Always
iv. <i>Labhraímid Gaeilge sa bhaile. We speak Irish at home.</i>			17.4%	22.4%	44.1%	13%	2.5%	0.6%

### *Ceisteanna cleachta Practice items*

	<b>1</b> <i>Easaontaím go mór</i> Strongly disagree	<b>2</b> <i>Easaontaím beagáinín</i> Slightly disagree	<b>3</b> <i>Neodrach</i> Neutral	<b>4</b> <i>Aontaím beagáinín</i> Slightly agree	<b>5</b> <i>Aontaím go mór</i> Strongly agree
A. <i>Is fearr peileadóirí Chorcaí ná peileadóirí Átha Cliath.</i>	0	0	0	0	0
B. <i>Tá laethanta saoire an tsamhraidh ró-fhada.</i>	0	0	0	0	0
C. <i>Is clár maith é “You’re a Star”.</i>	0	0	0	0	0

<sup>19</sup> The original pupil questionnaire was entirely in Irish. English translations have been added to this version to aid the reader.

<sup>20</sup> (N=172). Items are grouped according to the relevant scales. Items numbers indicate the order in which the items appeared on the Pupil Questionnaire.

Percentage of pupils choosing response options on each item ...

Item No.	1 <i>Easaontaím go mór Strongly disagree</i>	2 <i>Easaontaím beagáinín Slightly disagree</i>	3 <i>Neodrach Neutral</i>	4 <i>Aontaím beagáinín Slightly agree</i>	5 <i>Aontaím go mór Strongly agree</i>
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**Irish Attitude/Motivation Scales**

Integrativeness scales

(1) Attitude to Irish speakers (7 items)

	1	2	3	4	5		
53.	<i>De réir mar a chuirim aithne ar dhaoine a labhraíonn Gaeilge is ea is mó a theastaíonn uaim féin an teanga a labhairt.</i>	7.0	4.7	29.1	31.4	27.9	The more I get to know people who speak Irish the more I want to speak Irish.
6.	<i>Is cuid thábhachtach í an Ghaeilge d'Éirinn agus de mhuintir na hÉireann.</i>	1.8	2.3	5.3	15.2	75.4	The Irish language is an important part of Ireland and the Irish people.
14.	<i>Is cainteoirí Gaeilge iad cuid de na daoine is fearr in Éirinn.</i>	4.7	5.8	28.7	28.1	32.7	Some of the best people in Ireland are Irish speakers.
12.	<i>Dá gcaillfeadh Éire an Ghaeilge agus a ngabhann léi, ba mhór an chailliúint a bheadh ann.</i>	2.3	2.3	8.8	12.9	73.7	If Ireland lost the Irish language and the Irish way of life, it would really be a great loss.
25.	<i>Ba cheart do na daoine sa tír seo nach bhfuil acu ach Béarla iarracht níos mó a dhéanamh an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim.</i>	3.5	2.3	10.5	28.7	55.0	People in our country who only speak English should try harder to learn the Irish language.
30.	<i>Cabhraíonn na daoine a labhraíonn Gaeilge an saol in Éirinn a choinneáil speisialta agus difriúil ó thíortha eile.</i>	1.8	2.3	9.9	29.8	56.1	People who speak Irish help to make the Irish way of life special and different from other countries.
35.	<i>Cabhraíonn na daoine sin a labhraíonn Gaeilge leis an iarracht na sean traidisiúin áille, a gabhann leis an saol in Éirinn a choinneáil beo.</i>	1.8	2.4	13.5	27.1	55.3	People who speak Irish help to keep alive an old and beautiful part of the Irish way of life.

Percentage of pupils choosing response options on each item ...

Item No.	1 <i>Easaontaím go mór</i> Strongly disagree	2 <i>Easaontaím beagáinín</i> Slightly disagree	3 <i>Neodrach</i> Neutral	4 <i>Aontaím beagáinín</i> Slightly agree	5 <i>Aontaím go mór</i> Strongly agree
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(2) Integrative orientation to Irish (4 items)

	1	2	3	4	5	
8.						Learning Irish is important for me because it will allow me to meet and talk to different kinds of people.
<i>Tá sé tábhachtach domsa feabhas a chur ar mo chuid Gaeilge mar go dtabharfaidh sé deis dom bualadh agus labhairt le go leor daoine difriúla.</i>	5.2	5.2	12.2	30.2	47.1	
16.						It is important for me to improve my Irish because it will make it easier for me to take part in events such as <i>Coirm, Scór, feiseanna</i> and traditional music.
<i>Tá sé tábhachtach domsa feabhas a chur ar mo chuid Gaeilge mar go mbeidh sé níos furasta dom páirt a ghlacadh in imeachtaí ar nós Coirm, Scór, feiseanna agus ceol traidisiúnta.</i>	2.9	6.4	21.6	26.3	42.7	
22.						It is important for me to improve my Irish because it will make me feel more at home with people who speak Irish.
<i>Tá sé tábhachtach domsa feabhas a chur ar mo chuid Gaeilge mar go gcuideoidh sé liom a bheith ar mo shuaimhneas i measc daoine a labhraíonn Gaeilge.</i>	2.3	1.8	12.3	32.2	51.5	
23.						It is important for me to improve my Irish because it will help me to read Irish books and to understand Irish songs, stories and television programmes.
<i>Tá sé tábhachtach domsa feabhas a chur ar mo chuid Gaeilge mar go gcabhróidh sé liom tuiscint níos fearr a bheith agam ar leabhair, amhráin, scéalta agus cláir theilifíse i nGaeilge.</i>	2.9	3.5	10.5	22.7	60.5	

Percentage of pupils choosing response options on each item ...

Item No.	1 <i>Easaontaím go mór</i> Strongly disagree	2 <i>Easaontaím beagáinín</i> Slightly disagree	3 <i>Neodrach</i> Neutral	4 <i>Aontaím beagáinín</i> Slightly agree	5 <i>Aontaím go mór</i> Strongly agree
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Motivation scales

(3) Desire to learn Irish (5 items)

	1	2	3	4	5	
10. <i>Dá mbeadh seans agam Gaeilge a labhairt tar éis am scoile, ba mhaith liom iarracht a dhéanamh í a labhairt.</i>	14	14.5	30.2	23.8	17.4	If there was a chance to speak Irish outside school, I would like to try to speak it.
26. <i>Ba mhaith liom freastal ar chúrsa Samhraidh Ghaeilge.</i>	14.7	14.1	18.8	24.1	28.2	I would like to go to a Summer course in Irish
46. <i>I gcomparáid le hábhair scoile eile mar an Mhatamaitic agus léitheoireacht an Bhéarla, ní maith liom an Ghaeilge mórán.</i>	27.9	22.1	29.1	15.1	5.8	Compared to subjects like Maths and English reading, I don't like Irish very much.
54. <i>Dá mbeadh teaghlaigh ina labhraítear Gaeilge ina gcónaí in aice liomsa, ba mhaith liom labhairt leo i nGaeilge.</i>	8.1	9.9	15.1	32.6	34.3	If there were Irish-speaking families living near me, I would like to speak Irish to them.
57. <i>Ba bhreá liom cuairt a thabhairt ar an nGaeltacht.</i>	4.1	4.1	8.7	19.2	64.0	I would like to visit the Gaeltacht.

(4) Motivational intensity to learn Irish (4 items)

	1	2	3	4	5	
39. <i>Le bheith fírinneach, ní dhéanaim mórán iarrachta an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim ar scoil.</i>	48.8	27.9	11.0	8.1	4.1	To be honest, I don't really try very hard to learn Irish at school.
41. <i>Tar éis am scoile is minic a smaoinímse ar an méid Gaeilge a d'fhoghlaim mé sa cheacht Gaeilge an lá sin.</i>	22.1	19.2	22.7	20.3	15.7	I often think about what I have learned in my Irish lesson when the day is over.
47. <i>Ní chuirim mórán stró orm féin le hobair bhaile don Ghaeilge.</i>	34.5	29.2	12.9	11.7	11.7	I don't go to too much trouble with my Irish homework.
49. <i>Déanaim iarracht speisialta féachaint ar chlár Ghaeilge ar an teilifís.</i>	30.8	19.2	22.1	19.8	8.1	I make a special effort to watch programmes in Irish on the television.

Percentage of pupils choosing response options on each item ...

1	2	3	4	5
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Item No.	Easaontaím go mór Strongly disagree	Easaontaím beagáinín Slightly disagree	Neodrach Neutral	Aontaím beagáinín Slightly agree	Aontaím go mór Strongly agree	
(5) Attitude to learning Irish (8 items)						
	1	2	3	4	5	
4. <i>Is cur amú ama é a bheith ag déanamh staidéir ar an nGaeilge ar scoil.</i>	64.3	12.9	11.1	6.4	5.3	Learning Irish is a waste of time.
7. <i>Nuair a fhágfaidh mé an scoil, éireoidh mé as a bheith ag déanamh staidéir ar an nGaeilge ar fad toisc nach bhfuil aon suim agam inti.</i>	52.7	19.5	16.6	5.9	5.3	When I leave school, I will give up learning Irish completely because I am not interested in it.
11. <i>Bainim an-taitneamh ar fad as a bheith ag déanamh staidéir ar an nGaeilge ar scoil.</i>	6.4	11.0	18.6	26.2	37.8	I really enjoy learning Irish.
17. <i>Is ábhar scoile tábhachtach í an Ghaeilge.</i>	0.6	2.3	6.4	23.8	66.9	Irish is an important school subject.
24. <i>Is fuath liom a bheith ag foghlaim na Gaeilge ar scoil.</i>	55.3	24.1	12.4	5.3	2.9	I hate learning Irish.
31. <i>B'fhearr liom an t-am a chaithim ag foghlaim na Gaeilge a chaitheamh ar ábhair eile.</i>	17.9	23.8	32.7	15.5	10.1	The time I spend learning Irish, I would rather spend on other subjects.
34. <i>Is dóigh liom go bhfuil sé leadránach a bheith ag foghlaim na Gaeilge.</i>	41.2	25.9	15.3	15.3	2.4	I think that learning Irish is boring.
37. <i>Teastaíonn uaim an oiread Gaeilge agus is féidir liom a fhoghlaim.</i>	1.2	4.7	14.0	33.7	46.5	I want to learn as much Irish as possible.

Percentage of pupils choosing response options on each item ...

Item No.	1 <i>Easaontaím go mór Strongly disagree</i>	2 <i>Easaontaím beagáinín Slightly disagree</i>	3 <i>Neodrach Neutral</i>	4 <i>Aontaím beagáinín Slightly agree</i>	5 <i>Aontaím go mór Strongly agree</i>
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Other scales

(6) Instrumental orientation to Irish (3 items)

	1	2	3	4	5	
2.						Irish is important for me only because I'll need it for my job or career when I am older.
<i>Níl tábhacht ar bith leis an nGaeilge domsa, ach amháin go mbeidh sí ag teastáil uaim i mo chuid oibre nuair a fhásfaidh mé suas.</i>	38.0	26.9	12.9	11.7	10.5	
13.						I think it is important for me to improve my Irish because it may be useful to me someday in getting a good job.
<i>Ceapaim go bhfuil sé tábhachtach domsa feabhas a chur ar mo chuid Gaeilge mar go mbeidh sí úsáideach dom uair éigin nuair a bheidh post maith á lorg agam.</i>	1.7	2.3	3.5	24.4	68.0	
21.						It is important for me to study Irish because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.
<i>Tá sé tábhachtach domsa an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim ar scoil mar go gcabhróidh sí liom a bheith i mo dhuine níos eolaí.</i>	2.3	2.9	12.2	38.4	44.2	

(7) Parental encouragement (7 items)

	1	2	3	4	5	
1.						My parents try to help me with my Irish.
<i>Déanann mo thuismitheoirí iarracht cúnamh a thabhairt dom le mo chuid Gaeilge.</i>	8.1	4.7	14.0	36.0	37.2	
5.						My parents feel that because we live in Ireland, I should study Irish.
<i>Ceapann mo thuismitheoirí gur chóir dom an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim, toisc go bhfuil cónaí orainn in Éirinn.</i>	8.8	5.9	19.4	26.5	39.4	
9.						My parents feel that it is important that I work hard at Irish until I finish school.
<i>Ceapann mo thuismitheoirí go bhfuil sé tábhachtach go n-oibreoinn go dian ar an nGaeilge a fhad is atá mé ar scoil.</i>	0.6	5.2	8.7	16.9	68.6	

Percentage of pupils choosing response options on each item ...

Item No.	1 <i>Easaontaím go mór</i> Strongly disagree	2 <i>Easaontaím beagáinín</i> Slightly disagree	3 <i>Neodrach</i> Neutral	4 <i>Aontaím beagáinín</i> Slightly agree	5 <i>Aontaím go mór</i> Strongly agree	
15.						My parents often tell me how important Irish will be for me when I leave school.
20.						My parents really encourage me to work hard at my Irish.
27.						My parents encourage me to improve my Irish as much as possible.
36.						My parents feel that I should try my best when I am learning Irish in school.

Non-AMTB based scales

(8) Irish-ability self-concept (8 items)

	1	2	3	4	5	
18.						If I visited the Gaeltacht I would be able to look for and follow directions to make my way.
19.						If I met a native Irish speaker he/she would understand my Irish without any difficulty.
28.						It is difficult to speak Irish all the time at school.
42.						My Irish has improved greatly since I was in 3 <sup>rd</sup> class.

Percentage of pupils choosing response options on each item ...

Item No.	1 <i>Easaontaím go mór</i> Strongly disagree	2 <i>Easaontaím beagáinín</i> Slightly disagree	3 <i>Neodrach</i> Neutral	4 <i>Aontaím beagáinín</i> Slightly agree	5 <i>Aontaím go mór</i> Strongly agree	
43.						A native Irish speaker would think that my Irish was very good.
44.						It is much more difficult for me to speak Irish than English.
45.						I understand native speakers without difficulty when they are speaking Irish.
50.						I speak Irish like a native speaker.
(9) Use of Irish by all-Irish pupils (11 items)						
	1	2	3	4	5	
3.						I sometimes read books in Irish that are not schoolbooks.
29.						I would like to be able to speak Irish like a native speaker.
32.						It is important for me to be able to speak Irish without mistakes when I am speaking with my friends at school.
33.						I think that my Irish would change greatly if I was to go to live in the Gaeltacht.
38.						I sometimes borrow books in Irish from the library.



Percentage of pupils choosing response options on each item ...

Item No.	1 <i>Easaontaím go mór</i> Strongly disagree	2 <i>Easaontaím beagáinín</i> Slightly disagree	3 <i>Neodrach</i> Neutral	4 <i>Aontaím beagáinín</i> Slightly agree	5 <i>Aontaím go mór</i> Strongly agree	
40.						<i>Bheinn míchompordach ag labhairt Gaeilge le mo chairde scoile taobh amuigh d'imeachtaí scoile.</i>
	19.4	12.9	27.6	22.4	17.6	I would be uncomfortable speaking Irish to my school friends outside of school and school activities.
48.						<i>Ba mhaith liom freastal ar mheánscoil lán-Ghaeilge.</i>
	14.0	5.2	12.8	20.9	47.1	I would like to go to a second level all-Irish school.
51.						<i>Tuigim go ndéanaim botúin uaireanta nuair a bhím ag labhairt Gaeilge ach bheadh an iomarca trioblóide ann iad a cheartú.</i>
	12.3	28.7	19.3	24.6	15.2	I know that I make mistakes when I am speaking Irish but it would be too much trouble to correct them.
52.						<i>Tagann feabhas ar mo chuid Gaeilge de réir mar a labhraím í níos minice.</i>
	1.7	1.7	8.7	33.1	54.7	The more I speak Irish the more it improves.
55.						<i>Is rud tábhachtach dom é Gaeilge a labhairt gan aon bhotúin nuair a bhím ag caint leis an múinteoir.</i>
	4.7	10.5	7.0	21.5	56.4	It is important for me to be able to speak Irish without mistakes when I am speaking with the teacher at school.
56.						<i>Labhraím Gaeilge go minic lasmuigh d'am agus d'imeachtaí scoile.</i>
	26.9	19.9	22.8	24.6	5.8	I often speak Irish outside of school and school activities.

## Appendix 7.2 Tukey HSD test for *Attitude to Irish speakers scale by school*

A Tukey HSD test ranks the schools by mean scores in homogeneous subgroups. The schools have been divided into three subsets in Table 7.2.1 A Mann-Whitney test was used to calculate the effect size between School 1 and School 8, these are the two schools with the lowest mean scores in subsets 1 and 2 respectively. The same procedure was followed for School 6 and School 4, the two schools with the highest means scores in subsets 2 and 3 respectively.

**1.3 Table 0.2.1**  
Tukey HSD test – Mean score for *Attitude to Irish speakers scale by school*

School	N	Subset for alpha = .05		
		1	2	3
1	11	26.09		
8	15	28.27	28.27	
7	23	28.87	28.87	28.87
2	28	28.93	28.93	28.93
3	24	29.33	29.33	29.33
5	29		30.45	30.45
6	11		31.55	31.55
4	25			32.28
Sig.		0.17	0.16	0.13

When schools 1 and 8 were compared on the attitude to Irish scale the Z value was -1.537.

The effect size was calculated thus:  $d = Z/\sqrt{N}$

$$d = 1.537/\sqrt{26} = 1.537/5.099 = 0.301$$

An effect size of 0.3 is considered small (Cohen, 1988).

When schools 6 and 4 were compared using a Mann Whitney test the value of Z was -1.182.

The effect size then was:  $d = 1.182/\sqrt{36} = 1.182/6 = 0.197$ . The effect size when rounded to 0.2 is again considered small (Cohen, 1988).

Schools 1 and 4 were then compared using a Mann Whitney test as these were the schools with the lowest and highest mean scores respectively. The value of Z in this case was -4.047 and the effect size was:  $d = 4.047/\sqrt{36} = 4.047/6 = 0.67$ . An effect size of 0.67 lies between 0.5 and 0.8 and is considered a medium-to-large effect (Hinton, 2004).

## Appendix 7.3      Four write-in items at end of Pupil Questionnaire

58. Na rudaí gur maith liom faoin tslí ina fhoghlaimím an Ghaeilge ar scoil.....  
[The things I like about the way I learn Irish in school...]

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59. Na rudaí nach maith liom faoin tslí ina fhoghlaimím an Ghaeilge ar scoil.....  
[The things I dislike about the way I learn Irish in school...]

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60. Thaitneodh an tslí ina fhoghlaimím an Ghaeilge ar scoil níos fearr liom dá .....  
[I would enjoy the way I learn Irish in school more if...]

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61. Seo iad na rudaí a spreagann mé nó a chuireann fonn orm Gaeilge a labhairt .....  
[These are the things that motivate me or make me want to speak Irish...]

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**Go raibh míle maith agat as na ceisteanna seo a fhreagairt.**

## **Appendix 7.4      Pupils' responses to four write-in items at end of Pupil Questionnaire**

### ***7.4.1 What the pupils like about the way they learn Irish***

#### **Factors associated with the teacher (n=21)**

An slí a dhéanann na múinteoirí Gaeilge linn.

Na múinteoirí.

Is maith liom an caoi a bíonn an múinteoir ag freagairt do cheisteanna agus an caoi gur míníonn sé gach rud duit.

Bíonn mo mhúinteoir i gcónaí ann chun cabhrú linn agus éisteacht linn.

Bainim taitneamh as a bheith ag labhairt Gaeilge agus an slí a ceartaíonn an múinteoir tú má deireann tú rud mícheart, mar sin foghlaimíonn tú faoin bhotún agus ní déanann tú arís é!

Ná go mbíonn an múinteoir dian orainn agus fhoghlaimímid rudaí.

Is maith liom é nuair a labhraíonn an múinteoir faoi é.

Bíonn sé éasca foghlaim le mo mhúinteoir agus bíonn sé ceart go leir muna dtuigim aon rud.

Cabhraíonn an mháistir leat an t-am go léir.

Tá na múinteoirí an-deas.

Is maith liom a lán rudaí agus tá an máistir an-mhaith mar tá sé an greannmhar agus tá sé an-mhaith ag caint.

Tá na múinteoirí an-maith ag caint i Gaeilge

Is breá liom an Máistir Pól. Déanann sé é greannmhar. Is breá liom ag foghlaim Gaeilge. Tá an máistir Pól an-maith ag caint.

Cabhraíonn an múinteoir Gaeilge a labhairt i gceart.

An slí a insíonn se é.

Cabhraíonn na múinteoirí tú nuair a dhéanann tú botúin.

Gur déanann na múinteoirí cinnte go bhfuil eolas agat ar míniú an focail.

Mar cabhraíonn na múinteoirí linn Ghaeilge a labhairt.

Is maith liom a slí gur bhfuil an múinteoir go deas agus má tá ceist agat éisteacht sí leat.

Ta an múinteoir an-deas.

Bíonn tú ábalta caint le an múinteoir.

#### **Learning their native language (n=21)**

Mar nuair a éirim ar maidin, bíonn fhios agam go féidir mo theanga dúchais a labhairt ár dteanga ceart.

Táim ag cabhrú le mo tír féin.

Mar go bhaile sé síos mar ár teanga beag féin do cúpla daoine ar domhain.

Is maith liom an teanga Gaeilge agus a beith ag foghlaim é.

Tá fhios agam tá teanga mo tír.

Tá sé teanga ár dtír.

Is maith liom bheith in ann mo theanga féin a labhairt in áit teanga difriúil.

Is teanga an-suimiúil an Ghaeilge. Ceapaim go bhfuil sé go hiontach go bhfuil mé ag labhairt mo teanga féin agus ag cabhrú leis teacht suas arís.

An rud gur mhaith liom na tá sé ar teanga féin.  
 Mar sílim is rud maith é ar dteanga féin a caint.  
 Is maith liom an Ghaeilge a choinnigh beo agus is é an teanga ba cheart dúinn a labhairt.  
 Nó go bhfuil mé líofa anois agus tá sé maith bheith ábalta mo dteanga féin a labhairt.  
 Is maith liom é mar is é teanga na hÉirinn.  
 Mar gur ár teanga náisiúnta atá ann.  
 Is maith liom Gaeilge mar tá sé teanga an tír is má ní caint muid Gaeilge ní bheidh Éirinn  
 mar bhí blianta ó shin.  
 Na rudaí gur maith liom nó tá sé maith i caint in Gaeilge mar tá sin a teanga caint in  
 Gaeilge  
 Mar tá sin a teanga ba cheart le achan duine a labhairt in Éirinn.  
 Tá sé deas ár teanga féin a beith againn.  
 Tá sé an-maith do Éirinn agus duit féin.  
 Is maith liom fhoghlaím Gaeilge mar níl sé ar eolas ag gach duine in Éire.

### **Having a good standard of Irish and improving it, learning new words and grammar (n=19)**

Ná gur greamaítear é i do ceann nuair a tá tú 4 bliana d'aois agus mar sinn ní riamh  
 dhéantar dearmad faoi mar shampla tá mo dheartháir (5) níos fearr ag Gaeilge ná duine (15)  
 a chuaigh go scoil lán-Gaeilge eile  
 An bealach a bhfuil mé níos fearr ag Gaeilge ná duine i mbliain a ceithre sa meánscoil.  
 Bíonn tú ar aghaidh páistí i scoileanna Béarla.  
 Is fuath liom na rialacha ach caithfidh rá go cabhraíonn sé.  
 Is maith liom nuair a bhíonn rudaí ar scoil mar litriú no gramadach agus is maith liom ag  
 líonadh na bearnaí agus ag déanamh na bileoige a thugann an múinteoir dúinn  
 Bhuel, i gcónaí thaitin gramadach liom. Níl a fhios agam cén fáth. Is cainteoir dúchas í mo  
 mháthair mar sin caithfidh gur spreag sí mé.  
 Is maith liom nuair a dhéanann tú botúin nuair a labhraíonn Gaeilge agus ceartaíonn tú é so  
 na déanann tú é arís.  
 Is maith é nuair a labhraíonn an múinteoir faoi an ghramadach.  
 Na rudaí a thaitníonn liom faoi an Gaeilge ab ea an gramadach agus an craic a bíonn  
 againn.  
 Déanann an mhúinteoir boscaí dúinn chun an aimsir caite, láithreach agus fháistineach a  
 fhoghlaím a fhad níos fearr.  
 Is maith liom nótaí a scríobh agus scéalta agus aistí chun an graiméar ceart a úsáid.  
 Is maith liom an Gaeilge a fhoghlaím ar scoil mar tá a lán focal nua a fhoghlaímíonn muid.  
 Nuair a foghlaim focal nua.  
 Is maith liom nuair a caithfidh tusa féach suas an focal atá á lorg agat gan a cur ceist ar an  
 máistir.  
 Is maith liom bheith ag foghlaim focail úra.  
 Is maith liom focail agus frásaí nua a fhoghlaím achan lá.  
 Faigheann tú níos fearr nuair a fhoghlaímíonn tú é.

### **Learning other subjects through Irish (n=19)**

Stair.

Is maith liom má bíonn tú ag déanamh Tíreolas bíonn sé i Gaeilge.  
 Ba mhaith liom a bheith ag fhoghlaím mataí i Gaeilge mar tá mé go maith aige agus tá sé éasca le thuiscint.  
 Ná mata. Bíonn sé dúshlánach uaireanta, agus is maith liom é seo.  
 Is maith liom an tslí a déanann muid cúpla ábhar eile i Gaeilge.  
 Ná an slí a bhíonn muid ag déanamh ábhar eile tríd an Ghaeilge.  
 Is maith liom an tslí a déanaimid gach rud tríd Ghaeilge.  
 an stair  
 Is maith liom gach rud ach mata.  
 Ba mhaith liom gach rud a fhoghlaímim as Gaeilge sa scoil  
 An dóigh a déanann muid gach rud i Gaeilge tá sé maith.  
 Is maith liom mata ith Ghaeilge agus TC.  
 Mata.  
 Is maith liom ag déanamh rudaí difriúla.  
 Is breá liom an mata  
 Is maith liom mata.  
 Ba mhaith liom ceol agus mata.  
 Ba mhaith liom an ceol Mata.  
 Na rudaí ná Art Art Art agus Art.

### **Speaking Irish (n=18)**

Is maith liom Gaeilge mar uaireanta beann sé go maith é a labhairt.  
 Ag labhairt an teanga.  
 Is maith liom ag bheith Ghaeilge a labhairt le mo cara.  
 Is maith liom a bheith in ann Gaeilge a labhairt go daoine as scoil agus ní thuigeann a lán daoine eile é.  
 Is maith liom beith ag labhairt an teanga mar níl a lán daoine in ann labhairt é.  
 Is maith liom an tslí a labhraíonn muid é an t-am ar fad.  
 Is maith liom an bealach a chaithfidh tú Gaeilge a labhairt sa chlós  
 Níl am speisialta don Gaeilge tá sé againn gach nóiméad don lá (ach Béarla).  
 Ba mhaith liom an tslí gur bíonn muid ag labhairt as Gaeilge an tam ar fad  
 bíonn muid ag labhairt as Gaeilge.  
 Ag labhairt.  
 An slí a bíonn siad ag caint Gaeilge i ngach áit.  
 Nuair a bíonn muid ag caint le chéile agus fhoghlaímíonn rudaí ó duine eile.  
 Nuair atá mid ag labhairt an teanga Gaeilge.  
 Ba mhaith liom labhairt le mo carda as Gaeilge agus le mo mhúinteoir.  
 Ba mhaith liom a labhairt i Gaeilge  
 Tá aintín agam ón nGaeltacht agus tá sé maith beith ábalta labhairt léi i nGaeilge.  
 An shlí a bhím á labhairt le dhaoine eile i Gaeilge.

### **Activities (songs, poetry, music and debates) (n=13)**

Na amhrán, na ceol agus na dánta.  
 Na gníomhaíochta a dhéanaimid.  
 Is maith liom na hamhráin a dhéanamh as Gaeilge.  
 Is maith liom ag déanamh díospóireacht i Gaeilge agus uaireanta déanaim é i béarla.

Ag fhoghlaimím Dánta agus Ceoil.  
 Is breá liom na seanfhocal a fhoghlaim agus na amhrán sean.  
 Nuair a déanaimid obair ón foclóir agus na díospóireachtaí.  
 Agus bheith ag déanamh díospóireachtaí  
 Spórt, dráma Béarla.  
 Is maith liom ag caint amach os ard leis an rang. Mar shampla drámaí agus díospóireachtaí.  
 Cluiche, peil, ag labhairt agus mata.  
 Is maith liom ag déanamh drama i Gaeilge mar bíonn tú ag foghlaim focail difriúla.  
 Déanann an rang go léir damhsa na mbriathar agus fhoghlaimím Ghaeilge go tapa.

### **Reading, books, stories and essays (n=13)**

Uaireanta na leabhar a léimid  
 na an slí go déanfaimid léitheoireacht ranga.  
 Is maith liom nuair atá cead againn aistí amaideach Gaeilge a scríobh.  
 Is maith liom an léitheoireacht an cuid is mo den am  
 Abairtí, scéalta.  
 Is maith liom a bheith ag fhoghlaim é ón leabhair.  
 An léitheoireacht Gaeilge  
 Na rudaí gur mhaith liom na an slí a léann tú le máistir Pól agus an rang amach ós ard agus  
 uaireanta leanann tú leat féin  
 Is maith liom ag dhéanamh é ar an ábhar is maith liom ag scríobh scéalta agus aistí as  
 Ghaeilge.  
 Na scéalta sa leabhair léamh.  
 Ná leabhar Gaeilge, scéal Gaeilge agus rudaí Gaeilge ar an chlár bán.  
 Scéal a scríobh.  
 Is maith liom nuair atá an Múinteoir agus an rang ag léamh.

### **Fun, enjoyment, easy to learn and get a prize (n=12)**

Tá duais nuair a labhraíonn tú Gaeilge.  
 Tá duais nuair atá tú ag caint Gaeilge.  
 Is maith liom caint é agus craic.  
 Uaireanta bíonn cluiche ina mín píosa spraoi againn ag foghlaim Gaeilge.  
 Tá sé greannmhar agus bain mé taitneamh as é.  
 Bíonn a lán spórt agus spraoi againn.  
 Na rudaí a thaitníonn liom faoi an Gaeilge ab ea an gramadach agus an craic a bíonn  
 againn.  
 Is maith liom go féidir linn spraoi a bheith againn agus a bheith ag chaint as Gaeilge.  
 Is maith liom go bhféidir liom spraoi a bheith agam ag labhairt Gaeilge.  
 Tá sé go maith mar bainim taitneamh as.  
 Is maith liom an tslí ina fhoghlaimím Ghaeilge ar scoil mar tá sé éasca.  
 Bíonn sé éasca tar éis tamaill. Ní bhíonn a lán obair.

### **Learning a second language (n=11)**

An chaoi a bhíonn gach rud ar eolas againn i dhá teanga difriúla.  
 Is maith liom teanga eile a bheith ar eolais agam.

Is maith liom a bheith in ann dhá teanga a labhairt.  
 Mar anois tá aois agam Gaeilge agus Béarla.  
 Is maith liom a bheith an ann teanga eile a labhairt.  
 Bíonn mud ag foghlaim dara teanga.  
 Tá mé in ann duine a thuiscint i áiteanna difriúla.  
 Mar tá sé go chuir a beith a labhairt dhá teanga.  
 Is maith liom a bheith ábalta leabhair i dhá teanga.  
 Is maith liom go bhfuil mé ag foghlaim teanga eile.  
 Is maith liom ag fhoghlaim Gaeilge mar is féidir liom teanga difriúil a labhairt.

## **10. Being able to speak a language that others cannot understand (n=5)**

Táimid in ann a rá ór smaointe a rá sa páirc peile agus ní bheadh a fhios acu céard atá muid chun déanamh.  
 Thig liom labhairt faoi daoine nach bhfuil a fhios acu Gaeilge, i nGaeilge.  
 Mar go thig leat beadh ag súgradh cluiche agus thig leat caint Gaeilge le do chairde agus ní bhí a fhios ag na páistí cad é a bhfuil tú ag rá.  
 Is maith liom é mar nuair ata mé ag súgradh peile thig liom caint Ghaeilge le mo chuid cairde scoile agus níl a fhios acu ar an foireann eile cad é a bhfuil mé ag ráit.  
 Tuigim leabhar agus scéal as Gaeilge mar labhraím é ar scoil gach lá agus tá sé teanga difriúil ón mBéarla.

## **Advantages for later in life and secondary school (n=5)**

Mar tá mé ag iarraidh bheith mar aisteoir nuair atá mé sine agus tá a lán clár teilifíse.  
 Gaeilge ag lorg daoine ó Éire chun aisteoir ann. Freisin faigheann tú scór níos fearr san teastas i bliain a 3&6.  
 Post níos fearr.  
 Cabhróidh sé liom nuair a bheidh mé níos sinne.  
 Beidh sé i mo chuidiú le bheith i mo bhan-aisteoir. Beidh dhá teangaí agam, Béarla agus Gaeilge.  
 Is maith liom ag caint Gaeilge mar is rud maith é nuair a bíonn tú níos sinne.  
 Mar nuair a teann tú go dtí mheán scoil beidh Gaeilge an-maith agat.

## **Other (n=14)**

Is maith liom an Gaeilge mar tá sé go maith.  
 Sna cúpla seachain roimh é seo thosaigh muid ag déanamh beagáinín Gaeilge agus Béarla  
 Ní maith le aon duine Gaeilge agus caithfidh muid déan ábhar i Béarla freisin.  
 Mar bíonn sé difriúil.  
 Ceapaim go bhfuil an tslí a fhoghlaimím muid Gaeilge an-mhaith. Ach faighim é leadránach uaireanta.  
 Is maith liom nuair a faigheann daoine i dtríoblóid nuair a labhraítear Béarla.  
 Tá sé go maith mar níl gach rud ina Ghaeilge. Tá cúpla rud ins Béarla agus níl tú ag fáil ceangailte suas le gach rud.  
 Maith liom ag fhoghlaimím é mar bíonn tú ábalta aistriúchán a déanamh go éasca.  
 Is maith liom ag foghlaim Gaeilge ar scoil uaireanta tá sé maith agus suimiúil.



Is maith liom go bhfuil mé ag foghlaim Gaeilge agus is maith liom peil Gaelach a imirt le mo scoil.

Ná an baile a déan muid é.

Gach rud.

Ní maith liom aon rud.

Tá sé go breá.

Is maith liom an Ghaeilge ar scoil mar tá sé téama na scoile.

## ***7.4.2 What the pupils dislike about the way they learn Irish***

### **Grammar (n=40)**

Tá an gramadach deacair.

Bhíomar ag scríobh go leor faoi Ghramadach.

Ní maith liom an méid gramadach don Gaeilge. An Chead Réimniú an Dara Réimniú.

Baininscneach ag leanúint ar aghaidh.

Ní maith liom na briathar difriúil mar an Tuiseal Ginideach agus Modh Ordaitheach.

Gramadach-déanann múinteoirí é i bhfad ró-thapaidh, ba chóir go mbeadh siad ag déanamh

20 nóiméad do gach lá ar feadh seachtain nó dhó in ionad uair amháin gach lá do 3 lá.

Bíonn orm a lán gramadach a foghlaim de ghlan mheabhair agus ní bhíonn ach oíche amháin againn iad a fhoghlaim.

Na scrúdaithe gramadach a chuireann an múinteoir orainn.

Ná ag foghlaim briathra fada na nGaeilge. Tá an iomarca dóibh ann.

Tá sé leadránach é a foghlaim “Modh Coinníollach agus Aimsir Chaite sa briathar Déan”.

Beidh sé níos fearr má raibh saghas cluiche ann.

Ní maith liom na scrúdú gramadach

Ní maith liom graiméar a dhéanamh. (Tá sé chomh leadránach!)

Ní maith liom nuair a bhíonn orainn scrúdú briathra a bheith againn gach lá i ndiaidh na briathra a scríobh síos.

Gramadach.

Ní maith liom an gramadach.

Gramadach.

Is fuath liom an gramadach Gaeilge. Tá an iomarca ann.

Tá an iomarca rudaí chun cuimhniú faoin dtuiseal ginideach. Sin é chun bheith dáiríre, (Agus an A. Gnáthchaite!).

Ní maith liom na aimsire mar shampla ní maith liom Aimsir Caite nó Aimsir fháistineach. ní maith liom na briathra.

Bímid ag foghlaim na briathra ar scoil agus ní ceapaim go bhfuil an múinteoir ag cabhrú linn ó ag thógaint níos mó agus níos mó briathra le foghlaim.

Ag déanamh a lán scríbhneoireacht agus an gramadach.

Is fuath liom ag dul siar ar an gramadach i gcoinne.

Mar go bhfuil aimsirí difriúla mar aimsir caite agus go caithfidh tú iad uilig a fhoghlaim agus gheobhainn sé fríd a chéile.

Bíonn sé deacair an Gramadach a fhoghlaim.

Ní maith liom an slí a bhíonn a lán scrúdú againn is bíonn orainn a lán briathra in aon oíche amháin

Agus na briathra, is fuath le gach duine na briathra.

Ní maith liom nuair a chaithimid nótaí a scríobh faoin Tuiseal Ginideach, Tuiseal

Tabharthach, srl

An modh coinníollach! Aimsir gnáthchaite! Na briathra ar fad! Tá an iomarca foghlaim

Bímid ag foghlaim in iomarca briathra air scoil i am amháin agus tá scrúdú mór againn gach cúpla lá agus tá sé ró deacair.

Na Briathra!

Níor mhaith liom an tslí a bhíonn na focail meascaithe suas e.g.: The boy's name in John Sean ab ea t-ainm don buachaill.  
 Ab ea na aimsirí a fhoghlaimíonn tú, tá sé sias (*saghas*) deacair.  
 Tá a lán roil cun foghlaim, obair bhaile Gaeilge.  
 Ní maith liom an gramadach mar tá deacair chun smaoineamh ar gach rud.  
 An aimsir chaite.  
 Ní maith liom ag foghlaim Gaeilge mar chuaigh tú fhoghlaim faoi aimsire láithreach, Aimsir chaite.  
 Tá an gramadach sa Gaeilge beagáinín casta agus uaireanta bíonn botún sna leabhar.  
 Mar tá gach Backwards agus ní féidir leat dean aon rud.  
 Tá a lán riail ag baint leis.

### **Difficult and boring sometimes (n=39)**

Uaireanta bhíonn sé deacair.  
 Tá sé an-hard.  
 Ná uaireanta tá an Gaeilge cuíosach difriúil na an Gaeilge a labhraítear sa Ghaeltacht mar sin uaireanta ní féidir leat a thuiscint  
 Ní maith liom an litriú focail mar ceapaim mise tá an Ghaeilge níos deacra ná Béarla.  
 Níor mhaith liomsa focal atá an-deacair.  
 Scrúdaí. Tá sé leadránach.  
 Sílim tá sé rud beag leadránach.  
 Caithimid léigh scéal ansin tá timpeall a dó dhéag ceist isteach ann agus tá sé an-leadránach.  
 Tá muid ag fhoghlaim rudaí atá éasca.  
 Corruair faigheann sé leadránach.  
 Uaireanta caithimid a lán ama ar agus bíonn tú an-tuirseach tar éis an ceacht.  
 Bhuel, uaireanta tá sé saghas leadránach..  
 Uaireanta tá sé in ann a beith leadránach an slí ina fhoghlaimím an Ghaeilge ar scoil.  
 Tá an Gaeilge beagáinín deacair a fhoghlaim.  
 Uaireanta bíonn sé deacair cúpla focail a thuiscint sa leabhar mata.  
 Tógann sé a lán am suas, agus uaireanta bíonn sé deacair.  
 Tá píosaí an deacair ann.  
 Ceapaim ní bíonn go leor am agat chun déan do obair Gaeilge.  
 Saghas deacair freisin.  
 Ní maith liom an tslí ina fhoghlaimím litriú ar scoil.  
 Is maith liom Gaeilge ach níl mé an-maith leis mar tá mé ag déan iarracht ach níl mé maith, tá má déan iarracht a caint achan lá.  
 Níor mhaith liom an bealach gur caithfidh muid rudaí deacair a fhoghlaim i nGaeilge.  
 Litriú agus leamh na rudaí sara a dhéanamh.  
 Na fhocal.  
 Ni maith liom nuair a níl fhios agam cé a ceal atá le focail.  
 Déanaim dearmad air fríd an samhradh agus níl a fhios agam an ciall le cuid de na focail.  
 Déanann muid an rud céanna gach lá.  
 Ni maith liom an litriú i Gaeilge.  
 Uaireanta nuair a bhíonn an múinteoir ag múineadh, ní bhíonn sé an-suimiúil agus uaireanta tá sé deacair an gramadach a thuiscint.  
 Bíonn sé i gcónaí ceisteanna agus scéal a bhíonn orainn déanamh.

nach thuigeann mé.

Nó go bhfuil Gaeilge píosa níos deacra ná Béarla

Níl a lán nach maith liom ach an t-aon rud nó ag dhéanamh ceachtanna leadránach agus sean-aimsire.

Bíonn ró méid fhocal deacair a cheapann na múinteoirí ba cheart go mbeadh a fhios agam.

Ní maith liom an tslí go bhfuil an litriú deacair.

Ní maith liom an tslí a labhraíonn daoine as áiteanna éagsúla in Éirinn Gaeilge difriúil go háirithe na múinteoirí.

Mar tá ró méid brú orm ar scoil agus ní úsáideann daoine eile Gaeilge

Tá sé deacair!

An taon rud nach maith liom faoi ná i mata muna thuigeann tú rud éigin tá sé an-deacair.

### **Learning other subjects through Irish (n=31)**

Ní mhaith liom na matamaitic as Gaeilge.

Ní maith liom na rudaí seo mata agus stair

Tá gach rud i Ghaeilge.

Ní maith liom cúpla ábhar a bhfuil deacair.

uaireanta tá mata deacair a labhairt fríd Gaeilge.

ceol.

Nuair atá mid ag déanamh Mata, tá na focail ró deacair, ach is breá liom an Mata.

Ní maith liom an stair mar níl se éasca.

Ba maith liom den gach rud.

Ní maith liom stair.

mata agus stair

Caithfimid can i Gaeilge agus níl na amhráin in mBéarla go maith i Gaeilge.

Níl an rud a nach maith liom fi an Gaeilge ar scoil ach mata

Ní maith liom an slí go bíonn beagnach gach ábhar i Gaeilge,

Feiceann tú síos clár, nuair níl a fhios agat céard a ciallaíonn an square root

Ní maith liom a bheith ag déanamh Gaeilge nuair atá muid ag déanamh stair agus mata.

Mata, tíreolas.

Stair i Gaeilge. Tíreolaíocht i Gaeilge. Mata i Gaeilge.

go caithfimid tionscnamh a dhéanamh as Gaeilge agus tá sé níos deacra é a athrú go Gaeilge.

Ní maith liom ag foghlaim na mataí trí Gaeilge

ní maith liom a bheith ag labhairt Gaeilge nuair atá muid ag déanamh na ábhair eile

Bíonn muid i gcónaí ag déanamh mataí i Gaeilge

A dhéanamh Mata i Gaeilge.

Ní maith liom mata Ghaeilge.

Ag fhoghlaimím paidreacha

Ní maith liom chaithfidh muid gach ábhair (ach béarla) a dhéanamh as Gaeilge.

Mar caithfidh muid Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim i Mata i Stair, eolaíocht agus tír eolas agus uaireanta

mothaím níos compordach ag fhoghlaim fríd béarla.

Uaireanta ní maith liom ag déanamh fadhbanna Mata i Gaeilge.

Ní maith liom foghlaim “Stair” i nGaeilge, mar uaireanta bíonn sé an deacair, agus

uaireanta ní thuigim é i nGaeilge.

Ní maith liom a bheith ag fhoghlaim stair i nGaeilge mar tá sé deacair é a thuiscint le na focail ar fad

### **There is no aspect of learning Irish that I don't like (n=20)**

Níl aon rud nach maith liom ag foghlaim as Gaeilge sa scoil seo.

níl an rud

Níl aon rud nach maith liom faoin tslí ina fhoghlaimím an Ghaeilge

Níl aon

Tá sé an-mhaith agus níl aon rud nach maith liom.

Níl aon rud nach maith liom.

Ní dóigh liom go bhfuil aon rud nach maith liom faoin tslí a fhoghlaimím Gaeilge.

Sílím an tslí a múintear Gaeilge sa scoil is slí maith é. Ach caithfidh tú bheith réidh chun oibriú ar do chuid botún.

Níl aon rud nach maith liom faoin slí a fhoghlaimím Gaeilge

Is maith liom an bealach a fhoghlaimím an Ghaeilge.

Níl aon rud nach maith liom faoin tslí.

Níl rud ar bith nach maith liom fan tslí a fhoghlaimím Gaeilge ar an scoil.

Níl aon rud ní maith liom.

Ní nach maith liom aon rud.

Níl aon rud.

Níor mhaith liom aon rud.

Ba mhaith lom gach rud.

Níl.

Neodrach

Neodrach

### **Speak Irish at all times (n=18)**

Caith muid é a caint an táim go léir.

Caitheann muid caint i Gaeilge.

An fáth go gcaith muid caint é gach uair

Ní maith liom má labhraíonn tú Béarla faigheann tú cárta buí.

Is maith liom ag caint Gaeilge ach má labhraíonn me Béarla tá mé i dtrioblóid mór.

Uaireanta smaoiníonn mé níl ach teanga é.

Má deireann tú focal i mBéarla gheobhaidh tú i dtrioblóid.

Muna dtuigeann tú focal i Gaeilge níl cead é a labhairt i mBéarla.

Ma déanann tú dearmad ar focal gheobhaidh mé i dtrioblóid.

Ní maith liom go chaithfidh muid Gaeilge a labhairt nuair atá muid ar turais scoile

Mar chaithfidh tú é a labhairt ag am lóin.

Uaireanta bíonn mé ag caint Gaeilge agus rá mé Béarla gan a bheith ag smaoineamh agus faigh mé i trioblóid.

Na rudaí nach maith liom ag caint in nGaeilge nó ag labhairt le mo chuid chara in nGaeilge.

Nuair a dhéanann tu dearmad ar focal Gaeilge gheobhaidh mé i dtrioblóid leis an múinteoir.

Ní maith liom go labhraímid Gaeilge gach nóiméad do gach lá scoile.

Má bhíonn tú ag caint béarla agus rugann múinteoir ort faigheann tú in a lán trioblóid.

Nuair atá tú ag labhairt as Gaeilge agus níl an focail ar eolas agat agus deireann tú é as

Béarla faigheann tú i dtrioblóid

Ní maith liom ag faigh sa trioblóid ma tá mé ag caint béarla.

caithfidh tú é a labhairt an tam ar fad.

### **Factors associated with teacher (n=8)**

Scread an múinteoir orainn mar labhraíonn focal Béarla.

B'fhéidir go mbeidh múinteoir a bhfuil Gaeilge difriúil

Uaireanta nuair a dhéanann muid botún sa ceacht deireann an múinteoir muid le seasamh amach.

Ní maith liom nuair a chuireann an múinteoir a lámh ar a cheann agus ansin cheapann mé táim amaideach! Nuair ata se ag caint tapaidh.

Ní maith liom é nuair a faigheann na múinteoirí crosta nuair a bhíonn sé deacair agus níl a fhios againn cén chaoi a dhéanann tú é.

Ritheann an múinteoir tri rudaí i bhfad ró thapaidh agus mar sin, ní tuigeann an rang é, agus ansin, tá rud éigin eile tosnaithe again agus tá an rang i bponc faoin rud eile.

nach déanfaimid cleachtaí Gaeilge comh minic is ba choir dúinn.

### **Books (n=10)**

Ní maith liom na leabhair scoile mar níl siad suimiúil agus tá siad scríofa i gcomhair daoine nach leabhraíonn Gaeilge go maith. Tá na novels faoi daoine mar 'Anne' agus 'Nellí' agus Má biodh siad i Béarla beidh siad i leabharlann Rang 1'

Ní maith liom nuair a léimid leabhar Gaeilge le chéile

an leabhar Gaeilge a bíonn á léamh againn

Ní maith liom an bhealach ina bhfuil na sean leabhair tá siad ar fad faoi gramadach agus conas nach bhfuil muid ag labhairt i gceart.

Ní maith liom am treo nach bhfuil á lan leabhair Gaeilge inár scoil

Nil mórán an nach maith liom faoin tslí ina fhoghlaím Gaeilge ach tá an leabhar léitheoireacht a mbíonn againn iontach leanbaí.

Ná an leabhar Béarla a chaithfidh tú scríobh as Béarla.

Ní maith liom na leabhar go léir as Ghaeilge.

Ní maith liom é más tá muid a fhoghlaím Gaeilge tríd leabhair.

### **Homework (n=7)**

Ní maith liom nuair atá to ag déanamh an obair bhaile agus níl mé ábalta focal a léamh nó an obair a déanamh.

Ní maith liom obair bhaile.

Ní mhaith liom do obair Bhaile.

Ná an shlí a bhíonn a lán obair bhaile againn.

Ní maith liom obair bhaile.

Ní maith liom obair bhaile as Gaeilge mar cúpla uair bíonn sé deacair.

Ní maith liom obair agus an obair abhaile.

### **Gaps (n=6)**

An mbealach má tá mo chara ag caint faoi a scoil féin i mBéarla ní thuigim gach rud atá siad a rá. Mar má théann tú go dtí scoil Béarla sa meánscoil níl gach rud Béarla ar eolas agat!

Go minic nuair a chuireann an múinteoir ceist níl a fios so cainteann tú as Béarla mar níl a lán Gaeilge ag do cairde agus labhraíonn tú Béarla sa bhaile agus fuair tú measca suas

Ná n bhíonn fhios agat focail matamaitic i Béarla.

Níor maith liom, tá mé ag dul go dtí scoil Béarla i ndiaidh seo agus níl a fhios agam cuid mhór focla i mBéarla.

A lán den am bíonn sé an-leadránach mar caithfidimid fhoghlaim agus fhoghlaim agus mar sin ní déanann muid a lán Béarla.

Uaireanta caith muid caint Gaeilge nuair atá muid ag déanamh Béarla.

### **Writing (n=5)**

Na rudaí nach maith liom na nuair a chaithfidh tú scríobh aiste i Gaeilge agus sin é tá gach rud eile go breá.

Tá cuid mhór scríbhneoireachta le déanamh againn.

Ní maith liom an scríobh.

Tá sé go léir scríobha síos i leabhar mar scéal.

Ní maith liom an scríobh go léir a bíonn orainn dean!

### **Eile (n=4)**

Ní maith liom é mar ní féidir ling cloisint i gceart.

Ní maith liom a bheith ag caint Béarla i scoil.

Ní maith liom an Gaeilge..

Dearann mo cairde las amuigh den scoil, cén fáth a bhfuil mé ag déanamh Gaeilge mar go fuath leo an teanga.

### **7.4.3 The aspects that pupils would like to change about the way they learn Irish**

#### **Activities – games, debates, sport, music (n=60)**

Beidh cluiche Gaeilge ann do rang a sé.

n-imreodh muid cluichí i nGaeilge.

Beidh thig leis an Rang súgradh cluich faoi choinne a Gaeilge a foghlaim.

Taitneoidh sé liom cluichí a imirt i nGaeilge chun é a fhoghlaim.

Sugródh muid cluichí i nGaeilge

Cluiche beag.

Fhoghlaimínn i bhfoirm cluiche.

Is breá liom cluiche Ghaeilge

Ba mhaith liom má raibh cead agat cluiche a imirt le focail.

Bhí cluiche an

Tá mé ag iarraidh níos mo cluiche a súgradh

Thaitneodh an tslí ina fhoghlaimím an Ghaeilge ar scoil níos fearr liom dá imreoidh muid cluiche i Gaeilge.

I spórt.

Ag imirt cluiche.

Cluichí.

Dá mbeadh níos mó cluichí Gaeilge ar scoil

Dá n-imreoinn cluichí as Gaeilge.

Ba bhreá liom dá n-imreoimid cluichí as Gaeilge

D'imir cluichí as Gaeilge

imir cluichí Gaeilge

má rinne muid cluiche éagsúla i Gaeilge.

Má raibh cead againn cluichí a imirt a bhí as Gaeilge mar Pictionary nó rud mar sin.

Go raibh níos mo cluiche Gaeilge.

Chuireamar foghlaim Gaeilge isteach go dtí cluiche

A lán ag súgradh cluiche uaireanta

Imreoidh muid cluichí mar scríobhann tú focail Gaeilge agus cuireann tú é i mála agus caithfidh duine mím an chiall le an fhocail.

Imreodh muid cluichí i nGaeilge.

Mbeidh cluichí nó rud mar sin chun cabhrú leat foghlaim.

I ceoil.

Ag canadh.

Amhráin.

Ag déanamh drámaí go minic.

Má feicfidh muid an teilifís i nGaeilge.

Dá mbeadh díospóireachtaí againn.

Díospóireacht a dhéanamh.

Mbeadh díospóireachta againn.

Dá mbeadh níos mó gníomhaíochta

Ba maith liom díospóireacht agus cluichí a bheith againn chun an nGaeilge a fhoghlaim.

Bheadh sé i bhfad níos fearr dá mbeimid in ann díospóireachta a dhéanamh.

Níos mó díospóireachtaí a dhéanamh.



bheadh díospóireacht againn i nGaeilge.  
 déanfaimid díospóireacht anois is arís.  
 Díospóireacht a bheith againn.  
 Dá dhéanfaidh muid díospóireacht.  
 Níos mó scéalta agus ag úsáid do foclóir do focail nua!!!  
 bhí cúpla rudaí le déanamh againn ar ríomhaire agus má rinne muid drámaí is  
 díospóireacht.  
 A lán tionscnamh.  
 Scríobh litir, tionscnamh ar an rud is fearr leat.  
 Peil Ghaeilge i gcoir sinsir.  
 Bheith níos mó projects as Gaeilge.  
 Ceoil.  
 Ríomh-cluiche as Gaeilge,  
 Rinne mé é amach sa chlós.  
 Dá foghlaimid níos mó dánta agus amhráin as Gaeilge!  
 Ba chóir go mbeadh níos mó ceol Trí Gaeilge sa scoil.  
 foghlaim conas a imirt dots, mata, Béarla agus camógaíocht  
 Thig linn níos mó drama a dhéanamh.  
 Scríobh scéal Ghaeilge agus cuir é go dtí Gaelscoil eile.  
 Deachtú.

### **Books and resources (n=15)**

Dá mbeadh leabhar Gaeilge againn, chun rudaí a scríobh isteach ann.  
 Bheinn níos sásta dá mbeadh cead againn na leabhar Gaeilge linn féin mar ní bheadh sé  
 chomh leadránach.  
 Dá mbeadh na scéalta níos fearr.  
 Má raibh níos mó leabhar Gaeilge sa leabharlann.  
 Níos mó leabhair Gaeilge.  
 Má bhí na leabhair níos fearr agus má bhí cinn scríobha i gcomhair scoil lán-Béarla agus  
 lán-Gaeilge.  
 Ba cheart go mbeadh níos mó leabhair aistrithe go Gaeilge.  
 Ba mhaith liom leabhar Gaeilge a leamh sa rang.  
 Dá mbeadh níos mó rudaí interactive ann.  
 Ag léamh ag leabhair Ghaeilge ar scoil agus sa teach.  
 Beidh scéalta níos fearr an i mo bharúil féin tá na scéalta anois iontach páistiúil.  
 Na leabhar go leor as Gaeilge.  
 Raibh cead agam úsáid an ríomhaire glúine chun a Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim.  
 Mbeidh muid ag déanamh níos mó ar an clár in ionad ón leabhar.  
 Is fearr liom a bheith ag fhoghlaim ón leabhair níos mó ná ag foghlaim é ag caint.

### **More emphasis on Irish and on speaking Irish (n=15)**

Ba mhaith liom níos mó ceachtanna labhartha a dhéanamh  
 Dá mbeimid ag caint i nGaeilge agus ag caint amháin, bheadh se níos fearr. Freisin mbeadh  
 cead againn labhairt leis ár gcairde.  
 Bhí níos mó Gaeilge timpeall orm amach as scoil.  
 Má bhí mé i mo chónaí sa Ghaeltacht.  
 Dá mbeadh orm é a labhairt sa bhaile i gcónaí ná é a labhairt an t-am ar fad ar scoil

Uair agus leath gach dara lá. Béarla i gcoir uair gach dara lá.  
 Ba mhaith liom níos mó Gaeilge a labhairt as a chéile mar sílim go mbeidh sé cuidiú maith.  
 Ag déanamh rudaí as béal.  
 Dá mbeadh níos mó cuairt againn ar a Ghaeltacht agus go chuireadh gach duine an iarracht le Gaeilge a fhoghlaim.  
 Ba mhaith liom níos mó Gaeilge.  
 Ba bhreá liom ag caint lena cheile ós ard agus le cuidiú daoine a bhfuil ag déanamh botún.  
 Agus i rang 1 suas go dtí rang 5 chuir an múinteoir ceist céard a rinneamar thar na seachtaine, agus anois just déanaimid an obair.  
 Mar níl a lán daoine in Éirinn in ann Gaeilge a labhairt.  
 Mbeidh gach duine ag déanamh an rud ceart.  
 Raibh gach duine sa domhan an caint Gaeilge  
 Is breá liom ag na feiseanna agus na fleadhanna gur féidir liom Gaeilge a labhairt agus táim in ann comhrá iomlán Gaeilge a bheith agam, (ach níl na daoine i rang 6 i scoileanna eile Béarla in ann é a dhéanamh).

### **Do not change anything (n=11)**

Níl mé in ann aon rud a rá ... múintear Gaeilge / gramadach Gaeilge ar tslí iontach i <ainm na scoile>  
 Tá sé go maith an tslí atá muid ag foghlaim  
 Bíonn gach rud faoi foghlaim an Ghaeilge an-deas agus suimiúil  
 níl aon rud tá sé an mhaith  
 níl aon rud. Tá sé go hiontach.  
 Tá sé go maith an dóigh atá sé  
 Sílim go bhfuil sé fíor mhaith an dóigh a bhfuil sé.  
 Taitníonn Mata liom agus ceol agus Gramadach ana-mór liom.  
 Tá sé ceart go leor i gcoir mise.  
 Níl aon. Is fearr liom Gaeilge.  
 Is breá liom an spóirt ar scoile.

### **Other subjects through English (n=10)**

Go mbeadh cúpla ábhar i mBéarla  
 Sport Béarla.  
 Is maith liom a beith ag foghlaim Gaeilge níos ná ag foghlaim Stair nó Tír eolais  
 Beidh níos mó Béarla agus translate an Gaeilge rud go dtí Béarla.  
 Go múnadh é i mBéarla freisin, ag an am céanna, mar uaireanta foghlaim mataí i nGaeilge agus ní thuigim é i mBéarla.  
 Uaireanta rinne muid stair i mbéarla  
 Mbeidh an mata as Béarla  
 Mbeidh an mata i Béarla beidh sé níos éasca dom.  
 Dá mbeadh cead agat mata a déan i Béarla agus cúpla rudaí eile.

### **Make it easier (n=9)**

Dá mbeadh sé níos éasca.  
Dá mbeadh se níos éasca.  
Dá dhéanaimid i leabhar níos éascaí ná an leabhar atá againn.  
Raibh níos lú riail leis.  
Go bheidh níos éasca.  
Bhí na focal níos éasca chun litriú  
Go bheadh níos lú obair bhaile  
b'fhéidir níos lú obair bhaile.  
Níos mó understanding.

### **Gramadach (n=8)**

Mbeadh na briathra imithe ónar saol agus an gramadach  
Go stopfaimid na briathra.  
raibh liosta mór de gach bhriathair ar an mballa.  
Rinneamar níos lú briathar.  
Ní beidh an méid gramadach.  
mbeidh an múinteoir ag cuir níos lú brú orainn na briathra a fhoghlaim  
Mbeadh leabhair agat féin le na haimsire uilig agus focla deacra istigh ann agus cuid mhór rudaí eile mar foclóir.  
Má níor raibh chomh mead Briathra agus scrúdú á dhéanamh orthu.

### **Other subjects (n=8)**

Ba mhaith liom Eolaíocht a dhéanamh mar tá mé in san eolaíocht. Tá sé go maith.  
Níos mó eolaíocht a dhéanamh.  
Thaitneodh mise é níos mó ná an tslí ina fhoghlaímim tír eolas.  
Ag déanamh Stair.  
Mata, Tíreolas, Ceol, stair.  
Mata agus Stair.  
Mata.  
Má rinne muid níos mó ealaín agus P.E.

### **More fun and interesting (n=7)**

Dá mbeidh níos mo spraoi agam é a fhoghlaim.  
Dá mbeidh mé ag fhoghlaim nuair atá mé ag spraoi.  
Dá mbeach sé níos sceitimíneach.  
mbeadh níos mó spraoi an.  
Raibh sé níos suimiúla mar uaireanta tá sé an leadránach.  
Foghlaim níos mó rudaí úra.  
Agus b'fhéidir le drámaí nó comhrá bainfidh na paistí níos mó taitneamh as an nGaeilge.

### **More English (n=7)**

Ag labhairt Béarla.  
Mbeadh cead againn Béarla amach sa chlós len ar cairde.  
Chuir siad an focal Béarla i lúibíní in aice le focail deacair i leabhar Gaeilge níos minice.  
a bheith i scoil Béarla mar cabhraíonn sé leat nuair atá tú níos sinne.

... mbeadh cead againn Béarla a labhairt sa chlós.

Tá an Gaeilge go maith ach uaireanta bíonn a lán Gaeilge agus ní bhíonn am chun déanamh Béarla nó Sport nó Mata agus rudaí eile.

### **Factors associated with teacher (n=6)**

B'fhéidir ná force na páistí labhairt Gaeilge agus b'fhéidir labhair muid Gaeilge.

Má múinfeadh an múinteoir dúinn i slí níos suimiúla.

Ligeadh na múinteoirí níos mó botúin.

Raibh múinteoir nó máistir in ann teacht isteach chun den cinnte go raibh an Gaeilge a labhair muid ceart.

Shíl mé níl mo múinteoir ag blean Gaeilge maith is beidh duine eile ag gáire caint i Gaeilge.

Beidh difriúil mar ar an Gaeilge má rinne an múinteoir níos mó test orainn.

### **Eile (n=11)**

Ag caint Gaeilge sa chlós.

Bheadh mé i scoil Béarla mar bhí an Gaeilge agam ó nuair a bhí mé 4 agus aníos tá mé ag dul go dtí meánscoil Gaeilge agus tá fios agam tá sé chun cabhrú liom sna blianta le teacht!

Mar tá sé rud maith a labhairt as Gaeilge sa rang agus sa chlós.

Is maith liom clois daoine óg ag labhairt as Gaeilge.

Dá mbeadh níos lú duine sa rang.

Dá mbeadh freastalóir na seachtaine ann.

I rang a 5 rinne muid dalta na seachtaine agus tá mé ag iarradh sin a dhéanamh arís.

Tá sé teanga an tír.

Beann sé go maith.

Beidh sé go maith nuair atá tú sa meánscoil

Má déanaigh muid é a gur obair bhaile agus ar scoil a gur dó uair a chlog.

#### **7.4.4 The factors that motivate pupils to speak Irish**

##### **Parents, family, relations (n=40)**

Spreagann mo Mhamáí agus Daidí.

Spreagann mo chlann mé le Gaeilge a labhairt

Mo tuismitheoirí,

Mo thuismitheoirí,

Labhraíonn mé Gaeilge le mo Dhaidí agus mo clann ar taobh mo Dhaidí i Conamara.

Mo thuismitheoirí, mo dheartháir mat tá sé ag déanamh a (laving cert?)

bíonn mo dheartháireacha ag labhairt Gaeilge.

Spreagann mo thuismitheoirí mé.

Spreagann mo mamaí mo muintir.

Mo thuismitheoirí.

Tá mo mhamáí cainteoir dúchas agus chuaigh mo dhá thuismitheoirí go scoileanna lán-Gaeilge.

Mo thuismitheoirí.

Labhraíonn mo thuismitheoirí Gaeilge sa bhaile agus ba mhaith liom é a labhairt go maith freisin.

Mo dheirfiúr.

Mo mhamáí.

Mo chlann.

Mo tuismitheoirí.

Mo thuismitheoirí.

Nuair a bhíonn mo muintir/chairde ag labhairt Gaeilge.

Freisin mo shin sheandhaidí, mar go scríobh sé a lán leabhair i Gaeilge.

Caint le mo mháthair.

Mo daideo mar bhí Gaeilge an chéad teanga a bhí aige agus nuair a fhaigheann sé bás tá mé in ann leanúint ar aghaidh ag labhairt Gaeilge.

Mó thuismitheoirí (céard a ndéarfadh siad).

Chuaigh mo dhaidí chuig an Scoil céanna a bhfuil me isteach ann.

Mo mhamáí agus dhaidí ag labhairt Gaeilge linn.

Mo mhamáí.

Mo chlann go léir a labhairt.

Mo mamaí agus daidí.

Mo Mhamáí agus mo Dhaidí agus mo dheartháir.

Mo thuismitheoirí spreagann orm.

Mo thuismitheoirí.

Mo mhamáí agus mo chlann go léir.

Mar níl is ag mo mamaí a lán Gaeilge ach thugann sé cabhrú liom.

Go dtig liom caint le mo mhamó i nGaeilge.

Mo theaghlach.

Nuair atá daidí ag caint Gaeilge liom bím ag iarraidh caint Gaeilge ar ais.

Spreagann mo thuismitheoirí agus go ginearálta is breá liom é a labhairt.

Nuair a bhí mé beag bhí mo dheartháireacha ag caint Gaeilge agus bhí mé ag iarraidh caint Gaeilge leo.

Mo Dhaidí bíonn sé ag caint Gaeilge.

Nuair a bhíonn mo deirfiúr bheag (4) ag labhairt Gaeilge liom mar shampla “Mála scoile”.

### **Teachers, school (n=39)**

Na múinteoirí a labhairt í Gaeilge.

Na múinteoirí.

Múinteoir.

Múinteoirí agus cúpla daoine eile.

An scoil, mo mhúinteoir, agus an bpríomhoide.

Tá me i scoil lán Gaeilge

Na múinteoirí.

Scoil.

Mo mhúinteoir.

Chun ainm maith a chuir orm, mo rang agus mo scoil.

Mo mhúinteoir.

Scoil.

Caint leis an múinteoir.

Spreagann mo scoil.

Mo mhúinteoir.

Spreagann scoil.

Mo máistir.

Spreagann an máistir mé agus an príomhoide agus na múinteoirí eile.

An Máistir.

An múinteoir a spreagann mé.

Is breá liom é go mór mhór agus scoil an t-aon rud a chuireann fonn orm.

Nuair a bíonn mé timpeall na naíonáin ag tá said ag féachaint suas orainn ag caint as Gaeilge. Is féidir leat déan tionscnamh ar do rud is fearr agus déan rudaí mar i sin scríobh litir as Gaeilge do daoine sa Ghaeltacht agus rudaí mar sin.

An mata, Gaeilge, stair, eolaíocht agus ealaín.

Aiste a scríobh agus gach rud mar mata agus tíreolas a déanann i Gaeilge.

Spreagann na múinteoirí muid chun Gaeilge a labhairt.

An múinteoir agus tá an scoil Gaeilge.

Is breá liom labhairt Ghaeilge mar tá mé i scoil ó bhím beag agus ba mhaith liom é a labhairt. Níl sé tueina na scoile.

Bhí cúpla cinn go maith mar an léitheoireacht Gaeilge agus an scríbhneoireacht agus an dathú.

Mo múinteoirí.

Gheobhaidh mé i dtrioblóid muna labhraím é.

Ní caithfidh mo chairde as scoil Gaeilge a labhairt ar scoil.

An smaoineamh a beadh mé i dtrioblóid mór le an príomhoide

Tá duais nuair a labhraíonn tú Gaeilge.

Ag fáil duais.

Spreagann ‘duine an seachtain mé.

Chun fháil síniú.

Nuair a bhíonn mé ar scoil le Gaeilge a labhairt.

An múinteoir.

## Native language (n=36)

Mar go bhfuil mé i mo chónaí i Éire.

Tá an Gaeilge an teanga dhúchais.

Tá mé in ann teanga eile a labhairt agus go bhfuil sé teanga na hÉirinn.

Níl a fhios ag go leor daoine in Éirinn Gaeilge a labhairt agus tá áthas orm go bhfuil mé in ann é a labhairt

Is é teanga an tír seo agus bíonn mé bródúil as mo theanga seo.

Níl mé ag iarraidh an teanga a cailliúint.

1916 mar tríd muid agus an teanga ar ais ... agus anois tá sé againn.

Nuair a fheicim daoine nach bhfuil in ann Gaeilge a labhairt ag féachaint orm agus ag smaoineamh dóibh féin – “Ba bhreá liom a bheith in ann é sin a dhéanamh.”

Mar tá mé ag iarraidh caint an teanga Eire.

Is í an Gaeilge an teanga ceart Éireannach. Cuireann Gaeilge an teanga i gcuimhne don ar an stair agus an ceoil

Chun an teanga a coimeád beo.

Troid daoine chun cead a bheith againn an nGaeilge a labhairt agus ní fiú ba cheart dúinn bheith ag labhairt Béarla.

Is fíor-theanga Éirinn í.

Níl a lán scoileanna Gaeilge fós fágtha in Éirinn agus táim ag iarraidh an Gaeilge a coimeád beo!

Is teanga deas í an Ghaeilge. Is ar teanga dúchasach í an Ghaeilge.

Nuair a feiceann me daoine fásta ag rá bu breá liom an Gaeilge a labhairt

Tá sé go maith do teanga féin a labhairt.

An bhealach ina bhfuil an Ghaeltacht chomh maith agus níl sé Gaeilge ar fad.

tá sé deas chun iad a thuiscint agus mar is teanga mo thír dúchais é.

Mar tá mid in ár gcónaí in Éirinn agus tá ár teanga Gaeilge, caithfidh muid Gaeilge a labhairt.

Mar is ár dteanga féin é.

Tá sé teanga mo tír

An rud a spreagaim mar tá sé teanga an Tír

Tá sé ar tír ‘s teanga.

Is breá liom a bheith in ann Gaeilge teanga mo tír agus ba ceart dom é a foghlaim!

Tá a fhios agam go bhfuil an Ghaeilge ár dteanga náisiúnta.

Mar tá muid difriúil ó tíortha ar bith eile agus tá muid cleachtaithe le ár dteanga féin.

Nó bheith ábalta mo dteanga náisiúnta a labhairt.

Is maith rud go bhfuil teanga againn muid féin fosta.

Níl a fhios ag tír eile an teanga.

Chuir fonn orm mar bhí gach duine in Éire uair amháin ag caint Gaeilge agus tá leath den an tír ag caint anois.

I mo bharúil féin ba bhreá liom Gaeilge a chaint (agus) mar go raibh sé ar dteanga roimh thug Sasainn é.

Labhraíonn an Sasainn Béarla, cén fáth nach dtig linn Gaeilge a labhairt ?!?!?!?!?!?

Ba mhaith liom an teanga Gaeilge.

Mar go bhfuil sé ár dteanga féin

Mar tá mé i mo chónaí in Éirinn.

### **Other Irish speakers (n=28)**

Gaeilgeoirí eile.

Nuair a bíonn na peileadóirí agus iománaí a labhairt as Gaeilge.

Nuair a cloisim daoine eile ag labhairt Gaeilge.

Nuair a feicim duine ag labhairt Gaeilge an-mhaith.

Nuair a chloisim Gaeilge á labhairt, nuair a bhím ag caint i nGaeilge.

Nuair a cloisim daoine eile ag caint Gaeilge.

Na daoine atá ag ceint as Gaeilge

an Gaeltacht

Daoine nach mbeadh ag gáire fúm má dhéanaim botúin. Daoine ag cabhrú liom nuair a bhím ag labhairt.

Daoine a leabhróidh liom.

Daoine cáiliúla ag labhairt i Gaeilge.

An rud a spreagann mise le labhairt Gaeilge ná na cainteoir dúchais.

Anois tá mé in ann Gaeilge a labhairt le de daoine eile.

Duine eile a labhraíonn í.

Nuair a chloisim daoine san Gaeltacht ag labhairt Gaeilge

Nuair atá mé ag caint le duine agus tá a fhios acu Gaeilge bím ag iarraidh mo Ghaeilge a cleachtadh leo.

Tá na himreoirí peile is iománaíocht go leor é a labhairt agus daoine eile le Gaeilge

Dul ar laethanta saoire i nGaeltacht Gaillimhe ‘s a buaileadh le cainteoirí dúchas ar an tsráid ‘s sa siopa. P.S. Ní “suck up” mé d’fhreagair mé na ceisteanna go fírinneach.

Nuair a bíonn duine eile níos fearr na mé féin.

Dara Ó Cinnéide, Séan óg Ó hAilpín, Mó chlann, an Gaeltacht.

Ceapaim go bhfuil gach duine ag caint Gaeilge timpeall orm go maith, daoine mar polaiteoir, gach ag labhairt Gaeilge leat agus na Gaeltachtaí.

Mar nuair a bíonn daoine eile ag caint as Gaeilge cabhraíonn sé liomsa a caint as Gaeilge.

Cuireann an gealtacht spreagadh orm.

Is breá liom nuair a bím ag labhairt Gaeilge mar tá me in ann daoine eile a thuiscint agus foghlaim.

Go mbeadh mé ábalta Gaeilge a labhairt nuair a bhím ag an nGaeltacht.

Na daoine eile a labhairt Gaeilge agus nuair atá mé ag scríobh Gaeilge.

Nuair a féachaim daoine eile a labhairt.

### **Irish culture, television, activities in Irish (n=23)**

Na Ceol, amhrán agus dánta agus díospóireacht.

Ceol agus drámaí agus damhsa.

Ceoil traidisiúnta, damhsa Gaeilge

Dán i Gaeilge

Teilifís

Na díospóireachtaí Gaeilge.

Na aisteoir cáiliúil ó Éire a thosaigh le clár teilifíse Gaeilge

Dul go “Comhaltas”.

Féachaint ar TG4

mar nuair labhraíonn daoine ar an raidió nó an teilifís

mó fírinne chlúb bíonn siad ag caint as Gaeilge

Gaeilge an-mhaith i Ros na Rún agus is maith liom léamh leabhar i nGaeilge a léamh cheana sa Bhéarla.



Ag féachaint ar an teilifís i Gaeilge  
 Ag súgradh peil, sport, ealaín.  
 Nuair atá rud maith ar an teilifíse i nGaeilge.  
 Ag déanamh sport agus na leabhar.  
 Ag féachaint ar TG4 no ag éisteacht leis Radio na Gaeltachta.  
 Sport agus Spraoi, ag leamh, beidh ag foghlaim rudaí difriúil.  
 Tá a lán rudaí tríd Gaeilge agus níl ach cuid do na dhaoine i Éire ábalta Gaeilge a labhairt  
 Ar an teilifís nuair a féidir liom an teanga a úsáid.  
 Seinneann mé ceol traidisiúnta.  
 Cúpla seó teilifís.

## **Friends (n=17)**

Mo chairde a labhairt í Gaeilge  
 Cairde.  
 Bíonn tú ábalta caint ins Gaeilge le do chairde.  
 Mo chairde sa scoil.  
 Mar bíonn mo chairde ag labhairt Ghaeilge freisin.  
 A bheith ar scoil le mo chairde.  
 Mo chairde.  
 Mo chairde.  
 Mo chairde.  
 Mo chara.  
 Mo cara.  
 Ag labhairt le mo chairde.  
 Mar tá sé maith le caint teanga difriúil le do chuid chairde.  
 Deirim le mo chara a labhairt Gaeilge ar an fón.  
 Is maith liom ag caint i Gaeilge mar bhí me ó Albain agus sin caint eile gó dtí mo chairde.  
 Ma bhíonn mo chairde ag labhairt Ghaeilge liom.  
 Mo chairde ag caint liom.

## **To be able to speak a second language (n=11)**

Bíonn ábalta teanga eile a labhairt.  
 Má bíonn duine ag magadh fúm beadh mé in ann abair a lán rudaí dóibh go dtí a aghaidh  
 agus ní bheadh a fhios acu céard a bhfuil mé ag rá.  
 Bíonn tú in ann labhairt as Gaeilge os comhair daoine nach bhfuil in ann í a labhairt agus ní  
 tuigeann siad céard tá á rá agat.  
 Nuair a féachann mé mo chairde ag déanamh an obair bhaile agus tá sé éasca domsa ach deacair  
 dóibh agus caithfidh mé cabhair leo.  
 Tá sé deas a bheith in ann caint le mo chairde i dhá teanga, Béarla agus Gaeilge.  
 Ná go bhfuil is agam teanga eile agus go beadh sé níos simplí orm teanga eile a fhoghlaim.  
 Gach duine timpeall orm ag caint as Béarla agus beidh mé a t-aon duine ag caint as  
 Gaeilge. Is breá liom Gaeilge a labhairt mar tá sé go deas agus má ní maith leat an duine atá  
 ag éisteacht leat ag caint, is féidir Gaeilge a labhairt!  
 Níl sé ar eolas ag gach duine, mat tá mé i scoil Gaeilge.  
 Mar tá mé ag labhairt theanga eile.  
 Nuair atá mé as an tír agus bím ag labhairt Gaeilge le mo dheirfiúr agus ní thuigeann siad  
 muid.

### **Advantages for later life (n=5)**

Chun post maith a fháil.

Beidh mé chun faigh beagnach 10% níos mó pointe sa “Leaving Cert”.

An dóigh go dtiocfadh liom post a fháil i nGaeilge.

Mar nuair atá me níos sine bheag me ábalta obair mhaith a dhéanamh.

Tá sé éasca go leor agus b’fhéidir faighidh tú post níos fearr.

### **Eile (n=12)**

Google i Gaeilge.

An idirlín ins Gaeilge.

Conas é a labhairt níos fearr.

Is maith liom ag labhairt Gaeilge mar tá sé iontach maith.

Breá liom an Gaeilge go an- an-mhaith.

Mar tá sé rud difriúil ó na ábhair eile.

Mar Gaeilge a labhairt.

Don craic. Mar is maith liom é (beagáin).

Mo tuairimí féin faoi an Gaeilge.

Nuair a ceapaim go bhfuil mé ceart sa rud atá mé ag rá.

Ní spreagann aon duine fonn liom i Gaeilge ach is maith liom Cristiano Ronaldo.

Níl aon rud.

## Appendix 7.5 Instructions for Pupil Questionnaire

### LE LÉAMH OS ARD AG AN TAIGHDEOIR

*‘Tá mé ag iarraidh ort an ceistneoir seo a fhreagairt ionas gur féidir liom tuilleadh eolais a fháil amach faoin dóigh a bhfoghlaímíonn páistí Gaeilge agus cad iad na tuairimí agus na smaointe atá acu fúithi. Ní fheicfidh aon duine do chuid freagraí ach amháin mé féin. Ní bheidh cead ag aon duine sa scoil nó in aon áit eile do chuid freagraí a fheiceáil.*

*Tá mé ag iarraidh a fháil amach cad iad na tuairimí agus na smaointe atá agat i ndáiríre agus, dá bhrí sin, táimid ag brath go hiomlán ort. Má tá ceist ar bith sa cheistneoir seo nach dteastaíonn uait a fhreagairt, ní gá duit an freagra a thabhairt ach, mar sin féin, **tá súil againn** nach bhfágfaidh tú aon cheist ar lár. Cuir suas do lámh, le do thoil, mura bhfuil tú cinnte cad atá le déanamh agat.’*

*‘Cén rang ina bhfuil tú? Líon ciorcal amháin faoi ‘Rang 5’ nó ‘Rang 6’.  
‘An buachaill nó cailín tú? Líon ciorcal amháin faoi ‘Buachaill’ nó ‘Cailín’.  
‘Cén aois thú?’ Líon ciorcal amháin faoi ‘11’ ‘12’ nó ‘13’.*

*‘Anois féach ar na trí cheist cleachta.’*

*‘Anois, tá mé chun gach ceist a léamh os ard fad is atá tusa á léamh sa cheistneoir. Tá daoine ann a aontóidh leis na ráitis agus daoine eile fós a easontóidh leo. Níl a leithéid de rud ann agus freagra ceart ar an gceistneoir seo mar go bhfuil tuairimí difriúla ag a lán daoine.*

*Féach ar an gcéad cheann.’*

Ag an gcéim seo scríobhfaidh mé an chéad abairt cleachta agus na cúig rogha ar an gclár dubh go díreach mar atá siad i leabhrán an dalta.

*Is fearr peileadóirí Chorcaí ná peileadóirí Átha Cliath.*

1	2	3	4	5
Easaontaím	Easaontaím	Neodrach	Aontaím	Aontaím
		go mór	beagáinín	beagáinín
go mór				

Léifidh mé an ráiteas a luaithe is a bheidh sé scríofa síos. Ansin déarfaidh mé gach ceann de na roghanna amach os ard cúpla uair, ag léamh gach ceann acu ó thaobh na láimhe clé.

Míneoidh mé an focal ‘neodrach’, ag rá go gciallaíonn sé ‘nuair atá tú idir eatarthu, nuair nach bhfuil tú ag aontú nó ag easaontú’ (nó focail éigin den chineál sin.)

Ansin, nuair atá aire an ranga agam, déarfaidh mé an ráiteas atá sa chéad chleachtadh arís:

*‘Is fearr peileadóirí Chorcaí ná peileadóirí Átha Cliath.’ Anois cad a cheapann tú faoi sin? An aontaíonn tú nó an easaontaíonn tú leis? Má tá tú cinnte dearfa go bhfuil*

peileadóirí Chorcaigh níos fearr ná peileadóirí Átha Cliath, líon an ciorcal faoi ‘aontaím go mór’ atá díreach faoin abairt.

(Chun é seo a léiriú, líonfaidh mé ciorcal faoi na focail chuí ar an gclár dubh agus ansin glanfaidh mé amach é arís)

1	2	3	4	5	
Easaontaím	Easaontaím	Neodrach	Aontaím	Aontaím	
		go mór	beagáinín		beagáinín
go mór					

‘Má aontaíonn tú leis, ach ní go láidir, líon an ciorcal faoi ‘aontaím beagáinín’. Mura gceapann tú go bhfuil peileadóirí Chorcaigh níos fearr ná peileadóirí Átha Cliath, líon an ciorcal faoi ‘easaontaím go mór’ nó ‘easaontaím beagáinín’, cibé acu is fearr a léiríonn do thuairim. Sa chás nach bhfuil tú cinnte cé acu atá tú ag aontú nó ag easaontú, líon an ciorcal faoin bhfocal ‘neodrach’. Cuimhnigh gurb é do thuairim atáimid ag lorg.’  
(Sos nóiméad)

‘Ná líon ach ciorcal amháin faoi na roghanna. Líonfaidh duine amháin ciorcal faoi ‘easaontaím go mór’ agus líonfaidh duine eile ciorcal faoi ‘aontaím go mór’ agus daoine eile fós líonfaidh siad ciorcal faoi ‘aontaím beagáinín’ nó ‘easaontaím beagáinín’. Mura bhfuil tú cinnte cé acu a aontaíonn tú nó a easaontaíonn tú, líon an ciorcal faoi ‘neodrach’. Níl a leithéid de rud ann is freagra ceart nó mícheart sa cheistneoir seo. Is é do thuairimse an t-aon rud atá tábhachtach.’

(Ag an gcéim seo cinnteoidh mé nach bhfuil na daltaí ag tabhairt ach freagra amháin.)

‘Anois féach ar an chéad abairt eile. Léifidh mise é os ard. Ansin líon an ciorcal faoin bhfreagra is fearr a léiríonn do thuairimse. An easaontaíonn tú ‘go mór’ nó an easaontaíonn tú ‘beagáinín’? An bhfuil tú neodrach? An aontaíonn tú ‘go mór’?  
‘Tá laethanta saoire an tsamhraidh rófhada’.

An aontaíonn tú nó an easaontaíonn tú?

Anois líon an ciorcal faoi na focail is fearr a léiríonn do thuairim faoin ráiteas.

‘Tá laethanta saoire an tsamhraidh rófhada’.

‘Ná caith an iomarca ama ag smaoineamh air. Líon an ciorcal faoi do fhreagra chomh tapaigh agus is féidir leat. Ach ag an am chéanna, ná bí míchúramach, le do thoil, mar go bhfuil sé tábhachtach dúinn go léiríonn tú do thuairimí go cruinn.

Anois, an chéad ráiteas eile:

Is clár maith é “You’re a star”.

Líon an ciorcal faoi na focail is fearr a léiríonn do thuairimse.

(Sos nóiméad).

‘Ceart go leor. Anois iompaigh go dtí Leathanach a hAon agus léifidh mise na ráitis (abairtí) os ard. I ngach cás, líon an ciorcal faoin bhfreagra is fearr a léiríonn do thuairim faoin ráiteas. Ná bí ag fanacht liomsa le rá leat an freagra a mharcáil. Marcáil an freagra tú féin a luaithe is a léimse an ráiteas amach os ord. An bhfuil tú réidh?

## Appendix 8.1 Schedule for interviews with teachers

Líon na ndaltaí \_\_\_\_ Meánscoil lán-Ghaeilge \_\_\_\_ Naíonra \_\_\_\_ Cúlra na bpáistí

1. Cé mhéad bliain atá tú ag teagasc i scoil lán-Ghaeilge?  
1-5 bl. ☐ 6-10 bl. ☐ 11-14 bl. ☐ 15-20 bl. ☐ >20 bl. ☐
2. Cé mhéad bliain atá tú ag teagasc rang 5 nó rang 6?  
1-5 years ☐ 6-10 years ☐ 11-14 years ☐ 15-20 years ☐ >20 years ☐  
Cad é an cúlra teanga atá agat féin?
3. Cad é an polasaí sa scoil maidir le Gaeilge agus Béarla sna luathbhlianta?
4. Cathain a thosaítear ar Bhéarla a mhúineadh?
5. Cé mhéad ama a chaitear ag múineadh Béarla sna ranganna éagsúla?
6. Cad iad na háiseanna atá ar fáil do mhúineadh na Gaeilge? Cé chomh sásúil is atá siad i do thuairim?
7. Cé mhéad ama a chaitheann tú féin ag múineadh na Gaeilge go foirmiúil?
8. Ba mhaith liom roinnt ceisteanna a chur ort faoi chumas na bpáistí sa Ghaeilge anois:
  - a. Cé chomh sásúil i do thuairim is atá cumas na bpáistí sa Ghaeilge ag deireadh rang 5/6? An mbeadh sé inchurtha le cainteoir dúchais ag an aois chéanna? An bhfuil sé sásúil nó an cúis imní í?
  - b. Cad iad na straitéisí a úsáideann tú chun na páistí a spreagadh le labhairt as Gaeilge?
  - c. An bhféadfá cur síos a dhéanamh ar a líofacht sa Ghaeilge?
  - d. An bhfuil aon cheist faoi chruinneas na bpáistí sa Ghaeilge?
  - e. Cad iad na botúin? Struchtúr, focail Bhéarla
  - f. Cad iad na straitéisí a úsáideann tú nuair a chloiseann tú páiste ag rá rud éigin go míchruinn?
  - g. An bhféadfá cur síos a dhéanamh ar an teagmháil atá ag na páistí leis an nGaeilge lasmuigh den scoil? (m.sh. An gcasann siad le cainteoirí dúchais? Tacaíocht ó thuismitheoirí)
  - h. An bhféadfá cur síos a dhéanamh ar dhearcadh na bpáistí i leith foghlaim agus labhairt na Gaeilge?
9. An bpléitear cumas Gaeilge na bpáistí ag cruinnithe foirne agus más ea céard e éirim an phlé sin? Cad é polasaí na scoile maidir leis seo?
10. An bhfuil aon riachtanais inseirbhíse agat maidir le cumas na bpáistí sa Ghaeilge?
11. An bhfuil tuairimí agat féin faoi bhealaí go bhféadfaí an staid a fheabhsú?
12. An bhfuil rud ar bith eile le ra agat maidir le cumas Gaeilge na bpáistí?

## Appendix 8.2 Plain language statement

Teideal an staidéir: Dearcadh na múinteoirí i leith inniúlacht na bpáistí sa Ghaeilge i ranganna 5 agus 6 i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge.

A Chara

Is léachtóir i gColáiste Phádraig, Droim Conrach, Baile Átha Cliath mé. Táim ag plé le Teagasc na Gaeilge agus le Teagasc trí Ghaeilge faoi láthair sa choláiste. Roimhe sin chaith mé ceithre bliana déag mar mhúinteoir agus mar phríomhoide i scoil lán-Ghaeilge. Teastaíonn uaim taighde a dhéanamh i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge agus tá do chabhair á iarraidh agam. Is í aidhm an taighde ná scrúdú a dhéanamh ar chumas na bpáistí sa Ghaeilge i ranganna 5 agus 6 i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge ionas gur féidir linn tuiscint níos fearr a fháil ar bhealaí le feabhas ar an gcumas sin. Tá mé ag súil go gcabhróidh plé ar na buncheistean a bhaineann leis an ábhar seo le taighde ar an ábhar seo sa todhchaí chomh maith. Iarraim ort an cháipéis seo a léamh agus ceist ar bith a bhíonn agat a chur orm sula dtoilíonn tú páirt a ghlacadh sa taighde.

Má shocraíonn tú a bheith páirteach sa taighde iarrfaidh mé ort labhairt faoi do thaithí mar mhúinteoir i scoil lán-Ghaeilge agus faoi leibhéal cumais na bpáistí sa Ghaeilge i do rang. Eagrófar an plé neamhfhoirmiúil seo in áit agus ag am a oireann duit féin. Níorbh chóir go mairfeadh sé níos mó ná 30 nóiméad.

Níl aon bhuntáiste ann duit féin go pearsanta as a bheith páirteach sa taighde seo. Beidh tú ag cur áfach, leis an tuiscint ar an gcaoi a fheidhmíonn tumoideachas i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge. D'fhéadfadh an tuiscint sin cabhrú le cleachtais i scoileanna sa todhchaí mar aon le cláir réamhsheirbhíse agus inseirbhíse. Is é an cuspóir ar deireadh ná tuiscint níos fearr a fháil ar leibhéal chumais na bpáistí agus ar na tosca a chuirfeadh feabhas air.

Ó tharla gur mise an príomhthaighdeoir, déanfaidh mise an t-agallamh leat. Déanfar taifeadadh fuaime ar an agallamh ionas gur féidir liom é a thrasríobh agus anailís a dhéanamh air ina dhiaidh. Ní roinnfear na dioscaí le duine ar bith eile. Bainfear úsáid as samplaí ó na hagallaimh sa tuairisc dheireanach ar an taighde ach cinnteofar nach bhfuil aon sonraí ann a d'aithneodh foinse na dtuairimí chun do chuid príobháideachta a chosaint. Ní fhoilseofar d'ainm nó ní hinseofar é do dhuine ar bith eile. Coinneofar an t-eolas go léir a bhailítear faoi ghlas i gColáiste Phádraig go dtí 2010 agus scriosfar é ina dhiaidh sin. Geallaim duit nach mbainfear úsáid as an ábhar i dtaighde neamhghaolmhar amach anseo gan do chead a lorg roimh ré.

Faoi mar is eol duit tá rannpháirtíocht sa staidéar seo deonach agus tá cead agat tarraingt siar am ar bith. Má ghlacann tú páirt sa staidéar is féidir leat a shocrú gan ceistean a áirithe a fhreagairt muna dteastaíonn uait. Má shocraíonn tú gan páirt a ghlacadh ann tuigfidh mé é sin. Má tá tú sásta a bheith páirteach ann caithfidh tú cead scríofa a thabhairt ar dtús.

Ná bíodh leisce ort ceist ar bith a chur orm nó aon ábhar inní atá ort a phlé liom. Is féidir teacht orm ag: [padraig.oduibhir@spd.dcu.ie](mailto:padraig.oduibhir@spd.dcu.ie).

Is mian liom buíochas a ghabháil leat as ucht do chuid ama agus as smaoineamh faoi pháirt a ghlacadh sa taighde.

Má tá aon cheist agat i dtaobh an taighde nó má theastaíonn uait labhairt le duine neamhspleách faoi is féidir leat dul i dteagmháil leis an Dr. John Harris, Ionad Staidéir ar Theanga agus ar Chumarsáid (CLCS), Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath. Is é John an stiúrthóir mo chéime.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

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Pádraig Ó Duibhir

[padraig.oduibhir@spd.dcu.ie](mailto:padraig.oduibhir@spd.dcu.ie)

## Appendix 8.3 Informed consent form

**Teideal an staidéir:** Dearcadh na múinteoirí i leith inniúlacht na bpáistí sa Ghaeilge i ranganna 5 agus 6 i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge.

Taighdeoir: Pádraig Ó Duibhir, Roinn an Oideachais, Coláiste Phádraig, Droim Conrach, B.Á.C. 9.

Is é cuspóir an taighde seo ná iniúchadh a dhéanamh ar chumas na bpáistí sa Ghaeilge i ranganna 5 agus 6 i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge d'fhonn tuiscint níos fearr a fháil ar na tosca a chuirfeadh feabhas ar an gcumas sin.

Reachtálfar agallaimh le múinteoirí agus déanfar taifeadadh fuaime orthu ionas gur féidir anailís a dhéanamh orthu ina dhiaidh. Bainfear úsáid as samplaí ó na hagallaimh sa tuairisc dheireanach ar an taighde ach cinnteofar nach bhfuil aon sonraí ann a d'aithneodh foinse na dtuairimí chun do chuid príobháideachas a chosaint. Ní fhoilseofar d'ainm nó ní hinseofar é do dhuine ar bith eile. Coinneofar an t-eolas go léir a bhailítear faoi ghlas i gColáiste Phádraig go dtí 2010 agus scríosfar é ina dhiaidh sin. Faoi mar is eol duit tá tú ag glacadh páirte sa staidéar seo ar bhonn deonach agus tá cead agat tarraingt siar am ar bith. Má ghlacann tú páirt sa staidéar is féidir leat a shocrú gan ceisteanna áirithe a fhreagairt muna dteastaíonn uait. Má shocraíonn gan páirt a ghlacadh ann tuigfidh mé é sin.

Freagair na ceisteanna seo a leanas le do thoil trí tic (✓) a chur sna boscaí cuí

Ar léigh tú an Ráiteas i dTeanga Soiléir?	Leigh <input type="checkbox"/>	Níor léigh <input type="checkbox"/>
An dtuigeann tú an t-eolas a cuireadh ar fáil?	Tuigim <input type="checkbox"/>	Ní thuigim <input type="checkbox"/>
An raibh deis agat ceisteanna a chur agus an staidéar a phlé? Bhí <input type="checkbox"/>	Ní raibh <input type="checkbox"/>	
An bhfuair tú freagraí sásúla ar do chuid ceisteanna go léir? Fuair <input type="checkbox"/>	Ní bhfuair <input type="checkbox"/>	
An dtuigeann tú go ndéanfar taifeadadh fuaime ar an agallamh?	Tuigim <input type="checkbox"/>	Ní thuigim <input type="checkbox"/>

Leigh mé an t-eolas ar an bhfoirm seo agus tuigim é. D'fhreagair an taighdeoir mo chuid ceisteanna agus tá cóip agam den fhoirm thoiliú. Toilím a bheith páirteach sa taighde seo.

Síniú an rannpháirtí: \_\_\_\_\_

Ainm i mbloclitreacha: \_\_\_\_\_

Finné: \_\_\_\_\_

Dáta: \_\_\_\_\_

Má theastaíonn uait cóip leictreonach den tuairisc dheireanach a fháil, cuir tic sa bhosca agus tabhair do sheoladh ríomhphoist le do thoil. ☐ Ríomhphoist: \_\_\_\_\_