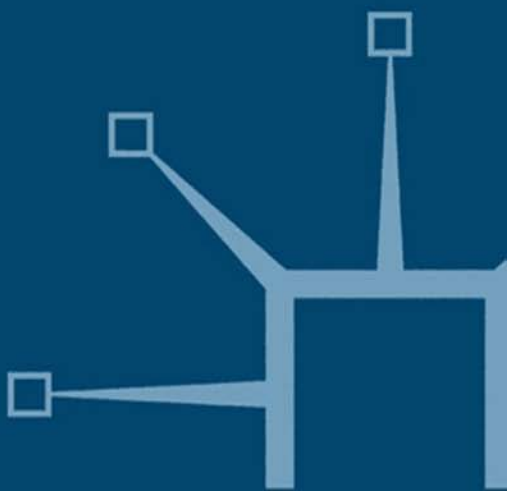


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Galician and Irish in the European Context

**Attitudes towards Weak and Strong
Minority Languages**

Bernadette O'Rourke



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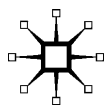
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**Attitudes towards Weak and Strong
Minority Languages**

Bernadette O'Rourke
Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

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First published 2011 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

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Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

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ISBN: 978-0-230-57403-8 hardback

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

To my mother and father

It might be said with a certain metaphoric licence that languages are seldom admired to death but are frequently despised to death.

(Nancy Dorian 1998: 5)

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Acknowledgements

Many friends and colleagues have contributed to the writing of this book. I cannot possibly mention them all but would like to mention a few in particular. I owe a great deal to Fernando Ramallo for his time and expertise and to his family for welcoming me into their home during my many trips to Galicia. I am also indebted to Anxo Lorenzo Suárez, Clare Mar-Molinero, Muiris Ó Laoire, Pádraig Ó Riagáin and Bill Richardson for advice and comments at various stages of the project. A very special thanks to Pierre and Oisín, for their patience and encouragement. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Irish and Galician students who agreed to be part of the research project.

Introduction

...the immortal star of Celticism rises again...will it shine for the Ireland of the South?

(Vicente Risco 1921: 20)¹

The *Torre de Hercules* is a well-known landmark for visitors to the Galician city of A Coruña in north-western Spain. Legend has it that on a clear day from the top of the tower it is possible to get a glimpse of Ireland in the distance. This popular legend reflects aspirations on the part of nineteenth-century Galician nationalists to join the Celtic nations of the North by becoming the Ireland of the South. Comparisons and connections between the Irish and Galician contexts can be found mainly in literary and cultural studies (see, for example, White 2004; McKevitt 2006) where cross-cultural connections between the two communities have drawn on a similar historical past, emigration, shared myths, symbols and sense of communal landscape.

Traditionally, such comparisons between these two Atlantic communities have been framed within the perhaps mistakenly named field of Celtic Studies, given Galicia's sometimes disputed claim to a Celtic past. While there does seem to be sufficient archaeological evidence to justify Galicia's attachment to its Celtic origins, Celtic influences in its autochthonous language, Galician, are more difficult to find. As a result, discussions of language survival and decline within the Celtic languages' framework, have given little or no attention to the so-called Seventh Celtic Nation. This is despite the fact that similarities on other levels can be clearly identified. Galicia's historically peripheral position within Spain, for instance, fits into Hechter's (1975) theoretical framework of internal colonialism used to describe the Irish, Gaelic, Welsh, Breton, Cornish and Manx contexts. Sociolinguistic analyses of

Galician have instead tended to be restricted to comparisons with other Romance or Iberian languages such as Basque and Catalan, language contexts, which apart from their geo-political positions within Spain, display very different cases in socioeconomic and cultural terms. While a cursory analysis of the Galician sociolinguistic literature makes sporadic references to Irish, such references tend to be framed negatively through the use of labels such 'Irlandization'. This term, often used by Galician sociolinguists, refers to the ritualistic nature of Irish as the official language of the state but which is rarely spoken. References to the 'Irlandization' of Galician are used to describe the potential threat of language shift facing Galician.

The Irish and Galician sociolinguistic contexts have each been studied from a wide variety of perspectives. Because of its anomalous socio-political status, Irish has attracted the attention of both autochthonous and international researchers. Interest in the Irish case stems from the fact that it is the only minority language in Europe and perhaps in the world with a state ostensibly dedicated to its protection (Fishman 1991). Additionally, language planning for Irish spans almost a century and in difference to other minority language cases in Europe, where language planning interventions are more recent, Irish in the Republic of Ireland² provides an excellent case study on the long-term effects of language policy.

Galician, in comparison, has received less attention outside its autochthonous community. Ramallo (2007: 21) suggests that this is due to several factors, among them that Galician and Spanish sociolinguistic publications have only recently become available in translation³ (see Fernández-Ferreiro and Ramallo 2002–2003; Monteagudo and Santamarina 1993). In contrast, familiarity with the Irish language context can undoubtedly be explained by an extensive bibliography which exists in English, paradoxically, the very language which is threatening its survival.

The general interest in linguistic minorities over the past number of decades has nevertheless heightened external interest in the Galician language. This has led to both sporadic and more in-depth accounts of the language situation (see, for example, Beswick 2007; Hoffmann 1996; Mar-Molinero 2000; Turell 2001). While Moreno Fernández (2007) and Ramallo (2007) are critical of some of these accounts, their authors have nonetheless begun to allow the sociolinguistic situation to become internationally known outside of the Iberian Peninsula. Moreover, the distance of these external authors from Galicia, it could be argued, allows for a more objective and

dispassionate perspective of the social, linguistic, and political situation relating to Galician.

As with many comparative studies, the decision to focus on the Irish and Galician language cases is partly autobiographical. I am what can be described as an Irish Hispanist, and through my repeated trips to Galicia over the past ten years, have become interested in and familiar with the Galician sociolinguistic context. At first sight these two languages appeared to represent very different cases. Irish enjoys constitutional support as the official language of the Irish Republic. Galician is co-official with Spanish within the Autonomous Community of Galicia. Irish is a Celtic language in contact with English which is Germanic in contrast with the Galician and Spanish contact pair where both are Romance languages. Irish is spoken by less than 5 per cent of the population in stark contrast with Galician which has never ceased to be the language spoken by the majority of Galicians.

While comparing two distinct cases demonstrates the usefulness of detailed comparative research (Blommaert 1996), overemphasis on these differences may explain why such little attention has been given to any systematic study of this language pair. It should also be remembered that there is not widespread consensus about the effects of these differences on language survival. Political and institutional support for a language does not always guarantee revitalization. The Irish language context, as we will see in later chapters, is one of the best testaments of this. Despite its status as the official language of the Irish State, continued survival of the language is still threatened. Similarly, while linguistic similarities between a minority and the dominant language can enhance the process of linguistic revitalization, they can also increase the possibility of assimilation (Clyne 1991). As we will see later, linguistic closeness between Galician and Spanish has to some degree contributed to the assimilation of Galician speakers. The numerical strength of the Galician-speaking community compared with that of Irish might also lead us to predict a healthier future for the Galician language. It is, however, naïve to base language survival on the basis of numbers alone. Who speaks a language is ultimately more important than how many speak it (Dorian 1981).

In determining the outcome of language contact situations and the survival prospects of minority languages such as Irish and Galician, earlier studies on language maintenance and shift tended to focus on macro-social events (such as those described above) as direct causes of survival or decline. Later research has, however, highlighted that it is only through an analysis of the interpretative filter of linguistic beliefs,

attitudes and ideologies that the effects of such macro-social factors can be assessed. It is from this perspective that the comparative analysis of the Irish and Galician contexts will be based in this book.

In analysing the Irish and Galician language pair, the comparative approach adopted in the book attempts to provide a broader and more objective framework than can be achieved through single-case studies. Additionally, it seeks to bring the dimension of external critique which as Ó Laoire (1996: 51) points out, acts as a safeguard 'against a discussion that may be flavoured by an over-introspective paralysis of analysis'. The book also proposes to make a contribution to the ever increasing number of cross-national comparative studies on minority language issues, in an effort to further our understanding of the mechanisms at play in maintenance and loss of minority languages in different parts of the world.

The opening chapter of the book reviews the literature in the area of language attitudes and language ideologies. The purpose of this review is to contextualize some of the main and most useful approaches in the field and particularly those applied to the comparative analysis of attitudes towards minority language cases. The definitions, theories, perspectives and methodologies discussed in the chapter provide the framework which will guide the reader through later analyses and discussion.

The historical evolution of language attitudes and ideologies is explored in Chapter 2 and sets the scene for the attitudinal data which will be presented in later chapters. Key changes in language policy relating to Irish and Galician are examined in Chapter 3. These changes are situated in the broader context of socio-economic and political changes taking place in Irish and Galician societies. Chapter 4 discusses the effect of policy and planning initiatives on language attitudes and ideologies and examines some of the implications of research findings for the vitality of each language. Some new insights into the mismatch between language attitudes and language use are also provided. Chapter 5 presents the findings of a systematic cross-national study of young people's attitudes towards these two minority languages. The book concludes with an overview of key similarities and differences between Irish and Galician and explores what language attitudes can tell us about their vitality.

1

Language Attitudes

Introduction

In determining the outcome of language contact situations and the survival prospects of minority languages, early studies on language maintenance and shift tended to implicate macro-social events as direct causes of survival or decline (see Fishman 1976a; Weinreich 1968). However, later research has highlighted that it is only through an analysis of the interpretative filter of beliefs about language that the effects of macro-social factors can be assessed (Mertz 1989: 109).

The 'interpretative filter' of beliefs, to which Mertz (1989) refers, can be looked at under the frequently cited generic heading of *language attitudes* or *language ideologies*. The perceived utility of *attitude* in the context of language-related research stems from an understanding of language as a form of social behaviour. It also derives from an underlying recognition that the evolution of linguistic structures and uses necessarily involves an analysis of speakers' ideas about the meaning, function and value attached to different ways of speaking and the use of different languages (Silverstein 1985: 220). According to Woolard (1998: 11), this stance moves beyond that taken in earlier linguistic and anthropological studies in which language attitudes and ideologies were seen as a distraction from the primary and thus 'real' linguistic data. She notes that Bloomfield (1933), for instance, referred to such studies as a 'detour' to the explanation of the structure of language.

Woolard (1998: 10) highlights that the emphasis of ideological analysis on the social and experimental origins of systems of signification such as language helps counter the treatment of such systems as 'natural'. She claims that such analysis forces us to question how seemingly essential and natural meanings of and about language and language

use are socially produced as effective and powerful. Implicit or explicit judgements and evaluations about languages are often made leading to their categorization along bipolar lines as being 'better' or 'worse', 'correct' or 'incorrect', 'logical' or 'illogical', 'beautiful' or 'ugly'. These judgements capture the social conventions within speech communities concerning the status and prestige of different languages.

While it is unlikely from a linguistic point of view that one language is 'better' or 'worse' than another, such judgements are commonly made (Edwards 1994). However, as Fishman (1976b: 331) points out, the absence or presence of a 'kernel' of truth in such judgements is entirely unrelated to the mobilizing power of such views. Spitulnik (1998) stresses that language ideologies and processes of language evaluation are never just about language. She highlights that:

Language ideologies are, among many other things, about the construction and legitimisation of power, the production of social relations of sameness and difference and the criterion of cultural stereotypes about types of speakers and social groups. (Spitulnik 1998: 164)

Similarly, in their review of attitudinal research, Ryan, Giles and Sebastian (1982: 1) refer to the differential power of particular social groups which is reflected in language variation and in attitudes towards those variations.

Although much of the work on *language attitudes* has been conducted under the rubric of the social psychology of language, other disciplines including linguistic anthropology, the sociology of language, sociolinguistics and education have also shared overlapping concerns and involvement. Despite the extensive survey of work in the area, a great deal of attitudinal data are, however, also overlooked due to the lack of terminological consensus surrounding the use of differing but related concepts across different research disciplines. Apart from *language attitude* and *language ideology*, other terms including *opinion*, *belief*, *habit*, *value*, *evaluation* and *perception* are also frequently used.

Defining language attitudes

While it is essential to recognize the multiplicity of research traditions in *language attitude* studies, it is generally acknowledged that much of the work in the area draws specifically on the social psychology of language (see Baker 1992; Giles *et al.* 1987). This is not surprising given

that the term *attitude* itself is what Edwards (1994: 97) describes as 'the cornerstone of traditional social psychology'. As Baker (1992: 11) points out, the incorporation of the term into this area can be traced to Allport's (1935) classic definition in which he describes *attitude* as:

[...] a mental or neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. (cited in Baker 1992: 11)

Since this initial contribution, the use of the term has proliferated and the concept of 'attitude' is, according to Allport (1985: 35), 'probably the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary (American) social psychology'. However, despite its popularity, even within the core discipline of social psychology, there is no general agreement on its definition. An examination of any text of social psychology demonstrates this (Edwards 1982: 20). Among the countless definitions which have been formulated, one of the most widely used is that offered by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975: 6). They define *attitude* as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object. In the case of language attitudes, which concern us here, the 'object' towards which such predispositions are held is of course language.

According to Fishbein and Ajzen's (ibid.) definition, an attitude is 'learned' through a socialization process which begins in early childhood and, as Allport's (1935) definition highlights, is 'organised through experience' within the social world. Attitudes are not fixed but are instead constantly fluctuating and shifting according to their social environment.

Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) definition, like that proposed by Allport (1935), reflects the *mentalist* perspective within attitude studies in which an *attitude* is viewed as 'an internal state aroused by stimulation of some type and which may mediate the organism's subsequent response' (see Williams 1974: 21). According to the *mentalist* perspective, an *attitude* is a deep-seated and private 'state of readiness rather than an observable response' (Fasold 1984: 147). In contrast to this is the *behaviourist* perspective which views attitudes as overt and observable responses to social situations, thereby essentially by-passing *attitudes per se* and concentrating directly on expressed behaviour (see McGuire 1969). However, as Agheyisi and Fishman (1970) have pointed out, resorting solely to the *behaviourist* model makes *attitude* a dependent variable and

as such it loses its capacity to account for and explain social behaviour. Although Giles *et al.*'s (1983: 83) review of the literature on *language attitudes* includes behaviourist elements such as 'self-reports concerning language use', the more conventional practice among scholars in the field tends towards a mentalist perspective (see Agheyisi and Fishman 1970; Baker 1992; Cooper and Fishman 1974).

Attitudes, so defined, are made up of hypothetical constructs which are formed from a number of different components. While there is no general agreement on the actual number of these components nor the relationship between them, social psychologists often operate with three different components:

- Cognitive (entailing beliefs about the world)
- Affective (involving feelings towards an object)
- Behavioural (encouraging or promoting certain actions)

These three components build on more or less complex models of *attitude* which vary according to different theoretical approaches. Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) approach for instance, distinguishes along these three componential lines but these authors change their labels to 'attitude', 'belief' and 'behavioural intention'. Within this framework, the term 'attitude' corresponds specifically to the affective component and is used to indicate an evaluation or a degree of favourability towards an object. Beliefs, on the other hand, are used to describe the cognitive dimension and indicate a person's subjective probability that an object has a particular characteristic. Behavioural intentions constitute the third componential division and, according to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), describe a person's subjective probability that he or she will perform a particular behaviour towards an object. Ajzen (1988) suggests that these three components merge to form a single construct of attitude at a higher level of abstraction. He gives the following explanation of how this hierarchical model of attitude accounts for the way in which attitudes affect behaviour:

The actual or symbolic presence of an object elicits a generally favorable or unfavorable evaluative reaction, the attitude towards the object. This attitude, in turn, predisposes cognitive, affective and conative responses to the object whose evaluative tone is consistent with the overall attitude. (Ajzen 1988: 22–3)

Theorists such as McGuire (1969: 157) have questioned the validity of making these three distinctions claiming that '... theorists who insist on

distinguishing them should bear the burden of proving the distinction is worthwhile'. Fishbein's and Ajzen's (1975) work in the field, however, provides evidence that componential differentiation is necessary and worthwhile from both a theoretical and empirical point of view. Their theory postulates that no necessary congruence exists between the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of attitudes, thus justifying the need to analyse attitudinal components separately. Edwards (1994: 98) suggests that componential separation in the context of language attitudes is justified. He notes that a person might believe that a language is important for career prospects (beliefs) but at the same time loathe the language (feelings). In attitude measurement, formal statements about a language generally reflect the cognitive component of an attitude which tends to contain surface evaluations about the language. There are doubts as to whether deep-seated, private feelings (affective component) are truly elicited in attitude measurement, especially when incongruent with preferred public statements (Baker 1992).

Language attitude studies are seldom confined to language itself and are more often extended to include attitudes towards speakers of a particular language or variety as well as a range of language-relevant 'objects' such as language maintenance and shift, planning efforts, linguistic policies and language use. Ryan *et al.* (1982: 7) define language attitudes as 'any affective, cognitive or behavioural index of evaluative reactions toward different language varieties or their speakers'. Adebija (2000) views language attitudes from a broad perspective:

[...] which accommodates evaluative judgements made about a language or its variety, its speakers, towards efforts at promoting, maintaining or planning a language, or even towards learning it. (Adebija 2000: 77)

Such language-relevant 'objects' can be further extended to include language-relevant 'institutions' and 'events' in line with Ajzen's (1988: 4) definition of attitude as 'a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event'. Language attitude is what Baker (1992: 29) describes as an 'umbrella' term which brings together a variety of specific attitudes. Indeed Giles *et al.*'s (1983) review of the literature in the area of language attitudes highlights the extensive range within which the term can be understood, which includes:

[...] language evaluation (how favourably a variety is viewed), language preference (e.g., which of two languages or varieties is preferred

for certain purposes in certain situations), desirability and reasons for learning a particular language, evaluation of social groups who use a particular variety, self-reports concerning language use, desirability of bilingualism and bilingual education, and opinions concerning shifting or maintaining language policies. (Giles *et al.* 1983: 83)

However, as pointed out earlier, more conventional studies of language attitudes tend to make an explicit distinction between attitudes in the mentalist and behaviourist sense and exclude reference to 'self-reports concerning language use'. Similarly, the inclusion of 'opinions' under the heading of language attitudes is not widely agreed upon. Baker (1992: 13) explicitly distinguishes between 'attitude' and 'opinion' and defines the latter as an overt belief without an affective reaction. Nevertheless, the inclusion of behaviours and opinions in Giles *et al.*'s description above, implies recognition of the diverse approaches and theoretical perspectives which the area clearly encompasses.

Socially grounded approaches to language attitudes

Although the discussion thus far has looked at language attitudes from a socio-psychological perspective, language attitudes have also been fruitfully assessed within the rubric of sociology and anthropology. Indeed *language attitude* has been a central concept in sociolinguistics ever since Labov's (1966) pioneering work on social stratification of speech communities. According to Woolard (1998: 16), more socially grounded approaches to *language attitudes* (see Dorian 1981; Gal 1979; Woolard 1989) recast the interpersonal attitude which grew up within the social-psychological tradition as 'a socially derived, intellectualised or behavioural ideology akin to Bourdieu's "habitus"'. The replacement of the term *attitude*, by *ideology*, in Woolard's (1998) definition, marks a different research perspective and emphasizes the more sociological as opposed to the traditionally psychological focus. In doing so, the term *ideology* highlights the importance of the group as opposed to the individual and uses the term to refer to codification of group norms and values (Baker 1992: 15), rather than the more individualistic representations manifested through *language attitudes* within the social-psychological framework.

As with the term *attitude*, *ideology* is also associated with a very often confusing tangle of definitions and meanings. Woolard (1998: 5–6) emphasizes that contemporary uses of the term point to several recurring strands. Even while recognizing that none are fully adequate, she

picks out a number of key themes from the literature on ideologies. Within one such school of thought, ideology refers to mental phenomena. According to this interpretation, *ideology* is part of our consciousness and is made up of subjective representations, beliefs and ideas. The subjectivist and mentalist siting of *ideology* can be compared with the *mentalist* perspective which is commonly adopted in the social-psychological interpretations of *attitude*. However, this interpretation of *ideology* constitutes a minority trend which is not always accepted among scholars of *ideology*. Woolard (1998) points out that the most influential view of ideology over the past few decades is that ideology is viewed as behavioural. According to this view the core phenomenon relates to meaning through lived relations rather than ideation in a mentalist sense.

In Woolard's (1998: 16) socially grounded definition of *attitude*, she draws a likeness between this 'socially derived, intellectualised or behavioural ideology' and Pierre Bourdieu's 'habitus'. The concept of 'habitus', which draws on the broader sociological programme of the French sociologist, can be understood as:

[...] a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks. (Thompson in Bourdieu 1991: 12)

Obvious conceptual parallels can be found between the social-psychological interpretation of *attitude* and *habitus*. Both highlight the presence of a dispositional quality which is used to explain behaviour. In the context of Bourdieu's theories on language and society, the 'socially-derived ideology' of the *linguistic habitus* constitutes a key concept in the understanding of his sociological theory of language behaviour and language use. This theory highlights the interactive nature of language contact situations, in which the *linguistic habitus* which functions as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions helps explain what happens between two speakers in a language contact situation. The componential structure of attitudes is also present in this sociological interpretation, 'as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions' which can be compared with what are referred to as the cognitive, affective and behavioural components in the terminology used in social psychology. As was already pointed out in the discussion of the term *ideology*, the two broad perspectives, distinguishing the *mentalist* and *behaviourist* orientations within social psychology, are

also present in Woolard's (1998: 16) definition through her reference to 'intellectualised' and 'behavioural' approaches to ideology.

In our earlier discussion of language attitudes within a socio-psychological perspective we saw that an attitude was understood as a 'learned' disposition (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975: 6). This began in early childhood and was organized through experience within the social world. Sociological perspectives, however, tend to place more emphasis on the external socialization processes involved in shaping language attitudes. As Bourdieu (1991: 82) points out, the system of successive reinforcements or refutations is as a result of this socialization process. This has constituted in each of us a sense of the social value of linguistic usages and all subsequent perceptions of linguistic products. Therefore, while sociologically grounded approaches do not refute the fact that dispositions towards a language are acquired by an individual, they stress that such dispositions reflect a common response to a set of common societal as opposed to individualistic conditions.

Language attitudes as predictors of behaviour

It is generally agreed that the survival of a language depends on the degree to which it is used by members of a community (see Fishman 1976a; 1991). The behavioural dimension of language attitudes is therefore of most interest in the studies concerning the future of minority languages. However, understanding and measuring this behavioural dimension has also proven most problematic. In the area of social psychology, relations between attitude and behaviour have been a major concern for many years. Several experiments have been carried out with the aim of analysing the complex relationship between people's attitudes and their behaviours (see Wicker 1969 for an overview). However, the conclusions are far from unanimous. Cohen (1964: 138), for example, says that 'attitudes are always seen as precursors of behaviour, as determinants of how a person will actually behave in his daily affairs', but LaPiere's (1934) frequently cited study provided counter-evidence, leading him to conclude, for example, that the attitudes overtly expressed by US hotel managers in terms of serving a Chinese couple were often inconsistent with their actual behaviour. Wicker (1969: 65) also provides a detailed review of research on attitudes and behaviours and argues that 'it is considerably more likely that attitudes will be unrelated or only slightly related to overt behaviours than that attitudes will be closely related to actions'. Within the social psychology of language, experiments have been used to analyse the complex relationship

between language attitudes and language behaviour (see Bourhis and Giles 1976; Fishman 1969; Kristiansen and Giles 1992; Ladegaard 2000) but, as with those in the core discipline of social psychology, conclusions are not unanimous.

The lack of consensus, conceptual difficulties in defining the term and subsequently building on theory brought attitude research under severe criticism regarding its utility in predicting and explaining human behaviour (McGuire 1969; Wicker 1969). Behaviourist models especially question the role of attitude research and suggest concentration on actual behaviour rather than 'behavioural intentions'. There continues to be a growing tendency to question the ability to predict action from attitude or indeed attitudes from action. These criticisms are also to be found in language attitude research and the mismatch between language attitudes and behaviour has led some writers to suggest bypassing language attitudes altogether and studying language use directly.

Such criticisms have led to a more sophisticated understanding of attitudes and what they can tell us about behaviour. According to Ajzen:

Every particular instance of human action is (...) determined by a unique set of factors. Any change in circumstances, be it ever so slight, might produce a different reaction. (Ajzen 1988: 45)

The specificity or generality of the attitude and the behaviour under investigation can explain apparent differences between attitude and behaviour. Broad attitudes, for instance, will be poor indicators of very specific action. As Baker highlights:

Human behaviour is mostly consistent, patterned and congruent in terms of attitudes and action, so long as the same levels of generality are used. (Baker 1992: 17)

Consequently, a general attitude towards a language will be a poor indicator of specific behaviour such as use of that language with friends during lunch-break at school.

From a socio-psychological perspective, Wicker (1969: 67–74) outlines some of the personal and situational factors which affect behaviour and these provide a clearer understanding of the apparent mismatch between language attitudes and language use. Personal factors include a person's verbal, intellectual or social abilities. When applied to language

attitudes, this means that a person might, express positive attitudes towards increasing use of a minority language but, because of low levels of linguistic competence in the language, feel unable to change his or her language accordingly. A second personal factor to consider relates to competing motives which influence different types of behaviour. Subjects may, for instance, be faced with a situation in which they have to choose between using the language of the peer group or the language of parents and the subsequent consequences associated with these choices.

The situational factors include the actual or considered presence of certain people. Peer group members may for instance influence a speaker's language choice even though they are not directly involved in conversation interaction. Normative prescriptions of what is considered to be proper behaviour are also included as situational factors. A person may for example have positive attitudes towards a language but might be reluctant to put it to use because the language is considered inappropriate for certain social contexts.

Wicker (1969) also suggests the relevance of alternative behaviours available to subjects in understanding mismatches between attitudes and behaviour. For example, a person may have fairly negative attitudes towards the minority language but may be required as part of the school curriculum to be able to speak that language during oral examinations, in which case necessity is more influential than attitude. Finally, Wicker mentions the importance considering expected and actual consequences of various behavioural acts such as how a person is perceived by others if he or she speaks the minority language, involving the use of stigmatized labels such as 'old fashioned', 'backward' or 'country bumpkin'.

From a sociological perspective, the role given to situational factors in Bourdieu's (1991) theoretical model on language exchanges can also help explain the complex interplay between the socially derived ideology of the 'habitus' (understood as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions) and language behaviour. According to Bourdieu, individuals adopt strategies with regard to the use or non-use of language based on the 'profit' or advantage that the speaker can derive from the situation. His theoretical model on language exchanges suggests that practices, including linguistic ones, follow a logic that is economic:

Every speech act and, more generally, every action, is a conjuncture, an encounter between independently causal series. On the one hand, there are the socially constructed dispositions of the linguistic habitus, which imply a certain propensity to speak and say determinate

things and a certain capacity to speak, which involves both the linguistic capacity to generate an infinite number of grammatically correct discourses, and the social capacity to use this competence adequately in a determinate situation. On the other hand, there are the structures of the linguistic market, which impose themselves as a system of specific sanctions and censorships. (Bourdieu 1991: 37)

Therefore, language attitudes are not only socially constructed through the linguistic habitus but are at the same time determined by the broader social context of the linguistic market. This market can be understood as the broader macro-social, economic and political context impacting on language attitudes and behaviour at a more micro level. The relationship between the linguistic habitus and the linguistic market thus works to determine the acceptability of a language (Ó Riagáin 2008: 336).

In Bourdieu's framework, languages are always spoken in a particular market or within a certain social field. Within these markets or social fields, they are accorded certain values and it is part of the 'practical competence' of the speaker to know when, where and with whom to use a certain language in order to derive maximum 'profit' from the situation. The linguistic and social competence which individuals possess in a language functions as what Bourdieu terms 'linguistic capital'. Language choice is determined by the speaker's knowledge about the social meanings or values attached to the different languages or language varieties available on the linguistic market. These values can be purely economic or monetary, but can also have a symbolic value such as prestige or honour, and a cultural value in the form of educational qualifications or skills. These values can, as an analysis of the Irish and Galician contexts will show, vary across different markets and a language may, for example, have a low economic value but may be highly valued as a symbol of group identity.

The merits of language attitude research

Although the relationship between language attitudes and behaviour has been shown to be spurious, inconsistencies between what people say and what people do have perhaps as much if not more to do with the complexity of language behaviour itself as with the inadequacies of language attitudes. Therefore, eliminating attitudinal research from the equation does not resolve these complexities but instead diminishes our understanding of language behaviour. Most writers agree that attitudes

provide imperfect indicators of behaviour but at the same time emphasize that such imperfections do not justify the sole concentration on behaviour because direct analysis of linguistic behaviour is also problematic, on both a theoretical and practical level.

From a theoretical perspective, Baker (1992: 16) notes that observation of behaviour does not necessarily lead to an accurate and valid understanding of social reality. Behaviour is often consciously or unconsciously designed to disguise or conceal inner attitudes and may in fact produce miscategorization and wrong explanations. On a practical level, changes in language use and behaviour are notoriously difficult to document on a large scale (Woolard and Gahng 1990) given the infinite number of linguistic practices existing in any particular speech community. Thus, the ability to capture these accumulated practices through language attitudes offers a more efficient and methodologically practical mode of data collection.

Much criticism surrounding research on language attitudes has concentrated on the shortcomings of such inquiry and as a result, valuable insights gained from such research are often overlooked. Although countless studies have shown inconsistencies between language attitudes and actual use, Baker (1992: 16) points out that, 'attitudes may be better predictors of future behaviour than observation of current behaviour'. Woolard and Gahng (1990: 312) make a similar point in support of attitudinal studies suggesting that because of '... the mediating import of symbolic values, it is useful to consider changes in language attitudes and values even when behavioural changes are not (yet) apparent or are not readily documented'. In the context of minority languages, attitudes, as predictors of future behaviour, provide a useful barometer for language planners and policy makers, who are then in a position to intervene and enhance conditions for language use. As highlighted in the earlier discussion of Wicker's (1969) personal and situational factors, this might involve enhancing intellectual and social abilities such as linguistic competence in the language through, for example, the provision of language classes. Such measures are of course in response to the incidence of positive attitudes towards the language in a community. However, language planners also need to be aware of negative attitudes towards a language because, as Baker (1992) points out:

Attempting language shift by language planning, language policy making and the provision of human and material resources can all come to nothing if attitudes are not favourable to change. Language engineering can flourish or fail according to the attitudes of the community.

Having a favourable attitude to the subject of language attitudes becomes important in bilingual policy and practice. (1992: 21)

Ó Riagáin (2008: 331) notes that the emergence of language issues on the policy agenda of many states, and a simultaneous shift to the operational procedures of planning in governmental decision making, all created a demand for reliable, up-to-date data about public attitudes and attitudes of specific groups such as teachers and school pupils. He also adds that attitudinal research was seen to meet this need in the process of formulating and implementing language policy.

Mac Donnacha's (2000) *Integrated Language Planning Model* includes language attitudes as a key component (although not the only component) in ensuring the maintenance or loss of a minority language. He offers three reasons why positive attitudes towards the target language are important. The first relates to the idea that highly positive attitudes towards the target language may cause individuals to take direct or secondary action towards that language. For Mac Donnacha, direct action might include, for example, learning the language and using it in various settings. This may require considerable sacrifice in terms of time, effort and sometimes money by the individual or group.

Secondary action, on the other hand, involves a more passive stance and might include providing one's own children with the opportunity to learn the language or sending them to a school which teaches through the medium of the target language or making personal financial contributions to language organizations or activities. Positive attitudes towards the target language among the community in general can provide a form of moral support for those who speak or are promoting the target language. Finally, positive attitudes among the population are necessary for any government to sustain high levels of investment over long periods of time to maintain or revive a minority language.

Similarly, Grin (2003: 44) and Grin and Vaillancourt (1999: 98), include positive language attitudes as one of the three conditions necessary for increased language use in a community. Like Mac Donnacha, these authors are careful to point out that language attitudes are not the only variables needed for languages to thrive. They emphasize that linguistic capacity and opportunity to use the language are also key conditions needed to increase language use. They do however note that '...favourable attitudes probably represent the single most important condition, and one that eventually pulls the others; in other words, we believe that in general, *supply follows demand*' (Grin and Vaillancourt 1999, emphasis in the original) for language revitalization to occur.

The multidimensional nature of language attitudes

As we have already seen, Giles *et al.*'s (1983) review of the literature includes a wide variety of language-relevant 'objects', 'persons', 'institutions' and 'events' towards which favourable or unfavourable dispositions can be held. In understanding the survival of minority languages, it is not sufficient to look at attitudes towards the language itself but to distinguish between attitudes across different domains such as the home, education, administration, as well as reactions to linguistic policies, institutional support for the language and the desired future of the language.

Mac Donnacha (2000) points out that we need to make a distinction between attitudes towards the target language and attitudes towards specific policies concerning it. He notes that research in relation to Irish has shown that, although there is widespread support of the language, there is also considerable opposition to policies which are perceived to involve any sort of unfair advantage, coercion or favouritism in connection with language. Members of a community may be more or less favourable towards various language-related issues or themes. Therefore, attitudes tend to be multidimensional and usually contain several layers of meaning.

Lewis' (1975) earlier studies on Welsh made a sixfold conceptual distinction across the various dimensions of attitudes towards the language and categorized them according to a number of themes. The first category looked at people's general approval of the Welsh language and was operationalized through an attitudinal statement such as 'I like to speak Welsh', with no reference to where, why or with whom. The second category assessed more specific attitudes towards the Welsh language, which Lewis labelled commitment to practice. This category was in turn operationalized as 'I want to maintain Welsh to enable Wales to develop'. National ethnic tradition, economic and social communicative importance, family and local considerations and, finally, personal, ideological considerations constituted the four other conceptual distinctions identified in assessing attitudes towards Welsh.

One potential problem with such conceptual distinctions is in establishing whether such differences are present within the personal constructions of individuals. However, this problem is to a large extent resolved because studies on language attitudes can now draw on sophisticated statistical methods such as factor analysis, which allows attitudinal dimensions to be explored. What is considered more problematic is replicating these conceptual dimensions across time, context and

sample. Although the conceptual categories used in Lewis' (1975) study were apt for the sample of Welsh respondents that he looked at, such conceptual constructions may differ in another language context or even across a different sample of Welsh respondents.

However, two dimensions can be identified which have been used by researchers across boundaries of time, sample and nation and which frequently appear as a dichotomy. Baker (1992: 31) points to 'instrumental' and 'integrative' dimensions of language attitudes. The former relates to the desire to get ahead in some way and the latter is the desire to be accepted by another group. These two dimensions which correspond to socio-psychological distinctions between different forms of motivations can be traced to Gardner and Lambert's (1972) influential study of second-language acquisition. 'Instrumental' and 'integrative' dimensions roughly correspond to the labels 'status' (or prestige) and 'solidarity' used, for example, in socially grounded distinctions made by Gal (1979), Dorian (1981) and Woolard (1989) to account for language maintenance and shift. Studies have found for example that attitudes towards a language may be positive in terms of the 'solidarity' dimension but negative in terms of 'status' values or vice versa. The findings of research exploring these two dimensions are generally consistent. Conversely, speakers of languages associated with a high 'status' or 'instrumental' value tend to be linked to high prestige languages and are ranked highly and in terms of socio-economic status and power. Speakers of languages associated with 'integrative' or 'solidarity' dimension tend to lack power and prestige. A minority language that is valued as a symbol of identity and solidarity may simultaneously be seen, even by its own speakers as weakly endowed in terms of status or in Bourdieu's (1991) terms, as a form of *linguistic capital*. The tensions set up by those competing evaluations can, however, be extremely difficult for individuals and communities to contain and resolve (Ó Riagáin 2008: 329–30).

The 'integrative' or 'solidarity' dimension

The 'integrative' or 'solidarity' dimension of language attitudes stems from the idea that language binds people into a community of shared understandings and hence identity. Subsequently, the strength of a minority language can be predicted by the degree to which speakers value their language as a symbol of group or ethnic identity. The language and identity perspective as an attitudinal dimension is based on the well-established premise that language plays an important role in

defining a sense of 'ethnic' or group identity and thus making it a valuable resource to be protected.

For Anderson (1991: 133) language constitutes an important symbol of identity because of 'its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect *particular solidarities*' (emphasis in the original). Languages are taken to symbolize group solidarity and as a means of marking distinctions across different ethnic or social groups. In doing so, they serve an important boundary-marking function (Heller 1994, 1999; Tabouret-Keller 1997), which, in Barthian terms, can be used to distinguish 'them' from 'us' (see Barth 1969). May (2001: 131) suggests a parallel between the boundary-marking function of language and Armstrong's (1982) notion of 'symbolic border guards'. The concept of 'border guard' is linked to specific cultural codes such as language, and these codes function to identify people as members or non-members of a specific national collectivity. It thus follows that in cases where language boundaries are used as a demarcating feature of a collective identity, a blurring of these boundaries is sometimes regarded as a threat to the group's existence (Khleif 1979). Similarly, where language is central to defining a group or, in Smolicz's (1995) terms, where it acts as a 'core cultural value', the weakening of language as a demarcating feature can be perceived as a means of endangering the legitimacy of the group.

Fishman suggests that the *indexical link* between a language and a particular culture 'is, at any time during which that linkage is still intact, best able to name the artefacts and to formulate or express the interests, values and world-views of that culture' (1991: 20). For him, the potential symbolic role of any language derives from its intricate indexical and part-whole relationship with its associated culture (Fishman 1987: 639). This proposition constitutes a weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis according to which people who speak different languages display different cultural outlooks as a result of a culturally specific structuring of reality through language (see May 2001: 133). Language is thus seen as influential in shaping our customary way of thinking (Edwards 1994). This notion, according to May (2001: 133) is akin to Bourdieu's linguistic 'habitus' which comprises a set of dispositions which are acquired in the course of learning to speak in particular social and cultural contexts.

As well as an indexical link between language and a particular culture, Fishman (1987: 639) also refers to a *part-whole* relationship between language and culture. Fishman (1991) argues that because so much of any culture is verbally constituted through its history, stories and songs, there are parts of every culture that are expressed via the language with

which that culture is most closely associated. It thus follows that patterns associated with a particular language are culturally or locally rather than universally applicable.

The predictive power of the 'integrative' or 'solidarity' dimension

The literature on language maintenance and shift (see Fishman 1991; May 2001; Paulston 1994) highlights that support for a language as a symbol of ethnic or group identity does not necessarily prevent language shift. For some people, the language and identity link may be little more than a superficial marker of identity. Positive support for the language on this level need never move beyond its symbolic role. Eastman (1984: 275) suggests that language use constitutes a surface feature of ethnic identity and therefore, in adopting another language, ethnic identity in itself is not affected. The original language of the ethnic group then becomes what Eastman calls an 'associated' language, where the language continues to be upheld by the group as a constituent part of its heritage but is rarely if ever used.

The 'associated' function of language has clear parallels with the weak form of social mobilization adopted by minority language groups which Paulston (1994) terms *ethnicity*. In her conceptual model for the prediction of maintenance or loss of a minority language, Paulston characterizes different types of social mobilization on a four-point continuum ranging from *ethnicity* to *geographic nationalism*. She uses the concept of social mobilization to describe firstly, the level of recognition of certain cultural features (including language) among members of a minority group, and, secondly, the perception that the group has of its relation with some dominant 'other'.

Ethnicity, is the first point on the social mobilization continuum and is defined as a type of social mobilization based on learned behaviour associated with a common past and common cultural values and beliefs (Paulston 1994: 30–1). Minority groups that adopt this type of social mobilization tend not to feel discriminated against or to feel that they are participating in a power struggle with another ethnic group. For them, although language continues to be recognized as a defining feature of the group, the language use aspect of identity disappears due to the lack of perceived necessity by the group to explicitly demarcate ethnic boundaries on the basis of language. In Eastman's (1984) terms, the language continues to be recognized as an 'associated' language but is rarely or ever used. Paulston (1994) predicts that the closer a minority

group's social mobilization comes to *ethnicity*, the more likely the group is to lose the minority language and to assimilate to the dominant group.

However, language use as an aspect of identity increases for minority groups where *ethnicity* turns 'militant' (Paulston 1994: 32), adopting the second form of social mobilization within the four-point continuum which Paulston terms *ethnic movement*. In addition to identifying with common cultural values such as a specific language, the members of minority groups who fall into the *ethnic movement* category also see themselves competing with another ethnic majority for scarce goods and resources. As a result, language becomes symbolic of the power struggle between the minority and the dominant group. The third point on the continuum is *ethnic nationalism*, which incorporates access to territory by the ethnic group and the goal of political independence. Paulston also adds a fourth point on the continuum which she terms *geographic nationalism* defined as a nationalist movement which is territorially but not ethnically based.

As well as distinguishing among different minority language cases, Paulston's framework can also be used to explain the varying relationships to language or languages among different sections of the community and across different groups. Intragroup differences are also recognized by Smolicz and Secombe (1988) who, as well as postulating that some cultures are more language-centred than others, also differentiate four broad approaches to minority languages that are evident between and within ethnic minority groups. A *negative evaluation* of the language characterizes the first group. A second group is included and is characterized as one which shows *indifference* towards the language with low levels of interest and support. The third category includes those with a *general positive evaluation* for the language. These groups tend to regard the language as a vital element of ethnicity but are not prepared personally to learn or use it, thus mirroring fairly closely Eastman's (1984) notion of an 'associated' language and the concept of *ethnicity* as defined by Paulston (1994). The final category within Smolicz and Secombe's (1988) framework is termed *personal positive evaluation* whereby the language is considered a core cultural value and this language commitment is put into practice.

The 'instrumental' or 'status' dimension

The inability to predict the survival chances of a language through the 'integrative', 'solidarity' or 'ethnicity' dimension alone, prompted

a widening of the research scope by seeking to incorporate additional measures of 'vitality' along with identity. As Giles and Coupland (1991: 136) put it, 'the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality originated as an attempt to incorporate individuals' construals of societal conditions as factors mediating individuals' interethnic attitudes and behaviour'. 'Status' is one of three components, along with 'demography' and 'institutional support' used to determine the level of linguistic vitality in a community. Information on, and perceptions of, these components are gathered by specially designed questionnaires.

The 'status' component is defined as 'a configuration of prestige variables of the linguistic group in the intergroup context. The more status a linguistic group is recognized to have, the more vitality it can be said to possess as a collective entity' (Giles *et al.* 1977: 309). The 'status' variable in Giles *et al.*'s model is broken down into three separate attributes including 'social status', 'economic status' and 'linguistic status'.

The 'demography' component in the model is defined in terms of 'the sheer numbers of group members and their distribution throughout the territory' (*ibid.*). Giles *et al.* note that ethnolinguistic groups whose demographic trends are favourable are more likely to have vitality as distinctive groups than those whose demographic trends are unfavourable and less conducive to group's survival. Finally, the 'institutional support' component is defined as 'the extent to which a language group receives formal and informal representation in the various institutions of a nation, region or community' (*ibid.*).

Giles *et al.* (1977) suggest that the vitality of a linguistic minority tends to be related to the extent to which its language is used in various institutions of the government, business and schools. From this model, languages displaying low levels of vitality would include, for example, those which are perceived by their speakers as having a low status value, with a small number of speakers and as lacking institutional support. Later work on Giles *et al.*'s original ethnolinguistic model has progressively added other socio-structural variables such as networks, education and social class (see Allard and Landry 1992). Despite the inclusion of these variables, the model continues to be criticized by some writers for its lack of a truly sociological approach and for its omission of any discussion of power in explaining minority-majority relations between languages in contact (Williams 1992: 211). Notwithstanding these inadequacies, the basic structure of the model and the interrelationship between its different variables provide a useful framework.

Institutional support for a language and its use in institutional domains such as the media, education and public services, for example,

affect the social, economic and linguistic status of a language. If the language is used in public services or in education, knowledge of the language may be required to gain upward social and occupational mobility or social advancement to enter and manipulate these formal domains. Access to prestigious jobs may also be determined by knowledge of a particular language. Moreover, the language of the economically dominant group is usually the language of institutional dominance, the language that receives official support and that is necessary for entry into higher education or government (Bourdieu 1982). A language that is perceived as having institutional support also has a certain amount of power attached to it and therefore becomes associated with social advancement and upward mobility. It may also prompt parents to want their children to learn it and its utility will be recognized for gaining access to certain parts of the labour market making it, in Bourdieu's (1991) terms, a form of 'linguistic capital'.

A review of methodological approaches and techniques

Just as the concept of language attitude embraces a variety of interpretations, methodologically, the field of language attitudes also embraces many approaches and techniques. Ryan *et al.* (1988: 1068) organize these approaches into three main categories. These include an analysis of societal treatment of language varieties, indirect assessment within the speaker evaluation paradigm and direct assessment with interviews or questionnaires.

All techniques which do not involve explicitly asking respondents for their views or reactions are classified as the societal treatment of language approach (*ibid.*). This approach generally tends not to be properly reviewed in mainstream accounts of attitudinal research (Garret 2001; Garret *et al.* 2003). The exclusion of many such studies from the literature on language attitudes is no doubt due to their implicit reference to language attitudes. As a result, 'the public treatment of language approach' is often ignored in discussions of language attitudes (Ryan *et al.* 1988: 1068). A useful illustration is Fishman's (1966) documentation of trends in the maintenance and loss of ethnic languages in the United States. An analysis of patterns in language use and language policies was used as a measure of the status of these languages compared with English. In their review of the literature in the area, Ryan *et al.* (1988: 1068) also cite Fishman, Cooper and Ma's (1971) study of Puerto Ricans in the New York area in which language attitudes were inferred from content analyses which compared the treatment of the

Puerto Rican ethnic group, language and cultural concerns in both English and Spanish language newspapers.

Observational analyses, participant-observation and ethnographic studies of speech patterns in various settings and by different social actors can also be included in this first approach. For instance, Woolard's (1989) experience as an ethnographer, recounted in her study of bilingualism in Catalonia, provides revealing insights into language attitudes based on language choices among people she encountered in the city of Barcelona. In these and other such studies, people's attitudes to a particular language or variety are inferred from observation of language choices and behavioural patterns (see Heller 1999). Self-reports of language usage in large-scale language census questionnaires (see Fishman, Cooper and Ma 1971; Lieberman 1981) as well as language surveys (see Labov 1966; Trudgill 1975) and in-depth interviews are also used to provide information on the relative status of a language or dialect. Fishman *et al.* (1971) report a study of bilinguals' choice of language in situations in which the person, place and topic were varied in order to determine the situation favouring each language and the situational factors carrying the most weight in judgements about the appropriateness of a language.

Although these approaches provide important insights into the status of a language within a community, as was already highlighted, from both a theoretical and a practical viewpoint, not everybody would agree with the predominantly behaviourist approach to language attitudes frequently adopted in content analyses of the societal treatment of language. On a theoretical level, Baker (1992) highlights that behaviour does not necessarily give a true picture of social reality. On a practical level, Woolard and Gahng (1990) have argued in favour of more explicit measures of attitudes, based on the difficulties involved in conducting large-scale studies of language use and behaviour. Moreover, while Ryan *et al.* (1988: 1069) agree that content analyses of societal treatment of language can provide valuable insights into language attitudes, they also emphasize the complementary rather than stand-alone aspects of this approach. According to Ryan *et al.* (1988):

[...] content analyses of societal treatment provide a valuable description of the roles of contrasting language varieties as well as the broad foundation concerning historical and geographic differences upon which the more sociolinguistic or social psychological studies are based. Direct observations and self-reports of language use can serve as valuable complementary data in conjunction with the more traditional measures of language attitudes. (1069)

In contrast to the analysis of societal treatment of language, the speaker evaluation paradigm is generally considered one of the more 'traditional measures' of language attitudes in which explicit reference is made by the researcher in the study to language attitudes. This approach employs what Woolard (1989: 95) describes as a 'quasi-experimental' measure of language attitudes known as the 'matched-guise' test. Woolard (*ibid.*) highlights that the distinction between 'quasi-experimental' and 'experimental' is an important one because, unlike in the natural sciences, subjects in the social world are not randomly assigned to groups. Instead, human groups can be found in society and are not manipulable by the experimenter.

In the matched-guise test, listeners are asked to rate tape-recorded speakers on a range of personal traits including ambition, leadership, sociability and sense of humour. In the test, each speaker on the tape reads the same prepared text once in each language under investigation, thereby controlling for differences related to the specific individuals' voices (see Ball and Giles 1982 for a more detailed description of the technique). The original matched-guise test can be found in Lambert *et al.*'s (1960) classic prototype of the speaker evaluation paradigm in which the socio-psychological effects of the bilingual situation in Montreal are tested. The two processes involved in Lambert's basic model are, first, the identification of the speaker's group on the basis of language and, second, the elicitation of stereotypes associated with that group. Since this initial study, similar designs have been used to investigate language attitudes in situations of dialect variation and bilingualism (see Carranza and Ryan 1975; Giles and Powesland 1975; Hoare 2000; Ryan and Giles 1982; Woolard 1989).

The third methodological approach identified by Ryan *et al.* (1988) measures language attitudes directly through qualitative or quantitative interviews or questionnaires concerning specific aspects of language. Questionnaires and interviews addressing language attitudes have been widely and profitably used in research and provide valuable information concerning the attitudes towards a specific language or languages as well as attitudes towards language-relevant objects. Trudgill and Tzavaras (1977) measured the declining status of Arvanitika (an Albanian dialect spoken in Greece) in a questionnaire which asked respondents directly about their attitudes towards the language. Questionnaires have also been used, for example, to predict second language learning (see Gardner and Lambert 1972; Gardner 1982) and to examine language policy issues such as bilingual education and the effects of language laws (see Bourhis 1984).

Direct and indirect methods

While both direct and indirect methods have been usefully employed by researchers in language attitude studies, each has its strengths and weaknesses. For example, a widely recognized limitation of the direct approach is that demand characteristics often lead to socially desirable responses and repress others (Lambert 1967) and hence openly expressed responses may not accurately reflect privately-held attitudes. For this reason, Lambert (*ibid.*) emphasizes the advantage of using indirect assessments in language attitude studies such as the matched-guise technique as a means of gaining access to people's private, uncensored attitudes. The major strength of this technique is the elicitation of spontaneous attitudes, less sensitive to reflection and social desirability biases than a direct assessment of attitudes. On the downside however, because of the 'quasi-experimental' nature of the matched-guise technique, whereby data are collected in controlled settings, it can be argued that this method does not account for the variety of situational factors including the physical appearance of the speaker, which can potentially influence attitudes towards a language. Indeed, because of the complexity of social behaviour (including language attitudes and language use), the degree to which such complexities can be captured under laboratory conditions is questionable. Moreover, because of the 'quasi-experimental' design, correlations that are discovered may be spurious and researchers cannot be certain that they focused on the aspect of the social behaviour that truly explains the effect observed (Woolard 1989: 95). Arguably, while the direct measurement through questionnaire or interview can also be contrived, it tends to be less so than the experimental method.

A practical disadvantage associated with the matched-guise test is that because the experiment must be set up and conducted in laboratory-style settings, the process tends to be time consuming. As a result, the number of potential respondents that can be queried in any one study is reduced, thus preventing the possibility of generalizing the results to a larger population. Comparatively, the direct method, especially the use of self-administered quantitative questionnaires, increases the number of respondents that can be queried in any one study and, because sampling procedures are used, the findings can be generated to a larger population beyond that of the sample surveyed. Therefore, as well as saying something about the structure of language attitudes themselves, more meaningful insights into the social factors such as age, gender, social class and the like can be gained. The patterns obtained in Trudgill and Tzavaras's

(1977) direct open-question attitude questionnaire could for example identify clear patterns in attitudes across different age groups in the Arvanitika-speaking population. In reference to the same study, Fasold (1984: 160) notes that Trudgill and Tzavaras's (1977) direct open-question questionnaire appears to give a more accurate picture of the function of a language as an indicator of group identity than seemingly more sophisticated matched-guise research. While matched-guise tests are credited for their ability to better capture an individual's 'true' feelings about a language, the results from many studies which use a direct method of data collection (see Trudgill and Tzavaras 1977; Ladegaard 2000) also suggest a fairly high degree of metalinguistic awareness among respondents. Ladegaard (2000: 230) says that there is no reason to assume that direct assessments about language attitudes (beliefs about language) may not also provide us with valuable insights into this complex question.

Different layers of attitudinal experiences

While it is useful to recognize the limitations of each approach, it is equally important to recognize that the direct and indirect methods lay claim to quite different layers of attitudinal experiences. As such they sometimes manifest contradictory, yet highly rational, attitude constellations. Indirect methods can search beneath the surface and capture deep-rooted feelings and perhaps are most appropriate to an analysis of the affective component of attitudes. Direct methods, on the other hand, are best suited to a surface analysis of attitudes and the cognitive component of an attitude. Indeed, Edwards (1994) points out that, although they are often referred to as language attitude questionnaires, they are in fact a measure of beliefs about language.

The methodological approach is however ultimately determined by the objectives of the research. When the aim is to find out about deep-seated prejudices towards a language then indirect measures of language attitudes are required to access individuals' inner feelings. On the other hand, when the aim is to understand the level of support for a language among members of a society then an analysis of language beliefs and behavioural intentions through questionnaires or interviews may be more appropriate.

The quantitative-qualitative dichotomy

So far the discussion has centred on Ryan *et al.*'s (1988) three-way categorization of language attitude approaches and their advantages and

disadvantages; an equally instructive discussion of methodological choices should also be looked at from a quantitative-qualitative perspective. As in other areas of social science research, there is an ongoing debate concerning the relative merits of quantitative and qualitative methods in the collection of data on language situations (see for example Wei 2000; Wei and Moyer 2008). At a most basic level, this distinction derives from the trend for quantitative research to emphasize quantification in the collection and analysis of data on language attitudes while qualitative research concerns itself more specifically with words and meaning.

Within the quantitative tradition, language attitudes can be measured through experimental design in the matched-guise test or through closed-ended questions concerning specific aspects of language in questionnaires. In both the matched-guise test and questionnaires, responses are quantified from ratings on numerical scales which are designed and constructed by the researcher prior to the investigation. Qualitative designs, on the other hand, collect data on language attitudes from what social actors do and say in ethnographic studies, in-depth interviews or group discussions.

The debate surrounding the distinction between the quantitative and qualitative methods, however, lies deeper than the superficial issue of the presence or absence of quantification. At the heart of the debate lie two contrasting epistemological positions concerning the question of how the social world can and should be studied. On the one hand, proponents of quantitative research tend to advocate the application of the methods of the natural sciences as a means of studying social reality, leading them to adopt an epistemological position known of positivism. The experimental design adopted in the matched-guise approach clearly reflects this tradition as does the structured language attitudes questionnaire. On the other hand, qualitative researchers reject the norms and practices of the so-called scientific model and emphasize the ways in which individuals interpret their own social world. As Martin-Jones (2003: 4) insists:

[...] ethnographic research provides us with a means of understanding what is happening 'on the ground' as policies are put in place and it gives us a means of gaining insights into the organizational and communicative strategies that teachers and learners deploy for dealing with local conditions.

Many of the distinguishing features used to describe the polarities between the two research strategies stem from these core epistemological

differences. For instance, the commitment of the quantitative research strategy to a positivist epistemological position also orientates quantitative practitioners towards a view of social reality as external and objective to the researcher. In contrast to this static perception of social reality, qualitative researchers tend to envision social reality as a construction of the individual and therefore constantly changing. Quantitative and qualitative research strategies are also distinguishable in the role that each allocates to theory in relation to research. The quantitative approach is usually associated with a deductive approach, whereby existing theories and hypotheses are examined initially, with a view to determining a set of postulates which can then be tested during the data collection process. Qualitative methods tend to work in the opposite direction, emphasizing an inductive approach to the relationship between theory, research and the generation rather than the testing of hypotheses.

Because of fundamentally contrasting epistemological beliefs about what can be considered acceptable knowledge in an analysis of the social world, quantitative and qualitative researchers are shown to exhibit differences in their approaches to data collection. Quantitative researchers are concerned with objectivity and research as a 'value-free' science and endeavour to distance themselves from their subjects, arguing that objectivity reduces the contaminating influence of the researcher along with the biases and values he or she may possess, thereby enhancing the validity of the results. They are concerned with the validity of the data which leads them to a more structured approach to data collection whereby respondents answer questions in the same way, leading to a set of hard reliable data and providing a sound basis for the testing of hypotheses. Additionally, since this method is frequently based on carefully calculated representative samples of a population, it is generally agreed that it facilitates the generalisation of results to a larger population beyond that of the sample itself. Conversely, since qualitative researchers view social reality as being constantly constructed by the individual, close contact with subjects is essential in their research method. In opposition to quantitative approaches, they argue that the quantification of data implies that researchers envision society as a mere aggregate of individuals and that, in doing so, the rich, varied and complex phenomena inherent in social interaction are ignored.

Language attitude research has been frequently criticized for its lack of authenticity and for remaining a discipline predominantly concerned with laboratory-based experiments (Edwards 1985). Likewise, studies which employ quantitative language attitude questionnaires

could be criticized for replacing 'real' behaviour in authentic social contexts with 'inauthentic' behaviour, such as completing vignettes in a questionnaire (Côté and Clément 1994), or providing more or less information on a questionnaire in response to accent A or B (Giles and Farrar 1979). While a qualitative methodological approach may be capable of capturing these complexities more adequately, the less-structured way in which data are collected is often criticized for being too impressionistic, too subjective and lacking reliability. One of the drawbacks of qualitative research is the fairly limited number of observations which can be collected by any individual researcher. The data tend to be less structured than quantitative approaches. Moreover, it is not always clear how the conclusions reached using a qualitative approach can be generalized to a larger population, given that the data are not gathered on the basis of statistical sampling. Indeed these limitations are recognized even by those who favour qualitative methods, as Coupland (1985) clearly illustrates in his comments, when he pointed out that:

[...] qualitative studies may have to live with criticisms of particularism and untidiness as a consequence of their commitment to be true to the social psychological and sociolinguistic dimensions of day-to-day talk. (1985: 168)

One possible response to the recognition of the strengths and weakness of both methods is to adopt a multi-strategy approach involving a combination of the research methods (see Hammersley 1992). Nevertheless, while there has been increased support for a combined methodological approach, not all writers support its use. Objections to an integrated methodological research approach reflect the continued epistemological distinction on which quantitative and qualitative research methods were founded. Their differing views on how the social world can and should be studied renders them incompatible. However, both in the context of mono- and multi-strategy research, according to Bryman (2001: 454), there seems to be a growing preparedness to think of research methods as techniques of data collection or analysis that are not encumbered by this epistemological baggage.

While epistemological commitments may be associated with certain research methods, the connections are not deterministic and the distinctions outlined in previous paragraphs between the quantitative and qualitative methods should be viewed as tendencies rather than definitive connections. Evidence shows that qualitative research very often has empiricist overtones (Bryman 2001: 429), and can be used

to test hypotheses rather than generate them. Similarly, some quantification of findings from qualitative research can provide insights into the generality of the phenomena being described (Silverman 1985). Quantitative research does not necessarily have to test hypotheses. It is also used in an exploratory and hypothesis-generating manner. For Silverman (2000: 11), dichotomies which differentiate quantitative and qualitative research strategies are in fact highly dangerous. At best, they constitute pedagogic devices for students to obtain a first grip on a difficult field and at worst, 'are excuses for not thinking, which assemble groups of sociologists into "armed camps" unwilling to learn from one another' (ibid.). For many writers on the subject, what is more important is the nature of the research question (Bryman 2001; Hammersley 1992; Platt 1996; Silverman 2000). Moreover, Platt (1996: 275) points out that methodological choices are very often driven by practical considerations rather than adherence to a methodological and theoretical stance. Consequently, there are many circumstances in which the nature of the research topic and the constraints on a researcher take precedence over epistemological considerations. In the words of Hammersley (1992):

We are not faced, then, with a stark choice between words and numbers, or even between precise and imprecise data; but rather with a range from more to less precise data. Furthermore, our decisions about what level of precision is appropriate in relation to any particular claim should depend on the nature of what we are trying to describe, on the likely accuracy of our descriptions, on our purposes, and the resources available to us; not on ideological commitment to one methodological paradigm or another. (1992: 163)

Therefore, as Silverman (2000: 12) suggests, it is sensible to make pragmatic choices between research methodologies according to the research problem in question.

Concluding remarks

There are a welter of research perspectives and labels used to measure and describe the 'interpretative filter' of beliefs referred to by Mertz (1989) through which the factors affecting language maintenance and decline can be understood. The predominant use of *language attitude* and *language ideology* for the purposes of this book does not aim to resolve terminological debates in the field. Indeed the initial choice of these terms, particularly *language attitude* derives from the fact that the

latter is most frequently used in the literature. Although the literature on *language attitudes* has been reviewed from a broad perspective, this review is not of course exhaustive. Instead, the purpose here has been to contextualize some of the most productive approaches to inquiry and to situate the comparative analysis of the two minority languages described in this book within these trends. The definitions, theories, perspectives and methodological approaches discussed in this chapter constitute the analytical framework which will guide the systematic exploration of attitudes towards Irish and Galician, the two language cases which form the focus of the remainder of the book. The next chapter looks at the origins and causes of linguistic minoritization in the Irish and Galician language cases through an examination of the socio-historical contexts in which language attitudes and ideologies have evolved.

2

Evolution of Attitudes towards Irish and Galician

As noted in Chapter 1, a basic premise of modern linguistics is that all languages are functionally equal (Edwards 1994). Grillo (1989: 173) notes that, in the same way as anthropologists refuse to judge the relative worth of cultures, linguists believe that 'one language is as good and adequate as any other' (Trudgill 1983: 205). Nevertheless, languages and cultures are very often evaluated and their social stratification tends to be the norm rather than the exception. However, the verifiability of negative judgements about different ways of speaking and about the speakers of different languages is unrelated to the mobilizing power of such judgements (Fishman 1976b: 331), especially if they contravene the basic premise of equality (Grillo 1989: 173). As Spitulnik (1998: 164) points out, language ideologies and processes of language evaluation are not just about language itself but are closely related to the construction and legitimization of power.

For much of its history, linguistics (and sociolinguistics) as an academic discipline has been preoccupied with idealist, abstracted approaches to the study of language (May 2006: 255). Language has tended to be examined in isolation from the social and political conditions in which it is used (Bourdieu 1991; May 1995) and language attitudes and ideologies are often seen as ideas which people just happen to have (Blommaert 1999; Williams 1992). Blommaert (1999: 6) suggests that the preferred locus of analysis in linguistic and sociolinguistic studies is the synchronic plane (relating questions of language to only one point in history), where questions about the origin, causes of distribution and impact of attitudes and ideologies can be avoided. The discussion which follows focuses closely on the origin and causes of the linguistic minorization of Irish and Galician through an exploration of the socio-historical context in which language attitudes and

ideologies evolved. In doing so it sketches the social, economic and political framework within which the stratification of these languages and their speakers occurred.

Early sociolinguistic histories

An analysis of the early sociolinguistic histories of the Irish and Galician languages provides an indication of the relative prestige that each language once claimed. Irish, which is part of the Celtic family of Indo-European languages, came to be the autochthonous language of the inhabitants of the island of Ireland during the second half of the first millennium B.C. (Ó hUallacháin 1994: 10). Historical accounts (see Ó Cuív 1969b, 1976; Ó hUallacháin 1994) would seem to indicate that up until the sixteenth century Irish was the main language used throughout the island. It was the language used by the majority of the autochthonous population and was used across a range of social and functional domains. These included domains of high culture where Irish had a reputable literary tradition in which poetry and, to a lesser extent, prose was written in Irish until after 1600 (Ó Cuív 1969a: 27). Ó hUallacháin (1991) points to the prestige which was associated with the language up until that period:

This eminence, which was consciously awarded to the language of Irish society, especially to the cultivated varieties of it [Irish] which were used in the spheres of government, of literature and of certain professions and trades, indicates that it had a central and recognized role in the community. (Ó hUallacháin 1991: 2)

Similar to Irish, typical descriptions of the early sociolinguistic history of Galician point to the relative prestige which the language continued to hold up until the end of the Middle Ages (see Freixeiro Mato 1997; Mariño Paz 1998; Monteagudo 1999a; Monteagudo and Santamarina 1993). Galician is a member of the Romance family of languages and until the twelfth century was broadly similar to the language variety spoken south of what constitutes part of the present political border between Galicia and Portugal. Linguistic differences between Galician and Portuguese began to emerge in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries following the political independence of Portugal from the rest of the Peninsula. Since its beginnings as an independent Romance language in the early Middle Ages, Galician gradually became consolidated as an everyday language in more

informal registers and as a language used in early Galician literature. During this period Galician was used by all social classes as well as being the language of administration, economy, judicial systems and the church. The vast majority of documents written in Galicia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was also in Galician, as was a flourishing literature, most renowned for its brilliant school of lyrical poetry (Monteagudo and Santamarina 1993: 120). Such was the prestige attached to this literary form of the language that its use extended beyond Galician borders and was used in the Castilian Court during the reign of Alfonso X (López Carreira 2005; Recalde Fernández 2000).

Changing status of Irish and Galician

While the early sociolinguistic histories of Irish and Galician are an indication of the former prestige of each language, in both cases, the profound political changes which followed these periods were to have long-term consequences on the status of their speakers and consequently on the languages themselves.

In socio-historical accounts of the Irish language, the Anglo-Norman invasions of Ireland in the twelfth century are frequently identified as a turning point in the status of the language. These invasions had little direct effect on the linguistic and cultural practices of the autochthonous Irish-speaking population whose lingua franca continued to be Irish. However, the long-term repercussions of this initial political foothold in the country are generally recognized as these invasions were seen to have sown the seeds for the more forceful military campaigns which followed. According to Mac Giolla Chríost (2005: 75), the most substantial impact of the Anglo-Normans upon the processes of language shift was their introduction of novel modes of administration, with various effects upon the social place of the Irish language. He highlights (*ibid*: 83) that, although the language continued to be a learned language with respect of history, grammar, law, place-name lore, genealogy, medicine, music and poetry and as such was patronized by all secular dynasties on the island of Ireland, during the Anglo-Norman period its function as a formal language of administration and governance was limited and its place within canonical learning became much reduced.

More explicit measures to detach the Irish from their culture and language can be traced to the early sixteenth century. Henry VIII's most determined effort to assimilate Ireland and excise the Irish language in

the 1537 'Act for the English Order, Habit and Language' decreed that all Irish men and women were to speak the English language (Crowley 2007: 150). Clergymen were obliged to ensure an English school was kept in each parish and parents were required to bring up their children speaking English (Durkacz 1983: 4). The particular means of expansion of the Tudor State in Ireland in the seventeenth century had the cumulative effect of progressively eroding the instrumental value of the Irish language in the most comprehensive manner (Mac Giolla Chríost 2005: 86). During the Tudor campaigns, Irish aristocratic families were dispossessed and replaced by relatively large numbers of native-born English which led to the formation of a new landlord class in Ireland. Thus as Mac Giolla Chríost (*ibid.*) points out, this led to severe structural changes in social, political and economic terms along with readjustments to new senses of identity in Ireland. These developments within the upper class gave a decisive impetus to the process of language shift towards English (Ó Riagáin 1997: 4). There is also evidence that this shift was beginning to gradually filter down to the rest of society. O'Brien (1989: 153), for example, highlights that by the early seventeenth century the phenomenon of social mobility had become so entrenched that many indigenous Irish speakers regarded English as the tongue of advancement. Wall (1969) explains the situation in these terms:

By 1800 Irish had ceased to be the language habitually spoken in the homes of all those who had already achieved success in the world, or who aspired to improve or even maintain their position politically, socially or economically. The pressures of six hundred years of foreign occupation, and more particularly the complicated political, religious and economic pressures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had killed Irish at the top of the social scale and had already weakened its position among the entire population of the country. (Wall 1969: 82)

The emerging linguistic and social situation in Ireland was that of an Irish-speaking peasant population and an English-speaking aristocracy. As Dorian (1981: 15) points out, when such a dichotomy exists, prestige quite naturally accrues to the language of the higher socio-economic group. The position of Irish soon became unfavourable and Irish not only ceased to be socially dominant but also socially acceptable and was looked on as the language of a wild, savage people. The eighteenth-century writings of Jonathan Swift clearly reflect these perceptions and

point to the negative attitudes towards the Irish language among the ascendancy in Britain and Ireland:

I am deceived, if anything hath more contributed to prevent the Irish being tamed, than this encouragement to their language, which might easily be abolished and become a dead one in half an age, with little expense, and less trouble. (cited in Grillo 1989: 86)

By the late eighteenth century, Irish was already considered the language of the past and of the poor (Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 42). The wretched conditions of Ireland were seen to be related to the continued use of Irish among the peasant population, thus linking the language to economic, social and political backwardness. Ó hAilín (1969) highlighted the continuity of such prejudicial beliefs about the Irish language in his reference to a pamphlet written in 1822 which stated that:

[...] the common Irish are naturally shrewd, but very ignorant and deficient in mental culture; from the barbarous tongue in which they converse which operates as an effectual bar to any literary attainment. (cited in Ó hAilín 1969: 92)

A number of key factors served over the centuries to reinforce such prejudices against Irish speakers and to exacerbate the stigmatization of the language. As was already highlighted, the hierarchical divide between Irish-speaking peasants and the English-speaking upper strata of Irish society ensured a high status for English to the detriment of the Irish language. Closely related to the hierarchical divide between Irish and English speakers was the emerging spatial divide between the rural Irish-speaking countryside and English-speaking towns. The latter had become the main locations of British military and administrative influence. The physical isolation of the rural Irish-speaking population, which as Fishman (1971: 315) notes, is required for groups to maintain a separate language or dialect, helped sustain the language among the majority of the population up until the eighteenth century. While the poor economic conditions, isolation and rurality of the Irish-speaking population may have curbed the immediate decline of the Irish language, such conditions also provided the basis for a stigmatized social identity which would prompt future generations of Irish speakers to abandon the language. Over the eighteenth century, the shift to English spread to all urban areas and gradually made its way into the rural hinterland. According to the 1851 Census, the first to include a language

question in Ireland, just under 30 per cent of the population were returned as Irish speakers. The majority of these speakers would probably have been bilingual in both Irish and English with an estimated 5 per cent monoglot Irish-speaking population (MacNamara 1971). The monolingual practices within the scattered number of remaining Irish-speaking communities in the western, northern and southern parts of the country were sustained by their poor economic conditions, isolation and rurality. The extended period of isolation from cross-cultural contacts with English speakers, which had brought about a shift to English in Ireland more generally, allowed these isolated communities to maintain enclaves of Irish speakers, whose occupation and language were stigmatized by the rest of society. A despised social status thus provided the resource for the remaining Irish-speaking communities to maintain their language and culture. However, although sustainable for a time, the long-term repercussions of the social conditions in which language maintenance had been ensured, reinforced existing prejudicial beliefs about the Irish language and its speakers.

The establishment in 1831 of a national education system, which was entirely through the medium of English is often blamed for the decline of the Irish language and the most stringent critique of the colonial scheme of education can be found in its labelling as 'The Murder Machine' by the twentieth-century Irish nationalist Pádraig Pearse (Crowley 2005). However, Crowley (2005: 133–4) also says that it would simply be wrong to claim that the colonial education system was used as the instrument to foist the English language on an unwilling populace. A more accurate account, he suggests, would be that the educational system played its part in the British policy of assimilation. This was in turn strengthened by the desire of Irish people to learn English out of economic necessity (Kelly 2002: 4). It could also be argued that the role of the schools in the decline of the Irish language is overstated, given the generally low levels of education among the Irish population more generally up until the twentieth century. However, as Dorian (1981: 27) notes, although a policy of excluding the home language from formal education does not necessarily lead to its decay or demise, it does so in the context of hostility and prejudices towards the language and its speakers. The exclusion of Irish from the education system, therefore, helped to consolidate the already negative attitudes towards the language which had accumulated over previous centuries of cultural and linguistic conflict (Durkacz 1983: 217) and reinforced the fact that English was the most useful tool for any child with minimal ambition (Hindley 1990: 12).

Another significant factor which is likely to have attributed to the decline of the Irish language is that English came to be used as the language of political mobilization in Ireland. Crowley (2005: 129) argues that although colonialism was often held responsible for the parlous state of the Irish language, the blame was not solely attributed to Ireland's rulers. It was also attributed to lack of internal support for the language by its own political leaders. The underlying linguistic attitude of Daniel O'Connell, one of Ireland's most imminent political leaders is evidence of this trend. Despite being a native Irish speaker, O'Connell held a fatalistic view about the inevitable decline of Irish (Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 44) and his campaigns for Catholic Emancipation were all through the medium of English (Mac Giolla Chríost 2005: 100). Thus here again we find clear examples that Irish was being replaced by English from the top-down.

The rapid decline of the Irish language, which gained momentum as the nineteenth century progressed, also tends to be attributed to the Great Irish Famine (between 1845 and 1849) which reduced the population of the country by more than two million through both death and emigration. Significantly, those most affected by the disaster were Irish speakers. According to the 1891 Census, the overall number of Irish speakers in the country had dropped to below 20 per cent in the years immediately after the famine with less than 4 per cent of children under the age of 10 being reported as Irish speakers. Census results show a marked drop in the numbers of monoglot Irish speakers in the period 1851 and 1891 from 4.9 per cent to 0.8 per cent (Mac Giolla Chríost 2005: 102).

An immediate effect of a natural disaster such as famine can be related to what Crystal (2000: 70) terms 'the dramatic effect on the physical wellbeing' of Irish speakers. Of the one million people who died during the famine, a significant number were likely to have been Irish speakers. However, in addition to these devastating effects were the waves of emigration which followed (again most pronounced in Irish-speaking parts of the country), which helped to further reinforce the already well-established link between the need to learn English and social advancement. As a result, earlier prejudices against the language were kept alive and even further strengthened among upcoming generations of potential Irish speakers. Mac Giolla Chríost (2005: 101) alludes to the significant role of the Irish diaspora in shaping the fate of the Irish language in Ireland and highlights that evidence of prejudicial beliefs about Irish in contrast to the utilitarian value of English was contained in numerous letters sent from the United States by established

Irish migrants. The letters encouraged parents to teach their children English and to prolong the amount of time they spent at school in order to enhance their command of spoken and written English.

Edwards (1984: 494) admits that while the view that the National School system, the Catholic clergy and Daniel O'Connell were the killers of Irish, is an oversimplification, all of these do relate to the declining prestige of Irish, increasingly associated with rural backwardness, poverty and an unsophisticated peasantry, and the power of a formidable language with two great nations behind it. Thus as de Fréine states, with regard to the Irish decline:

The worst excesses were not imposed from outside. The whole paraphernalia of tally sticks, wooden gags, humiliation and mockery – often enforced by encouraging children to spy on their brothers and sisters, or on the children of neighbouring townlands – were not the product of any law or official regulation, but of a social self-generated movement of collective behaviour among the people themselves. Most of the reasons adduced for the suppression of the Irish language are not so much reasons as consequences of the decision to give up the language. (de Fréine 1977: 83–4)

In the twentieth century, language shift to English continued and, according to the 1926 Census, only 18 per cent of those living in what is currently the Republic of Ireland were returned as Irish speakers. As well as constituting a numerically weak linguistic minority, these remaining Irish speakers possessed little in terms of social status. The occupational structure of Irish-speaking communities in the 1926 Census shows that the majority was engaged in small-scale farming and fishing. Outside of this small number of Irish-speaking communities, English had become the language not only of urban commercial and professional classes but also lower socio-economic groups, including those living in rural parts of the country. Therefore, as Ó Riagáin (1997: 171) points out, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, proficiency in Irish was of little economic or social value and provided little incentive for remaining Irish speakers to maintain the language or for others to learn it.

Many of the patterns identified in typical descriptions of the sociolinguistic history of Irish have clear parallels with the Galician context, a context in which attitudes towards the language would seem to have evolved in a similar way. Historical accounts of the Galician sociolinguistic context pinpoint the thirteenth century as the beginnings of language decline. Following the rise to the throne in 1230 of

Fernando II, the then King of the neighbouring Castile, the medieval Kingdom of Galicia became another territory to be ruled by the increasingly powerful Castilian crown. However, similar to the Anglo-Norman invasions in Ireland in the twelfth century, the joining of the Galician and Castilian crowns in the thirteenth century did not in fact lead to any quantitative decline in Galicia's cultural and linguistic peculiarities. Although certain varieties of Castilian began to appear among the inhabitants of Galicia, it was not until much later that Castilian began to be adopted as a spoken language by the autochthonous Galician-speaking population. Thus, language contact with Castilian had no immediate consequences on the Galician language and its speakers. Nevertheless, and again very similar to the effect of the Anglo-Norman invasions in Ireland, in qualitative terms, the initial hold gained by Castile over the Galician territory set the scene for future attempts to secure political control and in turn to advance the subjugation of the Galician language and its speakers.

The coming to power of the Trastámara dynasty in the fourteenth century marks an important turning point in the sociolinguistic history of the language. Galicia fell under more permanent Castilian domination leading to the decline of the native Galician nobility and their substitution by a Castilian ruling class along with a host of scribes, servants and clergy, all speaking the language of Castile. Castilian⁴ became the language of prestige, replacing Galician in formal domains and throughout the echelons of civil and military administration.

The increased move towards the consolidation of political unity by the Catholic Kings in the second half of the fifteenth century further advanced the subjugation of Galicia as a periphery of a Castilian-based centre of power. With the decline of Galician fortunes and the rise in importance of the Castilian Court, the Galician language began to decline correspondingly in prestige. Henceforth, the people who represented authority in Galicia spoke Castilian. Rodríguez (1991: 62) points to the 'xugulación dunha clase dirixente autóctona' ('strangulation of an autochthonous ruling class') in the fifteenth century and their replacement by Castilian speakers. Therefore, as in the Irish context, a new model was also being created for Galicians, built on the culture, language and values of a non-autochthonous centre of power. As a result, those who sought social mobility in Galicia began to imitate the linguistic behaviour of the new Castilian-speaking dominant classes. According to Monteagudo and Santamarina (1993), during this period language shift on the part of the dominant classes also had consequences for the general population, making familiarity with Castilian

a possibility if not an everyday occurrence. Nevertheless, Galician continued to be the language spoken by the majority of the population. As Recalde Fernández (2000: 24) notes, the de-Galicianization of the upper strata of Galician society had a qualitative rather than an explicitly quantitative effect, establishing a correlation between social class and language that still exists today in Galicia (López Valcárcel 1991: 136 cited in del Valle 2000:8)

It is noteworthy that, although no official linguistic laws were passed during the reign of the Catholic Kings, Isabella and Ferdinand, in the fifteenth century, this period marked the emergence of an implicit link between the Castilian language and political and administrative power. More explicit references to linguistic uniformity were to appear in the eighteenth century under the strongly centralist ideologies characteristic of the Bourbon dynasty which advanced the construction of the national Spanish State. In the 'imagined' (Anderson 1991) Spain which was beginning to emerge, there was no place for diversity and the use of languages other than Castilian began to be prohibited in the high functional domains of culture and education (Martin 2002: 21). However, such explicit legislation during the Bourbon dynasty did not have any direct effect on the Galician-speaking population, the majority of whom was not exposed to formal education. Indeed much of the population continued to have low levels of literacy right up to the twentieth century (Recalde Fernández 2000: 26). As Bouzada Fernández points out:

[...] the prevalence of the use of Galician has been accompanied since the beginning of the 20th century by very low levels of education, with illiteracy rates greater than 15% along with immeasurable levels of functional illiteracy. The prescriptions of the Ley Moyano (Moyano Law), passed by the Spanish State in the year 1857 to establish certain minimum schooling standards for every 500 inhabitants, did not manage to have any effect in Galicia even as late as the first decades of the 20th century. (Bouzada Fernández 2003: 326)

Although the policy of excluding Galician from formal education may not have had an immediate effect on the largely illiterate Galician-speaking population, as we have already seen in the Irish case, the exclusion of these languages from the school system was implicitly transmitting a low assessment of their value and utility to the community at large.

While there is little formal data on the number and socio-demographic distribution of Galician speakers at the end of the nineteenth and early

twentieth century, some information can be gleaned from the Mapa Sociolingüístico de Galicia, which deduces from the reported accounts of the language spoken by respondents' grandparents that 88.5 per cent of Galicians continued to be monolingual Galician speakers in 1877 (Fernández Rodríguez and Rodríguez Neira 1995: 52–3). Castilian was only spoken in Galician cities and among sectors of the bourgeoisie including merchants, industrial, administrative and intellectual middle classes. Up until 1900, over 90 per cent of Galicians lived in rural areas, with less than 10 per cent concentrated in Galicia's urban centres (Fernández Rodríguez 1993; Rei-Doval 2007) and this divide can be taken to loosely correspond to the linguistic divide between Galician and Castilian speakers at the time.

Regueira (1999: 859) cites Valladares Nuñez's (1970[1892]) description of the social status of the Galician language at the end of the nineteenth century as 'un dialecto relegado al ignorante vulgo y que la gente culta, la gente fina casi no habla ya' ('a dialect confined to the vulgar and ignorant sectors of society and one that the cultured people, the refined people rarely speak anymore'). Hermida's (1992) analysis of texts written at the end of the nineteenth century draws similar conclusions and identifies the visible divide between the Castilian-speaking upper social strata of Galician society and the Galician-speaking rural peasants. As Recalde Fernández (1997) notes:

La distribución lingüística era, pues, fiel reflejo de la estratificación social y este hecho contribuyó a que la lengua padeciese en este período un enorme desprestigio. Abandonarla a favor del castellano fue, así, un requisito para los escasos individuos que conseguían incorporarse a la pequeña burguesía y deseaban ser aceptados por su nueva clase. (Recalde Fernández 1997: 14)

[The linguistic distribution was a true reflection of the social stratification at the time and this fact contributed to the low prestige which came to be associated with the Galician language during that period. Abandoning Galician in favour of Castilian was a requirement for the few individuals who succeeded in becoming part of the petit bourgeoisie and who wanted to be accepted by their new social class. (My translation)]

From these indirect accounts, the profile of Galician speakers at the turn of the twentieth century would seem to largely resemble that of remaining Irish speakers at the time, comprising a predominantly rural, uneducated peasant population. The advent of industrialization

in Galicia, albeit slow, made Castilian Spanish the reference language of commerce and progress, linked to the main urban centres of Vigo, A Coruña and Ferrol. Meanwhile, Galician continued to survive in rural areas where the centralist government took relatively little interest and had thus exerted less influence.

The geographic, socio-economic and cultural isolation of Galician speakers to a large extent explain an unusually long period of linguistic sheltering from Castilian up until the twentieth century. The geographic isolation of Galicia in the extreme north of the Iberian Peninsula, which is also linked to its history of poor economic development, meant that it did not attract the waves of Castilian-speaking migrants who altered and continue to alter the sociolinguistic contexts of other linguistic communities in Spain, most notably those of Catalonia and the Basque Country (Mar-Molinero 2000). However, while Galicians were not affected by in-migration, similar to the Irish context, they frequently found the need to migrate to other parts of Spain in search of work or to emigrate to elsewhere in Europe or to Latin America. According to Villares (1984), over one million Galicians left Galicia between 1860 and 1970, and it is likely that the majority were Galician speakers (Recalde Fernández 1997). Compared with other parts of Spain, modernization of Galician society occurred at a much later stage and even by the end of the twentieth century according to Monteagudo and Santamarina (1993: 123) 'the substitution of a pre-capitalist economy based on agriculture for an economy founded on industry was still far from complete in Galicia'.

The concept of the 'speaker by necessity' can be used to describe the longstanding monolingual practices of the rural Galician population, where lack of cross-cultural contacts with Castilian speakers meant that the 'need' to speak any language other than Galician did not arise (Bouzada Fernández and Lorenzo Suárez 1997; Bouzada Fernández 2003). As the society began to modernize during the twentieth century, Galician speakers became less isolated and came into more direct contact with areas in which Castilian was used and needed. The impact of urbanization and industrialization on geographically isolated language communities such as was the Galician case is well documented in the literature on language maintenance and shift. Gal (1979) points to the effects of these macrosociological factors on the process of language shift from Hungarian to German in the Austrian town of Oberwart. Similarly, Dorian's (1981) case study of the East Sutherland variety of Gaelic spoken in Scotland, points to the rapid shift to English, as cross-cultural contacts between Gaelic and English speakers increased.

While these and other language cases (including the Irish language case) provide support for the thesis that modernizing societies become linguistically homogenous, proponents of this perspective on language maintenance and shift tend to accept the decline of some languages and the rise of others as a natural phenomenon. However, as Crystal (2000: 33) points out, there is no case for a Darwinian perspective of the survival of the linguistic fittest, because the factors which cause language death are, in principle, very largely under human control (see also Williams 1992). As Tovey and Share (2003: 333) suggest:

[...] the rise or decline of any language is not a 'natural' phenomenon that occurs without human or social agency, as the modernisation thesis tends to suggest. The relationship between the majority and a minority language is not one of modernity versus backwardness but one of power. (Tovey and Share 2003: 333)

Therefore, it can be argued that it was not modernization *per se* that led to the shift towards Castilian (or the shift in Irish speakers towards English) but rather the implicit understanding among Galician speakers that Castilian was the language of power and social mobility. The very factors (ignorance, poverty and rurality) which had allowed Galician to survive centuries of linguistic dominance as a subordinate of Castilian, were to provide the rationalization for many Galician migrants to abandon their language as they moved from the countryside to Galicia's cities in search of work during the second half of the twentieth century. As access to education and the media increased among the rural population so too did their exposure to Castilian. Increased contact with Castilian speakers further strengthened the link between Castilian and progress, values associated with the modern world in the minds of many Galician speakers.

Language revival movements and the rise of nationalism

According to Fishman (1991), the successful reversal of language shift is an invariable part of a larger ethnocultural goal. The impulses which brought language issues onto the public agenda in Ireland and Galicia at the end of the nineteenth century resulted from the ideological orientation of ethnocultural movements. Increased awareness about the plight of these languages coincides with the rise of these movements and marks the first attempts to curb the process of language shift and the reversal of the negative social meanings which had come to be

associated with the languages and their speakers. Ethnocultural movements in Ireland and Galicia were greatly influenced by the ideology of nationalism which had already been growing throughout Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (see Hobsbawm 1990), an ideology which portrayed the division of peoples into nations as a natural consequence of cultural differences across groups. Emerging nationalist movements also drew on the broader system of ideas known as Romanticism which at the time had come to dominate European intellectual life. Romanticism stressed the exotic, the local, and nostalgia for a glorious past which legitimized a community's uniqueness in the present (Mar-Molinero 2000: 7), and the reconstruction of this romantic imagery enhanced the justification for what was perceived as a people's innate right to nationhood. While, in a contemporary context, this romantic imagery can often appear overly nostalgic and exaggerated, at the time it was considered a necessary part of affirming and constructing a collective sense of identity.

The role of language within this imagery can be traced to late eighteenth-century German philosophy and to the work of Johann Herder in particular who characterized language as the 'genius of a people'. Within the Herderian perspective of nationalism, language constituted the core element in a group's claim to nationhood (see Fishman 1972).

The Irish language movement

In the Irish context, traces of the Herderian perspective on language are evident in the late-nineteenth-century writings of Thomas Davis and specifically in statements such as 'A people without a language of its own is only half a nation' and 'To have lost entirely the national language is death; the fetter has worn through' (Ó hAilín 1969: 94). These mark the beginning of what can be seen as the modern language revival movement in Ireland. Prior to this period, some attention was given to Irish through antiquarian investigation of the language in earlier movements such as The Gaelic Society of Dublin and the Hiberno-Celtic Society (Ó hAilín 1969: 92). Thus, ascendancy antipathy to Irish prior to this period, was somewhat tempered by the antiquarian interest in the language which was displayed by some educated sectors of Irish society. Nevertheless, it is important to note that his interest in the Irish language was wholly based upon the understanding that it was a dead language (O'Brien 1989: 163).

Active efforts to restore the language in its spoken form began with the work of *Conradh na Gaeilge* (The Gaelic League), founded in 1893

by Douglas Hyde. Although this movement was exclusively concerned with the revival of the Irish language and culture, its members also provided leadership and inspiration in other spheres (Ó hAilín 1969: 96). Durkacz (1983: 207) notes that, as a result of the efforts of the Gaelic League, the bond between the Irish language and nationalism was consummated by many emerging political leaders in Ireland, who subsequently adopted the Irish language as a symbol of national identity.

As highlighted earlier, language shift to English had already reached an advanced stage and therefore, by the end of the nineteenth century, for the majority of the Irish population, the Irish language was not a part of their lived everyday experiences. The use of Irish was restricted to a small and geographically isolated sector of the population along the north-western, western, and southern Irish seaboard. It was, however, to these communities that Hyde and *Conradh na Gaeilge* turned and on which the basis of a collective ethnic or national identity was to be formed.

Tovey *et al.* (1989) note that:

The nativism of the Gaelic League was rooted in original myths which elevated the cultural and social residues surviving in western islands and the Gaeltacht [meaning Irish-speaking areas] into the fountainhead for a new society. (Tovey *et al.* 1989: 19–20)

The Gaelic League's identification with the Irish language is also related to the restructuring of Irish society as a result of increasing industrialization and urbanization (Lee 1973). The initial composition of the Gaelic League was that of a Catholic and Protestant middle class intelligentsia for whom the vision of a simplistic and pure society in western, Gaelic parts of Ireland was of socio-psychological comfort (Foster 1988: 455). The romantic imagery which Hyde and the Gaelic League used in the construction of a distinctive Irish identity is often a source of ridicule (see Lee 1989) and has, according to Tovey *et al.* (1989: 16), led Hyde to be perceived as an 'anti-modernist who sought to purify the ancient Gaelic nation of intrusions from a vulgarised modern English culture'. However, Tovey *et al.* (*ibid.*) also argue that such exaggerated imagery can be seen as a necessary part of reversing the negative connotations which had come to be associated with a sense of Irishness and of providing an alternative identity to that which was being imitated by emerging elite groups in Ireland. The image of the noble and uncontaminated peasant who kept his language pure and intact, according to Fishman (1972: 69), provided a particularly frequent directive source of

nationalist language planning. Within this imagery, an Irish identity was constructed in opposition to a British identity and symbols which could emphasize differences between Irish as a separate ethnic group were drawn upon. For instance, the Irish could trace their origins to the Celts and this differentiated them from the English who were perceived as a Saxon race. In a similar vein, the dichotomy between rural Ireland and industrial England was emphasized in the construction of this imagery.

The workings of the Gaelic League were not solely ideological but also involved the use of very practical initiatives to increase the presence of the Irish language within society. In contrast to antiquarian language movements of the mid-nineteen hundreds, the League was devoted to the maintenance of the language as the living spoken vernacular in those communities (collectively known as the Gaeltacht or Irish-speaking areas) in which the shift to English had not yet occurred. Although the founders of the Gaelic League did not write anything in their constitution about making Irish the language of all the people of Ireland (Ó Cuív 1969a; Ó Laoire 1996: 52–3, 1999), many of the activities of the movement were targeted at increasing the knowledge base in the language among the non-Gaeltacht population. A key initiative adopted by the League was to increase the presence and the status of the language in schools. Additionally, in 1910, the members of the Gaelic League succeeded in putting sufficient pressure on British authorities to introduce Irish as an essential subject for matriculation in the National University of Ireland, a position which Irish continues to hold to the present day.

Through the construction of an idealized romantic imagery, as well as practical initiatives to restore the language, the League therefore enhanced the status of what had become a low-prestige language. It also raised a sense of linguistic awareness among the population and according to Ó hAilín (1969: 96), ‘revolutionised the attitude of the Irish people to their own language’. To a considerable extent also, the League provided the basis on which formal language policy would be shaped in the years following political independence in Ireland in 1922 (Ó Riagáin 1997).

The Galician language movement

As in the Irish case, antiquarian interest in the Galician language marked initial moves towards the restoration of the language’s lost prestige. Initial attempts to restore Galician’s lost prestige can be traced to

the eighteenth century and the pioneering studies undertaken by the Benedictine monk, Martín Sarmiento. His work on the lexis, etymology and toponymy of Galician constituted the first explicit claims for recognition of the language and made Sarmiento a pioneer in both his studies of the Galician language and his defence of it (Monteagudo 1999a). In 1840 renewed interest in the language began to take the form of an intellectual movement, initiating the formulation of a sense of shared identity among Galicians through Galicia's history, culture and language. During what is usually labelled the provincialist stage in the development of Galician nationalist sentiment, pride of place was given to the bucolic character of Galician society, the beauty of the Galician countryside, as well as its glorious historic past (Recalde Fernández 2000: 30). Within this romantic imagery, the Galician language was seen as a defining quality of Galicians as a people, reflecting a Herderian perspective of the symbolic significance of the language (see Mariño Paz 1998; Monteagudo 1999b). The Galician language constituted a key component within this romantic imagery and in the construction of a specifically Galician identity.

In time, the intellectual ideologies of 'cultural nationalism' became more politically orientated and gradually came to symbolize Galicia's peripheral position within Spain and the more deep-rooted socio-economic and political grievances linked to this position. This marked the transition to the next stage of Galician nationalism known as the regionalist stage. Galician nationalism was constructed in opposition to Spanish nationalism and the consolidation of the Spanish nation-state in the nineteenth century. In the intellectual discourse associated with this phase of Galician nationalism, the Galician language as well as Galicia's independent historic past and its ethnic origins became symbolic of the perceived differences which existed between Galicia and Castile as the Spanish centre of power (Recalde Fernández 2000: 30). The boundary between 'them' (central Spain) and 'us' (Galicia) began to be more explicitly marked and language constituted a key symbol in demarcating these boundaries. Like Douglas Hyde in the Irish context, Manuel Murgía, leader of the *Asociación Regionalista Galega* (The Galician Regionalist Association), drew on what can perhaps be considered an exaggerated imagery of differences between Galicia and Castile, emphasizing Galicia's Celtic past as a key differentiating characteristic (O'Rourke 2003a: 140). While there does seem to be archaeological evidence to support Galicia's claim to a Celtic influence in the region, Celtic influences in the Galician language (which linguists classify as a Romance language) are more difficult to find. Indeed, twentieth-century

nationalist writers in Galicia, such as Otero Pedrayo, can be accused of veering towards what Patterson (2000: 63) refers to as 'propaganda' in his idealization of the Celtic presence in the language. While the exaggeration of differences between Galicia and the rest of Spain can be criticized, as in the Irish context, this exaggerated imagery must also be looked at in the context of the broader European ideology of the time. Moreover, such idealization may be seen as a means of reinforcing differences between Galician and Castilian which are very close in linguistic terms. Indeed, the linguistic proximity between the two languages was frequently used to justify classifications of Galician as a dialect of Castilian rather than as a language in its own right. The historical subordination of Galician had led to what Kloss (1967) refers to as 'dialectalization', defined as a politically motivated process which occurs when enough structural similarity exists between a dominant and a subordinate language to classify the latter variety as a substandard dialect.

The social base of the regionalist movement in Galicia was small and consisted mainly of intellectuals and urban professionals. In general, Galician-speaking peasants, fishermen and crafts workers remained on the margins. The higher social classes in Galicia, which consisted of a small bourgeoisie and often times coming from outside of Galicia or descendents of a small rural aristocracy, were not ready to risk their political influence nor their economic privileges for a nationalist cause. While the regionalist movement had very little political success, it constructed an idea of Galicia that has remained to the present day and achieved most of its language objectives, principally that of restoring Galician as a literary language (Regueira 2006). The regionalist phase of Galician nationalism coincides with the *Rexurdimento* (Galicia's literary and cultural revival) which saw the emergence of Galician from the so-called *Seculos Oscuros* or 'dark centuries' during which Galician was abandoned as a literary language. The historical writings of Murgía and the literary compositions of Rosalía de Castro, Enrique Curros and Eduardo Pondal marked the beginnings of Galicia's literary renaissance. This period also saw considerable codification and elaboration of the forms of the language, with the production of grammars and dictionaries and the setting up of a Galician language academy, the Real Academia Galega in 1906.

A more clearly definable Galician nationalist ideology appeared in 1916 in the form of *Irmandades de Fala* or 'brotherhood of the language' whose role it was to protect and promote the Galician language (Henderson 1996: 242). The *Irmandades da Fala* were strongly critical of

the political position of regionalism as well as their cultural agenda, as they perceived it as being too close to the social reality of the Galician peasants and not at all attractive to the young modern generation. Unlike the preceding provincialist and regionalist stages, explicit proponents of Galician nationalism from 1916 onwards wrote and spoke publicly in Galician, claiming that it was only through the language that a true sense of Galicianness could be expressed (Recalde Fernández 2000: 31). The *Irmandades de Fala* laid the foundations for the Partido Galeguista (Pro-Galician Party) (Hermida 2001: 120) which was in turn to make demands on the Spanish central government for the introduction of Galician into public services and in education as well as for co-official status with Castilian. Although Galician political nationalism is considered timid in comparison to the other two Peninsular movements (Catalan and Basque nationalism) (Mar-Molinero 2000: 52), Santamarina (2000: 43) nonetheless points out that those who promoted the Galician language and culture provided a sense of leadership and their ideas came to be held in high esteem by the Galician population.

The 'Re-stigmatization' of Galician

Language revival movements in Galicia and the conversion of language into a symbol of a Galician political ideology succeeded in putting sufficient pressure on the central government during Spain's Second Republic to bring about change in the official status of the language. In 1936 the language was to be given co-official status with Castilian within what was to become the Autonomous Community of Galicia. However, these changes were violently disrupted by the Spanish Civil War and the ensuing forty years of dictatorial rule under General Francisco Franco (1939–75) imposed a highly centralized regime, politically and culturally. Indeed, a major goal of the dictatorial regime was to make the whole of the Spanish State politically and culturally homogeneous and special efforts were made to eliminate the use of languages other than Spanish. During the Franco regime Galician was rendered invisible. The methods used in attempts to eliminate these languages included severe direct repression and other, more sophisticated means of changing identity. There was no official or explicit prohibition on the use of the language, but as Ramallo (2007: 24) points out

[...] by using a linguistic praxis that favoured Spanish and a centralist sociopolitical ideology over any political identity cultural

manifestation, Franco's regime established, de facto, a unique acknowledgement of Spanish and put into practice a surreptitious persecution of the peripheral languages, hindering cultural production in the Galician language.

Although Galician continued to be used predominantly in Galicians' homes and in informal conversation, Castilian became the only language permitted in public domains such as government, education and, through censorship, in the media (Monteagudo and Santamarina 1993: 126). Whenever the language was used in public it was to show up a poor and ignorant society, using the language to scorn and ridicule (Hermida 2001: 120). A clear example of the linguistic ideology of the regime can be discerned from the following excerpt which appeared in pamphlets distributed in the Galician city of A Coruña in 1955 (Portas Fernández 1997: 121).

Hable bien
Sea patriota. No sea bárbaro.
Es el cumplido caballero que usted hable nuestro idioma oficial,
o sea, el castellano
Es ser patriota.
Viva España y la disciplina y nuestro idioma cervantino
[Speak properly
Be patriotic. Don't be barbaric.
It is the gentleman's obligation to speak our official language,
that is, Castilian
It is patriotic
Long live Spain and discipline and our language of Cervantes.
(My translation)]

References were made to Galician as being 'barbaric' while speaking 'properly' was seen as synonymous with speaking Castilian. Galician was also referred to as a dialect of Castilian rather than a language in its own right, reflecting the politically motivated process of 'dialectalization' (Kloss 1967). During the Franco regime, Galician was thus once again relegated to its pre-nineteenth-century status as a stigmatized and substandard language which was again excluded from the echelons of power and prestige. Schooling and the media, which were being accessed by an increasing percentage of the Galician population, were entirely through the medium of Spanish, as were areas of administration and the church. Socio-structural changes in Galicia, coupled with

the coercive linguistic policies of the Franco regime, therefore seemed to be working simultaneously against the language in the second half of the twentieth century. As a result the process of linguistic substitution accelerated and Spanish gained ground in urban areas, among those with access to education and younger age groups.

The rejection and ridicule of Galician by the Franco regime no doubt had important psychological effects on how Galicians perceived their language. However, at the same time, the anti-Galician ideologies of the Franco dictatorship, a political regime which was increasingly hated by many sectors of society and resistance to the regime made the Galician language a politically loaded question (Mar-Molinero 2000: 85). Throughout the years of the dictatorship, many of the protagonists of Galician language and cultural movements, both in the form of clandestine groups and in exile, continued the work which had begun in the nineteenth century. Such groups were to play a leading role in the defence and use of the Galician language in the post-Franco years (see Fernández Rei 1990a). By the 1960s a new generation of Galician nationalists had begun to emerge. Compared with earlier nationalist movements in Galicia, the emerging generation was strongly influenced by Marxist ideologies and anti-colonialist sentiment. They saw the time to be right to reinitiate political action. Such sentiments came into conflict, however, with the more conservative and anti-communist ideologies of traditional Galician nationalists led by Ramón Piñeiro which were by and large opposed to initiating political action. Thus a split between the two generations of nationalists emerged leading to the formation of the Galician Socialist Party (1963) and the Unión do Pobo Galego (1964). The Galician-language publishing house *Galaxia* also emerged during that period and acted as a movement of resistance to Spanish culture.

Increasingly, in the later years of the dictatorship, Galician began to take on a role as a political weapon and significant numbers of young urban Galicians from Spanish-speaking backgrounds began to use Galician in political activities, meetings, propaganda and literature. A new reality for Galician was thus beginning to emerge (Regueira 2006). Following Franco's death in November 1975 the complex and fragile process of democratic transition began in Spain. This process involved the restoration of Galicia's autonomous self-government which had been granted but not enacted in 1936. The process also involved the return of the Galician language into public life and marked the beginning of its recovery.

Concluding remarks

An analysis of the early sociolinguistic histories of the Irish and Galician languages provides an indication of the relative prestige that each of these languages once claimed. However, the profound political changes which followed these periods were to have long-term consequences on the status of their speakers and in turn on the languages themselves. In this chapter, the sociolinguistic histories of the Irish and Galician languages are set forth in the context of the broader political, cultural, educational and economic forces which have shaped attitudes towards them and in which attitudes have evolved. These factors served to reinforce and exacerbate the stigmatization of these languages, keeping earlier prejudices alive and even strengthening them.

In the larger perspective it is possible to see the alienation of these two languages and their speakers as part of a general fate which befell many of Europe's lesser used or minority languages, namely the economic and political exploitation of peripheries by a dominant core as part of a modernizing and centralizing centre of power (see Hechter 1975). Within this perspective, Ireland's and Galicia's peripheral relationship with non-autochthonous centres of political and economic power played a key role in the introduction of a dominant contact language – English in the case of Irish and Castilian in the case of Galician. In the cultural context a familiar pattern of language shift also emerges (Dorian 1981: 39), through the absorption of Ireland's and Galicia's social and economic elite with the resultant assignment of low prestige to the autochthonous languages. In this context, English and Castilian cultures were favoured and admired and competing Irish and Galician cultures were gradually disparaged. Once differentially ranked positions are assigned to two languages and cultures, Dorian (1981: 38) emphasizes that, it is not surprising, given the concentration of political power distant from the periphery, to find the centre promoting its own language and culture with total disregard for the indigenous peripheral languages. Grillo (1989: 173–4) points to the fact that 'an integral feature of the system of linguistic stratification in Europe is an ideology of contempt: subordinate languages are despised languages'. Speaking Irish and Galician became synonymous with barbarity and the 'rooting out' of these languages came to be regarded as the first step in rendering autochthonous populations more civilized (Dorian 1981: 39), thus reflecting the construction and legitimization of power on the part of a dominant group (Spitulnik 1998: 164).

The degree to which the 'rooting out' of Irish and Galician languages was achieved differs in both cases. The Irish case provides an example of what can perhaps be considered a case of unusually rapid decline, given the very advanced stage language shift had reached as early as the mid-nineteen hundreds. In contrast to the Irish case, Galician illustrates a case where language shift has been comparably slower, corresponding to the less-advanced rates of linguistic substitution by English among the remaining Irish-speaking parts of Ireland. However, Dorian (1981: 39) reminds us that it is sociolinguistically naïve to estimate language survival solely on the basis of the number of speakers. She notes that *who* speaks the language is ultimately more important than *how many* speak it (emphasis in the original). MacNamara (1971: 65) for example, notes that the great numerical superiority of Irish speakers through at least the first half of the eighteenth century could not preserve Irish when it was clear that English, the language of the ruling elite, was the prerequisite for social mobility. Similarly, in the Galician context, in the early nineteenth century Galician quickly passed from the status of a majority language to that of minority language once a Castilian-speaking elite established itself in significant numbers, despite the fact that those numbers were small in comparison to the body of Galician speakers in the area. In a context where social mobility is possible, even though difficult to achieve, the linguistic behaviour of the elite can have a profound effect on the rest of the population. While much more research would be required to tease out why the process of linguistic substitution has been slower among Galician than Irish speakers, it suffices to note for our current purposes that, notwithstanding their differently sized demographic bases, by the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, Irish and Galician speakers displayed largely similar socio-demographic profiles. The social meanings which had come to be associated with speaking Irish and Galician mirrored those of their speakers and reflected a stigmatized identity from which those who sought social mobility wished to disassociate themselves. Reversing the low-prestige status associated with Irish and Galician speakers and not their demographic bases *per se* constituted the central language planning problem facing each of these languages in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

As in the case of many of Europe's minoritized languages, the ideological orientation of ethnonational movements brought language issues onto the public agenda in Ireland and Galicia at the end of the nineteenth century. This period marks the first attempts to curb the process of language shift and the reversal of the negative social meanings

which had come to be associated with these languages and their speakers. However, compared with other ethnocultural movements in Europe such as the case of Catalan nationalism (Paulston 1992), political resistance to linguistic assimilation was much slower to develop in the Irish and Galician contexts, presumably as Inglehart and Woodward (1967–68) have noted in relation to similar language contact situations, because of the low level of economic and sociopolitical development in those areas during the centuries when an elite of alien tongue was becoming most visible. As a result, sociopolitical awareness came slowly to impoverished Irish and Galician peripheries, which had for so long been geographically, economically and politically isolated.

In a situation midst the power of a dominant political or economic group, it is deemed necessary for minority communities to control the institutions that affect their lives and to achieve sustainable improvement in their circumstances (see for example Corson 1990; Cummins 1988). Thus, the political changes which took place in Ireland in the 1920s and in the 1980s in Galicia allowed a legal framework to be put in place, through which the status of their respective indigenous languages could be enhanced. While as Fishman (1991: 27–8) highlights, political independence (or autonomy as in the case of Galicia) is not enough in and of itself to guarantee the ethnocultural and ethnolinguistic distinctiveness of a group, Spolsky (2004:15) points to the importance of political organization in forming and implementing language policy and planning initiatives. Our discussion will now turn to the issue of language policy and its role in reversing the process of language assimilation which had begun to take place in Galicia and which had already reached an advanced stage in the case of Irish.

3

A New Policy for Ideological Change

Defining language policy

Despite the fact that the academic study of language policy is relatively recent, it has for a long time existed as an activity in different countries and states even though it has not always been explicitly labelled as such. In the absence of explicitly stated formal policies, decisions about language have always been embedded in the agendas of powerful commercial interests. While noting that no single definition of *language policy* carries universal approval, Bugarski (1992 cited in Schiffman 1996: 3) provides a useful starting point defining it as 'the policy of a society in the area of linguistic communication – that is, the set of positions, principles and decisions reflecting that community's relationships to its verbal repertoire and communicative potential'. In a language policy, as Schiffman (1996) highlights, such positions, principles and decisions often take the form of rules, regulations or guidelines about the status, use, domains and territories of language(s) and rights of speakers of the language(s) in question.

In discussions about language policy, distinctions are often made between *overt* and *covert* policies (Schiffman 1996; Shohamy 2006). Overt language policy is that which is most easily recognizable as policy by the fact that it tends to be explicitly stated and is often formalized by legal or constitutional means. Covert language policies, on the other hand, make no explicit mention of language in any legal document or in administrative code. The guarantees of language rights of speakers and language users must therefore be inferred from other policies, constitutions or provisions. These policies are thus implicit, informal, unstated, *de facto* and very often grass roots. Schiffman (1996: 148) notes that whether or not there are explicit language policies, there will

always be implicit ones which encompass cultural assumptions about language, about correctness and about the 'best' way to talk or write. He argues (ibid.) that even if there is no explicit policy, these assumptions will constitute the implicit policy. Therefore, there is no such thing as no language policy because there is always at least an implicit policy in place. Fishman reiterates this point noting that:

[...] even the much vaunted 'no language policy' of many democracies is, in reality, an anti-minority-languages policy, because it delegitimizes such languages by studiously ignoring them, and thereby, not allocating them to be placed on the agenda of supportable general values. (Fishman 2001: 454)

Language policy and ideology

A language policy, whether explicitly or implicitly stated, reflects the ideological views and orientations of a society, government, institutions or individuals. As Spolsky (2004: 14) points out, 'language ideology is language policy with the manager left out, what people think should be done [with language]'. The link between language policy (in particular covert language policy) and language ideology is also embedded in Schiffman's (1996; 2006) concept of *linguistic culture* which he defines as:

[...] the totality of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, myths, religious strictures, and all the other cultural "baggage" that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their culture. (Schiffman 2006: 112)

For him linguistic culture is also concerned with the transmission and codification of language and has bearing on the culture's notions and ideas of the value of literacy and the sanctity of texts.

Blommaert (2006: 244) also argues that language policy is invariably based on linguistic ideologies, on images of 'societally desirable' forms of language usage and of the 'ideal' linguistic landscape of society, in turn derived from larger socio-political ideologies. It is therefore possible to infer from language policy decisions or statements what the ideological orientation of a society is in relation to assumptions about a specific language or language in general. This relates to the fact, as Spolsky (2004: 14) points out, that the members of a speech community share a general set of beliefs about appropriate language practices, sometimes favouring a consensual ideology, assigning values and prestige to various aspects

of language varieties used in it. These beliefs, he argues, derive from the influences of practitioners and can be a basis for language management or a management policy can be intended to confirm or modify them.

Language policy and planning

Although *language policy* and the related term *language planning* are often used synonymously, some writers have emphasized the need to distinguish between the two concepts which they see as fulfilling different functional approaches. For Rubin (1977) and Schiffman (1996), for example, *policy* is seen to reflect decisions and choices which can be understood in the ideological and political context from which they are taken. *Planning*, on the other hand, involves the means by which policy makers expect to put policies into practice. Spolsky's (2004: 8) definition of language policy gets round the need to distinguish between the two concepts by including language planning (or management as he refers to it) as one of three components which he identifies as making up language policy. This first component constitutes any specific effort to modify or influence language practices by any kind of language intervention, planning or management. The second is made up of the language practices that constitute the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire and the third refers to beliefs or ideologies about language and its use.

Cooper (1989) makes further distinctions and identifies three broad categories within the language planning process including *corpus planning*, *status planning* and *acquisition planning*. He uses corpus planning to refer to the form of the language or languages and focuses on standardization processes and the elaboration of terminologies to respond to expanding domains of language use. Williams (1992: 147) notes that when a minority language enters into new domains, there are repercussions for its corpus, not necessarily because of any 'deficiency' in that language but because of its social reconstitution.

Status planning, on the other hand, is seen to involve enhancing the value of the language by encouraging its use across a wide number of societal domains including public authorities, government and the judiciary. As Cooper (1989: 120) points out, status planning influences the evaluation of a language variety by assigning it to the functions from which its evaluation derives.

Finally, acquisition planning is used by Cooper (ibid.: 159) to describe aspects of status planning which focus on ways in which the language can be acquired and learned by different members of the society. While Cooper makes distinctions between these three types of planning, there

is considerable overlap among them. Williams (1988: 273), for example, notes that the distinction between status and corpus planning can be criticized on the grounds that language is itself a seamless web making such distinctions in its planned functions artificial.

Changing attitudes

Whether or not we wish to make the distinction between corpus, status, or indeed, acquisition planning, the underlying role of such planning is often to change existing language attitudes and in turn practices. As was pointed out earlier, attitudes towards a language derive from the influences of practitioners and can be a basis for language policy or a language policy can be intended to confirm or modify certain attitudes or ideologies.

Through its role in facilitating the acceptance of a language by members of society, for instance, status planning is regarded as particularly important in improving attitudes towards a language or in changing language ideologies and beliefs. In the context of language policy and planning, status is widely understood as the perceived relative value of a named language usually related to its social utility, which encompasses its so-called market value as a mode of communication, as well as more subjective features rooted in a society's *linguistic culture* (Schiffman 1996). As we saw in the first chapter, status is a key dimension of meaning within which attitudes towards a language can be measured. We also saw how perceptions about the relative status of a language were strongly influenced by its value as a form of what Bourdieu (1991) refers to as *linguistic capital*. It thus follows that status enhancing initiatives such as the inclusion of the language in key institutional domains including education, public administration and the media (domains from which minority languages were by and large excluded) have the potential to alter negative perceptions about the worth of a language.

Corpus and acquisition planning can also be influential in altering language attitudes and beliefs. Cooper (1989: 155–6), for example, points out that corpus planning efforts can strengthen the speakers' dignity, self-worth, social connectedness, and their ultimate meaning as a member of a group linked both to the past and to the future. Similarly, acquisition planning goals designed to create or to improve the opportunity to learn a language, as well as the incentives to learn it, are likely to have a positive effect on language attitudes.

Language policy and context

The ability of language policies and language planning efforts to change language attitudes and practices cannot, however, be automatically

assumed. This is not least as Schiffman (1996: 119) notes because implementation of such policies is almost always the weakest link in language policies, warning that while fiery rhetoric is one thing, carrying out the intention of the law is another. Moreover, seemingly well-intentioned language policy and planning initiatives can, rather than improve attitudes, actually have the opposite effect. Status planning, put in place with the intention of enhancing the symbolic value of a minority language can sometimes be seen as antagonistic and provoke negative attitudes towards the language, particularly if planning measures are seen to raise the status of certain groups within society and not others or if status measures are seen to provide linguistic capital to some but not to others.

In the case of corpus planning, Grenoble and Whaley (2006: 154–6) argue that although standardization has undeniable benefits for minority languages, the process can also facilitate continued language loss. Instead of strengthening speakers' dignity and self-worth, as Cooper (1989) suggests, standardization can in fact further stigmatize and isolate existing minority language speakers. In an attempt to rid the minority language of influences from the dominant contact language, standardizers often promote policies which reject loanwords and as Dorian (1994) notes, put in place a conservative and purist policy. Jaffe (1999) points out that in the process of standardization, such purist ideas can disempower vernacular forms of the language spoken in everyday contexts. While as Coulmas (1989: 11) notes, a purist policy often suits the educated urban elite, it risks 'alienation of the language of the masses'. As a result, corpus planning measures can become counterproductive, producing new forms of linguistic alienation and insecurity among existing speakers of the language.

Woolard (1998: 17) goes as far as to say that the very movements which set out to save minority languages are often ironically structured, willy-nilly, around the same received notions of language that have led to their oppression and/or suppression. Thus, minority language activists often find themselves imposing standards, elevating literate forms and uses, and negatively sanctioning variability in order to demonstrate the reality, validity, and integrity of their languages (Woolard *ibid.*).

While corpus planning is frequently presented as a neutral act and deemed a necessary part of making the language more modern, Fishman (2006: 19) reminds us that the directional forces moving and guiding such planning initiatives are more politically, ideologically and value laden than they may first appear. He suggests that corpus planning goes far beyond the specificity or mono-directionality of such

major outcome goals as 'modernization' (*ibid.*) Therefore, standardization unavoidably reduces variation, thus creating new hierarchies of linguistic prestige.

Under what conditions?

The task of measuring the effects of language policy and planning initiatives is also made difficult by the fact that such initiatives do not exist in a social or cultural vacuum. Instead, they take place in particular sociolinguistic and socio-cultural settings, and their nature and scope can only be fully understood in relation to these settings (Ferguson 1977: 9). Language-related policies are therefore not autonomous processes (Ó Riagáin 1997; Romaine 2002) but exist in an environment with physical, geographical, political and socio-economic components (Ager 1996: 11). As Spolsky (2004: 8) notes, language and language policy both exist in highly complex, interacting and dynamic contexts, the modification of any part of which may have correlated effects (and causes) on any other part. It thus follows that a host of non-linguistic factors (political, demographic, social, religious, cultural, psychological, bureaucratic and so on) regularly account for any attempt by persons or groups to intervene in the language practices and the beliefs of other persons and groups, and for subsequent changes to occur (*ibid.*).

Schiffman (1996), for instance, argues that abolishing the explicit rules about language, or declaring 'standard' language to be nothing but a 'myth' or an ideology does not make the cultural assumptions underlying these concepts automatically disappear. Similarly, he argues that, assumptions about languages and perceptions about their value are often so deeply rooted in a society's linguistic culture that changes in this value do not depend exclusively, or even necessarily, on any official or legal status conferred by a state through its exclusive, legislative, or judicial branches.

Thus, ideologies about language generally and specific languages in particular delimit to a large extent what is and is not possible in the realm of language planning and policy-making (Ricento 2006: 9). Tollefson (2006: 47–8), drawing on Fairclough (1989), notes that as hegemonic practices come to be built into the institutions of society, they tend to reinforce privilege and grant it legitimacy. Therefore, he suggests that the cultural and linguistic capital (in Bourdieu's terms) of dominant and non-dominant groups is made unequal by the structure of social institutions. A Critical Language Policy approach proposed by Tollefson thus shows ways in which explicit and implicit

policies contribute to such ongoing hegemony and the reproduction of systems of linguistic inequality (and the continued minoritization of certain languages).

Somewhat related to this idea is Ó Riagáin's (2008: 340) discussion of the role of socio-economic and societal structures on the ability of language policy to change attitudes. He points out that in minority language contexts, language attitudes are also conditioned by the way the economy and, in turn, society is structured. The state plays a very dominant role in shaping socio-economic development and as Ó Riagáin (*ibid.*) highlights, it is necessary to examine state policies which relate to economic and social issues, particularly education as it is likely that in total, their consequences for language attitudes are of more importance than language policies *per se*.

Language policy in Ireland and Galicia

An examination of the sociolinguistic histories of Irish and Galician in the second chapter shows that language policies have for a long time existed for these languages, and decisions were at various times made about their status, use, domains and the rights of their speakers. At times these decisions were spelt out through explicit laws or acts. At other times, they were unspoken and a 'no policy' policy (Fishman 2001: 454) allowed for a continuation of a status quo in which these languages and their speakers remained subordinated.

Taking advantage of changes in the balance of political power in Ireland of the 1920s and Galicia of the 1980s, attempts were made to intervene in the process of language assimilation which had to a greater or lesser degree begun to take place for their respective autochthonous languages. A series of laws and constitutional changes were enacted which required the use of Irish and Galician in many new functional domains. Working through political and government agencies, an attempt to change the linguistic culture of the time was managed through explicit policy and planning interventions which as we will see had major economic, political, social and cultural causes and consequences for both languages.

Constitutional and legal change

Following political independence in 1922, Irish constituted one of the key symbols used to reinforce and consolidate the legitimacy of the new Irish State. Under Article 4 of the Constitution of the Irish Free State (*Saorstát Éireann*), Irish was proclaimed the 'National' language.

This position was reaffirmed in 1937 in Article 8 of *Bunreacht na hÉireann* (The Irish Constitution) which states that 'the Irish language as the national language is the first official language' and that 'the English language is recognised as a second official language' (see Ó Máille 1990). Compared with other minority language cases, the nomination of Irish as the language of a state, awarded it a privileged position and has thus made it the only minority language in Europe and perhaps in the world with a state 'ostensibly dedicated to its protection' (Fishman 1991: 122).

Decentralization policies in the context of Spain's transition to democracy in the post-Franco period led to a new legal framework which was to greatly enhance the status of Galician and the other languages of Spain including Catalan and Basque. Explicit references to Spain's linguistic diversity appear in Articles 3, 20 and 148 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution marking a clear ideological shift from that of the Franco regime. Article 3, in particular, sets out the new government's official recognition of linguistic diversity within the Spanish territory stating that:

El castellano es la lengua española oficial del Estado. Todos los españoles tienen el deber de conocerla y el derecho a usarla.

Las demás lenguas españolas serán también oficiales en las respectivas Comunidades Autónomas de acuerdo con sus Estatutos.

La riqueza de las distintas modalidades lingüísticas de España es un patrimonio cultural que será objeto de especial respeto y protección.

[1. Castilian is the official language of the Spanish State. All Spaniards have the duty to know it and the right to use it.

2. The other Spanish languages are also official within their respective Autonomous Communities in accordance with their Statutes.

3. The wealth of Spain's different linguistic varieties is its cultural patrimony which will be the object of special respect and protection. (My translation)]

Similar to Irish, the Galician language became a central prop in the legitimization of a Galician national identity. The important role given to the language is evident in Article 5 of the 1981 Statutes of Autonomy for Galicia which reinforces the co-official status of Galician with Castilian and declares Galician to be Galicia's 'own language' (*lingua propia*).

As Monteagudo and Bouzada Fernández (2002) point out:

O idioma galego establece no plano simbólico unha diferenza cara a fóra, e unha homoxenidade cara a dentro. Este elemento diacrítico é un compoñente que facilita a xeración dun espazo de poder e intereses autónomo, en detrimento doutras fontes de poder. (Monteagudo and Bouzada Fernández 2002: 54)

[The Galician language symbolizes Galicia's difference with the outside and homogeneity within Galicia. This diacritical element is a component which facilitates the generation of a sphere of power and autonomous interests to the detriment of other sources of power. (My translation)]

Article 5 also articulates the commitment on the part of the newly established regional government (Xunta de Galicia) to guarantee the 'normal' and official use of both Galician and Castilian. Such a guarantee involves taking necessary measures to ensure adequate knowledge of both languages and to attain full equality with respect to the rights and duties of Galician citizens. According to Monteagudo and Bouzada Fernández (2002):

O novo marco autonómico establece as condicións para que as institucións galegas asumisen o 'problema' do idioma, e convertelo nunha política incorporada á estrutura permanente de actuación pública. Tamén os axentes que promoven o idioma galego na sociedade dispoñen dun ámbito favorecedor que posibilita que as súas accións dispoñan de maior proxección social. (Monteagudo and Bouzada Fernández 2002: 54)

[The new autonomous status establishes the conditions in which Galician institutions can take on the language 'problem', making it a policy which is incorporated into the permanent structure of public action. The agents who promote the Galician language in society are also working in a favourable environment in which their actions have a higher degree of social protection. (My translation)]

However, unlike in the Irish context, where the language was established as the official language of the Irish State, the constitutional status of Galician is much weaker. Although Galician is recognized as co-official with Castilian within the territorial confines of the Galician Autonomous Community, in the context of the 1978 Spanish Constitution, Castilian remains the first and only official language of

the Spanish State, of which Galicians continue to form a part. The use of Galician is restricted to the region where it is spoken as a community language. Castilian, on the other hand, can be used anywhere within the Spanish State (Vernet 2007).

The declaration of a language as official (as in the Irish Constitution or as co-official in the case of the Galician Statutes of Autonomy) is not of itself an essential act of language planning as it does not necessarily bring about increased language use (Cooper 1989: 101). The essentially symbolic significance of Irish as the first official language of the State reinforces this point and naming the autochthonous language as the 'first official language' has, as we will see, not led to its general adoption, even by the government itself.

Despite the declaration of Irish as the first official language of the Irish State, in practice English has continued to be the dominant language used for almost all parliamentary business. The constitutional and legal position of the Irish language and its prominent place in the rhetoric of political parties, therefore, gives a misleading picture of its strength. Thus, declarations relating to the official status of a minority language must instead be looked at in terms of the symbolic significance of statutory provisions rather than their immediate practical value. Cooper (1989) notes that:

[...] the statutory language symbolizes the common memory and aspirations of the community (or of the majority community), its past and its future. When a community views a language as a symbol of its greatness, specification of that language as official serves to support the legitimacy of governmental authority. (Cooper 1989: 101)

The new constitutional status, which gave an official position to Irish within the Irish State and co-official to Galician within its Autonomous Community, became more concrete through the development of specific language policies and language planning efforts.

Early years of language policy

Broadly speaking, the language policy in post-1922 Ireland followed a two-way strategy of preservation and restoration of Irish. Preservation policies sought to maintain and enhance the language in the remaining fragmented Irish-speaking parts of the country, along north-western, western and southern seaboard. Collectively, these areas were referred to as the 'Gaeltacht' (meaning Irish-speaking). A Gaeltacht Commission was set up to map the Irish-speaking areas and to make

recommendations for their consolidation (Walsh 2002). Gaeltacht areas were defined at district electoral division according to linguistic criteria and included what was termed 'Fíor-Ghaeltacht' and 'Breac-Ghaeltacht'. The Gaeltacht proper or 'Fíor-Ghaeltacht' consisted of areas where at least 80 per cent of the population had been returned as Irish-speakers in the 1911 Census of Population. The 'Breac-Ghaeltacht' (the literal meaning of 'breac' is speckled) consisted of bordering areas where Irish was not necessarily the main language of the resident population but where 25–79 per cent had been returned as Irish-speakers in the 1911 Census (Mac Giolla Chríost 2005). The inclusion of the latter areas was deliberate and the thinking behind the strategy was that language policy would bring about an overall increase in the number of speakers.

In economic and geographical terms the Gaeltacht areas were among the most underdeveloped and isolated in the country. In numerical terms also they were disadvantaged. By 1926 the Gaeltacht comprised less than 16 per cent of the total population of the country and out-migration and depopulation were key characteristics of these areas. However, despite these difficulties it seemed crucial to the survival of Irish that a true native-speaker population survive as a validating entity, a signal to the rest of the country that Irish could serve as a genuine language of daily life (Dorian 1988: 119). Attempts were made to maintain Irish speakers in these areas through a regional development programme (Ó Riagáin 1997) and the government proposed the provision of many special benefits to encourage the inhabitants of these areas to remain Irish-speaking (Dorian 1988; Fennell 1981).

The second facet of linguistic policy, which was one of restoration or revival, involved an attempt to expand the Irish-speaking population outside of the core Gaeltacht communities where English was the predominant language, termed by some at the time as the Galltacht (meaning English-speaking). One of the key agents in the restoration of the language was the education system (Ó Laoire 2008). As well as the maintenance and revitalization components of language policy for Irish, a significant component of the policy was concerned with increasing the use of Irish within the public sector and the media as well as corpus planning measures to standardize and modernize the language itself.

The Irish government's commitment to language revitalization in the early years of language policy is often interpreted as a desire to establish a monolingual Irish-speaking state through the displacement of English by Irish usage in as many of the spheres of national life as possible (see The Advisory Planning Committee (APC) 1988: 40). Nevertheless, as

Ó Riagáin (1997: 269) highlights, although individual politicians and spokespersons for the language movement may have expressed such a view, the constitutional and legislative provisions for Irish in the 1920s and 1930s do not suggest that anything other than the establishment of a bilingual state was ever envisaged.

Although rural Galician-speaking areas were not given an official label as in the case of the Irish Gaeltacht, there are frequent references to the idea of 'two Galicias' (Rodríguez González 1997: 29), reflecting geographical differences in the region's sociolinguistic reality. Unlike the two-pronged strategy of maintenance and revitalization in the Irish context, however, the Galician government adopted a blanket approach, designed for the autonomous community as a whole, largely ignoring territorial differences in the distribution of Galician speakers (Lorenzo 2008: 22).

Language policy for Galician revolves around *Normalización Lingüística* (Linguistic Normalization) which promotes the inclusion of Galician in domains from which it came to be historically absent. In order to fulfil its statutory aims (outlined in the Galician Statutes of Autonomy) of defending and promoting the Galician language, in 1983 the Law for Linguistic Normalization (*Lei de Normalización Lingüística*) was endorsed by the Galician Parliament. In the same year, the General Directorate for Language Policy (*Dirección Xeral de Política Lingüística* (DXPL)) was appointed as the main government body in charge of the recovery of the Galician language. The principal aim of the 1983 Law was to legalize the use of Galician, promote its use in all domains within Galician society and to reverse the process of linguistic substitution by Castilian which had begun to gain momentum over the previous decades. The Law consists of six parts and includes separate sections outlining linguistic rights, official use of the language, its use in education, the media, outside of Galicia and by the autonomous administration. While there have been several amendments to its various facets, the Law constitutes the core piece of Galician language legislation.

The concept of *normalization*, used by policy makers in Galicia, is very specific to the Spanish context. The term was first coined by Catalan sociolinguists, Aracil, Ninyoles and Valverdú (Mar-Molinero 2000: 80), and was subsequently used as a model for language planners within Catalonia itself, as well as in Galicia and the Basque Country. Although the concept is widely used in the Spanish context by academics, policy makers and even among the general public, the way in which the term is interpreted across and among these different groups has not always been the same. This led to the somewhat confusing array of

both technical and commonsense meanings which came to be associated with the term.

Up until recently in Spanish linguistic terminology the terms *normalización* and *normativización* frequently appeared in discussions concerning the process of language normalization. On the one hand, *normalización* tended to refer to the extension of a standardized language to all areas of public life, corresponding to the concept of status planning commonly used in English-language terminology (see Kloss 1969; Cooper 1989). On the other hand, *normativización* involved the selection and codification of a standard language, corresponding more specifically to the concept of corpus planning in the terminology used in English. In the more recent sociolinguistic literature, however, *normalización* tends to be used to encompass both the status and corpus elements of language planning, submitting to Williams' (1988) idea of language as a seamless web and that distinctions between the two are in many ways artificial.

The utility of the concept and its application to the Galician sociolinguistic reality have, however, been criticized by many writers (see Lorenzo Suárez 2008; del Valle 2000). Such criticisms are based on the fact that the languages of reference (in particular Catalan), from which the concept derives, are language situations with little in common with Galician. Lorenzo Suárez (2008: 25) notes that using Catalan and Basque as points of reference for language policy in Galicia created a false illusion about what could be realistically achieved through *normalización*, leading people to believe that a complete overhaul of the Galician sociolinguistic situation was possible simply by activating certain legal and political mechanisms. However, as our discussion will show, this was not to be the case and some thirty years of language policy, despite showing several positive results, at many levels has also proved disappointing.

Language planning for Irish and Galician

The overarching aim of language policies in both contexts was to enhance the social and legal position of their respective minority languages. The inclusion of Irish and Galician in key public spaces including schools, public sector employment, radio and television, constitute the key status planning measures which were put in place. Through such measures attempts were made to raise the status of what had historically come to be low prestige languages and in doing so, facilitate their social reproduction. Along with status planning elements of language policies, there was also significant work in the area of corpus planning. The latter focused on developing a standard language and

in facilitating the use of each minority language within a set of new functional domains.

Corpus planning and standardization

The corpus planning dimension of language policies in Ireland and Galicia can be seen as an attempt to modernize their respective minority languages and render them suitable for modern-day functions, for their use in literature, education and key formal domains. Corpus planning measures in both Ireland and Galicia have paid particular attention to developing and promoting a standard form of language. The development of *an Caighdeán Oifigiúil*, Official Standard Irish, was driven by the needs of statehood and the role ascribed to Irish as the national and first official language in the constitution (Ó hÍfearnáin 2008: 123). Similarly, *Galego Normativizado*, Standard Galician, formed a key component of the 1983 Law for Linguistic Normalization with specific reference made to the standardization of the language:

Nas cuestións relativas á normativa, actualización e uso correcto da lingua galega, estimarase como criterio de autoridade o establecido pola Real Academia Galega. Esta normativa será revisada en función do proceso de normalización do uso do galego.

[In questions related to the standard, updates and correct use of the Galician language, the form set out by the Galician Royal Academy is seen as the authoritative form. This standard will be revised in line with the process of normalization of Galician language use. (My translation)]

Both languages had previously enjoyed long literary histories dating from the seventh century in the case of Irish and the thirteenth century for Galician. Thus the basis of a literary and written language existed when revitalization movements for Irish and Galician emerged in the late nineteenth century. However, the last great periods in which they had appeared as written languages lay several centuries in the past. As Dorian (1994: 484) highlights, in the case of Irish, what had been a brilliant literary language survived in the monuments that had been produced by its practitioners; but so far as the spoken language was concerned, what remained was rustic in character, surviving in daily use almost exclusively among a peasantry. A similar pattern can be identified in the case of Galician where although the language continued to be used by the majority of the population, the latter was made up of rural peasants (Ramallo 2007).

The issue of forming a standard language in post-1920s Ireland and post-1980s Galicia raised challenging questions for language planners in both contexts. At the time Irish was established as the first official language of the newly independent Ireland in 1937, there were three main dialects of Irish spoken corresponding to varieties of the language spoken in Ulster, Connacht and Munster. Ó Baoill (1988: 111) notes that the dialects of Irish did not have any obvious superiority in prestige or numbers. However, the fact that Ireland's first Constitution was written in pure southern dialect may suggest that certain hierarchies did exist albeit implicitly. Nonetheless, the southern dialect did not emerge as the single prestige form and instead compromises were made when coming up with a standard (Tulloch 2006). Ó hÍfearnáin (2008), for instance, notes that after having been adopted by the education system and by all state agencies, the standard took on its own dynamic to become the only acceptable form in most domains of written Irish usage. Therefore, in formal domains, the standard would seem to be recognized as the prestige norm. The full version of the standard was published in 1958 by the Translation Section (*Rannóg an Aistriúcháin*) which serves Ireland's two houses of parliament. Although debates about its reform surface from time to time (see Ó Baoill 2000; Williams 2006), it remains the authoritative reference.

Unlike the three main dialects in Irish where geographical distance has led to lower level of comprehension across different speakers, there is a higher levels of intelligibility among speakers of Galicia's different dialectal forms. It is perhaps because of this that the existence of different dialects in Galician is not always recognized. However, despite its internally homogenous appearance, different dialects, sociolects and dialects can be identified. There are three main linguistic blocs: the Eastern, Central and Western blocs, with each containing individual sub-varieties (Fernández Rei 1990b). Monteagudo (2005: 421) makes further distinctions, identifying four sociolects and three idiolects. Many of the spoken forms of Galician are, however, strongly influenced by Spanish, showing the effects of a long period of language contact (Ramallo 2007; Rojo 2004). Attempts at replacing existing Spanish-derived terminology with a more *Galicianized* equivalent have, however, often been the subject of criticism and have according to López Varcácel (cited in del Valle 2000: 122) led to a language form which is frequently perceived as 'artificial, alien and full of errors'.

Although the standard variety is now used and accepted in the area of education and the media, codification and development of a unified standard form has, nonetheless, been complicated by the existence of

two ideological 'camps'. These consisted of on the one hand, *isolationists*, arguing for the independent development of Galician from both Spanish and Portuguese. The opposing group of *lusistas* or *reintegrationists*, on the other hand a smaller, but more strongly vocal group, have favoured alignment of Galician with Portuguese, arguing that because of the status of Portuguese as a major world language, this option has the potential to enhance its prospects for survival. Reintegrationists, therefore, have tended to see the goal of contemporary language normalization in Galicia as the gradual adoption of standard Portuguese as the standard language in Galicia. This stance has been based on the notion that Galician and Portuguese were historically one and the same language and that distance between the two emerging varieties was as a result of Galician's contact with Spanish. Therefore, the 'reintegration' of Portuguese orthography in Galician has significant symbolic import as it establishes a clear linguistic border with the contested dominant language, Spanish (Herrero Valeiro 2003).

There would, however, over recent years seem to have been a certain calming of long-standing and often heated debates surrounding orthographic norms. In the changes to the prescribed standard form of Galician in 2003, consideration was taken of certain reintegrationist proposals regarding orthography. The inclusion of some Galician-Portuguese norms in the language can perhaps be seen as an attempt to build a consensus among different sides of the debate and to put an end to the so-called normative wars in Galicia.⁵

Hoffmann (1996) previously noted that such disagreements about the standard are likely to have done little to persuade those who already spoke a dialect variety of Galician to accept the officially promoted version as the prestigious norm. Lorenzo Suárez (2008: 23) also makes the point that debates such as those surrounding selection of a standard form of language have led to a lack of unity on the Galician language question, limiting the potential action of mobilized pro-Galician sectors of society and causing reticence among what he refers to as the 'maioría silenciosa' (silent majority) of Galicians. Arguably, two decades of divisive disputes over which form of the language to use could have been more fruitfully spent on the common goal of language revitalization. While this may be the case, given the symbolic import of language, such disputes are of significance and reflect internal power struggles common to the process of linguistic revitalization in minority language communities about language ownership and decisions about who decides what constitutes the new 'legitimate' way of speaking (Bourdieu 1991; Heller 1999).

Status planning

In contexts of language revitalization, efforts to promote second-language acquisition often tend to rely on the school system and in this respect the Irish and Galician cases have not been any different. Education came to be the mainstay of government policy in its efforts to maintain the Irish language in the Gaeltacht areas and revive its use in other parts of the country. In line with government policy for the language, Irish was quickly established as the medium of instruction in National Schools within the Gaeltacht. Attempts to increase the knowledge base of the Irish language among the predominantly English-speaking population outside of the Gaeltacht involved the inclusion of the language in the school curriculum. The basis for language planning in the area of education had been substantially laid by the actions of the Gaelic League at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is estimated that by 1922, some 25 per cent of schools were teaching Irish (Ó Riagáin 1997: 11).

Cooper (1989: 161) points out that language acquisition measures through the schools are more likely to succeed if the target language is used as a medium of instruction as opposed to merely teaching the language as a target of instruction. Language planning initiatives for Irish followed a similar rationale. In addition to Irish being taught as a school subject, the State also promoted the use of the language as a medium of instruction for other school subjects with the ultimate aim of replacing English with Irish. The number of Irish-medium primary and secondary schools increased during the early years of the State. By 1928, for example, historical records show that there were 1240 schools in which Irish was the sole medium of instruction in infant classes, 3570 in which the teaching medium was partially Irish with between 25 and 30 per cent of secondary schools teaching through the medium of Irish (Ó Riagáin 1997: 16).

The aim of language policy in the early years of the State was to make schools Irish-speaking. There were incentives to increase exposure to Irish in schools through grants offered to those schools which increased its presence in the curriculum. Additionally, Irish was made an essential subject for the Intermediate Certificate examination (taken midway through second-level education) in 1928 and this was extended to the Leaving Certificate examination (the final examination at the end of second-level education) in 1934. Along with these status-enhancing efforts was the fact that knowledge of Irish had been made a requirement for entrance to the colleges of the National University of Ireland since 1910 as a result of the workings of the

Gaelic League during that period, thus providing a further incentive to learn the language.

As well as attempting to increase the knowledge base of the language through its formal instruction, the inclusion of Irish in the education system can be seen as an attempt to influence society's evaluation of the language and attitudes towards it. While the exclusion of Irish from public domains such as education in previous centuries had reinforced the low status function of the language, its promotion by the newly formed Irish government provided an explicit display of favourable support for the language among the dominant segments of the Irish polity.

While somewhat less contentious than corpus planning measures for Galician, as we will see, the status planning aspects of the 1983 Law of Language Normalization were by no means non-contested. Like in the Irish contexts, status planning measures in Galicia relate specifically to measures aimed at increasing the use of Galician in formal functional domains, such as education, the media and public services, where Castilian had, for historical reasons come to be the norm. Similar to the Irish context, the most significant provisions for Galician have been in education and, as Portas Fernández (1997), points out:

De maior significación, porque é no campo educativo onde máis se centrou até agora o debate sobre a normalización lingüística e onde se produciu unha maior codificación legal. (Portas Fernández 1997: 186)

[Of most significance because up to now, it is in the area of education that the debate on linguistic normalization has been centred and where there has been most legislation. (My translation)]

Rodríguez Neira (1993: 64) notes that 36 per cent of all legislation related to the Galician language is concentrated in the area of education. This proportion increases to over half of language-related legislation if Galician language courses outside of formal education are included. With the drawing up of the 1983 Law, the Galician autonomous government issued a decree making Galician a compulsory subject along with Castilian at all levels of education up to but not including university. Articles 12 to 17 of the Law for Linguistic Normalization refer specifically to the teaching of Galician. Although the use of Galician is not a legal requirement at university level, in Article 15.2, reference is made to the fact that the necessary measures will be put in place to ensure the 'normal' use of Galician in university teaching. Language policy in the area of education supports the progressive incorporation of Galician in the primary and secondary school curricula, with the

aim of establishing bilingual programmes in all Galician schools. In accordance with Article 14.3 of the 1983 Law, by the end of second-level education, pupils are expected to have acquired equal levels of oral and written competence in both Galician and Castilian. This is set out in the following terms:

As autoridades educativas da Comunidade Autónoma garantirán que ó remate dos ciclos en que o ensino do galego é obrigatorio, os alumnos coñezan este, nos seus niveis oral e escrito, en igualdade có castelán.

[The Autonomous Communities' education authorities guarantee that at the end of school cycles in which the teaching of Galician is obligatory, pupils will have the same oral and written knowledge of the language as Castilian. (My translation)]

However, no matter how accomplished schools are in encouraging language acquisition, they are unlikely to bring about increased use of the language outside of the classroom unless there are practical reasons for such use (Cooper 1989; Fishman 1991; Hornberger 2008). In the Irish context, although the most significant elements of language policy and language planning efforts were in the area of education, another area of strategic concern was the putting in place of the necessary infrastructure to ensure language maintenance in the Gaeltacht and language revival in the rest of the country. This led to a number of important initiatives to increase the use of Irish in the public services, which also involved its inclusion in national television and radio (see Ó hIfearnáin 2001; Watson 2003). In the public sector, for instance, knowledge of Irish was made a compulsory requirement in 1925 and, by 1945, competence in the language became part of the assessment for advancement within Civil Service positions. Furthermore, since 1925, regulations had been issued for the use of Irish in official forms and correspondence with the public (see Ó Riain 1994).

Outside of education, Galician language policy also makes reference to the promotion of Galician in other key societal domains including the media. Article 18, 19 and 20 of the Law for Linguistic Normalization makes explicit reference to the inclusion of Galician in radio and television. In 1984 Galician Radio and Television was established with the aim of increasing the promotion and spread of Galician language and culture, as well as the defence of a Galician national identity (Casares *et al.* 2008; Recalde Fernández 1997). Explicit measures were also taken to

increase the presence of the language in the area of public administration. Article 6.3 states the following:

Os poderes públicos de Galicia promoverán o uso normal da lingua galega, oralmente e por escrito, nas súas relacións cos cidadáns.

[Public bodies in Galicia will promote the normal use of the Galician language, both oral and written, in its dealings with its citizens. (My translation)]

Between 1983 and 1987, for example, over 5000 civil servants were given formal linguistic training. Additionally, the *Lei de Función Pública de Galicia* in 1988, as well as a modified version of the same law in 2008 made knowledge of Galician a compulsory requirement for access to public sector employment in Galicia. Although the passing of a written exam in Galician was for a time a prerequisite when applying for public sector jobs in Galicia, since 2009 applicants who can demonstrate existing knowledge or accreditation in the language are no longer required to take such an exam. Article 5 of the Law for Linguistic Normalization also stipulates that all official documents of the Galician administration must be published in both Galician and Spanish.

Socio-economic, political and cultural context

In the early years of language policy of the independent Irish State, Irish constituted a key symbol in the construction and legitimization of an Irish national identity. Therefore, 'Gaelicization' of the national education system in the early years of the State can be seen as an attempt to secure the loyalty of Irish citizens to the newly formed political entity which was the Irish State (APC 1988: 41). Additionally, the presence of the language in the media can also be seen as a means of promoting and consolidating a sense of Irishness among the population in the post-independence phase (see Watson 2003).

As well as reinforcing the value of Irish as a symbol of national identity, various aspects of language policies and language planning measures during the early decades of the twentieth century changed what Ó Riagáin, following Bourdieu, refers to as the 'rules' of the social mobility process in Ireland at the time, by awarding benefits to those with a proficiency in the language (Ó Riagáin 1997: 173). As a result of language planning in the area of education and public sector employment, knowledge of the Irish language could increase one's possibilities of achieving educational certification, gaining access to higher levels

of education and accessing certain sectors of the labour market. As a result of these changes, the value of Irish was enhanced among those who spoke the language and incentives were provided for those without knowledge of the language to learn it. In doing so, attempts were being made to alter people's attitudes towards the language by converting the economic and social penalties (Dorian 1981), which had come to be associated with speaking Irish in previous centuries, into economic rewards.

However, a number of factors limited the full potential of these efforts and certain sectors of the population were more directly affected than others. In his analysis of language policy in post-independent Ireland, Ó Riagáin (1997) notes that, during the early years, education itself was not widespread among the population and participation rates beyond primary school levels were low. According to Ó Buachalla (1988: 62), in the period that followed political independence in Ireland, outside of urban areas access to education beyond the primary school stage was available to less than one-tenth of younger age groups. Access to second-level education tended to be restricted to wealthier sectors of Irish society due to the fee-paying nature of schooling at the time. Therefore, only certain middle class sectors of society were directly affected by the requirement of Irish for educational certification and for access to the National University of Ireland. The relative effectiveness of language policies and language planning measures in the area of education was also restricted by the fact that, for a large sector of the population, social mobility was not attained through educational qualifications. Because the occupational structure at the time was one in which over half the population consisted of employers, self-employed or employed within family-run businesses, predominantly in the area of agriculture (see Breen *et al.* 1990: 55), social mobility within these occupational sectors tended to be achieved through inheritance or sponsorship rather than education. Social mobility through the education system and subsequently language policy, affected only a small sector of society which included civil servants and those entering the professions. Outside of these social status groups, the commercial and industrial middle classes of Irish society were not directly affected by language policies and planning initiatives during the early years of the State (Ó Riagáin 1997; Tovey 1978; Tovey *et al.* 1989).

Similar to the first half of the twentieth century in Ireland, language policies and planning in the area of education and public sector employment in Galicia have been aimed at enhancing the social value of the autochthonous language. However, in contrast to the Irish

context, where low participation rates in education can be seen to have limited the full potential of the earlier years of language policies, in Galicia, language planning initiatives coincide more closely with a period of educational expansion. As noted earlier in the second chapter, previous attempts by central Spanish governments to bring about linguistic homogenization in Spain through the education system had little direct effect in altering linguistic practices among the Galician-speaking population, given the low levels of education in Galicia more generally (Bouzada Fernández 2003; Recalde Fernández 1997), although such attempts were likely to have negative effects on people's attitudes towards the language. The Law for General Education (*Ley General de Educación*) in 1970 made education free and obligatory for all six- to fourteen-year-olds in Spain and since the 1980s, the number of school places greatly increased, following institutional reform which further extended the school-going age. Recalde Fernández (2000) notes the potentially positive effect this can have on the language, given that 98 per cent of the younger generation are currently exposed to the language through the education system.

As noted before, in the early years of language policy in Ireland positive initiatives were put in place to enhance the social status of Irish by awarding competence in the language for access to public sector employment. The full potential of this incentive, as Ó Riagáin (1997) highlights, was not reached given that the majority of the population was still engaged in agriculture, an occupational sector which was unaffected by language policy changes. In difference to the Irish context, language policy in favour of Galician in the 1980s coincides with socio-structural changes which have been taking place within Galicia over more recent decades and the transformation of a rural society into a more urbanized one (Rei-Doval 2007). The numbers engaged in the primary sectors of agriculture and fishing in Galicia have dramatically declined and in-migration to Galicia's main cities has increased. Statistics for 2001 show that, less than one-fifth of the population were engaged in agriculture and fishing, one-third were in manufacturing and construction and about half in the public services (Instituto Galego de Estatística (IGE) 2001). Fernández Rodríguez (1993: 28) highlights that up until 1900, over 90 per cent of Galicians lived in rural areas compared with less than 60 per cent at the end of the twentieth century. He notes that:

Galicia está deixando de ser básicamente rural, y el proceso de concentración en las cabeceras de comarca, ya muy intenso en los últimos

quince años, probablemente se intensificará más en los venideros. (Fernández Rodríguez 1993: 28)

[Galicia is becoming less rural and the concentration of the population in the main cities of the region (a trend which had already intensified in the last fifteen years), will probably intensify further in the future. (My translation)]

A direct outcome of the decentralization process in Galicia since the 1980s has been an increase in employment opportunities in public services related to Galicia's autonomous administration. While in 1977, 7.7 per cent were employed in the public sector, this figure had increased to 16.5 per cent by 1999 (Monteagudo and Bouzada Fernández 2002: 48). This new occupational niche provided an opening for those with medium to high levels of education to enter a sector of the Galician labour market, where knowledge of the Galician language came to be a requirement. As Monteagudo and Bouzada Fernández (2002) point out:

Na situación de precaridade laboral das últimas décadas, o sector público converteuse nunha expectativa de estabilidade laboral, e nunha esperanza de empregabilidade para os sectores sociais que, cunha formación media ou superior, pretendían incorporarse ao mercado de traballo. (Monteagudo and Bouzada Fernández 2002: 48)

[Because of the precarious situation of the Galician labour market over the last number of decades, public sector employment offered a sphere of stability and provided an employment outlet for social sectors of the population with medium to high levels of education. (My translation)]

Socio-structural changes in Galicia at the time of language planning had the potential to target a broader spectrum of the Galician population. However, the model of language policy adopted in Galicia, which Lorenzo Suárez (2008) describes as one of low-intensity and low intervention falls short of changing the rules of social mobility in the Galician context. As we will see in Chapter 4, from an analysis of sociolinguistic surveys in Galicia, this model has not led to any substantial increase in the use of the language among young, urban, and upwardly mobile sectors of the population. Lorenzo Suárez (2008: 22) argues that the model of language planning in Galicia has been based on a false illusion of linguistic vitality, highlighting that in the 1980s when migration to Galicia's cities was on the increase, nobody questioned the role of Galicia's urban centres as potential vanguards of linguistic recovery.

The two-pronged territorial-based approach to language policy in Ireland, distinguishing between the rural Irish-speaking Gaeltacht and the remainder of the country, isolated important differences between the two sociolinguistic realities characteristic of the Irish sociolinguistic situation at the time. Comparatively, the blanket policy approach adopted in the Galician context can be seen to have ignored the underlying complexities of the Galician situation. Lorenzo Suárez (2008: 22) suggests that the non-inclusion of these territorial differences in the sociolinguistic analysis of the time and an overly optimistic vision of the vitality of the rural Galician-speaking population, led to a distorted analysis of the sociolinguistic situation.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, Galician never ceased to be the language of the population and continues to be the language of daily use of the vast majority of Galicians. Over 60 per cent of the population report exclusive or predominant use of Galician (Monteagudo and Lorenzo Suárez 2005: 18). Therefore, based on the numerical strength of the language, strongly interventionist methods were likely to be deemed largely unnecessary. However, this model has failed to take consideration of what Dorian (1981: 51) describes as the potential 'tip' which can occur in seemingly demographically stable sociolinguistic situations such as Galician. Language policy also ignores the fact that Galicia's urban centres have historically been Spanish-speaking strongholds and a move to the city has tended to be associated with language shift in favour of the dominant language. As our discussion in Chapter 4 will show, thirty years of language policy and planning initiatives have not curbed this trend in language shift.

As we have seen, during the period which followed political independence in Ireland, language constituted a key symbol in the construction and legitimization of an Irish national identity. Similarly, the language policies adopted by the Galician Autonomous Government since the 1980s can be seen as an attempt to consolidate a Galician collective identity. The high abstention rates (71%) among the Galician population in the referendum prior to the passing of the Galician Statutes of Autonomy (Vilas Nogueira 1992) in 1981 point to the low degree of legitimization of Galicia as a political entity among Galicians themselves. Therefore, legislative measures to increase the presence of the Galician language in all Galician schools, the media and public administration may be perceived as an attempt to secure the loyalty of Galician citizens to the newly formed political entity.

However, although policies promoting the increased presence of the language in Galician society can be viewed as a means of securing

the loyalty of the Galician population, a key objective of the Galician administration has also been to avoid language policies which might provoke social conflict. Official language policy in Galicia has tended to promote (although implicitly) the idea of 'harmonious bilingualism', that is the non-conflictive co-existence of Castilian and Galician within the community (see Regueiro Tenreiro 1999 for a fuller discussion of the concept). Such a policy, according to Monteagudo and Bouzada Fernández (2002: 68), has reflected a political agenda which has sought to maintain the support of powerful sectors of Galician society, the majority of whom were Castilian speakers and among whom support for the autochthonous language has tended to be lowest.

The more cautious language policies of the Galician Administration have also reflected the dominance of bi-party politics in Galicia which have oscillated between Galician branches of Spain's two main political parties – the centre-left *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) and the conservative centre-right *Partido Popular* (PP), with the latter, under the leadership of the conservative Manuel Fraga, attracting more support among the population. Since 1993, however, support for the politics of the Galician nationalist party, *Bloque Nacionalista Galego* (BNG) has significantly increased, thus bringing a third party into the political arena in Galician politics and adding a new dynamic to language issues in Galicia. In contrast to the official discourse of 'harmonious bilingualism', Galician nationalists tend to view the language contact situation between Galician and Castilian as conflictive and as one in which Galician speakers still remain in a dominated socio-economic position. Galician nationalists therefore tend to be highly critical of the official language policy which they view as largely inadequate in reversing the process of language shift towards Castilian. In reaction to such criticisms, proponents of the official language policy in Galicia condemn what they perceive to be a largely radical approach to resolving the Galician language problem on the part of Galician nationalists.

Changes in language policy for Irish

The expansion of education in the 1960s and the necessity for good educational qualifications in order to obtain reasonable occupational status had the potential to enhance the effectiveness of language planning incentives by increasing the knowledge base and level of competence in the language across a broader sector of Irish society. However, by this time, the attitudes of the State towards the Irish language had also changed and a decisive shift in the ideological basis of state policy and rhetoric can be clearly identified (Ó Tuathaigh 2008). Language

policy entered a more advanced stage of stagnation and retreat as the revival strategy of language policy which had been adopted in the early years of the State was gradually weakened (Ó Riagáin 1997). From the second half of the 1950s government policy in the Republic of Ireland essentially involved a gradual de-institutionalization of the Irish language from the nation-state. Up until the mid-1960s, the popular understanding of Irish language policy was that the use of English was to be displaced through the revival of Irish (although as was noted earlier, Ó Riagáin highlights in his analysis of the constitutional statements at the time, that nothing beyond a bilingual state was being sought). The displacement notion was formally set aside in the 1965 *White Paper on the Restoration of the Irish Language* and 'bilingualism' was used thereafter to describe the national aim (APC 1986: viii). The increase in all-Irish schooling had reached a peak in the 1950s and then gradually declined. This decline coincided with a general disillusionment among the teaching profession with Irish language policy in the education system. By the 1950s language policy in the area of education had not led to the *Gaelicization* of schools and the number of new, competent speakers of the Irish language was small. Criticism of the government's handling of Irish language policy was evident in consecutive reports published by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) in the 1940s. These reports put forward the view that the instruction of Irish to children from English-speaking homes was detrimental to their education and that the way in which policy in the area of education was being carried out was detrimental to the language more generally (Brown 1985). These views within the teaching profession were also penetrating to the population more generally and got considerable media coverage in the late 1960s through protests organized by a small but vocal group of anti-Irish language activists euphemistically calling themselves the *Language Freedom Movement* demanding compulsory Irish to be abolished in schools and as a requirement for positions in the public service.

It was becoming clear that by 1960 the focus of language policy in the Republic of Ireland had turned from promoting bilingual or all-Irish programmes to fully developing the possibilities of teaching Irish as a subject (Ó Riagáin 1997: 21). The effect of the policy retreat can be seen for example, in the fact that the numbers of recognized Irish-medium secondary schools dropped from 80 in 1960 to 17 in 1975 (Ó Gliasáin 1988: 90). By 1980–81, only about 3 per cent of primary schools were teaching entirely through Irish (Harris 1988: 70).

A significant marker of policy retreat was the Republic of Ireland's accession to membership of the European Union (EU) in 1973 under

conditions whereby the Irish language became the only national and first official language of a nation-state member not to have the status of official working language of the EU (Mac Giolla Chríost 2005: 126). That same year also marks a change in language policy which brought to an end the compulsory passing of Irish in state examinations in order to graduate from school with a certificate. This pointed to a further weakening of state policies in relation to the language. Furthermore, although Irish continued to be required for matriculation to the National University of Ireland, the increasing demand for education led to the emergence of new higher level institutions for which a knowledge of Irish was not a requirement. The occupational niche within public sector employment for Irish, which had been a requirement in the early years of the State, was also progressively weakened. The year 1974 saw the withdrawal of the Irish language as a compulsory subject for civil service entrance examinations which meant that the language was no longer a requirement for employment in this sector. Except in the case of primary school teachers for whom the language continues to be obligatory, since 1999, the requirement that all secondary school teachers pass an examination in Irish to receive full payment from the State has also been discontinued. Thus, the position of the Irish language was significantly eroded in the domains that had been identified as most critical to the revival of the language by the founders of the State – education, legal and constitutional status, and public administration. Watson (2003) points out that the period of stagnation in linguistic policies, characteristic of the 1950s and 1960s reflects the de-emphasizing on the part of the State of the traditional symbols of national identity. Political independence had by then been consolidated and the symbolic value of Irish as a means of distinguishing ‘us’ from ‘them’ was therefore weakened. Moreover, nationalism as an ideology itself came into question in light of the negative connotations which had come to be associated with it in a European context where it was seen to have contributed to the two world wars. Closer to home, the increasingly violent events during that period in the North of Ireland further exacerbated the negative connotations of nationalism and its constituent symbols (see Tovey *et al.* 1989; Watson 2003). The ceasefire and the positive peace initiatives in Northern Ireland since the 1990s changed these negative connotations to some extent.

Watson (2003: 6) points to the emergence of a ‘modern’ element in Irish national identity from the 1970s onwards, based on individual choices and individual rights. In this context, people had the ‘right’ to choose their own identity rather than it being imposed from the

top-down through state intervention. However, the decline in state intervention in language policies in Ireland has to some extent been counteracted by bottom-up movements. Since the 1980s, for example, there has been a slight and continuing recovery in the number of Irish-medium schools (Ó Murchú 1993: 480), fuelled principally by a desire on the part of certain parent groups for the provision of increased exposure to the language for their children. Pressure groups in the 1990s lobbied for the establishment of a separate Irish-language television channel which began broadcasting in 1996 under the label of TnaG, later to be renamed TG4 (Corcoran 2004). Nevertheless, while the States' support for these initiatives indicates a reactive response to language pressure or lobbying groups (Ó Laoire 2008), its reluctance to clearly define language policy and planning initiatives (Ó Flatharta 2004) as well as its increasingly *laissez-faire* policy towards the Irish language question more generally (APC 1988: 40; Ó Riagáin 1997: 281) point to a move towards survival policies among existing speakers rather than any widespread project of recovery of the language across broader sectors of society. As Ó Tuathaigh (2008: 36–7) puts it

[...] the evangelical impulse of the 'revival' decades was being replaced by the state's understanding of itself and its services as functioning in a predominantly market-place environment: a provider of services on a cost-efficient basis, and a facilitator and supporter, as resources permitted, of initiatives for promoting the use of Irish in the wider civil society.

Some would argue that the Official Languages Act, passed in 2003, marks a further move in this direction. The latter constitutes the first piece of legislation to provide a statutory framework for the delivery of public services through the Irish language. The primary objective of the Act is to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish. In their proposal for the Official Languages Act, *Comhdháil na Gaeilge* (the co-ordinating body for groups and organizations which promote the Irish language) pointed out:

Because Irish language rights already exist, with an international, historical, and constitutional basis, it is not necessary to create them anew in a Language Act. Therefore, the main purpose of enacting the Language Act is to give practical effect to the language rights of citizens. It is therefore recommended that the new Act shall be based on the above-mentioned rights and shall define and set out the State's

duties and obligations in respect of the Irish language and give effect to the respect of citizens in relation to that language. (Comhdháil na Gaeilge 1998: 16)

This new legislation is expected to stimulate a significant increase in the provision of public services in Irish over the coming years and if careful planning is put in place has the potential to bring about meaningful changes in language practice (Walsh and McLeod 2008).

While this long-awaited Act was welcomed by language activists and promoters, Tovey (1988: 67) previously warned that, the more policy singles out 'Irish-speakers' as the target for language policies on the grounds of their rights as a minority group, (as the current Official Languages Act would seem to do) the less plausible it becomes to sustain existing policies to revive Irish. Ó Riagáin (1997: 282) also points out that a policy built around the provision of state services to Irish speakers may find that such speakers do not exist in large enough numbers nor are they sufficiently concentrated to meet the operational thresholds required to make these services viable. He also argues that state policy for Irish has become increasingly *laissez-faire* leading to a situation in which Irish citizens are left to interpret tendencies in relation to the presence of Irish within society. He suggests that, as a result, there has been an increasing trend to allow language use to act autonomously and to let its presence in the media and society in general be determined by market forces. Based on this interpretation of the Irish sociolinguistic context, Ó Riagáin (2001: 211) emphasizes that Irish language policy is at a critical stage.

Ó Riagáin's concerns about the absence of developments and public statements relating to the strategic duration of Irish and the lack of clarity about the long-term direction of government policy for the language may to a certain extent be alleviated by the Irish Government's 2006 'Statement on the Irish Language'. This Statement identified thirteen objectives in support of the language and the Gaeltacht, reiterating its commitment to the preservation, promotion and development of the Irish language. It commits to setting in place economic, educational, legal and institutional structures and processes to bring existing goodwill towards the language into effect. To this end, the Statement declared that a 20-year strategic plan for the language should be prepared. The task of preparation of the strategy was assigned to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, which awarded a competitive, publicly tendered consultancy to an international team of experts. At the time of writing, a draft government document on the strategy

was being finalized with an expected adoption date set for the end of 2010.

Changes in language policy for Galician

Various amendments to the initial policy statements relating to education were made since 1983 and the number of hours dedicated to the language was gradually increased. In the early 1980s, for example, attempts at defining language policy and language planning measures in education tended to be confined to Galician language and literature classes (Bouzada Fernández *et al.* 2002: 55). However, an amendment of this legal mandate in 1988 made more explicit recommendations regarding the specific school subjects which were to be taught through the medium of Galician. Article 6 of the amendment outlined that 'nos ciclos medio e superior de EXB impartiranse en galego, *alomenos*, a área de Ciencias Sociais' (during the primary school cycles [between the ages of 8 and 14] *at least* Social Sciences will be taught through the medium of Galician) (Bouzada Fernández *et al.* 2002: 57, emphasis added). Another amendment to the legal mandate was made in 1995 and later corrections in 1997 further increased Galician minimum requirements within the school curriculum (see Bouzada Fernández *et al.* 2002: 60).

However, the specificities of the 1983 Law have not always been adhered to and the implementation measures intended to serve the instructional role of Galician have been largely ineffective. Even though the presence of the language in the classroom was to be monitored through regular inspections, a blind eye was often turned to failure to meet the stipulated requirement. Instead, the presence of Galician in the classroom tended to be based on individual teachers' linguistic preferences. According to Caballo Villar (2001) more than 90 per cent of pre-school and initial stage primary education schools and over three-quarters of secondary schools were shown not to meet the stipulated requirements.

The 2004 *Plan Xeral de Normalización Lingüística* (PNL) (The General Plan for Language Normalization) constitutes a more recent policy document outlining specific measures and actions which need to be taken to make the 1983 legal stipulations a reality. It identifies education as one of seven domains which it proposes to target, formulating a detailed list of strengths and weaknesses of language policy in this sector. The Plan also outlines a set of proposals on how to enhance the social use of Galician in six other key areas including administration, family and youth, economy, health, society and use of language

outside the Galician community and has the following five general objectives:

- To guarantee the possibility to live through the medium of Galician for those who wish to do so, protected by Galician language laws and institutions
- To ensure the necessary social uses and functions of the language
- To ensure provision of services through the medium of Galician, reflecting a spirit of linguistic co-existence
- To promote an image of Galician associated with modernity and utility, overcoming prejudices against the language, enhancing its status and increase its demand
- To equip Galician with the technical and linguistic resources for use in the modern world.

It is important to point out, however, that while the PNL constitutes an important policy initiative which explicitly formulates and lists a set of measures intended to guide language planning measures, it does not implicate any legal changes for the language.

A major weakness which has however been identified by the PNL is the tendency in many schools to interpret the stipulated requirement that a minimum of 50 per cent of subjects be given through the medium of Galician as a maximum requirement. The proposed 2007 Decree for the Teaching of Galician (*Decreto Galego no ensino*) reinforces this point as a legal mandate stating explicitly that a minimum of 50 per cent of subjects be taught through the medium of Galician. These amendments coincided with the coming to power of a Socialist government in coalition with the Galician Nationalist Party for one term of office between 2005 and 2009, marking a brief period of political change away from the previous thirteen years of the more cautious language policies of the centre-right.

The proposed amendment did not, however, meet with widespread approval and was the subject of bitter attack from a small but powerful group of a pro-Spanish organization within Galicia calling itself *Galicia Bilingüe* (Bilingual Galicia) but whose discourse is essentially anti-Galician. This group, has greatly attracted the attention of the media, saw the 2007 proposed amendment as the imposition of Galician on those members of the population who prefer to use Spanish and therefore an infringement of their linguistic rights. On its webpage, the group defines its aims as defending the rights of parents and pupils to choose the language of schooling and in general, the right of citizens to choose

the language in which to be addressed in dealings with the Galician Administration. Although not explicitly stated, the implicit understanding is, however, that these choices refer to the use of Castilian and not Galician. The group's demand that parents be allowed to choose the language of schooling for their children can however be denied on constitutional grounds. Vernet (2007: 49) explains that although all children have the right to an education, the language of instruction can be decided by the legislation set down within the Autonomous Community itself or by individual institutions.

The underlying objectives of *Galicia Bilingüe* are in many ways reminiscent of those of the Irish Language Freedom Movement of the 1970s in their opposition to what they perceived as the imposition of the Irish language by government authorities at the time. Similar to the Irish context, such opposition reflects struggles about language as a form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991) on Galician's linguistic market and fears on the part of certain Castilian-speaking sectors of the population of potential shifts in the balance of power which they perceive as less favourable to them.

The politicization of the language question in Galicia has potentially positive repercussions for the language in that it has helped stimulate debate alongside other social issues such as unemployment, poverty, health services and the like, and, in effect, made the language question a subject of political debate. Language issues were certainly high on the political agenda during the 2009 regional elections in Galicia which saw the return to power of the Popular Party. In his pre-electoral campaign, the new leader to the party, Alberto Núñez Feijóo, promised to abolish the contentious 2007 decree approved by the Socialist-Galician Nationalist Party coalition. At the time of writing this book a draft of the amended decree was being made public. The main thrust of the draft was that parents could select the language of schooling for their children during the pre-school stage of their education (corresponding to the 0 to 7 age bracket). A further stipulation was also included, stating that in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas, at least the same amount of Galician as Spanish should be used in the classroom. This latter clause builds in some recognition of Galician's more precarious position compared to Spanish but curbs any attempt to increase the presence of Galician over Spanish in pre-school contexts where Spanish is the dominant language of the class. Beyond pre-school the new draft decree proposes a multilingual strategy in schools with a requirement that one-third of all subjects be taught through Galician, a third in Spanish and third in English. For pro-Spanish groups such as *Galicia*

Bilingüe, this proposed amendment to the 2007 Decree does not go far enough in guaranteeing the rights of Spanish speakers in Galicia. Conversely, for pro-Galician groups the amendment reduces the potential to improve the already precarious situation for Galician. They argue that if real change is to be brought about then positive discrimination measures are required and accuse the current centre-right wing government of 'linguistic suicide' for Galician.

The Autonomous Galician Administration and the Galician nationalists' simultaneous undermining of each others' linguistic ideologies in their ultimate pursuit of political power may, according to Monteagudo and Bouzada Fernández (2002: 72), also be working against the language (see also del Valle 2000). As our discussion in the following chapters will show, the link between speaking Galician and the more radical elements of nationalism is for example one of the outcomes of this political confrontation and is thus replacing former social stigmas associated with the language with newer ones (Bouzada Fernández 2003; Recalde Fernández 2000; Santamarina 2000).

Concluding remarks

According to Schiffman (1996), we cannot assess the success of language policies without reference to culture, beliefs systems, and attitudes about language and it is an implicit or explicit assumption of much language policy and provision that attitudes can or should change (Baker 1992: 97). In some instances a language policy is in fact largely, if not principally, concerned with inculcating attitudes either to the language or to the speakers of those languages (Lewis 1981: 262). Therefore, changing language attitudes, beliefs and so on is often seen as the first step towards the process of initiating the revival or revitalization of a minority language. The following chapter draws on a number of key studies on attitudes towards Irish and Galician and provides some insights into changes in beliefs, perceptions and attitudes in post-1920s Ireland and post-1980s Galicia as a result of policy intervention.

4

Effects of Language Policies on Attitudes

The early years of Irish language policy

Apart from a number of questions included in market survey research, up until the 1970s, the main barometer used to measure the impact of language policy in Ireland was the Census of Population. More conventional studies on language attitudes would tend to exclude self-reports of language ability such as those in the Census. In the absence of such studies, the census question nonetheless provides some indication of the early effects of policy changes. In Ireland, there is of course also a very real sense that such self-reports represent attitudinal or evaluative statements about the language as opposed to real ability and, many people who return themselves as Irish-speaking on census forms may in fact be expressing a strong emotional attachment to the language rather than claims that they possess reasonable fluency (Coakley 1980 cited in Williams 1988: 277). The 10 per cent increase (from 18 to 28 per cent) in those claiming ability to speak Irish over the fifty or so years between 1926 and 1971 can therefore in many ways be taken to represent an ideological shift in favour of Irish.

An analysis of the socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of those reporting ability in Irish over this period illustrates noticeable changes in the status of Irish speakers and consequently for the language itself. Because the standing of a language is so intrinsically tied to that of its speakers, enormous reversals in the prestige of a language can take place within a very short time span (Dorian 1998: 4). While at the beginning of the twentieth century Irish speakers were primarily engaged in small-scale farming and fishing (Ó Riagáin 1997: 7), by 1971, there had been a significant increase in the numbers engaged in occupations relating to public sector employment and the

professions. As many as 80 per cent of senior officers in the civil service and 50 per cent of those in the professional sectors claimed ability to speak Irish (Hannan and Tovey 1978). Such changes in the social status of Irish speakers reflected the focus of language policies in education and public sector employment and it would appear that these policies, particularly in the period 1922–60, succeeded in changing the ‘rules’ of the social mobility process (Ó Riagáin 1997). Evidence from marketing survey research in 1964 would seem to suggest that these rules were being internalized by a significant proportion of the population. Almost three-quarters of those queried in the survey believed that knowledge of Irish increased one’s chances of social advancement (cited in Ó Riagáin 1997: 177).

There were also notable changes in the spatial distribution of Irish speakers with census data showing a clear de-territorialization of the language from west to east. While in 1851 only about 5 per cent of those reporting ability in the language lived in the eastern province of Leinster (which includes the capital city Dublin), this figure had increased to over 50 per cent in the second part of the twentieth century (Ó Riagáin 1997: 146). This led to a growing demand on the part of newcomers to the language to assert their right to espouse Irish in a more modern, urban manner and thus to a certain extent, shaking off the traditional image of the Irish speaker as the downtrodden rural peasant. Also positive for the image of the language was the increased reported ability to speak Irish among younger age groups in the population with successive census of population since the foundation of the State showing a high concentration of Irish speakers in the ten to twenty-year-old category (Ó Murchú 2001).

While census data clearly showed that the status of Irish was changing in line with the more favourable socio-demographic profile of its speakers, there were also underlying conflicting views about the value of and support for the language at several other levels. Particularly, from the 1960s onwards there was some resentment towards elements of the language policy which were seen to be benefitting some sectors of the population more than others. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, given the strong emphasis of language policy in the area of education, the main focus of discontent related to the provision for Irish in this area, in particular post-primary education. Almost three-quarters of those surveyed in a public opinion poll in 1964 expressed dissatisfaction with compulsory Irish in state examinations (Ó Riagáin 1993: 47).

Such dissatisfaction coincides with a period in which levels of participation in post-primary education had begun to increase dramatically

in line with greater state emphasis on the importance of education in the process of Irish economic development. It also coincides with a time when educational credentials, as opposed to inheritance, were becoming the basis for social mobility and material success in Irish society (Breen *et al.* 1990). This led certain middle class parents, who had traditionally controlled access to cultural capital through other means, to resent the fact that their children might now lose out against those with higher levels of proficiency in Irish, claiming that this gave some an 'unfair advantage' on the job market (Ó Riagáin and Tovey 1998). Many people also felt that the compulsory element of Irish in the education system compromised the level of education in the curriculum and that many bright students were being held back by their inability to speak Irish (Kelly 2002). This belief gained credence through a study which was published in 1966 by John MacNamara which studied the academic attainment of a sample of primary school children and concluded that those who were being taught in bilingual school programmes succeeded less well educationally than those taught only through English. The public impact of his study at the time appears to have been considerable, stimulating fears which were most clearly visible in public protests on the part of the Language Freedom Movement, to which mention has already been made in the third chapter.

On becoming an element of state policy the Irish language also came to be associated with the overall conservative Catholic tenor of State management (Kirby 2004; Ó Tuathaigh 1991). Aspects of identity were redefined and reformulated to comply with the model of Catholicism being proposed and in time, the Irish language itself became part of this redefinition of Irish identity (Ó Laoire 2008). Crowley (2005: 156) argues that it was precisely the link between the language and this specific conservative ideology which proved so damaging to the health of Irish. Additionally, the difficult economic situation in the country and persistent emigration brought the whole strategy of post-independence State policies under increasing scrutiny. In this context the language policy itself became more vulnerable and exposed (Ó Riagáin 1997).

The early years of Galician language policy

Despite the inadequacies of census figures, their availability nonetheless provided important insights into the sociolinguistic situation in Ireland since the mid-nineteen hundreds. Such insights, as was noted in Chapter 3, were absent in the Galician context and did not become available until the end of the twentieth century. In their overview of

the sociolinguistic history of Galician up to the 1980s, Monteagudo and Santamarina (1993: 126) note that the official population censuses carried out in Spain up to then had never collected data on Galician. The first census to include a language question in Galicia was carried out in 1991. Formal sociolinguistic studies of the language only begin to appear from the 1970s onwards. The *Guía Bibliográfica de Lingüística Galega* (Bibliographic Guide to Galician Linguistics) published by the *Instituto da Lingua Galega* (Galician Language Institute) in 1996 cites over 600 such studies. However, in many of these, questions relating to the Galician language formed part of more general purpose studies on other sociological issues. Such studies tended to concentrate on specific sectors of the population and as a result their findings could not be generalized to the entire Galician population (see Iglesias Álvarez 1998, 1999; Rei-Doval 2000). The Foessa (1970) study for example included a number of language-related questions as part of a larger sociological study in Spain and the sample of Galicians queried in this study consisted of 278 housewives.

Despite their limitations, these earlier studies give us an idea of what the sociolinguistic situation in Galicia was like in the period immediately prior to policy changes in the 1980s. The Foessa study, for instance, found that over 90 per cent of people queried reported high levels of spoken ability in Galician with over 90 per cent reporting an ability to understand and speak it. It highlighted significant differences between rural and urban respondents, with the latter claiming markedly lower levels of knowledge in the language. The study found, however, that attitudes towards the language tended to be negative.

Rojo's (1979, 1981) later analysis of language attitudes and use among school-going age groups and teachers pointed to the emergence of a different trend in which reported use of Galician was low but attitudes had become more favourable. This upsurge in support for the language reflected the new socio-political context in Spain following the death of Franco in 1975 and the emergence of more liberal ideologies about diversity and linguistic tolerance in the context of Spain's transition to democracy (see Iglesias Álvarez 1998).

Studies carried out in the period immediately after the 1983 Normalization Act for Galician such as Monteagudo *et al.*'s (1986) analysis of younger age groups, began to draw attention to increasingly favourable attitudes towards the language, particularly among the younger generation. However, this and other such studies also pointed to the fact that the process of language shift to Spanish was gaining momentum among the very groups who seemed most supportive of

the language (see Rubal Rodríguez and Rodríguez Neira 1987; Rubal Rodríguez *et al.* 1991, 1992).

The findings of the 1991 Census of population, the first to include a language question on Galician confirmed the general trend identified in some of these earlier studies. Census results showed that the overwhelming majority (91%) of the population said they could understand Galician and 84 per cent claimed they could speak it (Instituto Galego de Estatística 1992). The ability to read and write in the language was, however, correspondingly lower. Less than half the population claimed they could read in the language and only one-third reported writing skills. Census results also confirmed differences in the sociolinguistic practices of rural and urban sectors of the population identified in previous studies. The use of Galician among the urban population for instance, showed a drop to one-fifth and the numbers reporting never using the language increased compared with the national average.

Survey research on Irish

Although census figures for Irish in the post-1920s period showed that there was some degree of reversal in the process of language shift to English, there was growing public concern about the overall progress of the restoration effort since the foundation of the State. Census data seemed to indicate increases in levels of ability in Irish. However, it was becoming clear that language policy was not achieving its initial aims of generating a bilingual population and there was thus a general sense of disillusionment with the process. The increased number reporting an ability to speak Irish in the population was concealing the ongoing decline of the language in the core Irish-speaking areas. Although Irish speakers in the remainder of the country had increased, the acquisition of the language was largely dependent on the education system. This was leading to the production of secondary rather than the reproduction of primary bilinguals through intergenerational transmission within the home. Additionally, while exposure to the language through the education system was leading to increased levels of ability in Irish among younger age groups, census results also indicated that, once formal schooling was completed, ability in the language was not being maintained into the adult years. The inflated figures on language ability among younger age groups can often be taken to reflect overly generous and optimistic estimations on the part of parents (who as heads of household are required to complete the census form) of their children's ability in the language (Hindley 1990: 27).

While census reports and marketing surveys seemed to point to the ineffectiveness of policy measures in reversing the process of language shift, as well as highlighting conflicting views concerning the promotion of Irish, there was insufficient comprehensive research on the Irish language to understand the complexities of the emerging sociolinguistic situation. In 1958 the Irish government set up a commission to formally investigate issues surrounding the Irish language. It was in this context that the Committee on Irish Language Attitudes Research (henceforth CILAR) was set up in 1970 with the remit of examining the extent of public support for the language and related policies.

Although the main focus of the study was on language attitudes, CILAR also collected data on the levels of language competence and use. The survey collected data from a representative sample of the population in the Republic of Ireland and a total of 3000 respondents were queried. As well as collecting data on the national population, a separate survey tested language attitudes and behaviour within the Gaeltacht. At a more micro-analytical level, a separate project examined sociolinguistic networks in these core Irish-speaking areas. Additional surveys assessed teachers' and pupils' attitudes towards the language. Matched-guise techniques also provided insights into stereotypes of Irish speakers among second-level pupils (see CILAR 1975: 453). According to the authors of the CILAR report, this sociolinguistic data constituted a valuable resource for policy-making, researchers and state agencies (CILAR 1975: 458). Hannan and Tovey (1978), for instance, subsequently used CILAR survey data to examine the relationships between measures of ethnocultural identity, social status and occupational characteristics. Ó Riagáin and Ó Gliasáin's (1979) study of All-Irish primary schools in the Dublin area constituted a more detailed study of the impact of these schools on home use of Irish, following CILAR's (1975) identification of the significance of Irish-medium schooling on language attitudes and use.

Since the publication of the CILAR report, sociolinguistic research on the Irish language has greatly increased and includes a wide variety of aspects relating to the language from both macro- and micro-sociolinguistic perspectives.⁶ In 1983 and 1993 Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann (ITÉ) conducted follow-up surveys at ten-year intervals, repeating many of the questions contained within the original CILAR study. More recently, in 2000, there was a large-scale all-Ireland survey of language attitudes in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (see Ó Riagáin 2007). The North-South survey replicated many of the questions appearing in earlier CILAR and ITÉ

surveys. At the time of writing, however, only preliminary findings of this latter study were available.

Survey research on Galician

The findings of the Mapa Sociolingüístico de Galicia (henceforth MSG) published in three volumes provided the first large-scale detailed analysis and description of linguistic attitudes among the entire Galician population (see Fernández Rodríguez and Rodríguez Neira 1996). Like in the CILAR study on Irish, data were also collected and published on language competence and use (see Fernández Rodríguez and Rodríguez Neira 1994, 1995). In the study a total of 38,897 Galicians were queried, representing different socio-demographic and geographic divisions within the Galician population. The very large sample size in the Galician survey makes it one of the largest sociolinguistic surveys in the world. The huge number of surveys also facilitated more detailed analysis of certain sub-sectors of the larger sample.⁷ The coordinators of the report emphasized that the first MSG was not an end product but a reference for future research and language planning, 'de xeito que non só sirva para afondar no seu coñecemento, seño para futuras tarefas de planificación lingüística en Galicia' ['so that it would not only deepen our knowledge but that it could also be used in future areas of language planning in Galicia'] (Fernández Rodríguez and Rodríguez Neira 1996: 11). Since the publication of the first MSG, sociolinguistic research on the Galician language expanded to include a variety of aspects relating to the language from both macro- and micro-sociolinguistic perspectives (see Lorenzo Suárez 2003; BILEGA database).⁸

Given the size and significance of CILAR and MSG surveys, the discussion will focus mainly on these here. Moreover, because of the longitudinal nature of the survey research on Irish, in the follow-up ITÉ and North-South survey, it is possible to track changes in public attitudes over several decades. At the time of writing, although a follow-up study of language attitudes in Galicia had been conducted, the data had not yet been published and made available in the public domain. Although they do not provide measures of attitudes in the conventional sense, some insights can nonetheless be drawn from the language use and competence components of more recent survey research (see González González *et al.* 2007; IGE 2009). The main thrust of the discussion is however based on the findings of the first large-scale attitudinal survey published in 1996.

Theoretical considerations in Irish and Galician survey research

Survey research on Irish and Galician draws on the social psychology of language and defines language attitudes as mental and non-observable states which mediate responses on the part of an individual. In both studies, attitudes are made up of cognitive, affective and behavioural components and include questions which distinguish these different parts. These questions relate to a wide variety of language-relevant 'objects'. Both surveys subscribe to the idea that language attitudes are multidimensional and explore various language-related themes which tap into the different levels of meaning about their respective languages.

Using techniques of factor analysis, the Irish survey identifies the following six dimensions:

- Irish as a symbol of ethnic identity
- Attitudes towards the teaching of Irish at school and in the home
- Attitudes towards the use of Irish in interpersonal interaction and norms conditioning its use
- Beliefs about the viability of the language
- Attitudes towards the Gaeltacht
- Feelings of apathy towards Irish and associated beliefs about the relevance of Irish in modern life.

Although the Galician survey identifies broadly similar themes to those in the Irish study, the data are analysed in a different way. Conceptual distinctions are made between attitudes, prejudices and opinions and within these groupings separate dimensions of meaning are identified. The study uses factor analysis to construct a general scale for measuring attitudes towards the minority language which is labelled *Actitude lingüística xeral* (General linguistic attitude). This scale includes questions about the role of Galician as a symbol of ethnic identity, perceptions about the presence of Galician as a result of the normalization process and questions about respondents' own personal commitment to the use of the language. Factor analysis identified a second dimension of meaning which grouped together attitudes towards Galician in the education system. The survey also examines prejudicial beliefs about the minority language as distinct from attitudes towards it. Again factor analysis was used and the following four dimensions were identified:

- Social status
- Sociability

- Friendliness and accessibility
- Aesthetic value of Galician.

Although the Irish and Galician surveys identify broadly similar attitudinal themes, conceptual differences in the way in which dimensions of meaning are grouped complicates comparative discussion. It therefore seems preferable at this point to deal with each context separately.

Attitudes towards Irish

The findings in national surveys, conducted by CILAR, ITÉ and the preliminary findings of the North-South survey, point to high levels of public support for the Irish language among the national population. The main value placed on Irish is its contribution to national cultural distinctiveness, as well as a reluctance to see the language disappear from public domains of Irish life and the experience of future generations of Irish people. When asked about what future they would like to see for the language, less than one-tenth wished to see Irish 'discarded or forgotten' (Ó Riagáin 2007), a finding which is also confirmed in a similarly-worded question included in Mac Gréil (2009). This finding indicates that positive attitudes and aspirations for Irish have been maintained at very high levels over almost four decades. While the link between language and ethnocultural identity has also been maintained over this period and differences in responses across the four surveys are not very significant statistically, overall they tend to register somewhat lower support in 1993 and 2000. In his analysis of some of the more recent data from the 2000 all-Ireland survey, Ó Riagáin (2007: 388) points out that in the Republic of Ireland the perceived relationship between the Irish language and national (or ethnic) identity may in fact be weakening. The percentages agreeing with statements such as, 'Without Irish, Ireland would certainly lose its identity as a separate country', showed a drop from two-thirds in 1983 to a half in 2000.

Despite such changes, attitudes towards Irish as a symbol of ethnic identity have by and large remained positive. Less favourable, however, are the more pessimistic views about the future of the language as well as perceptions about its inappropriateness in modern life (CILAR 1975: 299). In 1973 almost two-thirds (62%) of people believed that 'The Irish language cannot be made suitable for business and science' and just under half (47%) agreed that 'Most people see all things associated with Irish as too old-fashioned'. A follow-up matched-guise test of school-going age groups pointed to a stereotypical image of Irish and its speakers who tended to be perceived as smaller, uglier, weaker, less

healthy, more old-fashioned, less-educated, poorer, less confident, less interesting, less likeable and lazier than speakers of English. The study showed that quite generally Irish speakers were found to be less likely to have leadership potential and to be significantly less acceptable socially. They were also associated with certain occupations such as farm labourers or small-scale farmers with English clearly seen as the high status language (CILAR 1975: 300). Although in their earlier studies some of the older ambivalent values historically associated with the language were to some extent being retained (Ó Murchú 1993: 488), somewhat less negative attitudes began to be detected in later surveys (Ó Riagáin 1997), indicating that the previous inferiority complex which associated Irish with backwardness was to some degree fading. Despite the fact that a certain optimism regarding the survival of the language can also be detected post-CILAR (Ó Riagáin 1997), the more recent North-South survey (Ó Riagáin 2007) suggests a return to a more pessimistic stance with 54 per cent disagreeing with the statement 'Irish is a dead language', compared with 66 per cent in 1993.

There is some evidence, particularly from earlier research, that language policies in the post-1920s period had begun to enhance the utilitarian value of Irish. Respondents were presented with the statement 'people who know Irish well have a better chance to get good jobs and promotion' and almost three-quarters agreed (CILAR 1975: 64). However, although the importance of Irish in the process of social mobility was generally recognized, as was already highlighted earlier, many people resented these facets of the language policy, particularly the 'compulsory element' in the education system and public sector employment, and felt that it was favouring some sectors of the population more than others.

In 1973, as many as 60 per cent felt that children doing subjects through Irish did not do as well at school as those doing them through English (CILAR 1975: 30). Subsequent surveys following the removal of the compulsory element of language policy and for recruitment to state examinations, removed some of this earlier antagonism towards the language. Nevertheless, in doing so it also removed the main policies underpinning the economic value of Irish, thus weakening the value of the language on the language market. Although later surveys do not ask respondents directly about the instrumental value of Irish and its role in the process of social mobility, a number of questions about the use of the language in the home and at school, two key areas of socialization, provided some insights into the strategies adopted by families and individuals to maintain or improve their material

circumstances. In the 1983 and 1993 surveys, when asked about how they perceived their parents' views on the role of Irish in the process of social mobility, less than one-quarter of the population attached an economic value to Irish, less than one-tenth of whom saw the language of direct benefit in securing employment, with the remainder perceiving it to be indirectly linked to its role for examination purposes at school (Ó Riagáin 1997).

Attitudes towards Galician

The relative success of linguistic policies and the positive reinstatement of the Galician language in Galicia since the 1980s are evident in the MSG report's findings on changes in linguistic attitudes. On a 5-point scale, where 1 represents most negative and 5 most positive attitudes, Galicians score a 3.6 average in their ratings of the language (Fernández Rodríguez and Rodríguez Neira 1996: 80). As was explained earlier, this scale is made up of a variety of attitudinal items which tap into support for the language at various levels. A closer look at these attitudinal items shows that over 90 per cent of the population believe that everyone who lives in Galicia should know how to speak the Galician language. Around 86 per cent favour its increased use at a societal level and over 90 per cent believe that its use in public administration is equally or more appropriate than Spanish. About two-thirds express an explicit desire to have more radio and television programmes in Galician and almost as many favour its use in newspapers, street signs and advertising. Although by no means an overwhelming majority, more than half the population agrees that Galician should be the language used at school. These figures show that there is strong support for the 'normalization' of the language in public spheres, areas from which it was absent for several centuries. Survey research suggests that support for the presence of the language in Galician society is also coupled with a strong degree of personal commitment to the language with almost two-thirds expressing a desire to learn or improve their own linguistic skills in Galician.

Apart from generally favourable support for Galician at this level, the survey sought to ascertain the degree to which policy changes had eliminated prejudicial beliefs about the language. According to the survey, language policy appears to have been successful in removing explicitly expressed prejudices towards the language. On a 5-point scale, where 1 was most negative and 5 most positive, Galicians scored 4.34, reflecting the absence of prejudices about the perceived social status of Galician

compared with Spanish. Almost three-quarters do not perceive Spanish speakers as being better educated than Galician speakers. The majority (84%) disagrees that Spanish speakers should have greater possibilities of advancing professionally than Galician speakers or that someone who speaks Spanish deserves more respect than someone who speaks Galician (80%).

The findings of the MSG point to a strong level of societal support for the language and as Bouzada Fernández (2003: 331) suggests, 'point to a weakening, at least at certain levels of consciousness, of those coarser aspects of prejudice and sociolinguistic stigmatisation that have been working against the language for years'. Quantitative studies of linguistic attitudes in Galicia suggest that explicitly negative attitudes have been eliminated as a result of the institutional reinstatement of the language in key public domains such as education, public administration and the media. However, as Lorenzo Suárez (2008: 26) insists, another facet of this less visible evaluation of the language continues to exist. Negative attitudes can be found in the collective imagination and in the representations of the Galician society through forms of prejudices, negative identities and cutting discourses (*ibid.*)

A number of qualitative studies point to the fact that certain discourses continue to exist, albeit in a more implicit way, highlighting some of these negative identities and prejudicial beliefs about the language. Adjectives such as 'bruto' (rough) 'feo' (ugly), 'inferior' (inferior), 'inculto' (lacking culture), 'tonto' (stupid) are sometimes used to describe Galician at certain levels of consciousness (González González *et al.* 2003; Iglesias Álvarez 2002; Iglesias and Ramallo 2003; O'Rourke 2003b, 2005). As well as the continued latent existence of some of the older prejudices associated with Galician, certain newer ones have also emerged. The association between speaking Galician and nationalism has, for instance, begun to introduce a new social norm governing the use of Galician in certain social contexts.

Who favours these languages most?

Greene (1981: 7) suggests that, insofar as attitudes towards Irish have changed, such changes have led to the development of a greater esteem for the language among the educated and the middle classes. CILAR (1975) observed that:

Respondents most likely to express very positive attitudes to Irish [...] are people who are upwardly mobile from a blue collar origin, mobile

through the education system and having a high level of education and of ability in the language, and whose parents were strongly in favour of Irish. Downward mobility, on the other hand, with its associated experiences of failures in the education system, particularly where this was associated with a low level of ability in Irish and with low parental support for the language, is strongly predictive of negative attitudes towards Irish. (CILAR 1975: 83)

According to CILAR (1975: 8), research on variation in language attitudes towards Irish has been 'fundamentally sociological in nature'. As Ó Riagáin (2007: 278) explains, what this means is that differences in language attitudes have been seen to reflect positions individuals occupy in the social structure. Differing levels of support for the Irish language across social groups reflect the effect of language policies and planning initiatives in the area of education and in regulating access to certain sectors of the labour market. The state requirement of a pass grade in Irish to obtain examination certification at school had the effect of transforming the subject into a marker of academic success or failure. As a result, people with educational success tended to foster a supportive attitude towards Irish while failure very often produced a more negative disposition (Tovey 1978: 20).

In a re-analysis of parts of the attitudinal data collected in the CILAR survey, Hannan and Tovey (1978) identified clear differences in the levels of support for the language across higher status occupational groupings. According to the study, the highest levels of support for Irish as a symbol of national identity and as a marker of cultural distinctiveness were found among those employed in professional, government or semi-state occupations, while the lowest were to be found among commercial and industrial elite groups. Prior to the 1960s in Ireland, these latter groups did not need educational qualifications to secure their occupational status. As a result, they were less directly affected by the status-enhancing initiatives for language planning in education and public sector employment.

Educational qualifications became a necessity for social mobility from the 1960s onwards and the potential of existing language policy in the area of education was widened. Census returns in 1971 had provided some evidence of an increase in the proportion reporting an ability to speak Irish in commercial and industrial groups, following the initial period of educational expansion in the 1960s (Tovey 1978: 22). However, an increasingly *laissez-faire* attitude on the part of the government in the period that followed restricted the potential to

widen existing support for the language among higher socio-economic groups (APC 1988; Ó Riagáin 1997). The removal of Irish as a compulsory examination subject and as a requirement for entry to public service employment also contributed to the weakening of this potential. The lack of alignment between language policy and socio-structural changes in Irish society at the time also explains why policy was failing to meet its full potential. In the area of higher education, for instance, new institutions grew up in line with the increased demand for educational qualifications. These, however, were not regulated by language policy and it became possible for upwardly mobile sectors of Irish society to bypass Irish altogether (Ó Riagáin 1997).

However, despite all of this, the importance of social class in attitudinal analyses has remained. The Advisory Planning Committee (1986: 66) used quite different data in the 1980s, but similarly concluded that experiences of success or failure with school Irish were linked to different class backgrounds and to educational success generally. According to Ó Riagáin (2007: 375), there is no good reason to doubt the ongoing relevance of this explanatory framework. In his analysis of more recent attitudinal data from the 2000 North-South survey, he found that there were statistically significant associations between a belief in a bilingual future and social class, education and ability to speak Irish. Other research had shown that these three 'independent' variables were, in fact, all highly correlated with each other (see Ó Riagáin 1997). In relation to education, those most supportive of the language tend to have university education, a finding which is also confirmed in a similarly worded question included in Mac Gréil (2009). Drawing on the 2006 Census, Borooah *et al.* (2009) also point to the continued class dimension in the Irish language context, showing that Irish speakers do better in the labour market compared to non-speakers of the language. Thus, a certain degree of linguistic elitism in the Irish labour market would seem to have remained despite policy changes.

In difference to the more fundamentally sociological nature of attitudinal variation in Irish language research, the Galician survey focuses on linguistic factors. Habitual use of Galician and linguistic competence, particularly written competence, characterize those with most favourable attitudes. Although there is very little variation among different social groups in Galicia, there is some correlation between age and attitudes. Younger age groups, particularly those between 16 and 25 years, score highest on the attitudinal scale (3.75 on the 5-point scale). Age is, however, also highly correlated with linguistic competence (Fernández Rodríguez and Rodríguez Neira 1994: 556). This relationship is linked

to the recent inclusion of Galician in the education system leading to higher levels of literacy in the language among these groups. Although the majority of the older population speaks Galician, most have little or no formal competences in the language. Unlike Irish, social class was not found to be a significant factor in explaining attitudinal variation towards Galician although in an analysis of certain attitudinal items and dimensions there were some associations. For example, there was some evidence of increased support for the language among educated and more middle class sectors. These groups displayed most consolidated support for the language, especially in attitudes towards the transmission of Galician to the next generation (Fernández Rodríguez and Rodríguez Neira 1996: 559) and towards the language as a symbol of identity (Ibid.: 560). It is worth noting that while less than one-fifth of Galicians see the language as a 'core' part of their identity, this support is strongest in professions where highest levels of education are required (Ibid.: 561). Although lowest attitudinal ratings for Galician are among business sectors of Galician society and those entering the professions, Bouzada Fernández (2003: 330) notes that even in the case of these groups, attitudes are clearly positive. Indeed, Bouzada Fernández's and Lorenzo Suárez's (1997) survey of a sample of Galician businesses point to increased levels of linguistic consciousness among a powerful sector of Galician society, for whom, as was noted in Chapter 3, the Galician language had held little esteem in the past.

Language attitudes as predictors of language use

Like minority language contexts elsewhere, the survival of Irish and Galician is of course likely to depend on the degree to which these languages are used by members of their respective communities. The behavioural dimension of attitudes is therefore of great interest in predicting the future of each language. However, similar to numerous other studies, attitudes towards Irish and Galician have been found to be somewhat imperfect indicators of language behaviour and language use.

The mismatch between positive support for Irish at a number of levels, particularly in its role as a symbol of ethnocultural identity, and very low levels of language use, is particularly acute. Only a small minority of the population uses Irish extensively in their homes, community and at work. From the evidence of the CILAR and ITÉ national surveys, it would seem that the proportion who report use of Irish as their first or main language is only around 5 per cent. Between one sixth and one fifth of the national sample reported using Irish 'often' or 'several

times' since leaving school and when asked a more specific question about their use of the language in the preceding week, the proportions dropped to about 10 per cent. A further 10 per cent or so reported the use of Irish less intensively in conversation, reading or watching television programmes in Irish (Ó Riagáin 1997: 158). Mac Gréil's (2009: 58) recent survey reports a broadly similar pattern and points to consistency in such frequency of usage of Irish over a forty-year period. However, because usage of the language in the home domain has not exceeded 5 per cent, it is difficult to sustain stable levels of bilingual reproduction in Irish.

Favourable attitudes towards the language, therefore, do not appear to translate into motivation for active use or for deliberate language shift in the home domain (Ó Laoire 2008: 227). Given the weakness of the home in reproducing bilinguals, the role of the school has become crucial in sustaining societal bilingualism (Ó Riagáin 1997). The obligatory study of Irish in schools brings younger age groups of the population into daily contact with the language and usage is most intensive during these school years. However, use of Irish drops once formal schooling is complete and declines during the adult years.

The concentration of positive attitudes among higher socio-economic groups is carried over to language use. Outside of the core Irish-speaking Gaeltacht areas, those most likely to use Irish in the population tend to be from middle class, educated and urban sectors. By their nature, these socio-economic groups are usually more socially and spatially mobile and, as a result, Irish-speaking networks are constantly vulnerable to loss of existing members. Thus, the already precariously low level of active use of Irish within the population is further weakened by the fact that Irish speakers do not exist as a community of speakers but instead as loosely-knit social networks.

Particular concentrations of habitual Irish speakers (and therefore the potential for Irish-speaking networks) are to be found in the main cities of the Republic of Ireland, including Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. In the Dublin area especially, Irish-medium schools would seem to have been most central to the workings of Irish-speaking networks (Ó Riagáin and Ó Gliasáin 1979). There has however been no significant recent research which might better develop our understanding of the contemporary sociology of Irish in an urban context (Mac Giolla Chríost 2005: 88).

Although Irish continues to be spoken as a community language in core Irish-speaking areas of the Gaeltacht, the inhabitants of these areas account for less than 2 per cent of the national population. Moreover, as

a result of the ongoing shift to English, Irish is also ceasing to be used as a community language in certain parts of the Gaeltacht and increasingly, its use has been found to be restricted to particular social networks (APC 1988; Ó Riagáin 1997; Mac Giolla Chríost 2005). It is also becoming clear from census data that the education system is now the primary means of acquisition of the Irish language within the Gaeltacht and not the home. The findings of the most recent major sociolinguistic study on Irish in the Gaeltacht (Ó Giollagáin *et al.* 2007) confirm the ongoing shift to English and paint a clear picture of decline in the use of Irish as a community language in these areas. As Dónall Ó Riagáin (2008: 1) highlights, these findings suggest that the Gaeltacht, as a substantially Irish-speaking entity will have ceased to exist in about 20 years time if there is not a marked sea change in language usage practices.

Although the distribution of Irish speakers in Ireland continues to have a territorial and regional dimension, the linguistic distinctions between the Gaeltacht and the rest of the country are disappearing (Ó Riagáin 1997). The 2006 Census shows that of the 1,656,790 Irish speakers in the Republic of Ireland, only 64,265 live in officially designated Gaeltacht areas. The total number of daily users of Irish within the Gaeltacht is in fact only a little over half the number of daily users of the language in the Greater Dublin area. It is also significant that the number of young children returned in census of population as speaking Irish on a daily basis is about five times greater outside of the Gaeltacht than within.

Figures for language use in Galician show a strikingly different picture to that of Irish. According to the findings of the first large-scale survey on language use, over 60 per cent of the population reported Galician as their language of daily use (see Fernández Rodríguez and Rodríguez Neira 1995). Although more recent surveys point to a slight drop in active use of the language over this ten-year period (Monteagudo and Lorenzo 2005; González González *et al.* 2007; IGE 2009), Galician continues to be the numerically dominant language in Galicia.

This apparent strength in numerical terms, however, conceals certain more negative trends. The highest concentrations of speakers are to be found in rural areas, within older age groups and lower socio-economic categories. Among the urban population, middle classes and the younger age generation, the use of Galician is much lower. Although rural areas continue to be predominantly Galician-speaking, like in the case of the Irish Gaeltacht, these areas are however shrinking as a result of out migration to Galicia's main urban centres in search of work. Over half of all 16–25 year olds report exclusive or predominant use of Spanish (Monteagudo and Lorenzo Suárez 2005: 20).

At the same time, within these Spanish-speaking spaces and social groups there has been a degree of infiltration by Galician. Although Galicia's cities continue to be predominantly Spanish-speaking, comparisons between survey research carried out in 1993 and 2003, for example, show that the numbers reporting exclusive use of Galician in urban areas increased from almost 10 to 15 per cent over a decade (Monteagudo and Lorenzo Suárez 2005: 22). Such trends may be indicative of revitalization among the Spanish-speaking urban population or indeed resistance to language shift on the part of the Galician speakers from rural areas.

Some changes in the social divisions between Galician and Spanish speakers have also emerged in the post-normalization period and are evident in the increased use of the minority language among certain culturally and politically active sectors of Galicia's intellectual elite (Recalde 1997). The first sociolinguistic study of language use in Galicia also pointed to some degree of linguistic revitalization among Spanish speakers in Galicia. One-fifth of those brought up in Spanish-speaking homes reported Galician as their habitual language (Fernández Rodríguez and Rodríguez Neira 1994: 50).

While these trends point to the potentially positive effects of some thirty years of language policy in Galicia, there continues to be a significant gap between explicitly expressed support for the minority language and actual use. This mismatch is further confirmed in the findings of the follow-up MSG report which suggests a further decline in the number of young people using Galician. While some 46 per cent of 16- to 25-year-olds reported Galician as their habitual language in 1993, this was the case of less than 30 per cent a decade later. Paradoxically, as we have seen, it is among this age group that language attitudes have been shown to be most favourable.

Exploring the mismatch between attitudes and use

While attitudes towards Irish and Galician are found to be imperfect predictors of behaviour, this should not however invalidate the usefulness of such attitudinal research. Baker (1992: 21) suggests that language engineering can flourish or fail according to the attitudes of the community and points out that having a favourable attitude to the subject of language becomes important in bilingual policy and practice. The findings of survey research on Irish and Galician should therefore be looked at more usefully as a barometer for language planners and policy makers who are in a position to intervene in the sociolinguistic process and enhance conditions for language use.

Criticisms of language attitudinal research and attitudinal research more generally have, as has already been discussed in Chapter 1, led to a more sophisticated understanding of attitudes and what they can tell us about behaviour. Ajzen (1988: 45) highlighted that every particular instance of human action is determined by a unique set of factors and that any changes in circumstances, be it ever so slight, might produce different reactions. It thus follows that apparent differences identified in survey research between attitudes towards Irish and Galician and behaviour may be explained by the fact that many of the questions included in both questionnaires tap into general attitudes and do not provide information on attitudes towards specific action. A range of personal and situational factors are also likely to have an impact on the degree to which potentially favourable attitudes can be converted into language use. Wicker (1969) suggests that a person's verbal, intellectual and social abilities may have significant influence on behaviour. A person may, for example, express positive attitudes towards a language and a desire to use it but, because of low levels of linguistic competence, feel unable to change his or her language accordingly. Even when ability to use the language exists, perceptions about what constitutes correct or *legitimate* (Bourdieu 1991) ways of speaking may also prevent otherwise linguistically competent speakers from putting their abilities into practice. Therefore, in certain situations behavioural acts may be inhibited from taking place if such acts are seen to have negative consequences on how a person engaging in such behaviour will be perceived by others. So an understanding of what Bourdieu (1991) refers to as the *practical competence* in a language, in other words, knowing when, where and with whom to use a certain language in order to derive maximum 'profit' from the situation, is likely to have an effect on language behaviour.

In a comparative analysis of mismatches between language attitudes and language use in the cases of Irish and Galician, some account needs to be taken of the linguistic differences in their language contact situations. Predictably, bilingual conversations in the Galician-Spanish contact situation are likely to be facilitated by the closeness in linguistic terms between the two languages. Galician and Spanish, as was discussed in an earlier chapter are both Romance languages and there is a high level of intelligibility between the two. The Irish-English contact situation, which brings together a Celtic and a Germanic language, both of which are very distant in linguistic terms, does not lend itself to the asymmetric bilingualism characteristic of the Galician context.

Linguistic similarities between Galician and Spanish may go some way in explaining the high levels of ability among all Galicians to understand and speak the minority language. According to the MSG (1994) report, over 97 per cent claimed 'moderate' to 'high' abilities to understand the language and as many as 86 per cent claimed an ability to speak it. Even among young urban middle class sectors of the population, where language use has tended to be lowest, over three-quarters reported an ability to speak the language. More recent survey data on language competence (see Monteagudo and Lorenzo 2005) indicate that such competence is being maintained and even enhanced, showing a 4 per cent increase in reported ability to speak Galician (90%) over a decade. Although not directly comparable because of methodological differences in the way in which the data were collected in the follow-up MSG carried out in 2004, the findings nonetheless show that the majority of Galicians (82%) rates their spoken ability in the language at the upper end of a 4-point scale where a rating of 4 represents high levels of competence. Taken in conjunction, these results show that almost all people living in Galicia understand the autochthonous language and almost nine in ten people report an ability to speak it.

From national surveys on the Irish language, it would seem that the apparently reassuring increase in the proportion of the population reporting ability in Irish in consecutive census of population provides a somewhat inflated picture of actual levels of spoken competence in the language. While the number reporting ability to speak Irish increased from 18 per cent in 1926 to 43 per cent in 2006, survey research carried out between 1973 and 1993 showed that only a small minority of the population was sufficiently competent in the language to put that ability into actual use (Ó Riagáin and Ó Glasáin 1994: 5). CILAR noted that:

[...] a general attitude to Irish is least related to the extent to which the language is used. People may be highly favourable towards Irish while personally never uttering a single word of Irish. Commitment to the language is more highly associated with its use than is attitude [...] Expectedly, the most important single factor in Irish usage is ability in the language. (CILAR 1975: 173)

On the 6-point scale used to measure reported ability to speak Irish, only about one-tenth of the population report either 'native speaker ability' or sufficient ability to allow them to engage in 'most conversations'. Although worded somewhat differently, Mac Gréil's various

studies including the most recent Irish language survey (Mac Gréil 2009) show a broadly similar trend with 9 per cent of adults considering themselves to be 'Very Fluent/Fluent'. The very small pool of speakers reporting a high level of spoken competence in the language may therefore go some way in explaining mismatches between attitudes and use discussed above.

It is not possible however, to discern what exactly people mean when they describe their competence as 'native speaker' or as 'fluent' in survey research. The term 'native speaker' is itself an ambiguous term (see for example Davies, 1991, 2003, 2004; Kachru 1990; Phillipson 1992; Rampton 1990; Singh 1998, 2006) but is nonetheless frequently used as a label to distinguish between different types of speakers. Typically, the native speaker tends to be seen as the 'ideal' speaker (Chomsky 1957) and often takes on the role of what can be described in Bourdieu's (1991) terms as the *legitimate speaker*. In an Irish language context, the native speaker or *cainteoir dúchais* came to be associated with that minority of the population who learned the language in the home and who grew up in one of the official Gaeltacht areas. However, the majority of those claiming ability in Irish now falls under the category of 'non-native' speakers. Their proficiency in the language is not as a result of being brought up with it in the home or the community, but instead, from having acquired it at school as an academic subject or in a small but increasing number of cases, from having attended immersion type schooling. Given the low levels of exposure to Irish as a community language outside of the core Irish-speaking Gaeltacht areas, perceived competence in the language is more likely to be measured against school-based knowledge or the grade awarded for Irish in school examinations. While census and survey results provide data on reported ability in the language, various other studies of actual as opposed to perceived competence have shown that only a minority of children attain mastery in listening and speaking in the language (see Harris 1984, 1988, 1991; Harris and Murtagh 1988, 1999; Harris *et al.* 2006).

While the majority of Galicians claims high levels of spoken ability in the autochthonous language, these ability levels it must be remembered constitute reported accounts of perceived competence in the language.⁹ As in the case of Irish, it is not clear from survey data on people's reported ability to speak Galician what speakers mean when they say they have 'moito' (a lot), 'bastante' (fairly high), 'pouco' (little) spoken ability in Galician. Some insights into what these categorizations mean and the degree to which explicitly acclaimed high ability in the language is transformed into actual use, can be gained from a

number of more qualitative sociolinguistic studies. Iglesias Álvarez's (2002: 150) study suggests that a perceived lack of competence in spoken Galician is one of the reasons given among certain young Galicians to justify their low levels of use. Some respondents in her study refer to feelings of insecurity in their ability to speak Galician and a lack of confidence in their ability to engage in interpersonal conversation. In the discourses of some respondents, references are made to difficulties emerging because of their own perceived lack of fluency when attempting to initiate a conversation in Galician. They alluded to the idea that they 'knew Galician' but expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to convert that knowledge into actual use.

A variety of different personal experiences associated with trying to speak the language further decreased these speakers' lack of confidence in engaging adequately in a Galician-language conversation, defining their own way of speaking in pejorative terms with labels such as *castro* (literally 'rag' of Castilian) and '*mezcla*' (mixture). This perceived lack of competence in Galician seemed to be used by some to justify their use of Spanish as opposed to Galician, volunteering statements such as '*para habllarlo mal prefiero hablar castellano*' (if I am going to speak it badly [Galician] I prefer to speak Spanish) (Iglesias Álvarez 2002: 162).

While the examples given by Iglesias Álvarez reflect some of the discourses among mother tongue Spanish speakers, 'speaking badly' is also sometimes used by those whose first language is Galician. Older native speakers in particular, who despite being daily users of Galician, often lack confidence in their more dialectal use of the language. This frequently leads to the stigmatization of their way of speaking. For them the new institutionalized standard form of Galician is often seen as 'purer', 'more correct', 'more authentic' and 'more exemplary'.

Conversely, among younger native speakers of Galician, however, these discourses are less frequent. Equipped with higher levels of education and exposed to an education system in which Galician is now given institutional support, the younger generation seems ready to take that leap of confidence in favour of their more traditional and what they can claim to be a more 'authentic' way of speaking. They often reject Standard Galician, describing it as 'book-Galician' and 'TV Galician' (Domínguez Seco 2002–2003; Iglesias Álvarez 2002; Iglesias Álvarez and Ramallo 2003). Criticisms of this new form of language are in turn directed at the users of this form, the so-called non-native speakers, whose exposure to the language has been mainly through the education system. Unlike native speakers of Galician, whose use of the language

has traditionally been by 'necessity' (Bouzada Fernández 2003), neo-speakers take on a more dynamic role (Frías Conde 2006) and decisions to use the language are based on consciously made choices. These choices are frequently seen to have ideological underpinnings which tend to be socially, politically and culturally loaded. Particularly in the case of younger age-groups in urban contexts, use of Standard Galician is frequently seen as an ideological position with political connotations and associated with Galician nationalism. Thus, speaking Galician in urban contexts becomes marked and stigmatized behaviour, introducing a new social norm governing the use of the language in social contexts and among social groups where the language has been historically absent (Iglesias Álvarez 2002; O'Rourke 2006).

Personal commitment to the use of Irish, a willingness to use the language they know and a commitment to engage in an Irish-speaking conversation if initiated by someone else, are expressed by a sizeable percentage of the population. However personal involvement and self-imposed initiatives to begin a conversation are much lower. CILAR and ITÉ surveys show that as many as 60 per cent of those queried in the national sample reported having inhibitions about speaking Irish in a conversation if others are present who do not know the language (Ó Riagáin 1997). Almost as many, still, are reluctant to initiate a conversation in Irish and a sizeable minority (45%) of the population dislike the idea of speaking Irish with people who they know have better Irish than theirs (*ibid.*).

As might be expected, these social norms are affected by levels of competence in Irish. Those reporting highest levels of ability are most committed to using the language. However, Mac Gréil (2009) shows that irrespective of competence, there are occasions when potential speakers are discouraged from using Irish. He found that almost two-thirds of those reporting medium to high levels of fluency expressed reluctance to converse in Irish when they were unsure of a person's ability to speak Irish. They were also reluctant to speak Irish when there were others present who did not know the language. In its 1975 report CILAR described these social norms as extremely significant, commenting on their limiting effect on the 'safe' or predictable occasions of usage of Irish (CILAR 1975: 38).

Survey data on Galician with respect to social norms would seem to suggest 'safer' conditions for the use of the minority language. Two questions in the MSG survey provide some insights into the social norms which are governing the use of Galician. Although over 40 per cent of Galicians 'don't care one way or the other' about the language

used in a conversational interaction, there is somewhat more support for divergence to Galician in a Spanish-initiated conversation than the other way round. Almost one-fifth (17.4%) 'like' switches to Galician compared with less than 2 per cent in the case of switches to Spanish. Almost one quarter explicitly disapprove to divergence to Spanish in a Galician conversation. In other words, respondents are more supportive of situations which favour a switch to Galician than to Spanish.

From survey research on Galician it would seem that the legitimate discourse about the language is that speaking the minority language is the more explicitly expressed and socially acceptable norm. Switches to Galician are tolerated and those to Spanish somewhat less so. May (2001: 14) suggests that the long-term success of minority language policies rests on gaining a sufficient degree of support from majority language speakers or what Grin (2003) terms, increased levels of 'tolerability', to facilitate the use of the language among the minoritized group. The underlying suggestion from survey research is that Galician speakers no longer feel obliged to converge to Spanish in interpersonal interaction and that Spanish speakers are expected to be more accepting of Galician speakers' maintenance of their language in a bilingual conversational context.

Concluding remarks

There are difficulties involved in evaluating the effectiveness of language policy and language planning efforts since neither occur in a social vacuum. It is thus rarely simple to determine the degree to which a given planning goal has been met and it is even harder still to determine the relative contribution of each factor to the outcome. Nevertheless, some insights into the effects of such interventions can be ascertained from the language questions in census reports, survey results and sociolinguistic studies discussed above.

Conscious language planning efforts to promote the use of Irish span almost a century, and because of this, the long-term impact of such policies on language attitudes and behaviour can be more clearly traced. Official attempts to promote the use of Galician cover a comparatively shorter period of the sociolinguistic history of this minority language, and arguably, conclusions about the impact of policy changes since the 1980s remain more tentative.

There has been a perceptible increase in the numbers reporting use of Irish in census of populations, with figures more than doubling since the beginning of policy changes in the 1920s. However, the number

of active speakers of the language has remained comparatively lower. Although Galician remains the numerically dominant language in Galicia, language policy does not seem to be curbing the process of language shift to Spanish which had begun to gain momentum over the previous fifty years, especially among the younger generation.

Perhaps more telling of the relative success of linguistic policies and the positive reinstatement of Irish and Galician within their respective communities are the findings on change in language attitudes among the population. The positive attitudes expressed by the majority in each context contrast sharply with the historically negative views associated with each language. The main value placed on Irish among the population is its contribution to national and cultural distinctiveness, as well as a reluctance to see the language disappear from public domains of the Irish experience of future generations of Irish people. Survey research over four decades indicates that between a half and two-thirds of people share these views. Similarly, in the case of Galician, the majority of the population rates the language highly in terms of its symbolic significance as a marker of identity. The majority supports efforts to maintain it within Galician society through its presence at different societal levels and within key public domains, including education.

Despite similarities in the thematic structure of attitudinal items contained in Irish and Galician survey research, semantic differences in the wording of various questions as well as differences in the way data were collected do not however allow for direct comparisons of the structure of these language attitudes. To further explore similarities and differences between attitudinal dispositions in the two cases and their relationship to language behaviour, a systematic study of young people's attitudes towards their respective minority languages was conducted using a similar set of questions and design. The key findings of this study and their implications are taken up in the next chapter.

5

A Cross-National Study of Young People's Attitudes

Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss some of the findings from sociolinguistic research undertaken at two university institutions in Ireland's and Galicia's largest cities, Dublin and Vigo respectively. In the study, a total of 815 Irish and 725 Galician respondents completed a self-administered sociolinguistic questionnaire¹⁰ which included a range of attitudinal statements and questions on different aspects relating to the Galician and Irish languages, their use and speakers. The sample was stratified according to the four main academic disciplines offered at each university which included students pursuing degree courses in the areas of humanities, technology, business and science. Insights were also gained into certain aspects of the survey through the triangulation of the quantitative data in-depth interviews and group discussions with a smaller number of students.

Choice of respondents

There were several practical reasons for choosing to carry out the survey in a university context and among university students. A major one was ease of access to these universities by acquaintances who worked at these institutions. Additionally, undergraduate university populations are pre-selected for age (the majority tends to be between the ages of 17 and 25) and many respondents could be tested at the same time. Moreover, as Woolard (1989: 102) has previously noted, activities such as the completion of questionnaires and forms are already considered socially appropriate and meaningful in classroom situations. Respondents were therefore expected to be able to make sense of the survey as an event and to complete the task required of them with relatively little difficulty.

Additionally, because of the comparative focus of the research and the homogeneity of student groups in terms of educational level, age and social class across Irish and Galician student populations, unwanted cross-cultural differences are controlled for and thus comparability of responses maximized (see Van de Vijver 2003: 151).

There were also a number of theoretical considerations which make the choice of group meaningful. The majority of the Irish and Galician respondents ranged in age between 18 and 24 years, thus providing insights into language attitudes among younger sectors of the population. Previous research on minority language situations has found that attitudes held by the younger generation have important repercussions on the prosperity of the language as it is ultimately their views on the language which will determine the direction that changes will take in the near future (Woolard 1989; Hoare 2000).

As university students, their attitudes also reflect those of educated, middle class sectors of Irish and Galician societies. Given the link between education and the labour market, it is likely that their educational qualifications will also allow them access to more privileged social class positions within Irish and Galician societies. As a social group, the attitudes of these students towards a minority language are likely to be powerful in defining the terms on which other members of society would be expected to evaluate their situations and the meaning which would come to be attached to the two languages explored in the study. Therefore, in terms of age, level of education, as well as social class, attitudes among university students can provide useful into the survival prospects of the two minority languages being investigated here.

At a macro-level of analysis, the study constituted an attempt to compare these two minority languages in a systematic way and through this contrastive type of research provided an opportunity to explore how and why attitudes towards minority languages change in different sociolinguistic contexts. It also sought to examine if, in an increasingly globalized context, a cross-national correlation existed between the attitudes of young educated individuals in two European contexts towards linguistic diversity and attempted to identify the salient features found in the types of views held about a minority language more generally. The study allowed for some assessment of the degree to which a more localized sense of identity was being maintained through cultural symbols such as language.

At a more micro-level, the study of Irish and Galician student attitudes was also firmly located within the national contexts of each language situation. As the discussion of sociolinguistic research on the

Irish language has shown in Chapter 4, university student groups can be seen to bring together the characteristics of social groups among whom conditions for the Irish language have tended to be most favourable. Previous research (CILAR 1975; Ó Riagáin and Ó Gliasáin 1984, 1994; Ó Riagáin 2007; Mac Gréil 2009) has found a strong relationship between a person's educational background and attitudes towards the language as well as levels of competence and use. The relationship between educational qualifications and the labour market has in turn introduced a class dimension to the Irish language situation, attracting favourable support for the language among middle class sectors of Irish society. Most positive attitudes, highest levels of spoken ability and use of the Irish language have consequently tended to be concentrated within educated middle class sectors.

In difference to the Irish context, a review of existing research on the Galician sociolinguistic context would seem to indicate that the socio-demographic profile of university students in Galicia brings together least favourable conditions for the minority language in terms of its intergenerational transmission and habitual use. Lowest levels of reported use of Galician are to be found among the 16–25 age group, less than half of whom use the language habitually. Galician speakers continue to be concentrated in lower socio-economic groups, among those with low levels of education and living in rural areas. Spanish speakers, on the other hand, tend to be predominantly within the upper middle class sectors of Galician society, possess high levels of education and reside in more urban settings.

However, there are signs that these patterns may be changing in both contexts. Changes in language policy since the 1970s, as well as changes in the broader socio-economic context in which these policies were defined, may be weakening the motivation within certain educated middle class sectors of Irish society to learn the Irish language. The Advisory Planning Committee (APC 1986: 66) previously noted that the emergence of alternative routes to higher education and social mobility within Ireland's educational elite, may be fragmenting support for Irish within this group. This weakening in support levels for the language has clear implications for the future survival prospects of the language as it threatens the continued supply of competent bilinguals necessary to maintain the already small number of Irish-speaking networks in the population. According to the APC report:

[...] the position of Irish within the identity and social status meaning systems of middle class groups is becoming fragmented. The

emergence of more instrumentally oriented educational objectives within some post-primary schools, and of a third level sector which does not impose an Irish requirement to entrants, has facilitated a situation in which high educational and occupational achievement does not necessarily include high competence in Irish. Again, those who follow this route tend to be occupationally concentrated (though more regionally dispersed), in the higher positions of the manufacturing and construction industries. While this section of the middle class may not necessarily be unfavourable in their attitudes to Irish, we might hypothesise that the language is likely to occupy a marginal position in relation to their own sense of understanding of social status which distinguishes the groups to which they belong. (APC 1986: 75–6)

While there is evidence that support for Irish may be dwindling among these social groups, in the case of Galician, there is some suggestion that attitudes towards the minority language may be becoming more positive. As we saw in Chapter 4, survey research on the Galician sociolinguistic situation would seem to indicate that the new socio-political context in Galicia and the co-official status which the Galician language subsequently enjoys are being internalized by key social groups within Galician society. There is evidence in these surveys of increasingly consolidated support among the younger generation, sectors of the population with highest levels of education and certain middle class groups. The extension of the Galician language to key areas of public life such as the school, public administration and the media seems to be having a status-enhancing effect which is currently being manifested through increased support for the language among key social groups. Therefore, there is support for the language among prominent groups within Galician society who, arguably, are well placed to organize language issues effectively and to influence government policy in the area. Our discussion of Irish and Galician university students in the following sections allows us to further explore the strength of these predictions.

Profile of Irish and Galician students

An analysis of the socio-demographic profile of Irish and Galician students conformed to the expected characteristics of university student groups in Dublin and Vigo. The majority of respondents was aged between 18 and 24 and, based on an analysis of parents' occupational status, were found to be from predominantly middle class backgrounds.

Most students were from an urban as opposed to a rural background. Eight out of ten respondents in the Irish sample were from the eastern part of the country and over half were from Dublin. In the case of Galician students, just under three-quarters of respondents were from the southern Galician province of Pontevedra and almost a half were from the city of Vigo.

Table 5.1 shows differences in reported levels of spoken ability across the two student groups. While over 40 per cent of Galician respondents reported 'high' levels of ability in the minority language, this was the case of just 16 per cent in the case of Irish students.¹¹ These figures were reversed in the case of 'low' ability with 43 per cent of Irish students classifying their ability in this way compared with just 15 per cent in the case of Galician respondents. The percentage reporting 'medium' levels of ability in each language was roughly the same.

When asked about the language habitually used by these respondents almost three-quarters of Irish students reported exclusive use of English. Only a small minority (3%) reported using predominantly Irish or as much Irish as English. The remaining 24 per cent reported use of 'more English than Irish', thus acknowledging the use of at least 'some Irish' in their habitual linguistic practices. It is difficult to discern the extent to which 'some Irish' actually forms part of respondents' repertoires. Open-ended questions included at an earlier stage of the research, as well as in-depth discussions with smaller numbers of students, would seem to suggest that it was understood as the inclusion of Irish words and phrases in a predominantly English-language repertoire rather than conversations in which the Irish language was the predominant medium. It is possible, as Murtagh (2003) suggests in her analysis of similar age groups that their use of Irish is nothing more than a token Irish phrase or word in what is essentially an English-language conversation.

Table 5.1 Students' reported ability to speak the minority language

	Irish (%)	Galician (%)
High	16	40
Medium	41	45
Low	43	15

In the Galician sample, use of the minority language was found to be higher. Just over one-quarter reported the exclusive use of Spanish and at the other end of the spectrum, the exclusive use of Galician was reported by 6 per cent. The majority of Galician students reported some form of bilingual behaviour ranging from the predominant use of Galician (6%) to the predominant use of Spanish along with some Galician (49%). The remaining 12 per cent reported equal use of both languages.

Young people's attitudes to Irish and Galician

In the questionnaire used in the study, Irish and Galician respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with similarly worded attitudinal statements used to test a range of aspects concerning their respective minority languages. The statistical technique of factor analysis¹² confirmed two dimensions of meaning underlying the response patterns of Irish and Galician informants.

Attitudes to the societal presence of the minority language

The first attitudinal dimension combined items relating to the transmission of the minority language to the next generation with more general issues such as the level of passive support for the language within Irish and Galician societies as well as direct questioning of respondents' perceptions about the future of the minority language. As an attitudinal dimension it therefore represented a broad range of components, incorporating a number of sub-themes including perceived utility of the language, suitability for the modern world, desired future for the language and the transmission of the language to the next generation. These sub-themes were considered important determinants for the survival prospects of a minority language. A breakdown of responses to the individual items contained within this attitudinal dimension is shown in the tables below.

Support for the language and its future

In Table 5.2 responses to the first three items measure general levels of support for each language within their respective societies. When understood in this way, attitudes were shown to be positive and the findings point to a high degree of goodwill towards each language. The majority of Irish students (80%) is against the suggestion that attempts to keep Irish alive are a waste of time and money with almost three-quarters disagreeing with any proposed cuts in government spending

Table 5.2 Support for the language and its future

	Positive (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative (%)
Attempts to keep Irish alive are a waste of time and money	80	5	15
É unha perda de tempo e de cartas intentar conserve-lo galego	93	3	4
The government should spend less money in the promotion of Irish	73	12	15
O goberno debe gastar menos na promoción da lingua galega	84	9	7
Future for Irish	61	11	28
O futuro do galego	84	7	9
Shop signs should be in Irish	49	9	42
As letreios nas tendas deben estar en galego	60	17	23

in the promotion of the language. Such proposals are even more overwhelmingly condemned among Galician students with support for the minority language expressed by between 84 and 93 per cent.

However, in more concrete situations or settings such as shop signs, which involve the visible presence of these languages, Irish and Galician students display less favourable attitudes. Less than half of Irish students agree that these should be in Irish. While in both cases, the majority would like to see a future¹³ in which their respective minority language has at least a bilingual presence, a sizeable minority (28%) of Irish students only favours the limited use of Irish as a cultural artefact or in Gaeltacht areas.

Modernization and spread of the minority language

One of the key factors which led to the minoritization of many of Europe's lesser used languages (including Irish and Galician) was the failure to integrate these languages into the functions of the modern state. Instead, as the language of the peripheries, these languages became symbols of poverty and backwardness with their functions restricted to informal domains. Perceptions about the suitability of the minority language in the modern world were tested in the statements 'The Irish language is not suitable for business, science and technology'/'O galego non é axeitado para os negocios, a ciencia e a tecnoloxía'. The

predominant belief among Irish students is that the Irish language is not adequate for use in the modern world.

While it is unlikely from a linguistic point of view that languages are more or less equipped to fulfil different societal functions, such value judgements are frequently made (Edwards 1994), ultimately reflecting the perceived status of the language in society. Prejudicial beliefs about the Irish language are in sharp contrast with the very positive ratings displayed by Galician students for a similarly-worded item. The fact that these young Galicians perceive the autochthonous language as suitable for the world of business, science and technology is significant, given that, up until a few decades ago, these were domains from which Galician was previously excluded. The status planning element of language policy, which has led to the more explicit presence of the Galician language in public spaces such as schools, the media and administration, seems to have put in place new social conventions which are influencing perceptions about the relative prestige of the language. These new social meanings would seem to be reflected in Galician responses.

Another striking difference between Irish and Galician responses is their reaction to the statement 'Irish will never become the common means of communication in Ireland'/ 'A extensión do galego a tódolos ámbitos non é posible'. The majority of Irish students does not believe that Irish can become the language of wider communication in Ireland. Galician students, in contrast, are optimistic about the possibility of achieving what is officially referred to as language normalization, through which the language is to become the 'normal' means of communication in all social domains in Galicia.

Table 5.3 Modernization and spread of the minority language

	Positive (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative (%)
The Irish language is not suitable for business, science and technology	38	9	53
O galego non é axeitado para os negocios, a ciencia e a tecnoloxía	86	7	7
Irish will never become the common means of communication in Ireland	8	3	89
A extensión do galego a tódolos ámbitos non é posible	81	4	15

Strategies of social reproduction

While the survey did not include measures which sought to establish directly the evaluation of these minority languages in strategies of social reproduction, that is, strategies adopted by families and individuals to maintain or improve their material circumstances, a number of questions were included about the use of the minority language for use at work, at home and at school.

Students were asked about how important they perceived the minority language to be in obtaining future employment. Fishman (1977: 114) highlights that languages must either provide, or promise to provide entrée to scarce power and resources, otherwise there will be little reason for indigenous populations to adopt them for intergroup use. The perceived utilitarian function of Irish and Galician is therefore an important element in increasing the vitality of the minority language as the instrumental value also adds to its status and to its symbolic value as linguistic capital (Bourdieu 1991). If access to prestigious jobs is determined by a knowledge of the minority language, parents are more likely to want their children to learn it. Given the age group of respondents (18- to 24-year-olds), such work-related issues are likely to become more relevant in the context of their transition from late adolescence to early adulthood.

As can be seen in Table 5.4 the majority (83%) of Irish students sees the minority language to be of little or no importance in their future careers. Language policy in the early years of the Irish State had to some extent 'changed the rules of the social mobility process' in Ireland (Ó Riagáin 1997) by providing economic awards to those with a knowledge of Irish. However, changes in these policies since 1973, as well as broader socio-economic changes in Irish society during that period, have weakened the role of the Irish language in the process of social mobility. This is reflected here, where 83 per cent of Irish students perceive the minority language to be of little or no importance in their future careers. Galician students, in comparison, award a higher value to their minority language. Over half of those surveyed see the language as important in securing future employment. It is possible that the increased institutional presence of the Galician language is changing younger peoples' attitudes towards the language. The value awarded to a knowledge of Galician by a sizeable proportion of these young, educated individuals may point to a more positive re-evaluation for the language in terms of its social prestige.

Table 5.4 Strategies of social reproduction

	Positive (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative (%)
Importance of Irish in future employment	17	–	83
Importancia do galego na futura vida profesional	59	5	36
Language children should learn in the home	49	–	51
Lingua que se lles debe aprender ós nenos en casa	89	3	8
Language children should learn at school	59	–	41
Lingua que se lles debe aprender ós nenos na escola	91	1	8
If you were starting to raise a family today, how much Irish would you use with your children in the home?	32	–	68
E ti mesmo/a, se tiveras fillos, ¿canto galego utilizarías con eles na casa?	61	3	36

Irish and Galician students also differ in the extent to which they think the minority language should be transmitted to the next generation. While issues relating to the importance of the language in children's education may not be of direct relevance to these 18- to 24-year-old students, it is likely that these issues are beginning to take on more significance as they reach maturity. The first two of these items measure students' ratings of two general questions relating to the degree to which the minority language should be transmitted in people's homes and at school.

In response to the first question, 'What language should children learn in the home?', just under half of Irish respondents favoured the transmission of the language in the home domain.¹⁴ However, almost as many favour a predominantly or exclusively English language upbringing.¹⁵ This general pattern follows for Irish students' ratings of the transmission of the language through the secondary socialization agent of the school. Among Galician students there is overwhelming support for the transmission of Galician in the home domain and at school.

Although the majority of students favours the transmission of their respective minority languages to the next generation, the extent to which they are willing to actively participate in the transmission process is comparatively lower. Almost one-third less in each case expresses a commitment to the inclusion of the minority language. Such a stance

may of course have as much to do with respondents' confidence in their perceived ability to transmit the language as with an explicitly negative attitude towards it.

Attitudes towards language and identity

The second attitudinal dimension measured the role of the minority language as a symbol of group or ethnic identity. The 'integrative' or 'solidarity' dimension of language attitudes being measured here stems from the idea that language integrates people into a community of shared understanding and creates a sense of common identity. The language and identity perspective is based on the well-established premise that language can play a key role in defining or symbolizing a sense of 'ethnic' or group identity, thus making it a valuable resource to be protected. Language is seen to constitute a key role in the construction of identity because of its ability to generate what Anderson (1991) refers to as 'imagined communities' and thus builds on solidarities particular to a group. The degree to which Irish and Galician students valued the language as a symbol of group or ethnic identity provided some insights into the vitality of their respective minority languages.

As can be seen in Table 5.5, both Irish and Galician student groups score highly on items relating to the boundary-marking function of their respective minority languages. Their symbolic presence plays an important role in the ethnic identification of their respective groups. The majority of Irish (61%) and Galician respondents (87%) agrees that without their respective autochthonous languages, Ireland and Galician would lose their distinctiveness as cultural entities. As many as 62 per cent of the Irish student sample believe that 'Ireland would not really be Ireland without Irish-speaking people' and 79 per cent of Galicians respond affirmatively to a similarly-worded statement.

Because language is just one of many symbols used to construct a collective or national identity, the more compromising statement 'Language is the most important part of the Irish identity'/'A lingua é a componente máis importante da identidade galega' tests the extent to which each of these languages was seen as a 'core value' (Smolicz 1992, 1995) in demarcating a sense of 'Irishness' or 'Galicianness'. Only a minority of Irish respondents believed this to be the case, highlighting, that for his particular group, other symbolic resources other than language take precedence over language in constructing an Irish identity (O'Rourke 2005). Galician students in contrast place a significantly higher value on the minority language with 70 per cent identifying Galician as core to a Galician identity.

Table 5.5 Language and identity

	Positive (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative (%)
No real Irish person can be against the revival of Irish	56	9	35
Un verdadeiro galego non pode estar en contra dun rexurdimento do galego	68	15	17
To really understand Irish culture and traditions one must know Irish	41	4	55
Para entende-las tradicións e a cultura galega é necesario saber falar galego	43	3	54
Without Irish, Ireland would lose its identity as a separate culture	61	4	35
Sen o galego, Galicia perdería a súa cultura propia	87	2	11
Ireland would not really be Ireland without Irish-speaking people	62	4	34
Galicia non sería Galicia sen os falantes do galego	79	3	18
Language is the most important part of the Irish identity	36	7	57
A lingua é a componente máis importante da identidade galega	70	7	23

The statement 'To really understand Irish traditions and culture, one must know Irish'/ 'Para entender as costumes e tradicións galegas hai que saber falar galego' measures what Fishman (1987: 639) refers to as the 'indexical link' between these two languages and their respective cultures. For both Irish and Galician students, the 'indexical link' between the minority language and ethnocultural identity is weak and, for most students, the minority language does not express the interests, values and world views of an Irish or Galician culture. The fact that only 41 per cent of Irish and 43 per cent of Galicians agree with this statement seems to indicate that, for these young people, the minority language does not constitute an essential component in understanding their associated cultures.

Variations in language attitudes

The characteristics of students favouring the minority language differ greatly across the Irish and Galician contexts.¹⁶ As can be seen in

Table 5.6, attitudes towards Galician were shown to be positive among Galician students who defined their sense of collective identity in terms of a Galician as opposed to a Spanish collective identity. A strong identification with a Galician national collective was also linked to higher levels of language use in Galician, with those who defined themselves in terms of a Galician ethnic identity generally reporting it as their habitual language.

In the case of the first attitudinal dimension (*Support for Societal Presence of Language*), as well as being linked to a heightened sense of 'Galicianness', language attitudes were also closely linked to support for the Galician Nationalist Party as opposed to support for Galician branches of the two main political parties, the centre-right Popular Party and the centre-left Socialist Party or among those students who did not support any particular political ideology.¹⁷

Overall, career path (defined in terms of the domain of studies which students were pursuing), which was found to have a more 'minor' effect in the Galician context, was in fact most predictive of differences in attitudes towards Irish (see Table 5.7). Compared with the Galician sample, Irish students' linguistic background seemed to be more strongly predictive of attitudes towards the minority language. Parental attitudes and the degree of language use in the home had an important effect on language attitudes. Students reporting positive attitudes on the part of their parents also tended to be strongly supportive of the language themselves. Also important was respondents' perceived ability in the language, the intensity to which Irish was

Table 5.6 Explicative model for Galician

Attitudinal Dimensions	
Support for Societal Presence of Language	Language and Identity
MODEL	MODEL
Ethnicity	Ethnicity
Political Ideology	Habitual Language
Habitual Language	
PROFILE	PROFILE
Define ethnicity as Galician	Define ethnicity as Galician
Support the Galician Nationalist Party	Report use of Galician
Report use of Galician	

Table 5.7 Explicative model for Irish

Attitudinal Dimensions	
Support for Societal Presence of Language	Language and Identity
MODEL	MODEL
Career Path	Career Path
Academic Performance in Irish	Habitual Language
Parental Attitudes	Ability to speak Irish
Habitual Language	
PROFILE	PROFILE
Students of humanities	Students of humanities
High academic performance in Irish	Report some use of Irish
Parental support of Irish	High spoken ability
Report some use of Irish	

included in the school curriculum, and academic performance in Irish while at school. Additionally, the degree to which Irish was spoken habitually by students tended to be strongly predictive of attitudes relating to *Support for the Societal Presence of the Language*.¹⁸ Students reporting at least some use of the language displayed more favourable attitudes than those reporting monolingual behaviour in English. Use of Irish was also linked to the second attitudinal dimension, *Language and Identity*.¹⁹

Explaining differences across contexts

The role of nationalist movements

Nationalist movements and the conscious organization of language loyalty which often results from these movements have played an important role in upgrading the value of minority languages in many parts of the world (e.g. Barbour and Carmichael 2000; May 2001; Paulston 1994; Roberts and Williams 1980; Woolard 1989). Vigo students who most strongly identify with a Galician ethnic identity place a higher value on the autochthonous language than those students who define themselves partly or fully as Spanish. Positive attitudes towards Galician as a result of a more strongly held nationalist sentiment also leads to what Smolicz and Secombe (1988) refer to as a *personal positive evaluation* of the language, prompting passive commitment to be converted into active use. These findings suggest that a heightened sense of national

consciousness constitutes a key factor in stimulating language loyalty and increased language use among Vigo students.

It is, however, significant that language attitudes are more strongly predicted by students' active use of Galician as opposed to the first language in which they learned to speak in the home. The suggestion here is that support for Galician and loyalty to the language are not necessarily strongest among mother tongue speakers of Galician. What is more important, it seems, is the extent to which the Galician language forms part of these students' habitual linguistic repertoire, with attitudes most positive among those reporting predominant or exclusive use of the language. Therefore, some degree of language shift among mother tongue Spanish speakers may be taking place, a shift which it could be suggested, is being influenced by the conscious organization of language loyalty through an ideological orientation towards Galician nationalism. Such attitudes are in turn strongly influenced by a political ideology, with those who support the politics of the Galician Nationalist Party showing most consolidated support and highest levels of language use.

While ethnicity and political ideology were found to be most predictive of attitudes towards the Galician language, these variables were shown to have little or no effect in the Irish context. As we have seen, among Vigo students, ethnicity was a key distinguishing variable in terms of language attitudes where the minority language was symbolic of tensions between the Spanish core and the Galician periphery. This is not the case, however, among Irish students where it could be said that the need to express their identity through cultural symbols such as language is weakened by the undisputed status of the Irish Republic as an independent political entity since 1922. Although political independence did not prevent the continuation of strong economic and cultural influences from Great Britain and above all England, it removed the more explicit elements of the non-autochthonous centre of power. In the study, Irish students overwhelmingly described themselves as 'Irish'. As a result the 'ethnicity' variable contained too little variance to correlate with language attitudes. Other studies confirm this trend, showing an almost universal attachment to an Irish identity among the population in the Republic of Ireland (Fahey *et al.* 2005; Ó Riagáin 2007; Mac Gréil 2009).

Social mobilization

Paulston's (1994) conceptual model for the prediction of maintenance or loss of a minority language provides a particularly useful framework within which the relationship between ethnic identity, political

ideology, language use and attitudes can be explained. As we saw in Chapter 1, this model is used to characterize different types of social mobilization adopted by minority groups along a four-point continuum ranging from *ethnicity* to *geographic nationalism*. Social mobilization is used to describe the level of recognition among members of a minority group of certain cultural features (including language) particular to the group as well as the perception that the minority group has of its relation with some dominant 'other'.

That dominant 'other' in a Galician context is the Spanish State of which Galicia, as one of Spain's Autonomous Communities forms a part. When asked to define their identity, over one-third of Vigo students categorized themselves as Galician compared with the remaining two-thirds who defined their identity partially or exclusively in the context of the Spanish State. The type of social mobilization which characterizes the latter groups can be defined as *ethnicity*, constituting a form of learned behaviour associated with a common past and common cultural values and beliefs but in which there is no perceived power struggle with another ethnic group (Paulston *ibid.*: 30–1). Instead this subgroup of students sees themselves as being intrinsically part of Spain as a political entity. According to Paulston, the closer a minority group's social mobilization comes to *ethnicity* the more likely it is to lose the minority language and to assimilate to the dominant group. This interpretation was supported by comments such as the following which were frequently volunteered by students in follow-up discussions. Here they defined themselves in terms of a dual identity, as both Galician and Spanish:

Iria Porque: ...jolín porque Galicia pertenece a España y considero que debería ser igual unas que otras [las dos lenguas]

Interviewer: Sí

Iria: Completamente igual sí...o sea me parece imprescindible como el hecho de poder relacionarnos con el resto del país.

[**Iria:** Because...because Galicia belongs to Spain and I consider that the two should be equal [the two languages]

Interviewer: Yes

Iria: Completely equal yes...that is for me it seems essential to be able to mix with the rest of the country. (My translation)]

The stance taken by the majority of these Vigo students reflects what del Valle (2000: 117) regards as the predominant type of social mobilization adopted by contemporary Galicians and also explains the ongoing shift

to Spanish identified in national sociolinguistic surveys discussed in Chapter 4.

Paulston (1994) suggests that political independence in the Irish context removed the sense of urgency surrounding the Irish language question. The potential boundary demarcating function of the Irish language as a means of distinguishing 'us' from 'them', which had been reinforced by Irish cultural nationalists at the end of the nineteenth century, was therefore weakened. This perhaps explains why the perceived need for what Eastman (1984) refers to as the *language use identity* function of Irish only becomes important when, as one Irish student volunteered:

[...] if you go abroad and if you speak to anybody say like you are in France and you are speaking French and they'd hear your accent...they'd all...hey you are English...no I'm Irish...it's a big thing you know...it's your culture...it's your heritage...like I don't know it would be much better like because it separates us like...like down in Corsica...supposed to speak French but loads speak Corsican because they want to speak to themselves like...

Thus it is only when ethnic distinctions become blurred and when a specifically Irish identity expressed through the English language is confused with that of the former dominant 'other' that the demarcating function of Irish is drawn upon.

Power struggles

Comparatively, Vigo students who define their identity as Galician explicitly recognize their participation in a power struggle with another ethnic group and align themselves more closely to that of *ethnic movement*, the second point on Paulston's suggested continuum of social mobilization. In this context, language use as an aspect of identity increases as *ethnicity* turns 'militant' (Paulston 1994: 32). In addition to identifying with common cultural values such as a specific language, the members of minority groups within the *ethnic movement* category often see themselves competing with another ethnic majority for scarce goods and resources. In this context, language becomes symbolic of the power struggle between the minority and the dominant group. Del Valle (2000: 117) includes Galician nationalists here, a group which he sees as being well articulated around a political coalition of parties which include the *Bloque Nacionalista Galego* (BNG). Therefore, Vigo students who define themselves as Galician and who are also supportive

of the BNG would seem to explicitly recognize their participation in a power struggle with another ethnic group. This recognition is manifested when they convert ideological support for the language into actual use.

It is not always clear, however, if the increased value attached to a minority language as a result of nationalist movements is primarily in terms of the status of the language or the identification of the language as a symbol of group solidarity (Woolard 1989: 122). However, it does seem significant that the *Support for the Societal Presence of the Minority language* dimension contains some 'status-related' aspects. These include attitudes towards the importance of the minority language in the process of social mobility and perceptions about its suitability for the functions of the modern world (see Table 5.3 and 5.4). Significantly, it does not include the more explicitly 'solidarity-related' aspects of language attitudes measured in the second attitudinal dimension (*Language and Identity*). The explicit 'solidarity' link between nationalist movements and language loyalty is however confirmed by the fact that ethnicity and habitual language together are most predictive of attitudes towards Galician as a symbol of ethnic or group identity. Significantly, political ideology was not found to be strongly predictive of variation in the ethno-cultural value of the language among Vigo students and thus reduces what could be regarded as the more *militant* aspects of social mobilization required to bring about increased language use.

Irish and discourses of uncompleted nationhood

Even though, on a political level, statehood has been consolidated in the Irish Republic, discourses of uncompleted nationhood continue to circulate in Irish society, albeit in a more implicit way. These underlying discourses take the form of claims on the Six Counties of Northern Ireland. Despite the official abandonment of such claims at a political level, references to these claims still exist in both the Republic of Ireland and among certain sectors of the population of Northern Ireland explicitly voiced through Sinn Féin, the political party historically associated with Provisional IRA. The appropriation of cultural symbols, including the Irish language, by the more radical elements within Irish nationalism especially in the violent events in Northern Ireland, brought nationalism as an ideology itself into question, as well as one of its key constituent symbols, the Irish language (Tovey *et al.* 1989; Watson 2003). However, the ceasefire and positive peace initiatives which have followed, according to Mac Gréil (1996) explain an improvement in attitudes towards Sinn Féin, and support for the political party among

voters in the Republic of Ireland which has increased over recent elections (see Maillot 2005). Of the sample of students queried in this research, 7 per cent supported the politics of Sinn Féin, close to the 10 per cent or so level of support for the party at a national level.

Of particular interest for our current purposes is the finding that respondents who support Sinn Féin are shown to have significantly more favourable attitudes towards the societal presence of Irish than respondents who support any of the other main political parties. The more positive attitudes of the latter subgroup could be allocated the category of *ethnic movement*, or *ethnicity* turned 'militant' within Paulston's (1994) continuum for the prediction of maintenance or loss of minority languages, which has been discussed in the Galician context above. The move towards *ethnic movement* or even *ethnic nationalism*, in which there are demands for political independence on the part of the ethnic group, is closely linked to the role of Sinn Féin in the politics of Northern Ireland where the explicit presence of the dominant 'other' has increased the role of language as a symbol of political tensions with the British government and as a more important demarcating function.²⁰ This support does not lead, however, to a higher *positive evaluative function* of the language (Smolicz and Secombe 1988) found among Galician students, whereby positive attitudes are converted to active language use. Students who support the politics of Sinn Féin were not any more likely to report the use of Irish than supporters of other political parties.

It is also interesting to note that, although over 40 per cent of respondents in this study saw no political party as being supportive of the Irish language, almost as many students, however, identified support for the language with the more nationalistically oriented Sinn Féin party. This would seem to suggest some level of association between the political aims of Sinn Féin and the Irish language among a substantial number of these students. It must, nonetheless, be reiterated that, although real differences were found in the level of support expressed by supporters of Sinn Féin among the students queried in the current piece of research, these differences were found to be small and more detailed investigation would be required to further substantiate these claims.

Quite generally, and particularly when compared with the Galician context, language is not a political issue in the Republic of Ireland. The Advisory Planning Committee (APC) for the Irish language has previously remarked that despite a continuing high commitment to ethnic and cultural valuations of Irish, the language is not an issue of great significance to most Irish people in their everyday perceptions of politics

and political goals (APC 1988: 68). The general absence of political debate about the Irish language question also helps explain the fact that when asked about what they thought were the attitudes of other people they knew, over half of the Irish respondents described attitudes as neutral or were simply unable to comment on others' views on the language. Unlike the Galician context where language issues play a more significant political role, it would appear that issues related to the Irish language are not the subject of debate or discussion for the majority of these students. This fact in turn explains the increase in the proportions of respondents within the Irish student sample who 'don't know' or have 'no opinion' on many of the issues relating to Irish, reflecting an emerging trend also noted in national surveys on the Irish language (see Ó Riagáin and Ó Gliasáin 1984; Ó Riagáin 1997: 191). This lack of debate leads to a paradoxical situation in which, despite strong personal and ideological commitment to the Irish language among respondents in the study, many seem to be of the opinion that such commitment is not shared by others. Almost two-thirds of students believed that 'Most people don't care one way or the other about Irish', a figure which replicates exactly that which was found in the 1993 ITÉ survey (Ó Riagáin and Ó Gliasáin 1994; Ó Riagáin 1997). This of course limits the potential for organized interest groups to take root and the collective pressure for action which could be subsequently brought to bear on the state.

Collective action through the gaelscoil

One such group in the Irish context which acted collectively in favour of the Irish language and which appears to have brought about changes for the language was the *Gaelscoil* or all-Irish school movement. While, in the majority of schools in the Republic of Ireland, the Irish language is taught as an academic subject only, more than 7 per cent of primary and 3 per cent of secondary schools offer immersion-type programmes in which classes are taught through the medium of Irish. The earlier generation of all-Irish schools was established as part of national language policy in the 1930s and 1940s. However, Irish-immersion schools which were established since 1965 were as a result of initiatives on the part of interested urban, middle class parents. Therefore, the ethos of these schools is also different to that of the majority of schools in Ireland where Irish is taught as a subject only. Of the students queried in the current research, 36 per cent had gone to one of these all-Irish schools, therefore exceeding national proportions who attend such schools. The higher than average presence of individuals who attended one of these schools in the present study can perhaps be attributed to the fact that

university students in Ireland tend to be predominantly middle class. As was already pointed out, these social sectors have also tended to be most closely associated with Irish-language schooling, although there is also some evidence that this might be changing.

As a subgroup, students who attended all-Irish schools were found to have more strongly consolidated positive attitudes towards the Irish language than those who had attended mainstream schools where Irish was taught as a subject only. This confirms Kavenagh's (1999) study in which she found that students in all-Irish schools were more optimistic regarding the future of Irish than those attending an 'ordinary' school where Irish was taught to them as a subject only. The impact of the home on language attitudes is also significant in that a strong link was found to exist between strongly positive home attitudes and having attended an all-Irish school. A strong relationship was also found between the intensity of the Irish programme at school and the degree to which the Irish language forms part of respondents' habitual language practices. For example, those who had attended an all-Irish school were more likely to use some Irish than those from mainstream schools where Irish was taught as a subject only. Therefore, there is a *positive evaluative value use* (Smolicz and Secombe 1988) given to Irish where positive attitudes among those who attended a *Gaelscoil* are more likely to be converted into language use, something which is achieved to a much lesser extent among those who had attended a mainstream school. This confirms CILAR's (1975) findings and points to the importance of all-Irish schools in building community use of the language. The report emphasizes that:

Such schools not alone serve as instruments for increasing ability levels, they also serve a social function in providing important foci for the families they serve. (CILAR 1975: 339–40)

Higher levels of reported use among students who had attended an all-Irish school are also likely to be related to their higher levels of spoken ability in the language. Almost two-thirds of respondents who had attended an all-Irish school reported high levels of spoken ability in Irish compared with approximately one-tenth of students who had attended a mainstream school. There is a body of evidence showing that all-Irish primary schools, for instance, have higher levels of achievement in terms of reading and speaking abilities in the language compared with 'ordinary' schools (see Harris 1984; Harris *et al.* 2006) which are as high as similar age-groups in core Irish-speaking Gaeltacht

schools (Harris and Murtagh 1987). Again this trend was already identified in CILAR's (1975) national survey. Kavenagh's (1999) comparison of second-level pupils in all-Irish and mainstream schools also confirms this general pattern. Murtagh (2003: 15) concludes that a combination of high levels of confidence in their ability to speak Irish as well as more positive attitudes towards the language, may be important factors in helping to maintain high levels of motivation in the long term among those exposed to all-Irish schooling.

Irish as a symbol of an authentic individuality

It is perhaps significant, however, that the 'Gaelscoil effect' is cancelled out in the case of the second attitudinal dimension, *Language and Identity* where the ethnocultural value attached to Irish does not differ between students who had attended a *Gaelscoil* and those exposed to Irish as a subject only. Therefore, it does not seem to be language loyalty based on the 'solidarity' value which is necessarily prompting many of these students to use the language. The value of Irish as a national symbol seems to be shared by all students, irrespective of the intensity of the Irish language programme at school. Moreover, the 'solidarity' function of language among Irish students was found to be only weakly related to any level of use of Irish. What emerges from an analysis of some of the discourses produced by a sample of students who had attended an all-Irish school is that a positive disposition towards the minority language which is converted into language use has as much to do with the construction of an individual identity on the part of these students as with a collective Irish ethnic identity as the following excerpts would seem to suggest:

Respondent 4 Déanann sé tú a sheasamh amach do na daoine eile na daoine ón ngnáth...

[It makes you stand out from others...]

Respondent 4 Taispeánann sé go bhfuil tú ag iarraidh í a fhoghlaim duit féin

[It shows that you want to learn it for yourself]

Respondent 1 Breathnaíonn daoine air go bhfuil sé deacair... oh bhí sé sin an deacair so gur

[People see it as something difficult...oh that was difficult and that ...]

Respondent 6...táim an-bhródúil go bhfuilim in ann labhairt as Gaeilge... taitníonn an taobh sin you know like nuair a smaoiníonn

daoine ort ná 'tá Gaeilge aici'...like bhí clann mór agam like colceatharacha agus mar sin de...agus nuair a bhíonn siadsan ag plé orm like ceisteanna faoi leith...so like seasaim amach mar gheall ar an Ghaeilge agus taitníonn sé sin liom...

[... I am very proud that I can speak Irish...I like that side of it you know like when other people think about you or 'she has Irish' ... like I come from a big family and like cousins and things like that...and when they're describing me like questions like that...so like I stand out because of Irish and I like that...(My translation)]

In the Irish context where English has become the language of the majority of the population, the minority language would seem to be used by this subgroup of students to symbolize an authentic individuality, allowing them to 'stand out' and Irish is used as an expression of difference, reflecting a heightened concern about self-realization and identity (O'Rourke 2005). Tovey and Share (2003: 334) see this concern about identity as a trend which is characteristic of late modernity where '... individuals...pursue a 'project of the self' (Giddens 1991) and look for distinctive ways to express and symbolise individuality'. For the majority of students, like for the Irish population more generally, the Irish language functions as what Eastman (1984) terms an 'associated language' in that it is of high symbolic value but rarely if ever used. The subgroup of students who had attended an all-Irish school, however, seem to move beyond the high-ground ideological discourse of Irish as a symbol of national identity and thus beyond the predominantly ritualistic function of the language.

New stigmas linked to speaking Galician

While a heightened sense of ethnic identity among many of the students at the University of Vigo is leading to an increased sense of loyalty to the minority language, which may in turn be converted into actual language use, the link between speaking Galician and a nationalist ideology may also be having negative effects on the minority language. In the data there were examples of where, because of the link between speaking Galician and nationalism, use of the language in certain contexts becomes marked or deviant behaviour. The stereotypical image of second language speakers of Galician or *neofalantes* (new speakers) is one which would seem to be held by the majority of students within the University of Vigo.

Because all young Galicians have been exposed to both Galician and Castilian through Galicia's bilingual educational policies in place since

the 1980s, use of Galician among the younger generation can no longer be associated with an inability to speak Castilian or a lack of education, as had been the case in the past. Many of the older stigmas associated with the language can no longer be used to discriminate against young, well-educated Galicians such as those queried in this study, who are presumed to have equal competence in the two official languages of the Autonomous Community and perhaps even more especially in the dominant language, Castilian. However, new stigmas would seem to have emerged and in certain social contexts for these students, speaking Galician continues to be stigmatized. Use of Galician among younger age groups, in what have up until recently been regarded as Castilian-speaking spaces such as the city or a job interview, for some students continues to constitute marked or deviant behaviour, associated with a political ideology and support for the Galician Nationalist Party (BNG). The following extract from an interview with Eva, one of the students who participated in the study, further highlights this point:

Interviewer: Sí... y ¿en la universidad cuánta gente habla el gallego?

Eva: Más gente... aquí hay más gente bueno aquí hay muchos también ..galeguistas ¿no?

Interviewer: ¿Sí?

Eva: También... un poco nacionalistas quizás

Interviewer: Sí... más gente que habla gallego

Eva: Sí sí

Interviewer: Y los que no son galeguistas... ¿quienes son... sabes quienes son los que hablan gallego?

Eva: ... pues los que van por las asembleas o muchas historias de huelgas... manifestaciones así... y hablan siempre en gallego

Interviewer: Sí

Eva: Y son estos del Partido.. del Bloque del BNG

[**Interviewer:** Yes...and in the university, how many people speak Galician?

Eva: More people... here there are more people well here there are many supporters of Galician nationalism

Interviewer: Is that so?

Eva: Also ... a bit nationalistic perhaps

Interviewer: Yes... more people who speak Galician

Eva: Yes yes

Interviewer: And those who are not Galician nationalists... who are they? ... do you know who speaks Galician?

Eva: ...well those who go to meetings and other things like strikes... protests like that... and they always speak Galician

Interviewer: Yes

Eva: And they are from the Party... from the Bloque from the BNG. (My translation)]

According to Bouzada Fernández (2003: 325), historically, Galicia's disadvantaged socio-political position within Spain (which was described in Chapter 3) meant that the use of Castilian in public spheres in Galicia had become a neutral act and as a consequence a much freer act than speaking Galician. Key factors governing the use or non-use of the minority language are as Dorian (1981) has highlighted in the case of the variety of Scottish Gaelic spoken in East Sunderland, not so much linked to the rewards associated with speaking the dominant language but the 'costs' which are incurred through the use of the minority or subordinate language. Similarly, factors governing the use of Galician among Vigo students were not explicitly linked to the rewards associated with speaking Castilian but to the 'costs' which could result from the use of Galician in certain social contexts. One such context described by a student in this study was that of a job interview. Although Alexandra was brought up speaking Castilian by her Galician-speaking parents, like an increasing number of young Galicians, she had made a conscious decision to switch to Galician during her adolescence. Despite the fact that Galician has now become her habitual language, there continue to be contexts in which on a simple cost/reward calculation, for her, speaking Galician appears to cause more problems than it resolves and thus prompts a conscious decision to shift to Castilian:

Alexandra: ...eu mañá vou a unha entavista de traballo o pensaría moito antes de facer a entavista en galego

Interviewer: Sí... ¿por qué ?

Alexandra: Pero non porque non o podería facer sino porque sei que a actitude a isa persoa co respecto ao galego... para empezar vou estar maracada iso va ser... nacionalista radical, o BNG ou que sexa... xa... non sei como me miraría... o punto número dous é que ese señor igual non lle gusta que fale así eu e se traballa para atención ó público vai dicir non porque non quere que atendas a unha persoa en galego... 'pero cando chegas a miña tenda ou miña... o restaurante ou iso falas en castelán'

[**Alexandra:** ...if I had a job interview tomorrow I would think twice before speaking Galician in the interview

Interviewer: Yes... why?

Alexandra: But not because I wouldn't be able to but because I know that the attitudes of that person towards Galician... to begin with I would be branded that would be... radical nationalist, the BNG or whatever... then... I don't know how they would see me... the second point is that that man might not like me speaking that way and if I have to deal with people he would say no because he wouldn't want me to serve somebody in Galician... 'but when you come to my shop or restaurant or that you speak Castilian'. (My translation)]

The perceived link between speaking Galician and nationalism identified in Alexandra's remarks was confirmed in the questionnaire survey in which almost three-quarters of all respondents associated the use of Galician among young people in an urban context with an explicitly nationalist ideology. Therefore, on the one hand, although a nationalist ideology seems to be leading to increased use of Galician among certain young people brought up in Spanish-speaking homes, on the other hand, it can also be seen as a factor which may be inhibiting the more widespread incorporation of 'new speakers' and may also be deterring less ideologically minded native Galician speakers, *falantes tradicionais* (traditional speakers), from using the language or at least using it in social contexts where Spanish was traditionally the more 'acceptable' language.

The broader political debate

These ambiguous views about Galician reflect the broader political debates surrounding the language and the dichotomy between the linguistic ideologies promoted by official language policy and by Galician nationalists. Up until 2003 at least, the official language policy promoted by the Galician government has tended to support, albeit implicitly, the idea of 'harmonious bilingualism', that is the non-conflictual co-existence of Spanish and Galician within the community (see Regueiro Tenreiro 1999 for a fuller discussion of the concept). In contrast to this official discourse, Galician nationalists have tended to view the language contact situation between Galician and Spanish as conflictual and as one in which Galician speakers still remain in a dominated socio-economic position. Galician nationalists have therefore tended to be highly critical of official language policy which they see to have been largely inadequate in reversing the process of language shift towards Spanish. In reaction to such criticisms, proponents of official language policy in Galicia condemn what they perceive to be a

largely 'radical' approach to resolving the Galician language problem on the part of Galician nationalists. This approach is seen as 'radical' because it supports a reversal to monolingualism in Galician through positive discrimination in favour of the language.

The politicization of the language question in Galicia has potentially positive repercussions for the language in that it stimulates debate alongside other important social issues such as unemployment, poverty, health services, and the like. However, as the findings of the current research illustrate the Autonomous Galician administration and the Galician nationalists' simultaneous undermining of each other's linguistic ideologies in their ultimate pursuit of political power is also having some negative repercussions on the language. The link between speaking Galician and Galician nationalism is one of the outcomes of this political confrontation. Arguably, the promotion of 'harmonious bilingualism' by previous Galician Administrations and their criticism of the 'language conflict' paradigm have made the majority of Galicians less consciously defensive about language issues in Galicia and subsequently more accepting of Spanish as the seemingly value-neutral language. There has however been a move away from the discourse of 'harmonious bilingualism' in more recent years and under the leadership of the new party leader of the Galician branch of Spain's Popular Party, Alberto Núñez Feijóo, references are being made to 'bilingüismo cordial' (cordial bilingualism) or 'bilingüismo amable' (friendly bilingualism). Nevertheless, the underlying discourse would as yet seem to remain unchanged.

'Top-down' linguistic policies and attitudes towards Irish

While the strongly predictive power of ethnicity and political ideology to point in the direction of attitudes being shaped from bottom-up nationalist movements in Galicia, it could be suggested from the findings of this study that attitudes towards Irish are more directly influenced by top-down language policies, specifically language policies in the area of education. Attitudes towards Irish were influenced by examination performance in the language as an academic subject at school. Those reporting highest levels of support for the language were students who had achieved high academic grades in Irish as a school subject.²¹ Although high examination performance does not necessarily lead to increased use of Irish, students who had performed well in the language at school were found to be more likely to include the language as part of their habitual linguistic practices. Therefore, a higher level of confidence in their ability to speak Irish, which is strongly related to their

examination performance, tended to produce more favourable attitudes among these students which in turn prompted some degree of language use, even if this use was only very limited.

High performance in Irish at school was also closely related to the type of studies currently being pursued by students at university level. Students pursuing degrees in the humanities were found to have outperformed those in the three other academic disciplines of technology, business and science. The most striking differences were between students of humanities and students of technology. While almost three-quarters of students of humanities were found to have taken the most academically demanding course in Irish at school, only about one-third in the area of technology had done so. The demographic profile of students of humanities and technology also reflects a gender bias between the two disciplines where the majority of those in the humanities is female compared with technology which is predominantly male. This gender bias (which is common to these academic disciplines quite generally), further explains the concentration of positive attitudes in the humanities student group and less favourable support found among students within the field of technology. Arguably, the more positive attitudes of students of humanities are strongly influenced by the fact that, at school, Irish is taught to the majority of students purely as a language subject and therefore possibly has the connotation of a 'female' subject, associated with language learning in general. Maths, science and technology, have tended to be classified as more 'male' subjects. These connotations might further explain the lower levels of support for the language among students of technology.

Ó Riagáin (1997: 214) points out that, although the overall numbers in the population exposed to the Irish language at school have increased as a result of the expansion in post-primary education since the 1960s in Ireland, such quantitative increases have concealed an ongoing decline in performance in Irish as an examination subject. He also points out that, because the expansion in post-primary education participation has now run its course, the continued reliance on current schooling procedures as a means of generating linguistic competence places Irish in a very vulnerable position. Previous research would seem to indicate (see, for example, Ó Riagáin 1997) that the declining examination performance in Irish is not confined only to academically weaker pupils but also includes high academic achievers, as seems to be confirmed in the current study. This trend highlights a shift in language attitudes among the educated middle class sectors of Irish society, where support and use of the language were found to have been highest. These sectors, as the

present findings confirm, now seem to be adopting a more calculating attitude towards Irish (APC 1988) as a school subject. This calculation seems to enter into play in the differences found between students of humanities and those pursuing degrees in the three other academic disciplines of business, science and technology.

Students of humanities as an academic group displayed most positive attitudes towards Irish, reported highest certification of examination performance in the language and reported highest levels of language use. At the other end of the spectrum were students of technology who showed least positive attitudes, generally lower certification of examination performance in the language and higher incidence of monolingual behaviour with no use of Irish. Students of humanities, among whom potential cultural and teaching professionals of the future are most likely to be found, seem to be the single group which recognizes some potential use for the language for career purposes. Although only less than one-fifth of the student sample perceived Irish as a form of what Bourdieu (1991) terms 'cultural capital' which can be used to access the Irish labour market, half of students taking degrees in the humanities saw some potential in the language in terms of their future career prospects. This compares with about one-tenth of business, science or technology students.

Concluding remarks

The results of this cross-national survey of young people's attitudes towards their respective minority language confirmed general levels of support among the Irish and Galician respondents. The majority expressed high levels of goodwill towards their respective minority languages, supported measures to ensure the continued presence to these languages within each society and favoured their transmission to the next generation. The data suggest that in both the Irish and Galician contexts, their respective indigenous minority languages are valued by groups of younger, educated sectors of both societies. There is also some evidence that these two languages are used to construct a sense of difference and as expressions of identity. Such expressions of support for their respective minority languages and a desire to maintain them reflects a possible outcome of the globalization process, which according to Hall (1992), is one in which there is a strengthening rather than a weakening of a more local identity, reflecting a reinforced resistance to globalization. However, there is also some evidence from the data of conflicting views about the value of the minority language for

the functioning of the modern world. Particularly in the case of Irish students, many expressed negative views about the economic value and viability of the minority language in the modern world. Moreover, the 'indexical link' between the minority language and ethnocultural identity is weak for the majority of Irish and Galician students. For most, the minority language does not seem to express the interests, values and world views of an Irish or Galician culture and does not constitute an essential component in understanding their associated cultures. Therefore, their view may be interpreted as signs of erosion of natural and local identities as a result of cultural homogenization and 'the global post modern' (Hall 1992: 300).

At a more micro-level of analysis the Galician and Irish cases show a number of key differences. In the case of Galician, recruiting new speakers from the younger generation of urban, educated Galicians such as the Vigo students in this study (the majority of whom was brought up in Castilian-speaking homes), poses a serious challenge to language planners and educators in Galicia. Under the largely voluntary conditions mandated by the official bilingualism permitted by the central Spanish government and promoted by the Galician Administration there has been a change in language attitudes, especially among the younger generation, but such attitudes are not being converted into language use. The analysis of the language attitudes of this sample of students at the University of Vigo highlights the positive effect that top-down language policies are having on the language attitudes of young, educated and predominantly urban sectors of Galician society. Over three-quarters of these students support the societal presence of the language and almost 90 per cent value the language as a symbol of ethnic identity. Only a minority expressed an explicit lack of support for the language. Yet the largely favourable dispositions towards the language are not matched by any marked increase in language use among these groups.

Any increases in the use of Galician as a result of more favourable attitudes towards it would seem to be strongly influenced by bottom-up language movements which are tied up with the ideologies of Galician nationalism. The ethnic symbolism of the Galician language, which has emanated from these ideologies, could therefore appear to be assisting in the recruitment of some new Galician speakers among respondents from non-Galician speaking homes. This recruitment seems to be taking place among younger, middle class, educated sectors of Galician society, social groups who, as Woolard (1991: 63) points out, are both socially and psychologically situated to 'make a leap in identification' and in establishing a strong Galician identity through their new language

behaviour. These bottom-up movements, which are bringing about changes in linguistic practices, would seem to be stimulated by dissatisfaction with the top-down attempts of the Galician Administration to increase the societal presence of Galician and to curb the ongoing shift to Castilian. Use of Galician by certain social actors, thus takes the form of what Iglesias and Ramallo (2003), drawing on Castells (1997:8), refer to as *resistance identities*.

Although the expansion in education since the 1960s broadened the class base of Irish speakers, those sectors of the population reporting high levels of ability in Irish are still more likely to be found in the higher social classes than the lower. The university students queried in the current study tended to report higher levels of ability in the language as compared with national figures, higher levels of examination performance in the language at school and higher levels of active use. The continued existence of social polarization in language abilities in Irish can be explained by the fact that the process of social mobility, which since the 1960s has come to be associated with high educational qualifications, continues to be regulated by language policies, namely the continued requirement for all state schools to teach Irish on the curriculum and the requirement for a knowledge of Irish in order to access the National University of Ireland. These are policies which are likely to have influenced the generally higher reported ability in Irish and higher academic performance in the language as a school subject among the university students queried in the current study. However, there are signs that the weakening of language policies in Irish through the removal of the compulsory passing of Irish in state examinations and the broader choice of higher education colleges available to upwardly mobile sectors of the population may be reducing the level of support for the language among certain social groups, notably among technology students. Given the existing negative perceptions about the suitability of the Irish language for the functioning of the modern world within Irish society in general, lower levels of support among the potential technological professionals of the future helps to further maintain such prejudicial beliefs.

However, as Watson and Nic Ghiolla Phádraig (2009: 151–2) suggest there are countervailing forces, as a new linguistic market is being created based on the growth of employment opportunities through the use of Irish, as an integral part of work rather than as a mere entrance requirement. They suggest that while the State is the main driving force behind this, by acceding to demands for language rights by Irish speakers, it has created a different set of labour market dynamics based, for

the first time, on the private sector as well as the public sector. The Irish television channel, TG4, as well as changing the way people now perceive Irish (Moriarty 2009) provides a new source of employment for a new generation of Irish speakers. The 2003 Official Languages Act lays a requirement on public sector bodies to produce Irish language plans (see Walsh and McLeod 2008) and the social status for Irish in the EU since 2007 has already begun to provide new employment opportunities for Irish speakers as translators and interpreters. While it may be as yet too early to see the effects of these forces, such innovations may very well be the beginning of a sea change for the language.

Conclusion

Over the past number of decades, much discussion in sociolinguistics and the sociology of language has centred on concerns over the survival prospects of lesser-used or minority languages (see for example Dorian 1989; Edwards 2010; Fase *et al.* 1992; Fishman 1991; Grenoble and Whaley 1998; Hogan-Brun and Wolff 2003; King *et al.* 2008; Williams 2005). Researchers have been particularly interested in isolating the factors which best determine such survival. However, almost none of the factors cited in connection with language maintenance and shift is on its own a reliable predictor of the outcome of any particular situation of language contact (Romaine 1995). Socio-political changes have knock-on effects on the level of institutional support for a language and the degree to which language policy in favour of the minority language will be put in place. The effect of language policy may in turn be altered by socio-structural and socio-economic changes. Linguistic proximity or distance between the two languages in contact can also affect the degree to which language maintenance or shift will take place.

The title of this book makes reference to ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ minority languages and in different ways, Irish and Galician fit into both these categories. The strength of the Irish case can be associated with the fact that it is the official language of a state under which it has constitutional protection. Galician, although elevated to the status of a national language, has a weaker position within the territorial confines of its Autonomous Community. Conversely, in numerical terms, Irish can be considered weaker than Galician which is still spoken by the majority of people in the community. In each case, however, these apparent strengths, in and of themselves, do not guarantee the future survival of either of these minority languages.

While comparing two distinct cases demonstrates the usefulness of detailed contrastive research, it has also meant that little attention has been given to any systematic study of the Irish and Galician language pair. The lack of Celtic influences in the linguistic features of the Galician language may explain its absence from discussions within the Celtic languages' framework. However, taking a long-term historical perspective, Galician can be seen to have clear parallels with Gaelic, Welsh, Breton, Cornish, Manx, and as the discussion in the book has shown, also with Irish. Its historically peripheral position within Spain in geographical, economic and political terms mirrors the sociolinguistic trajectories of the languages of the Celtic Fringe. In all cases, like Galician, these languages became associated with a rural peasantry, with those wishing to get on in the world shifting to the dominant language.

Within the Iberian languages' continuum, the low-prestige status associated with Galician differs from Catalan, a language which has always maintained the support of the higher social strata of Catalan society. Of Spain's minority languages, Catalan has achieved most in terms of language recovery and in the international literature is frequently cited as a success story in the context of language revitalization more generally. The level of support from the middle and upper ranks of Catalan society in a contemporary context is crucial in evaluating this success.

Similarly, comparisons with one of Spain's other minority language cases, Basque, also proves spurious. In linguistic terms, unlike the closeness of Galician and Catalan to Spanish, Basque is not a Romance or even Indo-European language, thus eliminating the asymmetric bilingualism possible in the Galician and Catalan sociolinguistic situations. Basque, therefore, is similar to the Celtic languages, all of which are linguistically very different from their contact language, English, which is Germanic.

Galicia's geographical isolation, as well as its history of poor economic development made the region unattractive to Spanish-speaking migrants from other parts of Spain, unlike the more prosperous and industrial Catalonia and the Basque Country. Broadly speaking, the sociolinguistic history of Irish follows this pattern. Its Celtic counterpart, Welsh, on the other hand, was historically affected by in-migration of English labour to meet the needs of the iron and steel industry in the area. Like in the case of Basque and Catalan, these trends have played an important role in the process of maintenance and shift in the Welsh context.

In determining the outcome of language contact situations and the survival prospects of minority languages such as Irish and Galician, early studies on language maintenance and shift tended to implicate macro-social events, such as those discussed above, as direct causes of survival or decline. However, later research has highlighted that it is only through an analysis of the interpretative filter of beliefs through an analysis of language attitudes and ideologies that the effects of macro-social factors can be assessed. Although the macro-social factors affecting the two minority language cases explored in this book differ from each other in several ways, Irish and Galician share many commonalities around issues of attitudes and ideologies.

The sociolinguistic histories of Irish and Galician up until the twentieth century mirror those of many of Europe's lesser used languages in their patterns of language shift towards a dominant contact language. The Irish case provides an example of what can perhaps be considered unusually rapid decline, given the very advanced stage which language shift had reached as early as the mid-nineteen hundreds. Galician, in contrast illustrates a case where language shift has been comparably slower, corresponding to the less-advanced rates of linguistic substitution by English among the remaining Gaeltacht areas. While much more historical work would be required to fully understand the complex interplay between factors influencing the varying rates of language shift in the Irish and Galician contexts, such an examination was beyond the scope of the current study. Nevertheless, even a cursory overview of the sociolinguistic histories of these two language cases up until the twentieth century clearly illustrates the very unfavourable views about the utility of each language among their respective populations. Both languages were highly stigmatized and their speakers were subject to severe social and economic penalties. The linguistic ideologies of the dominant political and economic strata of both societies gradually filtered down to the rest of the population. This followed a trend which is not uncommon among minority language groups more generally, who tend to adopt majority attitudes toward themselves, even when such attitudes are hostile.

An examination of the sociolinguistic histories of Irish and Galician thus shows that, notwithstanding their different-sized demographic bases, by the end of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the socio-demographic profiles of their speakers were largely similar. Because the prestige of a language is generally inseparable from the status of its speakers (Dorian 1981), the social meanings which came to be associated with speaking Irish and Galician mirrored those of their speakers and reflected a stigmatized identity from which those who

sought social mobility wished to disassociate themselves. Reversing the low-prestige status linked to the languages and not their demographic bases per se thus constituted the central language planning problem facing policy makers in the twentieth century.

The assumption of much language policy and provision for Irish and Galician, as in the case of other minority language contexts, is that attitudes can and should change. The political changes which took place in Ireland in the 1920s and in the 1980s in Galicia allowed a legal framework to be put in place, through which the status of their respective indigenous languages could be enhanced. Working through political and government agencies, an attempt to change the linguistic culture of the time was managed through explicit policy and planning interventions which had major economic, political and cultural consequences. As such, language policy and planning initiatives formed the basis of and for ideological change.

Although policy approaches in the Irish and Galician contexts over these periods fit into the general typologies proposed in language policy and planning research, the shape that the policies took, and their subsequent impact, point to some significant differences between the two cases. The strongly interventionist approach adopted by the Irish government in the early years of language policy, is, for instance, in sharp contrast with the more lukewarm and low intervention policies which have dominated in the case of Galician. Lorenzo (2008) suggests that the model of language planning adopted for the Galician language was based on a false illusion of its linguistic vitality, leading to a distorted analysis of its demographic and territorial strength. The majority of Galicians speaks Galician. However, this majority consists of an aging, rural-based population and although a minority, the largely urban, younger generation shows a shift to Spanish.

Demographic and territorial divisions in the Galician and Spanish contact situation are very different to the Irish context where Irish speakers came to be a numerical minority, concentrated within the small and geographically scattered Gaeltacht areas. The remainder of the country was by and large English-speaking. Explicit provision was made for these distinctions through a two-pronged approach involving maintenance of Irish-speaking hinterlands and the revitalization of Irish elsewhere. While neither strand of the policy was fully successful, it is true to say that the revitalization effort fared considerably better. This led to an increase in passive knowledge of the language and a situation in which there are now more second language speakers of the language than first language speakers.

In terms of policy provision for Galician, however, no distinctions were made between the region's different sociolinguistic realities, adopting instead a blanket policy for the society as a whole. Such a policy does not seem to have succeeded in reversing the process of language shift to Spanish nor in maintaining the language among a more socially and spatially mobile generation of younger Galician speakers. Education policies are frequently seen as de-galicianizing agents for Galician speakers and are not being successful in changing the linguistic behaviour of Spanish speakers in sufficiently large enough numbers to counteract the process of language shift away from Galician. While so-called native or first language speakers of Galician continue to dominate, among the younger generation a new trend is emerging. In the last thirty years the numbers reporting Spanish as the first language in which they learned to speak increased from 40 to 56 per cent (IGE 2003), leading to a situation in which the majority of the younger generation is now second language speakers of Galician.

While language policy measures for Galician may have been based on an overly optimistic interpretation of the well-being of the language, it is likely, as with all policy, that this interpretation was not an unconscious one. The approach adopted during the early years of language policy reflected an ideological position which sought to maintain the linguistic (and consequently social) status quo, reassuring the dominant Spanish-speaking sectors of the population that their existing positions of power would remain unchanged. The strategy falls far short of any attempts to change the rules of the social mobility process characteristic of the early years of language policy in Ireland (Ó Riagáin 1997). Nevertheless, in an effort to change the status of Irish, strongly interventionist policies were by no means unproblematic. It became clear that while the Irish population supported efforts to maintain its presence in Irish society, as our discussion has shown, there was a clear threshold beyond which many people were not willing to tolerate its presence, particularly when measures were seen to place them at a social disadvantage.

In Galicia, the coming to power of a Socialist government in coalition with the Galician Nationalist Party for one term of office between 2005 and 2009 marked a brief period of political change away from the previous thirteen years of more cautious language policies. Their attempts to more rigorously enforce existing bilingual legislation for Galician did not meet widespread approval and were the subject of bitter attack by a small but vocal sector of the population who perceived such changes as discriminatory to Spanish speakers. The discourse of 'imposition'

is reminiscent of similar movements of discontent which appeared in 1970s Ireland and marked an expression of opposition to compulsory Irish promoted by government authorities at the time.

In both the Irish and Galician cases, such opposition reflects the struggles which emerge when language becomes a form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991) and is seen as a commodity on the linguistic market. Therefore, status planning, put in place with the intention of enhancing the symbolic value of a minority language can sometimes be seen as antagonistic and provoke negative attitudes, particularly if planning measures are seen to raise the status of certain groups within society and not others or if status measures are seen to provide linguistic capital to some but not to others. Thus, tensions such as those identified in the Irish and Galician contexts arising out of language policy changes represent fears among certain sectors of the population about potential shifts in the balance of power which they perceive as less favourable to them.

The ability of language policies and language planning efforts to change language attitudes and practices cannot, therefore, be automatically assumed. Well-intentioned language policy and planning initiatives can lead to antagonism towards the language and cause tensions among the different types of language speakers in a minority language context. These can range from so-called native speakers of the language (understood in the classical sense as those whose proficiency derives from being brought up speaking the language in the home or community) to 'non-native' speakers who acquire the language at school. This continuum also includes a range of variation in speaker types between these two extremes. Rather than forming a united language community, which would give strength to the minority language cause, these different types of speakers, with their varying degrees of proficiency, can often see themselves as being socially and linguistically incompatible. Such internal disputes among speakers of the minority language are of significance and reflect internal power struggles common to the process of linguistic revitalization in minority language communities about language ownership and decisions about who decides what constitutes the new 'legitimate' way of speaking (Bourdieu 1991; Heller 1999). Understanding the attitudes and ideologies of these different types of speakers are also likely to provide valuable insights into the processes of language choice in Irish, Galician and other minority language contexts.

While the survival of minority languages such as Irish and Galician will ultimately depend on the degree to which these languages are used

by the members of their respective communities, important insights can nonetheless be gained from finding out about language attitudes and beliefs. If we take attitudes to be better predictors of future rather than current behaviour, as Baker (1992), Woolard (1989) and others have previously suggested, then the future for Irish and Galician is hopeful. The generally positive dispositions which seem to exist towards these languages can act as moral support for existing speakers and for those wishing to become speakers. The continued presence of such positive attitudes among the population is also necessary to allow Irish and Galician governments to sustain the levels of investment required over long periods of time to maintain and revitalize these languages. While it is indeed unrealistic to think that attitudinal support alone is sufficient to ensure the survival of a minority language, the presence of such support is nonetheless a critical factor in determining the conditions necessary for its continued vitality.

Language attitudes, whether on an individual or community level, are dynamic processes and are constantly changing in response to changes in socio-political and socioeconomic situations in which minority languages find themselves. Knowing about and understanding these attitudes and the factors which are determining them provide important guidelines for language planners, educators and policy makers who are in a position to intervene and stimulate behavioural changes. Enlightened language policies and a generally supportive environment for a minority language have the potential to enhance the chances of language revitalization.

Notes

1. Vicente Risco, 1921. *Irlanda e Galiza*, *Nós*, 8, 18–20, p. 20.
2. This book focuses on Irish in the Republic of Ireland and Galician within the Autonomous Community of Galicia. Irish is spoken in Northern Ireland but the political structures in place and the status of the language differ from that of the Republic. Galician is also spoken outside of the Autonomous Community of Galicia in the areas within the peripheral regions of Asturias and Castile-León and in Extremadura but does not have the status of national language in any of these areas.
3. Cronin (2009: 251) points out, in the context of minority languages, translations should not be an instant threat, but seen as ‘both predator and deliverer, enemy and friend’. Although the act of translating into a majority language has traditionally been regarded as the consolidation of the inferior position of the minority language, it also enables a wider diffusion of the text content, bringing it to a wider audience than would otherwise have been possible. Paradoxically, if the works of Galician is to become more visible on an international scale then translation may be inevitable.
4. In this book the term Castilian is used interchangeably with Spanish.
5. For more detailed discussion of the orthographic debate and issues relating to the standard see for example Alén-Garabato 2000 and Domínguez Seco 2002–2003; Beswick 2007; Henderson 1996; Herrero Valeiro 1993, 2003; Kabatek 2000; Loureiro-Rodríguez 2007; Monteagudo 1993; Regueira 1999.
6. Many of these studies have focused on subsectors within the Irish population. Ó Gliasáin’s (1990) and Ó Riagáin’s (1992) studies, for instance, focused specifically on language shift in Gaeltacht or core Irish-speaking areas. Because of the central focus of language policies and language planning initiatives in the area of education, it is not surprising that a significant amount of research has focused on Irish in the educational domain (see Harris 1984, 1988, 1991; Harris and Murtagh 1988; Hickey 1991). Ó Fathaigh’s (1991) and Harris and Murtagh’s (1999) studies, for instance, have assessed pupils’ motivation to learn Irish at school. Researchers have also been interested in the degree to which school competence is maintained (Murtagh 2003) and how such competence can be transformed into language use once formal schooling in the language is completed (see Ó Laoire 2000). Harris and Murtagh (1999) assessed parents’ attitudes towards Irish as part of an in-depth study of teaching and learning of Irish in primary school classes. Ó Fathaigh (1996) analysed language attitudes, competence and usage among staff at University College Cork. Coady (2001) and Coady and Ó Laoire (2002) have focused more specifically on immersion education or *Gaelscoileanna*. Kavenagh’s (1999) study compared students’ levels of ability in Irish and attitudes towards the language in Irish- and English-medium schools. Working explicitly at a more micro-analytical level, Hickey (1997), for example, has concentrated on the effects of early immersion education among pre-school children. Ó Laoire *et al.* (2000) and Ó Laoire (2005) report on a number of small-scale

- studies which have looked at the effect of formal instruction in Irish on meta-linguistic awareness. The Irish National Teachers' Organization (1985) used survey methods to assess the general level of public support for the inclusion of the language in the school curriculum (see also Ó Riagáin 1986). The Economics and Social Research Unit also carried out a national survey on the Irish language which included questions on language attitudes, competence and usage (see Mac Gréil 1977, 2009; Mac Gréil and Winston 1990).
7. These include Ramallo's (1999) sociolinguistic analysis of public sector employees in Galicia and a detailed analysis of the sociolinguistic situation in the city of Santiago de Compostela (see Ciudadanía-Rede de Aplicacións Sociais 2001).
 8. These included Bouzada Fernández and Lorenzo Suárez's (1997) analysis of Galician in public administration and Ramallo and Rei-Doval's (1996, 1997) study of attitudes towards the use of Galician in advertising. A more recent study carried out by Bouzada Fernández *et al.* (2002) focused on Galician in primary education and assessed the effects of language policy over the previous two decades in Galicia. Sociolinguistic analyses of students and staff at the University of Vigo (Lorenzo Suárez *et al.* 1997) and the University of Santiago de Compostela (Rodríguez Neira 1998) provided data on the support for and use of Galician among Galicia's university populations. More micro-analytical level and qualitative analyses of the Galician sociolinguistic context include the work of Álvarez Cáccamo (1993), Álvarez Cáccamo and Herrero Valeiro (1996), Prego Vázquez (2003), Domínguez Seco (2002–2003), Kabatek (2000; 2003), Iglesias Álvarez (2002) and Iglesias Álvarez and Ramallo (2003). The Galician Seminario de Sociolingüística also conducted a comprehensive piece of qualitative research to complement the quantitative findings reported in the MSG (see González González *et al.* 2003).
 9. To date no large-scale study of measures of actual mastery in Galician exists. However, Bieito Silva Valdivia's forthcoming study may fill this gap.
 10. The sociolinguistic questionnaire used in the study was designed to compare young people's attitudes towards minority languages across two different cultural contexts. One of the key priorities when designing the questionnaire was to develop an instrument which, as well as being sufficiently context-specific to the Irish and Galician sociolinguistic situations, could also be used for comparative work between two minority language cases. Thus, along with the general principles and specific details of survey questionnaire design used in single case studies (see Converse and Presser 1986; Foddy 1993; Dillman 2000) additional steps were also taken to incorporate a cross-cultural (see Harkness *et al.* 2003a) and cross-national design (see Perry and Robertson 2002). As we have seen in Chapter 4, a review of sociolinguistic research specific to the Irish and Galician contexts points to the existence of well-tested questionnaire instruments in each case. Longitudinal replications of CILAR's sociolinguistic questionnaire on language attitudes and use by ITÉ and the North-South survey can be seen to have gained this instrument what Harkness *et al.* (2003b: 24) describe as a 'survey pedigree'. Similarly, the questionnaire used in the MSG survey on language attitudes and use among the Galician population provides a large pool of tested items and questions particular to the Galician sociolinguistic context. The Irish questionnaire was used as a prototype in the design of the

cross-national survey, and while the majority of attitudinal items was based on those used by CILAR and ITÉ, a number of others were taken from the MSG survey. The survey was piloted on a sample of one-hundred Irish and Galician respondents and changes made in the wording and structure of the final questionnaire where required.

11. The linguistic profile of Irish students queried in the current study appears to coincide with that of previous sociolinguistic research. CILAR and ITÉ national surveys on the Irish language have measured ability to speak Irish on a six-point scale ranging from highest levels of competence which they categorize as 'native speaker ability' to 'no Irish'. To facilitate comparisons with the Galician student sample, the current study used a more general four-point scale ranging from 'High Ability' in the language to 'No Ability'. While these differences do not allow for direct comparison with national surveys on the Irish language, some general tendencies were identified the six-point scale used in ITÉ surveys was collapsed into three cut-off points, corresponding to 'high', 'moderate' and 'low' ability. Ó Riagáin (1997: 151) has also used similar cut-off points in certain analyses of language abilities across subsectors of the Irish population. Based on this scale of measurement, students queried in this study report somewhat higher levels of ability than in the 1993 national sample but lower levels of ability than younger national age cohorts (<20-year-olds). The latter may reflect the 'slippage' or the decline in one's ability to speak the language (see APC 1988) which occurs once the support of formal education has been removed, as is the case with these university students.
12. The basic aim of factor analysis is to examine whether, on the basis of people's answers to questions, a smaller number of more general factors or dimensions that underlie answers to individual questions can be identified (De Vaus 1991: 257).
13. In this particular attitudinal item, the 'positive' score collapsed three response types and included support for monolingualism in the minority language, support for a bilingual situation in which the minority language would become the main language of the community and support for a bilingual situation in which the minority language would not be the main language. A 'negative' score represents the complete abandonment of the minority language or those who favour its presence as a cultural artefact only. Only 1% of Irish students opted wished to see the language abandoned altogether and no Galicians expressed this view.
14. This result reflects the belief among these respondents that 'Both English and Irish', 'More Irish than English' or 'All Irish' should be transmitted to children in the home.
15. Almost one-third favour 'More English than Irish' and a sizeable minority of students (16%) opt for monolingualism in English.
16. The effect of different distinguishing background variables such as place of origin, ethnicity, linguistic competence linguistic practices etc. on student attitudes was determined using techniques of analysis of variance (ANOVA). This procedure compares the mean scores of subgroups in a sample in order to determine whether they differ significantly from each other.
17. A three-way ANOVA found all three variables to have significant ($p < .001$) effects on attitudes towards Galician when understood as 'Support for the

Societal Presence of the Language'. These three background variables together account for 40% of the total variance in attitudinal responses among these students. In the case of the 'Language and Identity' dimension, ethnicity and habitual language were found to be the two most predictive variables and together accounted for just under 15 percent of the total variance.

18. A four-way ANOVA found career path, habitual language, parental attitudes to have significant effects ($p < .001$) combined with Academic Performance at School ($p < .05$). Together these variables accounted for almost 32% of the variance in attitudinal responses on this attitudinal dimension. The addition of other variables added nothing further to the percentage of variance which could be explained.
19. Variation according to career path, habitual language and ability to speak Irish constitute the three most salient variables and account for 7% of the total variance in student ratings of this attitudinal dimension.
20. For a more detailed discussion of the politics of language in Northern Ireland see, for example, O'Reilly 1999; Mac Giolla Chríost 2005, Crowley 2007.
21. A majority of post-primary school students in Ireland is required to take two public examinations – the Junior Certificate (formerly the Inter Certificate) and the Leaving Certificate. The first is generally taken midway through post-primary school at the age of fifteen and the second is taken at the end of second-level schooling around the age of seventeen. In the case of the Leaving Certificate, students have the choice of following a 'Higher' level syllabus (which is considered academically more demanding) and a 'Lower' level syllabus. Within the conventions of Irish examinations, only those who sit the 'Higher' level paper and achieve at least a grade C (corresponding to 55%) can be awarded an 'Honours' grade. Survey research in 1983 and 1993 (see Ó Riagáin 1997: 197–8) has previously highlighted the link between ability to speak Irish and examination performance. The findings of the 1993 ITÉ survey found that, of those who stay long enough in the education system to take the Leaving Certificate examination, over half of whom had achieved an 'Honours' grade claimed high levels of speaking ability in Irish (i.e. 'native speaker' or 'most conversations'). Comparatively, only about one-tenth of those who reported a 'Pass' grade in this examination claimed such levels of spoken ability in the language. In the current study, examination performance in Irish was also found to have a significant effect on self-assessed ability in the language with over three-quarters of those who had achieved the higher grade in Irish at school claiming medium to high ability in the language. Comparatively, these levels of ability are reported by only one-third of those who had taken lower-level Irish in their final examination in post-primary school. Again the relationship between examination certification in Irish and self-assessed ability in the language found in this study mirrors national trends (see Ó Riagáin and Ó Ghlisáin 1984, 1994; Ó Riagáin 1997: 195). Almost 40% of students who reported high examination performance in Irish as a school subject claimed some current use of the language, compared with only 14% in the case of those reporting lower examination performance in the subject. As might be expected, those who had taken the higher level course in Irish tended to perceive the language as less difficult than those taking lower level courses

in the language at school. Although under one-third of 'Honours' students perceive Irish as a difficult school subject, this seems to be the case among two-thirds of those who had received lower levels of examination certification in Irish. Additionally, those who perceived the language as difficult at school were also most highly critical of the way in which the language was taught to them at school as well as the type of material that was used. While over half of students who reported an 'Honours' grade in Irish were dissatisfied with the type and way in which the Irish language was taught as a school subject, this proportion increases to 80% in the case of students with a 'Pass' grade in the language. Therefore, more generally negative experience of the language while at school through lower levels of academic achievement in the language, difficulties encountered in learning it and dislike for the teaching methods and material in the language, were associated with lower level of support for the language. Previous research on the Irish language has pointed to the perception of Irish as a difficult school subject (see Hannan *et al.* 1983: 34) and, as a result, Higher level Irish tends to be studied by pupils with high levels of achievement in all subjects, including Irish (APC 1986: 26; Ó Riagáin 1997: 208). Access to higher education in Ireland is very competitive and is attained on the basis of grades awarded in examination results at the end of secondary education. Thus the very fact that respondents queried in this study are in higher education highlights their generally high level of academic ability. However, of these high-achieving students, it is significant that about 40% report lower examination certification in Irish, two-thirds of whom in turn also report low spoken ability in the language. This confirms a trend already identified in the report by the Advisory Planning Committee (1986) which points to a significant proportion of pupils who seem to select lower level courses in Irish but who do in fact have the academic ability to attain a place at university. As the current study has found, lower academic performance in the language at school among these students seems to be having an effect on their level of support for the language, ability and usage. An important feature of examination performance in Irish which has also been identified in previous research, is its close relationship with gender. While almost three-quarters of the female students queried in the current study achieved an 'Honours' grade in Irish, less than half of their male counterparts achieved a similar grade. When assessed in conjunction with national figures, however, the overall examination performance of both male and female students in the current study remains comparatively high. According to the Department of Education Statistical Reports, only one-tenth of boys who took the examination paper in Irish in 1991 achieved an 'Honours' grade while one-fifth of all girls did (see Ó Riagáin 1997: 205). Murtagh (2003) also points to this continued gender imbalance and notes that in 2000, 65% of females had taken the Higher level course in Irish compared with 35% of male pupils. Nevertheless, the differences in examination performance according to gender found in this study would appear to reflect national trends.

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