

To appear in *Strategies for Minority Languages: Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and Scotland*, edited by John M. Kirk and Dónal P. Ó Baoill. Belfast Studies in Language, Culture and Politics 22. Belfast: Cló Ollscoil na Banríona. 2011

Ten Years of Language and Politics: Impact and Whither Now?

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This paper reviews the ten years of Language and Politics symposia on the Gaeltacht and Scotstacht at Queen's University Belfast from 2000–2010. It addresses the impact which the symposia have made and speculates about the future.

Background

The inspiration for the symposia came directly from the *Belfast / Good Friday Agreement* of 1998 which propelled language centre-stage. But they also came about because, following Dónall Ó Baoill's appointment as Professor of Irish at Queen's in July 1998, we were eager to work together and cross the boundaries between our subjects in a genuinely inter-disciplinary way. Without either that ambition or the good rapport which we established, the symposia would not have happened.

The Agreement states:

All participants recognize the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.

Whereas that statement was a dynamic declaration of recognition, it entailed of itself no further action. It was in the next paragraph, with reference to the aspirations of the

*European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*¹ that a commitment to action was stated:

In the context of active consideration currently being given to the UK signing the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the British Government will in particular in relation to the Irish language, where appropriate and where people so desire it:

- take resolute action to promote the language;
- facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life where there is appropriate demand;
- seek to remove, where possible, restrictions which would discourage or work against the maintenance or development of the language;
- make provision for liaising with the Irish language community, representing their views to public authorities and investigating complaints;
- place a statutory duty on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education in line with current provision for integrated education;
- explore urgently with the relevant British authorities, and in cooperation with the Irish broadcasting authorities, the scope for

¹ 'The *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* is a European treaty (CETS 148) adopted in 1992 under the auspices of the Council of Europe to protect and promote historical regional and minority languages in Europe. It only applies to languages traditionally used by the nationals of the State Parties (thus excluding languages used by recent immigrants from other states), which significantly differ from the majority or official language (thus excluding what the state party wishes to consider as mere local dialects of the official or majority language) and that either have a territorial basis (and are therefore traditionally spoken by populations of regions or areas within the State) or are used by linguistic minorities within the State as a whole (thereby including such languages as Yiddish and Romani, which are used over a wide geographic area).' <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/html/148.htm>.

achieving more widespread availability of Teilifís na Gaeilge in Northern Ireland;

- seek more effective ways to encourage and provide financial support for Irish language film and television production in Northern Ireland; and
- encourage the parties to secure agreement that this commitment will be sustained by a new Assembly in a way which takes account of the desires and sensitivities of the community.

Although these wordings are directly taken over from the European Charter, the Charter had not, by 1998, been signed by the UK Government. No doubt under the pressure of the Belfast Agreement, the UK Government finally signed the Charter on 17 March 2000 and ratified it to take effect from 1 July 2001.

Languages that are official within regions or provinces or federal units within a State (for example Catalan in Spain) are not classified as official languages of the State and may therefore benefit from the Charter. On the other hand, the Republic of Ireland has not been able to sign the Charter on behalf of the Irish language (although a minority language). France, although a signatory, has been constitutionally blocked from ratifying the Charter in respect of the languages of France.

The charter provides a large number of different actions state parties can take to protect and promote historical regional and minority languages. There are two levels of protection—all signatories must apply the lower level of protection (as specified in Part II of the Charter) to qualifying languages. Signatories may further declare that a qualifying language or languages will benefit from the higher level of protection (Part III), which lists a range of actions from which states must agree to undertake at least 35.

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Ratification was with regard to Scottish Gaelic and Scots in Scotland, Welsh in Wales, and Irish and, no doubt following the *Belfast Agreement*, what was referred to as ‘Ulster-Scots’ in Northern Ireland, although for us it is a dialect of Scots (cf. Kirk 1998, 2004, 2011).²

The Charter is an international convention and thus has status under international law. By ratifying it to bring it into force, the UK Government and its devolved institutions were committing themselves to courses of action with regard to the languages named, to producing reports on those action every three years, and to receiving feedback on those reports by the Council of Europe’s Committee of Experts.³ These commitments, according to Ó Riagáin (2001), are ‘real and substantive’ and, with regards to Scots as well as Irish, ‘necessitate a dramatic shift in public perception of linguistic diversity in Northern Ireland’.

The first group (known as Part II provisions), are of a general nature and set out the broad areas of principle that underpin the thrust of the Charter. The second group (set out in Part III) are specific and appear under the following headings: education, judicial proceedings, administration, media, culture, economic issues, and trans-frontier links.

Dónall Ó Riagáin, one of the European Charter’s authors, has expressed the view that, for minority languages and the development of a shared society in Northern Ireland, the Charter is ‘a godsend’. ‘It is not a concession to anyone. It is the application of European

² In 2002, Cornish was added for England. In 2003, Manx Gaelic was also added to the UK instrument of ratification.

³ These reports may be found at <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/Commun/ChercheSig.asp?NT=148andCM=1andDF=andCL=ENG>

standards to all – standards of language rights, of human rights [...] an excellent basis for developing language policy.’ (2001: 54)

Although language appeared to be a late inclusion in the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement (see Mac Póilin 2001), the inclusion of the references to Irish and Ulster Scots could not be ignored. Their presence raised several issues, such as the following.

Where Irish was referred to as ‘the Irish language’, there was no such designation around Ulster Scots, so how was its status to be interpreted? Was the ‘language’ designation of Irish to be conferred to Ulster Scots by co-textual association? Or was Ulster Scots a dialect, as linguists and the *Scottish National Dictionary* had been advising? In Statutory Instrument 1999 No. 859, The North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, the status of Ulster Scots is defined as follows; ‘Ullans [i.e. Ulster Scots] is to be understood as the variety of the Scots language traditionally found in parts of Northern Ireland and Donegal.’ If the Scots found in Ulster is a dialect or variety of Scots, why was the label ‘Scots’ not used? The argument quickly grew that activists were seeking to establish Scots in Ulster not so much as part of a dialect-based continuum with Scotland but as an apperceptionally based but officially backed counterbalance to Irish. At the same time, Irish shared a much deeper relationship with Irish in the Republic of Ireland, so that, whereas the Agreement and the Charter ratification were welcome, neither went far enough. And in fact it appears that, because the Charter does not deal with dialects (Article 1), Ulster Scots had to be classified as a language – a political rather than linguistic motivation.⁴ Consequently, with the Charter’s recognition of two ‘minority or regional’ languages in Northern Ireland, there emerged a further voice which cut across the provisions of the Charter and which called for equality between Irish and Ulster Scots in every respect, including funding, seeking to link the fate of each so that neither could benefit without the other.

And so, in the aftermath of the *Belfast / Good Friday Agreement*, it quickly became clear that political and linguistic opinion were not aligned. By 2000, we were struck by the

⁴ Ulster-Scots is included in the list of languages covered by the Charter. See <http://languagecharter.eokik.hu/byLanguage.htm> lists

need for a Forum for debate about both ‘languages’, where all sides and parties, linguists as well as politicians, implementers as well as practitioners, could participate. At the same time, it became clear that it would be pointless to discuss Irish and Ulster Scots in Northern Ireland without discussion of Irish and Ulster Scots in the Republic of Ireland (shared linguistic continua, separate jurisdictions), and Gaelic (separate language) and Scots (shared dialect) in Scotland (shared UK jurisdiction).

First Symposium

With these thoughts in mind, **the first symposium** was organised for 12 August 2000, as a one-day event within *Dialect 2000*, a joint conference of the Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland and Ulster (FRLSU), and the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics (IRAAL). The primary theme for that day was ‘discrimination’, arising from the view that provisions such as those in the European Charter were necessary because there was a feeling that speakers of those languages had been discriminated against. However, we widened the debate to include gays,⁵ speakers of immigrant languages,⁶ and deaf speakers.⁷ The then devolved Minister of Education, Seán Farren, gave an address.⁸ The distinguished BBC NI broadcaster, Noel Thompson, chaired the entire proceedings, which were published in December 2000 as **Kirk and Ó Baoill 2000** (see Appendix 1).

Symposium Series

About that time, the then Arts and Humanities Board initiated a number of research centres, including one for Irish and Scottish Studies at the University of Aberdeen (RCISS), with Queen’s University Belfast and Trinity College Dublin as junior partners. Because of its organisation of *Dialect 2000* with IRAAL, the FRLSU was invited by the centre’s first director, Prof. Tom Devine, to contribute a series of symposia to the centre’s work. The continuation of the languages and politics theme was an obvious choice, so

⁵ Mag Lochlainn 2000

⁶ Foley 2000, Watson 2000

⁷ McCullough 2000

⁸ Farren 2000

that, in turn, on behalf of the FRLSU, we were invited to organise what became the next four symposia in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004. At the same time, for the purpose of wider dissemination, we became obliged to produce from each symposium an edited volume of proceedings (Kirk and Ó Baoill 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and see Appendix 1).

Mindful that it was the European Charter which had inspired the provisions in the Belfast Agreement, we quickly decided that the programme for these seminars should not only deal with what we came to formulate as the Gaeltacht and Scotstacht,⁹ covering Scotland and the Republic of Ireland as well as Northern Ireland, but also deal directly with the Charter's provisions and include as many non-academics and politicians as possible. At the same time, we decided to include presentations about other minority or regional languages particularly in Europe with which Irish and Ulster Scots might be beneficially compared.

The **second symposium**, in August 2001, thus addressed the issue of policy head-on. In addition, there were valuable comparisons with Frisian and with Norway and Switzerland. And papers or addresses were given by two MSPs (Mike Russell, MSP, who at the time was preparing a private member's Bill on Gaelic, and Irene McGugan, MSP, who had become the first chairperson of the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on the Scots Language), and by the Lord Laird of Artigarvan, by then the Chairman of the Board of the Ulster-Scots Agency. These papers are published as **Kirk and Ó Baoill 2001**.

The **third symposium**, in September 2002, tackled the issue of Irish-medium and Gaelic-medium education. The question of Scots and education had a different orientation and was accompanied by a set of valuable papers in issues of standardisation. Wider perspectives, particularly with regard to human rights, were raised in valuable keynote papers by the internationally renowned linguists Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Robert Phillipson. And political papers were given by Irene McGugan, MSP, previously mentioned, the then Minister for Tourism, Culture and Leisure in the Scottish Executive,

⁹ Our earliest use is in Kirk and Ó Baoill 2001: 2.

and the then Minister for Employment and Learning in the Northern Ireland Executive, Carmel Hanna, MLA. These papers are published as **Kirk and Ó Baoill 2002**.

By then, we had covered four areas of the Charter's provision: status, discrimination, rights and education. The **fourth symposium**, in September 2003, tackled other areas of Part III provision: 'the media', 'cultural activities and facilities' and 'economic and social life'. We divided the papers into the following sections: broadcasting, the press, culture in the shape of the performing arts, and the economy. International comparisons were made with Basque and Walloon. Éamon Ó Cuív, TD, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, made an important after-dinner address on the Republic's views towards Irish in the light of the *Official Languages Act 2003*. One of the papers on language and the economy was given jointly by Esmond Birnie, MLA, and Steven King, then an adviser to David Trimble, First Minister.¹⁰ These papers are published as **Kirk and Ó Baoill 2003**.

The **fifth symposium**, in September 2005, concluded the survey of Part II provision by tackling the trans-frontier issue of Irish in the European Union, Irish by then having become an official language in the EU. It also tackled the impending Gaelic Bill in Scotland, the question of literary uses of Irish, Gaelic and Scots, and also the sociolinguistics of each language. Comparisons were also made with Maltese, which had provided the key to the recognition of Irish in the EU, and Kashubian. These papers are published as **Kirk and Ó Baoill 2005**.

During 2005, the AHRC RCISS became funded for a second period of five years from 2006–2010 (Phase II). This time, no doubt in reflection of the success of the first five symposia and accompanying publications, and the association of Belfast with the event, we became invited directly to organise a further five annual symposia and accompanying publications.

¹⁰ Papers on many of the topics of this and the previous two symposia were also presented at a symposium on Language and Law in Northern Ireland at Stormont in February 2003 and published as Ó Riagáin 2003.

At the fourth symposium, in 2004, the session on language and economy proved so stimulating that we became urged to devote an entire symposium to the topic. This was the immediate choice for our theme at **the sixth symposium** in September 2006. We had the good fortune that, for this purpose, François Grin devised a set of four paradigms which could link language with economic development and which each contributor addressed. As a result, we constructed a very coherent set of position papers for Irish, Gaelic and Scots, some looking back to explain the present position, others looking forward to see how the matters could or should be developed. These papers were published as **Kirk and Ó Baoill 2009**.

By this sixth symposium, The *St. Andrew's Agreement* of December 2006 promised to bring forward heads of a Bill for a new Irish language Act. Some Irish activists construed this as meaning that there would be an Irish Language Act. The British Government fulfilled the letter of the agreement by bringing forward heads for a Bill but the whole project was vetoed by the DUP. The Agreement also promised an Ulster-Scots Academy.

The **seventh symposium**, in November 2007, tackled the question of communities in which Irish, Gaelic and Scots were spoken, how they might be sustained, and what policies might need to be implemented to ensure their sustainability. There was a central focus on the adequacy of current arrangements and practices for minority languages in Ireland and Scotland, the importance of infrastructure, environment, society, employment, urban renewal, culture, the role of education, the vibrancy of the languages themselves, and whether minority language sustainability is a matter for a top-down or bottom-up approach. A further group of papers deal with Scots, by applying similar questions, and a final set deals with similar situations facing certain comparable minority languages elsewhere. These papers are published as **Kirk and Ó Baoill 2011a**.

The **tenth symposium**, in September 2010, of which the present volume is the edited proceedings, takes its cue from the publication of the draft *20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language*.¹¹ The symposium sought to consider what it means to be 'bilingual' in Ireland, what the role of policy and education to this end is supposed to be, and what wider

¹¹ <http://www.pobail.ie/ie/AnGhaeilge/>

concepts and experience need to be considered for implementing the 20 Year Strategy. Given the continuum of language but separation of jurisdiction, the symposium also focuses on the implications of the Strategy for Northern Ireland. *A Strategy for Indigenous or Regional Minority Languages* has long been promised by DCAL, but none so far has appeared. Finally, the symposium received a report on the first set of recommendations to the Scottish Government by the Ministerial Advisory Group on Scots. These papers are published as **Kirk and Ó Baoill 2011b**.

From these eight symposia, there have arisen eight core volumes of language and politics papers. Other papers arising from the symposia are Kirk 2000a-b, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2011; and Ó Baoill 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006a-c, 2011a-b.

We should record that the **eighth symposium**, in November 2008, took on a different character and looked to the question of language and politics during the Age of Revolution which culminated in the Act of Union in 1801. Responses to the American Revolution and the French Revolution led to the creation of a huge body of poetry and songs in Irish, Gaelic, Scots, English and even Latin.¹² What emerges is that the responses to these historical events elsewhere in the different languages are varied and show different facets to radicalism in the face of loyalist oppression and backlash – hence the title of *United Islands?* From this symposium, and a sequel which was held in September 2009, two volumes of proceedings have been edited: **Kirk, Noble and Brown forthcoming, Kirk, Brown and Noble forthcoming**.

The **ninth symposium**, in October 2009, formed a thematic strand within the Sixth Irish-Scottish Academic Initiative Conference, entitled *Global Nations? Irish and Scottish Expansion since the 16th Century*, at the University of Aberdeen, where a range of language and politics papers as well as papers on language contact and borders were presented, including Walsh & McLeod 2011.

¹² Of note here is the work of the Scottish radical, Rev. Alexander Geddes.

Concurrent with these symposia during the first decade of the twenty-first century have been a number of key developments, which we now list:

In the Republic of Ireland

For Irish

2002 *Official Languages (Equality) Bill, 2002*

2003 *Official Languages Act 2003 / Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003*¹³

2003 Office of Irish Language Commissioner established.¹⁴ Seán Ó Cuirreáin is appointed as first Commissioner.

2006 Rialtas na hÉireann / Government of Ireland, publication of *Ráiteas i Leith na Gaeilge 2006 / Statement on the Irish Language 2006*.¹⁵

2007, 1 January, Irish becomes an Official Language of the EU

2007 Publication of *Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the Gaeltacht: Principal Findings and Recommendations*.¹⁶

2009 February Publication of *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language*, prepared for the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, by FIONTAR, Dublin City University.¹⁷

2010 Draft *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010–2030 / Straitéis 20 Bliain Don Ghaeilge 2010 – 2030*¹⁸

2010, 21 December, Launch of the (final) *Strategy for the Irish Language 2010–2030 / Straitéis 20 Bliain Don Ghaeilge 2010–2030*¹⁹ (see also Appendix 1)

¹³ The *Official Languages Act 2003 (Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003)* sets out rules regarding use of the Irish language by public bodies, establishes the office of An Coimisinéir Teanga to monitor and enforce compliance by public bodies with the provisions of the *Official Languages Act* and makes provision for the designation of official Irish language versions of place-names and the removal of the official status of English place-names in the Gaeltacht.

¹⁴ See <http://www.coimisineir.ie/>

¹⁵ For text, see <http://www.pobail.ie/en/IrishLanguage/>

¹⁶ A Research Report prepared for the for the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs by Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge / National University of Ireland, Galway by Conchúr Ó Giollagáin and Seosamh Mac Donnacha, Fiona Ní Chualáin, Aoife Ní Shéaghda and Mary O'Brien. For text, see <http://www.pobail.ie/en/IrishLanguage/>

¹⁷ This report was prepared by Peadar Ó Flatharta, Caoilfhionn Níc Pháidín, Colin Williams, Francois Grin, and Joseph Lo Bianco. For text, see <http://www.pobail.ie/en/IrishLanguage/>

¹⁸ www.pobail.ie/en/IrishLanguage/Strategy/Strategy.pdf

In Northern Ireland

For Irish

1998 Belfast / Good Friday Agreement

1999 North/South Language Body

1999 Establishment of Foras na Gaeilge

2001 Ratification of the European Charter

2004 Announcement of Irish Language Broadcast Fund

2008 Inter-departmental Charter Implementation Group

2006 *St. Andrews Agreement* interpreted by the DUP interpret as mandating a non-legislative strategy, and by the Irish-language community as mandating legislation. A Strategy for Indigenous or Regional Minority Languages has long been heralded.

For Ulster Scots

1999 Establishment of the Ulster-Scots Agency / Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch

2001 Ratification of the European Charter

2004 Announcement of Budget for an Ulster-Scots Academy

2005–06 Ulster Scots Academy Implementation Group

2006 Public Consultation on Ulster Scots Academy Implementation Group's proposals for an Ulster-Scots Academy

2006 *St. Andrews Agreement*, which states: 'The Government firmly believes in the need to enhance and develop the Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture and will support the incoming executive in taking this forward.'

2008 Inter-departmental Charter Implementation Group

2009 Deloitte produce a Business Case for an Ulster-Scots Academy

2011, February. Applications sought for Appointment of Chair and Members of Ministerial Advisory Group, Ulster-Scots Academy.

2011, March. Appointment of Chair and Members of Ministerial Advisory Group, Ulster-Scots Academy.

A Strategy for Indigenous or Regional Minority Languages has long been heralded.

¹⁹ <http://www.pobail.ie/en/IrishLanguage/>

In Scotland

For Gaelic²⁰

1997 Publication of *Secure Status for Gaelic (Inbhe Thèarainte dhan Ghàidhlig)* by Comunn na Gàidhlig

1999 Presentation of *Draft Brief for a Gaelic Language Act (Dreach Iùil Airson Achd Gàidhlig)* by Comunn na Gàidhlig

2000 *Publication of Revitalising Gaelic: A National Asset (The MacPherson Report)*²¹ which recommended that a Gaelic Development Agency should, *inter alia*, facilitate the process of achieving secure status for the language.

2002 Publication of *Cothrom Ùr don Ghàidhlig*, the Report by the Ministerial Advisory Group on Gaelic, chaired by Professor Donald Meek ('the Meek Report'), which set out further detail on the role and position of such a Development Agency and called for an Act.

2002 Private member's Bill on Gaelic (Michael Russell). This Bill aimed to require certain public bodies to publish, maintain and implement plans based on the principle that the Gaelic and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality as far as was appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practical.

2003, April, Establishment of Bòrd na Gàidhlig as an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body, which prepared the Gaelic Language Act.

2005 The *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005*. *Inter alia*, the Act established Bòrd na Gàidhlig as a national language planning body, requires the Bòrd to publish a National Gaelic Language Plan every five years and requires certain public authorities to prepare Gaelic Language Plans.²²

2007 Bòrd na Gàidhlig publishes the first National Gaelic Language Plan (2007-12)

2008 Launch of the digital television service BBC ALBA

²⁰ For a Government narrative of these developments, see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts/gaelic/gaelic-english/17910/Gaelic-language-plan>

²¹ For a critical appraisal by Alasdair MacCaluim and Wilson McLeod, see www.arts.ed.ac.uk/celtic/poileasaidh/ipcamacpherson2.pdf

²² For discussion of the Gaelic Plan for Glasgow, see Walsh and McLeod 2011.

For Scots

2000 Scottish Executive *Creating our Future Minding our Past: Scotland's National Cultural Strategy*²³

2004 Committee of Experts, First Monitoring Report on the European Charter.²⁴

2007 Scottish Executive *A Strategy for the Scotland's Languages*. Draft version for consultation. Scottish Executive Education Department, Cultural Policy Division.²⁵

2007 Committee of Experts, Second Monitoring Report on the European Charter.²⁶

2008 Establishment of Scots Language Audit.

2009 February. Conference on the Scots Language, University of Stirling, at which the Audit Report was presented.

2009 Establishment of Ministerial Advisory Group on Scots, under the Chairmanship of J. Derrick McClure.

2010 Committee of Experts, Third Monitoring Report on the European Charter.²⁷

2010. 30 November. Report of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Scots presented to the Scottish Government.²⁸

2011. March. Government Response to MAGOS Report still awaited.

As these time lines indicate, in each of our jurisdictions, it has been a decade of both activism and advocacy as well as productive political and legislative activities with regard to Irish, Gaelic, Scots and 'Ulster-Scots', with differing speeds and emphases. The pace of progress has inevitably been uneven, and the reports by the Committee of Experts show much that is far from perfect, particularly with regard to Scots and 'Ulster-Scots'. Language & Politics was thus a child of its time, arising after the creation of the North/South Language Bodies, and about the same time as Iomairt Cholm Cille, now

²³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/nationalculturalstrategy/docs/cult-00.asp>

²⁴ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/Report/default_en.asp

²⁵ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/01/24130746/0>. See also Scots Language Centre compilation of responses to *A Strategy for the Scotland's Languages*. Draft version. at <http://www.scotslanguage.com/>

²⁶ see footnote 26

²⁷ see footnote 26

²⁸ For text of report, see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/11/25121454/0>; see also Robinson and Eagle, in this volume. For a report on the Group's work, see <http://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/view/2278>

simply known as Colmille,²⁹ and concurrent as often long-awaited milestones were reached. Many of those involved with the advocacy, advising, reporting and implementing have been the very people who have participated in the symposia. A major part of their benefit and impact has not simply been the forum which they provided for critical reflection and appraisal, but that for those involved there grew an inevitable and valuable symbiosis between the discussion in their groups and that at the symposium, each influencing the other in incalculable ways in an unstoppable cycle. The first decade of the new millennium has turned out to be a linguistic journey for some of us, with the proceedings volumes documenting the way.

It has to be noted, however, that although the Scottish Executive/Government, contributes to the funding of Colmille, no funding came directly to the symposia or their publications from any Scottish body, even although a sizeable component of our deliberations and papers was concerned with Scots. Scottish academics and activists alike regularly commented upon the fact that, to discuss the politics of Scots, they had to be invited and paid for an event in Belfast.

Assessment

The success of these symposia was undoubtedly due to a cocktail of several ingredients.

Firstly, within sociolinguistics, although many journals have carried relevant material for some time, such as *The International Journal for the Sociology of Language*, we have certainly helped with the development of a growing area of ‘language and politics’ or ‘language policy’ studies, to which some of the leading core textbooks now devote entire chapters,³⁰ and for which there are specialist textbooks,³¹ and two journals.³² However,

²⁹ According to its website, ‘Colmille is a partnership programme between Foras na Gaeilge and Bòrd na Gàidhlig, promoting the use of Irish Gaelic and Scottish Gaelic in Ireland and Scotland and between the two countries. Colmille aims through its work to foster understanding of the diverse experience and culture of the Irish and Scottish Gaelic communities, and to encourage debate on common concerns in social, cultural and economic issues with a view to building self-confidence within the Gaelic language communities.’ www.colmille.net [accessed 7 April 2011]

³⁰ e.g. Mesthrie et al. 2009; Meyerhoff 2006; Wardhaugh 2009.

³¹ e.g. Kaplan and Baldauf 1997; Ricento 2005; Spolsky 2003, 2009.

our specific focus has been on the continua of the Gaeltacht, from the Butt of Lewis to the ring of Kerry, and what we came to call the Scotstacht, from Unst in Shetland to the Irish border counties (Cavan, Donegal, and Monaghan).³³ Cutting across these continua are the political jurisdictions: the sovereign states of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and, within the latter, there are now devolved Executive/Government in Edinburgh and Belfast. In so doing, our orientation has been East/West as much as North/South, with Northern Ireland occupying a pivotal position between the two, being both British and Irish as well as neither, what Longley (1993: 340) has called a ‘cultural corridor’ or ‘zone where Ireland and Britain permeate one another’, with British and Irish identities open at either end, what FitzDuff (2002) regards as ‘a metaphor for the overlapping of political identities that underpins the Good Friday Agreement’. For in each jurisdiction and within each devolved area, language policy has evolved separately, seemingly without co-ordination. Irish is treated very differently in the North from the South – and, whereas it is the same language, the *Official Languages Act 2003* and the *20 Year Strategy* in the Republic do not apply to Northern Ireland, where an Irish Language Act was rejected by two of the five parties forming the current power-sharing Administration through exercising a veto, despite a majority of consultation responses being in favour on two occasions; and arrangements for Scots in Edinburgh and Belfast have also pursued very different directions, despite the UK Government’s need to report by now three times on the European Charter, leading Kirk (2008) to conclude that the UK does not have a coherent language policy.

We have encouraged presentation in these languages, providing simultaneous translation facilities, quite a new experience for many.³⁴ We have edited and published in those

³² *Journal of Language Policy*, vol. 1-, 2002-, originally edited by Bernard Spolsky, published by Springer Verlag; *European Journal of Language Policy*, vol. 1– 2009–, edited by Michael Kelly, published by Liverpool University Press. In *Language Policy*, of especial interest to the concerns our symposia are Walsh and McLeod 2007, a version of which was presented at the 2007 symposium, and Millar 2006.

³³ Within those continua, we were also interested in the various Travellers languages, particularly Gammon, or Irish Cant, a quite separate phenomenon from Scottish or Scots Cant. From a separate symposium, with supplementation, we edited a volume of papers Kirk and Ó Baoill 2002b.

³⁴ We are grateful to all those who have helped with translation, especially Philip Campbell, Malachy Duffin, and Dónall Mac Giolla Chóill for translations from Irish, Dolina MacLennan and Maolcholaim Scott for translations from Scottish Gaelic, and Máire Uí Bhaoill from French. We are indebted to TOBAR

languages.³⁵ Although our earlier Introductions were intended to summarise all articles and be of especial use for readers without Irish or Gaelic, we have provided full translations in later volumes.

The content of our symposia focussed centrally on language policy for the minority/regional languages in the three jurisdictions in question, taking our cue from *the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. Through the symposia and their publications, we created a set of critical position papers on the Charter's domains for language use: education, law, administration and public authorities, the media, etc., as well as other areas. We identified connections and disconnections between languages, speakers, policies, and practices.³⁶ We incorporated an international dimension which enabled valuable contextualisation and provided useful clarification and insights. We achieved a great mix of participation (see below). Through the exchange of academic insight and applied or vocational experience, we raised awareness of all aspects of the equation: especially declining linguistic diversity, the need and means for reversing such declines, the sustainability, including economic sustainability, of languages and communities. There was a recurrent emphasis on education. For everyone who participated, we deepened the quality of discussion.

We were at all times conscious that parallel developments, some of them of an exciting and relevant nature, were happening in other European countries. We felt that we should try to learn from them and share our experiences and theories with our counterparts in these countries. Although the situation of Scots had already been compared with that of German-speaking Switzerland (Meier 1977) and Norway (e.g. McClure 1988, 1995, 1997, 2009; also Vikør 1993, 2001; Millar 2009) and of Frisian (Meier 1997 and Görlach 1985), for each we invited fresh reviews (Fischer, 2001, McCafferty 2001, Görlach 2001). Likewise, Celtic connections have long been made with Basque, Galician and Asturias (Celtiberans and the seven the Celtic nation) so that we invited new reviews

Productions, Tandragee, An Chultúrlann, POBAL and others, and Donegal County Council for the supply and use of translation equipment.

³⁵ Kirk and Ó Baoill 2002, for instance, has papers in Irish (Muller), Gaelic (Mac Ille Chiar), Scots (Macafee) and Ulster Scots (Parsley) as well as English.

³⁶ note here on Spolsky?

(Ruiz Vieyetz, 2003, on the similarities and differences between Irish and Basque, and O'Rourke 2011 and the similarities and differences between Irish and Galician). All the same, we were minded that both Scots and Irish were up against a 'large' language and were eager to draw comparisons with other languages 'eclipsed' (as D. Ó Riagáin 2003 puts it) by larger languages. Accordingly, we invited presentations about Estonia (Tender 2011), Tatarstan (Solnishkina 2011) and Ukraine (Pavlenko 2005, 2011), where the local languages were being eclipsed by Russian, Poland where Kashubian was being eclipsed by Polish (Wicherkiewicz 2005), and Belgium, where Walloon was being eclipsed by French (Fauconnier 2003; also Carruthers 2003). Finally, we were eager to hear about countries where multilingualism is the norm: Slovenia (Novak-Lukanovic 2009) and Hungary (Solymosi 2011). In a Preface to the first volume, Cormack (2000) briefly discusses languages in Kosovo. Finally, the acceptance of Irish as an official language of the EU was greatly advantaged by the recognition of Maltese, the subject of another paper (Zammit-Ciantar 2005).

To the symposia also came scholars who had researched the linguistic situation here. Cordula Bilger presented a PhD thesis on 'the language of the Troubles' to the University of Zürich (Bilger 2007), part of which was presented in 2002. Göran Wolf (Technische Universität Dresden), whose paper on Northern Ireland sociolinguistics was presented at the 2007 symposium (Wolf 2011), ran a Hauptseminar in 2008–09 on Northern Ireland Language and Politics, which he will run again in 2011.

To make contributions to the symposia came above all scholars of world-class standing: John Edwards (Francis Xavier, NS), Jean-Luc Fauconnier (Brussels), Markku Filppula (Joensuu), Andreas Fischer (Zürich), Manfred Görlach (Köln, twice), François Grin (Geneva, twice), Stephen May (Waikato), Kevin McCafferty (Bergen), Dónall Ó Riagáin (formerly of EBLUL), Robert Phillipson (Copenhagen Business School), Eduardo Ruiz-Vieyetz (Bilbao), Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (numerous affiliations), Nancy Stenson (Minnesota), Colin Williams (Cardiff), and Joe Zammit Ciantar (Valetta and Naples).³⁷

³⁷ We also thank Jo Lo Bianco Melbourne for his effort in trying to contribute by video link from Chile in September 2010.

In addition, we welcomed the following minority language experts: Tomasz Wicherkiewicz (Gdansk), Alexander Pavlenko (Taganrog, Russia, twice), Sonja Novak-Lukanovic (Ljubljana, Slovenia), Bernadette O'Rourke (Galician), Judit Solymosi (Budapest), Tõnu Tender (Turku, Estonia), and Marina Solnishkina (Kazan, Tatarstan).

To the rather different eighth symposium in 2008 we welcomed, in addition to numerous world-class UK and Ireland academics, Leith Davis (Simon Fraser, Vancouver), Iain McCalman (Sydney), Katie Trumpener (Yale), and Julia Wright (Dalhousie, Halifax).

As well as the world coming to the symposia, we have been summoned by the world. During the ten years of the symposia, John Kirk gave invited talks in Bonn, Chisinau, Dresden, Freiburg, Potsdam and Tallinn; Dónall Ó Baoill gave invited talks in Halifax, NS and Vancouver. A related volume of papers arising from a conference on minority languages in Europe held in Dublin, *Voces Diversae* (Ó Riagain 2006), was launched at the Irish Embassy to the EU in Brussels, at which John Kirk spoke.

We have also been aware that policy issues were not topics to be left to academic researchers alone, no matter how world-class, but needed input from all sides: government ministers,³⁸ politicians,³⁹ civil servants⁴⁰ and all their advisers,⁴¹ statutory and institutional practitioners,⁴² linguists,⁴³ language consultants,⁴⁴ language historians,⁴⁵

³⁸ Government Ministers: Seán Farren, MLA 2000, Carmel Hanna, MLA 2002, Éamon Ó Cuív, TD, Mike Russell, MSP 2001 and Mike Watson, MSP 2002. Over the years, many who had been invited were not able to accept; for instance, to the 2010 symposium were invited Nelson McCausland, MLA, Pat Carey, TD, and again Michael Russell, MSP.

³⁹ Politicians: Ian Adamson, MLA 2005, Alasdair Allan, MSP 2000, Esmond Birnie, MLA 2003, Irene McGugan, MSP 2001, 2002, as a stalwart before election, Ian James Parsley 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2005, and the Lord Laird of Artigarvan 2001.

⁴⁰ Civil servants: Patricia McAlister 2003, Stephen Peover 2002 and Edward Rooney 2001 from Northern Ireland; Brendan Mac Cormaic 2001, Seán Ó Cofaigh 2001, Bertie Ó hAinmhire 2001, and from the Republic of Ireland; various officials from DCAL and from the Scottish Executive have also attended.

⁴¹ Edmund 2002

⁴² E.g. from Northern Ireland: Mark Adair 2000 and Mari FitzDuff 2000 from the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, McCoy 2001, 2003, 2011 and Mac Póilin 2011 from ULTACH Trust, Muller 2002, 2011 from POBAL; from the Republic of Ireland: Ó?? Coisdealbha 2011 from the Irish Language Commissioner's Office, Ó hAoláin 2009, 20011a, 20011b from Údarás na Gaeltachta, Ó Murchú 2000, 2002, 2011 from Comhar ma Múinteoirí Gaeilge; and from Scotland: Campbell 2009 and MacIver

lawyers,⁴⁶ educationalists,⁴⁷ broadcasters,⁴⁸ ,journalists,⁴⁹ media consumers,⁵⁰ economists,⁵¹ writers of all kinds,⁵² actors, producers,⁵³ film-makers,⁵⁴ librarians,⁵⁵ activists,⁵⁶ as well as interested and informed individuals.

To the symposia also came broadcasters and media people eager for content and coverage. There was regular annual coverage on BBC Northern Ireland's Irish Language Service and on its Ulster-Scots magazine programme *Kist o' Wurds*. In the Republic of Ireland, the symposia have featured on TG4 and Raidió na Gaeltachta. In Scotland, there was coverage at times on the BBC's Gaelic Service, *Craoladh nan Gàidheal*, *Radio nan Gàidheal* and BBC Alba in Scotland.

A further strength of the symposia grew out of the regular involvement or participation of a core group of individuals, who willingly provided encouragement and

2011 from *Bòrd na Gàidhlig*, Mackay, R. 2011 from the University of the Highlands and Islands, West & MacLeod 2009 from Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

⁴³ Armstrong 2011, Bilger 2002, Corbett 2002, Corbett & Anderson 2011, Corbett & Douglas 2003, Dolan 2002, Dunbar 2001, 2003, 2011, Eagle 2001, 2011a, 2011b, Falconer 2001, 2005, 2011, Gupta 2002, Kirk, 2000, 2011; Lamb 2005, Macafee 2001, 2002, MacCaluim 2011, McClure 2002, Mac Ionnrachtaigh 2011, MacKinnon 2001, 2003, 2009, 2011, MacLeod, M. 2011, McLeod 2002, 2005, Millar 2009. 2011, Ní Dhúda 2011, Ó Duibhín 2003, Ó Giollagáin 2005, Ó Laighin 2005, Ó Riagáin, P. 2009, Phillipson 2002, Robinson 2011a, 2011b, Skutnabb-Kangas 2002, Smith 2005, Unger 2009, Walsh 2002, 2011, Walsh & McLeod 2011, Wolf 2009;

⁴⁴ Ó Riagáin, D. 2000, 2001, 2009, 2011a, 2011b

⁴⁵ Andrews 2000.

⁴⁶ Hadden 2000.

⁴⁷ de Bhál 2002, Douglas 2002, Galloway 2011, Harris 2002, 2011, Mac Ille Chiar 2002, MacDonnacha 2011, MacIver, M. 2002, McKendry 2002, Mac Nia 2002, MacNeil 2011, Malcolm 2011, Ní Fheargusa 2002, Nig Uidhir 2002, Niven 2002, Ó Baoill 2011, Ó Coinn 2002, Robertson 2002, Rohmer 2002.

⁴⁸ Caimbeul 2011, Cormack 2003. Cunningham 2003, Eirug 2003, Hegarty 2003, Kay 2011, McHardy 2003, Mac An Iomaire 2003, MacKay 2009, MacLennan 2003, MacNeill 2003, Ní Nuadhain 2003, Ó Ciardha 2003, Ó Cuaig 2003, Spurr 2003.

⁴⁹ Blain and Gifford 2003, Cormack 2003, Law, A. 2003, Mac Donald 2003, Ó Pronntaigh 2003,

⁵⁰ Ó Clochartaigh 2003, Ó hEadhra 2011, Robinson 2003, Titley 2003,

⁵¹ Bradley 2009, Birnie and King 2003, Chalmers 2003, 2009, Chalmers & Danson 2011, Grin 2003, 2009, Walsh 2003, 2009, Mac Donnacha 2003, MacLeod 2009, McLeod 2003, 2009, Ó Cearnaigh 2009, Williams 2009,

⁵² Brown 2009, 2011, Findlay 2003, Herbison 2005, Paisley 2003, Purves 2003, Titley 2005, Whyte 2005,

⁵³ Grant 2003

⁵⁴ O'Rawe 2003

⁵⁵ Delargy 2001, 2011

⁵⁶ Hance 2005, 2009 and Horsbroch 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2002 from the Scots Language Centre, Law, J. 2003, 2011 from the Scots Language Society, Smith & Montgomery 2005 from the Ulster-Scots Language Society.

advice as the series developed: John Corbett, Andy Eagle, Gavin Falconer, Francois Grin, Michael Hance, Dauvit Horsbroch, Derrick McClure, MBE, Gordon McCoy, Seosamh Mac Donnacha, Aodán Mac Póilin, Janet Muller, Róise Ní Bhaoill, Pádraig Ó hAoláin, Chris Spurr, Ian James Parsley, and especially to Kenneth MacKinnon, Wilson McLeod, Dónall Ó Riagáin, and John Walsh. We are hugely indebted to those individuals for their unstinting support over the years, and for all their help in making suggestions and guiding us in the right direction. We owe a very considerable amount to Dónall Ó Riagáin for generously making available his considerable expertise in language policy formulation and for introducing us to the many European minority language experts whom we came to invite. And much less would have been achieved without the support of our core funders, the AHRC RCISS, for which we are indebted to Tom Devine and Cairns Craig, and also to Jon Cameron, and also to our external funders, especially Foras na Gaeilge, Colmcille, and the Ulster-Scots Agency, and we are especially grateful to Deirdre Davitt and Maolcholaim Scott for their personal commitment to our work.

Whereas for the AHRC RCISS we became obliged to produce an annual volume, there was also a willingness to subvent these publications. Each volume produced by Cló Ollscoil na Banríona has been funded by Foras na Gaeilge. The Ulster-Scots Agency supported Kirk and Ó Baoill (2000, 2003, 2005). The Northern Ireland Community Relations Council supported Kirk and Ó Baoill (2000, 2001, 2002 and 2005). Colmcille supported Kirk and Ó Baoill (2009, 2011a, and 2011b). To each of these funders we are extremely grateful. We have always been delighted to acknowledge that the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council ‘aims to promote a pluralist society characterised by equity, respect for diversity and interdependence.’ We also wish to recognise that those funders were willing to support the publication of Irish, Gaelic, and different varieties of Scots in the same volume.

And so evolved the formula for these symposia to provide and provoke critical reflection and discussion in language policy pertaining to the Gaeltacht and Scotstacht.

Outputs

As desired by the AHRC RCISS, we have produced an annual publication, thereby ensuring an after-life for the symposia and a more permanent contribution concerning language policy in the three jurisdictions. As already mentioned, we produced multi-lingual volumes, which, despite general support for linguistic diversity, were quite a rarity.

We were able to use the volumes in our teaching. John Kirk uses them on his 'Language, Culture and Politics' undergraduate module, in which the BSLCP volumes formed the basis for many final assignments, including some on languages other than English. Dónall Ó Baoill uses the texts on his MA course on the Sociolinguistics of Irish. We know that the books are set texts at the University of Aberdeen and the National University of Ireland, Galway, and no doubt elsewhere, too.

John Edwards (2006) concludes his review of vols. 1-12 of our Belfast Studies in Language, Culture and Politics series, as follows:

The books reviewed here present a large number of valuable perspectives on current linguistic conditions in the British Isles. Of special significance is the central focus on Northern Ireland, since material dealing with (southern) Irish language, culture, and politics has typically been more available; this focus is a reflection of contemporary trends within Britain, and, in a larger context, within the European Union. Overall, it is hard to think of a more immediate and up-to-date introduction to Scottish and Irish sociolinguistics and the sociology of language than that provided by this fine and expanding set of volumes. And, as with all significant discussions of particular contexts, the coverage here also offers insights whose value extends in much more general directions. On both counts, the series editors, John Kirk and Dónall Ó Baoill, deserve our thanks.

The BSLCP series has attracted other publications, each of which is germane to our concerns, especially Ó Riagáin (2003, 2005). There have been two monographs on Gaelic (Lamb 2008, which, in an appendix, includes an excellent grammar of contemporary Gaelic, and MacCaluim 2008); a monograph on Irish (Mac Corraidh 2007), a selection of essays in Irish (Dillon and Ní Fhríghil 2008), and a thesis about attitudes to all aspects of language across the Northern Ireland border (Zwickl 2002). Finally, Irish-Scottish studies more broadly feature in four volumes of research papers (Kirk and Ó Baoill 2001, Longley et al 2003, Alexander et al. 2004, McClure 2004, and Alcobia-Murphy et al. 2005).

Outcomes

As the list above shows, we attracted to the symposia a very broad range of participants. For those engaged in the promotion of minority languages, we provided a suitable forum for cross-fertilisation. We encouraged communities to consider and reflect on their heritage in new and refreshed ways. We injected into the debate new information, models, insights, case-studies. We believe we also helped non-academics to learn and adapt new skills. We encouraged and accommodated the use of the minority languages. What we provided and achieved could not have been done by Google or on the Internet. Because of the dual-strand approach of symposia and publications, we believe that we have achieved the following outcomes: that we raised awareness of rich linguistic culture and heritage of Ireland and Scotland; that we have fostered an enhanced understanding of our diverse language heritage; that we have examined the role of Government policies and legislation; that we have provided academic leadership through bringing together and bridging the sectors; that we have generated critical syntheses and made recommendations; and that we have cast some reciprocal illumination on comparable linguistic situations in Europe.

With regard to participation, we were successful for both Ministers and civil servants from the Governments or Executives of each jurisdiction took part and presented papers or gave addresses, most of which were published (see above).

We believe we have had political outcomes and policy outcomes. We injected scientific right-mindedness and rigour into the debates both on Irish and Scots and gave support and confidence to many out there willing to respect the views of academic research and science. We impacted on civil servants, officials, advisers and opinion-formers through our publications that Scots in Northern Ireland is not a language separate from Scots in Scotland. To what Scots in Scotland is we've offered numerous categorisations and alternatives, including some treatment of Scotland and NI as Scots-speaking communities (Kirk 2011). We know that debates on an Irish Language Act for Northern Ireland have been influenced by our publications, and that we have influenced public policy, especially on linguistic diversity and multiculturalism in Northern Ireland more generally.

One of our clearest achievements has been the creation of a volume of studies about Irish, Gaelic and Scots in the light of Grin's four paradigms for economic development through language: the firm, market and management paradigm, the development paradigm, the language sector and multiplier paradigm, and the welfare paradigm.

A further achievement has been the creation of a specialist network comprising language practitioners, policy-makers, educationalists, and many others, with academics and researchers. Within the network, we've created consultative relationships as well as a sustainable and mutually beneficial set of multi-participative partnerships.⁵⁷ Because we've deliberately targeted both the Gaeltacht and the Scotstacht as well as the pairs of languages within each jurisdiction, we've provided that 'cultural corridor' which has proven necessary for the debate in Northern Ireland between Irish and Ulster Scots (the deeply mistaken debate about equality and the need for Part III recognition for Ulster Scots). In so doing, we have strengthened language policy sectors within UK and the ROI. It was a need that we identified and have filled. At the 2010 symposium, several board members of Bòrd na Gàidhlig were present. During his tenure as CEO of Foras na Gaeilge, Seosamh Mac Donnacha attended every symposium.

⁵⁷ A case in point was John Kirk's ability in 2007 to assemble in a very short space of time a bid for the Audit of Scots, which the Scottish Government put out to tender. About half its members were language experts who practise outside academia.

We have also benefited the general public through the media attention we've attracted and through our support for policies which promote respect for language and its use. At its most general, following Grin (2009) our support for minority languages entails enhancement to the quality of life for everyone.

In so doing, we have enhanced the reputation of Queen's University Belfast by acting as a catalyst for debate on language policy.⁵⁸

Thus, we contend, as a package of symposia and publications, which created a symbiotic relationship to debate and discussion, Language and Politics has made impact. We have made contributions to knowledge, understanding, analysis, policy, planning, skills, and, ultimately, as suggested, to an enhancement in quality of life. Furthermore, the content of the symposia and the volumes suggests to us the verdict that we have made a hugely significant and original contribution to the Irish-Scottish relationship. We set the bar high at the outset, and we believe we have lived up to these expectations.

Language and Politics has also been financially successful, attracting external investment of up to 2-3 times the initial AHRC RCISS investment, and similar amounts again for publications. In a nutshell, ten years of Language and Politics generated £250,000. We also believe that the chemistry and synergy between ourselves, linked to our imagination and desire to create something new, our hands-on-ness, and also our entrepreneurship, have all valuably contributed to its success. For the symposia and publications, we acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude once again the financial assistance which we have received.

At an individual level, Dónall Ó Baoill has been a member of POBAL's research group which in 2009 delivered to the Department of Education a 2-year research publication on 'The specialist educational needs of bilingual (Irish/English) children attending All-Irish

⁵⁸ At the AILA Conference in Essen in August 2008, there was a proposal of Queen's University Belfast as a possible venue for Inaugural Conference of the International Society for Language Policy and Language Planning Advisers, intended to be a society of professional accreditation.

Schools in Northern Ireland'. Its recommendations will now become part of the DE's future planning initiatives. The research was funded by DE.

in November 2000, Ó Baoill was appointed by the Minister for Education in Northern Ireland as one of six trustees of 'Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta' which co-ordinates the work of the All-Irish Education Trust and provides support for Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (Council for All-Irish Medium Education. The function of the Trustee Board has been mainly of a financial nature, with a budget of £2.5 million pounds for the first three years. In 2005, he was appointed for a second five-year term.

Since 2001, Ó Baoill has also acted as an adviser to DCAL's Language Diversity Section on matters relating to Irish Translation and Standardisation problems in Irish.

In 2008, John Kirk led consortium of academics and language advisers which bid and was short-listed for the Scottish Government's Scots Language Audit. Since 2000, Kirk has been a member of the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on the Scots Language. Kirk was a founder member of the Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland and Ulster and has been its Treasurer since 2004.

Whither Now?

After ten symposia and ten volumes of proceedings, we feel that on Language and Politics we have well and truly delivered. We could retire gracefully, with some satisfaction about our service.

However, the business of language policy development is ongoing, and there is still work to be done. There comes to mind immediately several pieces of unfinished business: the Language Strategy in the Republic, the desire for an Irish Language Act and an Ulster-Scots Academy in the North, the need for Gaelic Plans on the part of public authorities in Scotland, and the report of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Scots – all material enough

for another symposium or several more. There will almost certainly be more initiatives in the coming years. We have created a network of about a hundred or so individuals active in the field who could readily be called upon to participate and, in the example of the Scots Audit bid, to co-operate.

If our desire that the network should continue is shared and that further symposia should be held, we can think of several possible ways forward.

A strength of our success, we must record, has been the availability and generosity of funding. Our role within the AHRC RCISS always ensured our core funding, which we were then able to offer as our contribution for external or matching funding. Without initial, guaranteed funding, external funding might well have proven more difficult. We are enormously indebted to our external funders (especially Foras na Gaeilge, but also Colmcille and the Ulster-Scots Agency) for the commitment, encouragement and generosity which they have given to us over the years, and without which the project would not have happened on the same scale.⁵⁹

However, it may be possible to turn the funding arrangement inside out. As our funders – especially Foras na Gaeilge and Colmcille – have backed us solidly, there might be a case for those organisations to mount a series of symposia themselves, carrying all the administrative and financial arrangements, but subcontracting the programming and editing of proceedings either to ourselves or to anyone else who might be appointed to do so. That way, financial management would rest with the funders. As Foras na Gaeilge has undertaken a number of projects jointly with the Ulster-Scots Agency, perhaps the Agency could be involved too.

During the past ten years, there have two other exciting developments at university level: the expansion of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and the creation of Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge within the National University of Ireland, Galway, which would appear to have

⁵⁹ We also acknowledge funding from the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council for funding towards the publication of the symposia proceedings.

very similar functions and objectives. The Mission Statement of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig reads:

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is committed to being a centre of excellence for the development and enhancement of the Gaelic language, culture and heritage, by providing quality educational, training and research opportunities through the medium of Scottish Gaelic; and by interacting innovatively with individuals, communities and businesses, to contribute to social, cultural and economic development.

The Mission Statement of Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge reads:

The mission of an tAcadamh is to promote and exhibit innovation among the Irish language community, within the Gaeltacht areas and outside those areas. This innovation will enhance the social, cultural, economic and language development of those communities and of people of Ireland in general. To bring this mission to fruition, the objective of an tAcadamh is to promote the sustainable development of university courses, research, services and university activities through the medium of Irish and their delivery and administration.

Both colleges offer a range of graduate and postgraduate degree programmes through the medium of Gaelic and Irish respectively. In so doing, they are promoting the use of Gaelic and Irish both among the college communities as well in their catchment areas. Each college's activities are greatly enhanced by co-operative links within the wider Gaelic and Irish communities. An tAcadamh offers courses in Business Administration, Communications – Radio and Television Broadcasting, Translation Studies, Interpreting, Language Planning, Education, the Arts and Information Technology.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig also plays a leading role in the promotion of the Gaelic arts and culture and hosts a programme of residencies for artists in music, literature and the visual arts. Each college provides opportunities and high-quality facilities for in-depth research in these areas, too. An tAcadamh's academic co-ordinator, Seosamh Mac Donnacha, a regular contributor to our symposia (cf. Mac Donnacha 2011a, 2011b) has a particular interest in pursuing research into organisational and strategic aspects of language planning. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is home to a number of major creative and cultural research projects such as Tobar an Dualchais, Faclair na Gàidhlig and the multimedia and design company Cànan, and a new £5.29 million partnership project called Soillse⁶⁰ ('Enlightenment') has been set up to support the Gaelic language and culture.

In his inaugural lecture, 'Theory, Research and Other Dirty Words in Language Policy and Planning', in December 2010, Soillse's Senior Research Professor, Rob Dunbar, argued that theory and research can aid Gaelic revitalisation and explored ways in which the work of specialists can be useful to Gaelic language campaigners.

In a press release at the time of his lecture, Dunbar comments, as follows: "A common feature of minority language maintenance and revitalisation movements is the

⁶⁰ Soillse is headed by the University of the Highlands and Islands, especially its partner colleges Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on Skye and Lews Castle College on Lewis, and the universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow.⁶⁰ The four institutions are working with key agencies, including the national development agency Bòrd na Gàidhlig, to boost national and local efforts to reverse the decline of the Gaelic language, and to encourage the use of Gaelic in areas where it has not traditionally been spoken.

fundamental role that passionate activists have in them. Frequently, though, they have only a limited background in language planning theory or practice, and a lack of information to inform and to guide their development initiatives. Although specialists can provide insights and knowledge to these movements, the relationship between specialists and activists can at times be difficult, due to a variety of factors which could be summed up by the phrase ‘culture clash’. In my lecture, the theoretical tools relevant to language policy and planning for minority languages such as Gaelic, the experience on which such tools are based, and the research needs and priorities which such tools help us to define, will be considered. Can theory and research inform and support policy-making and practice in ways that allow us to avoid the ‘culture clash’?”

One of our aims and, we believe, successes of our Language and Politics symposia was the bridging of that relationship between specialists, activists and practitioners.

It strikes us that Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig form a natural partnership for the purpose of continuing the appraisal of language policy development in these islands. Queen’s University Belfast would make an obvious third partner. Whether such a Phase II of Language and Politics concerned itself solely with the Irish-Gaelic continuum or whether the Scots continuum should continue in parallel has still to be worked out.⁶¹

Within the UK, of course, further partnerships could be added – notably with Welsh and Cornish, and yet remain within the UK’s responsibilities under the European Charter. Now that it’s recognised by the European Charter, Manx, too, might be considered.

Any such tie-ups need not exclude the exploration of European partnerships. Our symposia (as well as others such as *Voces Diversae*) have shown the value of such comparisons, and various European models have been applicable to the local situations – e.g. Strubell’s Supply and Demand Catherine-Wheel Model for Language Planning or Grin’s four Language and Economic Development paradigms. The EU Commission for

⁶¹ The *Tobar an Dualchais* project at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig had a Scots title too, *The Kist o Riches*, in view of its large Scots component. See <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk>

Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth has many funds.⁶² Currently, the Union has 23 official languages and over 60 indigenous regional and minority languages – some of which have local official status, such as Sami, Sorbian, Sardinian and Basque.

The website on ‘EU Languages and Language Policy’ states that ‘EU language policies aim to protect linguistic diversity and promote knowledge of languages – for reasons of cultural identity and social integration, but also because multilingual citizens are better placed to take advantage of the educational, professional and economic opportunities created by an integrated Europe. The goal is a Europe where everyone can speak at least two other languages in addition to their own mother tongue.’

Within its programme on Multilingualism, the Commission has issued a number of key policy documents in the last few years. These ‘language policy milestones’ mark key stages in the formulation of current multilingualism policy.⁶³ The most recent is the *Strategic Framework for Co-operation on Education and Training* (2009), in which there is a call for further Commission action to promote language learning, e.g. for adults as part of vocational training, and to help migrants learning the language of the host country. In 2008, there appeared the *EU Strategy for Multilingualism* (2008) which sets out what the EU should be doing to promote language learning and protect linguistic diversity. Also in 2008, there appeared *Multilingualism: An Asset for Europe and a Shared Commitment* (2008), which assesses what needs to be done to turn linguistic diversity into an asset for solidarity and prosperity, and an *Inventory of EU Actions in the Field of Multilingualism*, which is a full report on action to promote languages in all fields. In 2007, there took place an online consultation on multilingualism, which later made available both the results and the discussion that followed. Finally, in 2005, a *New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism* appeared as the first strategy of its kind but has now been superseded by the 2008 strategy. Thus, there is already in place a considerable amount of thinking about language planning and language strategies for a Phase II to connect with and build on.

⁶² For an overview of funding possibilities, see http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/eu-programmes/index_en.htm

⁶³ For an overview, see http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/eu-language-policy/index_en.htm

In the EU, 2010 was the target date for many initiatives. Now, new initiatives have been set for 2020, under a strategic framework for European co-operation in education and training entitled ‘Education and Training 2020 – Diverse Systems, Shared Goals’. This framework is intended to build on progress made under the previous Education and Training work programme and has set four strategic objectives: making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship; enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training. These may well be objectives which a Phase II project could connect with.⁶⁴

A further possibility for future Language and Politics symposia might be more theoretical – to set up a project to stand back and reflect critically upon merits and demerits of language policies in a broad range of situations, with a view to establishing afresh the top-down criteria for the components of a first-rate policy. A start may have been made by the EU and also by recent textbooks which are concerned with policies on a world-wide basis.⁶⁵ It could certainly be a theme for a further symposium or two.⁶⁶

However, there is a final, not inconsiderable point which we’ve already mentioned and wish to end on. These symposia and publications arose from a voluntary collaboration between a Celticist and a Scotticist who happened to be in the same place at the same time, who found each other eager to push back the boundaries of their respective disciplines, and who found that their different sets of skills and expertise and the interpersonal chemistry of their rather different personalities and of their willingness to be flexible and adaptable enabled them to work extraordinarily well together. We are not aware of any other such productive inter-disciplinary link, but we feel that it will be a not insignificant factor if others are to build on our foundations. As we have repeatedly acknowledged, we could not have done Language and Politics without each other. And

⁶⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/eu-language-policy/doc120_en.htm

⁶⁵ See footnote 8.

⁶⁶ A further source of funding might to the AHRC Research Networks and Workshops Fund but, because our present efforts have created a successfully functioning network, an application thereto might seem inappropriate.

so, to each other, our warmest and most grateful thanks.

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Appendix 1

A Press Release covering the launch of the Strategy for the Irish Language 2010–2030 on 21 December 2010 states:

Taoiseach launches 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010 – 2030

At the launch of the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010–2030 today, the Taoiseach said “For the first time since the foundation of the State, we have a comprehensive long-term plan for the Irish language. This plan aims to increase the number of people who speak Irish on a daily basis from 83,000 to 250,000 over the next 20 years. Achieving this goal will not be easy, but I am confident that we will succeed.”

The Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, Pat Carey TD, said “This new and comprehensive national plan will allow us to take a new approach and ensure that the State, language organisations and the public are working together to promote the Irish language.”

The Taoiseach referred to the renaissance which the Irish language has enjoyed in recent years while also acknowledging that the language remains in a vulnerable position as the primary community language of the Gaeltacht. The Taoiseach said “If we are to protect the status of the language in the Gaeltacht and increase the number of speakers nationally, we now need a more modern, strategic and collaborative approach to language promotion

and maintenance. We also need a more enhanced engagement with the public than we may have had in the past. The Government's new 20-Year Strategy will provide us with the framework to achieve that. It will also allow us to focus resources towards the area of language planning.”

The Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, Pat Carey TD, highlighted the level of cross-party support in the Oireachtas that the Strategy received during its preparation. The Minister referred to the fact that over 1.6 million people claim some competence in Irish and said “This Strategy seeks to address the gap between competence in and usage of the language with a view to ensuring that the language survives and thrives.”