

Michał Baran (ed.)

# **Studies in Sociolinguistics, Translation, Foreign Language Teaching and Formal Linguistics**

Studies in Sociolinguistics, Translation, Foreign Language Teaching  
and Formal Linguistics

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Michał Baran

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# Thriving Minority Languages in the UK?

*Sabine Asmus*

**Abstract** This article provides an update on the situation of the minority languages of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 2025. It discusses (a) difficulties in terminology in light of attempts to prevent endangered languages from dying, (b) major aspects of language policies (and strategies) implemented in the UK for their promotion, and (c) the need of truly efficient (language) measures in the age of rampant digitalisation, including the need to standardise all of the languages in question, save Irish perhaps. The cases of Welsh and Scottish Gaelic, in particular, make clear that even the legally well protected languages are currently on the retreat and under threat<sup>1</sup> and need more than good language policies for their survival.

**Keywords** Endangered languages – language policies – Welsh – Irish – Scottish-Gaelic – Manx – Cornish – Scots – digitalisation – language standardisation

## Introduction

The UK, which has been referred to as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland since 1921 (from 1880/01–1921 it included the whole of Ireland<sup>2</sup>), comprises three semi-autonomous (devolved) main regions and one county with a devolution deal.<sup>3</sup> These are areas in which Celtic languages are still spoken despite the early immigration of Germanic tribes, particularly

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1 Categories of the various endangerment scales (e.g. Fishman 1991, Lewis and Simons 2010) are not used here due to their practical inapplicability. Focusing largely on language acquisition and performance, they cannot truly capture the manifold intricacies and subtleties at work, including special societal structures, that have led to the endangerment of the languages under review and are partially addressed here (see also discussion on the term revitalisation below).

2 See, UK <https://rahbarnes.co.uk/union/the-united-kingdom-of-union-1800/union-with-ireland-act-1800/>.

3 See, Devolution Deal Cornwall <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cornwall-devolution-deal-kevambos-digresennans-kernow-2023>.

from the 5th century onwards. The devolution areas and their minority languages as recognised by the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (ERCML)<sup>4</sup> are Northern Ireland with Q-Celtic Irish (*Gaeilge*) and Germanic Ulster Scots, Scotland with Q-Celtic Scottish Gaelic (*Gàidhlig*) and Germanic Scots (or Lallans), Wales with P-Celtic Welsh (*Cymraeg*), and Cornwall with Cornish (*Kerne/owek*, amongst others). In the Isle of Man, Q-Celtic Manx (*Gaelg* or *Gailck*) is still spoken, but the island is not part of the UK, only a Crown Dependency.

## 1 Politics and Language Maintenance

In the UK and the Isle of Man, the ERCML has been in force since 2001.<sup>5</sup> It grants Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Irish and Manx the maximum possible protection status. Until the UK's withdrawal from the European Union (EU) in 2020, the Council of Europe (CoE) considered the promotion of Irish and Cornish to be unsatisfactory,<sup>6</sup> although Irish and Ulster Scots in Northern Ireland were enshrined as languages to be promoted as early as 1998 under the *Belfast Agreement*.<sup>7</sup> Ulster Scots was recognised as a historical national language by the ECRML in 2001,<sup>8</sup> which remains politically<sup>9</sup> and scientifically (see, Crow-

4 In this context, 'regional or minority languages' are defined as:

- a. "regional or minority languages", which means languages that are:
- i. traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population; and
- ii. different from the official language(s) of that State; it does not include either dialects of the official language. language(s) of the State or the languages of migrants;
- b. "territory in which the regional or minority language" is used means the geographical area in which the said language is the mode of expression of a number of people justifying the adoption of the various protective and promotional measures provided for in this Charter (<https://rm.coe.int/1680695175> 1992).

5 See, for implementation <https://rm.coe.int/united-kingdomecml6-en/1680b1a73f>, p. 6. It was adopted as a convention on 25 June 1992 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and was opened for signature in Strasbourg on 5 November 1992 (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages/about-the-charter>).

6 See, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/united-kingdom-experts-report-considerable-progress-on-regional-and-minority-languages>.

7 See, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1034123/The\\_Belfast\\_Agreement\\_An\\_Agreement\\_Reached\\_at\\_the\\_Multi-Party\\_Talks\\_on\\_Northern\\_Ireland.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1034123/The_Belfast_Agreement_An_Agreement_Reached_at_the_Multi-Party_Talks_on_Northern_Ireland.pdf).

8 Within this legal framework, the UK also recognised Ulster Scots in 2024 (<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-05-25/hlws55>).

9 See, <https://www.ecmi.de/infocchannel/detail/ecmi-minorities-blog-debates-on-language-rights-in-northern-ireland-beyond-parallel-structures>, <https://writingthetroublesweb.wordpress.com/2022/03/07/ulster-scots-and-parity-of-esteem/>.

ley 2006) controversial to this day. After all, in Irish politics, it is seen as the language of the colonialists and linguistically as little different from Scots in Scotland (see for instance Hutchinson 2013: 9–23). It should also be noted that Cornish, Scots and Ulster Scots enjoy reduced international protection, namely only under Part II of the ECRML.<sup>10</sup>

In the given international context, the devolution efforts in the UK in the second half of the 20th century, which were successful in Scotland (Parliament) and Wales in 1997 (Assembly), also promoted the revitalisation<sup>11</sup> of their minority languages, although the language issue is only truly linked to political demands in Wales and Northern Ireland (see below). Nevertheless, Scotland issued the *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act* in 2005, which established the Scottish Gaelic Language Board (*Bòrd na Gàidhlig*). It was tasked with preserving the language and ensuring that it was treated with the same respect as English.<sup>12</sup>

10 I would like to thank the PhD-candidates Lena Krochmann (Scottish Gaelic), Zuzanna Grala (Irish) and Emma de Paor (Irish) from Leipzig University, Prof. George Broderick (University of Mannheim/Heidelberg), Dr Gòrdan Camshron (University of the Highlands and Islands) and Dr Hywel Glyn Lewis (University of Wales Trinity Saint David) for consultations and materials.

11 This term is used here in line with UNESCO terminology. The 20th century favoured the terms revival and reversing language shift (since Fishman 1991), when referring to actions aimed at halting language decline or bringing a language back to life. These terms would still be more suitable when talking about languages like Cornish (Lower Sorbian, Vogt and Asmus 2024), where the number of speakers is so low that the basis for revitalisation is questionable (see Grin 1992), certainly when looking at revitalisation as a community-driven venture to halt language decline (see for instance Hinton 2001, 2013), but the languages under discussion are on the way to develop into network languages (see definition in chapter 2.2.). This article, therefore, sheds light on selected aspects of language revitalisation (LR) as discussed by Comajoan-Colomé and Coronel-Molina (2021: 897), i.e. as a multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary field [...] related to language revitalisation [...] language policy and planning, educational policy, sociology of language, sociolinguistics, ecolinguistics, politics of language, language and political economy, linguistic anthropology, applied linguistics, field linguistics, and educational linguistics. Methodologically speaking, in recent years, LR has embraced ethnography, critical ethnography and linguistic ethnography; top down and bottom up approaches; and local, regional, national, transnational and global perspectives from micro and macro dimensions. Language revitalisation is also related to other notions, such as language rights, reversing language shift, language revival, language endangerment, language reclamation or restoration, language documentation, language loss and death, bilingual, multilingual and multicultural education, and foreign, second and heritage language teaching and learning.

12 See, [https://www.gaidhlig.scot/en/gaelic-language-plans/gaelic-language-scotland-act-2005/#::~:~:text=The%20Gaelic%20Language%20\(Scotland\)%20Act,respect%20as%20English%20in%20Scotland.](https://www.gaidhlig.scot/en/gaelic-language-plans/gaelic-language-scotland-act-2005/#::~:~:text=The%20Gaelic%20Language%20(Scotland)%20Act,respect%20as%20English%20in%20Scotland.)

In 2009, the *National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Welsh Language) Order*<sup>13</sup> transferred decisions regarding Welsh-language matters from Westminster to Cardiff, the capital city of Wales. In its wake, the *Welsh Languages (Wales) Measure*<sup>14</sup> was enacted in 2011. It dissolved the Welsh Language Board (*Bwrdd yr Iaith*) and replaced it with a Language Commissioner, modelled on Canadian language policies<sup>15</sup> (for consequences see chapter 2.3.). In 2012 the *National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act*<sup>16</sup> followed, the first Act since the last Welsh ruler Owain Glyndŵr (Prince of Wales, c. 1354 – 1415). This legislation gave Welsh official status, thus demanding its use in public and private industry sectors. At the same time, Welsh and English became the languages of the Welsh government, giving English a legally established official status in the UK.

At the end of 2023, Cornwall received a devolution deal that also opened up new opportunities for language promotion.<sup>17</sup> In addition to the Cornish Language Commission (*Kesva An Taves Kernewek*), there is now also a Cornish Language Office.<sup>18</sup>

The *Belfast Agreement* not only ended the 30-year period of violent conflict in Northern Ireland, i.e. the so-called ‘Troubles’ (1968–1998), primarily between pro-Irish and pro-British forces, but also established the possibility of the reunification of the two Irelands under certain conditions. As a result, the Republic of Ireland has since used the name Ireland and has extensively invested in Northern Ireland, including in the Irish language through the establishment of *Foras na Gaeilge* (The Irish Institution) in 1999.<sup>19</sup> The Brexit vote in the UK in 2016 interrupted this process. Consequently, Irish speakers and the CoE called for a new language law, which was successfully passed in 2022 under the name *Iden-*

13 See, <https://senedd.wales/media/aytkgy1/qg07-0058-english.pdf>, <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN04973/SN04973.pdf>.

14 See, <https://law.gov.wales/culture/welsh-language/welsh-language-wales-measure-2011>.

15 See, [https://business.senedd.wales/Data/Legislation%20Committee%20No.%205%20-%20Third%20Assembly/20090210/Agenda/LC5\(3\)-01-09%20Proposed%20Legislative%20Competence%20Order%20on%20the%20Welsh%20Language%20Background%20Briefing%20\(PDF,%20154%20KB\).pdf](https://business.senedd.wales/Data/Legislation%20Committee%20No.%205%20-%20Third%20Assembly/20090210/Agenda/LC5(3)-01-09%20Proposed%20Legislative%20Competence%20Order%20on%20the%20Welsh%20Language%20Background%20Briefing%20(PDF,%20154%20KB).pdf).

16 See, <https://law.gov.wales/national-assembly-wales-official-languages-act-2012#:~:text=The%20National%20Assembly%20for%20Wales,Senedd%20Commission%20discharges%20its%20functions.>

17 See, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cornwall-devolution-deal-kevambos-digresennans-kernow-2023>.

18 See, <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/parks-leisure-and-culture/the-cornish-language/cornish-language-programme/cornish-language-office/>.

19 See, <https://www.forasnagaeilge.ie/?lang=en>.

*tity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act*.<sup>20</sup> It includes Ulster Scots and established a language commissioner for both languages.<sup>21</sup> The act's goal is, of course, social cohesion and the preservation of linguistic and cultural heritage. However, the divide in society repeatedly manifests itself in actions directed against certain speakers or in demanding certain language use, as seen in demonstrations by Irish speakers at central transport hubs in Belfast in 2025, calling for bilingualism (!).<sup>22</sup>

Although the national minority languages of the UK remain under the protection of the CoE even after Brexit, they seized the opportunity to classify their languages as indigenous within the UNESCO-framework and its International Decade of Indigenous Languages IDIL (<https://idil2022-2032.org><sup>23</sup>). This initiative has a focus on language rights and started in 2022, being prepared by the International Year of Indigenous Languages in 2019 (<https://iyl2019.org>). It is clear, of course, that neither the Celtic languages nor the Germanic idioms of the UK are genuine indigenous languages. Germanic, for instance, arrived relatively late, i.e. in the early Middle Ages, pushing P-Celtic to the margins of Britain. One way or another, it is to be expected that the understanding and interpretation of established sociolinguistic terms will change in order to promote as many languages as possible within these different frameworks.<sup>24</sup>

## 2 In Search of Actual Language Use

Given the relatively good status of the minority languages in the UK, the legal conditions for their revitalisation look favourable, but for Welsh, for instance, the second decrease in a row in the number of speakers is evident from the latest census. The question arises, therefore, as to what goes wrong? Some answers are indicated in the following chapters.<sup>25</sup>

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20 See, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/45/contents>.

21 See, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9357/>.

22 See, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3vxy731egqo>, <https://www.dearg.ie/en/nua-cht/cartlann/232004-rush-hour-takeover>. Ulster Scots seems to be ignored. Also, the CoE demands trilingualism.

23 See, <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20230423-why-cornwall-is-resurrecting-its-indigenous-language>.

24 An early discussion in the field was offered by Zenker (2011).

25 For comprehensive studies on reasons for looming language shift in Ireland and Scotland, see Ó Giollaáin and colleagues over the last decade.

## 2.1 The Story of Manx

Manx, as a historically developed language was declared dead in 1974 (with the death of the last native speaker Maddrell<sup>26</sup>), but has undergone a sociolinguistic revival, with the number of speakers standing at 2,023 according to the 2021 census. This represents an increase of 2.41% in comparison to 2011 with 1,662 speakers, which gave 1.97% of the population as being able to speak the language.<sup>27</sup> The *Manx Gaelic Strategy*, a language development and implementation plan, similar to those already known in Wales, Ireland and Scotland, aims to generate 5,000 speakers by 2022–2032.<sup>28</sup> As with the other languages, education is in the focus, but Manx has also seen language nests,<sup>29</sup> where there are Manx-language playgroups and nurseries run by Mooijner Veggey (<https://www.mooijnerveggey.org.im>). In order to reach this feasible goal, the Isle of Man announced the Year of the Manx Language for 2026 (<https://yearofmanx.im>), following the model of the UNESCO International Year of the Indigenous Languages (see Chapter 1).

## 2.2 Issues with Cornish

Since the death of Dolly Pentreath in 1777, Cornish has been considered historically extinct, although the last known speaker of historical Cornish, John Davey, did not die until 1891. However, it has been regarded as sociolinguistically revived since Henry Jenner's publication of *A Handbook of the Cornish Language* (1904). It was officially recognised as a minority language within the UK as late as in 2014<sup>30</sup> and is protected by the CoE. The 2021 census lists 567 speakers,<sup>31</sup> while internal studies indicate more than 3,000 'connaisseurs' of the language, considering 500 of them as fluent. Whether the Cornish Lan-

26 The discussion about how to define the term 'last native speaker' and whether such a term represents the end of a language (language death) is ongoing and was discussed for Manx by Broderick in 2017.

27 See, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/Zensus/maps/change/identity/main-language-detailed/main-language-detailed/other-uk-language-manx-gaelic>.

28 See, [https://culturevannin.im/media/Foundation%20members%202011/policies/ManxLanguageStrategy\\_2022-2032.pdf](https://culturevannin.im/media/Foundation%20members%202011/policies/ManxLanguageStrategy_2022-2032.pdf).

29 Language nesting was developed in New Zealand in the 1980s and is a language recovery programme. Language nests are the method of revitalisation that most directly addresses the challenge of creating a new generation of first language speakers (see Koller, Amaller and Cooper 2022).

30 See, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cornish-granted-minority-status-within-the-uk>.

31 See, <https://rm.coe.int/united-kingdomecml6-en/1680b1a73f>.

guage Commission and the Cornish Language Office will succeed in invigorating the revitalisation of Cornish<sup>32</sup> remains uncertain. Being codified in numerous orthographies, Cornish suffers from linguistic overdiversification (see also Welsh in Chapter 2.6.), which triggers linguistic insecurity and makes it difficult to acquire and apply the language efficiently. It is, therefore, hoped that the multitude of small organisations or pressure groups promoting or pressing for Cornish will accept the Standard Written Form (SWF, Cornish *Furv Skrifys Savonek*) of 2008. In the context of lacking academic institutionalisation, linguistic insecurity is particularly high in Cornish. However, it is also high and counterproductive for language revitalisation in Ulster Scots, Manx, Scottish Gaelic and Welsh, all languages whose continuation largely or exclusively depends on learners and new speakers.

Subsequently, all the languages discussed here try to boost their use through the school system. The weaker languages have logically a strong focus on the primary education level. This is done in Cornwall through the 'go-Cornish' campaign (<https://gocornish.org/primary-schools>), which – however – seems to focus more on fun than on language acquisition by stating:

Go Cornish brings the Cornish language to life both inside and outside the classroom. It is a whole school programme that provides a clear framework to celebrate the language in fun and immersive ways, whilst promoting its use across your whole school community. Commissioned by Cornwall Council, and masterminded by Golden Tree Productions, Go Cornish is available to all primary schools in Cornwall for FREE. Teachers don't need to speak Cornish themselves<sup>33</sup> at entry level, and it requires little time commitment or admin.

This quote underscores the weakness of the language itself, with 567 reported fluent speakers following some 120 years after its first revival. Such a reduced speaker capacity hampers any revitalisation efforts, because immersion in a network community of speakers<sup>34</sup> seems impossible or rather a dream and is, therefore, described by Tsunoda (2005) as an ineffective method for languages

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32 See, <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/parks-leisure-and-culture/the-cornish-language/cornish-language-programme/cornish-language-office/>.

33 Underlining performed by the author.

34 The term network language is the term to be used here and explained as a potentially extreme communication-specific use of a language in a regularly reduced range of registers and domains of the language, which may exclude the standard language or all registers save an incidental and/or individual one; largely serving the purpose of whatever existing stable or instable network – formally or informally – rather than common community communication (see Vogt and Asmus 2024: 163).

with a certain endangerment status.<sup>35</sup> It rather seems to be a case in point for Grin's *Threshold Theory of Minority Language Survival* (1992).

### 2.3 Ble Mae'r Gymraeg?<sup>36</sup>

The promotion of Welsh in the UK meets more of the ECRML criteria than that of the other minority tongues. It has the best status and probably also the best prestige. This is partly due to its strong cultural and literary tradition, largely linked to the socially influential *Eisteddfod* (first held in 1176),<sup>37</sup> a former bardic competition that is now more of a cultural festival, showcasing all aspects of Welsh life. It is a celebration of Welsh that is held every year during the first week of August. In the absence of a consistent institutional standardisation of Welsh,<sup>38</sup> this also economically important institution is essential for language preservation, because despite various revitalisation campaigns since 2003 (see Asmus and Williams 2014: 46f.), the number of speakers has been in decline for the last 20 years. The 538,300 speakers in 2021 represent a loss of 1.2% since 2011 and the historically lowest percentage of speakers ever, i.e. 17.8% of the total population. Various excuses are often given, ignoring that the 2011 census already showed a loss of speakers compared to 2001. The numbers fell from 582,368 (21% in 2001) to 562,000 (19.0% in 2011). If the 2003 strategy *Iaith Pawb* (Everybody's Language) already failed to reach the 25%

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35 Looking at the Lower Sorbian *Zorja* project, a well-funded isolated micro-immersion schooling project is of course possible, but remains with little impact (see Vogt and Asmus 2024).

36 Due to the continuously waning use of Welsh, *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* (The Welsh Language Society), one of the major important and long-standing pressure groups for Welsh in Wales, runs its current campaign under this slogan meaning 'Where is Welsh?', demanding a new language Act (<http://cymdeithas.org/>, <https://cymdeithas.cymru/what-is-cymdeithas-yr-iaith>).

37 See, <https://eisteddfod.wales>; here are references to earlier bardic contests Strict-metre poetry is considered the culture-defining art of Wales (see, Asmus 2015).

38 Of course, the historical dictionary *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* presents standard Welsh, but – due to its nature – not for current daily use. The *Welsh Joint Education Committee* (Welsh CBAC) decides on language forms to be produced in teaching material, but does not employ linguists, and a chair for Welsh does not exist. Also, in 2011, the National Welsh-speaking college (*Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol*) was founded, but remains unclear with regard to standardisation efforts (see also Asmus and Williams 2014: 49). Despite a standard Welsh grammar by P.W. Thomas (1996), standard-language teaching material is currently largely produced by an individual: the former head librarian of Aberystwyth town library D. Geraint Lewis (see References). *Corpus Genedlaethol* 'The National (Welsh) Corpus' is at least a good source for potentially describing Standard Welsh.

mark and the 2010 Language Strategy *Iaith Fyw Iaith Byw* (A Living Language: A Language for Live<sup>39</sup>) failed, then the current strategy from 2017, which aims for a barely achievable one million speakers by 2050,<sup>40</sup> must also be questioned; especially in light of extant linguistics insecurity triggered by lacking standardisation and subsequent poor language health.<sup>41</sup> The decrease in the numbers of speakers comes after the *Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act* of (March) 2013,<sup>42</sup> which demanded local authorities to produce a *Welsh in Education Strategic Plan* in order to improve the planning of Welsh-medium education in its area. The so-called ‘Hill Report’ caused amendments to the Act, when stating in June 2013 that:

pupils are making excellent progress in acquiring Welsh second language skills in fewer than one in ten primary schools. The effect of this poor achievement on the secondary sector cannot be overemphasized.<sup>43</sup>

Following decisions by the Welsh government for Welsh-medium provision in 2021,<sup>44</sup> the latest strategy focuses again on schools (and translators). The goal is to gradually convert as many schools as possible into full Welsh-medium schools, increasing the proportion of each school year group receiving Welsh-medium education from 22% in 2017 to 30% by 2031 and 40% by 2050.

However, teaching successfully would need a standardised language to be taught given the predominance of learners (see also Cornish in chapter 2.2. and Heinz 2003) – a problem that affects all the languages discussed here. In field work conducted in the years 2024 and 2025, informants confirmed that language-structuring initial consonant mutations (ICM, see Baran and Asmus 2019), for instance, are not taught before A-level education. Similarly, in the teaching of adults, which excels in a variety of unexplained juxtaposed linguistic word forms. Grammar is nearly absent or sometimes incorrectly taught in the first years of teaching (see National Centre for Learning Welsh 2021: *Cwrs Dysgu*

39 *Language Strategy Iaith Fyw Iaith Byw*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-north-west-wales-11982654>.

40 See, <https://www.gov.wales/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy>.

41 Language health is defined as a “Degree of stability of a language and its sounds, forms, structures and idiom across domains and registers as far as developed historically; affecting all its sub-systems and their mutual interplay” (see also Vogt and Asmus 2024: 167).

42 See, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2013/1/contents>.

43 See, <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2018-12/160310-evaluation-welsh-medium-education-strategy-final-en.pdf>.

44 <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/guidance-on-school-categories-according-to-welsh-medium-provision.pdf>.

*Cymraeg – Mynediad*), a generally inappropriate methodology.<sup>45</sup> Worse, errors become normalised language use and are disseminated (H.G. Lewis 2024).<sup>46</sup>

There is also weak language planning for the use of the language after school, which leads to language loss even among native speakers (see informant Nia from the 5th of September in our field work of 2024). As a result of our field work, it can be clearly stated that the language seems to function only rudimentarily as a community language<sup>47</sup> and predominantly as a network language, i.e. it is used very domain-specifically, and outside school largely held together by the supra-regionally *Eisteddfod* (see above) and (deficient) media coverage.

The language is also affected by the ongoing world economic crisis (see also Ó Ceallaigh 2020). Welsh businesses are much less visible in recent *Eisteddfodau* than in those before the COVID crises (2020–2022).<sup>48</sup> This is not only an economic reflex, but means that the language has fewer domains in which it can be used. Minimarkets and corner shops, book shops, e.g. in Aberystwyth,<sup>49</sup> hotels, e.g. *Y Talbot* in Tregaron,<sup>50</sup> etc., which still show Welsh-language (shop) hea-

45 Other minority languages, like Upper and Lower Sorbian, are taught correctly from the very first day, because anything else goes against the functioning of our brains. Incorrect teaching hinders cognition by overloading the working memory with excessive complexity, failing to build a necessary knowledge foundation and promoting misconceptions. This leads to challenges, such as cognitive overload, frustration, disengagement, and difficulty in applying knowledge, all of which negatively impact a learner's ability to process, understand and store information effectively (see for instance, Brian Pickthorne 1983 and Barsham 2021).

46 Presentation at Leipzig University/Germany on the 6th of June in 2024.

47 This was confirmed by Dr Simon Rodway from the Celtic Department of the University of Aberystwyth on the 5th of September 2024.

48 See for instance the *Eisteddfod* of 2019 at <https://www.facebook.com/EventsConwy/posts/eisteddfod-map-download-a-copy-of-the-full-eisteddfod-maes-map-here-%EF%B8%8F-bitly2omb3/1281008065410325> in comparison to the much reduced number of stands in 2025.

49 See for instance the famous and Wales-wide known book shop *Siop y pethe*, founded by language campaigners in 1967 in Aberystwyth (<https://sioppethe.cymru>), which is also the place of the National Library of Wales.

50 Tregaron had the highest percentage of Welsh speakers in the county of Ceredigion with 66.9%. By now, this figure has decreased and shows the second-largest decrease in Ceredigion with 8.2 percentage points (<https://www.gov.wales/commission-welsh-speaking-communities-position-paper.html>). To make things worse, in 2024, no Welsh was allowed at the reception desk of the Gwesty'r Marine Hotel in Aberystwyth (Ceredigion), which is known for hosting many Welsh speakers and invites Welsh-language talks by displaying the language on its walls. The *Black Boy Inn* in Caernarfon (Gwynedd), celebrating its Welshness in the media, has a receptionist that would refuse to speak Welsh, and all Welsh mythology on the Wales of the dining room is in English, showing that the strategies for the promotion (prestige) and revitalisation (via bilingualism) of Welsh

dings, are increasingly taken over by non-Welsh speaking business people, often reluctant to show the least politeness or respect when approached in Welsh.<sup>51</sup> People-substituting machinery seems to know any language but Welsh – see for instance the Costa-Coffee machines, which display instructions in German or French, Spanish and even Arabic, but not in Welsh. In addition, as digitalisation progresses, in-person conversation gets reduced in many domains, e.g. in the banking sector, which predominantly digitalises in English. A nice exception is the HSBC bank in Llanbedr Pont Steffan,<sup>52</sup> which, however, has difficulties using the correct forms for ‘yes’ and ‘no’. At the same time the founding institution of the University of Wales<sup>53</sup> is closing down its campus here, making loads of (often Welsh-speaking) people of the area redundant. Logically, its business surrounding also suffers, e.g. the cosy (former) Welsh-language chit-chat place *Yr Hedyn Mwstard*/The Mustard Seed Cafe and Christian Book Shop (<https://mustardseedcafe.org.uk>), that now makes the use of Welsh so difficult that I eventually asked distressed at the counter, whether Welsh is allowed anywhere at all these days? Contrary to commonly known ‘British politeness’, an elderly English lady answered: “I don’t speak Welsh!” Younger people would surprisingly at least try to use the language or come up with an apology. This is similar to what can be observed in Ireland. For Welsh, the question has to be posed, whether the categorisation of Welsh as ‘a vulnerable’ language in the 2010 *World Atlas for Languages in Danger*, that relied on data from 2001, i.e. before the last two decades of decline, still holds water (see footnote 1 above). This classification is seen as outdated here.

## 2.4 Speakers without the Skill of Speaking

In 2022, the census for Scottish Gaelic showed 69,701 speakers (approx. 1.36% of the total population), which represents an increase compared to 2011. In the

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from 2003 and 2010 (see above) had no effect here. It is no surprise, therefore, that booking any Welsh-language accommodation from abroad is nearly impossible.

51 See, for instance Tregaron or even Pen-y-groes in Gwynedd. The 2021 Census data showed that 83.0% of the population aged 3 and over in the Pen-y-groes area could speak Welsh. This is a decrease from 88%, (<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Council/Documents—Council/Key-statistics-and-data/Census-2021/Pen-y-groes-S.pdf>).

52 In the 90s, some 65–80% of the population of this old market town area spoke Welsh (Osmond 1998: 312). After the closure of the post office and further developments, the 2021 census, using the English name Lampeter, shows only 48.8%, which is also a decrease in the absolute number of speakers (<https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/media/xizpixfk/census-2021-welsh-language-topic-paper-final.pdf>, pp. 16, 21).

53 See, <https://lampeter-tc.org.uk/index.php/en/home>.

same census, Scots has 1,537,626 speakers, i.e. it is spoken by 30% of the population,<sup>54</sup> with the highest percentage in the North-East of Scotland and the lowest in the Outer Hebrides, where Scottish Gaelic has its strongholds. When talking about ‘some skills’ in Scots, 2.4 million claim to have such skills. In addition, Scots speakers may tend to indicate that they speak a certain type thereof as there is no standard language, but varieties like Orcadian, Shaetlan or Doric may be mentioned.

Although skills have increased in school age, Gaelic-skilled people are generally older still, and there are surprisingly some last monoglots left. However, the statistical increase in the number of speakers disguises the fact that it was largely triggered by those who cannot speak (read or write) the language, but only understand it, i.e. by ‘neo-users’ of the language with reduced skills; as if Scottish Gaelic was only music that one listens to. The question arises whether this is a possible side effect of the lack of in-person interaction<sup>55</sup> and/or the result of a reduced domain representation of the language, which hampers any kind of communication, digital or in-person (see also the case of Welsh above)?

A closer look at the figures also reveals that they mask further current negative developments. One of them is the continuing decline of the number of native Scottish Gaelic speakers in traditional language areas. This is well analysed in a publication entitled *The Gaelic crisis in the vernacular community* (Ó Giollagáin et al. 2020),<sup>56</sup> stating that the language is at the point of collapse.<sup>57</sup> This is orchestrated by McLeod (2020: 330) when he states:

In the twenty-first century, the position of Gaelic has become increasingly paradoxical. In terms of day-to-day community use, Gaelic is the weakest it has ever

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54 See, <https://spice-spotlight.scot/2024/08/12/gaelic-and-scots-in-scotland-what-does-the-Zensus-tell-us/>.

55 In a discussion among colleagues, mention was made of Duolingo use as a reason. Prioritising screens over real-life interactions and relying on asynchronous digital communication can reduce comfort with spontaneous, real-time conversations, making it harder to engage in back-and-forth exchanges effectively, thus leading to fragmented communication and weakened conversational abilities (see also Zhai, Wibowo and Li 2024). However, Ó Giollagáin stated a loss of communicative competence for the Irish *Gaeltachtaí* as early as 2015 (Ó Giollagáin, and Charlton 2015), i.e. the problems are more complex.

56 See also Ó Giollagáin and Charlton (2015) for Irish communities in (the Republic of) Ireland.

57 As mentioned in footnote 1, such a category does not exist in the various endangerment scales, which – thus – prove insufficient. According to the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, Scottish Gaelic is – on a par with Irish – only ‘definitely endangered’ (Moseley 2010).

been, while the public status of the language and the level of institutional provision increase every year. This situation may well be unsustainable.

The language is now for the first time ever a minority tongue everywhere in Scotland, forming a maximum of 45% of speakers in communities of the Western Isles. Unsurprisingly, therefore, it is on the way to becoming a network language (see also Cornish in chapter 2.2. and Welsh in chapter 2.3.). Similarly to Wales, the core of the revitalisation policies, therefore, is centred on Celtic-medium schools in order to generate new speakers from non-Gaelic-speaking families, largely in urban areas (McLeod 2018: 86). The vagueness of the latest legislation, i.e. the *Scottish Languages Bill*, enacted on the 31st of July 2025,<sup>58</sup> does little to counteract this development.<sup>59</sup> Scottish Gaelic and Scots now have official status and educational standards should eventually be introduced. Yet, looking at Wales, such status building is good but has done little to increase the number of speakers. The effects of the introduction of educational standards as well as the *Scottish Government's Gaelic Language Plan 2022–2027*<sup>60</sup> and the *Bòrd na Gàidhlig's National Gaelic Language Plan 2023–2028* remain to be seen. The same holds true for the “support for the creation of areas of linguistic significance”, which sounds somehow similar to the Gaeltacht idea in Ireland, which has not worked out well there either (see, Ó Ceallaigh 2019, Ó Giollagáin and Charlton 2015).

## 2.5 Irish and Ulster Scots as Minority Languages

The status and prestige of Irish in Northern Ireland<sup>61</sup> is of a different nature than that of its kin state Ireland, where Irish<sup>62</sup> is the first national and, hence – despite being endangered – not a minority language according to the ECRML.

58 See, <https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/s6/scottish-languages-bill>, <https://www.gov.scot/news/scottish-languages-bill-passed>.

59 See, <https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/approach-to-gaelic-needs-a-complete-reset-before-it-is-too-late-4784207>.

60 [https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FINAL\\_BnG\\_National\\_Gaelic\\_Language\\_Plan\\_ENGLISH.pdf](https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FINAL_BnG_National_Gaelic_Language_Plan_ENGLISH.pdf).

61 As a result of the Anglo-Irish War (*Irish War of Independence*) and the 1921/22 Treaty, officially *The Articles of Agreement for a Treaty Between Great Britain and Ireland*, 26 of Ireland's 32 counties gained the status of a Commonwealth-dependent dominion as the Irish Free State (full independence in 1949 as the Republic of Ireland), with Northern Ireland, as defined in 1920, being allowed to secede and remain part of the UK (henceforth called ‘of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’).

62 For latest developments of Irish in Ireland and its revitalisation outcome, see Asmus (2025b) and <https://www.rte.ie/news/dublin/2025/0920/1534496-cearta-rally-dublin>.

The remaining part of the UK, Northern Ireland, has seen the promotion of two minority languages since the end of the 20th century, bringing the millennia-old Celtic vernacular<sup>63</sup> in competition with Ulster Scots, the language of historical invaders of Ireland, arriving here in the wake of the so-called Plantation of Ulster (c. 1609–1630). Irish therefore, became here part of the resistance movement against British dominance in the second half of the 20th century and even developed a new variety, called Jailic, during the Troubles (see Mac Giolla Chríost 2012). Since 1999, Ulster Northern Ireland Irish has been benefiting from the revitalisation and standardisation efforts of Ireland, despite Brexit. The census of 2021 shows an increase in the number of speakers of both languages. Northern Ireland sees 228,600 (12.4%) Irish speakers, which is 10.7% more than in 2011. For Ulster Scots, 190,600 speakers, i.e. 10.4% of the population, are reported, which is an increase of 10.7%.

Since the 1980s, Belfast, the capital city of Northern Ireland, has witnessed a steady growth of active English-Irish bilingualism. According to the 2021 census, 15.5% of the people in the city have some knowledge of Irish and 5.4% of the city's population claim to be able to speak, read, write and understand spoken Irish. 3.9% of the people in the city use Irish daily and 0.8% speak it as their main language at home and in the area around the Falls Road/Andersonstown Road corridor in the west of the city, also referred to as a *Gaeltacht* or the Gaeltacht Quarter. This Belfast Irish has made it into the arts, e.g. in the biopic *Kneecap*,<sup>64</sup> which is based in the Gaeltacht Quarter of 2019 and performs rap music in the West Belfast urban dialect of Ulster Irish.

The Gaeltacht Quarter hosts six Irish-medium primary schools and *Coláiste Feirste*, one of the fastest-growing secondary schools in Northern Ireland. Teaching qualifications through Irish are offered at St Mary's University College, Belfast, and *Cumann Chluain Árd* teaches Irish to adults in the community. *Foras na Gaeilge* fund organisations, which provide Irish-medium services, such as youth services, sports training facilities, adult learning, and live music for the local Irish-speaking community. Various businesses in the Gaeltacht Quarter have Irish-language or bilingual signage and public buses announce upcoming bus stops in English and in Irish, while many street names appear bilingually. There is also an Irish-language community radio station called *Raidió Fáilte* and

63 See, <https://udaras.ie/en/our-language-the-gaeltacht/history-of-the-irish-language>.

64 It is the first Irish-language film that premiered at the *Sundance Film Festival* (2024). Its title is a pun, blending Irish *ní cheap* 'not thought' and *kneecap* (paramilitary goal of injury during 'The Troubles').

an office of *Conradh na Gaeilge* (The Gaelic League).<sup>65</sup> The Gaeltacht Quarter promotes events that take place in west Belfast and the surrounding districts annually, e.g. *Féile an Phobail*, *Féile na Carraige*, *Sean-Nós na Fearsaide*, *Féile na gCloigíní Gorma*, *Liú Lúnasa* and *Scoil Samhraidh Mhic Reachtain*. A broad range of basic family Irish-medium services can be found here, e.g. pre- and afterschool childcare, youth clubs, Irish-medium GAA<sup>66</sup> teams. A cycling club, a gallery, bilingual coffee shops, a theatre, a school gym, film clubs, elderly citizen meet-up groups, a reading circle and several pubs all cater for and are all well-attended by the local Irish-English bilingual community. In 2011, the promotion of Irish in the Protestant Unionist community of Belfast started, organised by *Turas* through evening classes and cultural events at Skainos Centre in east Belfast. The Future will show how developing bilingualism will go together with the promotion of Ulster Scots (see conflicts addressed in chapter 1), which would require a trilingual policy.

Also, things do not seem to be what they look like. In light of all these activities and of rising numbers of speakers of Irish in Ireland and in the UK, an unexpectedly massive protest of some 50,000 protesters in Dublin (Ireland) united Irish speakers across the border in September 2025, addressing eroding language rights, amongst others with the slogan *Dearg le Fearg* 'Red with Anger'.<sup>67</sup> A good week later, new language legislation was enacted for Belfast. It has a focus on the promotion of Irish and met opposition by unionists, who have a stronger interest in Ulster Scots (see question of trilingualism above).<sup>68</sup>

## 2.6 Institutionalisation, Standardisation and Dissemination

Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Welsh are taught from nursery school through to vocational training<sup>69</sup> and are also part of university education. While in Scot-

65 This is the name of the Irish Language Society founded in 1893, amongst others by the later first president of Ireland, Douglas Hyde (1860–1949), whose current campaign in Northern Ireland is called *An Dream Dearg* (<https://www.dearg.ie/en>).

66 Gaelic Athletic Association, founded in 1884 in order to promote Irish sports, first of all hurling and camogie.

67 <https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/2025/09/20/thousands-march-in-dublin-to-demand-greater-irish-language-rights-and-help-for-gaeltacht>.

68 <https://www.rte.ie/news/regional/2025/1001/1536369-belfast-irish-language>.

69 This effects the tourism industry in Scotland to a limited extent (see *Gaelic Tourism Strategy for Scotland 2024–2029*) or the media, local authorities, teachers, translators and those directly involved in language revitalisation, i.e. a limited group of speakers.

land, there is *Sabhal Mòr Ostaig*,<sup>70</sup> the only Celtic-language college, but there is not even a chair for Welsh in Wales (or anywhere else).

Manx is regularly offered only up to secondary school level. Scots is more of an academic subject, while Cornish and Ulster Scots are mainly taught as marginal phenomena in subject teaching, e.g. history, although some Cornish should now be introduced into all primary schools (see chapter 2.2.).

According to the Scottish Government, it made Gaelic education at all levels a priority back in 2007 and has produced *Gaelic Language Plans* since 2010.<sup>71</sup> The *Education Scotland Act* of 2016 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/8/contents>) “enable[s] parents the right to ask their Local Authority to provide Gaelic Medium Education for their child.” There are 24 councils that provide Gaelic education at one level or another. In light of the 2022 census figures and their interpretation as presented in chapter 2.2. above, the second *National Language Plan* by *Bòrd na Gàidhlig* (2023–2028) now rightly demands to “increase the use and learning of Gaelic in Education, 0–18”.

When offered at all levels of education, a language needs to be standardised and well taught in order to allow for applicable language acquisition and the perpetuation of the language as an over-regional and over-generational means of communication. This, however, is not the case for Welsh, where recently the pre-media conflict of dialect competition has re-arisen (Lewis 2024<sup>72</sup>). At the same time, various new registers have developed (see Asmus and Williams 2014: 50) that have been offered to Welsh learners for assumed ease of acquisition and application, hampering exactly these two goals. An unfortunate heritage in this context is *Cymraeg Byw* (Living Welsh), continuing the trend of decades of the simplification of selected forms of various subsystems of the Welsh language system. It was introduced in 1964 with the booklet *Cymraeg Byw: Rhifyn 1* (Cyfadran Addysg Coleg y Brifysgol 1964)<sup>73</sup> in order to simplify

70 Its Scottish Gaelic character has been suffering from Anglicisation and it is hoped that new language legislation (see chapter 2.4.) provides better support for its survival as a Scottish-Gaelic institution.

71 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-governments-gaelic-language-plan-2022-2027>.

72 Presentation at Leipzig University/Germany on the 6th of June in 2024.

73 It was described further in books such as *Cymraeg i Oedolion* ‘Welsh for Adults’ (B. Jones 1965–68), *Siarad Cymraeg* ‘Speak Welsh’ (Jones, A. and A. Jones 1967) for use in schools, *Gweld, Dweud a Gwneud* ‘See, Say and Do’ (Davies 1975) and the grammar book *Gramadeg Cymraeg Cyfoes* ‘A Contemporary Welsh Grammar’ (Uned Iaith Genedlaethol Cymru 1976). For teaching *Cymraeg Byw* successfully, comprehensive didactic methods were developed, described by Roberts, M.E. and R.M. Jones (1974) and D.L. Jones (1974) and others.

Welsh for second-language learners. The intention was to avoid any language difficulties, an attitude that lowers the prestige of any language, and here of standard Welsh or Welsh as a whole, classifying it as a language that is too difficult to learn. The effect on the prestige of a persistently simplified language is indicated in a blog comment (Joanie, 14.04.2024) on *Cymraeg Clir* (Williams 1999):

I'm curious what first-language speakers feel about this campaign. Sometimes when similar things happen in English (at least in the US), people are outraged at the “dumbing down” or “bastardization” of the language.

Some of the linguistic results of the introduction of *Cymraeg Byw* were the enforced use of periphrastic constructions and a simplification of inflected verb forms,<sup>74</sup> as a result of which the morphology of the Welsh verb was reduced. In *Cwrs Wlpan* (1991), for instance, the plural forms of the past tense indicative were replaced by those of present tense subjunctive forms of the regular verbs (see Williams 1980: 104f.). As a result, the latter is now largely neglected or expressed by imperfect (predominantly in the South) or pluperfect forms. At the same time, morphological paradigms that had no match in English were disintegrated, e.g. adjectives, and syntactical patterns merged, as for instance seen in some of the forms of ‘I am’ in Welsh, all derived from *yr ydwyf: rwyf, rwy, rydw, rydwyf, yr wyf, dw, dwi, w i, ydwyf, ydw, wy, wi*. A seemingly random selection from various grammatical forms was then introduced into various domains of life, like *Cymraeg Clir* for office use (Williams 1999: 23), creating further sub-registers (see variety of orthographies in Cornish or Breton, e.g. Asmus and Vogt 2025). Although *Cymraeg Byw* was intended as an oral standard, called *Standard Oral Welsh*, it was gradually also adopted as a medium for writing by Welsh native speakers. One reason for this development is given by Knowles (1995: 321):

Dictionaries and grammars and popular literature about language questions become the instrument of national culture in [circumstances when a nascent state is geopolitically threatened by a powerful neighbour] and are imbued with an authority which it is difficult for anyone to contest. The “mode of exposition” of dictionaries and grammars easily adopts a prescriptive and proscriptive tone.

The power of written material increases if, at the same time, important types of dictionaries or other reference books are unavailable and the representa-

74 M.C. Jones speaks of ‘over-simplification’ in many areas of grammar (1998: 356).

tion of the language in the media is insufficient. The ultimate consequence was the development of *Canllawiau Ysgrifenedig Cymraeg Llafar* (Guidelines for Written Oral Welsh) (Welsh Joint Education Committee 1991), a contradiction in terms, that clearly hints at inappropriate and distorted registers.<sup>75</sup>

In addition, since the introduction of *Cymraeg Byw*, it has often been argued that there is no standard for the Welsh language, and complicated explanations have been introduced in order to explain subsequently constructed registers of Welsh. The status and prestige of these constructs with reduced sub-systems was promoted instead of that of a living register range of Welsh, including a standard with full morphology, phonetics and phonology, syntax, idiom and stylistic range. As a result, the confusion on the part of Welsh speakers with regard to the choice of forms of the language increased, a phenomenon called 'linguistic insecurity' (Jones 1998: 330 and also Cornish in chapter 2.2.). At this point, learners often give up using the language (see, Williams 1995: vii) as do natives, feeling patronised and ignored and that the language has been taken away from them. Indeed, *Cymraeg Byw* was felt by many Welsh speakers to be highly artificial (cf. Jones 1998: 356).

Adding to the confusion, Gareth King imposed his "speech of the people" onto the Welsh (e.g. King 1994: 3), which would rather be their dialect (see Jones 1998: 152). King and his 'Colloquial Welsh' thus created yet another construct.<sup>76</sup> Printed by powerful and influential international publishers (language imperialism), such as Routledge, inappropriate language description leads to overdiversification and, consequently, growing linguistic insecurity that undermine a language's function as an efficient means of communication. This development has been posing a serious threat to Welsh language preservation and revitalisation. "The language can change significantly when it is inadequately described and insufficiently and/or erroneously taught", says M.C. Jones (1998: 358) and she argues (Jones 1998: 45–154), for instance, that even in Welsh-medium schools, a dominating number of second-language learners in immersion schools influences the speech of the native speakers, something also known from Irish. "Historically inappropriate forms become increasingly prevalent in situations when second-language learners dominate and societal monitoring is absent" (Jones 1998: 358).

And if the language is likely to be given up by its learners and native speakers, that is, all its potential users, it is in severe decline rather than 'vulnerable'.

75 Standard Grammars were still produced during this time span, e.g. S.J. Williams (1980) and P.W. Thomas (1996), but are only used when reaching high proficiency levels.

76 See the review by Heinz (1999).

Indeed, the predominant use of a reduced and/or disintegrating and non-matching verb morphology (e.g. Williams 1999: 23), the presentation of a reduced syntax (see Heinz 2003: 403), the preference of an anglicised idiom (e.g. Heinz 2003: 302ff., Asmus and Ó Fionnáin 2024), one-word headwords in dictionaries, the ignorance of Welsh/Celtic word classes (see Asmus 2025a) or nominal morphological categories (e.g. Asmus and Werner 2015), uncertainties in phonetics and phonology and subsequently orthography (see Asmus and Grawunder 2017), and the suppression of the native counting system (see Meek 2005 and Hughes 1998) are elements of language death rather than language change. Investigations into the decline of languages in general have shown that, first, “[i]f a rule is optional with the older generation which has a full and varied command of a still vigorous language system, it is lost in the disintegrating language of a younger generation” (Dressler 1972: 425) and, second, “[w]hen a language surrenders itself to foreign idiom [...] the penalty is death” (O’Rahilly 1988: 121). Unsurprisingly, therefore, in 2002, i.e. at a time when census figures still looked good and promising, a teacher of Welsh wrote to me:

Mae cenhedlaeth gyfan o blant wedi mynd trwy’n hysgolion bellach heb rithyn o glem am ramadeg, gan fod y drefn addysgu yn gwgu ar gyflwyno’r fath beth. Mae’r Gymraeg heddiw yn dioddef yn enbyd o’r herwydd ac yn sicr ni all lleiafrif ieithyddol, megis ag ŷm ni, fforddio dibrisio’r iaith safonol. Yr eironi trist yw fod statws ffurfiol yr iaith ar gynnydd ond y feistriolaeth ffurfiol arni yn prinhaus. Ac mae’r peth yn newid llawer mwy enbyd nag y gellir ei anwybyddu fel y gwneir drwy ddadlau’n arwynebol fod pob iaith yn newid.<sup>77</sup>

Pupils in secondary schools can also use the Welsh Government’s *E-sgol* project (<https://e-sgol.cymru/what-is-esgol/> (video bank Carlam), so that hybrid learning is possible across the country, something also possible for Scottish Gaelic (<https://www.e-sgoil.com>). These projects use video technology to connect classrooms, so that learners from one school can join classes at other schools remotely, enabling pupils to access a greater range of subjects at GCSE and A-levels through the medium of Welsh and Scottish Gaelic. As

77 “A whole generation of children went through our schools without the slightest clue of grammar, since the educational system frowns on introducing such things. Thus, Welsh today suffers heavily, and certainly a linguistic minority, such as ours, cannot afford to disregard the standard language. The sad irony is that the formal status of the language is on the rise but its formal mastery becomes rare. And this change is much more severe, that it cannot be ignored, as it is the case by superficially arguing that every language changes.” (Griffith 2002, see similarly McLeod in 2020 for Scottish Gaelic in chapter 2.4.).