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LANGUAGE PLANNING AND IRISH: 1965–74

Séamus Ó Ciosáin
Department of Finance, Dublin 2

Abstract The decade following the publication in 1965 of the Irish Government's *White Paper on the Restoration of the Irish Language* saw a transition to what would now be described as the 'language planning' approach to language revival, characterised by its concerns for (1) fact-finding, (2) planning in the stricter sense, i.e. setting targets and selecting means, (3) implementation, and (4) the use of feedback to direct the entire process. The approach is in sharp contrast to earlier efforts at language revival and maintenance, many of which are indicated in the report of the Commission on the Restoration of the Irish Language, presented in 1964. The paper identifies and describes the principal differences and suggests a general model distinguishing between revival 'by decree' and revival 'by planning'.

Introduction

Following the achievement of independence in 1922, the new Irish state declared Irish to be the national language and adopted the policies of revival outlined by the Gaelic League and the nationalist movement under British rule. At this point Irish was the daily language of at most 10% of the population, living in isolated areas on the West coast. There were two principal strategies in the revival policy therefore. In the English-speaking areas, Irish would be compulsorily taught to all schoolchildren by immersion methods. This, it was hoped, would produce an adult population with functional competence in the language in the space of a generation. At the same time the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht areas would be strengthened and extended.

By the 1950s it was clear that the policy was not having the desired effect. There was little or no increase in the use of Irish as a community language in the English-speaking areas, even though schoolchildren achieved a considerable competence, passive and active, in the school context. In the meantime, the position of Irish in the Gaeltacht areas continued to decline. Reassessment was inevitable. In 1958, the Commission on the Restoration of the Irish Language was set up to review the situation and it presented its report in 1964. The following year the Government issued its own *White Paper on the Restoration of the Irish Language* which was partly a response to the report of the Commission, and partly an attempt to set a new agenda. It gave rise to a widespread public debate in the media and in the political arena. The policies previously applied, in particular those labelled 'compulsory Irish', began to be more closely scrutinised

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and a division of opinion about them opened up between the main political parties. It was generally recognised that the country was passing through a period of unprecedentedly rapid social and economic change and that language policy could not remain unaffected. A series of detailed reports and recommendations were made to Government and a number of decisions were taken by Government which together changed the locus, contours and practice of language planning (LP). On the one hand, the broad but sometimes crude instrumental sanctions previously applied in the State administrative and educational system were significantly modified. On the other hand, a number of specialised State agencies were established specifically to develop the use of Irish on a voluntary basis and in a clearly recognised bilingual context. Thus, by 1974, the framework of the present LP structures had come into existence.

This paper reviews the events of the decade 1965 to 1974 from the general viewpoint of LP under the headings:

1. The report of the Commission on Restoration (1964).
2. LP and the new realism: the government White Paper (1965).
3. Reactions to the White Paper.
4. Language and national identity: changing perspectives.
5. Implementing language policy.
6. The role of language research in LP.

The paper deals with macro-phenomena for the most part, and with the formulation of general Government policies rather than their implementation in specific settings. The general approach is diachronic, documentary, and descriptive. My hope is that the paper throws light on some of the enduring problems which the LP approach is likely to encounter wherever it becomes a part of state language policy.

Report of the Commission on Restoration (1964)

In July 1958, the Commission on the Restoration of the Irish Language (CRIL) was appointed with the following terms of reference:

Having regard to the position at present reached in the endeavour to secure the restoration of the Irish language, to consider and to advise as to the steps that should now be taken by the community and the State to hasten progress towards that end. (CRIL, 1964a: xi).

Éamon de Valera (1882–1975), who was Taoiseach at the time, addressed the first meeting of the Commission on 24 September 1958. He said that when the Government had first considered appointing the Commission, they had in mind that it would examine only the work of the schools, in particular language teaching methods; however, having thought further on the matter and having heard the opinions of others, they had decided that it would be best to allow the Commission to examine all aspects of the work of saving the language. He went on to emphasise that while the State could do much, it was the public and

especially the family which would ultimately decide the fate of Irish (CRIL, 1964a: xi).

The Commission, which was chaired in its final stage by the Reverend (later Cardinal) T. Ó Fiaich, consisted of 28 members (including five other clergymen), all of whom were active to a greater or lesser extent in the language movement and more or less committed to existing policies. It deliberated for more than five years and on 10 January 1964, its bulky final report in Irish was presented to both houses of parliament and published (CRIL, 1964a).

The Commission made a total of 288 recommendations, a number hardly indicative of selectivity. These were to a large extent concerned with micro-level objectives. The distribution of recommendations over areas was: education (94), government administration (74), Gaeltacht (58), media, culture and entertainment (35), Irish society, i.e. family, church, industry and trade, societies and organisations (24), and co-ordination and implementation of policy (3). Thus, contrary to the approach indicated by Mr de Valera, the emphasis in the report was very much on state action.

The Commission's report had the merit of covering the entire range of language domains and so demonstrating the extent and complexity of LP and the need for central co-ordination. However, it was singularly deficient in factual, research-based information on language knowledge, use and attitudes. It ignored certain educational and psychological questions which were beginning to be discussed at the time, such as the effect of learning a second language on progress in learning the mother tongue, the best age at which to introduce children to a second language and the effects of bilingualism on intellectual development. An even more basic defect in the Commission's report was that it did not provide a clear definition of the term 'restoration' and thus of the overall LP goal. In the introduction to the Irish version of the report (which was not reproduced in the English version), the Commission briefly explained that it understood 'restoration' to mean that Irish would again become the Irish people's normal medium of communication and intercourse (CRIL, 1964a: xiii).

Viewed in a LP context, the report's limitations were clear. As to *fact-finding*, it gave no evidence of fresh research or analysis. As to *planning*, it set no clear overall goal or order of priorities, unless placing public administration before the Gaeltacht and the educational system was to be interpreted as an indication of priority. As to *implementation*, it left this mainly to the Government and gave little idea of how the public was to be mobilised for the vaguely defined but clearly enormous task of restoring Irish. As to *feedback*, it gave no indication of how progress was to be measured but recommended that the Government should issue an annual report on the work done.

The Commission considered the question of 'Compulsory Irish' but did not contemplate any significant change in policy and had little to say on the topic itself, except to note: 'The slogan Compulsory Irish with its implication of a penal enactment has been used by enemies of the language to alienate the sympathy of unthinking people from the language movement. We hope that the last has been heard of it.' (CRIL, 1964b: 17-18). In the event, the Commission's hope that the issue of compulsory Irish would disappear was not to be fulfilled.

It is instructive to compare the Commission's report with other language reports which were prepared in other countries about the same time. In Canada, for example, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was established on 19 July 1963 'to inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races'. The Commission's report (Canada, 1965, 1967) took great care to provide definitions of the key words in the terms of reference, to hear a large amount of evidence throughout Canada and to undertake a research programme involving more than 150 contracts and internal research projects. 'We were not looking for spectacular results', the Commission noted, 'we were simply concerned with obtaining a reliable and substantial body of source material.' As a result of the recommendations made by the Canadian Commission, the Official Languages Act of 1969 was passed by the federal parliament and provision was made for the office of Commissioner of Official Languages charged with ensuring respect for the equal status of English and French in all federal agencies. Thus Canadian LP was placed on a statutory basis with a permanent independent co-ordinating agency.

LP and the New Realism: The White Paper and after (1965-68)

But if the defining concerns of LP were not evident in the CRIL report, they soon emerged in the Government's reaction to it. The report was submitted to a Government presided over by Seán Lemass (1899-1971), Éamon de Valera's successor as Taoiseach. Lemass had the reputation of being a pragmatist and of being capable of adopting new approaches to national problems. The Government announced that a White Paper, setting out a full response to the Report's recommendations, would be published within a year.

Significantly, the Government assigned the work of preparing the White Paper to the Department of Finance. The traditional role of the Department had been radically changing in the 1950s and by 1964 it had moved away from a largely passive *laissez-faire* philosophy towards a positive interventionist approach to the problems of the national economy. It had also become closely concerned with macro-economic planning.

The Secretary of the Department of Finance in 1964 was T. K. Whitaker (born in 1916 in Co. Down) who was the principal author of *Economic Development* (Ireland, 1958), the pioneer study of how economic progress could be achieved in Ireland. A large measure of success was attributed to the first Programme for Economic Expansion which covered the period 1959 to 1963, when the gross national product increased by almost 23% in real terms. As even larger hopes were entertained for the second Programme, which was to cover the period 1964 to 1970, Whitaker's prestige both with the Government and with the general public was very high. When he had read the CRIL report he produced two memoranda which can be said to have had an effect on LP comparable to that which his 'seminal and celebrated minute' of 12 December 1957 had on economic planning (Fanning, 1978: 514).

Whitaker first addressed himself to a basic element in LP, that of goal-setting, which he set firmly in the context of economic planning:

The reference to economics does not imply a cold and narrow outlook. The heart must play a large part in the attitude to the Irish language... But love and admiration for the language may remain virtually inactive forces unless the mind is satisfied that what is desired is both reasonable and attainable. That is the core of the problem. (Whitaker, 1983).

It may be added that this is also a necessary condition for effective LP.

Whitaker analysed the brief and rather vague statements made in the Commission's report as to what the term 'restoration' meant. They suggested that what was envisaged was a change-over from English to Irish as the Irish people's normal means of communication. He showed that this goal went further than that suggested by the founders of the Gaelic League or in the writings of such figures as Thomas Davis and Father O'Growney (Growney, 1890/1963). He concluded that

the bilingualism which it would seem reasonable to promote is one in which: (1) English was still accepted in practice as a general vernacular, though Irish had primacy of respect as the national language; (2) a widespread knowledge of Irish was ensured by the educational system and otherwise; and (3) the voluntary use of Irish as a living language not only in the *Gaeltacht* but by individuals, families and groups outside the present *Gaeltacht* areas was sustained by a general education in Irish civilisation. (Whitaker, 1983).

These views, coming to the Government from such an influential and articulate source, were to form the basis on which much of subsequent LP thinking was developed.

The first authoritative public statement on the proposed language policy was made by the Taoiseach, Seán Lemass, at a Fianna Fáil meeting in Arklow on 12 April 1964:

The time has come for a redefinition of the national purpose in regard to the language ... The work for its restoration must be approached in the same systematic way as the Programme for Economic Expansion — setting targets which are reasonable and attainable and which will be generally regarded as such, measuring our progress from time to time and accelerating our rate of progress as results are achieved which encourage us to speed up. (Lemass, 1964).

LP was now firmly entrenched in Government thinking and the public sensed a major change of language policy. In the months preceding the publication of the White Paper, the language organisations were extremely active in putting pressure on the Government to respond to the Commission's recommendations.

In support of a national declaration (for which, it was claimed, some half a million signatures were ultimately collected) an extensive campaign was undertaken with public meetings and press advertisements using the slogan 'Let the Language Live'. There were even calls for a national referendum.

The Government's White Paper on the *Restoration of the Irish Language* (Ireland, 1965) set out three main aims for the immediate future: (1) to strengthen the social and economic life of the Gaeltacht; (2) to extend the use of Irish as a living language, oral and written; and (3) to provide, through knowledge of the language and its literature, wider access to Ireland's cultural heritage. It also emphasised the role of the public and the family, in addition to that of the State, in any general plan for Irish and stressed the need for applied research into the study and teaching of languages. It stressed the economic and social problems of the Gaeltacht, which as then defined had 78,500 inhabitants, but noted that these problems largely coincided with those posed by the small farm areas of the West. It also, for the first time in a Government document of this kind, recognised the value of English as an international language and as a means of access to the knowledge and culture of the English-speaking countries (where millions of people of Irish birth or descent resided) and to the large body of Irish creative and political literature in English. The term 'bilingualism', however, was not used.

While the White Paper may be said to mark the formal beginning of LP as a component of Government language policy, looked at generally from the viewpoint of LP, it had a number of limitations. As to *fact-finding* it contained little new although it did set out, for the first time in a Government document since the 1928 statement of the Gaeltacht Commission report, a detailed economic and social (but not linguistic or motivational) analysis of the critical situation in the Gaeltacht areas. As to *planning* it set out in general terms, as already noted, the goal of making Irish a general medium of communication while maintaining standards of literacy and fluency in English. It also indicated the aims for the immediate future and the importance of the role of the public and of the family, as well as the need for research and standardisation; its specified objectives were not, however, in general quantified or related to predicted results. As to *implementation*, many of the Commission's recommendations were left to the Ministers concerned, with the Minister for Finance, initially, exercising a co-ordinating and supervisory function and with a new Consultative Council helping to review policy. As to *feedback*, it gave no indication of how evaluation procedures, based on research into actual language uses, processes and behaviour could be developed so as to make possible an assessment in quantitative terms of the relative importance or practical results of the various measures proposed.

Reactions to the White Paper

The publication of the White Paper set off a widespread public debate on language policy. The main language bodies, The Gaelic League, Comhdháil Naisiunta na Gaeilge and Gael-Linn, issued statements cautiously welcoming the White Paper as a first step in the development of a planned approach but

expressing misgivings about the Government's responses to the recommendations of the Commission, which showed a certain reluctance to go as far as the Commission intended. Other language bodies, notably Misneach (Courage) whose spokesman was the leading Irish language writer Mairtín Ó Cadhain (1906–1970), condemned both the White Paper and the Commission's report as totally inadequate (Ó Cadhain, 1970).

The Fianna Fáil party were in office so the White Paper was regarded as the authoritative statement of their policy. The main opposition party, Fine Gael, were in the process of reviewing the entire range of their policies and early in 1965 they published a policy document entitled *Towards a Just Society*. In it they used arguments not unlike those of the Government to argue for a lower status for Irish than the Government envisaged. In particular they proposed to remove 'compulsory' Irish in the various forms in which it existed in the educational system and the civil service. An elaborated version of this policy statement was issued in stencilled form in June 1966 and later published. It may be noted that the Fine Gael document referred to the 'maintenance' of Irish while the White Paper referred to 'restoration'.

The Fine Gael document also claimed that Fianna Fáil proposed to replace English by Irish. The first Progress Report on the White Paper (Ireland, 1966) replied plainly that it was not the Government's policy that the English language should be discarded but rather that the use of the Irish language should progressively be extended. This was a significant clarification, as the White Paper had appeared to some to suggest reservations in such sentences as 'for a considerable time to come English will remain the language chiefly used outside the Gaeltacht for various purposes' and 'a competent knowledge of English will be needed even in a predominantly Irish-speaking Ireland'.

The Fine Gael document made use of empirical research on the teaching of Irish in primary schools (Macnamara, 1964, 1966). This was a palpable point since the Commission had not carried out any research of this complexity. The Fine Gael document said:

We cannot ignore the evidence recently produced in a scientific study of bilingualism in primary education that 42% of the time spent on subjects other than religious knowledge in these schools is devoted to Irish, while only 22% is devoted to English, the language of the home of the vast majority of the pupils, 24% to Arithmetic and only 12% to all other subjects.

Although Macnamara's findings had been the subject of considerable dispute, they had evidently made an impact. In the first Progress Report on the White Paper (Ireland, 1966) it was stated that

the introduction of these courses (graded in accordance with Buntús Gaeilge research) into the schools should result in more efficient teaching of Irish and also allow of a reduction in the time allocated to it as a subject, thus making more time available for other subjects of the school curriculum.

Clearly the importance of research as a support for LP was being increasingly recognised.

On 7 April 1965, a general election was held which resulted in a working majority for Fianna Fáil. The language issue had been raised by Fine Gael during the campaign but the electoral results disposed of it for the time being. A debate on the White Paper took place in the Senate on 10 and 11 November 1965, during which the opposition (Fine Gael) Senator Garret FitzGerald, a future Taoiseach and author of a book on economic planning, called for 'a scientific study of public attitudes to the Irish language in both parts of Ireland, with a view to providing the factual basis required for the formulation of a language policy that will secure the maximum enthusiasm for the language and that will minimise the present apathy and hostility'. He added 'those who insist on extending the old policy of making Irish essential for more and more purposes, ignoring the evidence of the effects of this policy and refusing to institute a study of these effects, are not serving the cause of the language'. It was partly to meet arguments of this kind that the Committee on Language Attitudes Research was later to be established (see below).

A further move to widen the debate on language policy came on 10 March 1966 with the launching of the Language Freedom Movement. This organisation numbered academics, writers, and prominent businessmen among its patrons. Its activists, however, were not without their own brand of zealotry. It sought 'to promote a realistic approach to the Gaelic language and to remove compulsion and discrimination from the language policy'. It also proposed 'an objective, competent and exhaustive research project' to report on 'the desirability, feasibility, relative importance and probable cost of any language replacement policy' and to ascertain 'the real views of the Irish people on the Gaelic language, State language policy and language replacement methods'. It injected an element of publicity, and entertainment, into the language debate by means of campaigns of letters to the press and public meetings. These activities were, of course, resented by many Irish language supporters. At one such meeting, for example, it was reported (*Irish Independent* 22.9.1966) that 'there was a platform fist-fight, the Tricolour was twice seized, an attempt was made to set the stage curtains alight and speeches were in turn cheered, jeered and made inaudible by foot-stamping'. Soon the LFM was claiming that it had over 5,000 subscribing members.

Language and National Identity: Changing Perspectives

Another notable change in language attitudes at this time concerned the role of Irish as a 'core value' in the political and social identity of the nation. In the debate of the 1960s about language policy, Irish language activists appealed to sentiments of nationalism and looked for validation to the statements of the leaders of the struggle for independence, notably Pearse, Collins and de Valera. As it happened, feelings of nationalism were raised to a high pitch during the year 1966 by the special ceremonies and celebrations throughout the country to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Easter Rising of 1916, to honour those who took part

in it (particularly Pearse) and to emphasise its importance as a decisive event in Irish history. In a special message to the Irish people, Éamon de Valera (by now President) said that the men of 1916 could not be adequately honoured if all did not work and strive to bring about the Ireland of the dead patriots' desire, in the realisation of which the Irish language had a vital role. 'No nation with a language of its own would willingly abandon it ... They know that without it they would sink into an amorphous cosmopolitanism without a past or a distinguishable future' (Moynihan, 1980: 606).

But the tides of change exerted strong pressures in the opposite direction. Economic development and the increasing impact of technology were clearly linked more to the English than to the Irish language. In the 1960s the rate of change in these areas accelerated, resulting eventually in the transformation of Ireland from a mainly rural to a mainly urban society. The new media of radio and television spread through the country. While Section 17 of the Broadcasting Authority Act of 1960 contained safeguards for the national language, in practice, the amount of Irish which could be used on radio and in particular on television was largely governed, apart from the level of public knowledge and acceptance of Irish, by factors such as the need to make the service pay its way, the competition with British stations for listeners and viewers and the extent to which the service had to draw on external sources for programme material.

A further aspect of the effects on LP of the opposition between the forces of nationalism and cosmopolitanism came to the fore during the debate about Ireland's accession to the European Economic Communities. The second round of negotiations began in September 1966 and culminated in the Treaty of Accession which was signed on 22 January 1972 and which was approved in a national referendum a few months later. The Irish Government pressed to have Irish designated as an official language of the enlarged Communities. However, realising that the official translation into Irish of the innumerable Community texts, directives, regulations, etc., would give rise to serious practical difficulties, the Irish negotiators proposed that there should be provision to limit the extent to which Irish translations would have to be required. In this way it was hoped to protect the position of the Irish language, respect national sensitivities and avoid the creation of large-scale translation problems. In the event, Irish was not designated as a working language of the Communities but it was recognised to the extent that the Treaty of Accession provided for an Irish version of the Treaty which had equal authenticity with other language versions. Irish versions of the Accession, EEC, Euratom and ECSC Treaties were subsequently published (EEC, 1972) and Irish was designated as one of the official languages of the European Court of Justice. This status as a 'Treaty' language could be regarded as a form of recognition less than that given to larger national languages (English, French, Danish, etc) but more than that given to the regional languages (Welsh, Breton, Frisian, etc) of the EEC (e.g. by means of the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages).

The treaty provisions and the possible effects on LP EEC membership were widely debated in the years leading up to the referendum. The Gaelic League took a strong anti-EEC line and argued that lesser-used languages would be neglected

in the wider community and that there would be a diminution of the Government's authority to decide policy on strengthening the Gaeltacht and the Irish language (Conradh na Gaeilge, 1971). Others (Ó Raifeartaigh, 1972) argued that stepping outwards into the diverse company of other western European nations with numerous languages would be more beneficial culturally than remaining in a virtually monoglot Atlantic grouping and that ultimately nobody was going to maintain the Irish language and way of life except the people of Ireland.

Implementing Language Policy

As already noted, the co-ordination and supervision of language policy measures on the lines set out in the 1965 White Paper was assigned to the Minister for Finance, and the role of helping to review policy was assigned to a consultative council. Progress reports were to be issued at intervals. The first progress report, covering the period ended 31 March 1966, was published by the Government in December 1966 (Ireland, 1966). As well as clarifying the point that the policy was not to discard English but to extend the use of Irish, it surveyed the measures taken in the various domains and concluded that a comprehensive programme of research was urgently needed to direct the next phases of the implementation of the White Paper's proposals.

As promised in the White Paper, the Government appointed a Consultative Council on the Irish language to help review policy and advise on its future development, again with particular reference to the extension of the use of Irish in spheres other than that of public administration. By 1968, when the term of the Consultative Council came to an end, there was a general feeling in political and language circles that a further comprehensive review of language policy was still required. Accordingly, the Government appointed a new body, Comhairle na Gaeilge, to provide advice and assistance as regards Irish language policy. A distinct swing towards the new technocrats can be discerned in its membership.

In his address at the inaugural meeting on 18 July 1969, the Minister for Finance (C.J. Haughey) stressed as key issues the relationship between the two vernaculars, the need for research into varieties of bilingualism, and the future of the Gaeltacht (Haughey, 1969). The Minister's suggestion for a broad study of the question of bilingualism led to a request from Comhairle na Gaeilge to Máirtín Ó Murchú, then lecturer in Irish Language and Linguistics in University College, Cork, for a paper setting out the general concepts of linguistics, with particular reference to individual and societal bilingualism, and a sociolinguistic perspective on the Irish language situation. The resulting paper *Language and Community* (Ó Murchú, 1971) had a considerable influence. Thereafter, there was a noticeable shift in the terms of discourse away from such traditional phrases as 'badge of nationality', 'spiritual identity' or 'expression of the Irish mind' and towards a terminology which facilitated the objective description of possible bilingual situations and of possible ways in which the community could accept certain conventions of language behaviour.

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The first result of this new approach was a report from Comhairle na Gaeilge (1971a) entitled *Towards a Language Policy*. This report discussed the various kinds of bilingualism which could exist with particular reference to *diglossia*, which was defined as the pattern of language behaviour of a bilingual community involving the association of one language with some more-or-less specifiable domains of social activity and the other language with some other domains. These ideas were further developed in Comhairle na Gaeilge's (1972) report *Implementing a Language Policy*. At the macro level, it suggested the aim of a 20% use of Irish, on average, by persons outside the Gaeltacht by the end of the century; the figure of 20% was of course a general indication for purposes of illustration rather than a precisely calculated target. This increase was to be achieved by progressively attaining a greater amount of Irish-English bilingualism generally in some universal or extensive domains of language use. Thus, a significant improvement would have taken place if in a generation certain advances had been made: if in the home, for example, it was felt natural to speak Irish and a large minority of households had already begun to do so, at least in some recreational activities; or if in the work domain, Irish had been progressively extended in the public service and fewer public employees would regard competence in Irish as a requirement unrelated to their work or to the language situation in the community at large. Various suggestions were made as to how these situations could be brought about, and it was recommended that the general function of extending the use of Irish throughout the country should be assigned to a new statutory board, to be called Bord na Gaeilge (Ireland, 1978).

A number of important changes in the administration of the civil service were made in this period to improve the position of Irish, but it would take us too far afield to describe them here (cf. Ó Ciosáin, 1983). With regard to the implementation of the proposals for the Gaeltacht, Comhairle na Gaeilge (1971b) responded by submitting their report *Local Government and Development Institutions for the Gaeltacht*. The basic recommendation was that Gaeltarra Éireann and the SFADCO (Shannon Free Airport Development Company, regarded as a model of good management) should set up a working group to prepare a report on a co-ordinated series of programmes for the Gaeltacht areas. That recommendation was accepted at Ministerial level and within a few months the working group submitted its (bilingual) report *Gníomh don Ghaeltacht: An Action Programme for the Gaeltacht* (Ireland, 1971). The main recommendation was for the establishment of a new State agency, Údarás na Gaeltachta, which would be partly elected and would take over the existing developmental functions of Roinn na Gaeltachta and Gaeltarra Éireann.

The increased responsibility which was given to Gaeltacht people for local administration in this period also reflected the successes of Cearta Síbhialta na Gaeltachta (Gaeltacht Civil Rights), a Gaeltacht pressure group whose name had associations with Catholic Civil Rights movements in Northern Ireland at the time. This group had been engaged in a campaign of meetings and demonstrations demanding a more active, locally administered policy for the development of the Gaeltacht areas. Another of their demands was for an all-Irish local radio service, which eventually began broadcasting in 1972.

The Role of Language Research in LP

In all the discussions about language policy, it had become increasingly evident that there was a need for authoritative information about the current state of the Irish language, the degree to which people supported the general aim, their attitudes to various policies, how and when they used Irish and their ability in Irish. Accordingly, in September 1970, following a recommendation from Comhairle na Gaeilge, the then Minister for Finance and the Gaeltacht (G. Colley) set up the Committee on Language Attitudes Research (CLAR) to provide the necessary information. The Committee consisted of 18 members, most of whom had been professionally involved in linguistic or social research. The 15 Irish members were drawn mainly from third-level educational institutions. The three members from abroad were Dr J. A. Fishman of Yeshiva University, New York; Dr W. F. Mackey, Director, International Centre for Research into Bilingualism, Quebec; and Dr J. L. Williams, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Wales, Aberystwyth. The Committee's research programme, which took over four years to complete at a cost of some £188,000 was carried out by a full-time research staff. This was the first major study of its kind undertaken in Ireland and in many ways the work carried out was of a pioneering nature, even by international standards. It may be noted that it was confined to the 26 counties of the Republic.

The Committee's report (CLAR, 1975) was a lengthy and detailed document with implications for all aspects of language policy. The Committee reported strong support for a bilingual objective, based on a widely shared set of beliefs about the cultural and ethnic symbolic significance of the Irish language. However, an almost equally significant majority did not support many of the means that had been employed in the attempt to achieve this objective. In particular, there was a widespread objection to 'compulsory' policies. The report showed that there was widespread disappointment with Irish as experienced in school and with the low levels of communicative competence acquired in the language, even for secondary school students who went as far as the Leaving Certificate. The surveys on the general conversational ability levels achieved in schools had shown that there was a basis of fact for these beliefs and that, for students who completed their education at primary level or even at Group or Intermediate Certificate level, competence levels achieved in Irish were very low. For Group Certificate students, especially, high examination failure rates in the past appeared to have been a real basis for resentment against the language.

The main attitudinal basis of support for Irish, therefore, was in terms of its ethnic, ideological and cultural significance, but there was considerable objection to negative instrumental sanctions for learning the language. At the same time, some instrumental motivation seemed necessary for most school students learning any subject, in particular a second language. Such instrumental motivation might have contradictory effects; it could help considerably to increase ability but it might help to build up antagonism as well. As to the popular resentment against 'compulsory' policies, the report cautioned that policy changes which might improve public attitudes towards the language in the

short term might in the longer term result in a decline in ability and usage. Similarly there should be an awareness of the limitations of public support, especially if it were grounded in mistaken beliefs and did not appreciate the extent to which existing measures were contributing to the achievement of a bilingual objective.

The research undertaken demonstrated that a complex set of factors determine (i) people's attitudes towards Irish; (ii) actual achievement, even by those with positive attitudes, of threshold communicative competence, and (iii) use of that competence, once achieved. In the past, Irish language policies had been based on a misunderstanding of the potentialities of the educational system. Although that system was not designed to produce communicative competence in a second language, early language planners had taken for granted that the task of producing Irish speakers could be left mainly to the schools. The disappointing results were interpreted by many as proof that the task was impossible. Given the complexity of the problems involved it was, therefore, the Committee's view that unless future policy developments were based on solidly researched foundations — particularly in sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics — and unless the consequences of policy alternatives were continuously monitored, there could very easily be a cumulative decline in Irish over the coming 50 years. The policies previously adopted had failed to arrest the decline of Irish in the Gaeltacht, but had built up levels of ability and usage in non-Gaeltacht areas which numerically offset the losses in the Gaeltacht. This apparent equilibrium concealed the fact that the use of Irish as a community language was still diminishing. Changes in policy were therefore required; however, no change should be made without careful assessment of its likely consequences and every change made should be subject to regular review.

A further development in the direction of improved information-gathering was the establishment of Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann (The Linguistics Institute of Ireland) in its present form in 1972. The Institute had originally been set up in 1967 under State patronage in succession to the Language Centre at Gormanston College, to consolidate the progress made by the Centre in linguistic research, to ensure that further research into Irish, English and other modern languages would be carried out in an orderly and scientific manner and to broaden the scope of linguistic research to include teaching methods, teacher training, the psychological and sociological problems of language learning and aspects of applied linguistics generally. The Institute operated as a section of the Department of Education under its Director, Father Colmán Ó Huallacháin, OFM, who was appointed on a five-year contract, and an Advisory Committee, the composition of which was approved by the Government. Work undertaken by the Institute at this stage included the survey of spoken Irish from which emerged Buntús Gaeilge and the graded conversation courses for schools.

The Committee's finding that there was a widespread objection to 'compulsory' policies had been anticipated by politicians and others who monitored public opinion. In the course of the campaign preceding the general election held on 28 February 1973, the main opposite parties formed a National Coalition and issued a statement against compulsory Irish; on being returned to



Government they removed the principal forms of compulsory Irish, namely the required pass in Irish for public examinations and entry to the civil service. It may be noted, however, that Irish continued to be essential for most entrants to the constituent colleges of the National University of Ireland, as it had been since before the foundation of the State. And in practice, proficiency in Irish continued to be essential for most appointments in the clerical and executive grades of the civil service because the intense competition for such appointments meant that a candidate who did not obtain a suitable credit in Irish would not be highly placed in the examination; however, appointments to grades intended for university graduates were increasingly obtained by candidates who did not offer Irish as a subject. The activities of *Gaeleagras na Seirbhíse Poiblí*, which had been founded in 1971 to extend the knowledge and use of Irish in the civil service, were considerably expanded, particularly its scholarship courses in the Gaeltacht.

Summary and Conclusions

Thus we arrive at the general framework for LP as it exists at the present time. It is true that by the end of our period of study, 1974, other forces had already weakened some of the premises underlying LP. The 1970s saw a decline in the popular belief in the efficacy of centralised indicative planning. In the economic sphere, the oil crisis of the early 1970s and outbreaks of violence, including the troubles in Northern Ireland, showed that economic planning could be largely nullified by external factors and discontinuities. Moreover, the internal disciplines required for successful economic planning were not always forthcoming. In the case of LP also, it had become increasingly clear that the State's ability to influence the linguistic behaviour of the general public was severely limited for reasons other than the vagueness of many of the targets originally chosen or the State's reluctance to pursue them vigorously. Linguistic behaviours and attitudes are simply difficult to change.

It can be surmised, therefore, that LP will itself be subject to a radical reappraisal in due course. That is not my concern here, however. I have tried rather to show the emergence of the LP perspective in the state language policy over a 10-year period, demonstrating the various conflicts and tensions associated with its basic tenets. We saw how debate on Irish was changed in this period and how language policy was removed from the political issues debated at subsequent general elections. The broad but sometimes crude instrumental sanctions previously applied in the State administrative and educational systems had been significantly modified, and a number of specialised State agencies had been established with terms of reference aimed at developing the use of Irish on a voluntary basis.

By way of summary, and for the benefit of those who may wish to look for similar patterns in the development of state language policy in other countries, I conclude with an annotated list of nine basic shifts of emphasis which indicate the essence of LP as it emerged in Ireland in the period under review.

1. *Goal*: Replacement (of L1 by L2) versus Bilingualism (L1 plus L2). Although it was seldom made explicit at the time, the ultimate goal, or ideal, in

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the early years of the State was generally understood to be a unilingual one, with L2 (Irish) taking the place of L1 (English) except for communication with the world outside. The stated goal now is a bilingual one with L2 being used to a progressively greater extent in some significant domains of language use. In practice, the immediate aim is to maintain and if possible develop the use of L2 in the domains in which it has a foothold.

2. *Context: Ireland versus Europe.* The linguistic situation was formerly seen solely in terms of the relationship within the State between L1 and L2 with little or no consideration of situations elsewhere, even in Northern Ireland. Now the focus has been widened to include the developing European Community where L1 is in relationship with a number of main official languages (French, Spanish, German, etc.) and the position of L2 (although internally the first official language) is comparable to that of a number of lesser-used languages (Welsh, Breton, Basque, etc.).

3. *Dynamic: Decolonisation versus Modernisation.* Formerly L2 tended to be perceived in negative terms as non-L1 and LP as part of a decolonisation programme. The emphasis is now on the positive value of L2 to ethnic authenticity and cultural self-confidence. In official publications the rhetoric of nationalism has to a large extent been replaced by the terminology of linguistics.

4. *Information Base: Assumed Goodwill versus Research.* Assumptions about popular goodwill towards LP measures have been replaced for planning purposes by comprehensive sociolinguistic data on attitudes, ability and usage among different groups.

5. *Implementation: Government versus State Agencies.* Formerly, official language planning measures were decided either collectively by the Cabinet or by individual members of it (normally after consideration of papers presented by civil servants, on request, or following representations by pressure groups); implementation and monitoring was the responsibility of the Minister concerned and his civil servants. Now, under the legislation enacted and arrangements made in the 1970s, a number of quasi-autonomous State agencies are charged with the implementation and/or monitoring of language planning measures within specified areas.

6. *Means: Directive versus Promotional.* Previously, when language planning was a direct concern of Government, LP measures were usually promulgated by official directive, with little or no consultation with the target groups concerned. Now, the terms of reference and practice of the executive language agencies emphasise promotion, advice, co-ordination and assistance.

7. *Incentives: Instrumental versus Integrative.* Formerly, the main incentives applied to intensify the acquisition and use of L2 included the regulations which made a qualification in L2 essential for the award of the Leaving Certificate and for employment and promotion in the general established grades of the civil service. That requirement has been modified but the incentives offered under Gaeltacht schemes have been improved and greater use has been made of the mass media to convey such messages as 'it's part of what we are'.

8. *Priorities: State System versus Youth/Mass Media.* In practice, the State administrative system was seen as the priority area for the application of language

planning, partly because it was considered that the imperial administrative system had played a critical part in the ousting of L2 by L1 and that that process should be reversed. Now, greater emphasis is placed on the role of the public, the family and young people and on the potential of the new mass media.

9. *Feedback: Informal Perception versus Research data.* Where, previously, assessment of the effects of language planning depended largely on informal perception, various specialist sources of feedback, in particular the Linguistics Institute of Ireland, have now been made available.

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