

# THE IRISH LANGUAGE AND THE IRISH PEOPLE

(Report on the Attitudes towards, Competence in and Use of the Irish  
Language in the Republic of Ireland in 2007-'08)

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(Senior Research Officer)



**FOREWORD**

**By**

**Maolsheachlainn Ó Caollaí**  
*Iar-Uachtarán, Conradh na Gaeilge*

Survey and Research Unit, Department of Sociology,  
National University of Ireland Maynooth.

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The author wishes to acknowledge and express his gratitude to everyone, who in any way, contributed to this Report on *The Irish Language and the Irish People*. The Report is based on a national survey of a representative sample of adults (18 years and over) in the Republic of Ireland carried out between November 2007 and March 2008. Thanks is due, in the first place, to the 1,015 respondents who agreed to be interviewed on a wide range of topics, including the Irish language. The work of the interviewers is also to be praised.

The Economic and Social Research Institute is acknowledged for carrying out and supervising the fieldwork on commission. The work of Mr Fergal Rhatigan, M.Soc.Sc., as Senior Research Officer of the total project, has been central to the successful processing of the data and their conversion into findings presented in this text. Administrative Assistants, Mrs Maria Woulfe and Mrs Teresa Hunt have been largely responsible for the typing and presentation of this Report.

An t-Uasal Maolsheachlainn Ó Caollaí was linguistic advisor to the author and agreed to write the **Foreword** to the text. The support and advice of Professors Seán Ó Riain and Michel Peillon of the Department of Sociology, NUI Maynooth, are most gratefully appreciated. I also acknowledge the support of my Jesuit Superior, Fr Derek Cassidy, S.J., for his help and encouragement.

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Finally, I wish to thank the members of the **Project's Advisory Committee**: Professor Seán Ó Riain (Cathaoirleach), Professor Brendan Whelan, Dr Dorothy Watson, Maolsheachlainn Ó Caollaí and Dr Larry Bond. Authors whose work is quoted in the text below are also gratefully acknowledged. It was decided to publish this report in English in order to reach the highest possible readership. An Irish language version of the **Summary and Conclusions** is available. *Míle buíochas don uile duine a chuidigh liom san obair seo.*

*Micheál Mac Gréil, S.J.*  
*Loch Chluain,*  
*Cathair na Mart,*  
*Co. Mhaigh Eo.*

*18ú Feabhra 2009.*

## **Foreword**

by

**Maolsheachlainn Ó Caollaí**  
*Iar-Uachtarán, Conradh na Gaeilge*

When the nine (or was it ten?) men came together at two meetings in July 1893 to form *The Gaelic League* “for the purpose of keeping the Irish Language spoken in Ireland” their project seemed to be a mad, forlorn hope. During the previous hundred years or so, a centuries-long process of Anglicisation had resulted in a very rapid language shift in which Irish was replaced by English as the everyday language of the majority. The 1891 Census of Ireland indicated that, in a very few years, there would be no new native speakers. In the lifetime of one or two more generations, the remaining speakers would disappear.

The 1893 people and their successors soon realised that the limited objective of “keeping Irish spoken in Ireland”, even if it were achieved in the short term, would not be sustainable in the long run if the current language dynamics were to remain unchanged. In the absence of a high comparative status and widespread use in public life, Irish could not rely, generation after generation, on patriotism or other emotion as motivating factors for achieving nationwide learning and use of Irish. For the vast majority of people, over long time scales, the determinant is the perception that acquiring and using a language is absolutely necessary in achieving normal personal aspirations in the major social and cultural domains. The language movement realised they had to raise their sights much higher, and went for a full restoration of Irish. Together with others, they set about getting a native State which, they were confident, would create the conditions in which the language shift could be reversed. Eventually, in 1922, an Irish State was established in 26 of the 32 counties of Ireland, and the language project continued, mostly now under the aegis of the new State.

How can we now assess the success or failure of this great and unique experiment? Clearly, Irish has been kept “spoken in Ireland”. That in itself amounts to



a near miracle. But what about indicators which would let us know the extent to which the grand objective of **restoring** the language and securing its **future** has been successful? In producing *The Irish Language and the Irish People*, the author, Dr Micheál Mac Gréil S.J., has provided for policy makers, language planners and others, the third in a long-time series of studies (34 years) of the peoples' language attitudes and behaviour. The report of the first such study in the series was contained as a chapter in his internationally acclaimed book, *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland*, a 1973 survey of intergroup attitudes and relations which was based on his doctoral thesis and was published in 1977. It became an essential source for students, commentators, policy makers and government administrators. The second report which was contained in the author's book, *Prejudice in Ireland Revisited*, was published in 1996.

The current report, *The Irish Language and the Irish People* is part of a third, similarly large and wide-ranging survey of social attitudes and behaviour of adults in the geographical area of the Irish State carried out to the same exacting standards. The 1,015 respondents were aged 18 years or over. The field work was done between November 2007 and March 2008 by the Economic and Social Research Institute. Most of the questions regarding Irish replicated those of the previous surveys. But, with the intention of exploring some of the reasons for the low use of Irish by respondents with adequate ability in Irish, three new questions were added. For a number of reasons, a Gaeltacht sub-sample was not undertaken.

Over the thirty-five years encompassed by the three surveys, positive **attitudes and aspirations** for Irish have been maintained at very high levels. Of the Irish-born sample in 2007/'08, over 40% wish to see the language revived, while over 52% desire to see it preserved. Positive aspirations were held, therefore, by **over 93%**. The figure for the **total** sample, (including those not born in Ireland), was the same. Those who wished to see Irish "discarded and forgotten" amounted to 7%. Given the relentless expression of negative attitudes in much of the popular mass media, the consistency and strength of positive attitudes and the paucity of numbers of those who would wish to see the end of Irish, are truly remarkable.

The survey also measured self-perceived **competence** in Irish. Apart from the small Irish-speaking communities, competence is gained only through the school system. All children in the Irish State are expected to learn Irish throughout their primary and secondary schooling, and that has been the case since the late 1920s. Since the nineteen fifties, in the mainstream schools, Irish is taught through the medium of English, and contact with Irish is limited to the Irish class. A third of the teachers, in the words of the relevant minister, “do not have oral capacity in Irish”. As might be expected, many pupils, even after twelve years or more at school, fail to gain a useable level of knowledge and skills in the language.

In the mid-nineteen sixties, as a response to the continual downgrading and sidetracking of Irish in the mainstream schools, the voluntary language movement, successors of the people of 1893, began an alternative initiative which has resulted in a continuing build-up of new networks of total immersion pre-schools and primary and post-primary schools. These *naíonraí* and *gaelscoileanna* generally achieve very high prestige, and many have long waiting lists. They attract the active participation of parents and, by this means, they create new networks of speakers and increase the use of Irish.

Status is also improved not least by their provision of a significant level of employment for pre-school staff and for primary and post-primary teachers working through the medium of Irish. Although growing rapidly, the *naíonraí* and *gaelscoileanna* represent what is still a fairly small section of the school-going population, (in 2009 they cater for almost 40,000 children outside the Gaeltacht). But the past-pupils are believed to already have had a positive influence on the figures for competence in Irish and attitudes to the language in the wider, adult society.

Dr Mac Gréil S.J., finds that over 9% of the adult, Irish-born population consider themselves to be “Very Fluent / Fluent”. A further 31% believe they are “Middling” fluent and yet another almost 16% see themselves as being “Not so Fluent”.

Cumulatively, over 47% of the sample feel they have at least some level of fluency. The 9% result in the “Very Fluent / Fluent” category in 1988 to 2008 seems to indicate “no change” in this crucial measure. But the author feels it may even conceal a decrease in competence being acquired in mainstream schools which is masked by the positive results of the Irish-medium schools. The message is that, unless an element of immersion is introduced in the mainstream English-medium schools, there will be continued failure.

As was to be expected, the difference in Irish language ability between the total sample and the Irish-born in the sample is quite substantial. This reflects partially the recent large influx of new residents who never have had contact with Irish. Having already established the very encouraging fact that those not born in Ireland have levels of positive aspirations for Irish similar to those of the Irish-born, it can be hoped that the immigrant children will be given the support of the parents in learning the Irish language. Surely the children are entitled to learn the native language of the Irish people in order to enable them to relate fully to the core of Irish identity, the language, culture and tradition of their adopted country. Dispensations from learning Irish in the school may well be already depriving many of the immigrant children of the opportunity to learn Irish. This may create alienation in the future, and cannot be the right way to go about integration.

But dispensations from learning Irish affect far more than the immigrant population. Figures released by the Department of Education and Science showed that in the year 2006, a total of 11,871 pupils were exempted from learning Irish to the level of Leaving Certificate **on the basis of certificates of learning inability**. Since such exemptions are issued only in “rare and exceptional circumstances”, it must mean that the inability complained of has to be an acute and severe mental handicap. Nevertheless, over half of the exempted, numbering 6,341, were immediately able to overcome their inability to the extent that they were able to go on and study one or more continental languages in addition to their English first language! Apparently a new but not at all rare form of mental handicap has been discovered by the professional consultants – a language learning inability which applies only to one language – Irish!

The research on “The Frequency and Occasions of Use of Irish” reports that 10.8% of the Irish-born sample use Irish weekly or more often, while 11.8% use it “occasionally”. Cumulatively that amounts to 22.6%. The 1893 people, in their initial frame of mind, before they realised that any situation short of restoration would be unstable, no doubt would have been pleasantly surprised 116 years later to find 22.6% of the Irish-born using Irish, at least occasionally. But as we have seen, attitudes are overwhelmingly positive, and over 47% of the adult, Irish-born population perceive themselves to have some level of fluency. So what is the reason for the **gap between competence and use?**

As did several previous researchers, Dr Mac Gréil S.J., comments on this and concludes that “the harnessing of the favourable attitudes to stimulate those with reasonable competence to use Irish more frequently should be possible if the social constraints on the speaking of Irish are acknowledged and effective strategies devised to enable those with the necessary competence in Irish to overcome them”.

As long ago as the early 1970s, in a major research report, the Committee on Irish Language Attitudes Research (Report 1975) drew attention to the effect of social language norms on the speaking of Irish. The norms identified restrict the speaking of Irish to situations in which the participants know each other’s language competence, know that each participant wishes to speak Irish and know that none of the participants is a non-speaker of Irish. The absence of any one of these conditions will normally guarantee that the conversation will be in English. The author, in discussing the occasions on which Irish is used, valuably illustrates the influence of peer pressure on social behaviour with a reference to the study of the Bank Wiring Group in the Hawthorn Works of the Western Electric Company which will be familiar to everybody who has studied any of the behavioural sciences.

For the first time in the series he introduced three new questions to elicit information on what has been described as the ecology of language. Irish-born

respondents who had a “reasonable” competence in Irish reported on their attitudes to using Irish. Almost 60% were “committed to using Irish as much as one can”. Nearly 66% were “reluctant to converse in Irish when unsure of a person’s ability to speak Irish” and 63% were “reluctant to speak Irish when others who don’t know Irish are present”.

Fundamentally, this means that, almost regardless of any increases that can be achieved in individual competence in Irish, until the influence of the social norms is addressed, the speaking of Irish cannot become commonplace and normalised in the society, and competence gained in the schools will be wasted.

Because the existence and influence of the norms has never been explained to the public and no effort made to change them, opponents of the language frequently claim that the failure to convert learning of the language in the schools since independence into widespread use is an indication that the current people of Ireland have rejected Irish. Perhaps Dr Mac Gréil’s work will prompt the language planners to think “outside of the box”!

The report has several measures of the crucially important **comparative social status** of Irish. Language status of course, is many-faceted and can be measured in several dimensions. One measure is the status of speakers of a language, and the author shows that there is a positive correlation between occupational status and frequency of the use of Irish. The most frequent users throughout the State are shown to be those with the **highest** occupational status. The Bogardus Social Distance Scale was employed by Dr Mac Gréil to “measure and monitor intergroup attitudes and prejudice” including attitudes to Irish speakers. Given the prevailing mass-media attitudes already mentioned, one might have expected that Irish speakers, and therefore the Irish language, would have very low levels of status. *Ní mar a shíltear bítear* (things are not as they seem). Respondents indicated the closest point on a scale of seven levels of social distance, to which they would welcome an Irish speaker. Eighty-four percent would welcome an Irish speaker to the highest level of status which is **kinship**. This means that Irish speakers are within the top four in the order of preference of a total of fifty-one stimulus

categories. The author finds it amazing that this very high level of social preference has been maintained at least since the 1988/'89 study. In a suggestion which refers back to the social norms and which must be of the highest interest to language planners, he asks why, despite this very high esteem for Irish speakers, only 22.7% of the Irish-born reported that they speak/use Irish regularly, even though 47.2% of the sample see themselves as being reasonably competent in Irish. He goes on to suggest that “the main obstacles to a greater use of Irish are structural and outside the personal scope of most people”.

The author also reports on his research on Irish Ethnic Identity and, in that context, informs us that there has been “a significant and substantial change in the opinions of people in relation to the potential of the Irish Language as a symbolic basis of common identity for all Irish people”. There has been a very large reduction in the percentage who disagree with the proposition that Irish Language and Culture could provide a good basis for Irish unity in the long term, and a significant increase in those who agree. There has also been a substantial increase in the percentage who see themselves primarily as “Irish”. This represents a shift away from local identity to the national level. The “European” identity as the primary ethnic self-identity failed to make significant progress, and reaches only 3%.

The findings of this research are so packed with revealing information on the developing relationship between Irish society and its endangered language that it must be studied in great detail by those who decide and implement language policy. If the men of 1893 were to re-appear to re-start their revolution, one feels that first they would avidly devour this report and, armed with the data, information and knowledge presented, would launch several new strategic initiatives which would clear away blockages and exploit the many unexplored opportunities, and thus ensure that the restoration of the Irish language will indeed be completed.

*Feabhra 2009*

# **Chapter I**

~

## **Introduction**

# **The Irish Language and the Irish People**

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

The following Report measures and monitors the Irish people's attitude towards the Irish language and their perceived competence in and use of Irish. The findings presented in this text are based on a national survey (National Random Sample) of the attitudes and opinions of the adult population (18 years and over) of the Republic of Ireland between November 2007 and March 2008. The fieldwork was carried out by the Economic and Social Research Unit (ESRI) on commission.

Most of the questions asked of the 1,015 respondents, who agreed to be interviewed, were replicated from a similar national survey in 1988-89 and from a survey of Greater Urban and Suburban Dublin in 1972-73. In the case of the 2007-08 and 1988-89 surveys, the random sample was chosen from adults eighteen years and older, while the 1972-73 survey's sample was taken from adults of twenty-one years and older.

The overall positive message emerging from the findings of the 2007-08 survey has been the continued increase in the support for the Irish language and competence in it by respondents with higher education and the more highly prestiged occupations. This trend had been identified in the findings of the 1988-89 national survey. It means that the crucially important 'social status' of Irish is on the increase in the Republic.

The reasons for the change in the social standing of the native language are multiple, and further research would be required to verify the causes. This has not been possible because of constraints of time and resources. Hopefully, others will probe the causes in future surveys. Among the possible or probable causes of improvement in the social standing of Irish would be the raising of public awareness of Irish resulting from the public debate around the passing of *Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 (Official*



*Languages Act 2003*) and the successful campaign for official status for Irish within the European Union in recent years.

It will also be clear from the findings of the National Survey 2007-08 that for the national language policy the **most disappointing result** in the overall is the difference between ‘**reasonable**’ competence in (47%) and ‘**regular**’ use of (23%) Irish, i.e. for Irish-born respondents. The filling of this gap is a matter of priority. The high support for the **revival** and **preservation** of Irish should facilitate the State and others in taking action to encourage popular changes in the **patterns** and **occasions of use**. The support of the State and of the voluntary movements is necessary to arrive at a joint strategy in favour of a substantial increase in the regular use of Irish in the life of the people.

A third major finding of this Report is the **overwhelming dependence** of the Irish language on the **public education system**. The success of the Irish-medium or total immersion pre-schools (*naíonraí/naiscoileanna*) and primary and secondary schools (*gaelscoileanna*) is reflected in the results presented below. Competent and viable teaching in Irish in every national/primary and second-level school (as well as in the Irish-medium sector) is essential to enable all of our citizens to acquire the native language. The public support is there for such a programme.

It is proposed to present the findings in a number of chapters:

- (a) Aspirations of the People for the Future of Irish;
- (b) Self-perceived Competence in the Irish Language;
- (c) Frequency and the Use of Irish;
- (d) Irish as an Acceptable Symbolic Basis of Irish Unity;
- (e) Irish Ethnic Self-Identity and Other Attitudes towards Irish;
- (f) Summary and Conclusions

Information on the Irish language was compiled, as stated, from a national social survey of inter-group relations and social and cultural attitudes and behaviour. The interview of a random sample of adults (eighteen years and older) was carried out between November 2007 and March 2008. The normal tests and controls have been

applied to the data. In cross-tabulation only variations with a chi-square of  $p < 0.05$  or less are acceptable as statistically significant, i.e. not due to chance. Variations are considered **substantial** by the range of difference between the sub-sample percentages.

Fairly detailed Tables are presented to enable the readers to see for themselves the relative significance of the findings. These findings should be of particular interest to persons involved in the restoration of the Irish language and culture. The discovery of **patterns** and **correlations** in the variable findings will be of special interest also to the sociologist and to the socio-linguist in order to explain causes and changes in a theoretical manner. The statistical influence of each personal (ordinal) variable on the other variables and on **competency in Irish, frequency of use of Irish and dispositions towards Irish now** is spelled out on the three path-analysis diagrams in the Appendix.

Most of the detailed analysis by personal variables has been done in relation to the **Irish-born**, i.e. 85% of the Total Sample. Respondents who were not born in Ireland (with some exceptions) have not had the opportunity of learning Irish when young, and come from a different socio-cultural background, except in the case of a number of respondents born to Irish parents abroad. During previous studies in the 1970s and in the 1980s, the level of in-migration to the Republic of Ireland was hardly significant because the country was predominantly an emigrant society. This has changed considerably since the late 1990s.

This Report is written from the perspective of the restoration or revival of the Irish language. The findings are explained from an objective basis. The interpretation of these same findings is made in the light of their significance for the promotion of the restoration of the Irish language. Some may judge this to be a normative perspective. Since most, if not all, interpretations of social and cultural findings, are normative, the approach of the Report is acceptable and does not interfere with the objectivity of the findings themselves. Readers are given access to all the findings on which the interpretations are made. This enables them to seek a different interpretation where the findings permit.

## **Chapter II**

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# **Aspirations for the Future of the Irish Language**

## Chapter II

### Aspirations for the Future of the Irish Language

#### Part I - Introduction and General Findings

Three measures which are indicative of the state of the Irish language in the national population are examined in the Report, i.e.

- (a) **Aspirations** of respondents in relation to the future of the Irish language;
- (b) **Competence** in the language;
- (c) Frequency in the **use** of Irish.

In the case of each of these measures, the findings of this Report can be compared with those of previous surveys.

In this chapter the aspirations of the national sample for the future of the Irish language are presented and analysed. Changes in these aspirations are gauged over the past thirty-five years, and the findings of the current survey by personal variables are also examined.

**Table No. 2.1:**  
**Aspirations for the Irish Language of the Total Sample and of Those Born in Ireland**

<b>Aspirations for Irish</b>	<b>Total Sample A</b>		<b>Irish-Born B</b>	
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
1. Irish as Main Language	3.7%	3.7%	3.4%	3.4%
2. Bilingual – Mainly Irish	4.7%	8.4%	4.9%	8.3%
3. Bilingual – Mainly English	32.5%	40.9%	32.1%	40.4%
4. In Gaeltacht & for Cultural Reasons	52.5%	93.4%	52.8%	93.2%
5. Discarded & Forgotten	6.6%	--	6.7%	--
Number	100.0%	973	100.0%	839

One of the most interesting findings in Table No. 2.1 is the complete consensus between the total and the Irish-born sub-sample. This confirms the amazing agreement between those who were born outside Ireland and the Irish-born.

The level of support for the native language is very impressive at 93%. A little over half of the sample agrees that the Irish language should be **preserved** for its cultural value and spoken in the *Gaeltacht*. Forty per cent of respondents would wish to see the language **revived** throughout Irish society. Bilingualism with English as the principal language is the preference of four-fifths of those in favour of revival throughout the population. Of course, bilingualism in society can take many forms.

The level of change in aspirations since 1988-89 has been insignificant statistically, which means the pattern has been maintained. One rarely finds such a consistency of variation in survey research of a national population, i.e. in the case of two national samples with a gap of eighteen/nineteen years between them.

**Table No. 2.2:  
Changes in the Aspirations for the Irish Language since 1972-73**

Aspirations for the Irish Language	National Sample 2007-08	National Sample 1988-89	Change (A-B)	Dublin Sub-Sample 2007-08	Dublin Sub-Sample 1988-89	Dublin Sample 1972-73	Change (C-E)
	A	B		C	D	E	
1. Irish as the Main Language	4%	4%	0.0%	6%	3%	8%	-2%
2. Bilingual: Irish as Principal Language	5%	5%	0.0%	8%	3%	10%	-2%
3. Bilingual: English as Principal Language	33%	34%	-1.0%	28%	31%	33%	-5%
4. Preserved in the Gaeltacht and Revived for its Cultural Value as in Music and Arts	53%	52%	+1.0%	45%	61%	34%	+11%
5. The Irish Language Should Be Discarded and Forgotten	7%	6%	+1.0%	13%	4%	15%	-2%
Number	973	1,000	--	246	274	2,282	--

The positive attitudes towards the Irish language have been **‘maintained’ nationwide** since 1988-89 and have not been reduced by the influx of so many **immigrants** coming to Ireland as a result of the success of the so-called ‘Celtic Tiger’. The advance of the **economic institution** into a pivotal position in Irish society has resulted in a consequent reduction in the standing of the other socio-cultural institutions. The resultant materialism is not very favourable to national culture, as manifested in the Irish language and culture. The past decade, because of the conditions of the rise of the materialist culture, might have been expected to undermine public support for the Irish language and culture. The results in columns A and B in Table No. 2.2 confirm that the Irish language has just held its own.

The role of changes in public policy in *Dáil Éireann* (supported by all parties) and of the Irish Government seems to be bearing some fruit in maintaining for the Irish language a degree of viability in face of the sudden rise of materialism and globalisation. Increases in the social status of Irish such as the establishment of TG4, *Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003*, together with the operation of the provisions of that Act, the achievement of **official status** for Irish in the **European Union** and the success of the **Irish-medium sector** in education are likely to have had a positive influence on the aspirations, and prevented serious negative changes in the people’s attitudes. The **voluntary language and cultural movements** have continued to encourage new leaders and reinforced those already committed to the revival of the language and the support of art and culture. Specific research would be necessary to get an accurate estimate of the various influences which have combined to counter the growing and prevailing materialist culture of the currently pivotal economic institution in the Republic of Ireland.

The changes in the percentages in the National Sample between 1988-89 and 2007-08 are **not statistically significant**. Those changes in the attitudes of Dublin people between **1972-73** and **2007-08** are significant but quite moderate, and less than the changes between 1972-73 and 1988-89. Support for the revival of Irish in Dublin in 1972-73 was actually higher than that recorded in 1988-89. The move towards bureaucratic pragmatism had not yet asserted itself (in 1988).

The rise of *naíonraí* (the Irish-medium sector in pre-school education) and *gaelscoileanna* (Irish medium schools) seems to have sprung from the cultural idealism of earlier decades in the life of the post-independent State. These pre-school groups and schools are likely to be a positive influence on the maintenance of support for the preservation and revival of the native language. Currently the Irish pre-school groups and schools are growing in popularity, although in the case of primary and post-primary Irish-medium schools, establishing them at times seems to involve a struggle with officialdom.

## **Part II - Aspirations of the Irish-Born for the Future of the Irish Language by Personal Variables**

In Part I above, the people's aspirations for and opinions on the future of the Irish language were presented, and the changes in these dispositions over a number of years were discussed. In Part II it is proposed to examine these findings in greater detail.

Table No. 2.3 gives a breakdown of the general findings by the personal variables of age, gender, area of birth, place of rearing, region of residence, education, occupational status and personal 'take-home' income. This breakdown is restricted to the respondents who were born in Ireland, because it would not be reasonable to expect first-generation Irish inhabitants to have become involved with, or shared the experience of, being Irish throughout most of their lives.

**Table No. 2.3:  
Aspirations for the Future of the Irish Language of Irish-Born Respondents  
By Personal Variables**

Variable	Irish as Main Language	Bilingual with Irish as Principal Language	Bilingual with English as Principal Language	Revived (1+2+3)	Preserved for Cultural and Gaeltacht reason	Discarded and Forgotten	Number
	(1)	(2)	(3)		(4)	(5)	
Total Sample	3.3%	4.9%	32.1%	<b>(40.3%)</b>	52.9%	6.7%	840
<b>(a) Age (p&lt;.002)</b>							
1. 18-25 Years	6.5%	5.6%	29.8%	<b>(41.9%)</b>	52.4%	5.6%	124
2. 26-40 Years	5.7%	6.1%	38.2%	<b>(50.0%)</b>	45.9%	4.1%	246
3. 41-55 Years	0.5%	4.2%	33.0%	<b>(37.7%)</b>	53.8%	8.5%	212
4. 56-70 Years	1.8%	4.2%	28.5%	<b>(34.5%)</b>	60.0%	5.5%	165
5. 71 Years plus	2.2%	4.3%	23.7%	<b>(30.2%)</b>	55.9%	14.0%	93
Number	28	42	270	<b>(340)</b>	443	57	840
<b>(b) Gender (p&lt;.04)</b>							
Male	3.3%	5.6%	34.3%	<b>(43.2%)</b>	48.0%	8.9%	394
Female	3.4%	4.3%	30.2%	<b>(37.9%)</b>	57.3%	4.7%	443
Number	28	41	269	<b>(339)</b>	443	56	837
<b>(c) Area of Birth (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1. City (100,000+)	4.4%	5.9%	34.1%	<b>(44.4%)</b>	46.6%	9.1%	320
2. Large Town (10,000+)	3.6%	9.5%	32.1%	<b>(45.2%)</b>	52.4%	2.4%	84
3. Town (1,500+)	0.9%	4.5%	35.7%	<b>(41.1%)</b>	55.4%	3.6%	112
4. Rural/ Village	3.4%	2.8%	28.9%	<b>(35.1%)</b>	58.4%	6.5%	322
Number	29	41	269	<b>(339)</b>	443	56	838
<b>(d) Place of Rearing (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1. Dublin (City / Co)	6.4%	8.0%	31.5%	<b>(45.9%)</b>	43.4%	10.8%	251
2. Rest of Leinster	1.2%	3.1%	30.4%	<b>(34.7%)</b>	63.4%	1.9%	161
3. Munster	3.0%	3.5%	34.8%	<b>(41.3%)</b>	53.0%	5.7%	230
4. Connaught / Ulster	2.6%	5.8%	27.1%	<b>(35.5%)</b>	56.8%	7.7%	155
Number	29	42	250	<b>(341)</b>	421	55	797
<b>(e) Region of Residence (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1. BMW*	2.3%	2.8%	29.0%	<b>(34.1%)</b>	61.8%	4.1%	217
2. Dublin	6.6%	7.8%	27.5%	<b>(41.9%)</b>	45.5%	12.7%	244
3. Mid-East & South East	4.3%	6.4%	37.8%	<b>(48.5%)</b>	51.1%	0.5%	188
4. Mid-West & Sth West	0.0%	2.1%	36.3%	<b>(38.4%)</b>	53.7%	7.9%	190
Number	29	41	270	<b>(340)</b>	443	56	839
<b>(f) Education (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1. Primary or less	1.9%	4.7%	25.2%	<b>(31.8%)</b>	51.4%	16.8%	107
2. Incomplete Second-L.	5.1%	5.1%	29.5%	<b>(39.7%)</b>	53.2%	7.2%	237
3. Complete Second-Lev.	3.8%	1.9%	30.8%	<b>(36.5%)</b>	55.9%	7.6%	211
4. Third-Level	2.4%	7.3%	37.8%	<b>(47.5%)</b>	50.3%	2.1%	286
Number	29	42	270	<b>(341)</b>	443	57	841



<b>TABLE No. 2.3 (Cont'd)</b>	<b>Irish as Main Language</b>	<b>Bilingual with Irish as Principal Language</b>	<b>Bilingual with English as Principal Language</b>	<b>Revived (1+2+3)</b>	<b>Preserved for Cultural and Gaeltacht reason</b>	<b>Discarded and Forgotten</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Variable</b>							
<u>(g) Occupational Status (p&lt;.02)</u>							
1 Unskilled / Semi	5.3%	4.7%	28.1%	<b>(38.1%)</b>	56.1%	5.8%	171
2. Skilled/ Routine non-m	2.7%	4.3%	28.9%	<b>(35.9%)</b>	58.2%	5.9%	256
3. Inspectional / Supervisory	1.7%	2.5%	27.3%	<b>(31.5%)</b>	62.0%	6.6%	121
4. Professional /Executive	3.8%	5.6%	45.6%	<b>(55.0%)</b>	40.6%	4.4%	160
Number	24	31	228	<b>(283)</b>	385	40	708
<u>(h) Take-Home Income (p&lt;.001)</u>							
1. Under €6,000 p.a.	3.3%	3.3%	55.0%	<b>(61.6%)</b>	35.0%	3.3 %	60
2. Under €24,000 p.a.	1.5%	5.1%	29.7%	<b>(36.3%)</b>	55.9%	7.7%	195
3. Under €60,000 p.a.	7.1%	7.7%	20.2%	<b>(35.0%)</b>	59.6%	5.5%	183
4. €60,000 plus p.a.	0.0%	3.3%	41.1%	<b>(44.4%)</b>	51.1%	4.4%	90
Number	18	29	165	<b>(212)</b>	285	31	528

\* (Border, Midlands and West)

The percentages in brackets indicate the proportion of each sub-sample who wishes to see Irish **revived**. Those in Column 4 wish to have the language **preserved**, while the percentages in Column 5 would have the language **discarded**.

The findings of the **total sample** of Irish-born respondents are given in the first row, i.e.

(a)	<b>Revived</b>	=	<b>40.3%</b>
(b)	<b>Preserved</b>	=	<b>52.9%</b>
(c)	<b>Discarded</b>	=	<b>6.7%</b>

A good guide to evaluating the findings of sub-samples is to see how they fluctuate from the **sample average** as given above. All variables except **Marital Status** recorded a significant variation between the sub-samples.

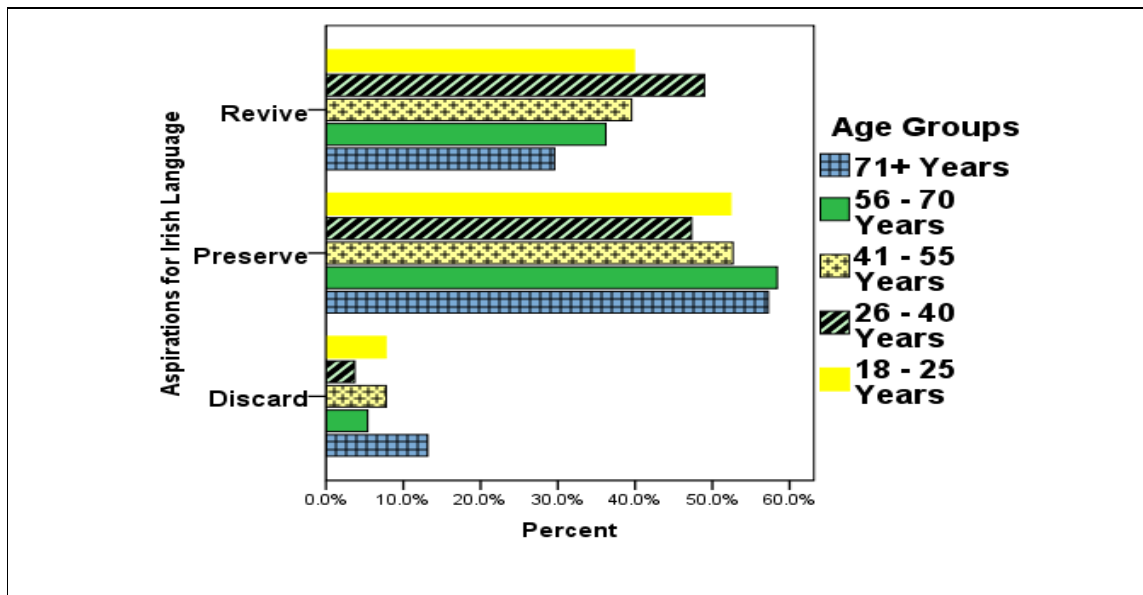
**(a) Age and the Future of Irish:**

The results of this variable are quite favourable from the point of view of aspirations for the language. The following summary table is an extract from Table No. 2.3:

<u>Variable - Age</u>	<u>Irish should be:</u>		
	<u>Revived</u>	<u>Preserved</u>	<u>Discarded</u>
1. 18 to 25 years	<u>41.9%</u>	52.4%	5.6%
2. 26 to 40 years	<u>50.0%</u>	45.9%	4.1%
3. 41 to 55 years	37.7%	<u>53.8%</u>	<u>8.5%</u>
4. 56 to 70 years	34.5%	<u>60.0%</u>	5.5%
5. 71 years plus	30.2%	<u>55.9%</u>	<u>14.0%</u>
(Sample Average)	(40.3%)	(52.9%)	(6.7%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

**Figure No. 1**  
**Aspirations for Irish Language by Age**



The two younger sub-samples are the most positively disposed to the future of the Irish language. In the case of the **26 to 40 year-olds**, more were in favour of ‘revival’

(50%) than were for 'preservation' (45.9%). Both sub-samples' percentages for 'discarding and forgetting' Irish were below the sample averages.

The most pessimistic sub-samples were the 'senior-middle-aged', i.e. 56 to 70 year olds and the older age group, 71 years plus. They were below sample averages in 'revival'. The senior-middle-age group is an important cohort whose support is important in society. While still very positively disposed to the language (with only 5.5% in favour of discarding it), their aspirations for its **revival** are 15.5% lower than the most optimistic age cohort, i.e. the young middle-aged of '26 to 40 year-olds'. The reasons for this variation may be historical for the 'post-war generation'. The **senior- middle-aged** are a very significant group as they tend to be parents and who also exercise leadership roles in the various organisations, i.e. political, industrial, occupational, recreational, cultural, judicial, security, education, religious, media, etc. Therefore, their active support for the Irish language is necessary if Irish is to succeed in becoming a popular language in Irish society. There was a moderate element of pessimism in the case of **the oldest sub-sample** in that 14% would be willing to discard the language.

In the overall, the responses of the age sub-samples are quite positive, especially in the case of the under forties. This may reflect a new optimism and confidence which bodes well for future support for Irish if the appropriate policies and strategies are put forward. Without the latter, all the optimism in the world will achieve little.

#### **(b) Gender and the Future of Irish:**

The variation between the scores of males and females in relation to their aspirations for the Irish language in the future are interesting, if moderate. The range of difference between the percentages is quite low.

<u>Variable – Gender</u>	<u>Irish should be:</u>		
	<u>Revived</u>	<u>Preserved</u>	<u>Discarded</u>
1. Male	<u>43.2%</u>	48.0%	<u>8.9%</u>
2. Female	37.9%	<u>57.3%</u>	4.7%
(Sample Average)	(40.3%)	(52.9%)	(6.7%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The patterns of support by males and females are interesting. ‘Males’ are stronger for ‘**revival**’ and for ‘**discarding**’ while ‘females’ are stronger for the **preservation** (as in culture, arts and *Gaeltacht*) and least in favour of discarding the language. They were also weaker for **revival** than their male counterparts by 5.3%, i.e. 43.2% - 37.9%.

Research in several countries and diverse cultures has shown that women tend to play a leadership role in language shift. Any tendency towards negative attitudes to the revival of Irish among women would therefore be of concern, given the role played by many women in language socialisation, i.e. intergenerational transmission of language. At the same time, one should not exaggerate the significance of the above variations in the light of other findings which show the very positive attitudes of females towards Irish and their competence in and use of the language.

### **(c) Area of Birth and Urban Status and the Future of the Irish Language:**

‘Area of Birth’ is classified by the urbanised status of the area, i.e. City, Large Town, Town and Rural / Village. The socio-cultural significance of the rural-urban divide on the culture and social norms of the people has been greatly reduced by the intrusion of television and other forms of electronic media on the values and norms of the people. Broadcasting, printed mass media and, more recently, the Internet, have been **agents of cultural homogenisation**, which is largely urban and Anglo-American in its cultural base.

Nevertheless, there are differences of life-style affected by the **density** of population, the level of geographic mobility, the relative impact of extended family, and

local neighbourhood and the stability of residence. The rise of non-farming rural residents and ex-urbans has had an impact on the cohesion of rural / neighbour networks. The proliferation of the **motor car** has also had a traumatic impact on the culture of rural life as has the commercialisation of leisure and the arrival of **universal telephonisation** in the whole rural-urban population. All these changes have a considerable impact (positive and negative) on the aspirations and opinions of the people in both rural and urban environments in relation to the future of the Irish language.

<u>Variable - Area of Birth</u>	<u>Irish should be:</u>		
	<u>Revived</u>	<u>Preserved</u>	<u>Discarded</u>
1. City (100,000 +)	<u>44.4%</u>	46.6%	<u>9.1%</u>
2. Large Town (10,000 +)	<u>45.2%</u>	52.4%	2.4%
3. Town (1,500 +)	<u>41.1%</u>	<u>55.4%</u>	3.6%
4. Rural / Village	35.1%	<u>58.4%</u>	6.5%
(Sample Average)	(40.3%)	(52.9%)	(6.7%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The above extract from Table No. 2.3(c), shows a very interesting pattern which indicates that the ‘rural/village’ sub-sample is less in favour of the **revival** and more for the **preservation** of Irish for its cultural and *Gaeltacht* use and value. Since the trend in Irish society is towards greater urbanisation, increasing support for revival of Irish (subject to adequate programmes and strategies) into the future is likely. Rural Ireland is an area of great challenge for the revival. Still, the move from **preservation** to **revival** in the rural/village should be less difficult, because of the survival of community and family links.

*Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann* (a very large traditional musical organisation established throughout Ireland and the Irish diaspora) and *Cumann Lúthchleas Gael* (The Gaelic Athletic Association) are strong in rural Ireland and committed to the revival of Irish. They have the potential to generate programmes to modify existing language norms in their organisations and build Irish-speaking networks through their activities.

The above findings should give them more confidence in their endeavours for the Irish language in **rural** and **village** Ireland.

**(d) Place of Rearing and the Future of the Irish Language:**

By ‘place of rearing’ is meant where one spent the first 16 years of life – or the most part of it. The sub-samples are from Dublin City and County, Rest of Leinster, Munster and Connaught/Ulster. Since language is a cultural phenomenon, it has to be transmitted to the young and ‘handed-on’ from one generation to the next. What happened in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was **the failure** of one or two generations of Irish speakers to transmit or ‘hand-on’ their language to their children. The Irish language will never be revived or restored fully until parents pass it on to the children at a young and tender age as part of **primary** informal socialisation.

The following extract from Table No. 2.3(d) gives a breakdown of the impact of ‘place of rearing’ on aspirations for the future of Irish:

<b><u>Variable - Place of Rearing</u></b>	<b><u>Irish should be:</u></b>		
	<b><u>Revived</u></b>	<b><u>Preserved</u></b>	<b><u>Discarded</u></b>
1. Dublin City & County	<u>45.9%</u>	43.4%	<u>10.8%</u>
2. Rest of Leinster	34.7%	<u>63.4%</u>	1.9%
3. Munster	<u>41.3%</u>	<u>53.0%</u>	5.7%
4. Connaught / Ulster	35.5%	<u>56.8%</u>	<u>7.7%</u>
(Sample Average)	(40.3%)	(52.9%)	(6.7%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The results by ‘place of rearing’ show that ‘Connaught/Ulster’ reared respondents were the most pessimistic with regard to revival, while those from Munster were the most optimistic overall. The pattern of ‘Dublin City and County’ was strongest in favour of revival and also of the Irish language being discarded. An almost similar response-pattern was recorded for those born in a city of 100,000 plus. This makes sense and emphasises the **urban** factor.

**(f) Region of Residence and the Irish Language:**

Because of the high rate of geographic mobility in modern society, it is necessary to separate birth, rearing and current residence. The four sub-samples have been arrived at by doubling up the regions, i.e. BMW (Border, Midlands and Western Regions), Dublin Region, Mid-East and South-East Regions and Mid-West and South-West Regions. The reader is reminded that the sample is made up of respondents who were born in Ireland.

<b><u>Variable - Region of Residence</u></b>	<b><u>Irish should be:</u></b>		
	<b><u>Revived</u></b>	<b><u>Preserved</u></b>	<b><u>Discarded</u></b>
1. BMW (Border, Midlands & West)	34.1%	<u>61.8%</u>	4.1%
2. Dublin	<u>41.9%</u>	45.5%	<u>12.7%</u>
3. Mid-East & South-East	<u>48.5%</u>	51.1%	0.5%
4. Mid-West & South-West	38.4%	<u>53.7%</u>	<u>7.9%</u>
(Sample Average)	(40.3%)	(52.9%)	(6.7%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

When one compares the findings of the above sub-table with the previous one dealing with where respondents **were reared**, it is possible to detect the impact of geographic mobility. For example, the Dublin-reared were more positively disposed to the future of Irish than were those resident in Dublin.

<b><u>Irish Should Be:</u></b>	<b><u>Dublin-Reared</u></b>	<b><u>Resident in Dublin</u></b>	<b><u>Difference</u></b>
	<b><u>A</u></b>	<b><u>B</u></b>	<b><u>(A – B)</u></b>
1. Revived	45.9%	41.9%	+4.0%
2. Preserved	43.4%	45.5%	-2.1%
3. Discarded	10.8%	12.7%	-1.9%

The difference between the **Dublin-Reared** and those **Resident in Dublin** is significant. The former are more optimistic with regard to the future of Irish. We must remember that all respondents considered here are exclusively Irish-Born. The increase

in pessimism among the current residents' sub-sample is probably due to the influence of the non-Dublin-reared who had come to live in Dublin from the provinces.

Even allowing for the findings of Dublin residents being lower than those of Dublin-reared in relation to the **revival / restoration** of Irish, the percentage in favour of revival among the residents of Dublin is still above the sample average at **41.9%**. The most favourably disposed to the revival / restoration in Table No. 2.3(f) are those of the two eastern regions outside Dublin, i.e. Mid-East and South-East with 48.5% in favour of **revival** and only 0.5% in favour of the discarding of Irish. With such **support** in the growing Eastern counties of Ireland it should be possible to add to the teaching and promotion of Irish right across the regions. The above findings show that support for the Irish language is stronger in the so-called '**Pale**' than outside it! Now is the time to capitalise on this goodwill and relatively high optimism. The reason why these regions stand out will probably be explained in the variable (g), (h) and (i), i.e. **Education, Occupational Status** and '**Take-Home**' **Income**.

**(g) Education and the Irish Language:**

As already noted in Part I, education is probably the major contributory variable to one's competence in, and use of Irish. The history of the changes in the State's policy towards teaching Irish has been far from even or adequate to meet the needs, or even satisfy the expectations, of the Irish people over the past forty years. This was evident in the findings of the 1988-89 national survey, and will become clear from those of the current 2007-08 survey.

Largely due to the support of **voluntary organisations**, a parallel system of Irish-medium pre-schools, primary schools and (of late) an increase in the demand for places in Irish-medium, second-level schools have been 'forced' on the **Department of Education and Science** for recognition by Irish parents and special Irish language movements. There is also an echo of this demand for Irish-medium education in our Third-Level Colleges. The time appears to have arrived when the role of the State should be more



than offering merely passive recognition of Irish-medium schools and colleges. This whole development in Irish-medium education at best will only reach a minority of siblings from pro-Irish parents.

The standard of Irish teaching and learning **in all of the State's Primary and Second-Level Schools** needs to be monitored to ensure that the language and culture are effectively transmitted to the young. It is the view of many educationalists that second language cannot be acquired where it is taught **only** as a subject and where it is isolated from every other aspect of the pupil's life. The experience of great numbers of Irish children over a very long time bears this out emphatically. Change is needed, firstly in the attitude of the Department of Education and Science, and then in all aspects of the teaching of Irish in English-medium schools. Proposals for the use of Irish in some aspects of school life apart from the language class have been made. All this has serious implications for Teacher-Training Colleges and Departments or Schools of Education in our Third-Level Colleges. These demands are implicit in the findings of this survey.

The following sub-table is an extract from Table No. 2.3(g):

<b><u>Variable - Level of Education Reached</u></b>	<b><u>Irish should be:</u></b>		
	<b><u>Revived</u></b>	<b><u>Preserved</u></b>	<b><u>Discarded</u></b>
1. Primary or Less	31.8%	51.4%	<u>16.8%</u>
2. Incomplete Second-Level	39.7%	<u>53.2%</u>	<u>7.2%</u>
3. Complete Second-Level	36.5%	<u>55.9%</u>	<u>7.6%</u>
4. Third-Level	<u>47.5%</u>	50.3%	2.1%
(Sample Average)	(40.3%)	(52.9%)	(6.7%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The above findings are very interesting. Third-Level respondents who constitute 34% of the 'Irish-born' sample are substantially more optimistic than the other grades. Those with 'Primary or Less' constitute 12.7% of the sample and are the most pessimistic, with relatively low 'Revival' scores and high 'Discarded' percentages. The differences between the scores of the two Second-Level sub-samples are hardly

significant statistically. They are just half-way between those of ‘Third-Level’ and ‘Primary or Less’ sub-samples.

When it is realised that current trends in educational participation and achievement in Ireland are heading for **over two-thirds** with participation in Third-Level for the relevant age-cohort, the importance of the above sub-table for the future of the Irish language becomes very significant. It also marks the fruit of much work for the Irish language by teachers and leaders of the community down the years.

**(h) Occupational Status and the Irish Language:**

Occupational status in Ireland today reflects many changes in agriculture, industry and the services. The trends revealed in the 1988-89 survey which recorded the acute decline in the ‘Blue-Collar Workers’ has continued over the past two decades.

The following extract from Table No. 2.3(h) shows a significant but moderate variation between the four sub-samples:

<u>Variable - Occupational Status</u>	<u>Irish should be:</u>		
	<u>Revived</u>	<u>Preserved</u>	<u>Discarded</u>
1. Unskilled/ Semi-skilled	38.1%	<u>56.1%</u>	5.8%
2. Skilled / Routine Non-manual	35.9%	<u>58.2%</u>	5.9%
3. Inspectional / Supervisory	31.5%	<u>62.0%</u>	6.6%
4. Professional / Executive	<u>55.0%</u>	40.6%	4.4%
(Sample Average)	(40.3%)	(52.9%)	(6.7%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The above pattern is similar to that of Education variable in that the higher occupational status is significantly and substantially stronger in favour of **revival**. This is the first time that the **majority (55%)** of a sub-sample opted in favour of the revival of the Irish language. This once again confirms the pattern that support for the language has become very strong among the ‘occupational elite’! Should this category become a positive **role model** for others aspiring to get top professions, the Irish language’s status

will continue to increase. A very important element of the social status of a language is the social status of its speakers and supporters<sup>1</sup>. But this will not happen by default. Senior executives and high professionals are already giving example of their appreciation of the Irish language. The recent examples of *An Taoiseach* and leaders of the opposition using Irish in *Dáil Éireann* without fuss or bother point the way, and were to be expected from the above findings.

**(i) Take-Home Income and the Future of Irish:**

When examined by ‘Take-Home Income’, i.e. income after tax, the variations are not as anticipated in all cases because of the mixed positive correlation between income and occupational status. The following sub-table also shows a mixed result:

<u>Variable - Personal Income After Tax</u>	<u>Irish should be:</u>		
	<u>Revived</u>	<u>Preserved</u>	<u>Discarded</u>
1. Under €6,000 p.a.	<u>61.6%</u>	35.0%	3.3%
2. Under €24,000 p.a.	36.3%	55.9%	<u>7.7%</u>
3. Under €60,000 p.a.	35.0%	<u>59.6%</u>	5.5%
4. €60,000 plus p.a.	<u>44.4%</u>	51.1%	4.4%
(Sample Average)	(40.3%)	(52.9%)	(6.7%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The highest support for revival has been evinced by those with the lowest take-home income. In fact, this category of persons is likely to be dependent on others, e.g. part-time workers, etc. or totally poor materially. They constitute **10.9%** of the sample responding to the income question. The largest category are sub-sample No.2 i.e. those ‘taking home’ more than €6,000 and less than €24,000. They constitute **39.5%** of the sample. The under €60,000 category make up **33.6%** of the sample, while the high-income earners represent **16.1%** of the sample. It should be remembered that we are talking here about personal take-home income. Many households today have multiple earners.

<sup>1</sup> The remarkable revival of the *Me'phaa Language* in Mexico, ongoing from the nineteen seventies, was spearheaded by *Me'phaa* leaders (see Anoby, Stan J. “Reversing Language Shift: Can Kwak'wala Be Revived”, in Cantoni, St Clair and Yazzie, eds. *Revitalising Indigenous Languages*, Northern Arizona University, 1999). Website source: [http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/RIL\\_4.html](http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/RIL_4.html) (Date accessed 12.02.2009.)

The second highest support for the **revival** of the Irish language is in sub-sample No.4, i.e. the highest paid respondents. This goes to show that the very rich are not totally materialistic! They have expressed a high level of optimism and support for the native language. This support could also be harnessed to facilitate the bringing about of the general revival in due course!

### **Part III - Attitudes Towards Irish in School and Now**

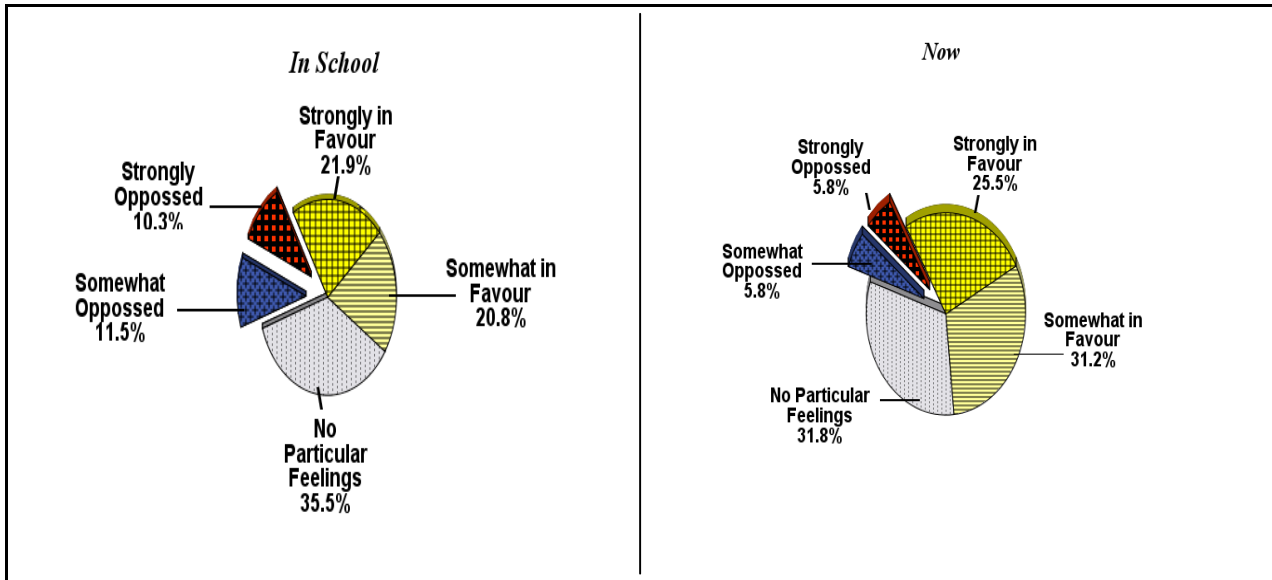
Respondents (Irish-born) were asked: *“Which of the following best describe the way you felt about Irish when in school and the way you feel now?”* The answers were pre-coded – “strongly in favour, somewhat in favour, no particular feelings, somewhat opposed, strongly opposed”. The purpose of the question was to discover if there was any change in attitude, and in which direction it moved.

The following Table No. 2.4 gives the findings for the Irish-born sample:

**Table No. 2.4:  
Attitudes of Irish-Born towards Irish in School and Now**

<b>Attitude Towards Irish</b>	<b>While in School A</b>	<b>Now B</b>	<b>Net-Change (B – A)</b>
1. Strongly in Favour	21.8%	25.5%	+3.7%
2. Somewhat in Favour	20.8%	31.2%	+10.4%
Total (1 + 2)	(42.6%)	(56.7%)	(+14.1%)
3. No Particular Feelings	35.5%	31.8%	-3.7%
4. Somewhat Opposed	11.6%	5.8%	-5.8%
5. Strongly Opposed	10.3%	5.7%	-4.6%
Total (4 + 5)	(21.9%)	(11.5%)	(-10.4%)
Number	848	842	--

**Figure No. 2**  
**Feelings towards Irish while in School and Now**



There is clear evidence in the above that the net-change, i.e. by subtracting the positive and negative changes, has been significant and fairly substantial. The change has been in the positive direction. In other words, the outcome of post-school experience and reflection has raised the level of commitment by **33.1%**, i.e. from 42.6% while in school to 56.7% now. This is a very important finding.

What are the causes of such a change in attitudes towards Irish? The most favourable explanation would be the **wisdom of age**, i.e. a sign of maturity. A less favourable explanation would be the unattractive way Irish was taught and the failure of the teachers to make the language attractive and worthwhile, i.e. few occasions of favourable image for Irish and poor stimulation of motivation. Also, there may have been a negative attitude towards Irish at home and among peers when in school. Some of it would have stemmed from the previously very low social status of Irish. Even the curriculum could be off-putting. The lack of adequate Irish-language school texts, and the failure to present Irish as a living language which could be used as a medium for teaching other subjects in school also may have contributed to the negative attitudes.

There are quite a range of possible causes to explain the relative unpopularity of Irish while at school as compared to later in adult life. It has been known for a very long time (UNESCO 1958) that acquiring only a nodding acquaintance with a language can lead to frustration. Frustration, of course, can lead to aggression. It is possible that schools which provide a lesser standard of Irish teaching could have built up (unwittingly) a degree of resentment against the language.

The results of Table No. 2.4 are not all negative. Twice as many respondents (42.6%) were in favour of Irish as were opposed to it (21.9%). This is not a bad result for the school experience and is a credit to those who had the task of teaching Irish down the years.

The changes in the 2007-08 National Survey and the 1988-89 one are spelled out in Table No. 2.5 below:

**Table No. 2.5:**  
**Changes of Attitudes towards Irish (1988-89 and 2007-08)**

Attitude towards Irish	When in School			Now			Now – Then Other Changes	
	1988-89 Sample A	2007-08 Sample B	B – A	1988-89 Sample C	2007-08 Sample D	Change D-C	C – A	D – B
1. Strongly in Favour	18%	22%	+4%	19%	26%	+7%	+1%	+4%
2. Somewhat in Favour	26%	21%	-5%	38%	31%	-7%	+12%	+10%
Total ( 1 + 2 )	(44%)	(43%)	(-1%)	(57%)	(57%)	(0%)	(+13%)	(+14%)
3. No Particular Feelings	33%	36%	+3%	29%	32%	+3%	-4%	-4%
4. Somewhat Opposed	13%	12%	-1%	9%	6%	-3%	-4%	-6%
5. Strongly Opposed	10%	10%	0%	6%	6%	0.0%	-4%	-4%
Total ( 1 + 2 )	(23%)	(22%)	(-1%)	(15%)	(12%)	(-3%)	(-8%)	(-10%)
Number	973	848	--	973	840	--	--	--

There has been little change in the percentages of the various sub-samples of the findings of the 2007-08 Irish-born Sample and those of the 1988-89 Total Sample. There

was a slight increase in the percentages who were ‘Strongly in Favour’, while in school, i.e. +4% and in those who were ‘Strongly in Favour’ now, i.e. +7%. The total numbers in favour (1+2) were practically identical in both cases, ‘While in School’ and ‘Now’.

The fact that the distribution remained more or less constant confirms the positive pattern of 33.3%, i.e. from a 43% to 57% increase between positive attitudes ‘While in School’ and positive attitudes towards the language later in life. The changes **within** the two favourable answers, i.e. rows one and two in Table No. 2.5, show a significant strengthening of the favourable attitude, change from ‘Somewhat in Favour’ to ‘Strongly in Favour’ over the nineteen/twenty years between the two National Surveys. This means that the post-school attitudes have been improving steadily. A firm pattern has been established. The challenge facing those with responsibility for the promotion of Irish would be to bring about a further strengthening of positive attitudes in favour of Irish in the students/pupils while at school.

Programmes of information integrated with plans of activity leading to increasing the use of Irish are necessary to avoid the possible build-up of frustration which could occur as a result of being highly motivated to learn the language and then not being able to use it. The link between the positivity of post-school attitudes and those while at school are in part due to mutually supportive parents and teachers.

The following Table No. 2.6 examines attitudes towards Irish while ‘in school’ and ‘now’ of the Irish-born by personal variables that elicited statistically significant variations:

**Table No. 2.6:**  
**Attitudes of Irish-Born towards Irish When in School and Now by Personal Variables**

Variable	While in School			Now			Change In Favour
	In Favour	No Particular Feelings	Opposed	In Favour	No Particular Feelings	Opposed	
Total Sample	42.8%	35.5%	21.9%	56.6%	31.8%	11.5%	+13.8%
(a) Age	(p<.001)			(p<.001)			
1. 18-25 Years	<b>46.9%</b>	35.2%	17.9%	<b>59.4%</b>	31.2%	9.4%	+12.5%
2. 26-40 Years	<b>43.2 %</b>	<b>37.7%</b>	19.0%	54.6%	<b>34.4%</b>	11.1%	+11.4%
3. 41-55 Years	32.5%	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>30.6%</b>	51.2%	<b>33.7%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>	<b>+18.7%</b>
4. 56-70 Years	<b>47.9%</b>	30.3%	21.8%	<b>67.1%</b>	24.4%	8.6%	<b>+19.2%</b>
5. 71 Years plus	<b>49.0%</b>	<b>35.9%</b>	15.2%	53.2%	<b>33.7%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	+4.2%
Number	361	300	185	478	267	97	---
(b) Gender	(p<.005)			(p<.05)			
Male	37.0%	<b>36.0%</b>	<b>27.0%</b>	53.7%	31.8%	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>+16.7%</b>
Female	<b>47.8%</b>	35.1%	17.1%	<b>59.3%</b>	31.8%	8.8%	+11.5%
Number	361	301	185	477	268	97	---
(c) Marital Status	(p<.001)			(p<.04)			
1. Single/Never Married	<b>45.3%</b>	35.2%	19.5%	54.9%	<b>33.1%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	+9.6%
2. Married	38.1%	<b>37.2%</b>	<b>24.7%</b>	56.0%	<b>31.8%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>+17.9%</b>
3. Separated/Divorced	30.0%	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>30.0%</b>	53.3%	<b>36.7%</b>	10.0%	<b>+23.3%</b>
4. Permanent Relat'ship	<b>55.6%</b>	29.6%	14.8%	<b>65.4%</b>	29.1%	5.4%	+9.8%
5. Widowed	<b>53.1%</b>	29.7%	17.1%	<b>61.6%</b>	26.2%	<b>12.3%</b>	+8.5%
Number	361	301	185	478	269	98	---
(d) Education	(p<.01)			(p<.001)			
1. Primary or less	33.3%	<b>42.8%</b>	<b>23.8%</b>	42.4%	<b>41.5%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	+9.1%
2. Incomplete Second-L.	39.3%	<b>43.5%</b>	17.1%	51.6%	<b>37.8%</b>	10.5%	+12.3%
3. Complete Second-Lev.	<b>45.1%</b>	31.0%	<b>23.9%</b>	54.7%	31.3%	<b>14.0%</b>	+9.6%
4. Third-Level	<b>47.0%</b>	29.8%	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>68.0%</b>	23.2%	8.8%	<b>+23.2%</b>
Number	361	301	184	478	267	97	---
(e) Occupational Status	(p<.001)			(p<.005)			
1 Unskilled / Semi	39.4%	<b>46.3%</b>	14.3%	52.0%	<b>39.8%</b>	8.2%	<b>+12.6%</b>
2. Skilled/ Routine non-m	35.4%	<b>37.3%</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	54.0%	<b>33.8%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>+18.6%</b>
3. Inspectional / Supervisory	<b>46.2%</b>	21.8%	<b>31.9%</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	21.7%	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>+16.2%</b>
4. Professional /Executive	<b>56.3%</b>	28.8%	15.0%	<b>66.7%</b>	25.2%	8.2%	+10.4%
Number	307	251	159	412	223	78	---

Note: Percentages above sample average are **bold**.

As stated already, positive attitudes towards Irish among students/pupils, parents and teachers are important if the learner is to acquire and relish the language. Teachers



and lecturers are keenly aware of the positive effects of motivation in the learning and teaching process. If supportive attitudes are strong in the adult population it is likely that the learner will get the necessary back-up at home. The goodwill needs to be harnessed to get the maximum results from the teaching of ‘living’ Irish in the schools throughout the country, especially in the English-medium primary and second-level schools. The mutual support of parents, students and teachers is basic to the revival and restoration of the Irish language.

**(a) Age:**

The findings of Table No. 2.6(a) are very interesting in that the most substantial percentage improvement in attitudes towards the language is among the middle-middle-aged and senior middle-aged. The following extract from Table No. 2.6(a) highlights the levels of commitment and of change at the various age-cohorts.

<u>Age Variable</u>	<u>While in School</u>		<u>Now</u>		<u>Change in Favour</u>
	<u>In Favour</u>	<u>Opposed</u>	<u>In Favour</u>	<u>Opposed</u>	
1. 18 to 25 years	<u>46.9%</u>	17.9%	<u>59.4%</u>	9.4%	+12.5%
2. 26 to 40 years	43.2%	19.0%	54.6%	11.1%	+11.4%
3. 41 to 55 years	32.5%	<u>30.6%</u>	51.2%	<u>15.1%</u>	<u>+18.7%</u>
4. 56 to 70 years	<u>47.9%</u>	21.8%	<u>67.1%</u>	8.6%	<u>+19.2%</u>
5. 71 years plus	<u>49.0%</u>	15.2%	53.2%	<u>13.0%</u>	+4.2%
Number	361	185	478	97	---
(Sample Average)	(42.8%)	(21.9%)	(56.6%)	(11.5%)	(+13.8%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

There is much to learn from the above extract from Table No. 2.6(a). The two age-groups 26-40 years and 41-55 years report the lowest percentages in favour of Irish while at school. The two cohorts were born between 1952 and 1981 and were at school between 1957 and 1999. It was during the period of 1960 until the 1990s that they were conscious of their attitudes as they experienced the learning and teaching of Irish at school. The ‘56 year olds and over’ seem to have been significantly more positive

toward the language during their time at school between 1941 and 1956. Of course, many who belong to these age-groups did not stay in school after 14 or 15 years of age. The ‘patriotic factor’ was still vibrant until the late 1930s. During that time the revival of Irish was very much an **explicit** ideal.

From the more pragmatic 1960s onwards, the philosophy of education seemed to change with greater emphasis on preparation for occupations and science and technology. The World Bank support for free education, introduced by Minister Donagh O’Malley, emphasised a move towards comprehensive education and, consequently, away from the humanities. Many in the 26 to 55 year old category would have experienced these pragmatic times. The demise of **Latin** and **Greek** and the loss of priority in teaching **Irish** could well explain some of the very unfavourable attitude (30.6%) towards Irish ‘while at school’ for the 41 to 55 years old sub-sample. This shift away from the classics and humanities heralded a **more pragmatic philosophy of education** in the service of the socio-economic development that occurred in Ireland following the Patrick Lynch report, *Investment in Education* in the 1960s.<sup>1</sup>

The change in the **41 to 55 year olds** sub-sample between ‘in school’ and ‘now’ from 32.5% to 51.2% (+18.7%), i.e. a change of **57.5%**, was very substantial. It reflects a source of encouragement. Since this age-group represents a **parental age-cohort of school-going** pupils and students, their change of attitude may be reflected in support of their children’s learning of the Irish language. It is also among this group of parents one finds those who are in favour of *Naíonraí* and Irish-medium schools.

The senior middle-age group of respondents, i.e. the **56 to 70 year olds**, recorded the most positive actual increase from school to now, namely, from 47.9% to 67.1% (+19.2%). This is a change of 40% from an already relatively high level of support while ‘at school’. Because of their authoritative role in society this age-cohort tends to exercise senior-leadership roles. Their level of support for the Irish language must give

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Lynch, *Investment in Education*, OECD, Dublin, 1966.

further confidence to those supporting the revival of Irish and raise the status of the native tongue.

The relatively positive results of the young adults (18 to 25 years) may surprise some critics of young people’s indifference to socio-cultural values. They, too, increased substantially from a high base while at school. This young age-cohort in all probability have benefited from the positive views of their parents, now in the 41 to 55 and 56 to 70 year-olds sub-samples, and may also be responding to the increased social status of Irish which is outlined above in Chapter II.

**(b) Gender:**

The gender variable produced statistically significant variations in both the ‘while in school’ and ‘now’. Females were more positive in both sets of replies. The following sub-table spells out the differences:

<u>Gender Variable</u>	<u>While in School</u>		<u>Now</u>		<u>Change in Favour</u>
	<u>In Favour</u>	<u>Opposed</u>	<u>In Favour</u>	<u>Opposed</u>	
1. Male	37.0%	<u>27.0%</u>	53.7%	<u>14.4%</u>	+16.7%
2. Female	<u>47.8%</u>	17.1%	<u>59.3%</u>	8.8%	+11.5%
Number	361	301	477	97	---
(Sample Average)	(42.8%)	(21.9%)	(56.6%)	(11.5%)	(+13.8%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The pattern of difference is very clear and shows females to be significantly and substantially more in favour of Irish ‘while in school’ and ‘now’. The differences are more in the ‘while in school’ columns. These were reduced somewhat by the (5.2%) bigger change in favour of Irish ‘now’ for men as compared with women’s change.

Is this an expression of the differences between male and female sub-cultures? The man’s world view is often seen to be more pragmatic and expedient, while the women’s outlook tends to embrace a broader (culturally speaking) set of values of which the Irish language and culture would be a feature. In relation to attitudes toward religion,

a similar difference of value-systems has been discerned in the findings of the Religious Report from the current survey.

The differences experienced ‘while in school’ may also reflect a difference of **cultural ethos and curriculum priorities** proposed for boys and for girls. The role of mothers in the primary socialisation of children is critical. Language is an important subject of primary (informal) socialisation. Therefore, it is to the advantage of the restoration of the Irish language that mothers are positively disposed to its teaching.

**(c) Marital Status:**

Marital status and the restoration of the Irish language as a living language in the homes of the people are obviously linked. The main sociological function of the family/home, according to sociologist **Talcott Parsons**, is **tension management**, i.e. the provision of an environment where the member can relax<sup>1</sup>. In a world that is more and more bureaucratised, there are fewer areas where the individual ‘can let his or her hair down’ without losing status (speaking metaphorically). Family relations are **personal** and **informal** in contrast with work and civil relations, which are **formal** and **contractual**. All kinds of social, cultural and psychological problems emerge when the family is dysfunctional.

First languages are learned, generally speaking and ideally, at our ‘mother’s knee’. Hence the meaning of the concept ‘**mother tongue**’. This is the great privilege of being raised in the *Gaeltacht* or in an Irish-speaking family. For the vast majority of Irish citizens, English is their ‘mother tongue’. It is the language of the home, of the village and of the neighbourhood. For that reason, most of our young people are almost totally dependent on the **local school** for initiation in the Irish Language. The learning of Irish demands more motivation than that of learning English, which has pragmatic as well as cultural reasons for our mastering it.

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<sup>1</sup> See Parsons, Talcott, *The Social System*, Glencoe, Illinois, Free Press, 1951.

The importance of the findings presented in Table No. 2.6(c) are, therefore, very relevant to the advancement of learning Irish. The support of members of the family is crucial. The following extract from Table No. 2.6(c) spells out the current situation:

<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>While in School</u>		<u>Now</u>		<u>Change in Favour</u>
	<u>In Favour</u>	<u>Opposed</u>	<u>In Favour</u>	<u>Opposed</u>	
1. Single/Never Married	<u>45.3%</u>	19.5%	<u>54.9%</u>	<u>12.1%</u>	+9.6%
2. Married	38.1%	<u>24.7%</u>	56.0%	<u>12.2%</u>	+17.9%
3. Separated/Divorced	30.0%	<u>30.0%</u>	53.3%	10.0%	+23.3%
4. Permanent Relat'ship	<u>55.6%</u>	14.8%	<u>65.4%</u>	5.4%	+9.8%
5. Widowed	<u>53.1%</u>	17.1%	<u>61.6%</u>	12.5%	+8.5%
Number	361	185	478	98	---
(Sample Average)	(42.8%)	(21.9%)	(56.6%)	(11.5%)	(+13.8%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The above findings are interesting in that the 'while in school' shows a wide range of variations, while the various rates of changes in favour of the language between 'school' and 'now' bring all variables 'into line' with a modest range of differences. For instance, the lowest in favour 'while in school' (the **separated/divorced**) at 30% increased by 77.7% to reach 53.3% in favour of Irish 'now'. Those in **permanent relationships** were most in favour 'while at school' at 55.6% and were also on top of the list at 65.4% 'now'. The increase in the support of the **married** from 38.1% in favour to 56% 'now', i.e. an increase of 47% was very significant since this sub-sample represents 47.3% of the sample. Also the **married** represent the vast majority of parents. The very strong support of the **single** and **widowed** is also noteworthy. The overall picture is indicative of positive trends in support of Irish. The fairly negative figure from the 'while at school' was significantly changed over the years to **now**.

#### **(d) Education:**

Standard reached in education is an interesting variable when the central question examined is the effect of the education or schools' experience on the attitudes towards the Irish language. While both the 'while in school' and the 'now' figures are statistically

significant, the former is quite moderate in the range of variations. The latter shows a much wider range and shows a clearly positive correlation between standard reached and support for the language. This confirms the finding of the Aspirations for the Future of Irish Table (see Table No. 2.3(f)) above.

The following sub-table is an extract from Table No. 2.6(d):

<u>Educational Standard Reached</u>	<u>While in School</u>		<u>Now</u>		<u>Change in Favour</u>
	<u>In Favour</u>	<u>Opposed</u>	<u>In Favour</u>	<u>Opposed</u>	
1. Primary or Less	33.3%	<u>23.8%</u>	42.4%	<u>16.1%</u>	+9.1%
2. Incomplete Second-Level	39.3%	17.1%	51.6%	10.5%	+12.3%
3. Complete Second-Level	<u>45.1%</u>	<u>23.9%</u>	54.7%	<u>14.0%</u>	+9.6%
4. Third-Level	<u>47.0%</u>	<u>23.2%</u>	<u>68.0%</u>	8.8%	<u>+21.0%</u>
Number	361	184	478	97	---
(Sample Average)	(42.8%)	(21.9%)	(56.6%)	(11.5%)	(+13.8%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

It is quite clear from the above figures that those whose education ended at the primary or incomplete second-level did not find their school experience in relation to Irish as positive as those who advanced to complete second level and third level. This might well be true of the attitude to other subjects as well. In the past, Irish was at times blamed (often **scapegoated**) for poor performance in school. It was portrayed as an ‘obstacle’ to ‘real’ education, whereas, in fact, it was an asset<sup>1</sup> to those wishing to study other languages. This dismissive attitude towards Irish was widespread throughout the adult population. It was often a purely pragmatic attitude and could have been carried over from the Great Language Shift of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>1</sup> Benefits of Bilingualism: “In summary, the conclusion that emerges from research on the academic, linguistic and intellectual effects of bilingualism can be stated as follows: The development of additive bilingual and biliteracy skills entails no negative consequences for children’s academic, linguistic, or intellectual development. On the contrary, although not conclusive, the evidence points in the direction of subtle metalinguistic, academic and intellectual benefits for bilingual children” – Jim Cummins, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, “Immersion Education for the Millennium: What we have Learned from 30 Years of Research on Second Language Immersion”, 2007.

Website source: [www.iteachilearn.com/cummins](http://www.iteachilearn.com/cummins) (Date accessed: 12.02.2009)

In the West of Ireland some adults would say to young people that the Irish language “will be no good to you when you go to England!” In the early years of the Irish Free State and in the 1930s and 40s **the prestige secondary schools**, with a few notable exceptions, did not feature Irish or work for its restoration. Some public/local leaders at times associated the Irish language with extreme Republicanism. One eminent Alderman in Dublin was reported to have alleged that a person who insisted on the Irish version of his or her name was a member of a ‘Republican para-military group’! The public media did not give (nor do they yet give) due recognition to the use of Irish. The substantial sale of English daily and Sunday papers which have widespread circulation in Ireland seem to ignore the Irish language completely. The negative attitude to the Irish language was also part of the ‘**post-colonial attitudinal schizophrenia**’. (See Mac Gréil, *Prejudice in Ireland Revisited*, Má Nuad, pp 260 ff)

All of the above pressures on the people to oppose, or fail to appreciate, Irish, together with the hitherto very low status of the language and other factors, have contributed to the negative attitudes at school as reflected in the below-average support for it by those who ended their education at the Primary or Incomplete Second-Level. This is understandable. The change of attitude in both categories was significant and substantial, i.e. **Primary only** increased by 27.3% (from 33.3% to 42.4%) and **Incomplete Second-Level** by 31.3% (from 39.3% to 51.6%). These respondents succeeded in overcoming the negative pressures they had to deal with while at school in relation to the Irish language and unjust issues they were forced to deal with.

The position of the two higher grade variables – **Complete Second-Level** and **Third-Level** improved their positive attitudes from a relatively high starting point. Complete second-level’s positive attitudes in favour of Irish between ‘school’ and ‘now’ improved by 21.3% (from 45.1% to 54.7%) while Third-Level’s percentages went up by 44.7% (from 47.0% to 68.0%). Between the two sub-samples they constitute 59.3% of the sample.

Because of the trend of greater participation and achievement in education, it is to be expected that the level of support for Irish will further increase as we move away from the post-colonial inferiority complex which is manifested *inter alia* in our complex attitudes towards the Irish language. There will be growing support, **leading to demands**, for due recognition in education, religious liturgy, song, drama, poetry, entertainment, sport, etc. Of course, it would always be possible to obstruct and delay the necessary linguistic **break-through** which is necessary to capitalise on the growing positivity in the above findings and elsewhere. Effort and deliberate collective action would be required to restore the Irish language and raise its priority on the national agenda. The old Latin adage '*primo vivere deinde philosophari*' ('first live and thereafter philosophise') can be applied to the above finding. Those whose basic survival needs are satisfied (as are 85% at least of the Irish population) are ready to pursue their higher wants<sup>1</sup>. Their Irish language and culture are among our people's higher wants. This helps to explain the performance of those with higher education, etc.

**(e) Occupational Status:**

Occupational status produced a statistically significant variation in the findings for 'While in School' and 'Now'. The following extract from Table No. 2.6(e) shows the direction of the variations:

<u>Occupational Status</u>	<u>While in School</u>		<u>Now</u>		<u>Change in Favour</u>
	<u>In Favour</u>	<u>Opposed</u>	<u>In Favour</u>	<u>Opposed</u>	
1. Unskilled/Semi-Skilled	39.4%	14.3%	52.0%	8.2%	+12.6%
2. Skilled/Routine Non-m.	35.4%	<u>27.3%</u>	54.0%	<u>12.1%</u>	+18.6%
3. Inspectional/Supervisory	<u>46.2%</u>	<u>31.9%</u>	<u>62.5%</u>	<u>15.8%</u>	<u>16.2%</u>
4. Professional/Executive	<u>56.3%</u>	15.0%	<u>66.7%</u>	8.2%	+10.4%
Number	307	159	412	78	---
(Sample Average)	(42.8%)	(21.9%)	(56.6%)	(11.5%)	(+13.8%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

<sup>1</sup> See Maslow, A.H. *Motivation and Personality*, New York, Harpur, 1954.



The experience at school in relation to Irish did not elicit very favourable attitudes for over 60% of the blue-collar workers and routine non-manual workers which make up around 60% of the sample. The change of attitudes between **school** and **now** is significant and substantial, i.e. ‘Unskilled/Semi-Skilled’ increased by 26.9% (from 39.4% to 50.0% in favour) and ‘Skilled/Routine Non Manual’ **improved** by 52.5% (from 35.4% to 54.0% in favour). Such a substantial increase was not anticipated for these two sub-samples. The changes for the top two sub-samples were from an already relatively strong basis. The two-thirds ‘now’ in favour of Irish in the case of the **highest occupational category** confirm the current standing of the native language among the **leading occupations**. The task facing Irish society is to discover how to translate this favourable attitude into concrete action leading to higher competence in, and use of, the Irish language.

## **Part IV - Conclusion**

The findings of Chapter II deal with respondents’ attitudes towards and aspiration for the Irish language. **Aspirations for Irish** concerned what respondents desired in relation to the future of the native language in the State. The answers fall under three main categories, i.e. ‘**Irish should be discarded**’ (6.7%), ‘**Irish should be preserved**’ (52%) and ‘**Irish should be revived**’ (40.3%).

This level of positive support for the Irish language gives a mandate for effective policies and their implementation, especially through the education system, to transmit a complete knowledge of Irish to all pupils and students. It should also support patterns for the **use** of Irish which guarantee the continuity of their competence after completing their formal education.

The analysis of the ‘**aspirations**’ by personal variables produced an even more optimistic result. The **trend** towards support for **the revival of Irish** was strongest among **the younger, more educated, more urbanised** and those with **more highly**

**statused occupations.** ‘All things being equal’ this points to continued and stronger support for Irish among the adult population in the years ahead.

The measuring of perceived **attitudes** toward Irish while **at school** and **now** has confirmed the positive trends in relation to the **aspiration** questions. The school experiences were quite mixed for the respondents. One could speculate why the range of responses was given by the respondents. Motivation to learn Irish was unevenly stimulated by the homes and the schools. It takes a post-colonial society a few generations to pass before identifying with its own cultural base of which the language is a central symbolic system. The improvements in attitudes between ‘**when at school**’ and ‘**now**’ showed a marked maturing of acceptance of Irish in a favourable light. This is an important change which will have a further significant bearing on the strengthening of support for Irish in future generations.

## **Chapter III**

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### **Perceived Competence in Irish**

## Chapter III Perceived Competence in Irish

### Part I - Introduction and General Findings

Ever since the 1840s, the Irish language had ceased to be the spoken language of the majority of ordinary people due to the decimation of the native Irish people as a result of the *Gorta Mór* (the Great Famine) and a negative disposition towards Irish by the Colonial British Government and the local Irish and Anglo-Irish dominant classes. A deliberate strategy of language replacement was promoted through **the national schools' system**, and this was aided and abetted by the prestige Church-run secondary schools which existed (with notable exceptions). The language was practically replaced by English within a space of two generations.

The arrival of a native Government in 1922 marked a very significant and substantial advance in the effort to restore and revive Irish. Fortunately, Irish had remained the communal language in a number of areas (now known as the '*Gaeltacht*') which, during the hey-day of the language movement, had become sources of inspiration and language acquisition. To-day's positive results are largely due to the State's effort to bring Irish back to the people through **the education system** and support for 'the *Gaeltacht* communities', as well as the efforts of the various Irish language voluntary movement, and allied associations and organisations.

With the rise of economic pragmatism since the late 1960s, the State's commitment to Irish in the schools' curriculum had abated somewhat, and there are indications of this to be detected in the detailed findings below.

According as the State's commitment through the normal education system declined, the voluntary language movement sought to fill the gap created by promoting the *naíscoileanna* (later known as *naíonraí*) and **Irish medium schools** (i.e.

*Gaelscoileanna*)<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, these excellent education organisations do not reach the vast majority of pupils – due to limited resources and parental commitment. Nevertheless, there is evidence to indicate that the results of this voluntarily inspired campaign (with measured State support) have helped to raise the social status of the Irish language in Irish society. It has certainly increased the level of competence in ‘upper’ sections of the current adult population.

Table No. 3.1 measures the self-perceived competence in the Irish language by the total national sample and by the Irish-born respondents.

**Table No. 3.1:  
Self-Perceived Competence in the Irish Language by Total Sample and  
Those Born in Ireland**

Level of Competence *	Total Sample A		Irish-Born B		Difference (B – A)	
	Actual	Cum.	Actual	Cum.	Actual	Cum.
1. Very Fluent / Fluent	7.8%	7.8%	9.1%	9.1%	+1.3%	+1.3%
2. Middling	19.5%	27.3%	22.1%	31.2%	+2.6%	+3.9%
3. Not So Fluent	14.2%	<b>41.5%</b>	15.9%	<b>47.1%</b>	+1.7%	+5.6%
4. Only a Little	32.5%	74.0%	36.9%	84.0%	+4.4%	+10.0%
5. None	26.0%	---	16.0%	---	-10.0%	---
Number	100%	1,015	100%	855	---	---

\* Respondents reporting their self-perceived competence to be ‘not so fluent’ or ‘higher’ will be judged to have ‘reasonable competence’ in the language.

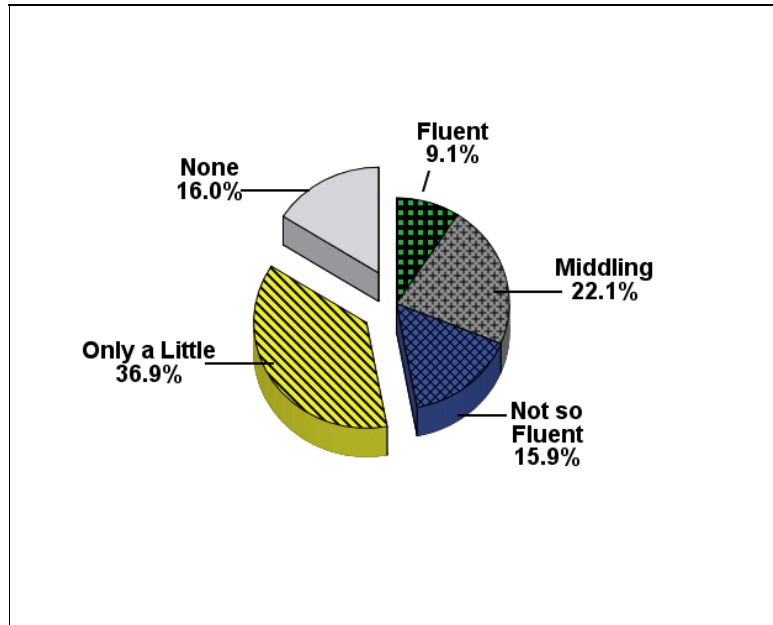
1

**Irish-medium Education 2007-08**

	Republic	Nor. Ireland	Total
Naíonraí	167	42	209
Naíonraí Gaeltachta	71	-	71
Primary (Gaelscoileanna)	136	32	168
Post-primary (Gaelscoileanna)	27	04	31
Post-primary Irish streams	13		13
Primary (Gaeltacht)	133	-	133
Post-primary (Gaeltacht)	22	-	22

N.B. Gaeltacht schools are not part of the Gaelscoileanna movement. A considerable number of schools, technically in the Gaeltacht may not be Irish-medium. Naíonraí sessions, because of youth of the children, are on half-day basis. The above numbers for naíonraí represent sessions. Some naíonraí run two sessions per day. Website sources: *Gaelscoileanna Teoranta*: <http://www.gaelscoileanna.ie> and *Comhar Naíonraí Gaeltachta*: <http://comharnaionrai.com> (Date accessed 14.02.2009.)

**Figure No. 3**  
**Competency in Irish by Irish-Born**



The findings of Table No. 3.1, while a little lower than what was anticipated (due to the continued rise in educational participation since the 1980s), are, nevertheless, quite reassuring. Over two-fifths (41.5%) of the total sample and slightly less than half of the Irish-born adult respondents (47.1%) have sufficient competence to understand and engage in Irish conversation (with relatively little assistance). At no time since the *Gorta Mór* (the Great Famine) and the Great Language Shift has there been such a level of ‘reasonable competence’ in Irish in the adult population outside the *Gaeltacht*. This has been achieved despite the noted withdrawal of some of the official support in the educational system. The fact that the level of competence is not higher is probably a reflection of this reduced official support, especially in mainstream primary and second-level schools. Obviously, the maximum and active support of the Department of Education & Science and of the schools’ system is necessary for the fullest realisation of the restoration of the Irish language as a viable national language and central **symbolic meaningful system** in our culture. Anthropologists see the native language as the unique cultural nuance on reality of a people. It also contains our cultural memory.

At the same time, there is evidence in Table No. 3.1 to confirm that competence in the Irish language has survived sufficiently strong in the population to provide a basis from which to make further advances in bringing it from the **minority**, which now benefits from it, to the **broader population**. This could be greatly helped by a change of policy in the ordinary schools' system or by extending the Irish-medium pre-schools, *Na Naíonraí* and **Irish-medium schools** more widely in the population.

There will be implications arising from this for the whole standard of teacher-training in the Irish language and the promotion of Irish-medium, third-level education. The degree of **institutional duplication**, i.e. separate Irish-medium schools, required for the development and restoration of Irish in society will be determined by the extent of support for the successful teaching of the Irish language in the mainstream schools. The more these schools fail to teach the language adequately, the greater the need for 'institutional duplication' facilitating Irish-medium schools.

The difference between the level of competence of the **total sample** and that of the **Irish-born** in the sample is quite substantial, and is also a source of optimism for the future of the language. Having already established that **those not born in Ireland** have the same level of positive aspirations as the Irish-born (see Table No. 2.1 above), it can be hoped that their children will be given the support of the parents in learning the Irish language. As new citizens of the State, they are entitled to learn the native language of the Irish people in order to enable them to relate to the culture and tradition of their adopted country. The percentage of Irish-born who stated **they knew no Irish** was as low as 16%, which is explained (probably) by the age factor. The rules and practices governing dispensations from learning Irish in the schools may well be already depriving the children of immigrants of the opportunity to acquire Irish.

Changes in self-reported levels of competence in the Irish language are given on Table No. 3.2. The changes refer to the National Samples of 2007-08 and 1988-89 and the Dublin sub-samples of 2007-08 and 1988-89 and the Dublin sample of 1972-73.

**Table No. 3.2:**  
**Changes in Competence in the Irish Language since 1972-73.**

Level of Competence	National Samples				Dublin Samples				
	Total 2007-08	Irish Born 2007-08	Total 1988-89	Change (B-C)	Irish Born 2007-08	Sub-Sample 1988-89	Sample 1972-73	D - E	E - F
1. Very Fluent/Fluent	A 8%	B 9%	C 8%	+1%	D 9%	E 11%	F 7%	-2%	+2%
2. Middling	20%	22%	19%	+3%	23%	22% }	18%	+1% }	+20%
3. Not So Fluent	14%	16%	14%	+2%	15%	16% }		-1% }	
<b>(1 + 2 + 3)</b>	<b>(42%)</b>	<b>(47%)</b>	<b>(41%)</b>	<b>(+6%)</b>	<b>(47%)</b>	<b>(49%)</b>	<b>(25%)</b>	<b>(-2%)</b>	<b>(+22%)</b>
4. Only a Little	33%	37%	40%	-3%	37%	32%	50%	+5%	-13%
5. None	26%	16%	19%	-3%	17%	20%	25%	-3%	-8%
Number	1,015	855	920	---	246	274	2,282	---	---

The changes between the findings of the **national samples** of 1988-89 and 2007-08 are barely significant in the positive direction. When compared with the Irish-born, the increase is significant at +6%. This is quite disappointing and raises some serious questions about the **success** of our mainstream schools in **transmitting** a working knowledge and ability to speak in Irish. Also, the family and the school have important roles in giving young people the necessary **motivation** to **use** their Irish.

The changes in perceived self-competence in Irish between 2007-08 and 1988-89 in the Dublin sub-samples are within the margins of error. While both mark a significant and substantial advance on the standards reported in the 1972-73 survey of Greater Dublin, progress was not continued between 1988-89 and 2007-08. This certainly provides a *prima facie* case for a serious examination of the factors which have slowed down (to a halt) progress made over the previous sixteen years. The author's hunch is that it is due to a reduction of the status of Irish in the education system and dis-improvements in the efficacy of teaching the Irish language to the young.

Education today seems to put greater emphasis on serving the needs of the **economic institution** than on the socio-cultural development of the person in society.



Should this situation continue, a new intervention on behalf of the Irish language and culture from voluntary sources would be necessary, e.g. the Irish language movement, to restore the progress recorded between 1972-73 and 1988-89. However, voluntary movements cannot take the place, or exercise the influence, of a Government organisation. The role of the European Union's influence on Irish Education, and the prevailing official approach in respect to bilingualism in education and the future of the national language all need to be assessed in the interest of future progress at every level.

## **Part II - Perceived Self-Competence in Irish of Irish-Born by Personal Variables**

In Part I of this chapter, the general findings of the Total Sample and of the Irish-born were presented in Table No. 3.1 above. The Irish-born, constituted 84.2%<sup>1</sup> of the Total Sample, i.e. 855 respondents. In Part II it is intended to focus on the Irish-born as the sample and to explore the variations in **competence** by the different personal variables. In this way, it will be possible to identify certain casual links between personal factors such as: **age, gender, marital status, urban-rural background, education, occupation and income and ability** to use/speak Irish.

The changes in the levels of self-perceived competence in Irish over the years, i.e. at National level since 1988-89 and in Dublin since 1972-73, are given in Table No. 3.2 above. Reference will be made from time to time to findings of this Table in order to understand those findings of some of the personal variables such as **age** and **education** which have changed over time. Most Irish speakers learn the language at school, in Irish-speaking communities (i.e. *Gaeltachtaí*) at home or in special voluntary organisations. Serious research into the relative significance of these four 'seed-beds' of competence in the Irish language would be worthwhile, especially in the changing Irish Society.

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<sup>1</sup> This is within 1.1% of the percentage of citizens born in the State (85.3%) according to the *Census 2006 Report: Ethnic and Cultural Background*, Baile Átha Cliath, 2007.

An individual's **psychological disposition** towards learning Irish and the parents'/teachers' motivation in persuading the child to want to learn Irish are crucial. Every popular language is within the intellectual capacity of the whole population. Otherwise, it would not be a **popular** language. The most intelligent and the least intelligent person (not severely suffering from acute mental handicap) are capable of learning Irish in the *Gaeltacht* or English in the *Galltacht*! Therefore, the myth that only the gifted are capable of learning Irish needs to be exploded. With the proper motivation and positive pedagogy, every Irish boy or girl and every immigrant to Ireland is quite capable of learning Irish. This needs to be stated to counter 'the mental bloc' which some young people (and not, so, young people) have towards acquiring competence in their native tongue. Support from parents and from all role models and reference groups is necessary to motivate the learner to be successful in his or her pursuit of fluency in Irish.

The rapid increase in numbers of exemptions from Irish being dispensed under the rules of the Department of Education & Science on the basis of **certificates of inability** to learn Irish issued by professional consultants needs to be queried. Seven thousand of the exemptees go on to take one or more continental languages (in addition to English) in their **Leaving Certificate**, and this raises many questions as to why they are deemed unable to learn Irish as a language.

Language is basically **aural** and **oral** and is, therefore, 'listened to' and 'spoken'<sup>1</sup>. Irish as a written symbolic system is an additional **visual** form, which has developed very early in European terms but long after the aural and oral stage. In the modern *Gaeltacht* Irish remained exclusively 'aural' and 'oral' until relatively recently. In fact, most people only used the 'visual' form of language in its English form, e.g. English versions of names on the tombstones in the *Gaeltachtaí*. Communities with 'oral' and 'aural' language only (ignorantly referred to as 'illiterate') contribute to its development with greater freedom in response to socio-cultural change.

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<sup>1</sup> See Edward Sapir in Mandelbaum, David S., *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality*, University of California Press, 1949 and 1958.

This is very relevant for the promotion of competence in the Irish language. In modern literate societies it would be unrealistic to neglect the ‘visual’ language. Reason would indicate that the ‘oral’ and ‘aural’ should precede the ‘visual’ if it is the intention of society to revive and preserve Irish. Without competence in ‘oral’ and ‘aural’ Irish, and focusing on literature alone, Irish would be presented as are the classics, i.e. for its literary value alone. Therefore, the first emphasis needs to be on the spoken word, *An teanga Gaeilge* (the Irish Tongue).

**Table No. 3.3:  
Competence in Irish of Irish-Born by Personal Variables**

Variable	Fluent	Middling	Not So Fluent	Reasonable Competence (1+2+3)	Only a Little	None	Number
Total Sample Of Irish-born	9.1%	22.1%	16.0%	(47.2%)	36.9%	16.0%	857
<b>(a) Age (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1. 18-25 Years	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>31.8%</b>	<b>27.1%</b>	<b>(69.0%)</b>	25.6%	5.4%	129
2. 26-40 Years	8.7%	<b>26.5%</b>	15.4%	<b>(50.6%)</b>	34.4%	15.0%	253
3. 41-55 Years	6.1%	14.5%	15.0%	(35.6%)	<b>48.6%</b>	15.9%	214
4. 56-70 Years	<b>11.5%</b>	19.4%	14.5%	(45.4%)	36.4%	<b>18.2%</b>	165
5. 71 Years plus	<b>11.5%</b>	18.8%	7.3%	(37.6%)	33.3%	<b>29.2%</b>	96
Number	78	189	137	(404)	316	137	857
<b>(b) Gender (p&lt;.03)</b>							
Male	8.6%	19.0%	<b>19.2%</b>	(46.8%)	35.2%	<b>18.0%</b>	406
Female	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>24.9%</b>	12.9%	<b>(47.4%)</b>	<b>38.3%</b>	14.3%	449
Number	78	189	136	(403)	315	137	855
<b>(c) Place of Rearing (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1. Dublin (City / Co)	6.2%	<b>23.7%</b>	13.6%	(43.5%)	<b>37.4%</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	257
2. Rest of Leinster	3.7%	19.6%	<b>19.0%</b>	(42.3%)	<b>49.7%</b>	8.0%	163
3. Munster	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>26.8%</b>	14.3%	<b>(55.8%)</b>	31.2%	13.0%	231
4. Connaught / Ulster	<b>13.1%</b>	16.2%	<b>16.2%</b>	(45.5%)	31.9%	<b>22.5%</b>	160
Number	77	181	125	(383)	300	128	811
<b>(d) Region of Residence (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1. BMW*	6.4%	13.7%	<b>23.3%</b>	(43.4%)	<b>38.8%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	219
2. Dublin	8.5%	<b>22.8%</b>	15.4%	(46.7%)	36.6%	<b>16.7%</b>	246
3. Mid-East & South East	5.2%	<b>27.2%</b>	14.1%	(46.5%)	<b>41.4%</b>	12.0%	191
4. Mid-West & Sth West	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>26.0%</b>	9.7%	<b>(52.0%)</b>	31.1%	<b>16.8%</b>	196
Number	77	189	135	(401)	315	136	852

<b>Table No. 3.3 (Cont'd)</b> <b>Variable</b>	<b>Fluent</b>	<b>Middling</b>	<b>Not So Fluent</b>	<b>Reasonable Competence (1+2+3)</b>	<b>Only a Little</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>(e) Education (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1. Primary or less	3.7%	7.5%	5.6%	(16.8%)	<b>42.1%</b>	<b>41.1%</b>	107
2. Incomplete Second-L.	2.9%	15.9%	12.6%	(31.4%)	<b>44.4%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	239
3. Complete Second-Lev.	<b>9.3%</b>	21.8%	<b>22.2%</b>	<b>(53.3%)</b>	36.1%	10.6%	216
4. Third-level	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>32.3%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>(66.8%)</b>	29.3%	4.4%	294
Number	79	188	136	(403)	315	138	856
<b>(f) Occupational Status (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1 Unskilled / Semi-	1.7%	17.6%	<b>22.7%</b>	(42.0%)	<b>39.2%</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	176
2. Skilled/ Routine non-m	6.0%	18.8%	15.8%	(40.6%)	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	266
3. Inspectional / Supervisory	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>25.4%</b>	9.8%	(46.7%)	<b>41.8%</b>	11.5%	122
4. Professional /Executive	<b>23.6%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>	14.9%	<b>(64.0%)</b>	26.7%	9.3%	161
Number	71	153	118	(342)	276	107	725

\* (Border, Midlands and West)

Note: Percentages above sample average are in **bold**.

#### **(a) Age and Competence in Irish:**

The performance of the **age** variable in Table No. 4.1 must be one of the most optimistic findings of the current survey. The following extract from Table No. 3.2 clearly highlights the negative correlation between age and reasonable competence as measure by adding 'Fluent', 'Middling' and 'Not so Fluent' together.

<b><u>Age</u></b>	<b><u>Reasonable Competence</u></b>	<b><u>Only a Little</u></b>	<b><u>None</u></b>
1. 18 to 25 years	<u>69.0%</u>	25.6%	5.4%
2. 26 to 40 years	<u>50.6%</u>	34.4%	15.0%
3. 41 to 55 years	35.6%	<u>48.6%</u>	15.9%
4. 56 to 70 years	45.4%	36.4%	<u>18.2%</u>
5. 71 years plus	37.6%	33.3%	<u>29.2%</u>
(Total Irish-born Sample)	(47.2%)	(36.4%)	(16.0%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The under-25 year olds have reached a relatively high standard of 'reasonable competence' at **over two-thirds** of the age-cohort. This is obviously connected with educational standard. Just over half of the 26 to 40 year-olds have 'reasonable competence'. The challenge facing both of these age categories will be the 'follow-up',

i.e. to get opportunities for use of the language to prevent ‘language-slippage’. The old adage – ‘*Beatha teanga í a labhairt*’ (the life of a language is in its speaking) is very true. With more practice in daily life, the standard of fluency will improve inevitably.

The position of the 56 to 70 year-olds is interesting. This cohort was born between 1937 and 1952 and would have ended second-level in the late 1960s when the ‘**O’Malley Scheme**’ was about to take effect. This level of competence is 10% higher than that of the 41 to 55 year olds, who were the lowest in self-perceived competence of the five age sub-samples at 35.6%. The causes of the marked improvement in the two younger age-groups, i.e. 18 to 25 years and 26 to 40 years, should be researched. Was it due to a change of attitude towards learning Irish? Was it a result of the rise of *naíonraí* and Irish-medium primary schools? Had the reactions to the Northern Troubles some influence on greater respect for and less ambiguity towards the Irish language? Whatever the reasons, it is a positive result for the long campaign to restore the native tongue to its people. Is it a combination of initial higher levels of competence among the 56 to 70 year olds declining gradually through lack of usage on the one hand and, on the other hand, lower initial competence among subsequent age categories similarly declining over the shorter periods of time?

**(b) Gender and Competence in Irish:**

The level of statistical significance between the declared self-competence in the Irish Language of males and females has been relatively modest. The differences are within the ‘margin of error’ and do not merit further comment apart from noting the (almost) consensus between males and females.

**(c) Place of Rearing and Competence in Irish:**

The geographic factor in the case of ‘place of rearing’ and ‘region of residence’ has produced significant variations between the sub-samples in relation to self-perceived competence in Irish. (See Table No. 3.2 (c) and (d)). The following extract from Table No. 3.2(c) presents variations in relation to **Place of Rearing**:

<u>Place of Rearing</u>	<u>'Reasonable' Competence</u>	<u>Only a Little</u>	<u>None</u>
1. Dublin City & County	43.5%	<u>37.4%</u>	<u>19.1%</u>
2. Rest of Leinster	42.3%	<u>49.7%</u>	8.0%
3. Munster	<u>55.8%</u>	31.2%	13.0%
4. Connaught / Ulster	45.5%	31.9%	<u>22.5%</u>
(Total Irish-born Sample)	(47.2%)	(36.9%)	(16.0%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

'Munster'-reared respondents are significantly and substantially higher in their self-perceived level of 'reasonable competence' in Irish at 55.8% or 8.2% above the sample average. The presence of *Gaeltacht* areas in 'Munster' and 'Connaught/Ulster', as well as a widespread 'Gaelic tradition', may provide a possible explanation for the relatively high scores of **fluency** sub-samples, i.e. 14.7% and 13.1% respectively.

In Leinster, both Dublin and 'Rest of Leinster' scored low in **fluency**, i.e. 6.2% for 'Dublin' and 3.7% for 'Rest of Leinster'. The Leinster-reared were above average for the *cúpla focal* or 'only a little', i.e. 37.4% and 49.7% respectively.

'Dublin' and 'Connaught/Ulster' had relatively high percentages, i.e. 19.1% and 22.5%, who declared they had no Irish. The reasons for this are probably demographic in the case of 'Dublin', and due to cross-Border mobility in 'Connaught/Ulster'.

Despite the fluctuations in the variations between the sub-samples, the figures in relation to 'reasonable competence' show that each province has provided a substantial proportion of those reared in its communities **capable** of using the language in the current areas of residence, should the favourable opportunities arise. As noted before, one of the most challenging tasks facing those who wish to promote the Irish language as a living 'native tongue' is to bring about an expansion in the times and places where those with 'reasonable competence' in Irish would enjoy using it. *Raidió na Gaeltachta* and *TG4* are part of the favourable occasions for listening to Irish. The more the people use

the language the greater will their self-perceived competence become (see the high correlation (0.696) between the ‘frequency of use’ and ‘competency in Irish’ in the path analysis in the Appendix, page 127 below).

**(d) Regions of Residence and Competence in Irish**

This variable gives information on competence in Irish of respondents according to their current region of residence. The difference between the findings of ‘place of rearing’ and those of ‘region of residence’ is the changes caused by geographic social mobility. It is quite marked in the case of Dublin, which has experienced substantial in-migration from the rest of Ireland over the past eighty years or so. Some seventeen percent of respondents living in Dublin have been reared elsewhere.

The following is an extract from Table No. 3.2(d):

<u>Region of Residence</u>	<u>‘Reasonable’ Competence</u>	<u>Only a Little</u>	<u>None</u>
1. BMW (Border/Midlands/West)	43.4%	<u>38.8%</u>	<u>17.8%</u>
2. Dublin	46.7%	36.6%	<u>16.7%</u>
3. Mid-East / South East	46.5%	<u>41.4%</u>	12.0%
4. Mid-West / South West	<u>52.0%</u>	31.1%	<u>16.8%</u>
(Irish-born Sample)	(47.2%)	(36.9%)	(16.0%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The level of self-perceived **reasonable competence** in ‘Mid-West/South West’ region, i.e. Counties Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary, Cork and Kerry, is well above the other three sub-samples. At the level of **Fluency**, the contrast is even greater. This confirms the findings of ‘place of rearing’, where ‘Munster’ was also well ahead in fluency and ‘reasonable competence’. Does this mean that the province of Munster is in line to become the first **Gaeltacht province**? It certainly has the capability of extending its **Gaeltacht areas**, if the people were to begin to make Irish their language of use at home. It would, of course, have to be a ‘bi-lingual’ new **Gaeltacht le Béarla!** The real

*Gaeltacht* areas in Munster are relatively small when compared with Galway and Donegal.

The differences between the levels of perceived competence between those **reared** in Dublin and those **now living** in Dublin are interesting (if modest).

	<u>Fluent</u>	<u>Reasonable</u>	<u>None</u>
1. Reared in Dublin	6.2%	43.5%	19.1%
2. Now Living in Dublin	8.5%	46.7%	16.7%
Difference (2 – 1)	+2.3%	+3.2%	-2.4%

This also tells us something about the nature of **immigration** from Munster and Connaught/Ulster into Dublin City and County. Those whose competence in Irish is high are most likely to be the younger and more highly educated. This change in competence is a clear indication of **the brain and talent drain** of young people out of the South-Western, Mid-Western, Western and North-Western regions of Ireland, resulting in a certain weakening in the **cultural**, social and **economic** resources of the places where they were reared. Such ‘migrants to Dublin’ are key sources of the enhancement of the city, its suburbs and ‘ex-urbs’.

The ‘Mid-East/South-East’, as compared with ‘the Rest of Leinster’ in the table on ‘Place of Rearing’, has also benefited from in-migration from the Western Regions it would appear, despite the 4% in those with ‘none’.

	<u>Fluent</u>	<u>Reasonable</u>	<u>None</u>
1. Rest of Leinster	3.7%	42.3%	8.0%
2. Mid-East/ South-East	5.2%	46.5%	12.0%
Difference (2 – 1)	+1.5%	+4.2%	+4.0%

These effects of **population shifts** within the Republic of Ireland on ‘self-perceived competence’ in Irish are very important, because of the need to plan for such



changes both in their positive and in their negative effects. On the positive side, they are enhancing the level of Irish competence in the regions of economic and population growth within the country. On the negative side, the loss of educated and talented people from areas where Irish is reasonably strong will inevitably undermine and demoralise those trying to preserve and promote the native language and culture, hence the importance of regional development in the regions losing talent. The very people trained and enabled to develop the economically weaker (although culturally strong), tend to leave the communities in which they are most needed.

**(e) Education and Competence in Irish:**

No other variable (not even age) has had such an impact on ‘perceived self-competence’ in the Irish language as has education. This finding is hardly surprising, since the vast majority of Irish citizens are **totally dependent** on the education system to acquire a competence in their native tongue. Table No. 3.2(e) confirms the role of education in society as the provider of a basic ability in Irish. Just as **National Education** in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was instrumental in the demise of the Irish language, the current education system has the capacity **to reverse the role** of its historical predecessors of the colonial past. The education system includes the State-run and voluntary schools and colleges.

The extent of the impact of education on perceived self-competence in Irish is clear from the following extract from Table No. 3.2(e).

<u>Level of Education Reached</u>	<u>Fluent</u>	<u>Reasonable Competence</u>	<u>Only a Little</u>	<u>None</u>
1. Primary or Less	3.7%	16.8%	<u>42.1%</u>	<u>41.1%</u>
2. Incomplete Second-Level	2.9%	31.4%	<u>44.4%</u>	<u>24.3%</u>
3. Complete Second-Level	9.3%	<u>53.3%</u>	36.1%	10.6%
4. Third-Level	<u>16.3%</u>	<u>66.8%</u>	29.3%	4.4%
(Total Irish-born Sample)	(9.1%)	(47.2%)	(36.9%)	(16.0%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

Two-thirds of ‘Third-Level’ respondents have **reasonable competence** in the Irish language and only 4.4% declared they had **none** – and apparently slipped through the net! One-in-six stated they were ‘fluent’ in the native language. By any standards, this result must be a source of optimism for those interested in the revival or restoration of the language. It provides a formidable foundation on which to build into the future. It also is evidence of some success to date in promoting the language through education.

To find out how this has come about, one would need a further focused research or survey. Credit must be given to the education system in so far as it has transmitted a competence to so many who had reached ‘third-level’. The role of *Naíonraí* and Irish-medium schools has also contributed to this result. Also, along the way a degree of positive motivation to learn Irish must have been inculcated into these students at different ages.

#### **(f) Occupational Status and Competence in Irish:**

Relatively very few professions or occupations in the Irish work force have the **Irish Language as a requirement for employment**. This is a fundamental and powerful measure of social status. Even the public (civil) service removed Irish as a condition of entry in the early 1970s (1974), which has led to serious problems according as the senior members of the various departments of Government retire. In a recent answer to a Dáil question, the then Minister for Education and Science (6 April 2006)<sup>1</sup> stated that in her own department some **3%** of the administrative staff were able to do their work through Irish. A further 40% of the inspectorate “indicated fluency in Irish”. In the current climate these percentages will need to increase, especially when competence is ‘translated’ into use. These statistics raise serious questions for the rights of those wishing to do their work with the State through Irish!

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<sup>1</sup> See questions regarding the use of Irish language in Departments, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006 from *Diospóireachtaí Parlaiminte*, Vol 617, No 6.

It is very significant that the **Department of Education and Science**, which at one time carried out practically all its internal work in Irish, now has one of the lowest percentages of employees who can carry out administrative work through Irish. In this context it must be remembered that this is the Department of Government which, on behalf of the people, is tasked with the key function of planning, organising, controlling and promoting the teaching of Irish to the young people.

The following is an extract from Table No. 3.2(f):

<b><u>Occupational Status</u></b>	<b><u>Fluent</u></b>	<b><u>Reasonable Competence</u></b>	<b><u>Only a Little</u></b>	<b><u>None</u></b>
1. Unskilled/Semi-Skilled	1.7%	42.0%	<u>39.2%</u>	<u>18.8%</u>
2. Skilled/Routine Non-Manual	6.0%	40.6%	<u>42.5%</u>	<u>16.9%</u>
3. Inspectional /Supervisory	<u>11.5%</u>	45.7%	<u>41.8%</u>	11.5%
4. Professional / Executive	<u>23.6%</u>	<u>64.0%</u>	26.7%	9.3%
(Sample Average)	(9.1%)	(47.2%)	(36.9%)	(16.0%)

Note: *Percentages above sample average are underlined.*

Almost one quarter of those in the ‘professional/executive’ sub-sample are fluent in Irish, and nearly two thirds (64%) of respondents in the highest occupational positions have ‘reasonable competence in the Irish language’, while only 9.3% of the same sub-sample reported having ‘No Irish’. Considering that those in the top occupations are middle-middle-age or older, such a relatively high level of ‘reasonable competence’ is all the more significant (See Table No. 3.2(a)). The status factor of the Irish language must be present here also.

### **Part III - Conclusion**

The main finding of this chapter has been the increase to **47%** of Irish-born respondents who judged themselves to be reasonably competent in Irish. This marks an improvement of around 6% on the level of reasonable competence in the 1988-89

national survey. Because of the in-built complexity of language shift and the hostile conditions against the promotion of Irish, despite the very high support for its **preservation and revival**, this result is a source of great optimism for those in the statutory and voluntary world who have devoted so much time and energy to the cause of the Irish language, which had been taken from the people by the British Government and its agencies, with the acquiescence of many if not most of the people in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The principal source of competence in Irish is the school or college these people and their children attended. In fact, the success of the revival of the Irish language is almost totally dependent on the education system. Granted, Irish-speaking homes in the true *Gaeltacht* are also very valuable sources of Irish for the privileged minority. In a post-colonial society like the Republic of Ireland, it was but inevitable that the support of the mainstream education system for Irish has been mixed since the foundation of the State in 1922. Prior to the rise of the philosophy of pragmatism influencing education at the end of the 1960s, a very serious and successful effort was made by the Department of Education and Science to give priority to the teaching of Irish to every student in every school. The cumulative effect of these forty or so years of dedicated teaching and promotion of Irish did ‘stop the rot’, and made it possible for later generations to advance on the shoulders of two generations of teachers and civil servants, guided by committed political leaders of all parties. Had this ‘Trojan effort’ been allowed to continue, with support for the use of Irish in extra-school life, one could have expected the percentage of respondents with ‘reasonable competence’ in Irish to be well over the 70% level today, as distinct from its present 47% for Irish-born

With the change in educational philosophy to the pragmatic support of the **economic institution**, the cultural aims of the curricula inevitably made way for ‘relevance and expedient pragmatism’. The teaching of Irish and the classics were reduced on the schools’ priority lists. This precipitated a new movement from within the voluntary language organisation, namely, *na Naiscoileanna Gaeilge* (the Irish-language pre-schools,) later known as the *na Naíonraí Gaelacha*. This, in turn, fed the demand

for Irish-medium primary schools, now known as *Gaelscoileanna*. The *Gaelscoileanna* would, in turn, lead to a demand for Irish-medium second-level schools and third-level education through Irish. State recognition and support was duly sought and received for this new movement of education through Irish. The findings of this chapter hypothesises that the current improvement in ‘reasonable competence’ is due, in part at least, to the new movement, and it more than neutralises the neglect of Irish in the mainstream schools because of their perceived pragmatic priorities.

The problem with the current situation is that Irish competence could well become a symbol of elitism, while the ordinary person who has not had the opportunity of going to a *Naíonra* or to a *Gaelscoil* has been deprived of his or her cultural heritage, i.e. the Irish language. How to solve this dilemma is a new challenge to the State and to the Irish Language Movement.

The effectiveness of the teaching in Irish in mainstream schools could be improved greatly if Irish were made an important element in the school environment. For example, it has often been suggested that a subject, other than Irish itself, be taught through Irish.

The number and geographic spread of good *naíonraí* to provide a service for much greater numbers of children should be a priority of the official voluntary language organisations. The momentum has gained strength (over the past thirty years or so). Hopefully, it will lead to the full revival of our native language. There are signs of hope in the findings of this chapter.

## **Chapter IV**

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### **Frequency and Occasions of Use of Irish**

## Chapter IV Frequency and Occasions of Use of Irish

### Part I - Introduction and General Findings

Under ‘**frequency of use**’, it is proposed to report on the frequency and occasions of use of Irish in the adult population in the Republic of Ireland. In addition to the patterns of usage of Irish in the total sample, the Irish-born among the respondents will be reported. The frequency of use of Irish in 2007-08 will be compared with the findings of the National Survey in 1988-89, and of the Greater Dublin Sample in 1972-73. Comparative findings from other surveys will also be examined in order to evaluate the progress in the use of Irish over the years. In Part II (below) a more detailed analysis of **frequency** will be carried out and interpreted.

In Part III the various **occasions of use** will be presented, i.e. TV/Radio, at home, with Irish-speaking friends, at work, all possible occasions, reading Irish and communicating with officials. Only those with a **reasonable competence in Irish** will be reported on. By ‘reasonable competence’ is meant those stating they were ‘**Fluent**’, ‘**Middling**’ or ‘**Not so Fluent**’. Those stating they had ‘Only a Little’ were not included in the ‘reasonable competence’ category, which constituted 47.1% of the 855 Irish-born in the sample. It was decided to examine the Irish-born rather than the total sample because of the relatively large minority of immigrants in recent times who would not have had the possibility of learning Irish at school, etc.

A relatively high level of support for the revival/restoration of the Irish language exists in the **Irish** population as shown in Chapter II, and an equally substantial proportion of the population has ‘reasonable competence’ in Irish as reported in Chapter III. The harnessing of the ‘favourable attitudes’ to stimulate those with ‘reasonable competence’ to use Irish more frequently should not be that difficult. Because of the gap between competence and use of Irish in the 1988-89 findings, it was necessary to be more cautious when anticipating the levels of use in this (2007-08) national survey. Among the obstacles are **social constraints on speaking Irish**, which have to be acknowledged

and effective strategies devised to enable those with the necessary competence in Irish to overcome them.

**Table No. 4.1:**  
**Frequency of Use of Irish by Total Sample and Those Born in Ireland.**

Frequency of Use <sup>1</sup>	Total Sample A		Irish-Born B		Difference (B – A)	
	Actual	Cum.	Actual	Cum.	Actual	Cum.
1. Weekly or More Often	9.3%	9.3%	10.8%	10.8%	+1.5%	+1.5%
2. Occasionally	10.8%	<b>20.0%</b>	11.8%	<b>22.6%</b>	+1.0%	<b>+2.6%</b>
3. Rarely	20.1%	40.1%	22.8%	45.3%	+2.8%	+5.1%
4. Never	59.9%	---	54.7%	---	-5.2%	---
Number	100.1%	1,015	100.0%	855	---	---

The most striking aspect of the above findings is the gap between **competence** in Irish and **occasional use** or more often. In the case of the Irish-born, almost half of respondents capable of using Irish, while **less than one quarter**, reported that they use it occasionally or more often. Previous surveys, including that of the **Committee on Irish Language Attitudes Research CLÁR** (Report 1975) found similar gaps between ability or competence and usage.<sup>2</sup> Still, the fact that 20% of the National Sample and 22.6% of the Irish-born respondents do use the Irish language occasionally or more often is significant as a foundation on which to build greater use which, in itself, will result in improved competence. It will be shown that occasions of use are more informal than formal. It might be useful, therefore, for families or groups to identify special times and places set aside for the ‘normal’ use of Irish, e.g. informal conversation at table/meals, family prayers, etc. Earlier research has noted the popularity of Irish for informal and personal communication rather than use in formal contractual relations.

<sup>1</sup> Respondents who use **Irish occasionally or more often** will be classified as **Regular Users**.

<sup>2</sup> Committee on Irish Language Research Report, 1975, *Oifig Dhiolta Foilseachán Rialtais*, Dublin, 1975.



Table No. 4.2 compares frequency of use of Irish in the country over the period 1972-73 to 2007-08. Again the level of advance in use of the language has not been commensurate with the potential opportunities. The results of this table may reflect other changes in home and communication patterns between people, including the rise of ‘the virtual community’ on mobile phones and the internet. The urgent need to ‘Gaelicise’ this form of interpersonal communication is probably more serious than some educators and leaders of the Irish language movement may realise. A manufacturer of mobile phones recently (January 2009) took the initiative by introducing a mobile phone with an Irish-language predictive-text capability.

**Table No. 4.2:**  
**Changes in the Frequency of Use of Irish from 1972-73 to 2007-08.**

Frequency of Use	National Samples				Dublin Samples				
	Total Sample 2007-08	Irish Born 2007-08	Total Sample 1988-89	Change (B-C)	Irish Born 2007-08	Sub-Sample 1988-89	Dublin Sample 1972-73	Changes D – E	D - F
	A	B	C		D	E	F		
1. Weekly or More Often	9%	11%	10%	+1%	9%	6%	16%	+3%	-7%
2. Occasionally	11%	12%	18%	-6%	15%	20%	9%	-5%	+6%
<b>( 1 + 2 )</b>	<b>(20%)</b>	<b>(23%)</b>	<b>(28%)</b>	<b>(-5%)</b>	<b>(24%)</b>	<b>(26%)</b>	<b>(25%)</b>	<b>(-2%)</b>	<b>(-1%)</b>
3. Rarely	20%	23%	23%	0%	18%	23%	23%	-5%	-5%
4. Never	60%	55%	50%	+5%	58%	52%	52%	+6%	+6%
Number	1,015	855	975	---	246	274	2,282	---	---

The **consistency** in the frequency of usage of the Irish language over thirty-eight years is remarkable. This is all the more amazing when it is considered that three separate surveys were involved. It gives a high level of reliability and validity to the **patterns of frequency** reported in each category. The slight increase in the percentage in the ‘**Never**’ row between 2007-08 and 1988-89 and 1972-73 must be seen as disappointing to those who would have expected improvements because of the rise in participation and achievement in education. It is very disappointing for those who had

hoped that membership of the **European Union** would result in greater use of Irish in the Republic. (The period covered embraces Ireland's membership of the European Union).

The optimist could respond to the above figures by expressing satisfaction in the fact that the 1972-73 figures for Dublin and the 1988-89 figures for the Irish-born sample were more-or-less **maintained**. At least, these findings should result in a greater priority in the promotion of the use of the Irish language in order to strengthen the language's restoration or revival.

**Table No. 4.3:**  
**Occasions when Irish Is Used by Irish-Born Respondents**

Occasion of Use (Order of Frequency)	Percentage of Respondents	
	Irish-Born Respondents Total Sample	Of Those who Use the Language Rarely or More Often*
1. Programmes on TV/Radio	23.9%	52.7%
2. At Home	19.1%	42.1%
3. With Irish-Speaking Friends	19.0%	41.8%
4. At Work	8.0%	17.7%
5. All Possible Opportunities	7.7%	16.9%
6. Reading Irish	6.5%	14.4%
7. Communicating with Officials	5.1%	11.2%
Number	855	388

\* Excluding those who Never Use Irish

The above occasions of uses of Irish are more or less as anticipated. It is very clear from these findings that, among those who use Irish, it has been almost confined to the **informal and domestic environments** where there are less social constraints to use the language. The proportion who use the language in their work and when **communicating with officials** is relatively small, but significant in the light of how few

Civil Servants and commercial employees (outside the *Gaeltacht*) would be at ease doing their business through Irish.

In the future this is an area of possible expansion in the use of Irish. Under *Acht na dTeangacha Oigigiúla 2003*, Government Departments and Semi-State Organisations are encouraged to promote the use of the Irish language. The recent introduction of bilingual announcements on the Dublin *Luas* and on *Iarnrod Éireann's* new trains is a welcome sign of such a normal extension of the use of Irish.

Table No. 4.4 compares the findings of Table No. 4.3 with those of the 1988-89 National Survey. As is evident in a number of other findings, these patterns of using Irish have not changed significantly. With the exception of 'at home', the frequency of use on the various occasions has been maintained.

**Table No. 4.4:**  
**Comparison between Patterns of Use in 1988-89 and 2007-08**

Occasion of Use	Percentage of Respondents (Excluding Those Who Never Use Irish)		
	Total Sample (1988-89)	Irish Born (2007-08)	Change
1. Listening (Radio/TV)	50%	53%	+3%
2. At Home	45%	42%	-3%
3. With Irish-Speaking Friends	39%	42%	+3%
4. At Work	18%	18%	0%
5. All Possible Opportunities	13%	17%	+4%
6. Reading Irish	14%	14%	0%
7. Communicating with Officials	11%	11%	0%
Number	484	388	---

The repetition of practically the same pattern of using Irish by the two samples after a gap of nineteen years is almost uncanny. The three areas where there was

‘**minimum meaningful increase** of plus three and four per cent reflect, in all probability, the arrival of TG4 and a growth in competence and commitment. A challenge facing those who wish to make a dramatic breakthrough in the use of Irish would be to find the above seven occasions as areas which have been chosen by Irish speakers themselves in which to practise their Irish. Other occasions not mentioned could include: Prayer and Religious liturgies, recreational opportunities, sport, holidays, visits to the *Gaeltacht*, attending cultural events, etc. This may help to fill the gap between ability to use Irish and using, as commented on already. The drop in use of Irish at home may be due in part to changes which have taken place in the patterns of relations at home, due to the commercialisation of leisure and other alterations.

## **Part II – Frequency of Use by Personal Variables**

In the following paragraphs it is proposed to examine the findings presented in Table No. 4.1 above in greater detail. By analysing the findings by **personal variables** it should be possible to discern reasons why people decide to use Irish (in addition to competence in the language). While it is interesting to discover the actual frequencies of current use for the various personal and other variables, what is more relevant is the discernment of trends in the use of Irish and the decline in its use after leaving the education system.

The teaching of Irish to date has been assessed mainly by performance at the time of leaving school, whereas **the purpose** of teaching the language is also ***the continuity of its use*** after leaving the education system. Perhaps, if schools and colleges were to be assessed by their success or failure in stimulating their *alumni* to maintain use of the language it would yield much better return to the tax-payer (who supports the teaching of Irish) than by mere points in the Leaving Certificate and Degrees in the Third-Level Colleges. Both tests should be applied when assessing the performance of the education system in relation to its responsibility for ‘handing-on’ the native language to all the

pupils and students. There may be need for positive sanctions for schools / colleges with good results in both examination results and in stimulating students and alumni in using their competence in Irish. The reputation of the school would also be enhanced by the use of Irish by its *alumni*.

‘Slippage’ in **competence in Irish** in the immediate post-second-level years has long been a serious problem.<sup>1</sup> The majority of second-level school-leavers today go to third-level colleges which are largely English-dominant environments where new social networks will be English-speaking. It was shown in Chapter III (Table No. 3.3) that **66.8%** of third-level educated respondents have ‘reasonable competence’ in Irish, although only **35.3%** use it regularly. A positive interpretation of this is that at least two-thirds of those with third-level education could potentially participate in Irish-speaking networks.

**Table No. 4.5:**  
**Frequency of Use of Irish of Irish-Born by Personal Variables.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>(1) Weekly or More Often</b>	<b>(2) Occasionally</b>	<b>Regular Use of Irish (1+2)</b>	<b>(3) Rarely</b>	<b>(4) Never</b>	<b>Number</b>
Total Sample	10.8%	11.9%	<b>(22.7%)</b>	22.7%	54.6%	855
<b>(a) Age (p&lt;.001)</b>						
1. 18-25 Years	10.1%	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>(25.6%)</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	51.2%	129
2. 26-40 Years	<b>16.3%</b>	9.5%	<b>(25.8%)</b>	21.4%	52.8%	252
3. 41-55 Years	7.0%	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>(21.0%)</b>	<b>26.6%</b>	52.3%	214
4. 56-70 Years	10.4%	6.7%	<b>(17.1%)</b>	<b>26.8%</b>	<b>56.1%</b>	164
5. 71 Years plus	6.4%	16.0%	<b>(22.4%)</b>	10.6%	<b>67.0%</b>	94
Number	92	100	<b>(192)</b>	195	466	853
<b>(b) Marital Status (p&lt;.001)</b>						
1. Single/Never Married	<b>12.6%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>(26.2%)</b>	15.6%	<b>58.3%</b>	302
2. Married	10.7%	9.7%	<b>(20.4%)</b>	<b>27.9%</b>	51.7%	402
3. Separated/Divorced	3.3%	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>(23.3%)</b>	<b>26.7%</b>	50.0%	30
4. Permanent Rel'ships	8.9%	7.1%	<b>(16.0%)</b>	<b>44.6%</b>	39.3%	56
5. Widowed	7.7%	18.5%	<b>(26.2%)</b>	4.6%	<b>69.2%</b>	65
Number	92	102	<b>(194)</b>	(195)	(466)	855

<sup>1</sup> *An Coiste um Thaighde ar Dhearcadh an Phobail I dTaobh na Gaeilge*, 1975.

<b>TABLE No. 4.5 (Cont'd.) Variables</b>	<b>(1) Weekly or More Often</b>	<b>(2) Occasionally</b>	<b>Regular Use of Irish (1+2)</b>	<b>(3) Rarely</b>	<b>(4) Never</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>(c) Place of Rearing (p&lt;.001)</b>						
1. Dublin (City / Co)	6.6%	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>(19.8%)</b>	22.6%	<b>57.6%</b>	257
2. Rest of Leinster	6.7%	11.6%	<b>(18.3%)</b>	20.7%	<b>61.0%</b>	164
3. Munster	<b>18.1%</b>	<b>14.2%</b>	<b>(32.3%)</b>	20.3%	47.4%	232
4. Connaught / Ulster	<b>13.9%</b>	7.0%	<b>(20.9%)</b>	<b>26.6%</b>	52.5%	158
Number	92	97	<b>(189)</b>	181	441	811
<b>(d) Education (p&lt;.001)</b>						
1. Primary or less	4.6%	3.7%	<b>(8.3%)</b>	7.4%	<b>84.3%</b>	108
2. Incomplete Second-L.	5.4%	8.8%	<b>(14.2%)</b>	16.7%	<b>69.2%</b>	240
3. Complete Second-Lev.	10.1%	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>(22.2%)</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	52.8%	210
4. Third-level	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>(35.3%)</b>	22.7%	33.2%	292
Number	92	102	<b>(194)</b>	194	468	---
<b>(e) Occupational Status (p&lt;.001)</b>						
1 Unskilled / Semi	4.6%	6.3%	<b>(10.9%)</b>	20.0%	<b>69.1%</b>	175
2. Skilled/ Routine non-m	6.8%	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>(21.5%)</b>	<b>26.4%</b>	52.1%	265
3. Inspectional / Supervisory	<b>16.4%</b>	9.0%	<b>(25.4%)</b>	<b>28.7%</b>	45.9%	122
4. Professional /Executive	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>(35.0%)</b>	16.9%	48.1%	180
Number	80	83	<b>(163)</b>	167	392	722

Note: Percentages above sample average are **bold**.

Table No. 4.5 shows the influence of age and education on the frequency of use. Most of the findings in this table are as were anticipated.

#### **(a) Age and Frequency of Use of Irish:**

The following extract from Table No. 4.5(a) highlights the differences between the variables. Variations were statistically significant (i.e. not due to chance) and quite substantial.

<u>Age Variable</u>	<u>'Regular' User</u>	<u>(Reasonable Competence)*</u>	<u>Never Use Irish</u>	<u>Gap Between Competence and Use</u>
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>
1. 18 to 25 years	<u>25.6%</u>	(69.0%)	51.2%	(+43.4%)
2. 26 to 40 years	<u>25.8%</u>	(50.6%)	52.8%	(+24.8%)
3. 41 to 55 years	21.0%	(35.6%)	52.3%	(+14.6%)
4. 56 to 70 years	17.1%	(45.4%)	<u>56.1%</u>	(+28.3%)
5. 71 years plus	22.4%	(37.6%)	<u>67.0%</u>	(+15.2%)
Number	192	(404)	466	---
(Sample Average)	(22.7%)	(47.2%)	(54.6%)	(+24.5%)

Note: *Percentages above sample average are underlined.*

\* Table No. 3.3, pages 45-46.

There seems to be a significant drop in the 'regular use' of Irish, (i.e. weekly and occasionally) after the 'age of 40 years'. This is sometimes referred to as 'language slippage'. Column D of the sub-table above shows the extent of 'competence redundancy'. Socio-cultural forces seem to be 'dumbing out' the Irish language in the population against the will of the people as expressed in the current level of support for the language as borne out in Chapter II above.

This raises questions about the lack of opportunities in Irish society for people to use Irish. One area in particular (familiar to the author) is religious liturgy and devotions. People who attend Church Services are often forced to do so in English, even in communities capable of participating in Irish. In terms of *diglossia*, **Religious Services** are ideal opportunities for believers to pray and worship through Irish. Churches and Religious Bodies might consider the presentation of services through Irish for cultural as well as spiritual reasons.

People spend a large proportion of their time **buying and selling**, e.g. groceries, clothing and footwear, fancy goods, hardware, books, etc. It would help greatly if the State were to insist that **all items** available for sale in retail outlets should have **bi-lingual labels** (provided by suppliers on goods for sale in the Republic of Ireland). Information

with regard to ingredients should be bi-lingual by **right**. This would immediately improve the Irish vocabulary of the people and facilitate the use of Irish in the day-to-day shopping. It would also make it easier for shop attendants to identify the various goods requested in Irish. *Gnó trí Ghaeilge* (Business through Irish) is being promoted throughout the country, i.e. Galway, Tipperary, Cork, Mayo and other areas. This is to be commended as another occasion for the normal use of Irish.

A similar change should be introduced in pubs and restaurants. It is rather strange to see so-called ‘high-class’ restaurants in Ireland printing their menus in English and French and ignoring the native language of the people. Is this yet another example of the remnants of our ‘**post-colonial attitudinal schizophrenia**’, i.e. looking up to the outsider while looking down on ourselves?

**(b) Marital Status and Frequency of Use of Irish:**

**Gender** failed to register a statistically significant variation in relation to the frequency of use by men and women. **Marital Status** elicited a chi-square score of  $P < .001$ . The following sub-table highlights the differences between the Marital Status sub-samples.

<u>Marital Status Variables</u>	<u>Regular User</u> <u>A</u>	<u>Never Use Irish</u> <u>B</u>
1. Single / Never Married	<u>26.2%</u>	<u>58.3%</u>
2. Married	20.4%	51.7%
3. Separated / Divorced	<u>23.3%</u>	50.0%
4. Permanent Relationship	16.0%	39.3%
5. Widowed	<u>26.2%</u>	<u>69.2%</u>
Number	194	466
(Sample Average)	(22.7%)	(54.6%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

Respondents in ‘Permanent Relationships’ were lowest in ‘regular use’ of Irish and also lowest in ‘Never Using Irish’. They were highest in the category who ‘Rarely’



used the language at 44.6%. The 'Single/Never Married' and the 'Separated/Divorced' were above average in their use of Irish. The 'Single/Never Married' were also above average in 'Never' using Irish. These mixed results are influenced by the age and education factors.

The 'Married' and the 'Widowed' are the two groups most likely to support the use of Irish in the domestic situation. The Married constitute 47% of the sample. The level of use of Irish of this category is **lower than expected**, because 'At Home' was ranked second to 'Radio/TV' in the occasions of use in Table No. 4.3 above. How to increase the use of language in the home requires much reflection. The growth of the Irish-speaking families is significant, but still relatively small. Under the *diglossia* principle it might be possible to identify certain regular family events such as **during meals** or the **family rosary or prayer**, as specific occasions at which Irish would be used. These practices can keep alive the use of the language for children and adults alike and are being promoted among their parents by many *Náionraí* and '*Maimilíní*' (parents and toddler groups). Modern family norms are reducing the number of occasions when all members are at home. The commercialisation of leisure has resulted in a reduction in the function of the home to provide for **tension management**.

The 'Widowed' in this survey provide an interesting result. Their level of use is above the sample average at 26.2%, while the percentage for 'Never Using Irish' is substantially higher than the other sub-samples. The widowed (and grandparents) would be an important category for the encouragement of grand-children to learn and use Irish. Observations suggest that they frequently act as very valuable child-minders of their own grandchildren.

**Language patterns** established early in relationships or in the early days of families tend to be fairly permanent and difficult to change once established. Where English is already the prevailing language, an agreement would need to be worked out to use Irish regularly in some daily shared activity. Such an agreed pattern has been found to be effective. Parent and toddler groups known as '*Maimilíní*' (which bring a number

of parents and very young children together in each other's homes to speak Irish and enjoy each other's company using structured activities) have been very successful. Potentially, they could have a profound effect on the establishment of life-long Irish-speaking networks.

**(c) Place of Rearing and Frequency of Use of Irish:**

The four areas by which respondents were clustered for Place of Rearing are similar to the four EU Election Constituencies of Dublin City and County, Rest of Leinster, Munster and Connaught/Ulster. The following extract from Table No. 4.5(c) gives a summary breakdown of the findings:

<u>Place of Rearing Variable</u>	<u>'Regular' Use</u>	<u>(Reasonable Competence)</u>	<u>Never Use Irish</u>	<u>Gap Between Competence and Use</u>
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>
1. Dublin City/County	19.8%	(43.5%)	<u>57.6%</u>	(+23.7%)
2. Rest of Leinster	18.3%	(42.3%)	<u>61.0%</u>	(+24.0%)
3. Munster	<u>32.3%</u>	<u>(55.8%)</u>	47.4%	(+23.5%)
4. Connaught / Ulster	20.9%	(45.5%)	52.5%	<u>(+24.6%)</u>
Number	189	(383)	441	---
(Sample Average)	(22.7%)	(47.2%)	(54.6%)	(+24.5%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

Once again the figures in Column D show that the total **gap** between reasonable competence in the language and its use is spread almost evenly around the country. This pattern confirms that **the redundancy of competence** is deep-rooted in the population. One rarely gets such uniform patterns in social surveys. This indicates a country-wide consistent pattern in the gap between **competence** and **use** of the Irish language. It may also suggest that cultural norms which prevent the use of Irish by competent speakers are also deeply engrained and long established.

**Munster-Reared** are clearly the respondents with greatest use as they were the province with highest competence. Despite this, the margin of +23.5% between

**competence** and **use** was the same as the sample average statistically speaking, i.e. when one takes the margin of error into account. Connaught/Ulster performance was lower than expected because of the presence of two major *Gaeltachtaí* in the area covered. Those reared in Dublin and the Rest of Leinster had more or less the same percentages.

**(d) Education and Frequency of Use of Irish:**

The positive correlation between education and frequency of use of Irish language is very significant. The range of scores is quite extensive, i.e. 27% (35.3 – 8.3) in the case of **regular use** and 51.1% (84.3 – 33.2) declaring **never** using Irish. The following extract from Table No. 4.5 clarifies the variations.

<u>Education</u>	<u>'Regular' Use</u>	<u>(Reasonable Competence)</u>	<u>Never Use Irish</u>	<u>Competence – Use</u>
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>
1. Primary or Less	8.3%	(16.8%)	<u>84.3%</u>	(+8.5%)
2. Incomplete Second-Level	14.2%	(31.4%)	<u>69.2%</u>	(+17.2%)
3. Complete Second-Level	22.2%	<u>(53.3%)</u>	52.8%	<u>(+31.1%)</u>
4. Third-Level	<u>35.3%</u>	<u>(66.8%)</u>	33.2%	<u>(+31.5%)</u>
Number	194	(403)	468	---
(Sample Average)	(22.7%)	(47.2%)	(54.6%)	(+24.5%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

There are a number of important lessons or features emanating from the above sub-table. In the first place, the positive correlation between **education and frequency of use** reports a similar link between **education and competence** in Irish (see columns A and B). The former is confirmed by the negative correlation between education and never using the language.

The second lesson coming from the above findings is the extraordinary depth of the embedded gap between competence and use of Irish (see Column D). Around 50% of respondents at different levels of 'reasonable competence' never use the language. One would have anticipated that the ratio between competence and use would reduce

according as education or both measures would increase. Of course, it could be argued that, because of the higher percentages in the case of those with higher education, the difference between use and competence would have to vary ‘to remain relatively the same’. A special look at the **ratio** between **competence** and **use** may be a fairer measure. i.e.:

<u>Education</u>	<u>Ratios of Competence to Use</u>		
	<u>Competence</u>	:	<u>Use</u> <u>Ratio</u>
1. Primary or Less	16.8	:	8.3 = 2.0 : 1
2. Incomplete Second-Level	31.4	:	14.2 = 2.2 : 1
3. Complete Second-Level	53.3	:	22.2 = 2.4 : 1
4. Third-Level	66.8	:	35.3 = 1.9 : 1

The above fluctuations in the ratios at each level of education are hardly significantly different. The range of difference is 0.5, i.e. between 2.4 and 1.9. Apart from confirming the reliability of the sample, this constancy of ratio shows how big the challenge is to **break through the ‘use barrier’**. It also means that it will not come about without the creation of appropriate precipitating factors from outside the individuals themselves, i.e. generating of suitable conditions to expand the use of Irish and remove obstacles to its use between and by people when pursuing their normal daily chores. Moves such as: bilingualism and retail **labelling** on goods of all kinds; encouraging the **catering trade** to facilitate the normal use of Irish; promotion of ‘business through Irish; provision of a welcoming **public service** through Irish; focusing on the teaching of Irish to **equip** the learner **to use it**; use of **mass media** to provide courses on radio and television which will refresh the viewers’ knowledge of Irish and increase their confidence to use it more frequently; and so forth.

The evidence of Table No. 4.5(d) clearly points to a socio-cultural environment in modern Ireland which does not encourage the use of Irish. One has to question what forces are undermining strenuous efforts to restore the language to its proper place in a bilingual context for most. Is this opposition coming from leadership of various powerful institutions? Is it a result of the proliferation of non-Irish print and electronic

media? Are there commercial interests who do not favour the restoration of the Irish language? Are the Irish speakers and those with competence in the language too timid to assert themselves? Or are the Irish still suffering from the inferiority complex caused by our post-colonial residue? Others more qualified than this author could add to, or take from, the above list of questions. Until the causes of this amazing shyness to use our native language are identified, it will not be possible to translate competence into use and generate a new momentum that will restore the Irish language to the benefit of all citizens and visitors. In the opinion of the present author, the causes of such a gap between competence and use are socio-cultural and likely to be **functional**, i.e. supportive of the current social system.

One area of education which has not been investigated by the current survey has been that of **playschools** and **crèches**. Reference has been made to the positive role of *Naíonraí*. **All playschools and crèches** have a very important function in relation to the transmission of the language to **all infants** and training them to enjoy using it at play. The language is the heritage of every child, and social norms or structures should not **prevent** the Irish from being transmitted to every child in his or her infancy.

**(e) Occupational Status and Frequency in the Use of Irish:**

The positive correlation between occupational status and the frequency of the use of Irish is confirmed in Table No. 4.5(e) above. The following extract helps to spell it out more clearly:

<u>Occupational Status</u>	<u>'Regular Use'</u> <u>A</u>	<u>Reasonable Competence</u> <u>B</u>	<u>Never Using</u> <u>C</u>	<u>Competence – Use</u> <u>D</u>
1. Unskilled/Semi-Skilled	10.9%	(42.0%)	<u>69.1%</u>	<u>(+31.1%)</u>
2. Skilled/ Routine Non-manual	21.5%	(40.6%)	52.1%	(+19.5%)
3. Inspectional/Supervisory	<u>25.4%</u>	(46.7%)	45.9%	(+21.3%)
4. Profession/Executive	<u>35.0%</u>	<u>(64.0%)</u>	48.1%	<u>(+29.0%)</u>
Number	163	(342)	392	---
(Sample Average)	(22.7%)	(47.2%)	(54.6%)	(+24.5%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

Because of the ‘mixed’ or moderately positive correlation between education and occupational status, there is a fluctuation in the percentages in column D above. Nevertheless, the correlation between **frequency of use** and **occupational** status is confirmed. The range of percentage in ‘Regular Use’ is 24.1% (35.0 - 10.9) and in the **never using** score 23.2% (69.1 - 45.9). This range is statistically substantial. The Chi-square for the occupational variable was  $P < .001$ . Therefore, the variations are statistically significant and not due to chance.

The fact that use increases according as the respondents’ occupational status increases is to be welcomed as further confirming trends in competence and in attitudes in support of the Irish language and its restoration. The great *bearna* (gap) or lag between the level of competence and that of use emerges once again. The ratios at each level of occupational status were as follows:

<u>Occupational Status</u>	<u>Ratios of Competence to Use</u>		
	<u>Competence</u>	<u>:</u>	<u>Use Ratio</u>
1. Unskilled / Semi-Skilled	42.0	:	10.9 = 3.9 : 1
2. Skilled / Routine Non-Manual	40.6	:	21.5 = 1.9 : 1
3. Inspectional/Supervisory	45.7	:	25.4 = 1.8 : 1
4. Professional/ Executive	64.0	:	35.0 = 1.8 : 1

The ratios for **skilled/routine non-manual**, **inspectional/supervisory** and **Professional/Executive** are practically the same at 1.8/9:1. The situation of the unskilled/semi-skilled is almost 4:1, which would indicate that the opportunities to use Irish have a ‘social class’ dimension. What are the reasons for this? Is using Irish becoming an elitist phenomenon? Has it moved from: ‘*Seán agus Peigí sa chistin go Siobhán agus Eoghan sa pharlús*’ (from Sean and Peigí in the kitchen to Siobhán and Eoghan in the parlour’)?

The improvement of the **social status** of the Irish language is likely to increase because of it becoming identified with the higher social classes. This is no reason to

neglect the members of the ‘working class’ by depriving them of their **native** language. The ratio above is very serious for two reasons, i.e. the special difficulty for people from the lower-class levels in getting a good grounding in Irish (outside the *Gaeltacht*) and the apparent difficulty of those who succeed being given fewer opportunities to use it. ‘Unskilled/Semi-Skilled constitute almost one quarter of the sample (24.3%) who gave their occupation. In a democracy, **all citizens** are entitled to their cultural inheritance.

### **Part III – Occasions of Use of the Irish Language**

In Part I of this chapter, Tables Nos. 4.3 and 4.4 gave the overall findings in relation to the occasion on which Irish was used by a proportion of respondents. A comparison with the findings of the 1988-89 National Survey in Table No. 4.4 showed a very close repetition of the 1988-89 finding in the 2007-08 results. This gives the responses extra validity and reliability.

Table No. 4.6 gives a breakdown of the findings when examined by five personal variables, i.e. **age, gender, marital status, place of rearing, education** and **occupational status**. The question asked of respondents was as follows:

*“When would you normally use Irish? Would you use it when:*

- 1. Meeting Irish-speaking friends?*
- 2. At work?*
- 3. All possible opportunities?*
- 4. At home?*
- 5. Listening to programmes on TV / Radio?*
- 6. Reading (specify)?*
- 7. Communicating with officials?*
- 8. Other?”*

The answer to each of the eight occasions was **Yes** or **No**. The findings on Table No. 4.6 are the percentage of those with reasonable competence who answered **Yes** in each case. ‘Other’ was not included.

**Table No. 4.6:**  
**Occasions When Irish was used by Irish-Born Respondents with  
'Reasonable' Competence in their Language**

Variables	TV/Radio (1)	At Home (2)	Irish-Speaking Friends (3)	At Work (5)	All Possible Occasions (6)	Reading Irish (7)	Communicating with Officials (8)
Total Sample	(23.9%)	(19.1%)	(19.0%)	(8.0%)	(7.7%)	(6.5%)	(5.1%)
Competence Sub-Sample	52.5%	42.1%	41.9%	17.6%	17.0%	14.2%	11.1%
<b>(a) Age</b>							
1. 18-25 Years	<b>66.1%</b>	37.1%	38.7%	11.3%	9.7%	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
2. 26-40 Years	46.7%	<b>45.0%</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>28.6%</b>	<b>28.6%</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>
3. 41-55 Years	39.2%	<b>44.1%</b>	38.2%	14.7%	5.9%	7.8%	7.8%
4. 56-70 Years	<b>65.8%</b>	34.2%	<b>44.4%</b>	13.7%	16.4%	9.7%	2.7%
5. 71 Years plus	<b>61.3%</b>	<b>51.6%</b>	<b>51.6%</b>	3.2%	<b>25.8%</b>	9.7%	6.5%
Number	204	163	162	67	66	54	44
<b>(b) Gender</b>							
Male	46.6%	41.0%	<b>48.3%</b>	17.4%	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>15.7%</b>
Female	<b>57.6%</b>	<b>43.1%</b>	36.4%	<b>17.7%</b>	15.7%	12.4%	7.2%
Number	204	163	162	68	66	55	43
<b>(c) Marital Status</b>							
1. Single/Never Married	<b>59.5%</b>	37.3%	<b>46.0%</b>	<b>23.0%</b>	<b>23.0%</b>	<b>22.2%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>
2. Married	50.5%	<b>47.4%</b>	37.8%	16.1%	13.0%	6.2%	7.8%
3. Separated/Divorced	20.0%	40.0%	<b>46.7%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	13.3%	6.7%	6.7%
4. Permanent Rel'ship	45.7%	29.4%	<b>47.1%</b>	14.3%	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	0.0%
5. Widowed	<b>68.4%</b>	<b>47.4%</b>	<b>42.1%</b>	0.0%	15.8%	<b>31.6%</b>	10.5%
Number	205	164	162	68	65	56	44
<b>(d) Place of Rearing</b>							
1. Dublin (City / Co)	<b>56.9%</b>	<b>45.9%</b>	30.3%	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	11.9%	9.2%
2. Rest of Leinster	42.2%	29.7%	37.5%	7.9%	14.1%	11.1%	9.4%
3. Munster	<b>57.9%</b>	37.7%	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>23.1%</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	8.3%	10.7%
4. Connaught / Ulster	52.0%	<b>51.3%</b>	<b>55.3%</b>	<b>19.7%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>	<b>30.3%</b>	<b>19.7%</b>
Number	198	164	157	68	65	53	44
<b>(e) Education</b>							
1. Primary or less	47.1%	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>43.8%</b>	5.9%	<b>35.3%</b>	11.8%	5.9%
2. Incomplete Second-L.	50.7%	<b>43.2%</b>	41.9%	12.2%	16.4%	9.5%	10.8%
3. Complete Second-Lev.	51.0%	36.6%	34.7%	8.9%	16.8%	12.9%	7.9%
4. Third-level	<b>55.1%</b>	41.8%	<b>45.4%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	15.3%	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>
Number	205	163	162	68	65	56	44
<b>(f) Occupational Status</b>							
1 Unskilled / Semi	45.5%	41.8%	20.4%	9.3%	14.5%	<b>16.4%</b>	11.1%
2. Skilled/ Routine non-m	40.9%	39.4%	41.3%	15.7%	15.0%	7.1%	10.1%
3. Inspectional / Supervisory	<b>59.1%</b>	35.8%	31.8%	<b>22.7%</b>	11.9%	13.6%	3.0%
4. Professional /Executive	<b>59.5%</b>	<b>48.8%</b>	<b>67.9%</b>	<b>28.6%</b>	<b>23.8%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>
Number	166	138	141	64	55	44	35

Note: Percentages above the sample average are **bold**.



The patterns emerging from the above table are in most cases as anticipated. There are a number of surprises. The latter reflect the social pattern of the recreational and occupational life of the different sub-samples according as passing changes in people's life-styles occur. Some sociologists would point out that the recreational and leisure patterns of people reflect their social class and they are different. If that be so, then the occasions for **use of Irish** would change according as those using Irish ascend or descend the 'social class ladder'. For purposes of replication, it was decided not to add to or take from the **range of occasions** presented to the respondent. Maybe, in future research more **occasions** should be added. An examination of those 'other' occasions on which Irish is used highlighted "*helping children with their Irish language homework*" as the most popular occasion of use (among the **other** category).

The **monitoring of occasions** of the use of Irish will be very important for those working to increase it in the years ahead. Attention should be focused on the 'general' Irish people as well as on the Irish language and culture supporters. Irish must get into the mainstream of Irish life – domestic, in the workplace and at recreation (indoors and outdoors) if the restoration is to be achieved and the 'reasonable competence' in Irish utilised.

**(a) Age and Occasions of Use:**

The '26 to 55 year olds' were above average for using Irish '**at home**', as were those in the oldest category, i.e. 71 years plus. They are the ages of parents rearing families and grand-parents. Use through **TV/Radio listening** was highest for the youngest (18 to 25 years) and to the oldest categories (51 – 70 years and 71 years plus). These findings may be of interest to listeners and viewers of *Raidió na Gaeltachta* and *TG4*.

The younger age categories (21 to 25 years and 26 to 40 years) were substantially above average in **Reading Irish** (18% and 21%) and in **Communicating with Officials** (14.5% and 19.2%). It would be good for the future of the Irish language if this pattern were to be maintained as those age-cohorts move up the 'age ladder'. This could be

likely as a result of more reading material being made available and the use of Irish when dealing with Officials being made easier and encouraged.

Looking at the findings across the seven occasions, it is interesting to note that the young middle-age (26 to 40 year olds) were above sample averages in **six of the seven** occasions. They were highest **at work** (28.6%), on **‘all possible occasions’** when **‘Reading Irish’** (21%) and in **Communication with Officials** (19.2%). The over 71 year olds lead the field for **‘Listening to Radio/TV’** (61.3%), **‘at home’** (51.6%) and with **‘Irish-speaking friends’** (51.6%). The patterns of use of Irish are in line with the age and likely domestic role of the different age-groups. It is very important to learn from this information and promote even greater use of Irish on the occasions identified. The first rule of development is to “grow from strength”.

**(b) Gender and the Occasions of Use of Irish:**

Table No. 4.6(b) shows the percentages of males and females who used Irish in each of the seven listed occasions. Allowing for a **margin of error** spelled out in the Introduction<sup>1</sup>, the differences between **male** and **female** are not statistically significant in the use of Irish **at home** (41% / 43%) and **at work** (17.4% / 17.7%). In the case of **‘all possible occasions’** (18.5% / 15.7%) and **Reading Irish** (16.3% / 12.4%) the variation is only moderately substantial, although statistically significant.

‘Males’ and ‘females’ differ substantially in **‘Listening to TV/Radio’** (46.6% / 57.6%), **Meeting Irish-Speaking Friends** (48.3% / 36.4%) and **Communicating with Officials** (15.7% / 7.2%).

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<sup>1</sup> Accepted ‘margins of error’ are determined by the amount of variation.

<u>P / Q (Q = 100-P)</u>	<u>Margin of Error</u>
1. Between 50/50 and 40/60	± 3%
2. Between 40/60 and 20/80	± 2%
3. Between 20/80 and 0/100	± 1%

Probably because of the influence of the Irish feminist movement and advances in equality rights, the **homogenisation** of male and female attitudes and behaviour was inevitable. Whether this has meant that males have followed female norms or females adopted more to male attitudes and practices is a question yet to be answered. Certainly, there is evidence in the current survey of 2007-08 and in 1988-89 of a move in the direction of homogenisation and the reduction of previous male-female diversity. The above results further confirm trends in attitudinal research over the past thirty-five years. Some would say that the merging of male and female sub-cultures will make our world less interesting!

**(c) Marital Status and Occasions of Use of Irish:**

The patterns of performance by the Marital Status sub-samples in Table No. 4.6(c) above show high levels of statistical significance and substantial ranges of variations. The range of difference with the Marital Status variable for each 'Occasion of Use of Irish' was never lower than 9%, i.e.

**TV/Radio** (68.4 – 20.0 = **48.4%**);

**At Home** (47.4 – 29.4 = **18.0%**);

**Irish-Speaking Friends** (47.1 – 37.8 = **9.3%**);

**At Work** (23.0 – 0.0 = **23.0%**);

**All Possible Occasions** (23.0 – 13.0 = **10.0%**);

**Reading Irish** (31.6 – 6.2 = **25.4%**)

**Communicating with Officials** (20.6 – 0.0 = **26.6%**).

The ranges of difference between the sub-samples point to the value of 'Marital Status' as a variable to produce variations which inform the reader of the factors which influence Irish language use today.

The 'Single/Never Married' and the 'Widowed' were the highest (59.5% and 68.4% respectively) users of Irish while listening to **TV/Radio**. As expected, the

‘Married’ and the ‘Widowed’ were the sub-samples using Irish **at home** at 47.4%. The ‘Married’ was the only sub-sample below average in the occasion ‘**When Meeting Irish-speaking Friends**’ at 37.8%.

The ‘Single/Never Married’ and the ‘Separated/Divorced’ were above the sample average for using Irish **at work** at 23.0% and 20.0% respectively. In fact, the ‘Single/Never Married’ were above the sample average for use of Irish in six of the seven occasions tested, i.e. all except at home. They were the only sub-sample above the sample average who used Irish (20.6%) in **communication with officials**. The sub-sample who gave the highest **Reading Irish** scores (31.6%) were the ‘widowed’.

#### **(d) Place of Rearing and Occasions of Use of Irish:**

The range of variation between those reared in the four EU constituencies has been significant but quite moderate. ‘Connaught/Ulster-reared’ were above average in **six** of the seven occasions and within 0.2% of the average in the seventh. The reason for this high performance across the board of the respondents from Connaught/Ulster, whose percentage using Irish regularly was slightly below the sample average at 20.9% (see Table No. 4.5(c)), is noteworthy, and would need further research.

‘Munster-reared’ respondents, who were highest in their frequency of use of Irish in two categories, i.e. **TV/Radio**, and **in all possible occasions**. Table No. 4.6(d) shows that respondents reared in ‘Dublin City and County’ were above average in using Irish when **listening to TV/Radio, at home, at work and in all possible occasions**. Those reared in the ‘Rest of Leinster’ were below the sample average in each of the seven occasions. In the case of meeting **Irish-speaking friends, all possible occasions, reading Irish and communicating with officials**, they were very close to that average.

#### **(e) Education and Occasions of Use of Irish:**

The interesting feature of Table No. 4.6(e) is the way education affected the occasions of use of Irish. Only **Listening to TV/Radio** performs according to the normal positive correlation pattern. **At work, reading Irish and communicating with**

**officials** also follow the positive correlation pattern with a deviation from the trend in the following cases, i.e. the below the norm's percentage of 'complete second-level' (8.9%) **at work**, likewise in the percentage of 'incomplete second-level (9.5%) **reading Irish** column and the drop to 7.9% for 'complete second-level' responding in the occasion of **communicating with officials**. These anomalies in education's performance are important in the light of the significance of education in preparing the young to use Irish in the various aspects of normal personal, social, cultural, familial, occupational, recreational, religious, educational and artistic life.

The use of Irish **at home** was negatively correlated with the respondents' education to a moderate degree. This finding may tell something about the life-styles of the various sub-samples of the educational variable. It is also influenced by the demographic make-up of the sub-samples, since the less educated people have a weaker competence in Irish. Nevertheless, they are more willing to use it at home than those with higher education.

Another occasion of use of Irish which has gone against the trends of this variable is '**all possible occasions**'. Is this an example of the proverbial 'widow mite' in support of the use of Irish? It is a mark of great praise to this sub-sample (Primary or Less) of respondents who, despite their education deprivations have revealed their using Irish on every occasion available – all 35.3% (224.5% of the sample average of 15.7%).

The above comments are not intended to take from the performance of 'third-level' respondents who scored above average in five of the seven occasions, all except '**at home**' and '**all possible occasions**'. Why the performance of those with lesser education is so noteworthy is that it has gone against the established trends. Also, the goal of the restoration of the Irish language is just as important for the man or woman with 'incomplete primary education' as it is for the woman or man with multiple doctorates!

**(f) Occupational Status and Occasions of Use of Irish:**

The final variable tested for occasions of use of the Irish language on Table No. 4.6(f) is *occupational status*. This is probably one of the most important variables for monitoring the use of the Irish language. Much of our social behaviour is influenced by peer-pressure. Human beings wish to satisfy the expectations of those around them.

For most of the life of most people, their work colleagues constitute a major peer group. As far back as the 1930s, American Sociologists and Social Psychologists<sup>1</sup> made a very important socio-psychological discovery that a **principal factor** in productivity at work was **the informal group of fellow-workers** whose peer-pressure determined the work-rate on the job, rather than a whole range of other incentives. This was confirmed in other walks of life, including the performance of military personnel at war. This was known only implicitly until the study of ‘**Bank Wiring Group Study**’ in the Hawthorn Works of Western Electric Company in Chicago bench-mark study. Research by sociologists and social psychologists over the past seventy plus years have repeatedly confirmed the importance of informal peer-pressure (in small groups) to control behaviour.

Applying this evidence to the voluntary use of Irish, one can see the importance of our fellow-workers in determining our behaviour. Table No. 4.6(f) is but a generalised report on the possible influence of colleagues’ peer-pressure as one of the factors at work.

Across the board the upper occupational status has recorded the highest use of Irish in **each** of the seven occasions of use examined. Remembering that one does not need to have the highest occupational status to be perfectly fluent in Irish or speak it every day or on every possible occasion, this result is both encouraging and disappointing. It is encouraging in that it spells out the versatility of the occasions of use of Irish by the members of the highest occupational status in the land. It is disappointing

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<sup>1</sup> See: Mayo, Elton, *The Human Problems of Industrial Civilization*, New York, Macmillan, 1933.

Roethlisberger, F.J and William, J, Dickson, *Management and the Worker: an Account of a Research Program Conducted by the Western Electric Company, Hawthorne Works, Chicago*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University press, 1938.

from the point of view of the blue-collar workers, and others in the lower and middle grades, that their range of use of Irish is relatively low (with the exception of **Reading Irish**).

Returning to the peer-pressure model discovered by Mayo and others (see page 80 above) to explain work-rates in the ‘Bank Wiring Group’, it would be useful for those who wish to improve the use of Irish to consider seeking support from Trade Unions, College Authorities, Office and Plant Committees, Management Committees, and any voluntary groups of work colleagues to support the use of Irish in a voluntary informal manner. As is well known, peer-pressure can discourage or encourage those who use Irish by such mechanism as ‘ridicule’ which, incidentally, was used regularly in the ‘Bank Wiring Group’ to encourage ‘the slackers’ to work harder and discourage the ‘rate-busters’ and ‘eager-beavers’ from working above the informally agreed rate. It is often reported by keen Irish speakers that they are ridiculed in the most subtle way by their peers who have ‘a complex’ about the Irish language.

When dealing with the adult population, great skill and tact needs to be used, not only to persuade people to use Irish in normal settings, but also to encourage their colleagues to do so. It is also necessary to resist the counter-pressures which, at times, come from people (maybe peers) who appear to be intolerant of Irish conversation, and are quick to disrupt it without the slightest consideration. At the current stage of the Irish Revival/Restoration, when one person present in a group is not willing to speak Irish, this forces the others who wish to do so to change to English. This issue will be discussed later in this Report.

#### **Part IV – Norms Restricting the Use of Irish**

It is generally accepted the people’s use of Irish is governed by the everyday norms of society. All human interaction is determined by social norms, which act as incentives and restrictions to our social behaviour. In the case of the use of the Irish language, it is obvious that, irrespective of competence, there are norms and occasions

when it is acceptable to speak Irish and when it is discouraged to do so. Table No. 4.7 measures norms restricting the use of Irish for Irish-born respondents whose competence is either “very fluent, fluent or middling”, i.e. 272 respondents. These respondents would be more than capable of engaging in a conversation in the Irish language.

**Table No. 4. 7:  
Norms Restricting the Use of Irish**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Committed to using Irish as much as one can</b>	<b>Reluctant to converse in Irish when unsure of a person’s ability to speak Irish</b>	<b>Reluctant to speak Irish when others who don’t know Irish are present</b>
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Total Sample	59.2%	65.5%	63.0%
<b>(a) Age</b>			
1. 18-25 Years	<b>63.0%</b>	64.8%	47.2%
2. 26-40 Years	56.4%	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>75.8%</b>
3. 41-55 Years	55.1%	<b>66.0%</b>	<b>70.0%</b>
4. 56-70 Years	58.3%	57.1%	<b>64.6%</b>
5. 71 Years plus	<b>70.4%</b>	37.0%	30.8%
Number	161	178	171
<b>(b) Gender</b>			
Male	<b>62.2%</b>	<b>67.2%</b>	61.3%
Female	56.5%	64.3%	<b>64.3%</b>
Number	161	179	172
<b>(c) Marital Status</b>			
1. Single/Never Married	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>71.7%</b>	62.3%
2. Married	50.4%	<b>69.2%</b>	<b>68.4%</b>
3. Separated/Divorced *	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%
4. Permanent Rel’ship*	54.3%	60.9%	<b>87.5%</b>
5. Widowed	<b>83.3%</b>	22.2%	22.2%
Number	160	178	172
<b>(d) Area of Birth</b>			
1. City 100,000 +)	52.9%	65.0%	<b>69.2%</b>
2. Large Town 10,000 +	48.3%	<b>75.9%</b>	<b>70.0%</b>
3. Town (1,500+)	<b>76.7%</b>	58.6%	51.7%
4. Rural Village	<b>65.3%</b>	64.9%	56.4%
Number	162	178	172
<b>(e) Place of Rearing (In Republic of Ireland)</b>			
1. Dublin (City / Co)	51.8%	<b>72.0%</b>	<b>69.9%</b>
2. Rest of Leinster	<b>62.2%</b>	62.2%	58.3%
3. Munster	<b>63.2%</b>	64.2%	62.1%
4. Connaught / Ulster	<b>66.0%</b>	59.6%	57.4%
Number	157	171	165
<b>TABLE No. 4.7 (Cont’d.)</b>			



<b>Variables</b>	<b>Committed to using Irish as much as one can</b>	<b>Reluctant to converse in Irish when unsure of a person's ability to speak Irish</b>	<b>Reluctant to speak Irish when others who don't know Irish are present</b>
<u>(f) Region of Residence</u>			
1 BMW (Border/ Midlands/West)	57.8%	57.8%	55.6%
2. Dublin	53.0%	<b>73.8%</b>	<b>68.7%</b>
3. Mid-East & South-East	<b>62.3%</b>	56.7%	60.0%
4. Mid-West & South West	<b>63.1%</b>	<b>67.5%</b>	<b>64.3%</b>
Number	161	178	172
<u>(g) Education</u>			
1. Primary or less	66.7%	58.3%	33.3%
2. Incomplete Second-Lev	56.5%	61.7%	61.7%
3. Complete Second-Lev.	<b>63.2%</b>	55.9%	51.5%
4. Third-Level	57.5%	<b>72.4%</b>	<b>71.2%</b>
Number	161	179	172
<u>(h) Occupational Status</u>			
1 Unskilled / Semi	32.4%	<b>70.6%</b>	<b>76.5%</b>
2. Skilled/ Routine non-m	60.0%	57.1%	45.7%
3. Inspectional / Supervisory	61.4%	<b>71.1%</b>	<b>63.6%</b>
4. Professional /Executive	<b>66.3%</b>	65.1%	<b>74.7%</b>
Number	135	150	148

Note: Percentages above the sample average are **bold**.

\* Note cells too small for statistical significance

The above findings are more or less as anticipated. Most Irish-speaking respondents accept the convention of being reluctant to initiate conversations in Irish or their wish to use it in company whose competence to speak the language is unknown to them. This means that the use of Irish is literally restricted to known *gaelgeoirí!*

There is an obvious need for a campaign of behaviour-change directed at the achievement of a favourable change in the social norms which restrict the use of Irish. Such a campaign should be part of genuine strategic planning for Irish and should be based on full understanding of the sociological and social psychological factors. Within such a campaign, the widest use of an emblem like *An Fáinne* could be very beneficial.

Table No. 4.7 gives the variations within the personal variables. The lower the percentage saying 'yes' in columns two and three, the greater the moral courage of the respondent to take the initiative and engage in an Irish conversation.

Column one gives the replies to the statement “*I am committed to using Irish as much as I can*”. The sample average of 59.2% of those with reasonable competence in Irish (or 18.8% of the Irish-born), who said ‘yes’, to the above statement is quite significant from a number of points of view. In the first place, it measures **the strength of motivation** in the population of reasonably competent speakers to initiate occasions of use of Irish. Secondly, it gives the base from which to start a campaign to promote the use of Irish. Table No. 4.7 gives the profile of this 59% in respect to **age, gender, marital status, area of birth, place of rearing, region of residence, education and occupational status**. Readers should study column one for themselves. At times, the motivation does not seem to go according to the level of competence (see Table No. 3.3), most markedly in the case of **educational standards**

## **Chapter V**

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### **Irish as the Basis of Common Identity and Attitudes towards Irish Speakers**

## Chapter V Irish as the Basis of Common Identity and Attitudes towards Irish Speakers

### Part I – Introduction and General Findings

The discussion and debate on what characterises the Irish people as a distinctive ethnic or cultural group has been central to the case for Irish National Independence and for Irish Ethnic Identity. Most **anthropologists**, i.e. academics and writers who study human culture and ethnology, agree that the **people’s language** is their most important symbolic meaningful system which characterises a people. The language contains the cultural deposit of centuries of a people living together in good times and bad. It also contains their prayers, songs and poetry. It is considered invaluable, totally unique and irreplaceable. It also provides a unique nuance on the world the people live in and a link between past, present and future generations<sup>1</sup>.

The findings of Chapter II above show that the vast majority of the adults of the Republic of Ireland appreciate the special value of the Irish language. **Ninety-three per cent** of the total sample (which includes those born in Ireland and those from abroad) expressed their agreement with the preservation of the Irish language, with forty-one per cent wishing to **have it revived** as a means of communication between Irish people. The wisdom of this anthropological insight in the general population is most impressive and reassuring to those who have campaigned for the restoration of Irish (See Table No. 2.1, page 6).

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<sup>1</sup> It is not only a means of communication. In the words of the 1967 Canadian Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism “Language itself is fundamental to activities which are distinctively human. It is through language that the individual fulfils his capacity for expression. It is through language that man not only communicates but achieves communion with others. It is language which, by its structures, shapes the very way in which men order their thoughts coherently. It is language which makes possible social organisation. Thus a common language is the expression of a community of interests among a group of people. ( See Book 1, *The Official Languages, General Introduction, Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Queen’s Printer, Ottawa, Canada, 1967).

Seeing the Irish language as a **symbolic basis of common identity** for the whole population of the island of Ireland (Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland) has been a wish of many leaders over the years. It would be non-sectarian and capable of embracing diverse political ideologies and world views.

The question of “the Irish language and culture” providing “a good basis for Irish Unity” was first introduced in the 1972-73 Survey of Greater Dublin and repeated in the National Survey of 1988-89. In the 2007-08 National Survey the question was replicated.

A question on the people’s Primary Ethnic Self-Identity was first introduced by Richard Rose of Strathclyde University in his survey of Northern Ireland in 1968<sup>1</sup> and replicated by the present author in the Greater Dublin Survey (1972-73) and in the National Surveys of 1988-89 and of 2007-08. The general findings of both questions, i.e. Irish as the basis of Irish Unity and the people’s ethnic self-identity will be presented and discussed in this part of Chapter V.

**Table No. 5.1:**

**Irish as an Acceptable Symbolic Basis of Irish Unity**

**Question Asked:** “*Would you agree or disagree that a return to the Irish Language and Culture could provide a good basis for Irish Unity in the Long Term (even though it might present difficulties in the Short Term?)*”

Level of Agreement (2007-08)	Total Sample A		Irish-Born B		Difference (B – A)	
	Actual	Cum.	Actual	Cum.	Actual	Cum.
1. Agree	30.0%	30.0%	31.0%	31.0%	+1.0%	+1.0%
2. Neither Agree nor Disagree	21.4%	51.4%	22.5%	53.5%	+1.1%	+2.1%
3. Don’t Know	16.1%	67.4%	11.3%	64.8%	-4.8%	-2.6%
4. Disagree	32.5%	---	35.2%	---	+2.7%	---
Number	100.0%	1,011	100.0%	855	---	---

<sup>1</sup> See Richard Rose, *Governing Without Consensus*, London, Faber, 1971.

The main result of the above Table is the fact that a slight plurality would not agree with the statement, i.e. 32.5% disagreeing and 30.0% agreeing. The Irish-born among the respondents do not differ that much from the Total Sample. The relatively high proportion in the ‘neither agree nor disagree’ and ‘don’t know’ would seem to indicate around one-third are indecisive, which could mean that their opinions are susceptible to change. Comparisons with the findings of earlier surveys would indicate a move towards agreement.

**Table No. 5.2**  
**Changes in Attitudes towards Irish as a Symbolic Basis of Irish Unity**

Level of Agreement	National Sample				Dublin Sub-Samples				
	Total Sample 2007-08 A	Total Irish Born 2007-08 B	Total Sample 1988-89 C	(A-C)	Sub-Sample Irish Born 2007-08 C	Sub-Sample 1988-89 D	Sample 1972-73 E	(C-D)	(C-E)
1. Agree	30%	31.0%	24%	+6%	24%	20%	18%	+4%	+6%
2. Don't Know/ Neither Agree nor Disagree	38%	34.0%	19%	+19%	40%	22%	4%	+18%	+36%
3. Disagree	33%	35.0%	57%	-24%	37%	58%	79%	-21%	-42%
Number	1,011	855	1,000	---	246	274	2,279	---	---

The findings of Table No. 5.2 show evidence of a significant and substantial change in the opinions of the people in relation to the potential of the Irish language as a symbolic basis of common identity for all Irish people. The biggest sign of change is the **reduction** of those who **disagree** (-27%) with the statement/question (see Table No. 5.1 above). The increase in the ‘Don’t Know/Neither Agree or Disagree’ row, as already stated, is indicative of the transitional stage of change of opinion.

While the change is significant and substantial, there is much room for improvement. The achievement of the **Good Friday Agreement** in 1998 and efforts to promote Irish as the language for all people living in Ireland are noteworthy. Their achievements for the improvement of **cultural solidarity** between people from diverse cultural, political and religious traditions may be beginning to have a positive effect on the people's opinions. This does not mean that the country is heading for a monolingual (Irish only) popular language. The increase of cultural diversity in Ireland to-day will result in many becoming multilingual, as is the case of citizens of Belgium, where a large number of citizens have a command of **Flemish, French, English and German**. The prominent languages in Ireland for some time will be Irish and English. The linguistic make-up of our population may add other languages. According as this diversity develops, the ethnic self-identity of many of our citizens will be mixed, hence the greater importance of Irish as a **powerful symbolic system** with the potential of promoting **cultural solidarity** which respects the cultural (or sub-cultural) pluralism of Ireland of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Despite the rational case in favour of the return to the Irish language and culture as symbols of common identity (giving some depth to the concept and reality of **being Irish**), there is need for caution and patience in the exercise of persuasion of others who have a different view. The common use of Irish does not exclude the common use of English. **Irish and English** are source partners of **Scots Irish**. There is no reason why every Irish person should not respect the **three** traditions.

Table No. 5.3 gives the **primary ethnic self-identity** of the people of the Republic of Ireland in 1988-89 and 2007-08 and of the Dublin people in 1972-73, 1988-89 and 2007-08. The results of the survey of Northern Ireland by Richard Rose in 1968 are also included. The question used in each survey in the Republic of Ireland in 1972-73, 1988-89 and 2007-08 was replicated from Rose's survey.

**Table No. 5.3:**  
**Primary Ethnic Self-Identity of the People of the Republic of Ireland**

Ethnic Self-Identity	Nth.Irl 1968 A	National Sample			Dublin Sample / Sub-Samples				
		* 2007-08 B	1988-89 C	Change (B-C)	* 2007-8 D	1988-89 E	1972-73 F	D - E	D - F
1. Irish	43%	<b>78%</b>	68%	+10%	<b>85%</b>	74%	48%	+11%	+37%
2. Irish County & Provinces	21%	<b>8%</b>	28%	-20%	<b>7%</b>	22%	47%	-15%	-40%
Total Irish	<b>(64%)</b>	<b>(87%)</b>	<b>(96%)</b>	<b>(-9%)</b>	<b>(92%)</b>	<b>(96%)</b>	<b>(95%)</b>	<b>(-4%)</b>	<b>(-3%)</b>
3. Anglo-Irish/ British	35%	<b>5%</b>	2%	+3	<b>0%</b>	3%	2%	-3%	-2%
4. European / Other	1%	<b>8%</b>	2%	+6	<b>7%</b>	1%	1%	+6%	+5%
Number	1,291	<b>1,015</b>	1,005	---	<b>286</b>	265	2,311	---	---

\* The 2007-08 percentages are in **bold**.

The most notable change in the above table is the substantial drop of those of the National Sample who saw themselves first as members of a particular county, city or province between 1988-89 and 2007-08, i.e. from 29% in 1988-89 to 8% in 2007-08. The proportion of Dublin Respondents, whose primary identity was city, county or province has dropped between 1972-73 and 2007-08 even more substantially, i.e. from 47% in 1972-73 to 7% in 2007-08. In both cases there has been a very substantial increase in the percentage who identified themselves primarily as 'Irish'.

What this **shift** in ethnic self-identity means is a decline in the **local** and the switch to the **national** self-identity. This could indicate a shift in social-class identity. It was found in the 1972-73 findings that **working class people** and those from a poorer



background tended to see themselves as ‘**Dublin**’ or ‘**Mayo**’ people, etc. before identifying with the ‘Irish’. **Middle-class** people expressed the ‘broader’ national self-identity of Irish. Is this evidence of the ‘*embourgeoisment*’ of the adults of the Republic of Ireland? The beginning of this shift in Dublin was evident in the 1988-89 findings, i.e. from 48% in 1972-73 to 74% in 1988-89 in those whose primary ethnic self-identity was ‘Irish’. The decline in ‘County/City’ as the primary ethnic self-identity also marks the further decline in local community identity in our move towards a more individualised world view.

The failure of ‘**European**’ as the **primary ethnic self-identity** to make significant progress since 1988-89 to 2007-08, i.e. from 1% to 3% at the National level may be disappointing for those who put emphasis on **European Union Citizenship**. It certainly has not registered with adults in the Republic of Ireland as a **primary** source of ethnic self-identity. This might be a factor in explaining the people’s refusal to approve the Lisbon Treaty. The Irish people seem to identify more with their National flag than with that of the European Union!

Some of the small rise in European and ‘Other’ ethnic self-identity is largely due to the influx of **first-generation foreign-born** immigrants over the past twenty years. This includes about 15% of the sample. **Professor Liam Ryan** noted (at the time of the entry of Ireland to the European Common Market) that the merchant middle-class **set up** the **Nation States** in Europe in opposition to the ‘ascendancy upper class’ and the ‘socialist working class’ in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The same Middle Class in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century proceeded to **set up** the European Common Market and work for the demise of the sovereignty of the Nation States against opposition from socialists and the remnants of the aristocracy.

The above findings do not indicate that the success of the move towards Europe has so far undermined the primacy of Irish self-identity in the **Irish** people. It would be interesting to test the degree to which the **European** (Union) has replaced the **local state or nation** as the primary ethnic self-identity in states across the EU.

The role of sport has much to do with the re-enforcement of local self-identity. The late **Professor Jeremiah Newman** (former Bishop of Limerick) was reputed to have said that the GAA created the ‘counties’ in Ireland as geographic entities with which the people identified. Their group games of ‘hurling’ and ‘football’ created inter-county rivalry which resulted in popular identity with the **county**, that had heretofore been an administrative unit based on arbitrary barony boundaries<sup>1</sup>. The popularity of these group games in pre-industrialised Ireland was an almost unique phenomenon. The rise of the counties as units of self-identity may have undermined the people’s identity with their dioceses. The GAA retained the parish as its local unit. Until quite recently, the followers of GAA were largely working-class and small farmers and not characteristically middle-class. The latter supported the ‘national’ teams, as in the case of ‘Rugby’. Soccer was largely supported by urban working-class. The commercialisation of sport has both broadened and narrowed its importance as a source of local and national ethnic self-identity.

The link between the people’s ethnic self-identity and the Irish language and culture is important as can be seen from the findings of Table No. 5.4, which gives the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between the three main findings of Irish Ethnic Self-Identity, Competence, Frequency of Use and attitudes towards the Irish language (now).

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<sup>1</sup> Some Counties’ boundaries were along older territorial divisions, i.e. boundaries of chieftains or local kings, e.g. Meath and Westmeath. Also, major features such as rivers and hills formed some parts of county boundaries. Counties as local administrative units were organised by early in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

**Table No. 5.4:**  
**Pearson correlations between Irish Ethnic Self-Identity, competence in Irish, Frequency of Use and attitudes towards Irish now**

	<b>Ethnic self-Identity</b>	<b>How Frequently use Irish</b>	<b>Competency in Irish</b>	<b>How felt about Irish-now</b>
<b>Ethnic Self-Identity</b>	1.000 n=1015	0.243 n=1015	0.384 n=1015	0.116 n=883
<b>How Frequently use Irish</b>		1.000 n=1015	0.696 n=1015	0.452 n=883
<b>Competency in Irish</b>			1.000 n=1015	0.482 n=883
<b>How felt about Irish-now</b>				1.000 n=883

This is a relatively strong correlation between ‘competency’ in Irish and ‘frequency of use’, i.e. +0.696. ‘Ethnic self-identity’ is moderately related to ‘competency’ in Irish, i.e. +0.384 and ‘frequency of use’ i.e. = +0.243. The non-significant link between ‘attitudes towards the language now’ and ‘ethnic self-identity’ is explained by the two different samples involved i.e. **Irish-born** and **total sample** respectively. The moderately high correlation between ‘attitudes towards the language now’ and ‘competency’ (+.482) and ‘use’ (+.452) is as was expected.

## **Part II – Irish as a Basis of Irish Unity by Personal Variables**

In Table No.5.5 the response to the question on the Irish language providing a good basis for Irish unity in the long term is examined by personal variables, i.e. **age, marital status, place of rearing, education** and **occupational status**. The question failed to elicit a statistically significant variation by the gender variable.

The last two columns give the ‘balance of opinion’ between **agree** and disagree. As noted in Table No. 5.2, the change in percentages **agreeing** and those **disagreeing** of the total sample between 1988-89 and 2007-08 was substantial, i.e. 1988-89: 24% **agreed** and 57% **disagreed** = 33% while in 2007-08: 30% **agreed** and 33% **disagreed** = 3%.

**Table No. 5.5:**

**Irish Language as a Basis of Irish Unity by Personal Variables (Irish-Born)**

**Question:** “A return to the Irish Language and Culture could provide a good basis for Irish Unity in the Long Term.”

Variables	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Don't Know	Disagree	Number	Balance of Opinion	
						Agree	Disagree
Total Sample (Irish Born)	30.9%	22.5%	11.4%	35.2%	854	---	+4.3%
<b>(a) Age (p&lt;/05)</b>							
1. 18-25 Years	<b>38.3%</b>	<b>23.4%</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	24.2%	128	+14.1%	---
2. 26-40 Years	<b>33.2%</b>	20.9%	10.7%	35.2%	253	---	+2.0%
3. 41-55 Years	23.8%	20.6%	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>43.9%</b>	214	---	+20.1%
4. 56-70 Years	32.1%	26.7%	7.9%	33.3%	165	---	+1.1%
5. 71 Years plus	29.8%	22.3%	<b>14.9%</b>	33.0%	94	---	+3.2%
Number	265	192	97	300	854	---	---
<b>(b) Marital Status (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1. Single/Never Married	<b>36.2%</b>	21.6%	<b>13.3%</b>	28.9%	301	+7.3%	---
2. Married	24.9%	<b>23.2%</b>	10.2%	<b>41.6%</b>	401	---	+16.7%
3. Separated/Divorced	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	6.7%	30.0%	30	+10.0%	---
4. Permanent Rel'ship	<b>49.1%</b>	15.8%	3.5%	31.6%	57	+17.5%	---
5. Widowed	25.0%	<b>28.1%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	29.7%	64	---	+4.7%
Number	265	192	96	300	853	---	---
<b>(c) Place of Rearing (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1. Dublin (City / Co)	21.4%	<b>31.5%</b>	9.3%	<b>37.7%</b>	257	---	+16.3%
2. Rest of Leinster	<b>35.6%</b>	14.7%	10.4%	<b>39.3%</b>	163	---	+3.7%
3. Munster	<b>34.2%</b>	22.1%	10.0%	33.8%	231	+0.4%	---
4. Connaught / Ulster	<b>37.7%</b>	17.0%	<b>16.4%</b>	28.9%	159	+8.8%	---
Number	252	183	90	285	810	---	---
<b>(d) Education (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1. Primary or less	27.1%	19.6%	<b>20.6%</b>	32.7%	107	---	+5.6%
2. Incomplete Second-L.	<b>36.2%</b>	<b>29.6%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	21.7%	240	+14.5%	---
3. Complete Second-Lev.	<b>32.4%</b>	17.6%	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>35.6%</b>	216	---	+3.2%
4. Third- Level	21.7%	20.9%	4.8%	<b>47.3%</b>	292	---	+25.6%
Number	265	191	97	302	855	---	---

<b>TABLE No. 5.5 (Cont'd.) Variables</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Dis- agree</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Balance of Opinion</b>	
						<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
<b>(e) Occupational Status (p&lt;.001)</b>							
1 Unskilled / Semi	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	20.5%	176	+19.8%	---
2. Skilled/ Routine non-m	24.9%	<b>23.4%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	265	---	+15.9%
3. Inspectional / Supervisory	26.0%	18.7%	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>43.1%</b>	123	---	+17.1%
4. Professional /Executive	<b>33.5%</b>	16.1%	6.2%	<b>44.1%</b>	161	---	+10.6%
Number	223	156	80	266	725	---	---

Note: Percentages above sample average are in **bold**.

Because the Irish-born sample has been used in the case of competence and frequency of use, it was decided to use the same sample in Table No. 5.5. Table No. 5.1 shows the total sample, and the Irish-born scores were not significantly different.

**(a) Irish as a Basis of Irish Unity by Age:**

The most interesting feature of the findings by age has been the moderate range of variation with a 'low' 'chi-square' at p<.05. Nevertheless, the differences are statistically significant.

The following extract from Table No. 5.5(a) highlights the differences and similarities between the scores:

<b><u>Age Variable</u></b>	<b><u>Irish as a Basis of Unity</u></b>		<b><u>Balance of Opinion</u></b>	
	<b><u>Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Disagree</u></b>	<b><u>Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Disagree</u></b>
1. 18 to 25 years	<u>38.3%</u>	24.2%	<u>+14.1%</u>	---
2. 26 to 40 years	<u>33.2%</u>	35.2%	---	+2.0%
3. 41 to 55 years	23.8%	<u>43.9%</u>	---	<u>+20.1%</u>
4. 56 to 70 years	<u>32.1%</u>	33.3%	---	+1.2%
5. 71 years plus	29.8%	33.0%	---	+3.2%
(Sample Average)	(30.9%)	(35.2%)	---	(+4.3%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

It is quite obvious from the above sub-table that the youngest age group (18 to 25 years) on balance **agree** with the opinion that “*a return to the Irish language and culture could provide a good basis for Irish Unity in the long-term*”, whilst the middle-aged cohort (41 to 55 years) substantially and significantly disagree (on balance). The other age groups’ scores are hardly significant. It is interesting to speculate why the ‘young’ and ‘middle-aged’ break with the norm in opposite directions. Since the variable is age and the question could be seen as having political as well as cultural connotations the life-experience of these two groups has been different, especially in relation to the conflict in Northern Ireland. The experience of the 41 to 55 year-olds (Irish-born) in relation to the Irish language and culture in their teens in the 1960s and 1970s (during the ‘youth cultural revolution’) may have affected their assessment of the native language and culture as a source of common ethnic identity? The opposite may have happened with the 18 to 25 year-olds whose experience in their teens was post-Northern Troubles and during a mini-Renaissance of the Irish language and culture. These are only speculative interpretations of the above findings.

**(b) Irish as a Basis of Unity by Marital Status:**

This variable has shown quite a variation in opinion in their responses. The following extract from Table No. 5.5(b) highlights the findings:

<b><u>Marital Status Variable</u></b>	<b><u>Irish as a Basis of Unity</u></b>		<b><u>Balance of Opinion</u></b>	
	<b><u>Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Disagree</u></b>	<b><u>Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Disagree</u></b>
1. Single/Never Married	<u>36.2%</u>	28.9%	+7.3%	---
2. Married	24.9%	<u>41.6%</u>	---	+16.7%
3. Separated/Divorced	<u>40.0%</u>	30.0%	+10.0%	---
4. Permanent Relationship	<u>49.1%</u>	31.6%	+17.5%	---
5. Widowed	25.0%	29.7%	---	+4.7%
Number	265	300	---	---
(Sample Average)	(30.9%)	(35.2%)	---	(+4.3%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The **single/never married, separated/divorced** and **permanent relationship** sub-samples had pluralities in agreement with the Irish language and culture becoming a **good basis for Irish Unity**. The **married** had the plurality in disagreement with the opinions expressed in the question, as had the **widowed**. Demographic factors are also at work in these findings, especially the presence of middle-aged opinions among the married. It is possible that supporters of the Irish language may not see its potential as a good basis for Irish Unity.

**(c) Place of Rearing and Irish as a Basis of Irish Unity:**

This variable explores the influence of place of rearing on the Irish-born respondents' opinions on Irish providing a good basis for Irish Unity. The following extract from Table No. 5.5(c) will focus on the positive and negative responses of each sub-sample:

<u>Place of Rearing</u>	<u>Irish as a Basis of Unity</u>		<u>Balance of Opinion</u>	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
1. Dublin City and County	21.4%	<u>37.7%</u>	---	+16.3%
2. Rest of Leinster	<u>35.6%</u>	<u>39.3%</u>	---	+3.7%
3. Munster	<u>34.2%</u>	33.8%	+0.4%	---
4. Connaught/Ulster	<u>37.7%</u>	28.9%	+8.8%	---
Number	252	285	---	---
(Sample Average)	(30.9%)	(35.2%)	---	(+4.3%)

Note: *Percentages above sample average are underlined.*

**Dublin City and County** respondents, who constitute 31.7% of the Irish-born sample, are clearly the weakest sub-sample in agreement. The urban factor is obviously at work in the Dublin City and County responses. The percentages in agreement for the **Rest of Leinster, Munster** and **Connaught/Ulster** are within margins-of-error range. In other words, there is consensus between the sub-samples in relation to **agreement**, which averages 5% above the 'sample average'. Because of the significantly lower percentage in **disagreement** in the case of 'Connaught/Ulster' at 28.9% (or 6.3% below the sample average) this province is, on balance, the sub-sample which is best disposed

towards the idea in the question. This is interesting for a province unit with four ‘Border Counties’, Donegal, Leitrim, Cavan and Monaghan.

**(d) Irish as a Basis of Irish Unity and Education:**

The correlation between education and agreement with the opinion that the “Irish language and culture” would be a good basis for Irish unity was moderately **negative**, which is the **opposite** to the findings of all the other questions about Irish presented in earlier chapters of this Report. The sub-sample least in favour of the opinion proposed was the ‘third-level’ one.

The following extract shows the extent of the variations:

<u>Education Variable</u>	<u>Irish as a Basis of Unity</u>		<u>Balance of Opinion</u>	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
1. Primary or Less	27.1%	32.7%	---	+5.6%
2. Incomplete Second-Level	<u>36.2%</u>	21.7%	<u>+14.5%</u>	---
3. Complete Second-Level	<u>32.4%</u>	<u>35.6%</u>	---	-3.2%
4. Third-Level	21.7%	<u>47.3%</u>	---	<u>+25.6%</u>
Number	265	302	---	---
(Sample Average)	(30.9%)	(35.2%)	---	(+4.3%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The most striking result in the above sub-table is the substantially different scores of the ‘**third-level**’ **sub-sample**, which represents 34.2% of the national sample and the other categories. One could speculate about the reasons for this **relatively negative response** when compared with those who have ‘incomplete’ and ‘complete second-level’. Is there a **social-class factor** at work in the response of those with ‘third-level education’ which would not support cultural nationalism? The ‘primary or less’ sub-sample was below the sample average in the ‘**agree**’ and ‘**disagree**’ columns and above average in its ‘**don’t know**’ percentages.



The ‘**incomplete second-level**’ was the most positive category in its attitudes/ opinions towards Irish being a good basis for Irish Unity, i.e. highest in agreement (**36.2%**) and lowest in disagreement (**21.7%**) resulting in a plurality in agreement. This category constitutes 25.8% of the sample.

**(e) Irish as a Basis of Irish Unity and Occupational Status:**

In relation to **occupational status**, the responses of Table No. 5.5(e) are quite mixed and **tend** to be presenting a very moderately negative correlation between **agreement** with and occupational status. The greatest level of disagreement is in the middle categories, i.e. **skilled/routine non-manual** and **inspectional/supervisory**. The following sub-table highlights the **pattern** of variations:

<u>Occupational Status Variable</u>	<u>Irish as a Basis of Unity</u>		<u>Balance of Opinion</u>	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
1. Unskilled/Semi-skilled	<u>40.3%</u>	20.5%	+14.5%	---
2. Skilled/Routine non-manual	24.9%	<u>40.0%</u>	---	+15.9%
3. Inspectional/Supervisory	26.0%	<u>43.1%</u>	---	+17.1%
4. Professional/Executive	23.5%	<u>44.1%</u>	---	+10.6%
Number	223	266	---	---
(Sample Average)	(30.9%)	(35.2%)	---	(+4.3%)

Note: Percentages above sample average are underlined.

The ‘unskilled and semi-skilled’ are **substantially more favourably** disposed than the other sub-samples to the idea of Irish becoming the symbolic basis of Irish ethnic or cultural unity. This idea could also become a basis of cultural unity between the Irish living in Ireland and the emigrant brothers and sisters living abroad in Great Britain, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Already, the Irish in the Diaspora share a common cultural solidarity through Irish dance, music and song. Such a common international Irish identity will not be complete until the emigrants acquire a competence in, and use of the Irish language. The vast majority of Irish emigrants to Great Britain and elsewhere left as unskilled and semi-skilled in the past. This pattern of emigration has changed since the 1980s. In recent years there has been a significant increase of

interest in Irish among the Irish diaspora, with courses leading to degrees and other qualifications in Irish being presented by many colleges abroad.

The reasons why the middle categories have been relatively negative in relation to Irish as a basis of Irish unity are difficult to explain. It may be too soon to expect consensus in agreement with the need for a **cultural basis of Irish Unity** rather than a territorial or political foundation, which would apply to the island of Ireland. The progress in attitudes since 1972-73 would indicate that, according as competence in and use of Irish improves and increases and the support for the “language” grows, the appreciation of Irish as a **good basis of (cultural) Irish Unity** will gain more approval.

### **Part III – Attitudes towards Irish Speakers**

The standing of the ‘**Irish speaker**’ in Irish society is yet another test of the public status of Irish among the people. With the disappointingly low percentage of the sample regularly using the language, it would not be surprising if this would be reflected in the attitudes towards the ‘Irish speaker’, which is measured below by means of a **social-distance scale**.

#### **1. Social Distance towards Irish Speakers:**

The Social Distance scale was devised by **Emory Bogardus**<sup>1</sup> in 1925 and used numerous times since then to measure and monitor inter-group attitudes and prejudice, including the surveys of inter-group relations carried out by the present author in Ireland in 1972-73, 1988-89 and 2007-08. Respondents were asked to indicate the closest point on a scale of seven levels of social distance to which they welcome a member of a particular stimulus category. The seven levels of social distance were:

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<sup>1</sup> Bogardus, Emory, “Measuring Social Distance” in *Journal of Applied Sociology*, No. 9, 1925.  
Bogardus, Emory, “Changes in Social Distance”, in *Sociology and Social Research*, No. 34, 1947.

1. **Kinship**, i.e. “Would marry or welcome as Member of my Family”;
2. **Friendship**, i.e. “Would have as a Close Friend”;
3. **Next-Door Neighbour**, i.e. “Would have as Next-Door Neighbour”;
4. **Co-Worker**, i.e. “Would work in the same Workplace”;
5. **Irish Citizen**, i.e. “Would Welcome as an Irish Citizen”;
6. **Visitor Only**, i.e. “Would Have as a Visitor Only to Ireland”;
7. **Debar or Deport**, i.e. “Would Debar or Deport from Ireland”.

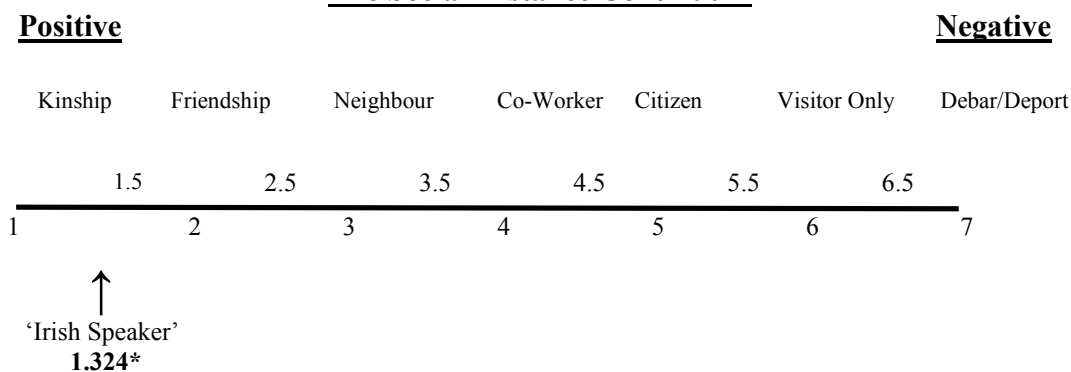
“Irish Speakers” were one of the fifty-one stimulus categories whose social distance was measured in the 2007-08 National Social Survey. Table No. 5.8 gives the responses of the Total Sample:

**Table No. 5.6:**  
**Social Distance towards ‘Irish Speakers’ by Total Sample**

Levels of Social Distance	Percentages	
	Actual	Cumulative
1. Kinship	84.4%	84.4%
2. Friendship	8.6%	93.0%
3. Next-Door Neighbour	1.4%	94.4%
4. Co-Worker	3.0%	97.4%
5. Citizen of Ireland	1.2%	98.6%
6. Visitor Only	1.4% }	
7. Debar / Deport	0.1% }	1.5%
Number	1,010	---
Mean Social Distance (MSD)		1.324

The finding on Table No. 5.6 confirms the **in-group** status of ‘Irish speaker’ in the attitudes of a random sample of Irish adults of eighteen years or older. On a continuum of 1 to 7:

**Figure No. 4**  
**The Social-Distance Continuum**



\* Mean Social Distance (MSD)

It could be said that stimulus categories scoring lower than **1.500** MSD would be classified as **in-groups** in that society, while those with MSD scores of over **3.500** would be in the **out-group** category. At **1.324**, the 'Irish Speakers' fall comfortably within the 'in-group' range. The old negative stereotype of the *Tá sé s* seems to have melted away.

The results are so favourable that the percentage not admitting to family (kinship) is so small as not to provide cells with sufficient members for statistically significant analysis.

Irish speakers share the 'in-group' status with the following who scored a lower MSD, i.e. '**Roman Catholics**' (1.168), '**Working Class**' (1.228) and '**Physically Disabled**' (1.268), which means 'Irish Speakers' are **fourth** in the order of preference out of a total of fifty-one stimulus categories.

**Table No. 5.7:**  
**Changes in Social Distance toward ‘Irish Speakers’ Since 1988-89**

Samples	Kinship 1.	Friend- ship or Closer 2.	Next Door Neigh- bour or Closer 3.	Co- Worker or Closer 4.	Citizen or Closer 5.	Visitor Only 6.	Debar or Deport 7.	MSD	N
1. Total Sample 2007-08	84.4%	92.9%	94.4%	97.4%	98.6%	1.4%	0.1%	1.324	1,015
2. Irish-born 2007-08	84.8%	92.8%	94.3%	97.7%	98.9%	1.1%	0.1%	1.316	855
3. Nat. Sample 1988-89	84.1%	92.5%	96.6%	98.4%	99.8%	0.3%	0.0%	1.287	1,004
( 1 – 2 )	-0.4%	+0.2%	+0.1%	-0.3%	-0.3%	+0.3%	0.0%		
( 1 – 3 )	-0.3%	+0.5%	-2.2%	-1.0%	-1.2%	+1.1%	+0.1%		
( 2 – 3 )	+0.7%	+0.3%	-2.3%	-0.7%	-0.9%	+0.8%	+0.1%		

The most amazing result of Table No. 5.7 is the absence of any significant variation between the Social Distance Scores of the Total Sample of 1988-89 and the Irish-born of 2007-08. This is yet another example of the **stability** and **consistency** of the pattern of attitudes in the population towards matters Irish. Some would argue that, since the level of social closeness is so high, i.e. members of the in-group, there is little room for change. But that is not the issue. Rather, what has remained constant is the maintenance of such a **high-level** of social preference. Does this finding reveal another fact about the level of the people’s perception of Irish as part of their own implicit self-definition? Therefore, when we show such positive attitudes toward ‘Irish Speakers’ over such a long period (marked by all kinds of socio-cultural changes), are we in reality showing a healthy love for ourselves? Are we recovering from the imposed sense of inferiority which resulted from the long period of colonial cultural and social supremacy or dominance?

Despite this relatively high esteem for the ‘Irish Speaker’, there are only 22.7% of the Irish-born reporting that they speak/use Irish regularly, even though 47.2% of the sample see themselves as being reasonably competent in the Irish Language. Does this not confirm that the main obstacles to a greater use of Irish **are structural and outside the personal scope of most people?** Have the State and the voluntary organisations failed to generate a socio-cultural environment (at the formal or informal levels) which would be conducive to greater use of Irish?

On the positive side of the above findings, there are encouraging lessons to be learned about the attitudes towards the Irish language in Ireland. The fact that ‘Irish Speakers’ are a positive **reference group** should reassure those who are keen on speaking the language that they are admired for doing so. It also could be seen as a mandate to the State to provide structured changes which facilitate greater use of Irish. The findings confirm the other expressions of support (reported in Chapter II).

## 2. Social Distance towards ‘Irish Speakers’ by Personal Variables:

Again, because of the exceptionally high percentage of respondents opting for ‘admission to kinship’, i.e. 84.4%, (which means a relatively low PD<sup>1</sup> of  $84.4 \times 15.6 = 1317$ ) the room for variation is quite restricted.

**Table No. 5.8:**  
**Extracts from Social Distance toward ‘Irish Speakers’ by Personal Variables**

Personal Variable	Welcome into the Family	Deny Citizenship	Mean Social Distance
<b>Total Sample</b>	84.4%	1.5%	1.324
(a) Age (p=<.001)			
1. 18-25 Years	75.4%	1.2%	1.476 *
2. 26-40 Years	86.4%	0.3%	1.285
3. 41-55 Years	83.9%	3.6%	1.397
4. 56-70 Years	87.1%	0.0%	<b>1.169</b>
5. 71 Years plus	88.5%	3.1%	1.287
Number	853	15	---

<sup>1</sup> P = 100 - D. The maximum PD is  $50 \times 50 = 2,500$  and the minimum is  $99 \times 1 = 99$ .

<b>TABLE No. 5.8 (Cont'd.)</b>	Welcome into the Family	Deny Citizenship	Mean Social Distance
<b>Personal Variable</b>			
<b>(b) Gender (p=&lt;.005)</b>			
1. Male	87.5%	1.2%	<b>1.287</b>
2. Female	81.3%	1.8%	1.360 *
Number	852	15	---
<b>(c) Marital Status (p=&lt;.001)</b>			
1. Single / Never married	79.9%	1.7%	1.461
2. Married	88.2%	1.3%	<b>1.209</b>
3. Separated / Divorced	82.2%	0.0%	1.239
4. Permanent relationship	76.4%	1.4%	1.526 *
5. Widowed	89.7%	2.9%	1.231
Number	852	15	---
<b>(d) Area of Birth (p=&lt;.001)</b>			
1. City (100,000+)	77.9%	1.4%	1.438 *
2. Large Town (10,000+)	88.3%	4.2%	1.294
3. Town (1,500+)	88.4%	0.0%	1.272
4. Rural/ Village	88.4%	1.2%	<b>1.216</b>
Number	850	15	---
<b>(e) Region of Residence (p=&lt;.03)</b>			
1. BMW- Border Midlands West	83.9%	1.5%	1.319
2. Dublin	81.8%	1.7%	1.394 *
3. Mid-East & South East	86.6%	3.2%	1.362
4. Mid-West & South West	85.2%	0.0%	<b>1.209</b>
Number	852	16	---
<b>(f) Education (p=&lt;.001)</b>			
1. Primary or less	92.4%	1.7%	<b>1.177</b>
2. Incomplete Second-Level	90.5%	0.4%	1.189
3. Complete Second-Level	84.0%	2.0%	1.377
4. Third-level	77.4%	1.9%	1.427 *
Number	852	15	---
<b>(g) Occupational Status (p=&lt;.03)</b>			
1 Unskilled / Semi	85.0%	0.0%	<b>1.323</b>
2. Skilled/ Routine Non-Manual	84.6%	2.8%	1.347 *
3. Inspectional / Supervisory	83.5%	3.0%	1.335
4. Professional / Executive	85.3%	0.0%	1.324
Number	723	13	---

Note: Lowest Mean Social Distance is in **bold** while the highest has an asterisk\*.

As is clear from the above Table, the range of percentages within each variable is moderate. Still, each of the variables recorded a statistically significant variation (on the range of replies to each level). The most reliable measure is the Mean Social Distance (on a 1 to 7 continuum). It must be emphasised that all sub-samples vary very little and their M.S.D. were under 1.500 which is the limit for a category to become an ‘in-group’.

In the case of **age**, the two oldest age-cohorts were the most favourably disposed to ‘Irish speakers’, i.e. the 56 to 70 year-olds and those 71 years and older. The

youngest age group was least welcoming to ‘Irish speakers’, i.e. with **75.4%** welcoming them into the family.

The percentages for **gender** sub-samples have shown that ‘males’ were slightly more welcoming to ‘Irish speakers’ than were ‘females’. Their range of difference when welcoming into the **family** was 6.2%, i.e. **87.5%** of ‘males’ would admit ‘Irish speakers’ to their family as compared with 81.3% of ‘females’.

There was a 13.3% difference of scores between the **marital status** sub-samples admitting ‘Irish speakers’ to the family, i.e. 89.7% of widowed as compared with **76.4%** for respondents in ‘permanent relationships’. The difference between the ‘married’ and the ‘widowed’ in the welcoming to kinship percentages was less than the ‘margin of error’.

‘Rural/village’-born respondents had the lowest MSD (**1.216**) and the highest percentage in **area of birth** sub-samples for ‘admitting to family’ (**88.7%**). It should be noted, however, that the three non-city sub-samples had practically the same percentage ‘welcoming to family’, i.e. Large Town **88.3%**, Town 88.4% and Rural/Village 88.9%. Such **consensus** is very rare! The city-born was the sub-sample with the lowest percentage ‘welcoming to the family’ (**77.9%**) and the highest MSD (**1.438**).

The range of difference between the sub-samples in the **region of residence** variable is minimal for significance statistically, which points to a high level of consensus across the State in esteem for ‘Irish speakers’.

**Education** produced the highest percentage of all in the Table (No. 5.8), welcoming ‘Irish speakers’ into the family at 92.4%, and the second-lowest Mean Social Distance score at **1.177**. The sub-sample to achieve this record is the respondents of the ‘primary or less’ level of achievement. Respondents with ‘third-level’ education were the least welcoming sub-sample within the variable, i.e. **77.4%** admitting ‘Irish speakers’ to the family, and the highest MSD score at **1.427**.



‘Unskilled/Semi-skilled’ and ‘professional/executive’, the bottom and top **occupational status** sub-samples, share the highest percentage admitting to family at **85.0%** and **85.3%** and the lowest MSD scores at **1.323** and **1.324** respectively. Variations between which were with the margin of error from the highest percentages admitting to family, show the high level of **consensus** between the social distance scores of the occupational grades.

## **Part IV – Conclusion**

The two questions reported on in Chapter V have been different yet related. Their findings are also quite varied. The first question addressed the possibility that a return to the Irish language and culture would provide **a basis of common Irish identity** between all Irish people of different religious, political and social affiliations. This could also be extended to the Irish *diaspora*. The support for their view is still a minority view, i.e. 30.0%, although opposition to it is on the decline.

The second question measured the standing of the **‘Irish speaker’** as measured by the Bogardus social distance scale. Not so long ago the *‘Gaeilgeoir’* or the *‘Tá sé’* was a category of benevolent comedy in the pubs and parlours of the ‘chattering classes’. While relatively few (**22.7%** of Irish-born) use Irish regularly, it is reassuring to learn that the standing of ‘Irish speakers’ is very high, and falls within the ‘in-group’ set of categories, i.e. those with a mean social distance score of 1,500 or under on a continuum of 1 to 7. The percentage who would welcome ‘Irish speakers’ into their family through marriage (to kinship) was as high as **84.4%**.

# **Chapter VI**

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## **Summary and Conclusions**

## **Chapter VI** **Summary and Conclusions**

In the course of the previous four chapters, i.e. Chapters II to V, the findings of a national survey carried out in 2007-08 of the attitudes towards, opinions on, competence in and use of the Irish language have been presented and analysed. Since the questions asked and the information sought had already been researched in a national survey in 1988-89 and in a survey of Greater Dublin in 1972-73, it has been possible to monitor changes in attitudes and behaviour in relation to the questions asked and the issues raised.

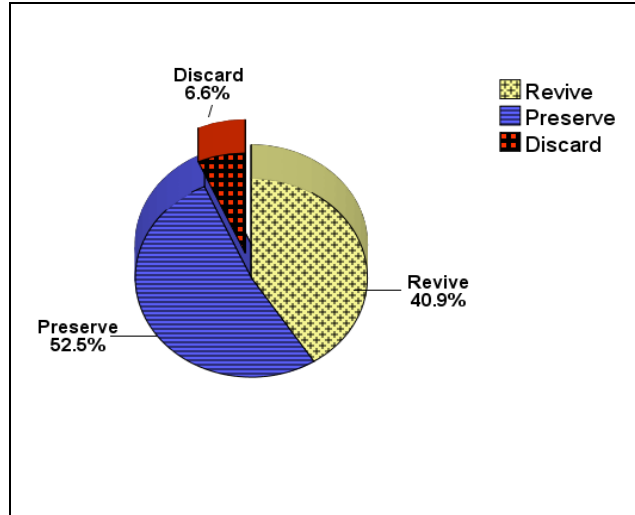
Certain suggestions have already been noted in the course of commentary on the findings in the earlier chapters. In this final chapter, the aim is to give a summary of the findings and select a number of recommendations in relation to the issues raised by the findings of the 2007-08 national survey.

### **Part I - Summary of Findings**

#### **1.1 Future of the Irish Language:**

Chapter II above dealt with the aspirations of respondents with regard to the future of the Irish language in Ireland and with the change of attitudes which had taken place in themselves towards Irish since they left school. The findings were, for the most part, positive, and recorded more support from the respondents for the **preservation and revival** of Irish, as well as admitting that they were more supportive towards, and appreciative of, the language since they left school. Only 7% of the national sample favoured the discarding of Irish.

**Figure No. 5**  
**Future of the Irish Language by Irish-Born**



Patterns of support remained **the same** since the 1988-89 survey, despite the influx of a significant minority of immigrants to the Republic of Ireland over the past fifteen years. The following extract from Table No. 2.2 (page 7) gives the responses of two national samples:

<b><u>Aspirations</u></b>	<b><u>2007-08 Sample</u></b>	<b><u>1988-89 Sample</u></b>
1. Revive Irish for public use	40.9%	42.6%
2. Preserve Irish in Gaeltacht and revive as in Art & Culture	52.5%	51.9%
3. Discard Irish	6.6%	5.6%

It is quite rare to get such a degree of consistency in the findings of two national surveys over a gap of nineteen years. In the course of the detailed discussion of Irish-born respondents' aspirations by eight personal variables, viz. **age, gender, area of birth, place of rearing, region of residence, education, occupational status** and **take-home income**, patterns of support emerged. Groups most in favour of **reviving Irish** are: younger people, males, city dwellers, the more highly educated and those with senior occupations. This clearly raises the status of the language and bodes well for its future.

## 1.2 Change in Attitudes between School and Now:

With regard to changes in attitudes to Irish between respondents when they were **at school** and **now**, there was an improvement of 33% on the school attitudes, i.e. from **42.6%** in favour of Irish when in school to **56.7% now**. Some 31.8% did not have any particular feeling. The percentages of those whose opposition to Irish was considerable, i.e. from **21.9%** to **11.5%** again show there was no significant difference between the patterns of change in 1988-89 and 2007-08 (See Table No. 2.5, page 24). The rate of positive (nominal) change between school and when the survey took place was continued, i.e. +13% in 1988-89 and +14% in 2007-08.

When measured by personal variables, viz. age, gender, marital status, education and occupation, the **most positive changes** took place in the case of the 41 to 70 year-olds, males, married and separated/divorced, third-level-educated and blue-collared workers. These sub-samples were not necessarily the ones with the highest proportion in favour of Irish (see Table No. 2.6, page 26). The levels of the sample average's improvement, i.e. **+13.8%**, reflected a drop of 10.4% of those who had opposed Irish when at school and a drop of 3.5% of those with 'no particular feelings'.

## 1.3 Competence in Irish:

Competence in Irish was measured and monitored in Chapter III. Respondents were asked to assess their own competence on the following scale:

- |                  |   |                           |
|------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Very Fluent   | } | 'Reasonably<br>Competent' |
| 2. Fluent        |   |                           |
| 3. Middling      |   |                           |
| 4. Not so Fluent |   |                           |
| 5. Only a Little |   |                           |
| 6. None          |   |                           |

Respondents opting for any of the one-to-four levels were deemed to be **reasonably competent**, i.e. would be able to follow a conversation in Irish and responds without great difficulty. Because of the influx of in-migrants in recent years, it was felt necessary to test for competence among the **Irish-born** (85% of the sample). Recent immigrants have not had the opportunity to learn Irish. In previous studies the vast majority of respondents were ‘Irish-born’ because of the high level of out-migration of Irish and the absence of a statistically significant number of respondents who were not born in Ireland.

The level of self-perceived competence in Irish of the sample is presented in Table No. 3.1 (see page 39 above). The level of ‘reasonable competence’ is **41.5%** for the total sample and **47.1%** for the Irish-born respondents. This marks a nominal increase of **+6%** when compared with the 1988-89 findings. For the Dublin sub-sample there was a decrease in the ‘reasonably competent’ respondents since 1988-89, i.e. from 49% to 47% (which is within the margin of error), in contrast to an increase of 24% between 1972-73 and 1988-89. This raises questions as to the success of the ‘mainstream schools’ pedagogy success in teaching Irish since the 1960s. The factor which helped to maintain the standard of competence was (in all probability) the emergence of Irish-medium schools, i.e. *Naíonraí* and *Gaelscoileanna*. The extent of the mutual influence of Irish-medium and mainstream schools on the current standard of Irish should be a matter of comprehensive research and evaluation.

Six personal variables recorded statistically significant variations in relation to competence. The following Summary Table shows the range of difference between the sub-samples within the variables:

**Table No. 6.1:  
Variable Differences in Competence (Fluent and Middling)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Highest in Fluent &amp; Middling</b>	<b>Lowest in Fluent &amp; Middling</b>	<b>Highest in None</b>
<b>1. Age</b>	18-25 year-olds (41.9%)	41-55 year-olds (20.6%)	71 years plus (29.2%)
<b>2. Gender</b>	Females (34.5%)	Males (27.6%)	Males (18.0%)
<b>3. Place of Rearing</b>	Munster (41.5%)	Leinster (23.3%)	Connaught/Ulster (22.5%)
<b>4. Region of Residence</b>	Mid-West & Sth. West (42.3%)	BMW (20.1%)	BMW (17.8%)
<b>5. Education</b>	Third Level (48.6%)	Primary or Less (11.2%)	Primary or Less (41.1%)
<b>6. Occupational Status</b>	Professional/Executive (49.1%)	Unskilled/Semi-Skilled (19.3%)	Unskilled/Semi-Skilled (18.8%)

Source: Table No. 3.3, pages 45/46.

The above Table (No. 6.1) emphasises the extent of difference and points to aspects or areas requiring attention in order to raise the all-round standards and give confidence to more people to feel able to use Irish. The range of difference within the variables is highest in education and lowest in the case of gender, i.e.

<b><u>Variable</u></b>	<b><u>Range of Perceived Competence (Fluent &amp; Middling)</u></b>		
<b>1. Education</b>	From 48.6% to 11.2%	=	37.4%
<b>2. Occupational Status</b>	From 49.1% to 19.3%	=	29.8%
<b>3. Age</b>	From 41.9% to 20.6%	=	21.3%
<b>4. Region of Residence</b>	From 42.3% to 20.1%	=	22.2%
<b>5. Place of Rearing</b>	From 41.5% to 23.3%	=	18.2%
<b>6. Gender</b>	From 34.5% to 27.6%	=	6.9%

In order to compensate for the imbalance in competence shown above, it will be necessary to **organise voluntary classes** for those groups or categories with relatively low competence. This will increase the occasions for using Irish, and bring more people into **Irish-speaking networks**. Because of the reluctance of people to speak Irish when others present lack competence, the best way to change that situation is to increase competence in the population. Greater use could also be made of **radio** and **television** to promote the learning and practice of Irish among the public. This would also be appreciated by second-level school students to enhance their oral Irish competence.

Region of Residence disparity should be a matter of concern for the relatively low level of competence in the **BMW (Border/Midlands/West)** regions overall. This territorial disparity should be researched, and Vocational Educational Committees in the counties involved might plan to correct differences.

#### **1.4 Regular Use of Irish :**

Regular Use of Irish in the population was the subject of examination and monitoring in Chapter IV above. It was decided to take ‘occasionally or more often’ as the cut-off point for **regular use of Irish**. It was also decided to exclude **respondents not born in Ireland** from the Tables measuring use of Irish by personal variables for reasons explained above.

The level of **regular use of Irish** (see Table No. 4.1, page 58 above) was **20.0%** for the **Total Sample** and **22.6%** for **Irish-born respondents**. This means that less than one quarter of Irish-born respondents reported using Irish ‘occasionally or more often’, despite the fact that more than twice that percentage **47.1%** declared they had ‘reasonable competence’, i.e. “not so fluent” or better. This raises a central issue with regard to the future of the Irish language as a vital part of the culture of the people, namely, **how to translate competence into use**. Much energy and action should be focused on this question. The role of the voluntary movement will be crucial to the promotion of the use of Irish and the



removal of impediments and obstacles to its use. *‘Beatha teanga í a labhairt’* (‘The life of a language is in speaking it’).

The absence of substantial change in the replies on Table No. 4.2 (page 59 above) between the responses of the national surveys in 1988-89 and 2007-08 are, once again, almost unique. (In fact, there was a modest decline, i.e. -5% over the nineteen years.) This could mean one of two things, viz. absence of change or the neutralising of change between two significant categories. It appears that, while there is a growing minority of Irish users, there is also a serious decline in large sections of society (with competence in Irish) who have not continued their use of Irish, either due to lack of personal motivation or absence of opportunities to do so. This area of use and failure to use Irish requires serious research and action. The occasions of use (Table No. 4.3, page 60 above) show that the main occasions when Irish is used are domestic and informal, i.e. watching/listening to TV/radio, at home and with Irish-speaking friends.

When frequency of use was tested by personal variables, a substantial range of responses was recorded for most variables, i.e. Table No. 6.2 below:

**Table No. 6.2:  
Highest and Lowest Frequency of Regular Use by Personal Variables (Irish-Born)**

<b>Personal Variable</b>	<b>Highest Frequency</b>	<b>Lowest Frequency</b>	<b>Highest Never Using Irish</b>
(a) Age	18 to 40 years <b>(25.7%)</b>	56 to 70 years <b>(17.1%)</b>	71 years plus <b>(67.0%)</b>
(b) Marital Status	Single/Never Married <b>(26.2%)</b>	Permanent Rel’ships <b>(16.0%)</b>	Widowed <b>(69.2%)</b>
(c) Place of Rearing	Munster <b>(32.3%)</b>	Rest of Leinster <b>(18.3%)</b>	Rest of Leinster <b>(61.0%)</b>
(d) Education	Third Level <b>(35.3%)</b>	Primary or Less <b>(8.3%)</b>	Primary or Less <b>(84.3%)</b>
(e) Occupational Status	Professional/Executive <b>(35.0%)</b>	Unskilled/Semi-Skil. <b>(10.9%)</b>	Unskilled/Semi-Skil. <b>(69.1%)</b>

Source: Table No. 4.5, pages 63/64 above.

There are indicators of optimism in the above figure in that the **younger** and the **more highly educated**, as well as those with the top **professions**, are among the most frequent users of Irish. Because of the relatively low (overall) level of use, i.e. **22.6%**, the range of variation between the highest and lowest sub-sample frequency scores is expected not to be as substantial as in the case of competence sub-sample differences.

**Education and Occupational Status** are exceptions!

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Range of Difference</u>		
1. <b>Education</b>	35.3% - 8.3%	=	<b>27.0%</b>
2. <b>Occupational Status</b>	35.0% - 10.9%	=	<b>24.1%</b>
3. <b>Place of Rearing</b>	32.3% - 18.3%	=	<b>14.0%</b>
4. <b>Marital Status</b>	26.2% - 16.0%	=	<b>10.2%</b>
5. <b>Age</b>	25.7% - 17.1%	=	<b>8.6%</b>

The above range of sub-sample variations clearly points to growing high ‘social status’ of the Irish language in Irish society. Those with higher education and the most prestigious occupation are substantially ahead of their less privileged fellow-citizens.

### 1.5 Occasions of use of Irish:

The occasions when respondents used Irish were more or less as anticipated (see Table No 4.6, Page 74). The most popular occasions, i.e. *Raidió/Telefís*, at home and with friends, were informal and domestic.

The use of Irish at work and in communicating with officials was relatively low, i.e. 17.6% and 11.1% (respectively) of those with reasonable

competence. Some 14.6% of respondents with reasonable Irish reported that they read the language.

While the use of Irish is relatively frequent among those competent in Irish, it needs to increase and take place in recreational and other areas of personal interaction.

### 1.6 **Irish as the basis of common identity:**

Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed “that a return to the Irish language and culture could provide a good basis for Irish unity in the long term (even if it might present difficulties in the short term)”. This question had been included in the 1972-73 and 1988-89 surveys.

The response to the question was a **plurality in disagreement** (32.5%). Thirty percent were in agreement, 21.4% neither agreed nor disagreed and 16.1% ‘did not know’. The results were disappointing in that the majority of the people did not see the true basis of Irish ethnic identity, i.e. the Irish language. The late President of Ireland, An Dr Dubhghlas de hÍde (“*An Craoibhin Aoibhinn*”), founder of *Conradh na Gaeilge* ( the Gaelic league) saw in the Irish language and culture a symbolic source of common identity between all Irish people - irrespective of religion, class and political persuasion.

There was some significant movement in the responses since 1972-73, (see Table No 5.2, page 88 above) i.e.

	<b><u>Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Disagree</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>
1972-73 (Dublin)	18%	79%	2,279
1988-89 (Dublin)	20%	58%	274
2007-08 (Dublin)	24%	37%	246
1988-89 (National Sample)	24%	57%	1,000
2007-08 (National Sample)	30%	33%	1,011

The above figures show a very substantial drop in the percentages in disagreement with the statement. The trend is in the opposite direction. For Irish in the *diaspora* (i.e. living abroad) the Irish language and culture provide a very strong ethnic bond. In recent years there has been a growing interest in learning Irish in the United States and Canada. According as the status of Irish improves at home in Ireland, it is expected that responses to the question put in Table No. 5.1, page 87, above will win greater support. Table No. 5.5, (pages 94-95 above), gives a breakdown of responses by personal variables. The variations between sub-samples are quite moderate.

### 1.7 **Attitudes to Irish Speakers:**

This is a very central measure of the standing and status of the Irish language in the Republic of Ireland. One could hardly have expected a more positive response than that recorded on Table No. 5.8, (pages 104-105 above), when 84.4% would welcome an Irish speaker into the family through marriage on the Bogardus social distance scale. This already places Irish speakers as an ‘**in-group**’ in Irish society. This pattern of closeness for Irish speakers has been maintained since 1988-89. Because of the very high percentage (**84.4%**) there was a limit to the range of differences possible in the personal variables.

What this finding confirms is the **very high social standing** of the Irish language in Ireland today. This is in agreement with earlier findings discussed in Chapter II above; such findings make it more plausible.

### 1.8 **Conclusion:**

The above summary shows that the Irish language has survived and, if the appropriate policies and actions are taken, it is ready for a most significant move forward. In the first instance, ways need to be devised and programmes implemented which will enable those with **reasonable competence (47.1%** of Irish-born) to use the language regularly. At present, only **22.6%**, or half of

those who are competent in the language, use Irish on a regular basis. The role and mission of voluntary Irish-language organisations should be focused on spreading the use of the language **outside** their membership.

The role of the mainstream schools in teaching Irish to all those who live in Ireland will be an integral part of continued revival of the Irish language. This will be supplemented by the work of *Naíonraí* and *Gaelscoileanna*

The high status of the Irish language has been confirmed in the aspiration for the future of Irish and by the standing of the ‘Irish speaker’. Agreement with Irish language and culture as a symbolic basis of Irish unity is gradually gaining support.

## **Part II - Conclusions and Recommendations**

The campaign for the restoration of the Irish language in Ireland had been part of the independence agenda during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was both a cause and a goal of that movement. After the setting up of the Irish Free State in 1922, the Irish Government pursued the revival of Irish as a priority goal for all the citizens. Irish cultural idealism continued until the 1950s. After that time Irish continued to be taught **as a subject** in all primary and second-level schools. The aim of economic development has taken priority over cultural revival since the 1960s in the Republic of Ireland.

The findings of this Report on the **attitudes towards, competence in and use of** the Irish language reflect the success and failure of the historic campaign to revive the language in the schools’ system and through the voluntary Irish-revival movement. In the overall, the position of the Irish language in 2007-08 (when the field work for this Report was carried out) is positive and quite encouraging. The general level of

**reasonable competence** among the Irish-born of the national random sample is **47.1%** and the attitudes towards the Irish language is very positive, i.e. **93.2%** in favour and **6.7%** prepared to discard Irish. Of the ‘those in favour’, **40.2%** wished the language to **be revived** and **52.9%** wanted it to **be preserved**.

The ‘regular use’ of the Irish language is significant at **22.6%**, but is, at the same time disappointing. This result indicates that slightly less than half of those with ‘reasonable competence’ use Irish on a regular basis. Herein is the **major challenge** emanating from the Report, namely, **how to facilitate greater regular use of the Irish language by those capable of speaking it?** This should be less difficult than in the past, since the public status of the language is relatively high among the better educated, urbanised citizens and those with higher occupational status. Socio-cultural norms which impede the regular use of Irish should be identified and changed where possible. The path-analysis (see Appendix) shows clearly a strong correlation between competence in, use of, and positive attitudes towards the language. Any significant increase in the use of Irish will result in further improvements in competence. The evidence does not, as yet, show improvement in competence leading to increase in frequency of use.

### **Specific Recommendations:**

#### **1. Competence in the Irish Language:**

The ‘reasonable level of competence or ability in Irish’ by the highest proportion of the population should be a **priority objective** of the mainstream primary and second-level education system, supplemented by as wide as possible a spread of *Naíonraí Gaelacha* (Irish-language pre-schools), *Gaelscoileanna* (Irish-medium primary schools) and Irish-medium second-level schools.

2. **‘Regular Use’ of the Irish Language:**

- 2.1 The statutory and voluntary agencies engaged in the promotion of ‘regular use’ of Irish among all citizens with ‘reasonable competence’ in the language should agree on, and pursue, a strategic plan aimed at greater use of the language at the informal and formal levels.
- 2.2 It is an opportune time for mainstream primary and second-level schools to make the transmission of a **‘living competence’** in Irish a pedagogical priority. To improve the levels of ability achieved and simultaneously to accustom students / pupils to **using** Irish, it is strongly recommended that at least **one subject** in addition to the Irish language be taught through the medium of Irish. This will have educational as well as linguistic benefits.
- 2.3 The promotion of a **‘living Irish’** in the extra-curricular activities of second-level schools should be accorded a priority equal to that given to **sport**. For example, **‘voluntary Irish-language youth clubs’** should be supported in order to provide a favourable environment for students to use the language in an informal manner. The Department of Education and Science should give due recognition to teachers and members of staff who support and supervise the activities of such clubs.
- 2.4 All **‘public use’ of written language** should be bi-lingual, e.g. signs, notices, etc. and labels on retail goods should also be bi-lingual, e.g. groceries, medicines, fancy goods, hardware, etc. Public announcements in sports arenas, at pilgrimage shrines, airports, railway and bus stations, etc. should be bilingual. The use of Irish should be encouraged in all religious (public) services.
- 2.5 All **public services** should be available to the people in Irish (and in English), as should services from the private sector, e.g. banks, medical care, legal advice, etc. and servants in these services should be given the opportunity to train themselves in the necessary linguistic skills.

2.6 **Employers** (public and private) should be encouraged to facilitate and promote the use of Irish within their workplaces and when dealing with members of the public

3. **The Role of Irish-Language Voluntary Organisations and Voluntary Organisations Friendly towards Irish Culture.**

3.1 The promotion of the **use of Irish among the public** should be a priority goal for all Irish-language voluntary organisations.

3.2 Voluntary Organisations **promoting Irish culture** through music, dance, sport, etc. should be encouraged to promote the speaking of Irish throughout their membership.

3.3 The wearing of *An Fáinne* should be encouraged for those with reasonable fluency in Irish in order to spread the use of Irish through society. This should be **part of a strategic plan** of behaviour directed at the achievement of a reduction in pressures to restrict the use of Irish. Sociological and social-psychological factors should be taken into account when preparing such a co-ordinated plan. Statutory support should be available for the implementation and monitoring of the plan.

3.4 It is very important that **churches and religious groups** be encouraged to provide liturgical and devotional services in the Irish language throughout Irish society. This will be to the mutual advantage of religious participation by congregations well-disposed to the language and to the cultural quality of religious services.

3.5 Support for the Irish revival of all the **media of mass communication**, i.e. radio, television, newspapers, magazines, web-sites, etc., is a most important contribution to the desired increase in the frequency of the use of Irish in society. Features on Irish and in Irish should be part of the regular programmes and



contents of the various media being listened to, viewed and read by the people in Ireland

4. **Conclusion:**

The above suggestions do not exhaust the needs raised by the findings of this Report. They are presented as responses to the issues raised and deemed likely to promote the revival and restoration of Ireland's native language and build on the excellent work (voluntary and statutory) done over the years whose positive fruit is evident in the chapters of this Report.

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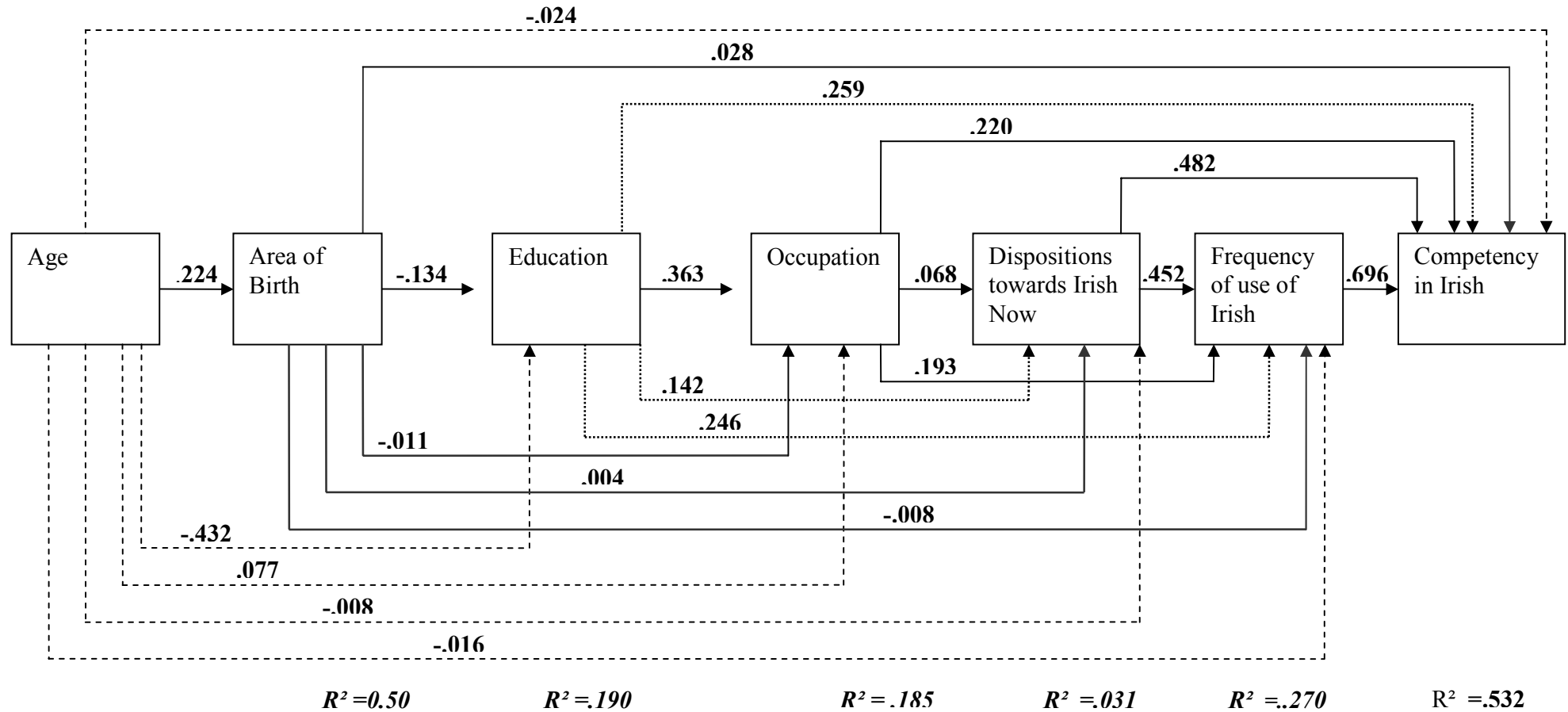
# **Appendix 1**

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## **Path Analysis**

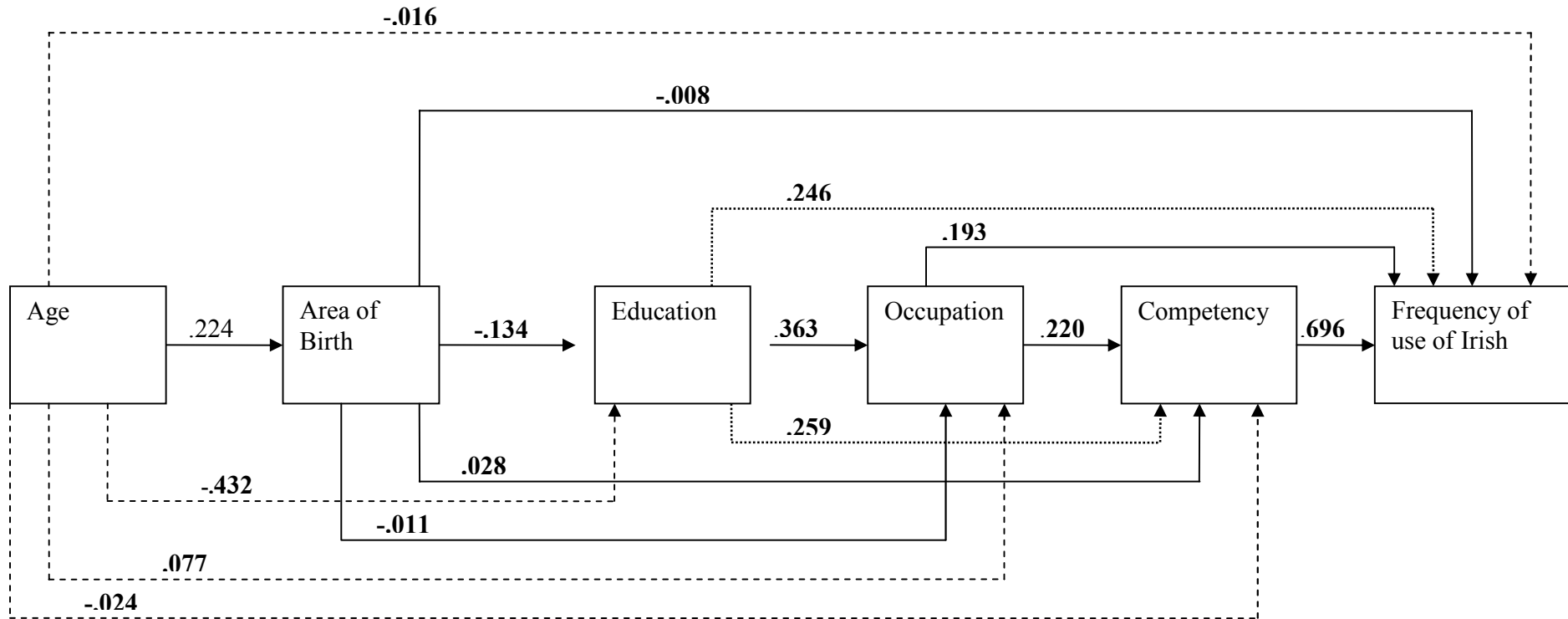
## Irish Language Path Analysis

### 1 Competency in Irish as a function of: Age, Area of Birth, Education, Occupation, Dispositions towards Irish Now & Frequency of Use of Irish



- Age** 1), 18-25 years, 2), 26-40 years, 3) 41-55 years, 4) 56-70 years and 5) 71 years and older
- Area of Birth** 1) City (100,000+), 2) Large Town (10,000+), 3) Town (1,500+), 4) Rural/ Village
- Education,** 1) Primary or less, 2) Incomplete Second-level, 3) Complete Second-Level, 4) Third-Level
- Occupational Status,** 1) Unskilled / Semi-Skilled, 2) Skilled/ Routine Non Manual, 3) Inspectional/Supervisory, 4) Professional/Executive
- Competency in Irish,** 1) None, 2) Only a little, 3) Not so fluent, 4) Middling, 5) Fluent
- Frequency of use of Irish,** 1) Never, 2) Rarely, 3) Occasionally, 4) Weekly or more often
- Dispositions towards Irish Now,** 1) Strongly opposed, 2) Somewhat opposed, 3) No Particular feelings, 4) Somewhat in favour, 5) Strongly in favour.

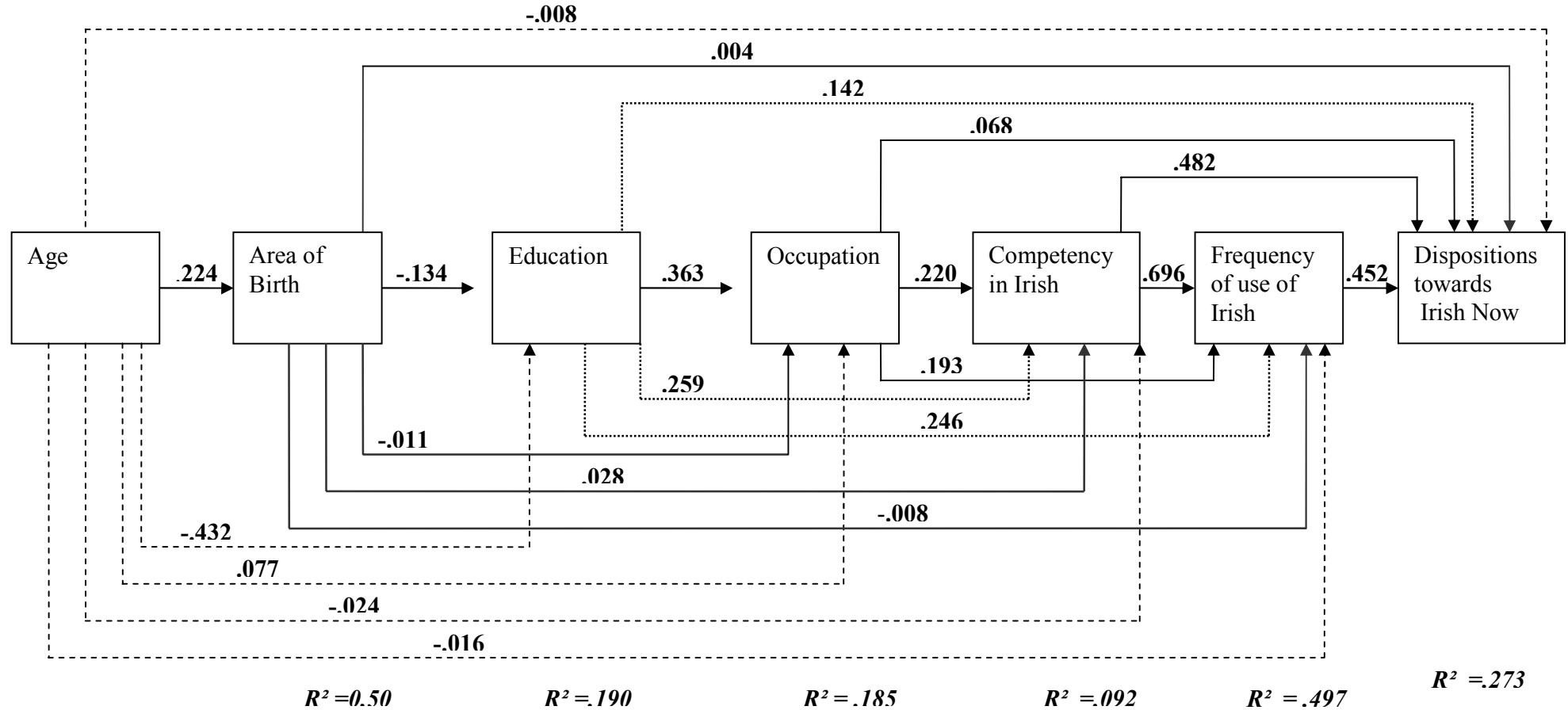
**2 Frequency of use of Irish as a function of :  
Age, Area of Birth, Education, Occupation and Competency**



Variables in the Model Coded as  $R^2 = .050$   $R^2 = .190$   $R^2 = .185$   $R^2 = .092$   $R^2 = .497$

- Age** 1), 18-25 years, 2), 26-40 years, 3) 41-55 years, 4) 56-70 years and 5) 71 years and older
- Area of Birth** 1) City (100,000+), 2) Large Town (10,000+), 3) Town (1,500+), 4) Rural/ Village
- Education,** 1) Primary or less, 2) Incomplete Second-Level, 3) Complete Second-Level, 4) Third-Level
- Occupational Status,** 1) Unskilled / Semi-Skilled, 2) Skilled/ Routine Non Manual, 3) Inspectional/Supervisory, 4) Professional/Executive
- Competency in Irish,** 1) None, 2) Only a little, 3) Not so fluent, 4) Middling, 5) Fluent
- Frequency of use of Irish,** 1) Never, 2) Rarely, 3) Occasionally, 4) Weekly or more often

**3 Dispositions towards Irish Now as a function of:  
Age, Area of Birth, Education, Occupation, Competency & Use of Irish**



- Age** 1), 18-25 years, 2), 26-40 years, 3) 41-55 years, 4) 56-70 years and 5) 71 years and older  
**Area of Birth** 1) City (100,000+), 2) Large Town (10,000+), 3) Town (1,500+), 4) Rural/ Village  
**Education,** 1) Primary or less, 2) Incomplete Second-Level, 3) Complete Second-Level, 4) Third-Level  
**Occupational Status,** 1) Unskilled / Semi-Skilled, 2) Skilled/ Routine Non Manual, 3) Inspectional/Supervisory, 4) Professional/Executive  
**Competency in Irish,** 1) None, 2) Only a little, 3) Not so fluent, 4) Middling, 5) Fluent  
**Frequency of use of Irish,** 1) Never, 2) Rarely, 3) Occasionally, 4) Weekly or more often  
**Dispositions towards Irish Now,** 1) Strongly opposed, 2) Somewhat opposed, 3) No Particular feelings, 4) Somewhat in favour, 5) Strongly in favour.



## **Appendix 2**

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### **Achoimre**

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## **An Ghaeilge Agus Muintir na hÉireann**

# Achoimre agus Tátail

In *The Irish Language and the Irish People*, tá cur síos agus taifeach ar thorthaí suirbhé náisiúnta a deineadh i 2007-2008 ar dhearcaithe i dtaobh na Gaeilge, ar thuairimí fuithí, agus ar chumas agus úsáid na Gaeilge. Cuireadh na ceisteanna céanna agus lorgaíodh an t-eolas céanna i suirbhé náisiúnta a deineadh le linn na bliana 1988-89 agus i suirbhé i Mórcheantar Átha Cliath a deineadh le linn na bliana 1972-73. I ngeall ar sin bhíodhas in ann athruithe i ndearcaithe agus in iompair a bhaineann leis na ceisteanna a cuireadh agus na hábhair a tarraingíodh anuas a fhairchán.

Sa cháipéis seo déantar iarracht achoimre ar thorthaí shuirbhé náisiúnta 2007-08 atá in *The Irish Language and the Irish People* a chur ar fáil maraon le roinnt moltaí a bhaineann le ceisteanna a eascraíonn as.

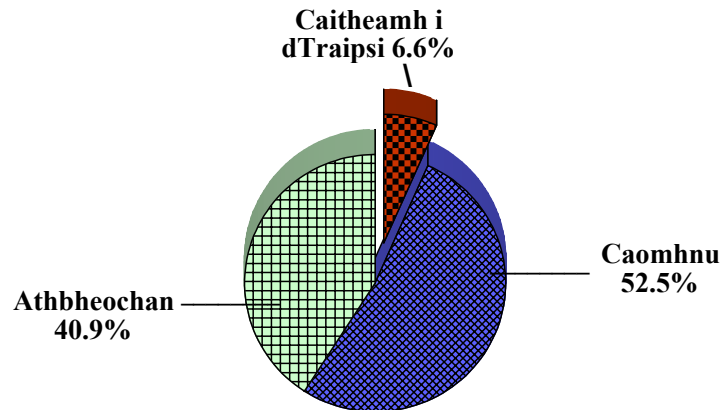
## CUID I - ACHOIMRE NA DTORTHAÍ

### 1.6 An Ghaeilge Amach Anseo:

I gCaibidil II de *The Irish Language and the Irish People*, tuairiscítear ar mhianta freagróirí an tsuirbhé maidir leis an nGaeilge amach anseo agus ar na hathruithe a tharla ina ndearcaithe féin i dtaobh na Gaeilge ón uair a raibh siad ar scoil anuas go dtí an lá atá inniu ann. Bhí formhór na dtorthaí dearfach agus tuairiscíodh go raibh na freagróirí níos mó i bhfách le **caomhnú agus athbheochan** na Gaeilge ná mar a bhíodh siad tráth. Anuas ar sin, mhaigh siad go raibh níos mó bá acu leis an teanga agus go dtabharfadh siad níos mó tacaíochta dí ná mar a dhéanadis nuair a bhídís ar scoil. Ní raibh ach **7%** den sampla náisiúnta ag iarraidh an Ghaeilge a chaitheamh i dtraipsí.

## Fioghar . 5

### An Ghaeilge Amach Anseo, faoi “A Rugadh in Éirinn”



Ainneoin gur tháinig líon mór inimirceach isteach i bPoblacht na hÉireann i rith na cúig bliana déag seo caite agus gur mionlach sontasach iad anois, **níor tharla athrú** ar na múnlaí tacaíochta a bhí ann nuair a deineadh suirbhé 1988-89. Feictear thíos sliocht as Tábla Uimhir 2.2 (Leathnach 7) ina bhfuil torthaí as dá Shamhlachas Náisiúnta:

<u>Mianta</u>	<u>Samhlachas 2007-8</u>	<u>Samhlachas 1988-89</u>
1. Athbheochan na Gaeilge len í a úsáid sa phobal	40.9%	42.6%
2. Caomhnú na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht agus í a athbheochan i gCultúr agus Ealaíon	52.5%	51.9%
3. An Ghaeilge a Chaitheamh i dTraipsí	6.6%	5.6%

Tá an leanúnachas atá le feiceáil anseo an-neamhghnáthach agus ní bheifí ag súil leis i dtorthaí dhá shuirbhé a mbeadh tréimhse chomh fada le naoí mbliana déag eatarthú. Le linn an phlé a deineadh ar mhianta na bhfreagróirí a rugadh in Éirinn de réir ocht athróa pearsanta, eadhon, **aois, inscne, áit bhreithe, áit dúchais, ceantar cónaithe, oideachas, stádas slí bheatha agus teacht isteach ghlan**, tháinig múnlaí áirithe tacaíochta chun glinne. Is iad na dreamanna is mó atá i bhfách leis an **nGaeilge a athbheochan** ná; daoine óga, fir, áititheoirí cathracha, daoine a bhfuil oideachas ard go maith orthu agus iad siúd a bhfuil slithe beatha sinsearach acu. Is léir go méadaíonn seo ar stádas na teanga agus is dea thuar é.

## **1.2 Athruithe Dearcaidh ón Uair a Rabhthas ar Scoil agus an Lá Atá Inniu ann:**

Ón uair a rabhthas **ar scoil** go dtí an **lá atá inniu ann**, bhí athrú dearfach de 33.1% i ndearcaithe i dtaobh na Gaeilge na bhfreagróirí, eadhon, ó **42.6%** ar son na Gaeilge nuair a bhíodar **ar scoil** go **56.7%** san **lá atá inniu ann**. Maidir leo siúd a raibh dearcadh acu a bhí i gcoinne na Gaeilge, eadhon ó **21.9%** go **11.5%**, ní raibh difríocht mhór ins na múnlaí athraithe idir suirbhéithe 1988-89 agus 2007-08. (Féach leat Tábla Uimhir 2.5, leathnach 24). Ní raibh dearcadh ar leith ag 31.8%. B'ionann, beagnach, an ráta dearfach athraithe (ainmniúil) idir fágáil na scoile agus an uair a deineadh an suirbhé, eadhon +13% in 1988-89 agus + 14% in 2007-08

Tomhaiste de réir athróa pearsanta, eadhon, aois, inscne, stádas pósta, oideachas agus slí bheatha, **ba dhearfaí iad na hathruithe** imeasc na ndaoine a bhí idir 41 agus 70 bliain d'aois, fir, daoine pósta agus scartha/colscartha, iad siúd a raibh oideachas tríú léibhéil orthu agus oibrithe láimhe. Níorbh gá, áfach gurbh iad seo na fo-shamhlachais ba mhó a raibh daoine ina measc a bhí i bhfách leis an nGaeilge (Féach leat Tábla Uimhir 2.6, leathnach 26). Ba ísliú de 10.4% den dream a bhí i gcoinne na Gaeilge le linn dóibh a bheith ar scoil é an t-athrú dearfach a bhí ag meán an

tsamhlachais, eadhon **+13.8%** agus bhí tuitim de 3.5% ina measc siúd nach raibh dearcadh ar leith acu.

### 1.3 Cumas sa Ghaeilge:

I gCaibidil III, tomhaiseadh agus deineadh faireachán ar Chumas sa Ghaeilge. hIarradh ar fhreagróirí a gcumas féin a mheas de réir an scála seo leanas:

- |                              |   |                     |
|------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. An-Líofa                  | } | 'Cumas<br>Cuíosach' |
| 2. Líofa                     |   |                     |
| 3. Meán Líofa                |   |                     |
| 4. Gan bheith<br>chomh líofa |   |                     |
| 5. Beagán                    |   |                     |
| 6. Tada                      |   |                     |

Measadh go raibh **cumas cuíosach** acu siúd a shíl gur bhain aon cheann de na céad cheithre leibhéal cumais leo, eadhon, bheidis in ann comhrá i nGaeilge a leanacht gan aon dua mórán. Toisc gur tháinig sruth inimirceach isteach sa tír le tamall de bhlianta anuas, measadh gur ghá cumas Ghaeilge na bhfreagróirí a **rugadh in Éirinn** a mheas. (Ba ionann iad seo agus 85% den samhlachas). Ní raibh deis ag inimircigh a tháinig isteach le deireannas an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim. Ins na suirbhéithe a deineadh san am atá caite ba daoine a rugadh in Éirinn iad formhór mór na bhfreagróirí. Ag na hamanta sin bhí an eisimirce ar siúl go tréan agus ní raibh brí staitisticíúil ag baint leis an líon freagróirí nach in Éirinn a rugadh iad.

I dTabla Uimhir. 3.1 (féach leat leathnach 39 thuas), tá cur síos ar chumas Ghaeilge na bhfreagróirí, dár leo féin. Bhí “cumas cuíosach” ag **41.5%** den sampla iomlán agus **47.1%** ag na freagróirí arbh in Éirinn a rugadh iad.. Taispáineann sé seo méadú ainmiúil de +6% le hais torthaí 1988-1989. Laghdú a tháinig ar chéatadán na bhfreagróirí san samhlachas Baile Átha Cliathach a raibh “cumas cuíosach” acu ó 1988-1989 i leith, eadhon, ó 49% go 47% (tá sé sin lastigh den lamháil earráide). Cuirtear sin i gcompráid leis an méadú de 24% a tharla idir 1972-73 agus 1988-89.

Tarraingíonn seo anuas ceist mhúineadh na Gaeilge sna gnáth scoileanna ó na naoi déag seascaidí anuas. ‘Bhfuil ag éirí leo? Is é is dóichí gurb é an rud atá ag coinneáil suas caighdeán an chumais Ghaeilge sa phobal ná dul chun cinn an tumoideachais Ghaeilge tríd na **Naíonraí** agus na **Gaelscoileanna**. Ba cheart go ndéanfaí taighde cuimsitheach agus measúnú ar thionchar na ngnáth scoileanna agus na naíonraí agus na ngaelscoileanna ar chaighdeán láithreach na Gaeilge.

Tugadh faoi deara go raibh lúáil tathagach cumais sa Ghaeilge i gcás sé chinn de na hathróa pearsanta. Taispeáineann an tábla achoimreach seo leanas raon éagsúlachtaí idir na fo-shamhlacha taobh istigh de na hathróa.

**Tábla Uimhir 6.1:**

**Éagsúlachtaí Athraitheacha i gCumas (Líofa agus Meán Líofa)**

<b>Athróg</b>	<b>Ba Mhó i Líofa agus Meán Líofacht</b>	<b>Ba Ísle i “Líofa agus Meán Líofa”</b>	<b>Ba Airde nach raibh Ceachtar Cumais acu</b>
<b>1. Aois</b>	18-25 (41.9%)	41-55 (20.6%)	71 agus ós a chionn (29.2%)
<b>2. Inscne</b>	Baineannach (34.5%)	Fireannach (27.6%)	Fireannach (18.0%)
<b>3. Áit Dúchais</b>	Cúige Mumhan (41.5%)	Cúige Laighean (23.3%)	Cúige Chonnacht/ Cúige Uladh (22.5%)
<b>4. Réigiún Cónaithe</b>	Lár-Iarthair & Iardheisceart (42.3%)	Teorainn, Lár & Iarthar (20.1%)	Teorainn, Lár & Iarthar (17.8%)
<b>5. Oideachas</b>	Triú Leibhéal (48.6%)	Bunscoil nó níos Lú (11.2%)	Bunscoil nó níos Lú (41.1%)
<b>6. Stádas Shlí Bheatha</b>	Gairmiúl/Feidhmeannach (49.1%)	Neamhoilte/ Leathoilte (19.3%)	Neamhoilte/Leathoilte (18.8%)

Faoinse: *Tábla. 3.3, leathnaigh 45/46.*

Tá aird ar leith san Tábla thuas (Uimhir 6.1) ar na héagsúlachtaí agus tugann sé leid maidir leis na nithe ar gá aire a thabhairt dóibh chun caighdeán a

mhéadú agus chun muinín daoine ina gcuid Gaeilge a mhúscailt sa chaoi go ligfí dóibh i a úsáid. Is in oideachas is mó atá an raon éagsúlachtaí agus is in inscne is lú iad, eadhon:

<u>Athróg</u>	<u>Raon Cumais a Braitheadh ( Líofa &amp; Meán Líofa)</u>		
1. Oideachas	Ó	48.6% go 11.2%	= <b>37.4%</b>
2. Stádas Gairm Bheatha	Ó	49.1% go 19.3%	= <b>29.8%</b>
3. Aois	Ó	41.9% go 20.6%	= <b>21.3%</b>
4. Réigiún Cónaithe	Ó	42.3% go 20.1%	= <b>22.2%</b>
5. Áit Dúchais	Ó	41.5% go 23.3%	= <b>18.2%</b>
6. Inscne	Ó	34.5% go 27.6%	= <b>6.9%</b>

D'fhonn na héagsúlachtaí cumais atá léirithe thuas a réiteach caithfear **ranganna deonacha** a eagrú do na dreamanna seo a bhfuil cumas iséal go leor acu. Méadóidh seo ar na deiseanna úsáid na Gaeilge agus cuirfidh sé le líon na ndaoine a bhíonn rannpháirteach **i gcuideachtaí Gaeilge**. Bíonn leisce ar dhaoine an Ghaeilge a labhairt i láthair dhaoine atá ar bheagán Gaeilge nó gan Gaeilge agus is é an bealach is fearr le sin a athrú ná cumas Gaeilge an phobail a mhéadú.

D'fhéadfaí an **raidió** agus an **teilifís** a úsáid níos mó le sealbhú agus úsáid na Gaeilge i measc na ndaoine a chur chun cinn. Ba chabhair é seo freisin do dhaltaí dara leibhéal agus iad ag iarraidh feabhas a chur ar a gcumas labhartha Ghaeilge. Ba cheart go mba ábhar inní é cumas Ghaeilge atá iséal go leor san réigiún **Teorainn/Lártíre/ Iarthair** atá léirithe sna héagsúlachtaí atá léirithe in “Réigiún Cónaithe”

#### 1.4 Úsáid Tráthrialta na Gaeilge :

I gCaibidil IV bhí aird ar úsáid tráthrialta na Gaeilge imeasc na ndaoine agus deineadh faireachán air. Socraíodh go nglacfaí leis gur **úsáid tráthrialta na Gaeilge** é “ó am go chéile agus níos minice” ach nach nglacfaí faoin gceann

teidil sin le minicíocht níos lú ná sin. Ar fáthanna a luadh cheana, socraíodh fresin freagróirí **nach in Éirinn a rugadh iad** a fhágail as an áireamh i dtáblaí inar tomhaiseadh úsáid na Gaeilge de réir athróga pearsanta.

Imeasc lucht an tsamhlachais iomláine bhí **20.0%** a úsáideann **an Ghaeilge go tráthrialta** (féach leat Tábla Uimhir 4.1, leathnach 58) agus **22.6%** imeasc **freagróirí a rugadh in Éirinn**. Mar sin, thuairiscigh níos lú ná an cheathrú chuid de na freagróirí a rugadh in Éirinn go núsáideann siad an Ghaeilge “ó am go chéile nó níos minice”, aineoinn gur thuairiscigh níos mó ná dhá oiread an chéatadáin sin, **47.1%**, go raibh “cumas cuíosach” acu, eadhon, go raibh cumas “meán liofa” nó níos fearr acu. Tarraingíonn seo anuas ceist bhunúsach maidir leis an nGaeilge amach anseo mar chuid dílis de chultúr na ndaoine. **Cén chaoi gur féidir an cumas a chur ag obair?** Caithfear fuinneamh mór a chaitheamh leis an gceist agus gníomhiú dá réir. Beidh tábhacht ar leith ag baint le hobair na gluaiseachta deonaigh maidir le cur chun cinn na Gaeilge agus na bacanna ar a húsáid a scuabhadh chun siúl. *‘Beatha teanga í a labhairt’*

Tá an easpa athruithe suntasacha ins na freagraí i dTábla Uimhir 4.2 (leathnach 59) ins na suirbhéithe náisiúnta i 1988-89 agus 2007-08, an-neamhghnáthach. (Tharla laghdú beag, eadhon, -5% i rith na naoi mbliana déag) D’fhéadfadh gur tharla seo de bharr easpa athruithe nó de bharr go bhfuil athruithe i ndhá chineál ag cealú a chéile. Is cosúil go bhfuil mionlach úsáideoirí na Gaeilge ag méadú fad atá laghdú nach beag ag tarlú ar líon na n-úsáideoirí i gcoda móra den phobal (a bhfuil cumas Ghaeilge acu), dreamanna nach bhfuil ag leanacht le húsáid na Gaeilge. D’fhéadfadh gur easpa spreagtha pearsanta nó easpa deiseanna is cúis leis seo. Maidir le húsáid agus neamhúsáid na Gaeilge, teastaíonn taighde mór agus gníomhaíocht.

Léiríonn ócáidí úsáide (Tábla Uimhir 4.3, Leathnach 60) gur go neamhfhoirmeálta agus sa mbaile is mó a úsáidtear an Ghaeilge, eadhon, úsáidtear í ag éisteacht/ breathnú ar theilifís/raidió sa mbaile agus le cáirde a bhfuil Gaeilge acu.



Nuair a tástáladh minicíocht úsáide de réir athróga pearsanta, ba léir go raibh raon mór freagraí taifeadtha i gcás formhór na n-athróga, eadhon, Tábla Uimhir 6.2, thíos:

**Tábla Uimhir. 6.2:**

**An Mhinicíocht ba Mhó agus ba Lú Úsáide Tráthrialta de réir Athróga Pearsanta (Daoine a Rugadh in Éirinn)**

<b>Athróga Pearsanta</b>	<b>Minicíocht ba Airde</b>	<b>Minicíocht ba Ísle</b>	<b>Ba Airde nach n-úsáideann an Ghaeilge</b>
<b>(a) Aois</b>	18 to 40 bliana <b>(25.7%)</b>	56 to 70 bliana <b>(17.1%)</b>	71 bliana agus ós a chionn <b>(67.0%)</b>
<b>(b) Stádas Pósta</b>	Neamh-phósta/Nár phós <b>(26.2%)</b>	Caidreamh Buan <b>(16.0%)</b>	Baintrigh <b>(69.2%)</b>
<b>(c) Áit Dúchais</b>	Cúige Mumhan <b>(32.3%)</b>	An Chuid eile de Chúige Laighean <b>(18.3%)</b>	An Chuid Eile de Chúige Laighean <b>(61.0%)</b>
<b>(d) Oideachas</b>	Tríú Leibhéal <b>(35.3%)</b>	Bunscoil nó níos Lú <b>(8.3%)</b>	Bunscoil nó níos Lú <b>(84.3%)</b>
<b>(e) Stádas Gairme</b>	Gairmiúl/Feidhmeannach <b>(35.0%)</b>	Neamhoilte/Leathoilte. <b>(10.9%)</b>	Neamhoilte/Leathoilte. <b>(69.1%)</b>

Foinse: Tábla Uimh. 4.5, leathnaigh 63/64.

Tá táscairí dóchais le fáil ins na figiúirí sin thuas sa mhéad is gur imeasc na ndaoine is mó a úsáideann an Ghaeilge tá an **óige**, iad siúd a bhfuil **oideachas níos airde** orthu agus **lucht na ngairm bheatha is mó cáta**. Toisc go bhfuil an leibhéal úsáide sách íseal, eadhon, **22.6%**, ní rabhthas ag súil go mbeadh an raon luála idir scóranna minicíochta an fho-shamhlachais ab airde agus an fho-shamhlachais ab isle chomh mór is a bhí na difríochtaí ins na fo-shamhlacha a bhain le Cumas.

Is eisceachtaí iad **Oideachas** agus **Stádas Shlí Bheatha** !

<u>Athróg</u>	<u>Raon Difríochna</u>		
1. <b>Oideachas</b>	35.3% - 8.3%	=	<b>27.0%</b>
2. <b>Stádas Slí Bheatha</b>	35.0% - 10.9%	=	<b>24.1%</b>
3. <b>Áit Dúchais</b>	32.3% - 18.3%	=	<b>14.0%</b>
4. <b>Stádas Pósta</b>	26.2% - 16.0%	=	<b>10.2%</b>
5. <b>Aois</b>	25.7% - 17.1%	=	<b>8.6%</b>

Gan amhras ar bith léiríonn an raon luála sin ins na fo-shamhlacha go bhfuil **Stádas Comhdhaonnach** na Gaeilge ag dul i méid sa sochaí Éireannach. Is amhlaidh go bhfuil siad siúd a bhfuil oideachas níos airde orthu agus iad siúd a bhfuil na postanna acu is mó atá faoi cháta, go bhfuil siad chun cinn go mór ar a gcomh-shaoránaigh nach bhfuil an oiread céanna den ádh orthu.

### 1.5 **Ócáidí Úsáid na Gaeilge:**

Is mar a ceapadh roimh ré a bhí na hócáidí inar úsáid na freagróirí an teanga. (Féach leat Tábla Uimhir 4.6, Leathnach 74). Is ar ócáidí neamhfhoirmiúla, sa mbaile agus le cáirde is mó a úsáidtear an Ghaeilge.

Bhí úsáid na Gaeilge ag an obair nó i gcumarsáid le hoifigigh an Stáit sách íseal, eadhon, 17.6% agus 11.1% (faoi seach) acu siúd a raibh cumas cuíosach acu. Thuairiscigh tuairim's 14.6% a raibh cumas cuíosach acu go léann siad an teanga.

Cé go n-úsáideann na daoine a bhfuil an cumas sin acu an Ghaeilge go minic caithfear an mhinicíocht sin a mhéadú agus a leathnú i gcúrsaí caoimheachais agus i gcaidreamh eile daonna.

## 1.9 An Ghaeilge mar bhun le féin-aitheantas coitianta:

Cuireadh ceist ar fhreagróirí ar aontaigh siad nó ar easaontaigh siad leis an ráiteas; “ *go gcuirfí bunús maith ar fáil do aontas Éireannach sa bhfad thréimhse ach filleadh ar an nGaeilge agus an ar an gcultúr (cé go mbfhéidir go mbeadh deacrachtaí ann sa ghearr thréimhse)*”. Cuireadh an cheist seo freisin i suirbhéithe 1972-73 agus 1988-89

Dhiúltaigh 32.5% don smaoineamh. D’aontaigh 30%. Bhí 21.4% ann nár aontaigh agus nar easaontaigh agus bhí 16.1% ann nach raibh fhios acu. Ba ábhar díomá iad na torthaí mar níorbh léir don mhóramh gurb í an Ghaeilge bunús firinneach an fhéin-aitheantais eitnigh Éireannaigh

. Dar le hIar- Uachtarán na hÉireann, an Dr Dubhghlas de hÍde (“An Craoibhín Aoibhinn”), duine de bhunaitheoirí Chonradh na Gaeilge, gur foinse chomharthach chomh-féin-aitheantais idir Éireannaigh uile í an Ghaeilge agus an cultúr, cuma cé’n aicme len mbaineann siad nó cé’n chreideamh nó leagan amach polaitiúil atá acu.

Tharla athrú tábhachtach ins na freagraí ó 1972-73 i leith. (Féach leat Tábla Uimhir 5.2, leathnach 88), eadhon:

	<u>Aontaíonn</u>	<u>Easaontaíonn</u>	<u>Uimhir</u>
<b>1972-73 (Baile Átha Cliath)</b>	18%	79%	2,279
<b>1988-89 (Baile Átha Cliath)</b>	20%	58%	274
<b>2007-08 (Baile Átha Cliath)</b>	24%	37%	246
<b>1988-89 (Sampla Náisiúnta)</b>	24%	57%	1,000
<b>2007-08 (Sampla Náisiúnta)</b>	30%	33%	1,011

Léiríonn na figiúirí thuas gur tharla titim mhór san chéatadán nár aontaigh leis an ráiteas. I dtreo an aontais atá an claonadh. Is nasc tábhachtach eitneach í an Ghaeilge don *diaspora* (a chónaíonn thar lear). Le blianta beaga anuas, i Stáit Aontaithe Mheiriceá agus i gCeanada tá tóir ar fhoghlaim na

Gaeilge. Meastar go mbeidh méadú, amach anseo ar na freagraí dearfacha ar an gceist a chuireadh i dTábla Uimhir 5.1.leathnach 87) de réir mar a mhéadaítear ar stádas na Gaeilge.

I dTábla Uimhir 5.5, (Leathnaigh 94-95) tá mionscagadh ar na freagraí de réir athróga pearsanta. Níl na héagsúlachtaí idir na samplaí an-mhór.

### **1.10 Dearcaidh i dtaobh Cainteoirí Ghaeilge.:**

Tomhas an-bhunúsach is ea é seo ar sheasamh agus ar stádas comhdhaonnach na Gaeilge. Ar éigin go bhféadfaí a bheith ag súil le freagra níos dearfaí ná an freagra atá taifeadtha ar Thábla Uimhir 5.8 (leathnaigh 104-105). Bheadh **84.4%** sásta fáilte a chur roimh cainteoir Ghaeilge a phósfadh isteach ina theaghlach. Tá sin tomhaiste ar an ***Scála Coimhirse Bogardus***. Dá réir sin, is **dream faoi cháta** (*in-group*) san sochaí Éireannach iad lucht labhartha na Gaeilge. Tá an scéal amhlaidh ó 1988-89 i leith. Toisc go raibh an céatadán seo chomh hard is a bhí, chuir sé teorainn leis an raon éagsúlachtaí a d'fhéadfadh a bheith le sonrú ins na hathróga pearsanta.

Deimhníonn sé seo go bhfuil árdmheas comhdhaonnach ar an nGaeilge sa lá atá inniu ann. Tagann sé seo freisin le torthaí eile a pléadh i gCaibidil II, rud a chuireann le h-intaofacht na dtorthaí.

## CUID II - TÁTAIL AGUS MOLTAÍ

Le linn deireadh na naoú aoise dhéag agus le linn na fichiú aoise ba chuid den clár oibre don neamhspleachas é feachtas athbheochan na Gaeilge. Nuair a chuireadh Saorstát Éireann ar bun sa bhliain 1922 chuir an Rialtas Éireannach athbheochan na Gaeilge chun cinn mar cheann de phríomh chuspóirí an Stáit agus na saoránach. Mhair an díogras sin anuas go dtí na caogadaí. Ina dhiaidh sin, leanadh de mhúineadh na Gaeilge i ngach bun agus iarbhunscoil ach is **mar ábhar** a mhúineadh í. Uaidh sin ar aghaidh tugadh tús áite don fhorbairt eacnamaíochta agus ní don athbheochan cultúir agus teanga.

Is léiriú ar dhul chun cinn agus ar dhul ar gcúl an fheachtais stairiúla ar son athbheochan na Gaeilge tríd na scoileanna agus tríd an ghluaiseacht deonach Ghaeilge iad torthaí na tuarascála seo ar **dhearcaidh i dtaobh** na Gaeilge, ar **chumas** sa teanga agus ar **úsáid** na Gaeilge.

Go ginearálta, ba ábhar dóchais é staid dearfach na Gaeilge le linn 2007-08 (nuair a deineadh an obair pháirce don Tuarascáil seo). Tá **cumas cuíosach** ag **47%** den sampla náisiúnta a rugadh in Éirinn. Anuas ar sin, tá dearcaidh an-dearfacha i dtaobh na Gaeilge ag na daoine. Tá **93%** ar a son agus tá **7%** ann a chaitheadh i dtraipsí í. Theastaigh ó **40%** go **n-athbheofaí** an Ghaeilge agus theastaigh ó **53%** go **gcaomhnófai** í.

Tá sé tábhachtach go bhfuil **23%** ag úsáid na Gaeilge go tráthrialta ach is ábhar díomá é sin freisin. Tugann na torthaí chun léire dúinn nach mbíonn a leath díobh sin a bhfuil cumas cuíosach acu ag úsáid na Gaeilge go tráthrialta. Déanta na fírinne, is é seo an **dúshlán** is mó a eascraíonn as an dTuarascáil; **cén chaoi inar féidir a chinntiú go mbeidh an teanga á húsáid níos mó acu siúd a bhfuil an cumas acu?**

Shílfeá go mbeadh seo níos fuirste le déanamh anois ná mar a bhí sé san am atá caite, mar tá árdmheas ar an teanga ag na saoránaigh úd a bhfuil breis oideachais orthu, saol uirbeach á chaitheamh acu agus acu siúd a bhfuil postanna ard-stádais acu.

Is gá na **gnásanna comhdhaonnacha cainte** a chuireannn cosc le labhairt na Gaeilge a aithint agus iad a athrú nuair is féidir. Tugann an conair-thaifeach chun léire go bhfuil comhghaolmhaireacht idir: cumas sa teanga, úsáid na teanga agus dearcaidh dearfacha i dtaobh na teanga. Má mhéadaítear go suntasach ar úsáid na Gaeilge tiocfaidh feabhas ar chumas. Ach níl fianaise ann fós go spreagann méadú cumais méadú úsáide.

## MOLTAÍ SONRACHA

### 1. Cumas sa Ghaeilge:

*É bheith ina chuspóir ard-thábhachta ag an gcóras gnáth bhunscoileanna agus iarbhunscoileanna go mbeadh **cumas cuíosach** sa Ghaeilge ag an gcéadchodán is mó de na daoine. Na Naíonraí Gaelacha agus Gaelscoileanna (bun agus iarbhun) a bheith ar fáil chomh forleathan agus is féidir.*

### 2. Úsáid Tráthrialta na Gaeilge:

**2.1** *Plean Stráitéiseach, a mbeadh sé mar chuspóir aige úsáid fhoirmeálta agus neamhfhoirmeálta na Gaeilge sa phobal a mhéadú go mór, a bheith comhaontaithe agus á feidhmiú ag na heagrais stáit agus na heagrais dheonacha a bhfuil cúram na teanga orthu.*

**2.2** *Is mithid do na gnáth bhunscoileanna agus iarbhunscoileanna tús áite a thabhairt do chumas beo sa Ghaeilge a chothú. Moltar go láidir go múinfi ábhar amháin ar a laghad, chomh maith leis an nGaeilge féin trí mheán na Gaeilge chun na caighdeáin chumais a mhéadú agus ag an am céanna chun na daltaí a chur i dtaithí ar úsáid na teanga. Dhéanfaidh sé seo leas oideachasiúl agus leas teangeolaíochta*

- 2.3 *An tosaíocht céanna a thabhairt i ngníomhaíochtaí for-churaclaim na n-iarbhunscoileanna do chur chun cinn na **Gaeilge mar theanga bheo**, is a thugtar do chúrsaí **spóirt**. Mar shampla, b'fhiú go dtabharfaí tacaíocht do **chumainn óige Ghaeilge** d'fhonn deiseanna timpeallachta a chur ar fáil do na daltaí a ligfeadh dóibh an teanga a úsáid go neamhfhoirmealta. Thiocfadh leis an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta aitheantas cuí a thabhairt do mhúinteoirí agus baill eile fóirne a thabharfadh tacaíocht agus a stiúrfadh gníomhaíochtaí na gcumann.*
- 2.4 *Na **comharthaí agus fógraí poiblí** ar fad a bheith dátheangach. An dá theanga a bheith freisin ar **lipéidí earraí a dhíoltar** i siopaí, bia, earraí tí, earraí cruaidh, agus a leithéidí. Ba cheart go mbeadh **fógraí poiblí** dátheangach ag imeachtaí spóirt, ag ionaid turais reiligiúnda, ag aerphóirt, stáisiúin treanacha/bus agus rl. Ba choir go gcothófaí úsáid na Gaeilge i ngach seirbhís reiligiúnda.*
- 2.5 *Ba choir go mbeadh gach seirbhís phoiblí ar fáil do na daoine i nGaeilge (agus i mBéarla), seirbhísí a chuireann an earnáil príobháideach ar fáil san áireamh, mar shampla bancanna, seirbhísí leighis, comhairle dlí. Ba cheart go mbeadh deis ag fostuaithe na seirbhísí seo iad féin a oiliúnt le go mbeadh an cumas teanga acu atá riachtanach.*
- 2.6 *Spreagadh a chur i **bhfostóirí** (príobháideach agus poiblí) le go mbeidh fonn orthu úsáid na Gaeilge ina gcuid ionaid oibre a chur chun cinn, go háirithe in aon chaidreamh leis an bpobal.*
3. **A bhfuil le Déanamh ag Eagrais Dheonacha Ghaeilge agus Eagrais Dheonacha atá Báúil leis an gCultúr Gaelach**
- 3.1 *Ba cheart go mbeadh cur chun na Gaeilge **imeasc na ndaoine** ina phríomh chuspóir na n-eagras Gaeilge uile.*
- 3.2 *Spreagadh a chur ina na h-eagrais deonacha a chuireann an cultúr Gaelach chun cinn, le labhairt na Gaeilge imeasc a gcuid ball a mhéadú.*

- 3.3** Spreagadh a chur iontú siúd a bhfuil cumas cuíosach acu **An Fáinne** a chaitheamh. Ba ghá go mbeadh seo ina chuid dílis de phlean stráitéiseach maidir le h-iompar daonna a bheadh dírithe ar na brúanna i gcoinne labhairt na Gaeilge a laghdú. Caithfí na gnéithe socheolaíochta agus soch-síceolaíochta a chur san áireamh. Theastódh tacaíocht stáit.
- 3.4** Tá tábhacht ar leith ag baint le **seirbís liotúirge agus creidimh** a bheith á gcur ar fáil i nGaeilge ag na hEaglais ar fud an sochaí. Dhéanfaidh seo leas na n-Eaglais agus na pobail eaglaise a bhfuil meas acu ar an dteanga agus ar chaighdeán maith cultúir a bheith ag baint le seirbhísí reiligúnda.
- 3.5** Teastaíonn tacaíocht na **mórmheán cumarsáide**, eadhon, raidió, teilifís, nuachtáin, irisi, agus idirlíon. Ar an mbealach sin d'fhéadfaí cur go mór le minicíocht úsáid na Gaeilge sa sochaí. Tuige nach mbeadh cláracha a bhainfeadh leis an nGaeilge nó cláracha i nGaeilge ina gcuid tráthrialta de na mórmheáin.



## Gluais

<b>Athróg-a</b>	A Variable ( <i>Slat tomhais ar féidir luachanna éagsúla a bheith ag baint leis</i> )
<b>Brí Choibhneasta</b>	Relative Significance
<b>Brí Staitisticiúil</b>	Statistical Significance
<b>Cáta</b>	Prestige, Faoi cháta
<b>Cárnach</b>	Cumulative
<b>Claoine</b>	Inclination, Prejudice
<b>Comharthach</b>	Symbolic
<b>Comhdhaonnach</b>	Social
<b>Comhghaolmhaireacht</b>	Correlation
<b>Conair-thaifeach</b>	Path Analysis
<b>Cuideachtaí Ghaeilge</b>	Irish-speaking Networks
<b>Dearbh</b>	Actual
<b>Dream faoi Cháta</b>	In-group
<b>Dúnghaois</b>	Policy, Strategy
<b>Gnásanna Comhdhaonnacha Cainte</b>	Language Social Norms
<b>Glinnigh</b>	Scrutinise ( v.n. –iúint; Scrutiny)
<b>Lamháil Earraide</b>	Margain of Error
<b>Múnlaí Úsáide</b>	Patterns of use
<b>Samhlachas</b>	Sample
<b>Samhlachas Fánach</b>	Random Sample; <i>Cuid den daonra a roghnaítear sa chaoi go mbíonn deis comh-chothrom ag gach duine sa daonra a bheith roghnaithe. Cuireann seo cosc le claoine i roghnú freagróirí agus baineann buanna eile leis freisin</i>
<b>Scála Choimhirse Bogardus</b>	Bogardus Social Distance Scale
<b>Sealbhú Teanga</b>	Acquisition of language
<b>Taifeach</b>	Analysis
<b>Táscaire</b>	Indicator
<b>Tátal</b>	Deduction, conclusion

## About the Report

The campaign for the restoration of the Irish language in Ireland had been part of the independence agenda during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was both a cause and a goal of that movement. After the setting up of the Irish Free State in 1922, the Irish Government pursued the revival of Irish as a priority goal for all the citizens. Irish cultural idealism continued until the 1950s. After that time Irish continued to be taught **as a subject** in all primary and second-level schools. The aim of economic development has taken priority over cultural revival since the 1960s in the Republic of Ireland.

The findings of this Report on the **attitudes towards, competence in and use of** the Irish language reflect the success and failure of the historic campaign to revive the language in the schools' system and through the voluntary Irish-revival movement. In the overall, the position of the Irish language in 2007-08 (when the field work for this Report was carried out) is positive and quite encouraging. The general level of **reasonable competence** among the Irish-born of the national random sample is **47.2%** and the attitudes towards the Irish language is very positive, i.e. **93.2%** in favour and **6.7%** prepared to discard Irish. Of the 'those in favour', **40.2%** wished the language to **be revived** and **52.9%** wanted it to **be preserved**.

The 'regular use' of the Irish language is significant at **22.7%**, but is, at the same time disappointing. This result indicates that slightly less than half of those with 'reasonable competence' use Irish on a regular basis. Herein is the **major challenge** emanating from the Report, namely, **how to facilitate greater regular use of the Irish language by those capable of speaking it?** This should be less difficult than in the past, since the public status of the language is relatively high among the better educated, urbanised citizens and those with higher occupational status. Socio-cultural norms which impede the regular use of Irish should be identified and changed where possible.

***Micheál Mac Gréil, S.J. (Author and Research Director).***

Extract from Summary and Conclusions of the report.

The findings of this research are so packed with revealing information on the developing relationship between Irish society and its endangered language that it must be studied in great detail by those who decide and implement language policy. If the men of 1893 were to re-appear to re-start their revolution, one feels that first they would avidly devour this report and, armed with the data, information and knowledge presented, would launch several new strategic initiatives which would clear away blockages and exploit the many unexplored opportunities, and thus ensure that the restoration of the Irish language will indeed be completed.

***Maolsheachlainn Ó Caollaí (Iar-Uachtarán, Conradh na Gaeilge).***

Extract from Foreword to the Report

€15.00

