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How does the decline and revival of Irish in Northern Ireland compare with the decline and revival of Cornish, and what successes from Northern Ireland can the Cornish language community adapt in its language policies?

Abstract

In Northern Ireland, the Irish language faced similar difficulties in terms of usage, status and acceptance within the wider society to those of the Cornish language in Cornwall. Both languages have been reduced to the point of near extinction due to the move from monolingualism, through bilingualism to an almost universal use of English within their geographical areas. Their respective language communities have, with varying degrees of success, attempted to revive their particular languages in terms of both usage and status within their respective societies. By examining the decline, revival and current position of Irish in Northern Ireland, we can apply this knowledge to factors affecting the decline of Cornish in Cornwall during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and by drawing on the experiences of the Northern Irish minority language communities, look for ways in which the continuing Cornish language revival can be most positively achieved and outline a future strategy for the Cornish language based on the factors which have achieved most success in Northern Ireland.

I have been researching why languages become extinct, how we define a language as actually being extinct, and what has been done, by both linguists and communities, to both preserve and revive their particular languages. As a comparison for my own studies, I have been concentrating on the decline of Irish, and its revival in Northern Ireland. The focus of this is further understanding the reasons why the use of Cornish declined, and how the decline in the use of Irish, which is well-documented, may give us a model to understand the less well-documented decline of Cornish. In a similar fashion, the revival of Irish in Northern Ireland is a few steps ahead of the current situation here in Cornwall, in terms of both its use and acceptance of the language by a wider section of the community, and its official status, and so I would also like to share points of interest and use which should be considered by those working to further language revival here in Cornwall.

There are several stages to the death of a language. The first stage is usually political or social discrimination against speakers of a particular language, either through official policies or benign neglect.[1] In both Cornwall and Ireland during the period in which use of the vernacular languages declined, the English government was in power, and therefore English was both the language of government (along with Latin) and, increasingly, the language of business. Although the Bible was produced in Irish

[1] David Harrison, *When languages die: The extinction of the World's languages and the erosion of human knowledge*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 8.

in the seventeenth century, unlike in Cornish, English became the language of the Church, and printing other books in Irish was restricted from the seventeenth century.[2]

William Scawen, in his 1680 'The causes of Cornish Speech's decay' gave sixteen reasons for the decline of the language. Amongst these were the use of Latin in both writing and speech, the influence from Devon of spoken English, trade, especially in fishing and tin, being carried out in other languages because foreigners were unable to learn Cornish and the necessity for young people to learn the Lord's Prayer, Creed and Ten Commandments in English.[3] Robert McAdam, editor of the Ulster Journal of Archaeology, writing in the nineteenth century gave three reasons for the decay of Irish: scholars who had no interest in the living language; writers using obscure language and the attitude of the Catholic Church in neglecting to teach the Catechism and to give sermons in the language.[4] English had spread to most towns in Ireland, but in 1800, at the time of the Act of Union, half the population was Irish speaking. We cannot ignore the effects of the potato famine and emigration on the Irish speaking population, most emigrants moved to major English-speaking cities such as Liverpool and Boston. Being able to speak English offered some hope of escaping destitution.[5] English was the prestige language, whereas Irish literally embodied poverty and a difficult life. Similarly, between 1815-1915, 250,000 people emigrated from Cornwall, caused in part by the depletion of copper and tin reserves, and the opening up of new mining areas generating a demand for the skills of Cornish miners elsewhere, and the 1840s also witnessed, to a lesser extent, the same potato blight in Cornwall that affected the crops in Ireland, and elsewhere in Europe.[6]

Another of the principal agents which contributed to the decline of the Irish language in the island of Ireland as a whole was educational policy during the nineteenth century. No provision was made for the Irish-speaking population in 1831 when the regulations of the Commissioners of National Education were drawn up.[7] This inevitably had an effect on those monolingual Irish-speaking areas, where children were forced to learn to read in a language they did not speak. Irish speakers numbered just over 300,000 people in 1851, around 23 percent of the population, and the bilingual population, 1.5 million people.[8] The Intermediate Act of 1878 finally

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[2] Margaret Sutherland. 'Problems of Diversity in Policy and Practice: Celtic Languages in the United Kingdom', *Comparative Education,* 36. 2, Special Number (22), (2000), 199-209, (p.206).

[3] Scawen, William. Old Cornish Manuscript collected by William Scawen. (1680) EN/1999. Kresen Kernow.

[4] Seamus O'Neill. 'The Hidden Ulster: Gaelic Pioneers of the North', *An Irish Quarterly Review*, 55. 217, (1966), 60-66, (p.63).

[5] Tony Crowley. 'Politics, and the State(s): Reflections from Ireland', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 35. 1/4, (2017-2018), 331-349.

[6]< https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornish_diaspora> [Accessed 27/04/2020].

[7] Seamus O'Buachalla. (1984). 'Educational Policy and the Role of the Irish Language from 1831 to 1981', *European Journal of Education*, 19. 1, (1984), 75-92 (p.75).

[8] Ibid., p. 75.

included Irish within the national school curriculum, as a result of a campaign by the Society for the Protection of the Irish Language, but only as a peripheral subject worth less than other languages.[9] Added to this is that very few teachers were qualified to teach Irish, the language was taught outside regular school hours, and only to a limited age group. At the end of the nineteenth century, the number of schools teaching Irish was approximately 1% of the total, and the number of pupils examined in Irish never exceeded 2000 from a total enrolment of 800,000. Finally, in 1897, Irish was included as an optional subject at teacher training colleges.[10] Every student had to offer one optional subject and those who took Irish were awarded an extra certificate on passing their training. However, as a result of the previous language policy numbers of students able to speak Irish, and therefore wanting to teach it were low and only 57 of 700 trainee teachers in the last three years of the nineteenth century took Irish as their optional subject.[11]

Prior to the nineteenth century there was little formal education in England. There was a system of grammar schools, and some schools run by religious establishments, but of those schools established before 1700, the closest to Cornwall were in Exeter, and it wasn't until 1811 that National Schools were established, thus well into the period of decline of the Cornish language.[12] A statistical essay presented to the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society in 1839, by the Reverend Courtney gives us details of the schools available in Penzance at that time. There were 2 endowed boys' schools and 2 endowed girls' schools (so National Schools, supported by subscriptions, 11 private boys, and 14 private girls' schools. Between them, these 29 schools educated around 1100 pupils.[13] At this time however, many Cornish children would have, by necessity, been contributing to the family income by working, boys were working in mines from the age of 12.

Once a language is no longer being learned by children it is defined as moribund, and as the older speakers become less numerous and more elderly it begins to die out.[14] This was the case in large areas of Ireland in the nineteenth century. In Cornwall, in the seventeenth-century Nicholas Boson, later regarded as one of the early group of antiquarians who tried to preserve Cornish, was actually prevented from learning Cornish from neighbours and family servants when he was a boy by his mother. He subsequently learned the language as an adult in order to carry out business with fishermen.[15] Boson's experience shows us that for many Cornish people of a certain class, even during a period without the availability of mass education English was perceived as necessary in order to get ahead.

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[9] Ibid., p. 77.
[10] Ibid., p. 77.
[11] Ibid., p. 79.
[12] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_education_in_England> [Accessed 27/04/2020].

[13] J. S. Courtney. (1839). ' Chronological memoranda, Relating to the Town of Penzance', *Report of the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society*, 7, (1839), 22-57, (p.48).

[14] David Crystal, *Language Death*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.viii.
[15] Dee Harris, *The Cornish History Notebook.* (Pool: An Kylgh Kernewek and Ors Sempel, 2016), p. 24.

After the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, Northern Ireland was created through partition in 1921 with a majority protestant and unionist population.[16] The state was set up specifically as "a Protestant state for a Protestant people," and therefore the Irish language was long perceived as connected with an enemy force. Government debates released to public inspection in the 1990s make it clear that the Irish language was not directly suppressed in Northern Ireland so as to avoid creating a rallying point of public protest from the marginalized nationalists.[17] The language was permitted to be taught outside the "normal" school curricula in certain areas. In discussing the Irish language in Northern Ireland, the political element cannot be ignored. Language policy has been used as a political football by politicians of both sides, and the Irish language played a significant role during the hunger strike protests by IRA prisoners in the 1980s.[18] However, it is the grassroots, community-led language work which is of most relevance and concern to language revival in Cornwall.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, revitalisation of the Irish language in Northern Ireland is centred on Belfast, which was home to the only urban Irish-language community on the entire island of Ireland but is now being joined by Derry. The event which seems to have initiated the Irish language revival in Belfast, or, at the very least had the most lasting effect, occurred in the late 1960s when a group of young families decided to build houses together in the Shaws Road area of West Belfast, establish their own Irish-speaking community and bring up their children speaking Irish. In 1971 they opened a primary school which used Irish as the language of education.[19] The original core of the school comprised the Shaws Road children, but by 1986 there were 350 pupils enrolled including many from neighbouring areas, five nursery schools, over 60 evening classes, and several intensive courses had been run for the unemployed.[20] For these children, Irish was the language they spoke at home, at school and at church. In 1984 a weekly Irish language newspaper was established in Belfast, and the area was home to the only Irish language bookshop outside Dublin. An all-Irish social club had been established, mass was said weekly for Irish speakers and over 300 streets had bilingual signs. An annual festival to promote Irish in Schools had been established. These achievements did not occur without a struggle. It took a two year campaign of protests, lobbying and publicity before the BBC began broadcasting Irish language programmes on Radio Ulster.[21] The Shaws Road primary school finally

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[16] Jeffrey Kallen, 'The Political Border and Linguistic Identities in Ireland: What Can the Linguistic Landscape Tell Us?', in *Language, Borders and Identity*, ed. by Dominic Watt and Carmen Llamas (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), pp.154-168, (p.154).

[17] James Blake. 'The Irish Language Today: An Teanga Inniu: Language Planning and Policy in Ireland, 1960-1998', *New Hibernia Review/ Iris Eireannach Nua*, 2. 4 (1998), 147-154 (p.151).

[18] Olaf Zenker. (2012). 'On Prophets, Godfathers, Rebels, and Prostitutes: Distributed Agency in the Irish Language Revival of Northern Ireland', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 137. 1 (2012), 23-45 (p.36).

[19] Patricia Kachuk. 'A Resistance to British Cultural Hegemony: Irish-Language Activism in West Belfast', *Anthropologica*, 36. 2, (1994), 135-154 (p. 142).

[20] Brendan De Leigh. 'The Language of Grassroots Revival', *Fortnight*, 245, (1986), 15, (p. 15).

[21] Ibid.

began to receive state funding in 1984 after years of being financed by community efforts.[22] However by the 1976-77 academic year, Irish was being taught as an additional language in 142 primary schools, 13% of the total, and 71, or 38% of all secondary schools. It was also possible by 1978 to study Irish language and literature as part of the Irish Studies programme at the University of Ulster.[23]

The number of speakers of a minority language needs to be examined in terms of proportion of the overall population of the country and majority language speaking population in which it sits. These statistics are far more easily available for the use of Irish during the period of its decline and revival as an Irish language question was included on the census from 1851, although after partition a question on language use was not included in the Northern Ireland census until 1991, leaving a gap of 80 years in our knowledge.[24]

By 1991, the census data showed over 27000 people in Belfast, and over 9000 people in Derry could speak Irish. The age distribution was positively skewed with 48% being aged under 24 and only 7% aged over 65. As a comparison, in the same census 22% of Welsh speakers were aged over 65.[25] There has been a so-far unsuccessful push to have a question regarding Cornish speaking included on census forms, although 557 people declared it as their main language in the 2011 census.[26]

Evidence from the early 1990s shows that there was interest in the language amongst those from the Protestant community, including an all-female group of adult learners in the working-class Shankill area of Belfast, but also amongst higher-level socio-economic classes.[27] This was put down to the increasing presence of Irish in the media and the education system, and enhanced levels of Irish national identity across both communities. Irish language broadcasting increased on English medium radio and television, and Irish medium television broadcast by the Republic of Ireland was available in parts of Northern Ireland.[28] By 1997 all-Irish medium secondary schools had been established in Belfast and Derry,[29] and in the 2001 census over 10% of the

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Colman O Huallachain. 'Languages of Instruction in Ireland 1904-1977', *International Review of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft / Revue Internationale de l'Education,* 24. 4,(1978), 501-510 (p.508).

[24] Felim O'h Adhmaill. 'Irish and the New Educational Reforms', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 37. 1, (1989), 72-77 (p.73).

[25] Chriost Mac Giolla and John Aitchison. (1998). 'Ethnic Identities and Language in Northern Ireland', *Area*, 30. 4, (1998), 301-309 (p.303).

[26] Dave Sayers, Merryn Davies-Deacon and Sarah Croome. *The Cornish Language in Education in the UK.* (Mercator: European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, 2018), p. 6.

[27] Mac Giolla, *Ethnic Identities*, p. 305.

[28] Ibid. p. 306.

[29] Gearoid Denvir. 'The Irish Language in the New Millennium', *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, 3. 4, (1999), 18-48, (p. 33).

entire population of Northern Ireland claimed some knowledge of the language.[30] By 2017, the Irish speaking population of Northern Ireland was recorded at 11 %,[31] so it will be interesting to see if next year's census shows any real growth, and in which areas of the population. More recently, last month saw the launch of a series of short, animated films created by the Protestant, Unionist community as part of the Turas project which provides adult education in Irish. These films, produced in conjunction with Don Duncan, a lecturer in Broadcast Journalism at Queen's University, aim to show normal, everyday Protestants and Unionists engaging with the language, explaining why they decided to learn the language, and what they get from it.[32] The first film features Gail McCune who began learning Irish in an evening class seven years ago, and is now beginning the second year of an Irish language degree. Funding from The Turas project allows higher level language learners such McCune to attend university.[33]

What then of the situation and status of the Cornish language in Cornwall? The modern revival dates from the publication of Henry Jenner's 'Handbook of the Cornish Language' in 1904, initially with a group of enthusiasts who began learning the language, and resulting in the formation of the Cornish Gorsedh in 1928 and many Old Cornwall Societies.[34] As the century progressed, magazines entirely written in Cornish, such as Kernow in the 1930s, and An Lef Kernewek from the 1950s, were produced. These magazines, with both articles and stories, as well as excerpts from medieval literature, gave people something to read and an incentive for learning. Classes were established in both Cornwall and London, and key figures of the revival such as Robert Morton Nance and ASD Smith began producing teaching materials.[35] In 1967 the Cornish Language Board was established.[36] This undertook the examination of Cornish, initially at three levels, with the highest examining candidates at a level just above the old O Level.[37] By the 1980s there were around 20 adult education classes in Cornwall, the correspondence course Kernewek Dre Lyther had been set up, and exam results showed increasing numbers of proficient speakers, in

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[30] Tony Crowley. (2006). 'The Political Production of a Language: The Case of Ulster-Scots', *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 16. 1, (2006), 23-35 (p.28).

[31] Crowley, *Politics, and the States,* p.346.

[32] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/unionists-getting-animated-over-their-love-for-the-irish-language-39527418.html?fbclid=IwAR0whYLZh6dFXCV2AWArd4OV2bAt1Q9gqmelj05cTqeuLIOv8ffyDB4rUjY> [Accessed 26/09/2020].

[33] <https://www.community-relations.org.uk/news-centre/turas-bursary-scheme-8-people-now-attending-university> [accessed 26/9/2020].

[34] Peter Berresford Ellis. *The Cornish Language and its Literature.* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1974), p. 153.

[35] Harris, *Cornish History*, p. 42.

[36] Sayers, *Cornish Language*, p.7.

[37] Government Office for the South West, *Cornish Language Study,* (London, Government publications, 2000), p.42.

1989 this scheme was extended to a 4th grade and by 2000, the number of classes had risen to 36.[38] In 2019 a total of 82 candidates, from evening classes and the correspondence course, took these examinations across the four grades.[39]

Certain families involved in the language movement brought up their children speaking Cornish at home, however, there has not been the momentum within the educational establishment to support these initiatives. In 1979 the organisation Dalleth was founded to support such efforts, and the six families known at the time who were bringing up their children as bilingual, and in 1980 a children's magazine, Len ha Lyw was introduced.[40] Eventually, the Movyans Skolyow Meythrin, Nursery School movement established the Skol dy-Sadorn Kernewek at Cornwall College in Pool in 2010, providing a Saturday morning session for both children aged 2-5 and child-based Cornish lessons for parents. In 2017 the Skol Veythrin Karenza became a Ofsted-registered fully Cornish-medium day care centre for children up to 8, and a new setting was due to open at Easter this year.[41]

Before the 1980s, Cornish was reported to be taught in a handful of schools. The 1984 state of the language report found it was being taught in 7 primary, and 2 secondary schools.[42] With the introduction of the National Curriculum, any Cornish language provision was confined to lunchtime and after school clubs, and reliant on either volunteer provision, or a keen teacher who was either able to speak Cornish, or use those resources available. The Cornish Language Partnership, MAGA sent three language learning packs to all primary schools across Cornwall, and in 2012, their two part-time Education Officers worked with around twenty schools across Cornwall.[43] MAGA also delivered training on Cornish to teachers, providing teaching materials and some taster sessions, usually in the form of workshops. Since 2016, Golden Tree has been contracted to develop and support the teaching, learning and use of Cornish. Their task was to embed Cornish as a modern language across a core group of primary schools, rising from 5 to 50 within a five-year period.[44] In 2018 this programme was run at 15 schools in Penzance and Liskeard. However, for Cornish to succeed at primary level it does need both the support of Headteachers and a teacher who is either able to speak Cornish, or able to run the sessions. As yet, Cornish does not have enough of a stronghold within the primary system in Cornwall either within curriculum time, or as part of a club, but this is due to inadequate provision in terms of manpower, and as school staff become more willing and able to deliver the language, and less reliant on outside providers this should continue to grow. A key marker as to the success of Cornish in primary schools will be the acceptance of Cornish as a

[38] Ibid. p.44.

[39] Kesva an Taves Kernewek, *Derivas Blydhenyek 2019/ Annual Report 2019.* (Truro: Kesva an Taves Kernewek, 2020), p. 9.

[40] Government Office for the South West, *Cornish Language*, p.21.

[41] Esther Johns. Personal correspondence, (16th April 2020).

[42] Government Office for the South West, *Cornish Language*, p.44.

[43] Sayers, *Cornish Language*, p. 11.

[44] Ibid. p. 19.

foreign language in terms of adherence to the National Curriculum as "Teaching may be of any modern or ancient foreign language.[45]"

It was possible to study Cornish to GCSE until 1996, when a total of 42 candidates took the examination, however the examination was no longer commercially viable and it was scrapped.[46] In 2000 Cornish was being taught at 4 secondary schools as part of a club,[47] but as with the primary curriculum, finding space for Cornish within the secondary curriculum is all but impossible. The teaching of a modern foreign language is compulsory to the age of 14, with the proviso that this provide the basis for further study.[48] How, therefore, do we define Cornish within these parameters? The provision of Cornish at secondary level would also require a vast increase in levels of resources and teacher training, both of which are currently heavily reliant on the voluntary sector within Cornish adult education.[49] For Cornish to succeed within the state education system, it still requires status, a place within the school day, properly resourced and paid peripatetic teachers, or resources and retraining for existing teachers within schools.

Apart from adult education, the areas in which Cornish is showing a growth in use are cultural. One of the means by which the Cornish language has been widely disseminated has been through song, with singers such as Brenda Wootton, and more recently, Gwenno, singing in Cornish. There is a flourishing folk music scene which uses the language and many choirs also sing both secular and sacred songs translated into Cornish.

Public worship has taken place in Cornish annually since 1933 and the first wedding to take place in Cornish occurred in 1964. In the 1970s an advisory board was established by the Bishop of Truro and services now take place regularly in Cornish, in both Truro cathedral and many other churches.[50] A project to translate the Bible into Cornish finally finished in 2018 and it is now available as an app.

Cornish is supported by cultural, religious and political organisations based within the county, and there are strong links to organisations within the other Celtic nations. Cornwall plays a full and active role in the Pan-Celtic Song Competition and the annual Celtic festival held in Lorient. A small number of specialist Cornish language

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[45] Department for Education., *Languages Programme of Study: Key Stage 2. National Curriculum in England.* DFE-00174-2013, p. 2.

[46] Government Office for the South West, *Cornish Language*, p. 46.

[47] Ibid. p. 4.

[48] Department for Education, *Languages Programme of Study: Key Stage 3. National Curriculum in England.* DFE-00195-2013, p. 1.

[49] Mark Trevethan. *Strateji an yeth Kernewek Towl Oberansek 2017/18 – Derivas Penn an vledhen/ Cornish Language Strategy Operational Plan 2017/18 – End of Year Plan.* (Truro: Cornwall County Council, 2018), p. 4.

[50] Government Office for the South West, *Cornish Language*, p. 55.

bookshops have been established in the county. An Gannas, a monthly magazine has been in continuous print since 1976, increasing numbers of novels are not only translated into Cornish, but written in Cornish too, and Cornish is becoming more of a presence in other media. In 1989, Rod Lyon began broadcasting a programme called Crawder Crawn on BBC Radio Cornwall, and in 2000 he began a weekly news bulletin in Cornish which continues to this day.[51] Nowodhow an Seythen started in 2007, and in 2008 became Radyo an Gernewegva, a weekly programme of music and conversation entirely in Cornish broadcast online. This was joined by Pellwolok an Gernewegva in 2016, and a monthly programme, An Mis began in 2017. This has been, in part, maintained through crowd funding.[52] One area of visible growth in the use of Cornish has been businesses using Cornish in their signage and some branch names, including large chains such as Asda, Tesco, and Wetherspoons, as well as many local businesses.[53] In 2016 the ice cream company Kelly's launched the first national television advert in Cornish.

Where Cornwall does struggle is in funding for the language. A small amount of money was available during the 1990s from European Cultural funding sources, but these often-required collaborations across member states, and the Cornish language did not have enough critical mass at that time to truly benefit from these schemes. In 2000, Council funding for Cornish was £5000.[54]

Between 2010 and 2015, the coalition government gave around £120,000 per year for the development and promotion of Cornish. Since then, Cornwall Council has spent £150,000 each year on the language, and in November 2016, it was confirmed that Cornish was now the responsibility of Cornwall Council and the Cornish Historic Environment Forum.[55] This was, however, to change once more when £150,000 of government funding was granted for Cornish in the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

One of the ways in which languages can be preserved is through creating new uses for the language, (or continuing to be creative in the language), as we are seeing in Northern Ireland. By involving people in the development of a new corpus of literature it gives them ownership of and a sense of value in their particular linguistic culture. The technology available to us in the twenty-first century means that the production of books, newspapers and websites is both low-cost and democratic.

One of the biggest problems facing those seeking to revive a language is a lack of appropriate teaching materials and qualified teachers, as we have seen was the case in Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century. This necessitates the provision of a wide variety of language materials, the coinage of new vocabulary and training programmes for teachers. A lack of education in any language makes maintaining its use difficult, both on a personal and collective level, and the push for Irish medium education in Northern Ireland is one of the principal factors in the growth of the language there. Learning a language solely through the medium of grammar books

[51] Rod Lyon. *Personal Correspondence*. (16th April 2020).
[52] Matthew Clarke. *Personal Correspondence*. (16th April 2020).
[53] Sayers, *Cornish Language*, p. 25.

[54] Government Office for the South West, *Cornish Language*, p. 56.

[55] Sayers, *Cornish Language*, p. 9.

and dictionaries only gives an artificial flavour of the range of use in a particular language, therefore we should seek to provide as diverse a range of education, and educational materials, as possible to preserve the language as a living being, fit for purpose in our everyday lives and to better reflect the purposes for which it was originally used.

What, therefore, does this mean for language revival movements, such as that in Cornwall? It can be a daunting task. Given any lack of appropriate resources, setting realistic priorities has to be of the highest importance. Inevitably this necessitates the involvement of small, voluntary groups working at a very local level, rather than any form of national agency or network. By concentrating, in the first instance, on community-led and financed voluntary efforts, a minority can control the language and its use far more easily, and, with the aim of achieving small, incremental goals, realise far more than the imposition of a top down policy requiring success in larger, more unrealistic measures of success. That does not mean state aid, especially financial, should be avoided but it normally comes with a price, namely undermining a minority population's responsibility for, and right to control the language. Requests for bilingual education upset the status quo after all, and schemes such as these often attract criticism if financed by majority taxes.

The most important marker of success in judging language revival, when it is being carried out from a bottom up position, is to look back at and take account of the starting position of the language when revival began. Language diversity and preservation should not hark back to an idealised past, but always be aiming forward, promoting a sustainable, appropriate and empowering development of the language. Languages have always coexisted, and multilingualism can add to strong local identities.

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