

THE PRESENT LANGUAGE COMMUNITY

The present language community is described in this section: ability in, and use of, Irish as well as public attitudes towards the language and towards State efforts on its behalf. Particular attention is given to the Gaeltacht. Current challenges are included.

TERRITORIALITY AND PERSONALITY

DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS

The majority of Irish speakers using the language on a daily basis in community are located in the *Gaeltacht* (fairly peripheral) regions or in urban clusters. Outmigration and return migration have been constant features of *Gaeltacht* life as Ireland's economic fortunes ebb and flow. Speakers often return with English speaking spouses and children. The school system is too often without the necessary resources to cope with the resultant highly complex classroom situation. State services had in the past rarely been provided in Irish as several surveys have revealed. Apart from a very small number of very young children (first born usually), for a brief period of time, Irish speakers, wherever they reside, are usually bilingual Irish-English.

Outside the *Gaeltacht*, Irish may be the native or the chosen language of daily speakers mostly dispersed throughout the population. Individual islands in a sea of English, some are now calling for their efforts to be recognised in the same fashion as are those of the *Gaeltacht* population, through grant schemes for families. The State, however, does support a range of voluntary organisations that provide various services.

ABILITY IN IRISH

NUMBERS OF SPEAKERS

Modern Irish is spoken as a language of lesser use than English throughout Ireland. In the Constitution of Ireland (1937), Article 8.1 avers that 'the Irish language as the national language is the first official language'.

Table 2.1 shows the changes over the years in the census in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) in the percentage of the total population returned as having competence in Irish. These returns are, of course, self-report and may be more indicative of attitude than of actual competence, or of degrees of competence. The definition of *Gaeilgeoir* or Irish speaker suggested by the Minister with responsibility for the language, in advance of Census 2006, is a person who speaks Irish every day. Some discussion of the latest censuses may help to give more clarification of the situation as well as provide the contemporary linguistic context for any official initiatives on language planning and subsequent policies.

In all censuses, the figures for Irish speakers over the age of three constitute largely second language speakers generated by the school system, some individuals outside the *Gaeltacht* who were either native speakers or had made Irish their chosen language, and those *Gaeltacht* residents who were Irish speakers. More women than men are speakers and numbers are highest in the school-going population, even in *Gaeltacht* areas.

The 1996 returns represented 1.43 million persons over the age of 3, including 61,000 *Gaeltacht* residents who were Irish speakers. Of the total *Gaeltacht* population, Irish speakers constituted 76.3% while the proportion was 42.7% for non-*Gaeltacht* areas. Almost 22,000 people in *Gaeltacht* regions were non-Irish speakers or did not state whether they were or not. In fact almost 19,000 *Gaeltacht* residents said they were non-Irish speakers. A worrying figure for transmission at that time was the low 50.9% of the 3-4 year old cohort considered Irish speakers in the *Gaeltacht*.

The April 2002 returns showed the total population of the State (Republic of Ireland) at 3,917,203 persons, its highest level since 1871, due in part to the economic success of the so-called Celtic Tiger. The total 8% increase of over 290,000 persons in the six years since the 1996 Census shows to some degree in every age group. It includes returning Irish emigrants, foreign workers and students, as well as asylum seekers. While the movement of both Irish and foreign nationals in and out of Ireland for varying periods of time had become much more diversified than previously estimated, some of the net results of the population increase have consequences for language policy. Over two million people were living in the eastern coast province of Leinster where the population has been consistently on the rise with accompanying falls in the other three provinces. Up to 40% of the population was living in the commuter belt of the greater Dublin, or capital, area. The rural population represented only 40% of the total with the urban population at 60% – almost the opposite of the situation pertaining in 1926. The average age had risen to 35. Of the total population, 5.8% reported as being non-nationals at that time. This included 2.7% (248,500 persons) who came from Northern Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland. The remaining 3.1% come from over 30 states in Europe as well as from the USA, Africa, Asia, South America, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

While the figure for Irish speakers at 1.57 million in 2002 represented an increase in actual numbers from the 1.43 million of the 1996 Census, it also showed a slight percentage drop from 43.5% to 42.85% (both percentages excluding those respondents not stating) which may be partially explained at least by immigration factors. There are other items of interest for language policies arising from the 2002 Census. The *Gaeltacht* speakers may account for Galway County returning the highest proportion of persons self-reporting as being able to speak Irish, 52.7%. In comparison, the capital city of Dublin figure was disconcertingly low at 34.6%. The child-bearing age group 25-44 had become ethnically and linguistically more diverse with 9.17% returning as non-Irish nationals, not of Irish or dual Irish/other nationality. This is almost a 1 in 10 ratio. This may also account for the fact that competence in Irish was reported by 37.3% of the age group 25-44, below the 2002 national average of 42.85%. This age group of actual or potential parents is crucial for language transmission to children.

The publication (March 2007) of the principal demographic results of Census 2006 shows largely the same trends. The population is now 4,239,848. Urbanisation continues and the decline of rurality. The average age has risen slightly to 35.1. In the age-group 25-44, the place of birth for 29.8% of the cohort was outside Ireland (the Republic), 303,294 persons of a total 1,017,257. For the same age group, non-Irish nationality was held by 16.6% of the cohort. Ability to speak Irish in this age group has then fallen to 35.3.

Irish speakers, while increasing in actual numbers to 1.66 million, have declined slightly in terms of percentage. However, this decline is less than would have been anticipated given the large increase from 5.8% to 10% of non-Irish nationals in the population, 420,000 persons. In addition, while the average number of children per woman continues to decline and families are getting smaller, there is a welcome rise in the percentages of the 3-4 year old cohort returning with Irish, both in the *Gaeltacht* and in the State overall.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSES, OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS AND IRISH IN CENSUSES 2002 AND 2006

Of the socio-economic class categories in use for purposes of the 2002 Census, 54.9% of professional workers in category 1 (professional workers) reported as having competence in Irish in the State as a whole, while the figure was 28.3% for category 6 (unskilled). These were again the highest and lowest returns for ability in Irish (in the State) in 2006. The distribution was more even across these six social categories in the *Gaeltacht* in both censuses but with a slight change in the workers reporting the lowest percentage in 2006 and an increase to 71.7% in the professionals reporting ability in Irish.

Census 2002 and 2006: Social class and ability in Irish

Social Class Number & Category		State	
		2002	2006
(Highest)	1. Professionals	54.9%	54.9%
(Lowest)	6. Unskilled	28.3	25.1%

Social Class Number & Category		<i>Gaeltacht</i>	
		2002	2006
(Highest)	2. Managerial/technical	75.7%	75.4%
(Lowest)	6. Professionals	69.3%	
(Lowest)	4. Skilled Manual		68%

The tables below give the percentages of Irish speakers across various occupations in ranked order.

Census 2002 and 2006: **Irish Speakers as % of Total in Certain Occupational Groups: State**

Population Over 15 years

Census 2002		Census 2006	
Group		Group	
Teachers	79.3%	Teachers	77.9%
<i>Garda Síochána</i> (Police)	76.6%	<i>Garda Síochána</i> (Police)	74.1%
Religious	65.0%	Religious	58.8%
Scientific/technical	50.6%	Business/commerce	54.1%
Business/commerce	54.9%	Central/Local Government	54.0%
Central/Local Government	57.1%	Scientific/technical	48.4%

Census 2002 and 2006: **Irish Speakers as % of Total in Certain Occupational Groups: Gaeltacht**

Population Over 15 years

Census 2002		Census 2006	
Group		Group	
Teachers	90.0%	Teachers	88.3%
Religious	81.2%	<i>Garda Síochána</i> (Police)	86.3%
<i>Garda Síochána</i> (Police)	87.7%	Farming/ Fishing/ Forestry	76.2%
Farming/ Fishing/ Forestry	78.6%	Central/Local Government	76.1%
Central/Local Government	77.2%	Religious	70.4%
Army Occupations	76.1%	Business/commerce	70.2%

In many occupations, the proportion of females reporting ability in Irish was higher than that of males. The lowest returns for ability in Irish in 2006 were 21% in the State for Food/Drink/Tobacco workers, which may reflect the effects of immigration, and in Personal Service/Childcare workers in the *Gaeltacht* at 57.5%, a finding which could have repercussions for language acquisition and maintenance in childcare facilities. The net results of all these population changes and trends are of consequence for language policy.

GAELTACHT 1996 – 2006

The decline of 3.7% reported between 1996 and 2002 in Irish speakers over 3 years of age in *Gaeltacht* areas was of concern. Of the total *Gaeltacht* population, Irish speakers constituted 72.6% in 2002, down from 76.3% in 1996. The decline was recorded for every *Gaeltacht* area except the small Meath *Gaeltacht*, which is an example of reverse colonisation carried out in the 1930s. Here the proportion of speakers moved marginally upwards from 59.5% (1996) to 60.6% (2002). The highest proportion of speakers was still found in the other small *Gaeltacht* in Cork County, at 83.1% which showed a small decrease of 0.6% since 1996. The Waterford and Kerry County *Gaeltacht* regions showed the most significant decreases of 8.8% and 6.1% respectively in 2002. It may, perhaps, be of some note that both these *Gaeltacht* areas had been examples of unease over housing issues, with regard to new schemes in the Ring area of Waterford and incomers to the traditional *Dún Chaoin* (Dunquin) area in Kerry, where the population rose by 20% between the censuses (1996 and 2002) and there is a high proportion of holiday homes. Rising unemployment rates during the intercensal period in certain *Gaeltacht* pockets, from 26% to 37%, may also have been an issue.

By 2006, the decline had slowed somewhat from 72.6 to 70.8% but is shown in all *Gaeltacht* areas except the small Meath and Waterford regions despite an overall increase in the total *Gaeltacht* population. However, that 29.2% (or 26,539 persons) of the *Gaeltacht* population returned as non-Irish speakers is disconcerting as is the 1,058 persons who did not state. A cause of concern for ongoing transmission of the language are the low percentages of the 3–4 year old cohort considered Irish speakers in the *Gaeltacht*. However, this percentage has recovered slightly in 2006 and has risen outside the *Gaeltacht*. These are significant factors, even if attributable to institutions outside the family, in view of family-oriented policies being currently implemented in the *Gaeltacht* and possible future attitudes, ability and use patterns. Overall, however, the *Gaeltacht* community may, as is the case in the rest of the State, be moving towards a situation where

younger speakers are school rather than home generated.

A language policy in the *Gaeltacht* for the 1,161 non-Irish speakers in the 3–4 age group, as well as for the 151 children for whom no return was made, or a total of 1,312 children, would appear to be a policy concern that need not necessarily entail inordinate financial outlay.

SUMMARY ON ABILITY: CENSUSES 1851–2006

The salient difference between 1851 and the more recent returns lies in the fact that the majority of speakers were native speakers in 1851 while the later speakers constitute largely secondary bilinguals, a significant number of whom are school generated. The 1851 Census included the six counties of what was to become Northern Ireland.

Summary on ability by % of total population

Year	1851	1926	1961	1971	1981	1986	1991	1996	2002	2006
%	29.1%	18.3%	27.2%	28.3%	31.6%	31.1%	32.5%	43.5%	42.8%	41.9%

USE OF IRISH

CHANGES IN COMPETENCE

The apparently enormous jump from 1991 (32.5%) to 1996 (43.5%) is partially explained by a change in the census question used in the Republic. The question is now more directly formulated and also seeks information on aspects of use. Other contributing factors may include significant changes in education, e.g. increased numbers of Irish-medium playgroups and schools; new communicative learner-friendly curricula drawing on contemporary authentic resources and which include more focused comprehensive skills (aural and reading); new Irish-medium courses at third level; more tolerant societal attitudes. The Census question was further refined in 2006 to take account of users within and outside the education system. Demographic changes and migration patterns may have influenced the slight drop in the intercensal periods between 1996 and 2002 (42.8%) and again between 2002 and 2006 (41.9%). Nevertheless, general analysis of the periods reveals some trends of interest to language planners, particularly on issues of translation of competence into communicative use.

CENSUS 1996: USE OF IRISH

Use and the frequency of use were recorded for the first time in the 1996 Census although occasions of use are not recorded. As expected, competence is far higher than use of that competence as reported in all censuses, 1996, 2002 and 2006. In 1996, only a quarter of the 1.43 million with competence actually used Irish on a daily basis and almost 80% of these were in the school-going population. Up to two thirds of the 1.43 million returned as competent either never used Irish or used it infrequently. Over half of the non-users were in the crucial age group 20–44, never providing possible models for a coming generation. More crucially, analysis of Census 1996 showed that under 3% of the adult population in the State, 70,950 people, said they used the language on a daily basis. Of this figure, almost 21,000 lived in *Gaeltacht* areas, leaving approximately 50,000 daily users in the rest of the State.

CENSUS 2002: USE OF IRISH

The overall results from Census 2002 showed daily use of Irish in the State by 9.2% of the population over 3 years, with additional occasional use by 16%, figures largely due to the school-going age groups. Of the 1.57 million reporting competence, just over a fifth (339,541 persons) used Irish on a daily basis, and over three quarters of these daily users, 76.78%, were in the school going population of the 5–19 age groups. In addition, almost 80% (78.38%) of the 1.57 million returning with competence either never used Irish, used it infrequently, or did not state. Almost 45.6% of these largely non-users were in the age group 20–44, vital to family transmission. Just under half a million persons in the State (491,014), or 13% of the population over 3 years of age, either never used their competence in Irish or did not state.

Overall then, while clearly the actual numbers of persons reporting as having Irish have increased, as has the population in general, the actual percentage has fallen slightly since 1996 as has actual use of competence in the language, in percentage terms. An analysis from GMIT (Galway-Mayo Institute

of Technology) takes the adult population to be all those in the age groups over 19. Taking this measure, which omits the school going cohorts, the figure for those reporting competence who actually used the language on a daily basis was 7.4% of all users or 72,834 persons. This means that under 3% of adults in the State used Irish on a daily basis. The figure falls to under 2% or 52,111 persons, in the non-*Gaeltacht* sector. Nevertheless, although these slight percentage falls on the 1996 returns are apparent, the actual numbers of daily adult users have risen a little from the 70,950 of 1996 to the 72,834 of 2002.

The returns for the schoolgoing population are, nevertheless, an impressive endorsement of the State's education policy. In addition, they provide a very sound basis for policies which extend both competence to use, and school context to the extra-school social environment. Further challenges for language planning lie firstly in providing contexts of use for those with ability in Irish who do not have opportunities to put that ability to use and secondly in raising ability levels further.

Table 2.2 (a)–(e) shows the degree of use and non-use in Census 2002, among those reporting competence in Irish, in various locations across the State. The towns are chosen at random from a possible list of those with some local linguistic support feature. Schoolgoers are included in these users. The changes are interesting when the outer suburbs are added to the city administrative area [Table 2.2 (d)] and show the possibilities for a language policy based on specific segments of city conurbation.

A possible inference from these statistics is the difference made to the level of use by the presence of some mechanism or structure that is language supportive, such as an all-Irish school, a local project or scheme, or an institution such as university or training academy for official personnel. These supports appear to be some answer to the rather large problem of non-utilised competence in Irish. It is of note that Irish speakers constitute almost 45% of these towns of various sizes, chosen more or less at random, but having some form of support, and a fifth of those speakers use the language daily, even if in an institutionalised setting. This surpassed the national average of 42.8% speakers. This provides some evidence of the success of official and voluntary support. Any forms of language planning must take issues such as these into account.

USE OF IRISH AMONG PRESCHOOL CHILDREN 2002

Results from the 2002 Census show that up to 36.8% (903 children) of preschool children in the *Gaeltacht* spoke Irish daily while almost 4.7% (5,088 children) of this cohort did so outside the *Gaeltacht*. This, of course, represents no more than 5.4% overall of the total cohort. Nevertheless, it is a small increase from 3.4% (861 children) and 4.0% (3,951 children) respectively in 1996 and could be a good augur for the future if maintained and increased since it reflects intergenerational transmission of the language to some extent. Interestingly, if the figures for those not stating in the cohort in the State as a whole are excepted, 59% of 3-4 year olds returned as Irish speakers were daily users. It is not known whether these daily speakers used Irish in the home, in an Irish-medium playgroup (*Naíonra*), or in both.

CHANGES IN THE INTERCENSAL PERIOD 2002–2006

IMMIGRATION

Three years after the 2002 census, by April 2005, the Central Statistics Office estimated that the population in the Republic had reached 4.13 million, going over the four million figure for the first time since the 1871 census. The increase arose from an increasing birth rate and immigration figures. The current series of annual migration estimates, comprising emigration and immigration data, began in 1987. The CSO recorded that the estimated immigration figure for the twelve months to April 2005 stood at 70,000, the highest since 1987, while the emigration figure at 16,600 was at its lowest. Public immigration issues were largely concerned with two categories of immigrants: those from the EU accession countries and those from non-EU states, excluding the USA.

IMMIGRANT CATEGORIES

The immigration data for 2005 reflect the result of the new accessions to the EU of May 2004, almost 38% of the total coming from these countries: 17% of immigrants coming from Poland and 9% from Lithuania. The table shows the change from 2000 to 2005. For 2000, immigrants from the 10 accession countries are included in the column 'rest of the world'. Percentages are given in brackets for 2005.

Immigrants: Country of Origin and Number of Persons

Year	2000	2005
UK	20,800	13,800 (19.7%)
EU (other 14)	11,700	8,900 (12.7%)
EU (new 10)	—	26,200 (37.4%)
USA	5,500	4,300 (6.1%)
Rest of World	14,500	16,800 (24%)
Total	52,600	70,000

In all years from 2000 to 2005, the majority of the total number of immigrants were aged between 15 and 44 with the largest increase in 2005: 19,700 being in the age group 15 – 24 and 37,500 in the age group 25 – 44, a total of 57,200 (or almost 82%) out of the total 70,000. Overall there were more males than females among the incomers and the number of males increased more than the number of females.

While the accession states immigrants were predominantly economic immigrants, the category ‘rest of the world’ will include asylum seekers and refugees. The table shows the changes in absolute numbers in this category during the period 2000 to 2005.

Immigrants: ‘Rest of the World’ category

Year	Number of Persons
2000	14,500
2001	21,500
2002	29,900
2003	22,500
2004	19,700
2005	16,800

The 2005 figure was moving towards half that of 2002 at 56%. This was reflected in the planned closure of many centres set up for asylum seekers. Such closures are also a sign of the numbers of asylum seekers being allowed to remain in the state as a result of having Irish-born children, a provision in place since late 2004 or of their moving to refugee status which allows them to take up employment.

The other category of interest is that of ‘returning Irish’ as a percentage, although reducing, of total immigration as shown below. A United Nations report on international migration (June 2006), overseen by a former Irish attorney general and EU Commissioner, refers to Ireland as a profitable example of outward and inward migration, and regards the influx of returning Irish emigrants, drawn by Ireland’s success, as a significant factor in the continuing revitalisation of the economy, as were the remittances sent home to Ireland in a previous period of Irish history.

Immigrants: ‘Returning Irish’ category

Year	Percentage of total immigration
2000	47%
2001	44.5%
2002	40.3%
2003	34.6%
2004	33.7%
2005	27.1%

Estimated figures from the Department of Foreign Affairs suggested that from three quarters to a million Irish born persons currently live abroad, the majority in the UK and in the USA. Because of the ‘illegals’ in the USA, it is difficult to quantify precise numbers. There are also substantial numbers of Irish in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and EU states. These will be discussed further in the section on the Diaspora.

With regard to language, if it is assumed that the majority of immigrants from the UK and USA probably have English, and that some of these are returning Irish people with Irish also, it would

appear that perhaps 4% of the population may be in the non-English speaking group. Even if incomers previous to 2000 are included, as well as the families and children of immigrants either following the breadwinner or being born here, the percentage is still low and capable of being managed to the advantage of the immigrants and the host country, Ireland. The *Taoiseach* put the number at 5% when introducing the *National Plan on Racism and Interculturalism* (January 2005). There was also, however, evidence, of increasing numbers arriving. In the five years to 2006, it was reported that a total of 750,000 Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSN) were issued to immigrants from all categories. There is no precise information, however, on whether all these stayed in Ireland, or were joined by their families, or were resident only for periods, Summer students being one example. It was generally estimated in 2005 that over 400,000, or almost one in ten, of the population had been born outside Ireland. This was verified at 420,000 and 10% of the population with the publication of the demographic volume on census returns 2006. If economic growth continues, and some predictions are for fifteen more years at near current levels, it is estimated that the population will grow to 5.25 million of which 1 million will be migrants. Such forecasts are, of course, contingent on many internal and external factors. They still carry linguistic implications, however.

CONSEQUENCES OF IMMIGRATION

Policies and structures

The consequences have been at several levels of this influx of people of differing ethnic, linguistic and religious background into a country where emigration had long been the norm in economically worse off times. In practical terms, it has resulted in state arrangements on relatively open borders, a new examination of the concept of citizenship, social welfare supports including child support as directed by the EU for children not resident in the state for those entitled, as well as the establishment of a series of official and voluntary support agencies: the Reception and Integration Agency; the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism; the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland; the Immigrant Council of Ireland; the Irish Refugee Council; Integrate Ireland Language and Training; Sport against Racism. The Immigration Control Platform was also formed. The newly inaugurated Intercultural Week covers the whole island, North and South.

In terms of state philosophy and policy, the *Taoiseach* announced at the beginning of 2005 the establishment of the First National Action Plan on Racism, entitled *Planning for Diversity*, with an annual budget of one million euro and a monitoring committee. Non-nationals, a term derided as not being inclusive although preferable to the legal usage 'aliens', at that date comprised 5% of the population, in the estimation of the *Taoiseach*. Available information in 2007 placed that figure at 10% of the growing population of the Republic. This is considered too conservative an estimate. Some commentators draw a distinction between *migrants* who are transitory visitors and *immigrants* who intend to settle down. Consultation began in September 2006 on the new comprehensive Immigration Bill to encompass new immigrants, residence and protection. It is now promised for 2008.

Terms such as *multicultural society* and *pluralism* abound in public discourse, together with integration and the non-acceptable *assimilation*, although without any clearly applicable and easily accessible explanation in the Irish context. Clearly, these concepts need not necessarily possess generally accepted and common interpretation. Official publications from the Department of Education and Science (DES) and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) use the term *intercultural*. Both the *Taoiseach* and a church leader have spoken publicly of the possible dangers of *multiculturalism* if, in practice, it means services in immigrant languages which could mitigate against integration into the host society and be a possible cause of problems in this or the next generation, as has happened in the UK and in France. Whether like is being compared with like in this latter instance is not entirely clear.

Education

In structural terms, the addition to the population of over 170 different nationalities has provided a challenge to the education system. The DES calculate that there are now 18,000 pupils at primary level and at least 8,000 at second level education for whom English is not their first language. The 2006 IRAAL (Irish Association for Applied Linguistics) Conference was told that 167 foreign languages are now used in Ireland. The Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association, in a comment

(June 2006) on the tender for interpreting sought by the Courts Service, pointed out the task of supplying services in 210 languages and dialects overall across the country. The arguments in relation to education centre on two issues: competence in English; acceptance of a set of common values. The psychological and adjustment problems of incoming immigrant children have not reached debate on the educational agenda.

The following table shows recent estimates of certain ethnic or language groups in the Republic followed by the figures reported in the 2006 census (persons over 3 years of age). No small discrepancies are apparent, an indication of the difficulties in providing appropriate provision.

Ethnic/language groups in the Republic: Estimated and Reported Numbers (by place of birth)

	Estimated 2005	Reported Census 2006
Poland	150,000	63,090
China	60,000	11,218
Lithuania	45,000	24,808
Latvia	30,000	13,999
Nigeria	28,000	16,677
Romania	5,000	8,566
Philippines	5,000	9,644
Pakistan	4,500	5,850

The three leading religious affiliations from census 2006 are as follows.

Census 2006: Religious Affiliation

Roman Catholic	3,681,446
The Anglican Communion	125,585
Muslim (Islamic)	32,539

There were also usually resident in Ireland on census night 2006 persons born in Northern Ireland (50,172), in England and Wales (204,746), in Scotland (16,863) and in the United States of America (USA), 25,181.

The language support system for non-English speaking students had been one language assistant teacher to every 14 pupils but a maximum of two per school. Support is provided for a maximum of two years. In February 2007, the Minister for Education announced that the two year two teacher maximum would no longer apply. Grants are also provided to schools seeking part-time language teachers. The number of teachers allocated has been increased. In early 2007, a DES statement gave these figures.

Language Support for non-English Speakers in Education

Year	Language Teachers	Schools Grant-Aided	Total
2001/02	149 (p); 113 (pp)		262
2005/06	562 (p); 262 (pp)	409	824
2006/07	879 (p); 371 (pp)		1,250

(p) denotes primary school

(pp) denotes postprimary school

It is intended to have an additional 350 extra teachers in place over the next two years to 2009. A language assessment kit will be provided to every school to assess the language capacity of children for whom English is not their first language. The kit is being prepared by Integrate Ireland Language and Training, a group which already provides English language courses for immigrants and training for teachers.

One primary school in the Dublin area has over 40 nationalities in its classes. Another caters for children from 14 different countries. The percentage of foreign-born students tends to be higher in the Infant classes, where it may reach over 40% in some schools. Since Government policy had been to disperse immigrants around the state, the majority of primary schools especially will have immigrant pupils to some degree. The Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO), the National Council for

Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), Crosscare of the Dioceses of Dublin and Integrate Ireland Language and Training have endeavoured to provide guidelines and materials. Teacher training is slowly catching up.

In the education sector, the Muslim National School was set up in 1990 and always has a waiting list for entry. The established curriculum is followed. Three languages are studied, Arabic, Irish and English. Of the 20,000 Muslims in Ireland countrywide, the majority regard themselves as Irish Muslims. There are French, German and Spanish-medium schools in the Dublin area which also include Irish on the curriculum. A DVD for parents on the primary school curriculum has been published in English, Irish, French, Lithuanian and Polish.

Two research projects were announced in early 2007. Trinity College Dublin (TCD) initiated a €6 million four year study of immigrants and Irish people in schools and in the work place, with emphasis on deprived areas. A University College Dublin (UCD) two year project will examine the issue of migration and citizenship.

It is to be noted that the arrangements for pupils with English as first language in *Gaeltacht* or Irish-medium schools bear no comparison to these arrangements for English. There is a view that had the same level of official interest been shown, and a fraction of the investment been made, for the educational and linguistic needs of the children of returning emigrants in *Gaeltacht* schools, their problems today might be more easily surmountable. Irish language reception classes for immigrants are now being called for in the *Gaeltacht*.

Employment

In employment terms, this relatively new phenomenon has led to a situation where, on the one hand, skills needed for the economy have been provided, particularly in the construction, health, hotel and tourist industries but, on the other hand, has provided some argument on the possible *displacement* of Irish workers. However, consensus is growing among economists that, although often over-qualified for the unskilled jobs they are initially willing to undertake, immigrant workers are not yet displacing Irish workers in these jobs as Irish workers are not losing jobs as a result. This, however, is contingent on the present fairly favourable economic climate continuing. There are currently over two million of the population in employment for the first time in the history of the State. The construction industry is a significant part and is the highest employer of non-nationals, a sector now (late 2007) suffering a degree of decline. Ironically, the number of non-nationals buying their own accommodation was part of the building boom. Such outlay is probably indicative also of an intention to remain in Ireland for at least a relatively stable period. Public posters to combat racism informed the public that there were 30,000 people from all over the world working in the hospitality sector; 20,000 people working in the health sector and 6,000 in education. In addition, the 15,000 working immigrants who have joined unions are helping to make the union voice more significant. It is estimated that currently up to 8/9% of the work force are non-nationals.

The European Commission declared 2006 the *European Year of Workers' Mobility*. However, studies have shown that a mere 2% of Europeans of working age are currently resident in a state other than their own, lack of languages proving one barrier. Borders closed to workers from the new states is another obstacle. Indeed, at the time of accession in 2004, only Ireland and the UK did not seek derogation for a period up to seven years on the right in principle of all EU citizens to work in any of the existing fifteen states. Instead a less restrictive policy was introduced in Ireland: workers from accession states were required to register for work on arrival and, initially, could not receive social benefits for the first two years of residence. Certain restrictions were put in place, however, in advance of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in January 2007.

The Irish topped a recent *Eurobarometer* poll, 68% being enthusiastic about working outside of Ireland. However, no more than 25% would actually seek work abroad if unemployed at home. In the same ambiguous vein, a public outcry took place in solidarity with certain categories of deportees, mothers and school students, while – on the other hand – immigrant associations cite many examples of overt racial behaviour towards some immigrants. Nevertheless, the 2006 report of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia reported that the Republic was one of the few states found satisfactory at recording racist behaviour.

Economic and linguistic policy

In the absence of clearer data and analyses on the actual numbers of immigrant or non-national workers, the issue of coherent immigration policies is assuming more importance. Economic policy will also require a more planned approach to cater for the needs of the population if numbers continue to increase as estimated particularly since the Irish economy had been growing at such a rate that basic infrastructural needs such as public transport and health services were already under immense pressure. The current (2006 – 2007) ongoing debate on the optimum economic model for Ireland, particularly in view of the developing integration of specific areas of the economy of the Republic and Northern Ireland, has implications for Irish and linguistic-cultural policy in general. On the one hand, language planners would consider that language policy, as an aspect of State policy, cannot be properly developed in isolation from other State policies. On the other hand, different economic policies are based on very different views of social and cultural policy. Laissez-faire and interventionist policies are largely considered antipathetic. In a democracy, paternalism and even neutrally benign attitudes towards groups regarded as minorities may terminate in unacceptable and dangerous forms of ghettoism. Irish, as the historic indigenous and national language, is seen as the right of all citizens, be they actual or potential, and an ensuring State would be expected to provide the required support and access.

The issue of changing attitudes in a changing economic climate could also have an effect on linguistic attitudes. Currently, there appears to be a more tolerant attitude to multilingualism as more and more languages attain visibility in the environment. This has had, to some extent, a beneficial effect on attitudes to the indigenous language, Irish. It has also provided a more concrete context for arguments made by speakers of Irish. However, if speakers of migrant languages became the object of less accepting societal attitudes, in the event of a downturn in the economy, attitudes towards the Irish language also could be negatively affected.

Socio-cultural effects

In socio-cultural terms, the demographic changes have led to a range of ethnic restaurants and shops, media outlets, leisure activities, and liturgy. The Protestant churches have benefited from the immigrants from the continent of Africa and the Catholic church from the Polish and Filipino immigrants. Church services in the languages of the larger immigrant groups are available. The political parties have received new members; the *Taoiseach* addressed *Irish Polonia* on the *Fianna Fáil* website in a Christmas 2007 message to Poles in Ireland, referring to aspects of a shared history. The national broadcaster RTÉ includes programmes by and for immigrants in its schedule. The Irish language community radio, *Raidió na Life*, has a weekly bilingual Polish-Irish programme (2007). Irish classes for immigrants are held in several centres around the country, particularly in the *Conradh na Gaeilge* centre in Galway city. With the support of the immigrant agencies and RTÉ a scheme of awards for initiatives promoting cultural diversity has been organised annually by the monthly periodical *Metro Éireann*, begun in 2002 to cater for the immigrant communities. Since October 2006, it appears weekly. The Irish language drop-in centre in Dublin, *Buail Isteach*, was awarded a *Foras na Gaeilge* award for its integration initiatives (2007). The Minister for Education recently launched the addition of a two page insert devoted to Irish language and culture in *Metro*, subsidised by *Foras na Gaeilge*. This is now a regular page. Some of the content is aimed at immigrant learners of Irish. However, promotional materials for the recent Intercultural Week sponsored by the official organ, the Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, did not include Irish among the languages in which they were printed, due to lack of funding. The Irish Catholic newspaper and some regional newspapers publish inserts or pages or columns in Polish for the local community.

In practical communication terms, the Health and Safety Authority ran a media campaign on safety in the construction industry in Spring 2006 only in Turkish and Polish. The National Safety Council has issued leaflets in nine languages on Safety on the Road and the Law. The Minister for Transport has launched a new road safety leaflet in English, Irish, and eight other languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, and Russian. The Irish Taxation Institute is launching tax guides in Czech, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish and Slovakian. Bank of Ireland has colourful posters announcing *Changing for You* followed by Polish, Russian and Chinese, and ending *We speak your language*. A Spring 2006 initiative on encouraging immigrants to make personal provision for pensions was launched in Arabic, Chinese, French, Polish, Russian and Spanish. The

Census 2006 form, which included a question on ethnicity, was provided in English, Irish and eleven other languages: Arabic, Czech, Chinese, French, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian and Spanish. The census website of the Central Statistics Office carries information in all these languages as well as in Estonian, Hungarian, Slovak, Turkish and the African language Yoruba, largely spoken by Nigerian immigrants.

The results, in April 2005, of an independent human rights audit of *An Garda Síochána*, commissioned by the force's internal Human Rights Working Group, found procedures and operating practices within the force that could lead to institutionalised racism, particularly against Nigerians, Travellers and Muslims. Race and diversity training was recommended for members. A joint course, Diversity Works, has been developed for the police forces in the Republic and in Northern Ireland. However, it does not encompass any linguistic community.

SUMMARY ON IMMIGRATION AND ITS EFFECTS

A changing population has implications for language policy. An understanding of those changes is a prerequisite to developing appropriate policies. Estimates of the total immigrant population varied between 6% and 10% in the intercensal period. While Census 2006 returned 420,000 persons, 10%, this is now in late 2007 considered too low and some commentators place it closer to 13%. High immigrant populations in relatively small town communities will inevitably affect attitudes, ability and use patterns in Irish, initially at any rate. An indication of the extent of immigration is found in the growing number of services, for the Polish community in particular, many established by the community itself. Weekend schools through Polish, funded by the Polish government, for students aged 7–15, teaching subjects as history and geography from the homeland point of view, have been established in Limerick, Waterford, Cork and Cavan. Dublin City University rents accommodation to a Polish third level college which sends lecturers at the weekend to allow Polish immigrants either to continue or commence tertiary education. A Polish magazine produced in Dublin reports 40,000 monthly readers.

The effects of immigration are apparent in social attitudes, in the establishment of new State structures, in education and in employment. The sociocultural changes have resulted in a more linguistically diverse environment. This has had, to some extent, a widening and liberating effect on planning for language, from which Irish has benefited. *Bord Gáis*, for example, the national Gas Board, is now (August, 2007) providing its 24 hour customer telephone service, as well as a series of information leaflets, in five languages, given that 15% of its customers are foreigners: Irish, English, Mandarin Chinese, Polish and Russian. One of the more positive results of this quite new multilingual approach in the context of Ireland is the normalisation effect it is having on the provision of materials in the Irish language, the relative absence of argument in relation to demand, and the gradual acceptance of something other than a general monolingual mentality. However, in relation to some of the initiatives to reach immigrants in their own languages, there is a degree of comment that the same language courtesies are not being extended to speakers of Irish in some of the instances cited. In general, foreign-born immigrants, both children and adults, often at least bilingual on arrival, welcome opportunities to add Irish to their linguistic repertoire.

EFFECTS: ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR AN GARDÁ SÍOCHÁNA AND ARMY

The consequences of these rapid demographic changes for Irish society and for the Irish language have manifested in several ways other than societal attitudes. Communication with and by the State and organs of the State is probably one of the more important, an issue on which speakers of Irish have long campaigned in the case of Irish. However, in late 2004 and again in early 2005, the then Minister for Justice signalled his intention to review all aspects of the entry requirements for recruits to *An Garda Síochána*, including the Irish language requirement of Grade D in Leaving Certificate Ordinary Level Irish, with the intention of having a police force that reflected the cultural diversity of the State and to prevent alienation of the youth of the immigrant communities. For the new recruitment campaign begun on 29 September 2005, the then language requirements were defined as the obtainment in the Leaving Certificate Examination (or similar) of a qualifying grade in two languages, one of which must be English (a grade not lower than D3 at Ordinary Level) or Irish (a grade not lower than C3 at Foundation Level or D3 at another level), plus another language (a grade not lower than D3 at Ordinary Level); in other words applicants were required to have basic competence in

either English or Irish plus an additional language. The Minister had made two commitments in response to criticism of the revised language requirements: that all recruits would have an appropriate level of Irish before qualifying as full members of *An Garda Síochána*; that any citizen who wished to do business through Irish would be accommodated.

Irish language organisations, while welcoming the broadening of the ethnic base of the force, made their views known on the Irish language aspect. *Conradh na Gaeilge* suggested the use of the course, *Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge* (European Certificate in Irish) at appropriate levels, a course then being developed at the National University of Ireland at Maynooth (NUIM). Interestingly, there was also a divergence of views on the language issue within the *Garda* representative associations of differing ranks.

The Irish course that had been followed by entrants to the *Garda* Education College, all of whom would have had some level of Irish from Leaving Certificate, could be taken at Foundation or Higher level. It had been developed to reflect the possible future specific needs of *gardaí* in carrying out their duties with Irish-speaking citizens, whether in the *Gaeltacht* or not. Service in *Gaeltacht* areas carries specific allowances. This established course presupposed some existing knowledge of Irish which successful immigrant entrants could not possess. The Minister with responsibility for the language then suggested to the *Garda* Commissioner that eligible immigrant entrants without Irish could undergo a three month language induction course offsite that would enable them on return to continue studying with their peers on the existing Irish course. The Commissioner consulted with the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, under the aegis of the Department of Justice, the department from which the original proposal on a more ethnically diverse *Garda* force had come. The result was rejection of the language induction course on the grounds that such separation of a group from their peers would militate against the inclusive policy of the force. The Director of Training and Development at the *Garda* College had proposed three possibilities: an induction course onsite; a period of five years during which inservice would be available to allow these new entrants acquire the required competences, as in the case of incoming primary teachers trained in other jurisdictions; a new syllabus that would take account of the specific language needs of this group of learners. A further complication was added to the language issue as a result of the *Garda* Reserve Force recently proposed by the Minister for Justice and initially opposed by *gardaí*.

By May 2006, a committee had been set up in the *Garda* Training College to ensure that the religious and cultural needs of new foreign recruits were met, including food requirements. While a very welcome departure, this type of possible separation within peer recruits, unlike the initial Irish language course mooted, is apparently of a different order.

In the new recruitment drive that followed the ending of the previous Irish entry requirement, it was reported that around 15% of applicants, or some 1,240 persons, some seeking information only, were non-nationals. Of the total number of 8,462 applicants, 4,900 applicants were called to take the first hurdle, an aptitude test. Some non-national applicants did not pass this stage due to insufficient English, but 193 did successfully move to the next stage of interview to be followed by medical and physical examination for those succeeding at interview. Asian Chinese comprised the largest group within these 193 succeeding in the aptitude test.

The next training course for successful candidates began in August 2006. All participants were to follow some course in Irish. An advertisement appeared (end May 2006) for a teacher of Irish language in the College. However, despite the change in language requirements, by mid 2007 it was reported that no more than 11 foreign born applicants had succeeded in receiving training places in the *Garda* College. It may now be necessary to seek candidates from police forces in eastern European states to whom citizenship would automatically be given on successful completion.

Calls are now being made for a move similar to that undertaken in *Garda* recruitment to be made by the Defence Forces and on the same grounds of maintaining the support of all segments of the general population, including equality for women. The applications by 35 non-nationals in recent years did not meet the minimum entry requirements. As in the case of *An Garda*, eligibility for enlistment in the defence forces does currently encompass any national of the EU or the EEA or the Swiss Confederation; citizens of other states fulfilling the criteria of being lawfully present in the State and with a minimum of legal residency of five years; residents who qualify under the Refugee Act 1996. The Minister for Defence has powers to appoint officers of any nationality and has done so in the past.

THE ORGANISATION *iMEASC*

The most striking consequence of this change to *Garda* entry requirements to reflect what was described as the multi-ethnic composition of Irish society was the establishment of the organisation *iMeasc* by a group of immigrants from areas as widely apart as Europe, the Sudan, and Australia, all of whom were speakers of Irish, having learned the language since arrival or in their country of origin. Their initial focus was to ensure that, on the one hand, immigrants in general would not be deprived of the Irish language, and, on the other hand, that immigrants would not be used as an excuse for any lobby wishing to downgrade the public position of the language. The name of the organisation reflects the concepts of integration and respect which it is intended to promote through an integrated programme of mutual awareness and knowledge of one another's culture between the immigrant and host societies.

One of the more recent concerns of the organisation has been in response to a statement from the new Minister for Justice (June, 2007) to the effect that, with regard to those seeking citizenship, he was examining the issue of possible language proficiency tests in both English and Irish. These tests would not be obligatory and made available only to those seeking the linguistic qualification. However, *iMeasc* is of the view that such tests should apply to everybody not to specific groups in the population, while *Conradh na Gaeilge* opines that such tests should apply especially to the public service. The Minister was seeking consensus on 'what it means to be Irish'. It was considered likely that proficiency in English only would be sought if any conditions were, in fact, eventually applied. In the event, however, in mid December 2007, the Minister for Justice signalled that, in the context of the upcoming inclusive Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill, applicants for citizenship would have to demonstrate a reasonable competence to communicate with their fellow citizens, whether in English *or* in Irish, through appropriate testing which would be included in the Bill, although the tests might not be immediately available. Currently, five years residency suffices for application (with some conditions). In the event, competence in English *or* Irish is proposed for the 2008 inclusive Immigration Bill.

LANGUAGE

As 2006 was a Census year, the Central Statistics Office conducted an initial preliminary nationally representative survey of some 7,500 households in 32 enumeration areas of the State, not including a *Gaeltacht* area, in order to test additional census questions or revised formulations of some existing questions. Ethnic group, voluntary work, and unpaid work at home were among the new questions. In answer to analyses, particularly of the 2002 Census, a new box to be ticked was also added in this survey to the Irish language question as formulated in previous censuses in an effort to distinguish between habitual users within the educational system and outwith it. The survey results of April 2004 on this amended Irish language question may reflect both the omission of the *Gaeltacht* and the changing composition of the population. Resulting from this exercise, the language question was further refined in the 2006 Census although the problem of continuous question change affecting interpretation of long term trends must also be taken into account.

Changes in the Census question on the Irish language in the Republic

1991

The census question in this and previous years, 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1986, was headed Ability to Speak the Irish Language and offered four possible choices to respondents, directing them to: Write "Irish only"; "Irish and English"; "Read but cannot speak Irish" or leave blank as appropriate. Respondents were further instructed not to write anything opposite persons who can neither read nor speak Irish.

1996 and 2002

The new version introduced in 1996 was a major departure from the version in use in previous censuses. It was retained unchanged but in more streamlined format for censuses 2002 and 2006.

Irish language

Indicate whether the person can speak Irish by inserting (tick) in the appropriate box. If the person can speak Irish please indicate frequency. The possible answers to the first part of the

question were a simple *Yes* or *No*. Four choices were given for the second part of the question: *Daily; Weekly; Less often; Never*. The Explanatory Notes accompanying the census form contain two directions: this question to be answered for persons aged 3 years and over and left blank for children under 3 years of age; the “Yes” box to be ticked in the case of persons who can speak Irish only or Irish and English.

2004 – 2006

A pilot census version of 2004 amalgamated the 1991 and the 1996/2002 versions. However, it was not used eventually. Instead, the 2002 question was further refined in 2006 to reflect use within and outside education as in the second part of the pilot question.

Pilot census question 2004 on Irish language

10 Can you understand, read, write or speak Irish?

Tick ALL the boxes that apply.

- (1) No knowledge of Irish
- (2) Understand
- (3) Read
- (4) Write
- (5) Speak

If you can speak Irish, how often do you speak it?

Tick the appropriate box or boxes.

- (1) Daily, within the education system
- (2) Daily, outside the education system
- (3) Weekly
- (4) Less often
- (5) Never

Responses from the survey group indicated that 39% of that population over three years of age could speak Irish (lower than either of the two previous censuses); one in three reported that they had no knowledge of Irish—although comments from respondents also indicated some frustration with a question that allowed no possibility to record a certain basic level of competence—while one in six of the school population (age 5–19) indicated inability; no more than 1.2% of schoolgoers with ability in Irish actually used that competence outside the school context—a figure to be interpreted also in terms of the opportunities for use which exist in contexts other than school for those age groups as an aspect of language policy.

Some criticism was directed at the Central Statistics Office (CSO) for distributing, in English only in the *Gaeltacht*, an information leaflet and questionnaire in connection with the five yearly Family Budget Survey 2004–2005. The case was taken up by *An Coimisinéir Teanga*, although no scheme had yet been agreed at that time between the CSO and the Minister with responsibility for the Official Languages Act. Translation had been delayed and the issue was resolved.

SURVEYS

A survey on Irish radio listenership was commissioned by the Department of Community, Rural and *Gaeltacht* Affairs in late 2004, in collaboration with *Foras na Gaeilge* and the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland, through their joint Irish Advisory Committee. The language background and context of respondents formed part of this survey, which included *Gaeltacht* and non-*Gaeltacht* participants. It is useful to gather the results under the generally accepted headings: attitudes, ability, use.

Attitudes

Taking together the differing groups who considered promotion of Irish important, 89% of persons considered such promotion important to the country as a whole while 60% viewed it as

important to them on a personal level. Overall, 80% agreed that the Government should support Irish language radio, particularly the under 35s and tabloid readers.

The group entitled *Champions*, who felt such promotion important on both counts, formed 57% of the survey. In general they were likely to have third level education and self reported good levels of Irish. This group was high in the *Gaeltacht* survey population, 70%, and in the Dublin region, 63%. They tended to be readers of the *Star* newspaper.

The *Idealists*, who saw promotion of Irish important to the country if not to them personally, formed 32%. These were likely to have second level education, considered their Irish ability poor, and tended to be *Sun* readers.

The *Pragmatists* found promotion important to them personally but not to the country as a whole. This small group of 3% were found either in the *Gaeltacht* and/or had third level education and tended to be *Independent* readers.

Rejectors, who see no importance to promotion of Irish, formed 7% of the population. They tended to be in the older age categories and to be male with poor language skills. They tended to be *Irish Times* readers.

Ability

Self reported ability, as in the census, may reflect also attitudes and self-confidence or absence of confidence. The levels reported in this survey, while broadly in line with the sliding scale of ability reported in previous surveys, are lower than in the previous census. Higher levels were reported by younger age groups, a finding consistent with both censuses and other surveys.

Survey on Irish radio listenership 2004: Respondents' competence in Irish

Very Good	6%	
Quite Good	25%	31% Good
Quite Poor	37%	
Very Poor	32%	69% Poor

Use

This was gauged by involvement in Irish language activities by the overall sample in relation to their self-reported/assessed ability.

Survey on Irish radio listenership 2004: Respondents' use of their competence in Irish

	Good Irish	Poor Irish
Involved	24%	3%
Not Involved	76%	97%

As noted in previous surveys and in the census reports, language proficiency and language use are not linear. However, that three quarters of those with good Irish are not involved in any Irish language activity is of concern, particularly since lack of ability is not preventing 3% from becoming involved. The survey also showed that 86% of the younger age group and 94% of the older age group are not involved.

An Gaeltacht

In terms of ability and confidence in the future, the survey finding of most concern for policy purposes is that 43% of *Gaeltacht* respondents rated their Irish in the poor category. The actual meaning of *poor* for individuals is difficult to define and may differ from *Gaeltacht* to areas outside the *Gaeltacht*.

PRELIMINARY POPULATION RETURNS

The preliminary population returns showed a continued increase of 8% since 2002 to a total of 4,234,925 in the Republic, of whom up to 10.4%, or up to 420,000 persons, were non-nationals. In 2002, the corresponding figures for non-nationals were 5.8% or 224,000 persons with a nationality other than Irish. This inevitably affects the percentage of Irish language speakers. There are unconfirmed views that the statistics of non-nationals may be underestimated.

Since the preliminary population results were given by district electoral divisions (DEDs), it was possible in an analysis conducted by a lecturer in the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology

(GMIT), and reported in the press, to extrapolate *Gaeltacht* figures. These showed a continuing increase in the total population of the *Gaeltacht*. However, the increases were more prevalent in areas where little Irish is spoken. A decline was apparent in some *fíor-Ghaeltacht* areas, defined as areas where at least 60% of families qualify for the Irish speaking family grants. In the matter of language planning, these results drew comment on the issue of current *Gaeltacht* boundaries and their possible redefinition.

CENSUS 2006: USE OF IRISH

ABILITY AND USE OF IRISH IN THE STATE 2006

The returns on language from Census 2006 deserve careful scrutiny for language planning purposes as being so recent. The question on use of Irish was further refined in Census 2006 to distinguish use within and outside the education system. The tables refer to those returning as Irish speakers, as having ability in Irish, 1,656,790 persons or 41.9% of the population. All percentages are based on those figures, unless otherwise stated.

In Table 2.3 (b), the patterns of use among those *also* using Irish *outside* the education system have been added to use by other speakers outside the system as returns are given separately in the Census volume. It is an issue for planners to note that use outside education is made of Irish to varying degrees by 761,106 persons, 46% of those professing to be speakers.

In Table 2.3 (c), the school age groups (5–9, 10–14, 15–19) and the parent age groups (20–24, 25–34, 35–44) have been taken together. Percentages are expressed in terms of the *cohorts* in this table as represented in the 41.9% of the population professing ability. The census figures give separate returns for those using Irish outside the education system and those in the system who also use Irish outside the system. The table *combines* both figures.

In order to complete the total picture, the final line adds the numbers and percentages of these age groups using Irish daily within the education system *only*. Those using Irish *in* the system and *also outside* education are not included as they have been included in the preceding part of the table.

The preschoolers [Table 2.3 (c)] appear to use Irish most, whether in educational settings or otherwise (lowest rates of *Never* and *Not Stated*). Daily use outside education is also higher for this age group. These are reasonably encouraging indicators for policy makers. Up to 50% of the age groups 20–44 use Irish weekly or occasionally. Given outlets for use through appropriate policies, this could well become more frequent and reduce the 40% who never put their competence in Irish to functional use. Clearly, for the age group 5–19, the maintenance of Irish in education is crucial but effects could be greatly enhanced through extra-school opportunities for use, if made available through integrated linguistic planning.

ABILITY AND USE OF IRISH IN THE GAELTACHT 2006

Those returning as speakers in the *Gaeltacht* constituted 70.8% of the population or 64,265 persons of a population of 91,862. The percentage distribution of ability to speak Irish across significant age groups is given in Table 2.4 (a).

The significance of education is clear in the 5 to 19 age group as the Table 2.4 (b) and (c), on patterns of use by those with ability, bears out. In addition, some use is made of their competence by some 70% of speakers. However, some 9% (5,703 persons) appear not to use Irish. In order to complete the total picture, the final line in Table 2.4 (c) adds to the table the numbers and percentages of these age groups using Irish daily within the education system *only*.

Daily use by preschoolers in an educational/institutional setting (41.5%) equals what may be presumed to be home use of Irish (40.7%). The combined categories of use outside education by the parent groups, 78.7%, is almost double that of the school groups, 40.4%. However, 11% of the parent groups never use Irish compared to 2.9% of the schoolgoers, which probably underlines once more the significance of education. But this factor, allied to the high use in education by preschoolers (63%), highlights the changing nature of language use in the *Gaeltacht* and the shift to school as opposed to home generation of speakers, as is the case outside the *Gaeltacht*. The convergence is at a critical juncture.

In summary, 70.8% of the *Gaeltacht* population return as having ability in Irish, as Irish speakers. Of these, 69.4% put this ability to active use to some degree (daily to less often) outside education while 21.8% use Irish daily in education only. However, almost 9% of speakers make no use of their

ability, many of them in the crucial 20–44 parent age group and only just over 40% of the schoolgoers, age 5–19, make some use of Irish outside education (daily to less often).

ABILITY AND USE OF IRISH OUTSIDE THE GAELTACHT 2006

Those returning as speakers outside the *Gaeltacht* constituted 40.16% of the population or 1,592,525 persons. The patterns of use exhibited by this group of persons with ability in Irish is shown in Table 2.5 (a) and (b). In order to complete the total picture, the final line in Table 2.5 (b) adds to the table the numbers and percentages of these age groups using Irish daily within the education system *only*. That over a quarter of those with competence outside the *Gaeltacht* never use that competence is an issue for future policy.

Less than 20% (19.2%) of the school population use Irish to some degree outside the education system while over 50% (54.2%) do so in the parent groups and 30.6% in the preschool group. However, the 40% of the parent cohort who never put their ability to use is indicative of a highly underused linguistic resource.

Outside the *Gaeltacht*, the combined degrees of use by schoolgoers outside the education system at 19.3% is half that of the same groups in the *Gaeltacht* at 40.4%.

ABILITY AND USE OF IRISH IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN THE STATE

Information from Census 2006 shows the same general trends as in 2002 (particularly in ability) with some slight changes. However, a further refinement in the language question occurred in this census with regard to daily use within and outside the education system. This resulted in a specific category of persons being distinguished who use Irish daily only in the education system (referred to as **A** in tables) and another category (**B**) which uses Irish daily in education (**B1**) but *also* to varying extents outside education (**B2**). These have not been counted in the education *only* category in the table on the Provinces but rather in the extent of their daily use *outside* education, and are added to the category of persons who use Irish *daily only outside* education (**C**). The purpose is to ascertain the true extent of *daily use* and of non-use of Irish outside the education system in the State. This appears to stand at 72,148 persons, 4.4% of those professing ability. Direct comparison with previous censuses is constrained by the change in the formulation of the question on use of Irish.

As users in education the **B2** (also) category become **B1** for purposes of the tables. Those who never use Irish are categorised **D**. Some **B2** users appear to have been confused by the Census question since a proportion of those returning as users outside education also appear to never do so and are added to **D**. While some 59% of this new census (**B2**) category use Irish daily outside education, 8.3% of them never use Irish outside education.

The correlation between ability and use provide food for thought for planners, Table 2.6 (a)–(e). Many factors affect the local situation: the age profile and composition of the population; the numbers in educational institutions; the prevailing support system for use of the language including a nearby *Gaeltacht* area. While the towns of Buncrana (County Donegal) and Rathnew (County Wicklow) were among the lowest returns for Irish speakers in the 2006 census, 29.8 and 26.7 respectively, it is of note that no town had a zero return in the category of daily use outside education, even if, in some instances, these respondents were in single figures.

Census publications use the older spelling forms *Laioighis* and *Portlaoighise* for the county and town. In the Census 2002 publication, a certain town in Kerry was written Dingle. By 2006, it had become *An Daingean* in accordance with the Placenames Order issued. The town of *Droichead Nua* in County Kildare is always given in its Irish version.

The patterns are relatively consistent with figures nationally but show slight overall decline in speakers since 2002. While comparison on use patterns is difficult due to the change in question, those speakers reporting no use of Irish appears to have fallen since 2002.

Since overall numbers but not frequency of use by the category **B2** is given in Census returns in the case of towns, the figures in Table 2.6 (e) are approximate only, using the same proportion as in instances where frequency of use by this group has been given: 59% daily; 8.3% never. In the case of third level institutions, the population of speakers may be considered relatively transient or liable to change. In other cases, it is of note that while institutional support does appear to increase the number of speakers, daily use seems to be higher in those towns where that support has been available for a longer period and, presumably, occasions of use have been supplied over time

through more examples of community activity being made available, as is known to have happened in Newcastle West and Rathcoole. For planners, an integrated approach, rather than the sole establishment of any particular institution, would appear to offer more success particularly since translation of ability into use is clearly the problem on a national scale. This might also allow the *Never* category to move into occasional or even weekly use while increasing the *Daily use outside education* category.

USE OF IRISH AMONG PRESCHOOL CHILDREN 2006

The 2006 results are even more interesting in the case of preschoolers, since they distinguish use within and outside the education setting. Firstly, the number and percentage of 3-4 year olds returned as having ability in Irish has increased. In the State overall – 14,773 (13.7% of the cohort); in the *Gaeltacht* – 1,226 (51.4%); outside the *Gaeltacht* – 13,547 (12.6%). Daily use outside education is made by 12% of those with ability and by 63% daily in education only, an interesting statistic for planning, if extra-school supports were also provided.

ABILITY AND USE OF IRISH AMONG CERTAIN ETHNIC/CULTURAL GROUPS

Information on the ethnic or cultural background of the population was published in volume V of the Census in July 2007. Knowledge and use of Irish was demonstrated as given in Table 2.7 (a)–(b). White Irish has been omitted as a category. Irish Travellers has been retained as a category. Caveats must also be made with regard to the definition of terms as *immigrant*, *nationality*, *place of origin/birth* in any discussion of the information given. Some within groups may be Irish citizens; some immigrants much more recently arrived than others. Some of the information is highly relevant to language planning at the macro and at the micro level.

There were 63,438 persons in addition who did not state their cultural background, of whom 27% reported as Irish speakers. Of those recording their *nationality* as Irish, 46.3% reported ability in Irish. Of this group, 4.3% reported daily use of Irish outside the education system.

In the case of the USA, England, Wales and Scotland, it is possible to assume a level of returning emigrants, some from *Gaeltacht* regions. Some from Scotland may also be speakers of Scottish Gaelic. In all cases, the level of daily use by speakers whose birthplace is outside Ireland is high.

ATTITUDES: REPUBLIC OF IRELAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Self-reported competence in Irish in census returns is generally taken as an indication of fairly positive attitudes towards the language. Negative answers such as not stating, or the use of *Never*, may, in some instances, be an indication of less supportive attitudes.

The first professional survey in the Republic was carried out in 1973 with Government support and using academic and technical expertise from the United States. This Committee on Language Attitudes Research (CLAR), replicated in 1983 by ITÉ (Linguistics Institute of Ireland), shows a high level of societal support for Irish as an ethnic symbol, support for State action for the language, for competent teaching of the language in the education system, and for policies for the *Gaeltacht*. An IMS (Irish Marketing Surveys) report in 1988 for the State board, *Bord na Gaeilge*, on Irish in the education system, showed that 71% were satisfied with the then current arrangements while a significant minority within that group demanded improvements. Both in this professionally conducted survey and in a previous newspaper poll, as well as in the 1983 ITÉ survey, a significant number of respondents were quite confused as to the true situation of the Irish language when described as *compulsory*; up to 40% were of the false opinion that failure in the Leaving Certificate examination was due solely to failure in Irish, or were unclear on the facts.

In Northern Ireland, surveys had shown that approximately 23% of the Protestant community would support Irish in the education system.

ALL-IRELAND OMNIBUS SURVEY 2000

A question on public perceptions of Irish added to the Northern Ireland and Irish Social Omnibus Surveys in November 2000 by the new *Foras na Gaeilge* gives much interesting information from which the following is extracted. The percentages of agreement with the propositions are given by jurisdiction.

Irish Social Omnibus Survey 2000: % Agreement with Some Statements

Government action for Irish	Republic of Ireland %	Northern Ireland %
Does too much	4%	20%
Does enough	36%	23%
Does too little	15%	15%
Does the right things	33%	17%
Does the wrong things	9%	23%
Policy Choices		
competent teaching of Irish	48%	24%
policies for the <i>Gaeltacht</i>	24%	48%
Bilingual State		
English dominant	41%	19%
Irish dominant	3%	1%
Public Services for Irish Speakers		
as right	68%	22%
Responsibility for Irish, job of		
voluntary organisations not State	21%	43%
Preserve Irish as heritage not necessarily as spoken language		
	24%	24%
Irish-medium schools on demand		
	70%	45%

Events colour perceptions and attitudes. These perceptions are now seven years old. Replication might be useful given the most recent political arrangements in Northern Ireland including a restored Assembly and functioning Executive although debate and deferred decision on a Language Act for NI from that Executive might seem to augur little attitudinal change.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE NI RESEARCH 2001

Even more interesting were the results of more extensive research which was published in late 2001, having been commissioned by the Policy Evaluation and Research Unit of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), on behalf of the Linguistic Diversity Branch of the Department, on establishing the demand for services and activities in the Irish language in NI. From the qualitative data derived from interviews and focus groups, four attitudes or distinct viewpoints emerged. These were categorised as Devotees, Sympathisers, Tolerators, and Opposers. The quantitative data were based on returns from four questions asked of a representative sample of men and women aged 18 and over in the Social Omnibus Survey conducted in the period March–April 2000. Respondents were also asked to give religious affiliation. Overall, attitudes were quite divided. Although at this stage over 30% of Protestants had fairly positive attitudes towards official policies for Irish, a very large majority still had problems with the notion.

Question One

The first question dealt with respondents' assessment of which of four possible attitudes best described their own attitude to the provision of Irish language versions of 13 official matters, which included written material: leaflets/reports/other documents/application forms/websites; communication: written/oral/telephone; registration of births/marriages/deaths; interviews. Taking responses across the 13 areas, the results may be interpreted as follows.

Personal Attitude to Official Provision of Irish-language Forms/Documentation

Description of Attitude	Overall Percentage	Approx.%Prot	%Cath	%Other
Provided as right	7.7-9.3	15	78	7.5
On request ¹	44.8-50.7	47.7	39.6	12.5
On request ²	9.7-12.5	68	13.5	17.6
Never in any circumstances	20.7-25	82.6	9.3	7.4
Do not know/ Do not answer	8.9-11	59.2	28.1	11.66

(1) to those specifically wanting it

(2) only if not literate in English

Question Two

The second question on the use of Irish language versions of signage in public buildings and places elicited a sharp divergence of attitude between Protestant and Catholic respondents. A proportion of respondents answered each section.

Personal Attitude to Provision of Irish-language Signage in Public Places

Description of Attitude	No. of Respondents	%Prot	%Cath	%Neither
Provided as right/ matter of equality	130	18	76	7
In circumstances where majority in contact in favour	452	46	38	15
Never in any circumstances	278	87	7	6

Question Three

Answers to question three, on the use of Irish language advertising by Government, were similarly divided by community.

Personal Attitude to Provision of Irish-language Advertising by Government

Description of Attitude	No. of Respondents	%Prot	%Cath	%Neither
Provided as right/ matter of equality	160	19	68	13
Only to specialist Irish language media	378	50	37	13
Never in any circumstances	278	85	7	8

Question Four

Question four asked respondents to indicate in rank order the three priorities in relation to Irish which they would choose from a list of 16 Government activities.

Personal Ranking of Priorities in relation to Irish-language Activity by Government

	Activity	Rank Order
Protestants	Don't know	1
	Not in favour of any on list	2
	Signage	3
	Government information leaflets	4
	Registration of births/marriages/deaths	5
Catholics	Signage	1
	Don't know	2
	Government information leaflets	3
	Registration of births/marriages/deaths	4
	Election voting cards	5

Some degree of convergence of views across communities is registered in the section replies below, albeit somewhat grudgingly. Overall, however, attitudes are quite divided. While clearly over 30% of Protestants have fairly positive attitudes towards official policies for Irish, a very large majority still have problems with the notion.

Summary of Survey Replies

Attitude towards provision in Irish replies	% More positive replies		% More negative replies	
	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic
13 Official matters	31.35	58.8	75.3	11.4
Public signage	32	57	87	7
Government advertising	34.5	52.5	85	7
Average	32.6	56.1	82.4	8.46

EVALUATION OF LANGUAGE COURSES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS (NI)

No services can be provided unless staff with language skills in Irish are available. Courses in basic skills for beginners were run by the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety in NI during 2000. They were held at lunch time once a week for a period of 10 weeks, two in Belfast and one in Derry and were evaluated by both the Department and by Queen's University. The attitudes towards the courses were very revealing of attitudes pertaining in the environment. While the courses themselves were considered enjoyable, not long enough, or fairly difficult, the attitudes of the participants varied from an acceptance that Irish 'was newly respectable' or that this was 'the way things were going' and that it was necessary 'to keep up with the times' to a reluctance to tell colleagues because of underlying sensitivities, despite the fact that this could have been mitigated somewhat by the fact that the courses were being officially organised by the Department itself.

Bilingualism in some public fora

These ambivalences were highlighted in events in Autumn 2004. There were objections from Irish speakers when a BBC radio commentator spoke over the maiden speech by a newly elected Member of the European Parliament from NI, given in Irish, on the grounds that it was necessary to ensure explanation for all listeners. A member of another political party, recently retired from office, was a guest presenter on a BBC talk show. She began with a bilingual greeting which elicited no small degree of adverse comment from certain listeners. At Queen's University, Belfast, the Students' Union have, over the years, conducted an ongoing argument with the authorities on the question of bilingual Irish-English information packs and signage. Such materials are seen as a cause of offence to unionists. The authorities then suggested that the Union produce two information packs: Irish/English and Ulster Scots/English. These problems led to a call for unambivalent clarity from the Westminster Parliament in relation to the implementation of the Charter of the Council of Europe for both Irish and Ulster-Scots. For the same reasons, Irish speakers point to the facts that

from 2005 a British passport will include Welsh beside English and French and that it is intended to have up to 150 languages on the exchange dealing with 999 calls in London, Gaelic Ireland/Scotland having been listed among them. The fairly predictable reactions of the generality of politicians from different parties, nationalist and unionist, is illustrated in the sections below on local authorities and the proposed Language Act.

IDENTITY AND EQUALITY

Churches Peace Education Programme

All the churches in NI are trustees of the Churches Peace Education Programme: Catholic, Protestant churches, Orthodox. A report on the operation of the programme 1978 – 2004 was prepared with research from the two denominational teacher education institutions, St. Mary's and Stranmillis. While advocating the continued involvement of the churches, even as an obligation, in peace education, the deep identity crisis still pertaining in NI was also revealed and how the conflict about identity is still very potent.

Most commentators will point out the connection between language and identity.

The economy: poverty, unemployment and religious background

By the latter half of 2006, official sources reported unemployment in NI at 4.4%, lower than in the UK (5.5% average) and than in the EU (8.1%), although Derry and Strabane remained black spots. The economy was slowly improving, manufacturing growth being ahead of the UK and business survival higher. Nevertheless, the economy was still highly dependent on public finances, up to 30% of employment was in the public sector, and the continuing stalemate in the political process was impeding economic development.

Equality is one of the cornerstones of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement 1998. However, that this has not been yet achieved in employment was clearly demonstrated in research from the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) published in September 2006, *Equality in Northern Ireland: the Rhetoric and the Reality*. Catholics are still under-represented at the top levels of the civil service and in the work force of the largest private employers. The official Taskforce on Protestant Working Class Communities sectarianised the challenge of working class poverty. Catholics still suffer disadvantage. The poor of both Protestant and Catholic communities are not receiving the assistance to help them participate in the developing economy.

These are factors that have the potential to lead to polarized positions on other aspects of communal life, the cultural and linguistic.

AN GHAELTACHT

The *Gaeltacht* as region and as community is crucial to the entire linguistic project. It has always been under threat and is still contracting and changing. Planning for the language in the *Gaeltacht* must be flexible enough to take immediate account of any results of policy evaluation.

USE OF IRISH IN THE GAELTACHT

The *Gaeltacht* returns in Census 2002 show a broadly similar pattern to that of the State as a whole, use being lower than ability and schoolgoers accounting for a high proportion of those with ability. Of the 72.6% of the *Gaeltacht* population reporting ability in the language (62,157 persons), 1,338 did not state the frequency of use, leaving 60,819 to demonstrate the patterns of usage. The results show daily use 55% or 33,789 persons, with high use by schoolgoers, which if removed leaves adult daily use by no more than 20,723 persons or 34%. This is no more than one third of those professing ability and less than a quarter, 24.21%, of the total *Gaeltacht* population (the 927 non-respondents to the question having been omitted). In the crucial 3–4 age cohort, 78%, 903 children, use Irish daily. But these are the children with competence in the language. Taking the whole age cohort into account the percentage falls to 36.8%, or 38.9% if non-respondents are omitted. The possible parent group in the 20–44 age cohort shows no less reassuring returns. These cohorts represent 28% of the total *Gaeltacht* population. No more than 43.6% (8,475 persons) of those with Irish apparently use the language on a daily basis. There may be many reasons for this but they need to be identified on the micro scale for policy purposes. Broad sweep policies need not necessarily reach all.

In Census 2006 those returning as speakers in the *Gaeltacht* constituted 70.8% of the population or

64,265 persons of a population of 91,862. The percentage distribution of ability to speak Irish across significant age groups is given in the Table 2.4 (a).

The significance of education is clear in the 5 to 19 age group as Table 2.4 (b) and (c) on patterns of use by those with ability bears out. Up to 70% make some use of Irish from daily to less often. However, some 9% of the *Gaeltacht* population appear not to use Irish, 5,703 persons.

Daily use by preschoolers in an educational/institutional setting (41.5%) equals what may be presumed to be home use of Irish (40.7). The combined categories of use outside education by the parent groups, 78.7%, is almost double that of the school groups, 40.4%. However, 11% of the parent groups never use Irish compared to 2.9% of the schoolgoers, which probably underlines once more the significance of education. But this factor, allied to the high use in education by preschoolers (63%), highlights the changing nature of language use in the *Gaeltacht* and the shift to school as opposed to home generation of speakers, as is the case outside the *Gaeltacht*. The convergence is at a critical juncture, Table 2.4 (c).

In summary, 70.8% of the *Gaeltacht* population return as having ability in Irish, as Irish speakers. Of these, 69.4% put this ability to active use to some degree (*Daily to Less Often*) outside education while 21.8% use Irish daily in education only. However, almost 9% of speakers make no use of their ability, many of them in the crucial 20–44 parent age group and only just over 40% of the schoolgoers, age 5–19, make some use of Irish outside education (*Daily to Less Often*).

DECLINE AND REMEDY: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Transmission of the language depends on the first instance on the home, where 3–4 year olds with competence in Irish now constitute barely over 50% of the *Gaeltacht* population, according to census returns. As indicated above, however, daily use by preschoolers in an educational/institutional setting appears higher than what may be presumed to be home use of Irish. This situation has been borne out in a survey carried out by *Comhar na Naíonraí Gaeltachta* on the competence in Irish of incoming preschoolers for the year 2005–2006.

Survey on competence in Irish of incoming preschoolers 2005–2006

Ability	<i>Gaeltacht</i> Area						
	Galway	Donegal	Kerry	Cork	Waterford	Mayo	Meath
Native	82	63	7	1	3	0	7
Good	22	22	3	3	1	7	1
Few Words	79	59	12	7	8	30	11
Understands (Yes)	97	77	23	10	3	15	11
Understands (No)	56	106	41	28	5	32	8
Total	336	327	86	49	20	84	38

An accompanying study of the linguistic skills and use of those skills in the home background would have been useful for policy purposes. The conditions for home transmission are, however, present before the age of 3. In view of the gravity of the situation, some studies have been conducted and recommendations made, particularly in relation to programmes that would enable parents to reach a conscious decision with regard to the language of the home and would continue to support them through a system of Home Visitors, in co-operation between the responsible Department, the *Gaeltacht* Authority, and local Health Services. *It was suggested that home support might best be accomplished through a restructuring of the Language Assistants scheme since its concentration on pupils with little or no Irish in primary schools has met with some criticism from those who feel that potential home generated Irish speakers may be being neglected and that the linguistic and other development of Irish speakers, in what is a less than helpful environment, also requires urgent attention.* On publication of the results given above, queries were raised on two counts: that two categories of *naíonra* should be available in all areas, not just in a small number of instances – for those with Irish and for those children without Irish; that *Údarás na Gaeltachta* should not support institutions where children speak no Irish at entry. Both views were echoed in a slightly different manner on the leaked report on the *Gaeltacht* cited below.

A pioneering integrated community education programme has been developed by the Educational Research Project, *Muintearas*, in the small but strong *Gaeltacht* area of *Ceantar na nOileán* (Islands Region) in County Galway, an area where the number of Irish speaking households is now on the increase. The project is funded by the *Gaeltacht* Authority.

In view of changing needs, two schemes of the Department were put under internal review, *Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge* (scheme to encourage the speaking of Irish) and *Scéim na gCúntóirí Teanga* (language assistants). Both continue to be implemented. *Scéim na gCúntóirí* was allotted €250,000 for Galway, Mayo and Meath in 2007. The responsible Minister, speaking at the annual *Daoncoil na Mumhan* (Munster Folk School) in August 2003, said that the *Gaeltacht* must be strengthened through the provision of services for the young from birth onwards. Indeed, the Agreed Programme for Government 2002 and the Strategy Statement 2003–2005 of the Department responsible state these objectives.

Community awareness is growing also amid calls for family support centres. In the Kerry *Gaeltacht*, the local *Oidhreacht* (Heritage) *Chorca Dhuibhne* established a language support scheme, *Tús Maith* (A Good Beginning), in collaboration with parents. A document from *Sailearna Co-operative in Connemara* in October 2003 called for a Family Support Centre to be set up to ensure that the language continues as strong as it currently is in the area as community language. Over 100 people attended a seminar on Parents, Children, and Irish in Spiddal in November 2003, where a linguist spoke on the strategies for ensuring bilingualism and a representative of the organisation for *Comhluadar* (Families through Irish) outlined their strategies. Simultaneous translation was provided to ensure full participation. A new nursing home for elderly Irish speakers opened for Christmas 2003 in *Carna* in the Galway *Gaeltacht* under public-private partnership as a result of the continuing efforts of a local group, *Coiste na nAosach* (Senior Citizens Committee).

Departmental recognition was given through not only the pronouncements of the Minister responsible but of the programmes he initiated for public tender, both in co-operation with *Údarás na Gaeltachta*. One allotted €300,000 for a language awareness campaign for prospective parents and for parents with children from 0–5 years of age, particularly for *Gaeltacht* parents, directed at highlighting the advantages of using Irish as the primary language of the home. This multi-media programme, *Feachtas Feasachta Teanga* (Language Awareness Campaign), was launched on 10 October 2004. Speaking at the launch of the new programme, the Minister responsible referred to the need for parents to use Irish with their children, not out of guilt, nor because it might seem right, but because an added advantage to the children might otherwise be lost.

Persuasive publicity campaigns were part of the Minister's strategy. The first ran in conjunction with the language awareness campaign, *Feachtas Feasachta Teanga*, in 2004. Entitled *Ár dTeanga Ná dúrtha Féin* (our own natural language), it featured a child in the womb and was targeted at families to encourage use of Irish in *Gaeltacht* homes.

The effects of this public discussion and schemes of assistance may account for the rise in the numbers of preschoolers being returned as Irish speakers even if response has been in terms of preschool education through Irish.

DECLINE AND REMEDY: SCÉIM LABHAIRT NA GAEILGE

The pilot Census survey of 2004 did not include a *Gaeltacht* area. However, one existing indicator of home transmission of the language is the number of households with children which are designated as Irish speaking in accordance with the requirements of the incentive grant *Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge* (scheme for the speaking of Irish). This scheme was initiated in 1934 to encourage home use of the language and amended in 1993. It is administered by officials of the Department with responsibility for the *Gaeltacht* by examining the fluency of children over 5 years. The value of an annual grant is then awarded on a sliding scale. This grant provides a small annual sum per family, full grant €260; partial grant €130, as well as possible eligibility for other grants. The scheme is based on households with school-going children where the household makes formal application and the children are then assessed in the school setting. The assumption is made that the competence arises from the home as well as the school situation and that the household is Irish speaking and will continue to transmit the language. For these and other reasons, any review of the scheme should be thorough although there are some objections that changes may obviate against judging usage trends across regions.

The analysis, for the newspaper *Foinse*, of the funding Department for the year 2001-2002 on the

take-up of this grant by families appears to show that no more than a quarter of families in *Gaeltacht* areas seemed to have full fluency in the language, or 2,413 households of a possible total of 8,613 households with school going children. In addition, the majority of the *Gaeltacht* population lived in areas where less than 10% of households qualified for this grant or where no households qualified. However, the reasons why eligible households may not have applied for the grant would require further scrutiny. A partial analysis for the year 2002-2003 showed a very slight improvement in some larger *Gaeltacht* areas but continued decline elsewhere. One of the more unexpected outcomes of this research on the family grant scheme was the enormous media interest it generated, particularly in the English-medium media, both radio and print, especially in the Sunday newspapers, including those in ownership external to the State. Conflicting views on the linguistic planning value of such a scheme were vehemently expressed. Coincidentally, this media barrage occurred at the time of an official visit to Ireland of the Canadian Commissioner for Languages.

An indication of continuing trends are possible from the returns of *Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge*, for the school year 2004–2005.

Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge, returns 2004–2005

<i>Gaeltacht</i>	Applicants	(a) Full Grant	(b) Partial Grant	Refused
Kerry	378	197	158	23
Cork	171	35	112	24
Donegal*	1078	697	279	102
Mayo	268	88	101	79
Waterford	68	20	43	5
Galway	1410	1151	199	60
Meath*	25	8	13	4
Total	3398	2196	905	297
		64.6%	26.6%	8.7%

(a) + (b) = 3101 [91.2%]

In the regions marked with an asterisk, some schools had not yet received the required visit from an official of the Department with responsibility for the *Gaeltacht*. In addition, there is no clear evidence that all eligible households did apply. Reports are given by the District Electoral Divisions (DED) in each *Gaeltacht* area. This allows for closer scrutiny of results. Analyses conducted for the Irish language media by a lecturer in Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) show some trends:

- a continuing overall slight decrease, particularly in the two larger *Gaeltacht* areas
- a difference between DEDs from 96% of Irish speaking families in *Garumna/Leitir Mór* (Galway) to others where no household qualified for the full grant of €260 (the partial grant is 50% of €260).

The 2005–2006 results show a trend towards more take up of the grant in the areas considered linguistically weak and a slight decrease in the stronger areas. The reasons are not entirely clear but would bear investigation from the future policy perspective. The most recent overall results are as follows:

Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge, returns 2006–2007

Applicants	(a) Full Grant	(b) Partial Grant	Refused	Outstanding
3470	2216	937	225	92

Irish-speaking households or families are not, of course, confined to *Gaeltacht* areas. The organisation, *Comhluadar* (Company, in the social sense), supports parents attempting to transmit the language in an English-speaking environment. The Department with responsibility has, however, recently (June 2006) refused an application from the organisation to apply the scheme outside the *Gaeltacht*. *Comhluadar* would itself conduct the tests carried out in the *Gaeltacht* by Department officials and could be the channel for the disbursement of the grant.

DECLINE AND REMEDY: THE SCHOOL

The very mixed linguistic situation facing teachers in schools is borne out by some recent figures. Information from *Gaeltacht* primary schools shows that some schools have no more than 15% of Irish speakers at entry at age 4–5 and that competence is quite varied. In the best cases, no more than 50% Irish speakers at entry is the norm. The Department responsible for the *Gaeltacht* has introduced a scheme of Language Assistants to support teachers. An outreach based Diploma certification has been established for these Assistants through the Dublin Institute of Technology. At second level, the student body of a large Community School in the heartland comprised 17% of young people born abroad in the school year 2001–2002. Two such schools in other areas have in the past lost their *Gaeltacht* status by Department of Education criteria. One school has established an Irish-medium stream to cater for its mixed linguistic intake.

The Departmental Report on School Accommodation (2003) refers, among its recommendations, to this linguistic mix and advances two possible methods of dealing with the problem: the establishment of an English-medium stream in the *Gaeltacht* schools most affected, on the model of Irish-language streams in some schools outside the *Gaeltacht*; bussing students to the nearest English-medium school. Either solution could have long term deleterious effects on the maintenance of Irish as medium of instruction and as community language. The organisation *Gaelscoileanna* sees Irish-medium streams in English-medium schools only as a temporary measure towards the establishment of a separate Irish-medium institution and lists the difficulties of maintaining the Irish-medium character in a sea of English.

A study of *Gaeltacht* schools, commissioned by *An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta* (COGG, 2002), the Council for Irish-medium education, was carried out by a team from the National University of Ireland at Galway (NUIG), in collaboration with *An Díseart* in *An Daingean* (Dingle), during 2003–2004. While other previous surveys and publications had highlighted the problems which were, in fact, known for years, this new comprehensive work focused on the necessity of seeking immediate solutions. The response rate from both primary and postprimary schools was 90%, a return that adds greater urgency to this issue of finding solutions for linguistically mixed, largely small, schools operating in an educational context designed for majority English-medium schools. More than a quarter (26%) of pupils attending *Gaeltacht* primary schools originated from outside the *Gaeltacht* and 9% of pupils attending 33 schools lived outside the *Gaeltacht*. At postprimary level, the corresponding figures were 23% originating from outside and 18% who lived outside the area. Both levels had difficulty recruiting staff.

Research categories

The research sample was subdivided into three categories at both levels:

Primary (total 129 schools with 8090 pupils)

- (A) 39 schools with 2226 pupils in areas where 70% of the local population use Irish on a daily basis (Census 2002 by District Electoral Divisions);
- (B) 21 schools with 1320 pupils where between 40% and 69% of the population do so;
- (C) 69 schools with 4544 pupils where less than 39% of the local population are daily speakers.

Postprimary (total 27 schools with 2093 pupils)

- (A) 9 schools with 1328 pupils;
- (B) 7 schools with 1420 pupils;
- (C) 11 schools with 2093 pupils.

In the lower classes of primary schools, pupils having high competence in Irish stood at 54% of Category A schools and at 24% of Category B schools while the majority in Category C in these classes have little or no Irish. However, all schools increased the competence of the large majority of pupils as they moved upwards through classes. In these circumstances, the findings that personal notes or a mixture of textbooks take preference over Irish language resources or that English as a medium of instruction increases from Category B to Category C schools are hardly surprising, although this is also dependent on individual school policy. The research found teaching through the medium of Irish in postprimary *Gaeltacht* schools to be in a state of crisis.

Recommendations

Recognition of the challenges facing *Gaeltacht* schools and teachers resulted in the following main Recommendations:

- *redefinition of 'Gaeltacht school' based on the educational model in use: Irish as first language model; Irish immersion model; English as first language model*
- *recognition of the Gaeltacht as a separate educational sector with corresponding integration of all educational support services*
- *review of the future of schools with a view to mergers*
- *provision of teaching resources in ways that would ensure their use in schools*
- *review of the appropriateness of current teacher training models*
- *integration with other aspects of language planning, youth services in particular.*

The findings of the COGG research were to some extent borne out in a smaller study of four *Gaeltacht* primary schools and two *gaelscoil* conducted by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA, 2006) as preparation towards a consultation exercise on bilingual literacy. Teachers reported difficulty teaching through Irish because students did not have sufficient skills in the language. A point of further concern was, not only lack of Irish, but a much less rich idiom among the young compared with the past, and reluctance to use Irish as social language with peers. Language support teachers were called for, as is current practice for immigrant children to develop English language skills.

The most recent commissioned paper from COGG (April 2007) advocates a separate Education Board and Minister for State at the Department of Education to be solely responsible for education in the *Gaeltacht*. Recent (2007) policy moves by the DES have met resistance from *Gaeltacht* and Irish language organisations. These policies included the introduction of the teaching of English to Junior Infants from the second term of school and the initiation of a survey among parents and students of a second level school, established as a result of amalgamation between two schools in *An Daingean*, each having apparently had a different linguistic policy on the medium of instruction. A similar survey has (October 2007) been initiated by Donegal Vocational Education Committee (VEC) on *Árainn Mhór* (Arranmore Island) off the Donegal coast while the local Co-operative is conducting a survey among the whole community.

Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne opened its doors in September 2007. The Board of Management intended to implement a full Irish-medium policy of instruction (as a result of public consultation through an initial meeting). A number of parents and students apparently unused to this in their previous local school objected. Two groups of parents emerged: *Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta* (*Gaeltacht* Parents), who sought legal advice in relation to statements in the Education Act on education in the *Gaeltacht*, and Concerned Parents of *Corca Dhuibhne*. The Minister for Education wished provision to be made for both sets of students, if possible. To this end, an advertisement appeared at the end of 2007. The views and principal linguistic choice of instruction and of other school activities was sought of current parents and students of the school. Parents were to apply for the requisite questionnaire to the Commission on School Accommodation. In the event, only a tiny number opted for English. It is hoped to provide services that will allow these to integrate gradually into the Irish-medium education of the school which has officially retained its AI or full Irish-medium status.

It would appear that amalgamation was not the most sensitive linguistic choice made by officialdom in the first instance. It has been suggested that students currently living in the *Gaeltacht* but preferring education through English should have their travel costs paid to attend schools outside the *Gaeltacht*. Given the gravity of the situation in the *Gaeltacht* as described in the linguistic analysis published in late 2007, and the significance of the Government ministerial group set up to consider it, recent comments from the chairperson, the then Minister for Finance, now *Taoiseach*, are interesting. In his opinion, Irish-medium education should be available to all requesting it in the *Gaeltacht*. What that means in practice is not yet clear.

Research was conducted in November 2003 by *Cumas Teoranta*, a local partnership for *Conamara* and the Aran Islands, together with the university at Galway, on access, participation, and development opportunities in education for the community, with particular emphasis on young people. The level of education reached by the population showed wide variation. With the exception of Irish, examination results in a range of subjects, particularly language based subject

areas, were lower than the national average. Cultural and sociolinguistic changes in the *Gaeltacht* were widely noted. The 28 recommendations made in the report centre largely on intervention and support services from preschool onwards, for a community that is culturally disadvantaged. Nevertheless, lists published in the newspapers of the feeder schools for universities, both large and smaller schools, contained a significant number of both *Gaeltacht* and Irish-medium schools outside the *Gaeltacht*, island schools included.

DECLINE AND REMEDY: YOUTH SERVICES

In the youth category, a survey of Irish-language youth organisations was commissioned jointly by the *Gaeltacht* Authority and *Foras na Gaeilge*. It basically recommended an overall body to serve the needs of youth in all regions. Another survey by the Irish language Sunday newspaper *Foinse* found that only 9 of the 40 football clubs in the *Gaeltacht* used Irish as the chief language of communication in their meetings and on the sports field. Some of these clubs had already been considered ineligible on these grounds for *Comórtas Peile na Gaeltachta* (*Gaeltacht* Football Competition). One of the reasons given by clubs was the uneven linguistic mix of the catchment area from which they draw members. In fact, these 40 clubs, in the range of Irish use they display, probably mirror use of the language in the *Gaeltacht* itself. A third survey conducted by the youth on the smallest of the Aran islands, *Inis Oírr* (Inisheer), in 2001, found, to the surprise of the elders, that the majority would wish to remain on the island if suitable employment was available. The pupils of two second level schools in the Muskerry (Cork) *Gaeltacht* have set up their own Forum.

The position of Youth Officer in a *Gaeltacht* area is occasionally funded by the Department of Education and Science. The *Gaelacadamh* in Spiddal, which encourages traditional music, song and dance among young people is also grant-aided. The company *Scléip Teoranta* (Enjoyment) is funded for its football skills training with young people.

During December 2005 and January 2006, a television advertising campaign costing €200,000 was commissioned by the Department with responsibility for language affairs. It featured young *Gaeltacht* people known from TG4, the Irish-language station, was aimed at demonstrating the added value of speaking Irish to *Gaeltacht* youth between 15 and 25 years of age, and ran on all TV channels, including E4, MTV and Sky 1, News and Sports. Its success has led to a repeat in 2007. It was provocatively entitled *An Ghluín Dheiridh?* (The Last Generation?).

DECLINE AND REMEDY: LANGUAGE PLANNING AND THE COMMUNITY

Another programme proposed local language planning initiatives to be run by the successful applicant local organisations in four areas with official funding up to €130,000 annually. This was probably inspired by the local community language plans that followed in the wake of proposals on redefinition of *Gaeltacht* boundaries. Sixteen community organisations applied for funding under this Language Planning Initiative programme of which 5 were (October 2004) granted funding over 3 years of grants between €110,000 and €70,000. Four were co-operatives and one a community group specifically established to mount a language maintenance project. The regions covered were Donegal 2 – (*Gaoth Dobhair, Ros Goill*), Galway 1 – (*Sailearna*), Aran – (*Inis Mór*), Meath 1 – (*Ráth Cairn*). The Minister responsible contacted the unsuccessful applicants also as part of the planning process. The most significant aspect of this initiative is the specific recognition given to the concept of language planning, and planning by the community for the community, with state enablement. In 2005, a Language Planning Initiative was launched by the Department. Community organisations were invited to apply for the three year programme which included the appointment of Language Managers in certain areas. By end 2006, projects were sharing experiences and one, *Comharchumann Shailearna* (*Sailearna* Co-operative) in the Galway *Gaeltacht*, had launched its language planning website (www.pleanailteanga.ie). Both the Department and *Údarás na Gaeltachta* are members of the steering committees of the various language planning projects. Smaller communities in Waterford and South Kerry also prepared community plans based on local surveys and engagement.

DECLINE AND REMEDY: COMMUNITY AND OFFICIAL INITIATIVES – FÓRAM AGUS COIMISIÚN NA GAELTACHTA

Fóram na Gaeltachta

Recognition of the fragility of Irish as community language in the *Gaeltacht* led to both official and

community action. The community based *Fóram na Gaeltachta* (*Gaeltacht Forum*) was established to bring together individuals and organisations from within the scattered *Gaeltacht* areas to discuss common concerns, reach agreed policy solutions, and to lobby the relevant authorities across a range of strategic issues.

Coimisiún na Gaeltachta

In the wake of *Fóram na Gaeltachta* came the second State-initiated *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta* in early 2000. The first *Gaeltacht* Commission had been established in the early days of the State, in 1925, but little came of its deliberations. The terms of reference of the second Commission were simultaneously simple and wide ranging: to make recommendations to the Government in regard to strengthening the position of the Irish language as the vernacular of the *Gaeltacht* community. This Commission consulted widely, held 28 public meetings attended by over 1,500 people, commissioned several pieces of research, and received 146 written submissions – 76 from organisations or institutions and 70 from individuals among whom were an ambassador and a member of Parliament (United Kingdom). These submissions came from a variety of sources, national, Northern Ireland, outside Ireland. The publication of the Commission's report was given leader column status in the Irish Times which reminded readers of the 'bald tone' of its contents, 'that unless urgent action is taken to address the encroachment of English, it will only be a question of a few years before the language heartlands cease to exist'.

Recommendations

The main Recommendations issued by the Commission in 2002 were not unexpected.

They included:

- *calls for the enactment of the Official Languages Equality Bill (as then entitled) and official status for Irish in the European Union*
- *the location of planning for the Gaeltacht within a reformulated national State policy together with a National Plan and planning system for Irish supported by a dedicated third level education unit for sociolinguistic studies and language planning*
- *integrated and sustainable planning for the Gaeltacht, to include a stronger role for the Gaeltacht Authority*
- *the provision of effective State services through Irish and no entitlement to Gaeltacht or Irish language funding in the absence of a language courtesy policy in any agency serving the Gaeltacht.*

Departmental budget estimates for 2004 stated that an extra €1.9 million had been provided for the implementation of the recommendations of the *Gaeltacht* Commission. This sum included grants allocated to other bodies, including *Údarás na Gaeltachta*.

The report of the Commission was cited in the Programme for Government of the incoming post-election 2002 Government as the basis for Government policy. Proposals for the implementation of the Commission's main recommendations were put in the hands of an Advisory Committee, set up by the Minister responsible, to investigate which aspects might be realised in the short term through existing agencies and current funding. The members of the Committee represented largely what may be described as corporate *Gaeldom*: the *Gaeltacht* Authority and the all-island agency for the language, *Foras na Gaeilge*; Departments of Education and *Gaeltacht*; Irish-medium television and radio; Council for the Islands; and two voluntary organisations, *Forbairt Náionraí Teoranta*, (the joint body for preschooling), and the Gaelic League, (a community organisation founded in 1893). The Advisory Committee members do not include the members of the Commission. This Advisory Committee was later added to the other advisory group set up by the Minister, *Fóram na Gaeilge*.

DECLINE AND REMEDY: STATE AGENCIES IN THE GAELTACHT

One of the pieces of research commissioned by *An Coimisiún* was published simultaneously with the report of *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta*. It proved a damning indictment of the policies and practices of official bodies functioning in the *Gaeltacht*, including the Government Department within whose remit the *Gaeltacht* falls. It enumerates a catalogue of absences:

- *lack of clearly delineated aims and objectives*
- *lack of research; lack of evaluation; lack of innovation*

- *lack of strategic direction and overlapping functions resulting in ad hoc concession to pressure groups in place of coherent strategy*
- *lack of understanding of the importance of influencing mentality as a prerequisite to action*
- *lack of delivery of basic services through Irish.*

The research calls for openness and honesty in relation to the operation and results of all grant-aid schemes for the *Gaeltacht*. It further points out that the *Gaeltacht* community must be convinced that political will is on their side and that redefining *Gaeltacht* boundaries has little sense in a situation where the linguistic region has apparently so little reality in the perception of officialdom, as evidenced by their lack of services. It reiterates that any and all policies for the *Gaeltacht* must have the language itself at the centre of any development if they are to be counted as truly *Gaeltacht* policies.

DECLINE AND REMEDY: COMMISSIONED REPORT ON THE GAELTACHT

In light of all these factors as well as a recommendation made by *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta*, the responsible Minister commissioned a comprehensive report on the *Gaeltacht* in January 2004 at a cost of €500,000, to be carried out by *Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge* (National University of Ireland, Galway) and the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (National University of Ireland, Maynooth). Publication was expected before the General Election of May 2007. The Minister, however, explained that the report was very detailed, that the contents had to be analysed by his department and then go before the cabinet before public release. In the event, significant portions were leaked and appeared in the press in July 2007 before official release. The report, *Staidéar Cuimsitheach Teangeolaíoch ar Úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht: Príomhtháil agus Moltaí* (Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the *Gaeltacht*: Main Findings and Recommendations) was eventually launched by the Minister when he officially opened the festival, *Oireachtas na Samhna*, 31 October 2007. He also announced the formation of a high level Government (Inter-Departmental) Committee, chaired by the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister), to study the report and to produce an action plan for the *Gaeltacht* within a year. While the timescale received some criticism, the Committee itself is a significant political response to matters linguistic.

The leaked information, both analysis and recommendations, bore out existing information. In the Minister's own assessment, in an interview in July, the report contained no significant new statistical information but useful work on attitudes; it clarified again the immediate danger facing the language in the *Gaeltacht* unless urgent pro-active steps were taken. The Minister also referred to the question of the perceived 'dilution' of the language, as now spoken in the heartland, as a phenomenon affecting languages in new relationships in a changing society.

Findings

Among the Findings of the report, were the following:

- *among youth, despite the favourable attitudes of 94%, the fact that no more than 24% of the 53% brought up through Irish or mostly through Irish in the strongest Gaeltacht areas actually speak Irish with their peers and 46% either cannot speak Irish or use it minimally; so that the language behaviour of youth is essentially English dominant*
 - *since the language of courtship is tending towards English, so is the language of the home later*
 - *businesses are using English more*
 - *some State enterprises have no conception of their role in the language dynamic of the Gaeltacht*
 - *within the general sociolinguistic environment, changes (mostly due to incomers who are not active speakers) are transforming the social dynamic to one inimical or at least not in favour of Irish*
 - *within the education system, 46% of pupils begin school with no ability in Irish and 25% are born outside the Gaeltacht*
 - *that English takes hold when the critical mass of daily speakers falls below 67%*
- Leading inevitably to:*
- *within the home and community, the end of Irish as spoken language within 15–20 years, particularly in the smaller more vulnerable areas (Mayo, Cork, Kerry, Donegal South).*

One of the researchers was of the view that opting to use Irish might in future have to be a conscious choice by parents and community (this is inevitably the case in bilingual communities, the majority language rarely requiring conscious choice; Irish speakers outside the *Gaeltacht* have to make this choice every day). The Minister pointed out, quoting studies from 150 and 50 years ago, that the demise of the *Gaeltacht* has been often forecast but that it has survived despite vicissitudes.

Recommendations

The Recommendations were not unexpected, given the information available.

An Ghaeltacht

- *that a statutory delineation be made of three categories of Gaeltacht community: (A) 67% plus speak Irish daily; (B) 44–66% speak Irish daily; (C) less than 44% speak Irish daily; less than 30% no Gaeltacht status – this in order to assist the various bodies functioning on behalf of the Gaeltacht to more clearly distinguish between the differing types of Gaeltacht community and therefore to operate more effectively*
- *that the majority of resources be channelled primarily into those areas in the strongest (A) category (this was officially rejected) where Irish is still the dominant language*
- *that the voting constituencies for Údarás na Gaeltachta be changed to reflect these ABC categories, or areas which are strong or weak linguistically*
- *that each region prepare a seven year plan to be agreed with the Minister's Department and upon which ABC statutory delineation would rest (this was not universally welcomed)*
- *that the plans for (A) category incorporate all aspects, physical, education, development, social, community; that plans for (B) and (C) categories concentrate on development of the language and networks of users; that Údarás na Gaeltachta co-ordinate these plans*
- *that active use of the language by youth be targeted; a specific Coláiste Samhraidh (Summer College) for Gaeltacht youth being among the recommendations*
- *that couples and families be encouraged and assisted to make Irish the language of the home*
- *that appropriate changes be made to Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge (scheme open to all but with monitoring; €5,000 annually for parents to use on services to enhance the use of Irish in the home)*
- *that monoglot English speakers be assisted into the language community*
- *that Gaeltacht industry target language-based initiatives*
- *that demographic changes and the factors producing them be carefully managed.*

Education in the Gaeltacht

- *that radical change is required in the education system, since not alone are native speakers being hindered from reaching their potential intellectually, socially and academically, but the system could now be of damage to them*
- *that only Irish proficient pupils be accepted into pre-schools and schools through the provision of language acquisition institutions aimed at enabling pupils not being brought up through Irish in category (A) areas or incoming children without Irish to acquire sufficient proficiency in the language to enable transfer to schools where Irish is the medium of instruction*
- *that educational institutions in category (A) areas have a clear entry policy that only Irish proficient children will be accepted*
- *that current arrangements for second level education through Irish be reviewed as a matter of urgency in all Gaeltacht areas*
- *that An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta is Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) be made statutorily responsible for all aspects of education in the Gaeltacht (this was welcomed by COGG)*
- *that a specific Board or Authority for Gaeltacht Education be established*
- *that a Minister for State be appointed with responsibility for Irish Language and Gaeltacht Affairs in Education*
- *that a College of Education be established in the Gaeltacht to provide appropriate training for teachers at primary and at second level.*

Reservations

Even with regard to these leaked observations, several counter-arguments were expressed. In light of the need for a national plan for Irish, and the preparations being made towards this, there was a view

that the report should have placed the *Gaeltacht* concerns and recommendations in a wider context; that reserving educational institutions in the *Gaeltacht* for Irish speakers only could prove too radical. On the other hand were noted:

- *positive attitudes towards the language and the Gaeltacht in all regions and particularly among the young*
- *quite high levels of ability in the language generally including among some incomers*
- *continued State support and official assistance*
- *willingness on the part of official and community institutions to engage positively and actively with and on behalf of the community language*
- *above all, the continued existence of the Gaeltacht itself, despite continuing language shift over years and generations.*

DEFINITION OF GAELTACHT BOUNDARIES

The physical limits of the regions designated as *Gaeltacht* have been changed from time to time by Ministerial order and are currently legally defined by the various *Gaeltacht* Areas Orders which extended the areas so designated in 1956, 1967, 1974 and 1982.

While *Gaeltacht* status is a privilege carrying its own linguistic duties, not all extension of the *Gaeltacht* areas were carried out in a considered fashion that would enable the region to maintain the language. For example, the small *Gaeltacht* region of *Uíbh Ráthach* (Iveragh) in south Kerry was granted *Gaeltacht* status but not in a way that allowed it to develop since it consists of isolated pockets with no underlying social infrastructure such as focal town or second level school. Also, the reverse colonisation policy of 1935-7 which gave parcels of divided land in *Baile Ghib* (Gibstown), County Meath to *Gaeltacht* speakers brought largely from Connemara with the intention of creating a *Gaeltacht* also surrounded them with English speakers. Criteria for *Gaeltacht* recognition are, at the very least, unclear and have led to debate. In 1999, the then Minister for State proposed the possibility of allowing the choice to the inhabitants themselves. Linguistic conditions, and advantages, would then apply if the choice were to remain a designated *Gaeltacht* area.

Criteria for *Gaeltacht* status

The criterion for *Gaeltacht* status set down by the 1925 *Gaeltacht* Commission was 80% of the community to be Irish speakers but no required frequency for actual use of linguistic competence was included. In more stringent fashion, the 2000 Commission suggested that all *Gaeltacht* regions be given a seven year term to improve their linguistic situation. This would give decision making back to the individual and to the community. At the end of that period, all areas with 50% daily users of Irish would be fully recognised. Those falling just below 50% would be given a second term. Admitting that census figures are a relatively blunt instrument for redrawing boundaries, the Commission recommended the initiation of a linguistic survey or audit to include all major domains of community life together with renewed targeted schemes of assistance such as *Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge* for families. In addition, as their linguistic situation improved, areas losing their *Gaeltacht* status could re-apply for recognition.

A study conducted for *Nuacht TG4* (News) by a researcher in Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) on the use of Irish in *Gaeltacht* District Electoral Divisions (DEDs) which was reported in the newspaper *Foinse* of 4 July 2004 made sobering reading. If the recommended 50% criterion were applied to the 2002 figures for daily speakers in these DEDs in the *Gaeltacht*, the resulting population would number no more than some 27,000 persons and the territory designated '*Gaeltacht*' would equal no more than one third of the present area. For policy purposes, the resulting options might include no change, increasing emphasis on these stronger areas, or alternatively giving increased support to the weaker areas.

While the proposals made by the second *Gaeltacht* Commission were straightforward, the discussion within the report of the Commission proved more radical and controversial, particularly on the question of recognising a geographic region as a linguistic entity and the appropriate criteria for such recognition. For example, the Minister with responsibility for the *Gaeltacht* opined that there was hardly a linguistic base for recognition as *Gaeltacht* in areas where less than 15% of the population use Irish daily. The Commission placed on record that, while the *Gaeltacht* was indeed under external pressures, more crucially it was also threatened at its own core since the community

appeared to be losing confidence in itself as a distinct linguistic community, in view of the decline in those actually using the language or transmitting it to their children. It was made clear that, while the State has a responsibility to the *Gaeltacht*, the people of the *Gaeltacht* also carry a responsibility to the language. While this may be true, the immense pressure of the English speaking world on many language communities today must also be recognised. Extraordinary commitment is often required of ordinary people in the ordinary everyday world.

Outcomes of proposals on criteria for *Gaeltacht* status

One of the outcomes of this 50% proposal was the preparation by communities, particularly those most vulnerable, of Language Action Plans for their local areas. These included *Uíbh Ráthach* (Iveragh) in south Kerry, *Ros Goill in Tír Chonaill* in the north-west, *Na Forbacha* (Furbo) west of Galway City, *Oileán Acla* (Achill Island) off the Mayo coast. Only part of the latter was designated *Gaeltacht* under the 1956 Act. The Minister remarked (3 September 2004) ‘that in future it would seem sensible that either all the Island should be in the *Gaeltacht* or none of it and that it was fundamentally a choice for the community to make, based on linguistic criteria’. More recently, other areas have begun similar work through public meetings and surveys as a basis for action: *Ceathrú Thaidhg* (County Mayo) which established *Gluaiseacht na gComhluadar Beo* (Movement of Living Communities); *Cill Cártha* in south Donegal intent on showing the economic benefits of the language arising out of *Comórtas Peile na Gaeltachta 2004* (*Gaeltacht* Football Championship); *Lios Póil* in Kerry. *Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne* (Corca Dhuibhne Heritage) in the Kerry *Gaeltacht* was (August 2004) granted €1,000,000 over three years to implement its local language maintenance and development plan. A survey towards a language plan for the *Decies Gaeltacht* area of County Waterford had a 97% response rate. These local initiatives have been encouraged by the grants now available to selected communities to embark on local language planning; by the well-funded competition, *Baile Beo* (Living Town) run by *Údarás na Gaeltachta*; by the community planning criteria and staff assistance from the annual competition run by *Glór na nGael*. These two competitions also provide community pride, public prestige and media publicity. In March 2008, the responsible Minister announced that the language planning scheme was under review and that, for the moment, no further funding would be made available.

Another outcome of the Commission’s proposal highlighted the increasing similarity between some *Gaeltacht* areas and certain urban communities, both of which exist in a bilingual context where English predominates. Instead of removing *Gaeltacht* status from the more bilingual areas, a call was made for the recognition also of urban *Gaeltacht* communities particularly in West Belfast and in suburban areas of Dublin city where the local community has invested much energy in ensuring the provision of its own educational, cultural and recreational infrastructure through the medium of Irish. The argument rejecting this interpretation rested on the definition of *Gaeltacht* as a geographic area where the language had been spoken without break for generations.

More generally, this particular suggestion from the Commission has been resisted on the grounds that it would not only reduce the critical mass needed to maintain what is already a struggling community of speakers but, in particular, would further disempower those who continue to maintain the language, against heavy odds, in the more bilingual areas of the *Gaeltacht*. The possible practical implications also gave rise to unease. These could include possible loss of grants (housing, infrastructure); loss of recognition for Summer Colleges with resulting loss of income for the region particularly for the *Mná Tí* (female householders supplying bed and board) and local suppliers; loss of supplementary benefits for teachers and *gardaí* (police); loss of administrative area for the *Gaeltacht* Authority and other State services (courts); reduced catchment area for clubs and sports players; reduction, perhaps, in outreach stations for radio and television with resultant loss of staff.

Towards criteria

While there is not official acceptance of the Commission’s particular criteria for *Gaeltacht* recognition and possible redefinition of boundaries, the Minister with responsibility is seeking appropriate linguistic and other criteria to ensure clearer definition. To this end, he initiated a linguistic survey (February 2004) on the Irish language in the *Gaeltacht* described as the most detailed of its type since the foundation of the State and based on the necessity for total reform of *Gaeltacht* policy based on comprehensive information to halt the decline underway so as to prevent

an end to the *Gaeltacht* as historically understood. Beginning in April 2004, as reported previously, and allocated a budget of €550,223, it was conducted by two new foundations, *Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge* (Academy of Irish University Education), at the National University of Ireland Galway, and NIRSA (National Institute for Regional and Spatial Studies), at the National University of Ireland Maynooth. It is recognised that the needs of the *Gaeltacht* areas are very different now to those identified in the 1950s and 1960s. This survey included the urban pockets of *Gaeltacht* in the vicinity of Galway city. The Minister is on record as saying that it is now necessary to ascertain whether there are areas where the community no longer wishes to be considered part of the *Gaeltacht* as a linguistic region. When this survey was first signalled by the Minister in early 2003, he mentioned the possibility of recognition for Galway city as a *cathair Ghaelach* (Gaelic city), a suggestion that was first mooted in the early days of the State and which, if implemented now, may trigger similar demands in the future from other large towns. He also referred to some possible qualifying criteria for future *Gaeltacht* status and recognition:

- *self-recognition by the community as a Gaeltacht community*
- *numbers of daily speakers*
- *numbers of eligible applicants for family and housing grants*
- *numbers of voters in elections to the Gaeltacht Authority*
- *the language used as medium in local schools*
- *the availability of Summer Colleges and other educational or cultural institutions.*

In essence, drawing on several different sources, the Minister appeared to be seeking *Gaeltacht* definition that makes sense on linguistic and community grounds, an approach that could result in either expansion or retrenchment over time. The objectives of the new survey, which was made publicly available in late 2007, were to find ways of strengthening the linguistic development of the *Gaeltacht* as an Irish-speaking region and to survey the existing official *Gaeltacht* regions. Particular emphasis was laid on inter-generational transmission of the language and on the possible long term implications of the references to language in the Planning Act (Development) 2000. Whether the ABC delineation proposed by the *Staidéar Cuimsitheach Teangeolaíoch ar Úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht* (Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the *Gaeltacht*), 2007, will be accepted by the Government Committee set up in late 2007 to examine its findings remains to be seen. In the meantime, however, another survey in the series by a lecturer in Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) appeared in the Irish newspaper *Foinse* in March 2008. Using the ABC criteria on 162 *Gaeltacht* District Electoral Divisions (DEDs) and including the results of *Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge* (Scheme for Speaking Irish), the results reported were fairly bleak. The *Gaeltacht* population, as *Gaeltacht*, would fall by half, from almost 95,000 to around 44,000, composed of approximately 17,000 each in categories 'A' and 'C' and 10,000 in category 'B'. Several areas would not qualify even for 'C' status and consequently would be in danger of losing *Gaeltacht* status, as would towns such as *Béal an Mhuirthead* (Belmullet) in Mayo, parts of Galway City and *An Daingean* (Dingle) in Kerry. An independent Commission to decide *Gaeltacht* boundaries into the future was called for, as a corollary.

While on the one hand the transplanted colony of *Gaeltacht na Mí* (County Meath) was celebrating 70 years of existence in April 2007, a professional survey was being carried out in the *Gaeltacht* of Donegal South West, commissioned by *Raidió na Gaeltachta*, on possible future changes to *Gaeltacht* boundaries. In response to the question of the *Gaeltacht* area of Donegal South West being possibly reduced, respondents provided the following fairly lacklustre assessment: In favour (13%); Against (42%); Not my concern (33%); Don't know (12%). On the other hand, a survey towards planning in the Decies *Gaeltacht* of Waterford had an overwhelming response to maintaining *Gaeltacht* status (April/May 2006).

PHYSICAL PLANNING IN THE GAELTACHT

For community language transmission and maintenance, planning issues are a crucial component of sustainable community life, particularly in housing policy. Unfortunately, due largely to the dispersion of powers across a range of differing levels of authority, coherent joined-up planning, to include physical planning, both for the language and for the *Gaeltacht*, does not yet occur in reality.

The Planning and Development Act (2000)

Physical planning is circumscribed by the Planning and Development Act (2000) and by Regulations on Planning and Development (2001). It is implemented through local authority development plans as accepted in policy decisions made by local authority councillors and carried out by planning staff. Physical planning is also affected by the decisions of the statutory *An Bord Pleanála* in the case of appeals to decisions. Planning issues may be either debated publicly or be challenged by local individuals, groups or specific organisations.

Local authorities come under the Department for the Environment. In July 2007, the newly appointed Minister used his (seldom used) powers, on grounds of national policy, to rescind land zoning decisions taken by councillors in one local authority (non-*Gaeltacht*), against planning advice, when adopting the county development plan. The move was later welcomed by the Chairman of *An Bord Pleanála*.

As a result of sustained lobbying since 1997, Section 10.2(m) of the Planning and Development Act (2000), lays a duty on those County Councils which include *Gaeltacht* regions through the inclusion, for the first time ever, of objectives in county plans which are intended to protect linguistic and cultural heritage. However, the practical application of these provisions are not specified in the Act. In the absence of a more coherent general policy, those of the seven *Gaeltacht* area County Councils developing new plans in compliance with the Act of 2000 continued the process of evolving practices specific to their own regions for inclusion in their county development plans. The provisions of the Development Act apply also to city and town local authorities. Approximately half of the area covered by Galway City Corporation is also designated *Gaeltacht* although it appears to have no specific plans apart from general promotion of the language in the city and its environs through local committees, particularly in *Mionlach* and *Cnoc na Cathrach*, established through the support of the Language Development Officer. It is of note that the Government Statement on the Irish Language of December 2006 specifically mentions, among the basic principles for future policies and actions, the special status given to the Irish language in the Constitution and in various acts, including the Planning and Development Act.

All seven County Councils containing *Gaeltacht* regions have prepared new county development plans in recent years. Such plans may have an immediate impact on linguistic and language community issues. It was initially considered that current best practice in plans developed was operating in counties Galway and Meath, the largest and one of the smaller *Gaeltachtaí*. However, the positions taken by some Galway *Gaeltacht* Councillors in mid 2006, in seeking relaxation of existing conditions, appeared to contradict this.

County Council	Duration of County Development Plan
Cork	2003–2009
Donegal	2000–2006
Galway	2003–2009
Kerry	2003–2009
Mayo	2003–2009
Meath	2001–2007
Waterford	2005–2011

In keeping with its particular role, *An tÚdarás* submitted an appeal to *An Bord Pleanála* in the case of eleven holiday homes which had received planning permission in *Baile an Sceilg* in the the Kerry *Gaeltacht* of *Uíbh Ráthach* on the grounds that it had not been informed under law, under section 28 of the planning regulations. Similarly, *An tÚdarás* made its views known to Cork County Council on the basis of *Gaeltacht* housing provision primarily by criteria of local need, in relation to a major private housing development sought in *Baile Bhuirne*. In recent years, physical planning issues have come to the fore in discussion of the present and the future of the *Gaeltacht* as community source of the language, particularly as it relates to the aspect of housing.

While particular language conditions may vary somewhat, depending on each County Development Plan or Local Area Plan, conditions may attach to both single dwellings and larger housing developments. Conditions may attach to individuals seeking planning permission for a family home or to individuals intending to buy a house in a development. Developers must include a general language impact statement with the initial application. For housing, they must ensure

that the allocated proportion of houses are sold only to Irish speakers and make the necessary arrangements to evaluate the Irish language competence of purchasers. In the more isolated areas, sales in housing developments may be restricted to local people engaged in employment in the area, to returning emigrants and their immediate family, and to Irish speakers. Resale only to an Irish speaker may be a condition for a set number of years. Such measures have had to be defended by the Irish Government to deflect possible legal action by the EU on grounds of possible discrimination.

Planning issues in the *Gaeltacht*

Several problems face planners: the almost irreversible linguistic results of past planning decisions; the challenge of reconciling linguistic conservation and development on the one hand with community development on the other, in areas where the community itself is choosing, or being forced to choose, bilingualism; the desire of local landowners to get market value for their land in a market which dislikes conditions of any kind, particularly linguistic ones; the proliferation of holiday homes held largely by transient non-Irish speakers. According to the 2006 Census, there were 19,000 holiday homes in Munster, no small number of these in the scenic *Gaeltacht* regions, and 20,000 houses and apartments in County Donegal were empty or closed. Nevertheless, physical planning is vital to the future of the *Gaeltacht*, and therefore to the future of the Irish language. Decisions taken now could have far reaching consequences for the community language.

The main planning issues related to the following distinctions:

- *maintaining clarity between the need for community sustainability through increasing the local population and the need for sustainability of the existing language community through increasing the number of speakers*
- *ensuring sustainable communities in sparsely populated areas*
- *individual private houses on the one hand – whether for residents of the *Gaeltacht*; for relatives of residents (sometimes returning emigrants), or for holiday purposes and on the other hand the issue of larger developments – whether houses or apartments; by private developers or in social housing provided by the local authorities*
- *the possible methods to ensure a linguistically ecological approach – a Language Impact Statement prepared by developers or the local authority as an integral part of the initial application for planning*
- *the three related aspects of who should be allowed to purchase – local, other; what allocation should be made of housing – to Irish speakers, to others; depending on criteria for allocation, how should individual language competence be assessed and by whom*
- *the enurement conditions required in order to ensure that solely Irish speakers remain in the housing so allocated, whether as purchasers or tenants, for a reasonable period at least*
- *in summary, finding acceptable methods, whether through oral assessment or other means, of ensuring a preponderance of Irish speakers as buyers or tenants so that the delicate linguistic balance that ensures the continuing community language of the *Gaeltacht* as Irish is not put further at risk*
- *the further fact that County Councils must take into account the recommendations of the Planning Guidelines of the National Housing Framework and Sustainable Rural Housing (2005, Department of the Environment) as well as the provisions of the Planning and Development Act (2000).*

The *Gaeltacht* Authority and the Department with responsibility for the language also play a role in physical planning since the Planning Act stipulates that they must be informed in relation to the possible effects of local development plans for *Gaeltacht* areas. The new *Gaeltacht* Authority which took office in 2005 takes the issue very seriously, particularly in relation to the negative impact of large developments more suited to urban settings.

The issue of holiday homes is of concern to all *Gaeltacht* areas, both in relation to what was perceived as the ease with which planning approval was given and the impact on the linguistic environment. In Donegal, for example, in the *Ros Goill* area, a survey revealed that there were approximately 220 houses occupied by locals and 386 holiday homes. A previous survey had shown the same type of unsustainable ratio in the *Dún Caoin* area of the Kerry *Gaeltacht* and in the Waterford *Gaeltacht*, *An Rinn*. By February 2006 upwards of 360 submissions had been received in

relation to Donegal Council's County Plan, the majority seeking to prevent any further holiday homes being built. The Chair of *Údaras na Gaeltachta*, speaking in a personal capacity on behalf of *Oideas Gael* in *Gleann Cholm Cille* in Donegal, among others including local politicians, proposed a ratio of 5:1 in favour of family homes.

Decisions taken now could have far reaching consequences for the community language. Galway County Council, containing the largest *Gaeltacht* area, is a case in point and illustrates some of the challenges more generally encountered.

The case of Galway County Council

In its previous County Development Plan (1997) Galway County Council had included a Language Impact Statement as a condition of housing planning permission in the *Gaeltacht*. Unfortunately, the Council itself omitted to supply such a Statement in its own plan for social housing in *Ceathrú Rua* (Carraroe) in 2002 and thereby lost the case taken against them in the High Court by local objectors. This issue of the specific conditions and practical implications of the language impact of new housing in the case of both individual and corporate applications for planning permission led to much interesting, and more generally applicable, debate on the new draft Galway County Development Plan 2003-2009. One *Gaeltacht* based councillor submitted an amendment to the Draft Plan to the effect that only persons competent in Irish should be given planning permission in the linguistic heartland region of Connemara-Aran Islands, with the intention of conserving the linguistic integrity of the area. This amendment was not well received, either by his fellow councillors, councillors in other *Gaeltacht* regions, nor by *Gaeltacht* people themselves. The objections and arguments were on several levels:

- *the technical difficulty of how and when to assess actual competence: at initial planning stage or after building; whether to allow applicants a reasonable period to acquire the language*
- *the difficulty of providing housing on a monolingual basis only in areas that are becoming more and more bilingual or where English usage now predominates*
- *inability to ensure that houses initially occupied by Irish speakers would not be sold on to monolingual English speakers*
- *whether competence translates into actual use although without competence no use can occur*
- *refusing applicants whose skills were needed: doctors, those in the fish industry*
- *the most vehement arguments against the proposal concerned locals who had little or no Irish, specifically those of local parentage who were emigrants returning to a family plot of land whose partner and family need not necessarily have Irish*
- *the difficulty and expense of finding experts to draft an appropriate and acceptable Language Impact Statement, particularly since its inclusion had been largely ignored since 1996*
- *the fact that seeming redefinition of Gaeltacht boundaries for planning purposes would ensue if linguistic conditions were stringently applied in areas where Irish was dominant and less stringently in more bilingual areas*
- *the possible effects on the land market*
- *a belief that both the responsible Department and Gaeltacht Authority should have a more active as opposed to solely consultative role in planning issues in order to ensure coherent linguistic policies for the Gaeltacht*
- *a call for a new separate local authority to manage all aspects of Gaeltacht affairs currently within the remit of the county councils.*

Other amendments followed from individual councillors and from the Council's subcommittees, including a compromise proposal from a *Gaeltacht* based councillor, which was eventually agreed, that the language stipulation not be required for individual homes but for development schemes of two houses or more.

The final agreed Plan included some other linguistic conditions. Section 10 (5) of the County Development Plan allows the planning authority to refuse any development which might have a significant negative impact on the language and on the *Gaeltacht*. In the list of eleven types of development schemes the Plan would encourage three that specifically mention housing and the Irish language: houses for native Irish speakers; low-cost houses for Irish-speaking couples; houses for Irish-speaking families who wish to settle in the *Gaeltacht*. The first such housing scheme was

approved at the end of 2003 for twelve houses in *Ceathrú Rua* (Carraroe) conditional on the developer entering, before construction, into a legal agreement on the use of Irish by the occupants of the houses to be built. The stipulation was that the details of the standard of Irish to be achieved, and the methods of evaluating that standard, must be agreed in writing prior to the finalisation of the legal agreement.

Language restrictions and the law

An expert opinion sought by Galway County Council as basis for implementation of sections of its planning on linguistic grounds advised that non-Irish speaking but resident locals on the housing list should not be removed from the list but dealt with by means of the proposed language improvement classes. While individual lawyers have commented on constitutional aspects of these linguistic conditions attaching to planning applications, the most definitive statement came from the Law Society. The Society's Law Reform Committee (1997) examines specific points of law for clarification. Its Report of early 2005 on this issue found language proficiency conditions in planning approval for *Gaeltacht* areas to be constitutional but advised that only what is necessary for language survival be used and that it not be uniformly applied over a wide area. However, conditions which may discriminate between people may be in conflict with the Constitution, EU law and the European Convention on Human Rights. Attention is also drawn to the Equal Status Acts 2000-2004. Here the Report was referring specifically to special status being conferred on certain categories of individuals in section 39 (2) of the Planning and Development Act (2002), in particular the 'blood-line' condition which favours relatives of local residents over those without such connection.

Two councils which do not have a *Gaeltacht*, Wicklow and Clare County Councils, already have certain planning restrictions in favour of local rural persons in an attempt to deal with local need and over-development. The Wicklow County Council Settlement Plan discriminates in favour of local purchasers of new housing. Following the principles of the National Spatial Strategy, criteria related to where individuals live and work apply. While second hand houses in any part of the county and new housing in urban areas are unrestricted, a ban applies to purchasers of new housing from outside the county and even to Wicklow residents moving to certain areas within the county. Some lawyers consider such restrictions to be at variance with the trend towards free movement of goods and people. They quote the November 2005 regulation which overturned a specific condition in the Land Act (1965) for non-Irish purchasers to have the prior consent of the Land Commission (Department of Agriculture) which was changed to non-EU purchasers from 1995.

In Summer 2007, the EU Commissioner from Ireland (Internal Market) questioned housing development conditions relating to 'bloodline', living and/or working in the vicinity, competence in Irish. These were all defended in a strong reply from the Irish Department of the Environment. The Law Society is of the opinion that the language condition does not violate either the Irish Constitution or domestic or EU legislation.

Determining language competence

An independent Language Assessment Unit which would develop and implement procedures to test the Irish language competence of prospective buyers was proposed by the community group, *Glór na nGael an Spidéal*, using the methods already in operation by Department inspectors for housing grant purposes. *An Bord Pleanála* ruled that the basis for testing fluency in Irish should mirror the standards already in use for *Gaeltacht* housing grants by officials of the Department with responsibility for matters linguistic. These refer to the head of the household seeking the grant. In October 2006, Waterford County Council clarified that the process and content of the interviewing procedure in use in the *Gaeltacht* areas of *An Rinn* (Ring) and *Sean-Phobal* would adhere to these standards. In an earlier case of planning of October 2004, permission had been given to a private developer on the basis of three of five houses being sold either to native speakers or to persons competent in written and spoken Irish. The Council had approved the sale of the first house on the basis of competence in Irish defined as Irish to Leaving Certificate standard. A subsequent attempt by the Council in the case of that particular development to impose an interview to assess competence was dismissed by the Court on the basis that compliance with the language condition had already been approved and implemented. When oral language testing by means of interview

using two examiners was introduced by Galway County Council in relation to both public and private developments, there were some interesting consequences. The move received publicity in the English-language media, in property sections of newspapers. One family did not pass this qualifying oral. A Northern Ireland Unionist politician and member of the House of Lords declared himself willing to test such failures in Europe on a human rights basis. Advice was also given to the Council that the general attitude towards the language and the *Gaeltacht* conveyed by the person under test carried importance in addition to the fluency aspect. Further counsel was also given that personation might occur where a fluent speaker might personate the intending purchaser or tenant.

Other County Councils

The evolution of the *Gaeltacht* section of the Galway County Development Plan was watched and commented upon by councillors in other Councils with a *Gaeltacht*, not always with approval. County Meath has made specific and strong provision for the language in its two small *Gaeltacht* areas. The Minister with responsibility for the language chose the case of Kerry County Council to reiterate (August 2004) his view that County Councils must implement the law in relation to the physical development of the *Gaeltacht*. Otherwise, they are endangering the linguistic designation of the regions as *Gaeltacht*, particularly in the case of private housing. The Council set up a strategic planning committee. Kerry County Council did embark on a specific local *Gaeltacht* development plan, although it may be already too late to halt the results of the process noted several years ago of the proliferation of holiday homes on this scenic peninsula. Apparently, at that time, no linguistic conditions attached to potential house occupiers in new developments that had received planning permission. Donegal is now planning for the period 2006-2012. As part of that process, a local plan for the *Gaeltacht* area in *Gaoth Dobhair* did not meet with universal public approbation. In particular, the proposed supply of social housing and the possible development of *Gaoth Dobhair* as a town were seen as threats to the language and, more importantly, to traditional settlement patterns. With the assistance of the Council's Irish Language Officer, a three year development plan for the *Gaeltacht* areas of Donegal is underway. Cork County Council's plan for 2003-2009 mentioned the *Gaeltacht* as did Mayo Council's plan but not significantly. Cork has become more proactive of late, seeking further information from developers in *Baile Bhuirne* (Ballyvourney) and in *Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh* (Ballingeary), citing their policy of conserving the *Gaeltacht* heritage as noted in both the County and local development plans, whereas development had apparently been allowed in 2004 without linguistic conditions in *Baile Mhic Íre*. In response to criticism, Cork is now keeping *Údarás na Gaeltachta* informed, as officially stipulated. Waterford County Council, while it had decided to concentrate development around three villages in the Ring *Gaeltacht* and it is difficult to obtain planning permission to build elsewhere, initially had no specific protective mechanism for the language in those areas of development. While the draft County plan had been delayed to allow for translation, this Council now has language measures in place. In addition, the local community formed *Comhlacht Forbartha Ghaeltacht na nDéise* (The Decies *Gaeltacht* Development Body) and prepared its own draft *Gaeltacht* development plan for 2006-2008 as part of the general *Gaeltacht* planning exercise encouraged by the Department and the *Údarás*.

Common Guidelines

Over 30 developments in the Councils containing *Gaeltacht* areas have had linguistic conditions attached in recent years. Approximately two thirds of these were in the Galway *Gaeltacht*. However, no common criteria are yet in actual use to assist in the process of determining linguistic restrictions, either across the seven authorities involved, or of a kind that would attempt to reconcile economic and linguistic sustainability in rural communities.

Section 10.2 (m) of the Planning and Development Act (2000) and Regulations (2001) arising lay a compulsory duty on those County Councils which include *Gaeltacht* regions to protect linguistic and cultural heritage in their county development plans. Among other provisions to achieve this aim the imposition of conditions or restrictions is included. However, as is relatively normal in legislation, no specific indications or guidelines form part of the legislation, these generally being left to subsequent ministerial order. Since practical application is not specified in the Act, the Minister with responsibility for the *Gaeltacht* had promised (2003) that his department would cooperate in the provision of clearer guidelines. Section 33 of the Planning Act allows the Minister of

the Environment, in consultation with the Minister with responsibility for the language, to make relevant statutory regulations with particular reference to cases of *Gaeltacht* planning applications. In late 2005, however, the Minister for the Environment considered further statutory instruments not necessary. He upheld this position in late 2006, considering existing legislation sufficient to protect the language and that there was no necessity for new ministerial regulations to ensure that private developers provide independent linguistic impact statements in the *Gaeltacht*. This task was considered to be the function of local politicians, the elected councillors, who would ensure general policy guidelines to be implemented by officials of the Council.

The portfolio of the Minister with responsibility for the language and the *Gaeltacht* also includes Rural and Community Affairs while the portfolio of the Minister for the Environment includes Heritage and Local Authorities. The issue of sustainable rural communities, irrespective of the language they speak, then concerns them both in different ways. County councils must take into account the recommendations of the Planning Guidelines of the National Housing Framework and Sustainable Rural Housing (department of the Environment).

A consortium exists comprising *Údarás na Gaeltachta*, NUIG, five County Councils containing *Gaeltacht* regions (Cork, Donegal, Galway, Mayo, Kerry) and Galway City Council. Between them, they maintain an office in Brussels and generally co-operate in several fields of development. This consortium, *Nasc* (tie, bond), commissioned the preparation of guidelines to assist in the integration of economic, social and linguistic/cultural objectives in sustainable planning for the *Gaeltacht*, of a kind that would not be inherently contradictory nor overly restrictive. These were completed by 2005 but not generally discussed or apparently formally accepted.

Language organisations and planning issues

Comhdhail Náisiúnta na Gaeilge helped to set up the group *Airdeall* (Vigilance) in late 2005 representative of local communities and language experts to continue to monitor all planning applications and lodge reasoned appeals if necessary until an official agency would be established. The group also considers a more strategic approach to be required and have produced draft regulations for consideration by the relevant Ministers. Within a brief period from its inception, the group had forwarded some twenty one submissions, seven of which were appeals against planning permission already granted. The majority concerned the Galway *Gaeltacht*, nine submissions and up to six appeals. The Waterford *Gaeltacht* drew four submissions and Kerry one submission and one appeal. In a very recent case (early 2007), *Airdeall* took the unusual step of appealing, on behalf not of a development but of an individual case, on the basis that Galway County Council is currently more favourable to developers in the Spiddal area than to an individual wishing to build a dwelling for himself. In more recent times, the Irish press reports that *Airdeall* has been in dispute with Galway County Council which appears to be ignoring the recommendations of *An Bord Pleanála* and the efforts of developers to reach agreement on whichever specific linguistic conditions are to apply. The Draft *Gaeltacht* Plan (Galway) for consultation has been welcomed (late 2007). It proposes reservation of 80% of developments for Irish speakers in much of the *Gaeltacht*.

In addition to local development groups, there is no lack either of support from the community or language organisations. The group formed for planning purposes, *Cosaint na Gaeltachta* (Defence of the *Gaeltacht*), engaged in sustained lobbying. *Conradh na Gaeilge* provided legal backup. A campaign leaflet from *An Conradh* made the observation that since 1996 thirty nine houses were built on estates in *An Spidéal* (County Galway) and that the percentage of daily speakers there fell from 74% to 68% between the censuses of 1996 and 2002. Similarly in *An Rinn* (County Waterford), 34 houses were built on estates and the proportion of daily speakers fell from 60% to 43%. While there were undoubtedly other factors at play also, housing is part of the cluster.

An Bord Pleanála

An Bord Pleanála, the statutory Planning Board, generally known by its title in Irish, caused controversy (end 2003) when it informed objectors to a Waste Disposal Project, the entrance to which lies within the County Waterford *Gaeltacht*, that English only would be the language of the hearing to be conducted. Such a decision followed neither the intent nor the reality of either the Planning and Development Act (2000) nor the more recent Official Languages Act (2003). However, decisions of *An Bord Pleanála* in relation to appeals, particularly during 2005 and 2006,

served to create a more stable legal context in the absence of regulations from the Department of the Environment.

The proportion of Irish speakers, according to Census results, in any given *Gaeltacht* area, is used, *inter alia*, by *An Bord Pleanála* as benchmark in deciding the proportion of houses in a development to be retained for Irish speakers in an attempt to retain the linguistic character of the area.

The first ever oral hearing through Irish of *An Bord Pleanála* took place in late 2004 on foot of an appeal against a large housing development planned for *An Spidéal* and signed off by Galway County Council on the basis of the linguistic provisions to be applied to 62 per cent of the housing, or 11 of 29 apartments for a period of 10 years, instead of the anticipated 100 per cent. Simultaneous translation was provided. Public interest was high in what was widely regarded as a test case and the outcome eagerly awaited. In the event, both sides won. The decision taken by *An Bord Pleanála* allowed the development to proceed on the basis that outline planning permission had been given under previous legislation. However, *An Bord* also made clear that it supported the linguistic stipulations in planning made by Galway County Council. This was further clarified in the case of the scheme, which drew comment from the Minister, in the village of *Baile an Fheirtéaraigh* in the Kerry *Gaeltacht* where the appeal was lodged by one person acting as a result of a local public meeting. The Council had made no language stipulation, perhaps seeking clarification through a test case, but *An Bord Pleanála* reduced the development to a total of sixteen houses and applied the language restriction to twelve or 75%, based on current usage of Irish in the locality, thus giving a yardstick for the future. Indeed, an appeal by a developer, who had initially acquiesced to a certain percentage of the development being retained for Irish speakers, in relation to a Claregalway development on the basis of the low level of Irish usage in its environs was rejected by the Council and later by *An Bord Pleanála*. *An Bord* also ruled that 60 per cent of 27 houses in *Fál Carrach* in Donegal be reserved for Irish speakers. In *Baile na nGall* in the Kerry *Gaeltacht*, *An Bord* refused a development of nine holiday homes and an administration centre on foot of a local community appeal. Indeed, attention was drawn in the decision to the lack of a regional local plan for the area. Similarly, an appeal from a local group, *Caomhnóirí na Gaeltachta* (Guardians of the *Gaeltacht*), against a development of 17 houses in *Maoil a' Chóirne* in the Waterford *Gaeltacht* was upheld to the extent that at least 10 houses should be reserved for persons with fluency in Irish and seven for local people. It was further stipulated that no work begin until the agreement between the developer and the Council was fully compliant with the decision. *An Bord Pleanála* also upheld a decision of Galway County Council to refuse permission for a large (89 room) aparthotel in *An Spidéal* on various grounds, including size and adverse language impact.

An Bord Pleanála and Galway County Council, with Meath County Council, had laid the foundations for a more rigorous application of the few existing regulations and the many exhortations that are current, although *An Bord Pleanála* appears more vigorous in its rulings than local authorities. Other councils tended to look to Galway. Local communities, support organisations and statutory bodies are raising their voices for what they perceive to be the maintenance of the physical and linguistic environment in which they spend their lives. A more coherent physical plan for the *Gaeltacht* is beginning to emerge. Unless, however, this element becomes part of a more comprehensive planning exercise its overall effectiveness will be reduced. Declarations and aspirations in local authority development plans tend to remain words on paper unless based on sociolinguistic analyses, clear guidelines and effective implementation. Despite its efforts, Galway County Council is finding it difficult to provide a planning advice service in *Gaeltacht* areas through the medium of Irish. *Gaeltacht* people must still seek this advice through English in the city of Galway office instead of locally at pre-planning seminars as are held throughout the county. Implementation is still proving controversial.

The first ever oral hearing through Irish of *An Bord Pleanála* took place in late 2004. One of the more recent bilingual hearings, in November 2007, on the environmental impact statement relating to the proposed outer bypass for Galway city which goes through *Gaeltacht* areas, suffered two setbacks. Firstly, although interpreters were available, the equipment for simultaneous interpretation was not. Additionally, Irish speakers were in possession of the Irish version of the impact statement for only three as opposed to the statutory six weeks it had been available to English speakers.

Conditions and implementation

A market research survey on housing and language conditions was conducted for *Nuacht RTE/TG4* during early October 2006 in the Galway and Kerry *Gaeltacht* areas. Support for such conditions was higher among the 25-34 age group and in rural as opposed to urban areas but not overwhelmingly favourable overall. The majority of respondents rejected any re-drawing of *Gaeltacht* boundaries.

In view of the rapidly expanding population of the state and the settlement patterns that were increasing the number and size of both overly and sparsely populated areas, it was proving problematic for local authority planners to base their future estimated housing needs on precise figures, even in *Gaeltacht* areas, particularly areas in proximity to urban and town centres.

In the Draft Plan for the Galway *Gaeltacht* area (2006), the region had been divided into different areas. Some of the areas further west come within the *Ceantair Laga Ard-Riachtanais* (regions of high dependency) or CLAR programme of the Department with responsibility for the language and the *Gaeltacht*. They have lost more than 50% of their population between 1926 and 2000. There was then speculation that Galway County Council might have to revisit its own *Gaeltacht* housing policy once more in efforts to enhance and develop community life in these heartland *Gaeltacht* areas. New regulations from the Department of the Environment which permitted, for one year only, once off rural housing by residents had also impacted on local Council development plans for *Gaeltacht* area.

There have been direct economic results of linguistic planning conditions. Some developers and landowners in the *Gaeltacht* are of the view that the market is failing them. However, *Gaeltacht* people seeking housing now find that the new market conditions are enabling them to invest in a house in some areas in the *Gaeltacht*. This is of direct benefit to the region in several ways. But in other areas such as Donegal, where there are many holiday homes, particularly in those areas close to the border with NI, there is some concern at any restriction on housing as this might tend to push prices up and keep locals out. However, this argument appears contingent on a policy that allows unrestricted holiday homes and no language conditions.

In Galway, *Gaeltacht* councillors sought recent changes (2006) in an apparent amalgamation of existing conditions, linguistic and other: between housing developments to which linguistic conditions attach and the conditions attaching to once-off individual rural housing. In the former case, to date it had been understood that resale was not permitted *in perpetuity* except under the same linguistic conditions. In the latter, resale was not permitted for ten years. A number of Galway *Gaeltacht* Councillors argued to change the ten year restriction in the case of rural housing to seven years and to apply that ten year restriction instead of the existing *in perpetuity* restriction to housing having language conditions attached. The officials of the Planning Section of the Council were continuing to function in accord with the original arrangements (May 2006). Indications were that, despite *An Bord Pleanála* upholding its stand on linguistic conditions based on percentages of speakers as recorded in the census for particular areas, and despite the pioneering approach of Galway County Council, this group of *Gaeltacht* councillors were seeking changes to their own original stipulations, as not being in tune with some local wishes. In their view, the regulations should apply only in a quite restricted geographic area and persons with a connection to the *Gaeltacht*, even if not speakers, should be free to purchase houses. The watchdog group, *Airdeall*, argued that no premature steps should be taken pending the imminent publication of the *Gaeltacht* review commissioned by the Minister from National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) and the upcoming county plan which would draw from it. It was fairly clear that any changes by Galway County Council would be quickly replicated by other councils.

The view of the Minister with responsibility for the *Gaeltacht* was that all involved in the planning system should come together to discuss the issues since changes are a matter for the local authorities. While the legal situation is clearly stated in the Planning and Development Act 2000, flexibility of implementation was possible. A legal opinion agreed on the matter of flexibility, although a constitutional case or a legal review could be mounted on the basis of deleterious effects if far reaching changes were made by the councillors.. In July 2006, the CEO of *An tÚdarás* urged that the Minister's advice be taken, that a meeting be convened by both relevant Ministers (language and environment) of all official parties in the interests of reaching an agreed joint position and issuing agreed guidelines. The parties would include – for Councils containing *Gaeltacht* regions – County Council Managers, Directors of Planning, also CEOs of Regional Development Authorities, *Údarás na Gaeltachta* and the Department with responsibility for the *Gaeltacht*. He also called for:

- *more consultation with the local community*
- *the timeframe for the local plans being developed for the Galway Gaeltacht to be extended*
- *no changes to be made in Galway's current policy for the Gaeltacht*
- *experts in language planning and sociolinguistic matters to be employed as advisers.*

Some *Gaeltacht* councillors are also members of *Údarás na Gaeltachta*. They subsequently complained of not having seen these recommendations in advance of publication in media interviews. A meeting was convened by *An tÚdarás* to which relevant elected persons and officials were invited but the recommendations were rejected by the *Gaeltacht* councillors. Much media comment followed. The organisation *Airdeall* was concerned at not having received an invitation to put its four points to the meeting:

- *applications from Gaeltacht residents to build their own dwelling on their own land or land for sale be given favourable consideration*
- *the danger to the Gaeltacht of large developments without language conditions be recognised but that recognition be given also to the advantages of small developments catering for local need and the wishes of fluent speakers willing to relocate to the Gaeltacht*
- *the fact that restrictions may, in fact, result in locals being able to purchase more cheaply than on the open market*
- *the need for a positive strategy in order to encourage developers to build in sparsely inhabited areas and Irish speakers to relocate to such areas: it was recommended for the former that the current CLAR grant should be doubled; for the latter that a tax incentive (as in County Leitrim, ex alia) be introduced in areas where the schoolgoing population has fallen over the last ten years.*

Issues of democracy were raised on the airwaves on the difference between the role of elected persons and voluntary community organisations funded by the state.

In the event, Galway *Gaeltacht* councillors succeeded in relaxing the existing conditions. The variation was agreed in July 2006 and applies for three years to housing of more than two units. In addition, since it omitted two heartland areas, the inappropriate use of the region covered by the Galway transportation planning study had to be changed as basis for the areas in which these new housing changes would apply. The changes form part not of the cultural section of the Local Area Plan but of the settlement and rural housing component so future anomalies may exist since the right to refuse developments deleterious to the usage of the language still remains. The existing language conditions (language assessment and resale only to an Irish speaker) will no longer apply to areas where less than 20% of the population speak Irish on a daily basis as in census data. *An Bord Pleanála*, while using this general yardstick of percentages based on census data, would also allow for more stringent conditions in some cases on the basis of the potential linguistic impact of developments. The conditions will remain in place for areas under pressure and the proportion of housing for Irish speakers will still be determined by census data. In the more isolated areas, sales in housing developments will be restricted to local people engaged in employment in the area, to returning emigrants and their immediate family, and to Irish speakers.

The existing language conditions (language assessment and resale only to an Irish speaker) will no longer apply to areas where less than 20% of the population speak Irish on a daily basis according to the results of census data. *An Bord Pleanála*, while using this general yardstick of percentages based on census data, would allow for more stringent conditions in some cases on the basis of the potential linguistic impact of developments. Existing conditions will remain in place for areas under pressure and the proportion of housing for Irish speakers will still be determined by census data.

The most recent Draft *Plean Gaeltachta* (late November 2007) from Galway County Council was then welcomed by activists, by *Údarás na Gaeltachta* and by the advocacy group *Airdeall*: it allows for 80% of new houses to be allocated to Irish speakers in the area from *Na Forbacha* (Furbo) west of Galway city to *An Cheathrú Rua* (Carraroe) and the remaining 20% to be primarily for local residents, for those working locally in a regular capacity and for Irish speakers wishing to relocate to the *Gaeltacht*. The plan was submitted to public consultation and later adoption in its final form in March 2008.

More vital, however, may be the emerging situation where councils, for whatever reasons, are either lax in interpretation of conditions or do not continue to monitor situations where planning conditions have been imposed in order to ensure that they are actually upheld by the developer. The

senior planning inspector with *An Bord Pleanála*, in his report on an appeal addressed by *An Bord* on a development of 51 houses in *An Spidéal*, Galway, was not impressed with the County Council's approach. In his opinion, a sufficient number of decisions are available with respect to the Galway *Gaeltacht* to enable the Council not to be 'avoiding its responsibility to set out the main parameters of a language condition' instead of setting deficient conditions capable of exploitation to the detriment of the language.

While conditions may ensure that a significant proportion of new home owners in the *Gaeltacht* have competence in the language, they cannot ensure actual use of this competence. However, without conditions the future of the language community in their own regions would be much more negative. This would inevitably affect the future of the language generally. Such planning conditions are then not only a legitimate, but a very necessary, element of language planning. Their impact is greater when part of more joined-up linguistic planning.

SUMMARY ON COMPETENCE AND USE

ABILITY

Table 2.8 gives a summary picture of ability in, and use of, Irish over the period 1996 to 2006. Recent censuses (Table 2.8) do not record either the degree of overall linguistic competence or the degree of oral competence on which the census question is based. Evidence from a variety of sources, including censuses and social surveys, must then be considered in assessing competence and use. Taking the population of the Republic as a whole, with regard to degrees of competence as opposed to use, it is usually accepted that some 6%–10% have high competence. This group includes the traditional Irish-speaking communities of the *Gaeltacht*. A further 25–30% or so have good to reasonable competence and another 30%–50% are on a declining scale towards low passive competence. The changing composition of the population appears, for the moment, to be having some slight effects on ability and use levels. Concentration of immigration in certain areas, especially in small communities, will have initial effects on the sociolinguistic environment, effects that may become permanent. Hastily conceived official responses to what is described as multiculturalism are considered unlikely to have lasting benefit for any sector of the population. On the other hand, ability and use among those whose birthplace was outside Ireland showed interesting results in the 2006 Census, particularly with regard to active daily use of Irish by those professing ability.

The population of the island of Ireland is now moving closer to six million. If those returning with some knowledge of Irish north and south were put together, the figure proposed of one in every three being acquainted with the language may be accepted. The fact that a large proportion are schoolgoers, or that self-report may indicate no more than a positive attitude, does not detract from the very sizeable base that does exist as a result of past policy, and which does constitute a foundation on which to build future policy. However, the gap between ability and use of that ability is a further challenge.

USE

Approximately 75% of those returning as Irish speakers put that competence to use, Tables 2.8 and 2.3, in some fashion (27.4% in the education system only and another 46% outside the education system from daily to less often, according to Census 2006). Between 3% and 5% of the population returning in the Census with ability in Irish engage in daily active use of the language in the post school years. Up to 10% engage in daily to weekly use. In terms of numbers, taking all age groups together, almost 100,000 (97,089) persons use Irish weekly outside the education system and over five times that number, 581,574 persons, use Irish occasionally. Over three quarters of a million persons, 46% of those with ability, currently use Irish to some extent outside the education system. No town in the State returned a zero response with regard to use of Irish outside education. The potential for more than weekly or occasional use is a challenge for policy makers, if the occasions on which use takes place, or might be stimulated, were known.

In the age group 20–44, while 40% never make use of their ability, 50% do so outside education, on a weekly or occasional basis. Preschoolers (age 3–4) with ability are the highest users even if largely in education (63%). Their number is also increasing at each census. A mere 4.2% of those with ability in this 3–4 age group do not use Irish or do not state. Exploiting potential

across all age groups and contexts of use remains then a challenge for planners.

The fragility of the language in the *Gaeltacht* is borne out in every study, particularly among the age groups significant for language transmission: parents and teenagers. This has been highlighted over the years in so many studies from the 1980s down to the more recent, which include the Commission on the *Gaeltacht*, COGG studies, continuous analyses from GMIT and the latest comprehensive study which provoked a ministerial study group led by the then Minister for Finance, now *Taoiseach*. This situation is probably the single greatest challenge facing both the traditional community and language planners. It cannot be adequately or comprehensively tackled, however, in isolation from linguistic planning for the State's and indeed the island's population as a whole, in the interdependent legal, cultural, social and economic context which prevails. New definitions are sought for the terms *Gaeltacht* and immersion education. In 1925, 80% of speakers was considered the criterion for *Gaeltacht* status. The *Gaeltacht* today has 30% of its population who are not Irish speakers and 9% of those returning as speakers do not use the language. Among the parent age group, 20–44, 11% never use Irish. Where incoming industry was formerly blamed for language shift in the *Gaeltacht*, it is now seen also and perhaps even more as the inevitable outcome of bad planning and lack of foresight by the State, whether in education or in physical development. The end of the *Gaeltacht* is foreseen within 15 to 20 years unless drastic steps are taken, both by the authorities and the community itself, taking charge of its own destiny. In the *Gaeltacht* the number of preschoolers using Irish in education (41.5%) equals use outside education (40.7%). Home generation of speakers is ceding rapidly to a situation closer to the school generation of speakers taking place outside the *Gaeltacht* with concomitant falls in use of ability. The reasons for the increasing social dominance of English have been well documented: incomers with little or no active Irish, mixed language family situations. However, more research might uncover the specific triggers for code switching to English in informal contexts of use by Irish speakers in the *Gaeltacht*. The miracle of the continued existence of the *Gaeltacht* despite all odds is, however, undeniably a cause for celebration.

Nevertheless, it is admitted that Census returns are relatively crude instruments. Definitions require more precision. What is the real meaning of speaker, of ability? Referring to those professing ability to speak Irish as Irish speakers is misleading since a large proportion of them never use, or have access to contexts in which they might use, that ability. They are potential rather than actual speakers. There is no indication of the degree or quality of oral ability possessed. Ability is defined solely in terms of speaking. Understanding spoken or written language, ability to read or write or possession of all skills is not recorded. Frequency of use is given solely in terms of time, (daily, weekly, less often, never), not according to contexts of use outside school, whether home or other. It might also be useful for future censuses to have a uniform question north and south. This could usefully include both passive and active competence, or the four language skills of understanding, speaking, reading and writing, as in the NI Census 2001, (now discontinued in the Republic), as well as indication as to frequency of use as has been introduced since 1996 in the south. Indications as to the degree of oral competence and the occasions of use, or of potential use of a list of contexts if made available, would greatly enhance the linguistic information provided, as happens in censuses in Canada. If such a level of information is considered inappropriate for purposes of the Census, it could be sought at local community level, and more usefully perhaps, as a basis for community planning.

Ability is too often literally use-less. It is, of course, impossible to consider use in a vacuum. Without occasions for use, ability must remain purely passive or even totally inactive, language being mainly a social activity. Information on occasions of use (actual or desired), constitute a vital tool for planners. Despite the change begun in the Census question in 1996, an amalgam of both the previous and the new formulations might be more revealing for the future, since passive use (listening, reading, writing), as in the pre-1996 period, might be distinguished from active use in speaking and the frequency of that use. There are respondents who are of the view that their passive skills in Irish, however developed, do not count for purposes of the census, a view expressed in the wake of the piloting of possible new questions in the pre-2006 Census period. These respondents have little choice but to selfclassify as non-speakers. Such respondents have a vital role to play in language revitalisation, whether as passive users or as influencers of positive attitudes towards policy measures.

However, no matter how refined the levels of information available, the main challenge will remain: that of providing the impetus and the contexts for translating competence into active use. Contexts for active use outside the education system are required for those in the system; appropriate additional contexts are also required for those who currently actively use Irish outside the education system. Ironically, more opportunities exist for the passive skills through radio, television, newspapers, magazines, books, and live performances, than do for active use. With the dispersion of out of school active users throughout the State, planning appears to require differentiated but locally integrated approaches at the micro-level which might allow interaction between different ability levels. Such an approach has benefit particularly in the *Gaeltacht* situation. Broad sweep policies at the national level, while acceptable in some domains, are not entirely appropriate for local communicative activity. Locally based research and plans might not only integrate differing levels of activity but different target groups and levels of ability in an effort to both increase ability and raise use. Towns with some form of linguistic support, once maintained over time, appear to have levels of ability and use slightly above the national norm.

The challenge appears to lie in normalising active use of what is now a very under-utilised linguistic resource and thereby benefiting from the positive attitudes and undoubted creeping normalisation that is gradually taking place, whether the latter is fluke, fad or indeed firmly enconced through political and popular will. The *Taoiseach* referred to the 92% of people who feel that promoting Irish is important to the country, to themselves personally or to both, when introducing the Governmental Statement on Irish in December 2006. The State has had success in its acquisition policies through the domain of education and in application by citizens of the passive skills so acquired. However, the issue of outlets for use of the active language skills has been left largely to the voluntary sector outside the *Gaeltacht* or to chance in the case of *Gaeltacht* social networks. Language acquisition and development occur primarily through immediate and continual use of whichever level of skill has been acquired, whether in the home or in institutional settings. This demands joined-up planning where official, voluntary and community initiative may combine, in mutually complementary and integrated roles, in locally based endeavours that encompass all aspects of life, which impinge on the sociolinguistic environment.

Table 2.1 Censuses 1996 / 2002 / 2006 Ability in Irish

Census	1996	2002	2006
Total State population	3,626,087	3,917,203	4,239,848
Total respondents— <i>population over 3 yrs</i>	3,479,648	3,750,995	4,057,646
Irish speakers (and as % of <i>population</i>)	1,430,205 (43.5)	1,570,894 (42.8)	1,656,790 (41.9)
Non-Irish speakers	1,858,170	2,097,263	2,300,174
Not Stating	191,273	82,838	100,682
3–4 year age group (and % for <i>cohort</i>)	8,471 (10)	10,450 (10.3)	14,773 (13.7)
Gaeltacht			
Population total	82,715	86,517	91,862
Irish Speakers (and as % of <i>Gaeltacht</i>)	61,035 (76.3)	62,157 (72.6)	64,265 (70.8)
Non-Irish speakers	18,946	23,433	26,539
Not Stating	2,734	927	1,058
3–4 year age group (and % for <i>cohort</i>)	1,111 (50.9)	1,174 (50.6)	1,226 (51.4)
Outside Gaeltacht			
Population total	3,396,933	3,664,478	4,147,986
Irish Speakers (and as % of <i>outside pop.</i>)	1,369,170 (40.3)	1,508,737 (41.1)	1,592,525 (38.4)
3–4 year age group (and % for <i>cohort</i>)	7,360 (7.2)	9,276 (8.3)	13,547 (12.8)

* Those not stating excluded

Table 2.2 Census 2002: Frequency of Use of Irish by Location**(a) Frequency of Use by Province**

Province (% local pop.)	Total Speakers	Daily (%)	Never (%)
Leinster (39.1)	768,404	153,700 (20)	239,450 (31.2)
Munster (47.7)	493,500	105,032 (21.3)	145,618 (29.5)
Connacht (49.3)	216,128	53,236 (24.6)	53,147 (24.6)
Ulster (39.9) <i>3 counties</i>	92,862	27,573 (29.7)	21,442 (23.1)
State	1,570,894	339,541 (21.6)	459,657 (29.3)

(b) Frequency of Use in the Counties in each Province returning the Highest and Lowest percentages of Speakers

Province	County Total Speakers (% local population)	Daily (%)	Never (%)
Leinster			
Highest	Laois 24,255 (44.6)	5,007 (20.6)	7,138 (29.4)
Lowest	Louth 34,485 (36.3)	7,276 (21)	10,604 (30.8)
Munster			
Highest	Clare 48,644 (50.5)	10,436 (21.5)	14,053 (29)
Lowest	Tipp. Sth. 32,757 (44.1)	7,013 (21.4)	10,021 (30.6)
Connacht			
Highest	Galway 102,529 (52.1)	29,743 (29)	21,577 (21)
Lowest	Leitrim 11,095 (45.5)	2,240 (20.2)	3,206 (29)
Ulster 3 counties			
Highest	Monaghan 20,551 (41.4)	5,071 (24.7)	5,607 (27.3)
Lowest	Cavan 20,528 (38.6)	4,577 (22.3)	6,274 (30.6)

(c) Frequency of Use by City

Dublin	158,116 (34.6)	25,889 (16.4)	51,769 (32.7)
Cork	52,072 (44.9)	9,300 (17.9)	16,629 (32)
Limerick	21,417 (42.1)	4,159 (19.4)	6,487 (30.3)
Galway	31,440 (50.8)	5,983 (19)	7,721 (24.6)
Waterford	17,234 (41.5)	3,230 (18.7)	5,863 (34)

Table 2.2 Census 2002: Frequency of Use of Irish by Location

(d) Frequency of Use by City Including Suburbs

City Greater Area	Total Speakers (% local population)	Daily (%)	Never (%)
Dublin	349,076 (37.3)	63,825 (18.3)	112,585 (35.3)
Cork	83,178 (47.5)	16,080 (19.3)	26,535 (31.9)
Limerick	38,339 (46.8)	6,879 (17.9)	12,142 (31.7)
Galway	31,595 (50.8)	6,009 (19)	7,743 (24.5)
Waterford	18,078 (41.5)	3,408 (18.9)	6,157 (34)

(e) Frequency of Use by Selected Towns

Town (Feature)	Total Speakers (% local population)	Daily (%)	Never (%)
10,000+ Residents			
Dundalk (AIS)	11,290 (37.6)	2,393 (21.2)	3,399 (30.1)
Killkenny (AIS)	8,557 (44)	1,797 (21)	2,528 (29.5)
Carlow(AIS)	7,480 (43.4)	1,540 (20.6)	2,374 (31.7)
Maynooth (University)	4,805 (50.6)	1,043 (21.7)	1,420 (29.5)
5-10,000 Residents			
Portmarnock (AIS)	4,294 (53.3)	722 (16.08)	1,491 (34.7)
Dungarvan (near <i>Gaeltacht</i>)	3,406 (49.4)	767 (22.5)	948 (27.8)
Nenagh (Scheme/AIS)	3,037 (50.5)	528 (17.4)	951 (31.3)
3-5,000 Residents			
Newcastle West (AIS)	1,737 (47)	396 (22.8)	520 (29.9)
1.5-3,000 Residents			
Rathcoole (AIS)	1,099 (45.6)	265 (24)	309 (28)
Templemore (Garda College)	1,200 (56)	297 (24.8)	276 (23)
Dingle (<i>Gaeltacht</i>)	1,060 (62.4)	422 (39.8)	74 (7)
Abbeyfeale (<i>Glór na nGaeil</i>)	791 (49.8)	147 (18.6)	258 (32.6)
Totals (12 towns population 110,996)	48,756 (44)	10,317 (21.2)	14,548 (29.8)

*AIS: All Irish Schools

Table 2.3 Census 2006: Ability in and Use of Irish in the State

(a) Daily use of Irish in the education system

Daily	Speakers (%)
Daily in education system <i>only</i>	453,207 (27.35)
Speaks Irish <i>also</i> outside education system	31,605 (1.9)
Total in education system	484,812 (29.26)

(b) Use of Irish *outside education* by those with competence in Irish

Frequency	Users of Irish	Users <i>also</i> outside ed.	Total as % of speakers
Daily	53,471	18,677	72,148 (4.4)
Weekly	97,089	5,772	102,861 (6.2)
Less Often	581,574	4,523	586,097 (35.4)
Never	412,846	2,633	415,479 (25)
Not Stated	26,998	—	26,998 (1.6)
		Daily to Less Often	761,106 (46)

(c) Use of Irish *outside education* by some age groups among speakers

Age / Use	3-4	5-19	20-44
Cohort (and % of age group)	14,773	550,474	618,179
Daily (%)	1,769 (12)	17,542 (3.2)	26,573 (4.3)
Weekly (%)	1,371 (9.4)	32,428 (5.9)	37,721 (6.1)
Less Often (%)	1,679 (11.3)	59,342 (10.8)	275,459 (44.6)
Never (%)	208 (1.4)	34,476 (6.3)	239,847 (38.8)
Not Stated (%)	413 (2.8)	8,138 (1.5)	9,129 (1.5)
Daily only in education	9,333 (63)	398,548 (72.4)	29,450 (4.8)

Table 2.4 Census 2006: Ability in and Use of Irish in the *Gaeltacht***(a) Ability to speak Irish by age group and % of Cohort**

Age	3-4	5-19	20-44	45-64	65+
Ability %	51.4%	85.8%	62.5%	68.8%	75.5%

(b) Use of Irish in the *Gaeltacht*

Frequency	Speakers (%)
Total with ability in Irish	64,265
Daily use in education only	13,982 (21.75)
Speaks outside education also	5,179 (8.05)
<i>Aggregate</i> daily in education	19,161 (29.8)
Daily outside education	17,687 (27.5)
Weekly	6,564 (10.2)
Less Often	15,150 (23.6)
Daily to Less Often	39,401 (61.3%)
<i>Aggregate</i> all users outside education (including users outside education also)	44,580 (69.4)
Never	4,313 (6.7)
Not Stated	1,390 (2.2)
Never + Not Stated	(6.7) + (2.2) = (8.9)

(c) Use of Irish outside education by some age groups in the *Gaeltacht*

Age / Use	3-4	5-19	20-44
Cohort (speakers %)	1,226	17,373	20,357
Daily (%)	501 (40.9)	4,460 (25.67)	6987 (34.3)
Weekly (%)	89 (7.3)	1,040 (6)	2559 (12.6)
Less Often (%)	88 (7.2)	1,505 (8.66)	6,468 (31.77)
Never (%)	2 (0.16)	508 (2.92)	2,251 (11)
Not Stated (%)	37 (3)	294 (1.69)	372 (1.8)
Daily only in Education	509 (41.5)	9,566 (55)	1,720 (8.45)

Table 2.5 Census 2006: Ability in and Use of Irish outside *Gaeltacht***(a) Ability in and use outside education by speakers outside the *Gaeltacht***

Frequency	Speakers (%)
Total Speakers with ability	1,592,525
Daily in education only	439,225 (27.6)
Daily outside education <i>also</i>	26,426 (1.7)
<i>Aggregate</i> daily in education	465,651 (29.2)
Daily <i>outside</i> education	54,461 (3.4)
Weekly	96,297 (6)
Less Often	570,947 (35.85)
<i>Aggregate</i> all users outside education	716,526 (45)
Never	411,166 (25.8)

Or 716,526 (45%) if the 5,179 speakers in the *Gaeltacht* who also use Irish outside the Education system, but for whom no separate frequencies of use are given, are taken into account.

(b) Use of Irish outside education by some age groups among speakers outside the *Gaeltacht*

Age / Use	3-4	5-19	20-44
Cohort (% speakers)	13,547	533,121	597,822
Daily (%)	1,268 (9.4)	13,082 (2.5)	19,586 (3.3)
Weekly (%)	1,282 (9.5)	31,388 (5.9)	35,162 (5.9)
Less Often (%)	1,591 (11.7)	57,837 (10.8)	268,991 (45)
Never (%)	206 (1.5)	33,968 (6.4)	237,596 (39.7)
Daily <i>only</i> in education (%)	8,824 (65)	388,982 (73)	27,730 (4.6)

Table 2.6 Census 2006: Frequency of Use of Irish by Location**(a) Frequency of Use by Province**

Province	Total Speakers (% local pop.)	A Daily in Ed. <i>only</i> (% of speakers)	C+B2 Daily <i>outside</i> Ed. (% of speakers)	A+B+C Daily Overall (% of speakers)	D+B2 Never (% of speakers)
Leinster	823,555 (38.6)	228,797 (27.8)	27,292 (3.3)	256,089 (31.09)	217,219 (26.4)
Munster	510,005 (46.4)	137,247 (26.9)	17,278 (3.4)	154,525 (30.3)	130,351 (25.6)
Connacht	224,953 (47.5)	56,706 (25.2)	17,766 (7.9)	74,472 (33.1)	48,358 (21.5)
Ulster 3 counties	98,277 (39.2)	30,457 (31)	9,812 (10)	40,269 (40.9)	19,551 (19.9)
Total	1,656,790	453,207 (27.35)	72,148 (4.4)	525,355 (31.7)	415,479 (25)

*Including 2,633 persons who stated that they used Irish *also outside* Education, category B2

(b) Ability and Use in the Counties in each Province returning the Highest and Lowest percentages of Speakers

Province	Speakers (% local pop.)	A+B1 Daily in Education (% of speakers)	C+B2 Daily <i>outside</i> Ed. (% of speakers)	D+B2 Never (% of speakers)
Leinster				
Killkenny	35,669 (43.5)	11,500 (32.2)	918 (2.6)	8,816 (24.7)
Louth	37,993 (36.7)	12,451 (32.8)	1,014 (2.7)	9,742 (25.7)
Munster				
Clare	50,287 (48.8)	14,414 (28.7)	1,427 (2.8)	12,752 (25.4)
Tipperary South	33,769 (43.2)	10,187 (30.1)	667 (2)	8,852 (26.2)
Connacht				
Galway	108,124 (49.8)	28,909 (26.7)	13,817 (12.8)	20,070 (18.6)
Leitrim	11,758 (43.1)	3,311 (28.2)	239 (2)	3,012 (25.6)
Ulster 3 counties				
Donegal	54,813 (39.6)	18,814 (33.2)	8,679 (15.8)	8,468 (15.5)
Monaghan	20,828 (39.6)	7,296 (35)	638 (3)	5,154 (24.8)
Cavan	22,636 (38)	7,464 (33)	495 (2.2)	5,929 (26.2)

**ex aequo*

Key

A – Use Irish daily *only* in Education

B – Use Irish daily in Education (B1) and *also outside* Education (B2)*

C – Daily *only outside* Education

D – Never use Irish (includes 456 persons in category B2)

Table 2.6 Census 2006: Frequency of Use of Irish by Location

(c) Frequency of Use by City

City	Speakers (% local pop.)	A+ B1 Daily Use In Ed. (% of speakers)	C+B2 Daily Use <i>outside</i> Ed. (% of speakers)	D+B2 Never (% of speakers)
Dublin	158,762 (33.8)	38,986 (24.6)	6,459 (4)	43,061 (27.1)
Cork	48,082 (42.8)	11,440 (23.8)	1,677 (3.5)	12,879 (26.8)
Limerick	19,711 (39.8)	5,735 (29)	537 (2.7)	4,884 (24.8)
Galway	31,153 (45.9)	6,097 (19.6)	2,308 (7.4)	6,672 (21.4)
Waterford	17,031 (40.4)	4,638 (14.9)	357 (2.1)	4,978 (29.3)
Totals	274,739 (35.7)	66,886 (24.4)	11,338 (4.13)	72,474 (26.4)

(d) Frequency of Use by City Including Suburbs

City Greater Area	Speakers (% local pop.)	A+ B1 Daily Use In Ed. (% of speakers)	C+B2 Daily Use <i>outside</i> Ed. (% of speakers)	D+B2 Never (% of speakers)
Dublin	358,520 (36.9)	95,812 (26.7)	13,219 (3.7)	97,691 (27.2)
Cork	81,926 (45.9)	21,372 (26)	2,813 (3.4)	22,040 (27)
Limerick	37,806 (44.3)	9,963 (26.4)	986 (2.6)	10,268 (27.1)
Galway	31,311 (46)	6,153 (19.7)	2,227 (7.1)	6,728 (21.5)
Waterford	18,381 (40.6)	5,033 (27.4)	390 (2.1)	5,372 (29.2)
Totals	527,945 (37.9)	138,323 (26.2)	29,267 (5.5)	142,099 (26.9)

Key

A – Use Irish daily *only* in EducationB – Use Irish daily in Education (B1) and *also outside* Education (B2)C – Daily *only outside* Education

D – Never use Irish

Table 2.6 Census 2006: Frequency of Use of Irish by Location

(e) Frequency of Use by Selected Towns

Town (Feature)	Speakers (% local pop.)	A+ B1 Daily Use In Ed. (% of speakers)	C+B2 Daily Use <i>outside</i> Ed. (% of speakers)	D+B2 Never (% of speakers)
10,000+ Residents				
Dundalk (AIS)	11,958 (36.9)	3,924 (32.8)	604 (5)	3,003 (25)
Kilkenny (AIS)	8,499 (41.1)	2,441 (28.7)	340 (4)	2,128 (25)
Carlow (AIS)	7,707 (40.2)	2,137 (27.7)	257 (3.3)	2,063 (26.8)
Maynooth (University)	5,154 (50.7)	1,393 (27)	353 (6.8)	1,290 (25)
5–10,000 Residents				
Portmarnock (AIS)	4,224 (49.3)	961 (22.75)	105 (2.5)	1,298 (30.7)
Dungarvan (near <i>Gaeltacht</i>)	3,528 (45.1)	1,017 (28.8)	140 (4)	831 (23.5)
Nenagh (Scheme/AIS)	3,272 (45.2)	792 (24.2)	67 (2)	1,015 (31)
3–5,000 Residents				
Newcastle West (AIS)	2,094 (43.9)	486 (23.2)	95 (4.5)	573 (27.4)
1.5–3,000 Residents				
Rathcoole (AIS)	1,107 (40)	262 (23.7)	50 (4.5)	286 (25.8)
Templemore (Garda College)	1,260 (55.1)	360 (28.6)	20 (1.6)	281 (22.3)
<i>An Daingean</i> (<i>Gaeltacht</i>)	1,075 (62.3)	296 (27.5)	280 (26)	79 (7.3)
Abbeyfeale (<i>Glór na nGael</i>)	796 (44.3)	216 (27)	22 (2.8)	226 (28.3)
Totals	50,674	14,285 (28.12)	2,333 (4.6)	13,073 (25.8)

·AIS = All-Irish School

KeyA – Use Irish daily *only* in EducationB – Use Irish daily in Education (B1) and *also outside* Education (B2)C – Daily *only outside* Education

D – Never use Irish

Table 2.7 Census 2006: Irish and Certain Ethnic/Cultural Groups**(a) Ability in Irish Among Certain Ethnic/Cultural Groups including Ages 3–19 and 20+**

Ethnic/Cultural Group	Overall Total			Total with Irish (%)		
	Total pop.	Age 3–19	Age 20+	Total pop.	Age 3–19	Age 20+
White						
Irish Traveller	20,321	9,752	10,569	2,872 (15%)	2,134 (24%)	738 (7%)
Any other white background	282,145	40,235	241,910	21,694 (8%)	15,263 (39%)	6,431 (3%)
Black or Black Irish						
African	35,314	13,410	21,904	4,755 (14%)	4,292 (34%)	463 (2%)
Other Black background	3,292	1,151	2,141	614 (19%)	430 (40%)	184 (9%)
Asian or Asian Irish						
Chinese	15,962	2,246	13,716	1,376 (9%)	952 (44%)	424 (3%)
Other Asian background	33,429	6,638	26,791	2,856 (9%)	2,311 (36%)	545 (2%)
Otherincl. Mixed Background	43,319	12,162	31,157	6,965 (16%)	5,184 (44%)	1,781 (6%)

(b) Ability in and Use of Irish by Birthplace

Country of Birth	Number (% with Ability)	% Daily Use <i>outside</i> Education
USA	9,155 (38.3)	6.4
England and Wales	57,086 (28.4)	4.5
Northern Ireland	11,617 (23.9)	6.5
Scotland	3,489 (21)	16.7
Other Countries	4,215 (18.9)	4.2
Africa	5,114 (12.5)	2.4
EU Countries	7,607 (8.2)	11.3
Other European Countries	2,768 (10.5)	7
Asia	3,926 (7.4)	4.2
Republic of Ireland	1,546,005 (46.8)	4.2

Table 2.8 Summary – Censuses 1996/2002/2006: Ability and Use Patterns

<u>Ability</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2006</u>
State			
Speakers (<i>% population</i>)	1,430,205 (43.5)	1,570,894 (42.8)	1,656,790 (41.9)
Age 3–4 (<i>% cohort</i>)	8,471 (10)	10,450 (10.3)	14,773 (13.7)
Gaeltacht			
Speakers (<i>% population</i>)	61,035 (76.3)	62,157 (72.6)	64,265 (70.8)
Age 3–4 (<i>% cohort</i>)	1,111 (50.9)	1,174 (50.6)	1,226 (51.4)
Outside Gaeltacht			
Speakers (<i>% population</i>)	1,369,170 (40.3)	1,508,737 (41.1)	1,592,525 (38.4)
Age 3–4 (<i>% cohort</i>)	7,630 (7.2)	9,276 (8.3)	13,547 (12.8)
Use Patterns			
Speakers	1,430,205	1,570,894	1,656,790
Users in education and outside education to varying degrees	1,002,171 (70.07)	1,079,880 (68.74)	1,214,313 (73.3)
Daily inclusive of education	353,663 (24.7)	339,541 (21.6)	525,355 (31.7)
Weekly	123,860 (8.7)	155,039 (9.9)	102,861 (6.2)
Daily to Weekly (%)	477,523 (33.4)	494,580 (31.5)	628,216 (37.9)
Less Often	524,648 (36.7)	585,300 (37.3)	586,097 (35.4)
Never	369,515 (25.8)	459,657 (29.3)	415,479 (25)
Use: Adult Cohort			
Cohort (% of cohort)	863,933	1,032,693	1,091,543
Daily post-19 years including education	70,950 (4.96)	72,834 (4.6)	98,163 (9)
and as % of users	7%	6.7%	8%
Daily post 19 years excluding education	—	—	72,148 (6.6)
and as % of users	—	—	5.9%
Weekly post 19 years excluding education	—	—	69,062 (6.3)
and as % of users	—	—	5.7%

The figures for 1996 and 2002 in the Summary Table are derived from results which do not distinguish daily use in education and outside education and which therefore give combined results. To maintain the same basis of comparison, daily use from the 2006 results for the post age 19 or adult groups have been combined from three sources: daily use in education; outside education; and from the results for daily use by those in education who also use Irish outside education. This is possible since this latter group is dealt with separately in the Census returns for 2006.