

All bishops, no congregation: The minority language condition in public policy concerns

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MIME Project

Structure of Lecture

1. Current engagement: prescription without an agreed diagnosis
2. Knowledge of existential threat
3. Acknowledgement of threat in policy
4. Pragmatic agenda for engagement: a rebalance

PART 1

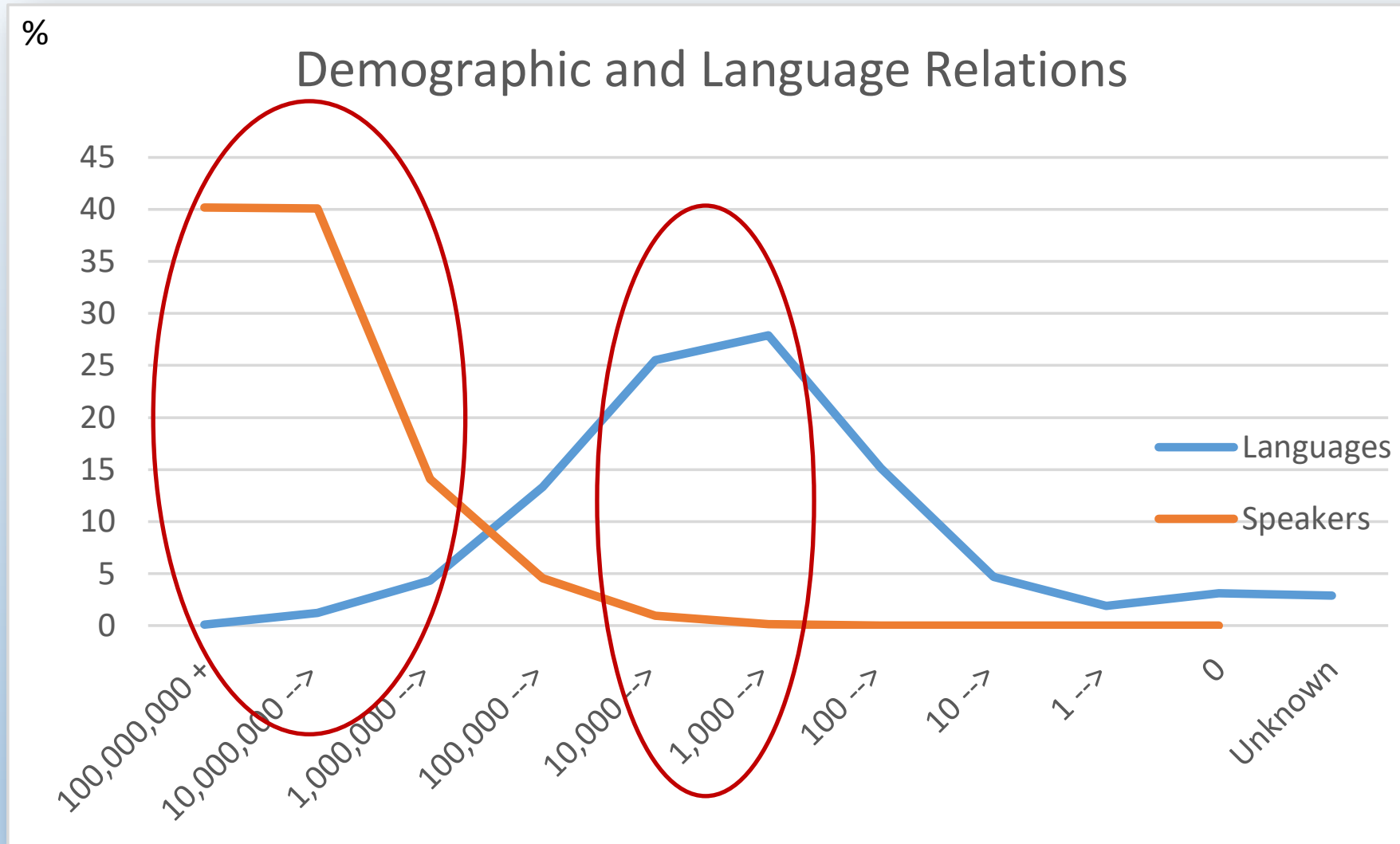
Current engagement:
prescription without an
agreed diagnosis

Civic engagement: What is policy addressing?

- Civic asymmetrical imperative
 - Policy without detriment to majority – minority's vicarious relationship
 - Expedient/pragmatic containment of minority concerns – what is possible
 - Unidirectional bilingualism in group contact (Matras 2009)
- Fallacy of composition
 - Rationales for multilingualism – bilingualism is good for you (Ramakrishnan *et al.* 2017)
 - Learners as compensation for societal decline
 - Sectoralism – intermediary class
- Contradiction of public policy politics at the expense of minority-group politics
 - Policy support, institutional promotion, resource allocation
 - But with weak societal engagement and naïve prioritisation of resource and effort

Legacy issues and ideological trends

- Linguistic pastoralism: cultural celebration of the threatened cultural resources (19th Century, Mòd, Oireachtas, Eisteddfod, etc)
- Pre-modernist infrastructuralism: social transfers/relief and public works (i.e., the 19th Century in the 20th Century in the case of the minoritised groups)
- (Post-)Modernist development or sectoralism: Modernisation without empowerment, outgroup-determined notions of development in circumscribed sectors

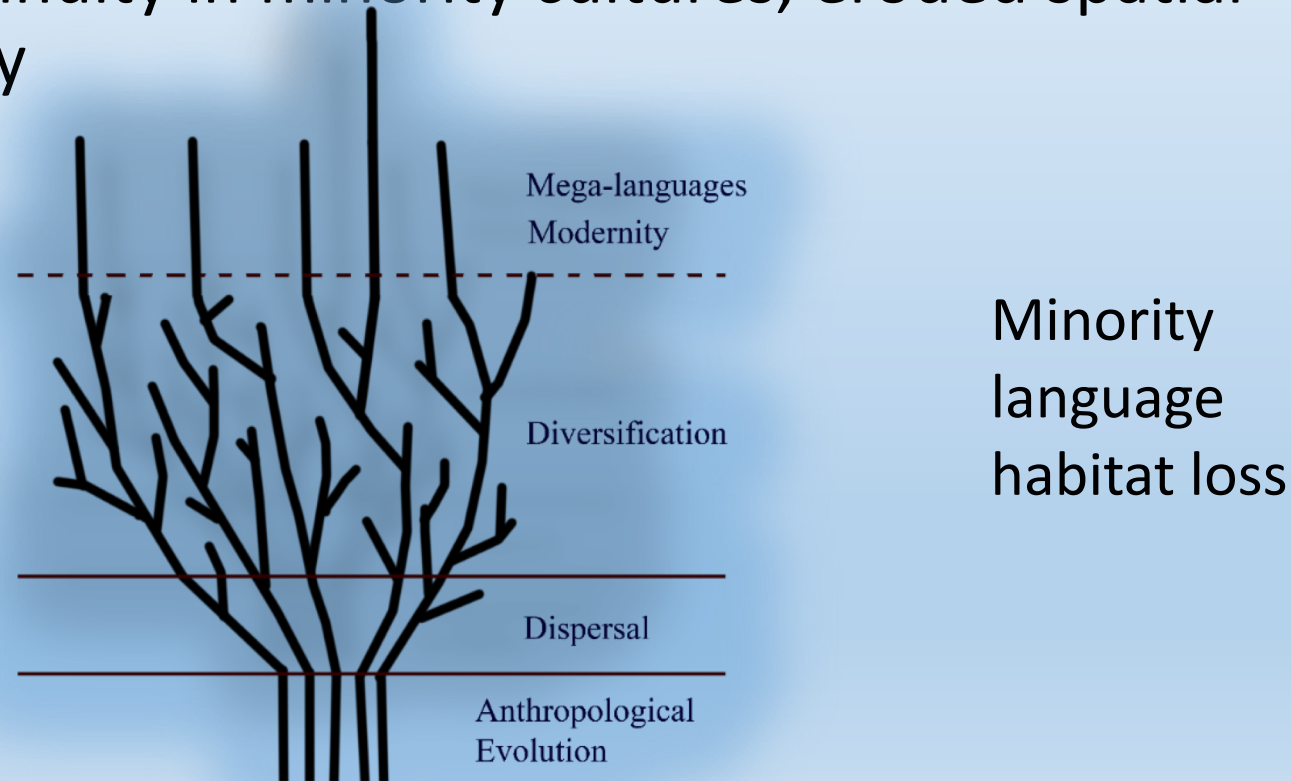


Data: Ethnologue 2016

Minusculation of languages rather than minority languages context 1% pop. = 50% languages (94% pop. = 6% lngs)

Local Challenges in Global Trends: Post-spatial Anthropocene

- Threshold of post-diversity, centripetal English and mega-languages (de Swann 2001)
- Horizontal Diversity in Cosmopolitan centres
- Discontinuity in minority cultures, eroded spatial diversity



Metropolitan diversity without diachronic (history) and spatial (geographic) diversity

- **Contradictions of Cosmopolitan Anthropocene** (cities more diverse but subordinate regions less diverse):
 - **Geographic dimension:** Erosion of the regional diversity
 - **Historical dimension:** Groups dispossessed of their cultural roots, era of socio-cultural amputation
- ‘An overly retrospective view of heritage and aesthetics, in conjunction with the common failure of sociology to recognise the threat of linguistic extirpation, conspire to avoid the implications of postmodernity for cultural and autochthonous diversity. In the context of postmodernity’s linguistic destructiveness, i.e. the pervasive cultural scenario of imminent language death, both language studies and sociology are insufficient to the task’ (Ó Curnáin, Ó Giollagáin, Stiùbhart, forthcoming).

Dimensions of diagnosis 1

- **Demolinguistic and Spatial**

- **Contraction** in absolute numbers
- **Erosion of social density** of speaker group

- **Sociological**

- Rapidity of **abandonment of traditional society**
- **Reverse assimilation** of new social player

- **Social-Linguistic**

- Reduction in minority language **linguistic function** in contraction of group
- Contraction in functions/domains, in diversity of registers → **reduced acquisition**
- Descent into a **non-elaborated code**
- Disadvantaged in **bilingualised minority** contact with majority

Dimensions of diagnosis 2

- **Socio-economic**

- **Drying up of social market** in which linguistic function was rewarded (habitus)
- **Pseudo-Modernisation** through adherence to majority market

- **Political/ideological**

- **Weak civic culture** to offer in-group leadership/engagement through transformations (Gramscian civic culture a preserve of the majority)
- **Utopian aspect** of language revitalisation/revivalism dissociated for existing group

- **Organisational**

- **Institutional stasis/cluelessness** (integration of peripheral areas in wider market)
- **Secondary social-linguistic aims**; failure to integrate socio-cultural aims for the minority into community development aims (Ó Giollagáin 2006; Ó Neachtain 2016)

- **Intellectual/Academic Leadership**

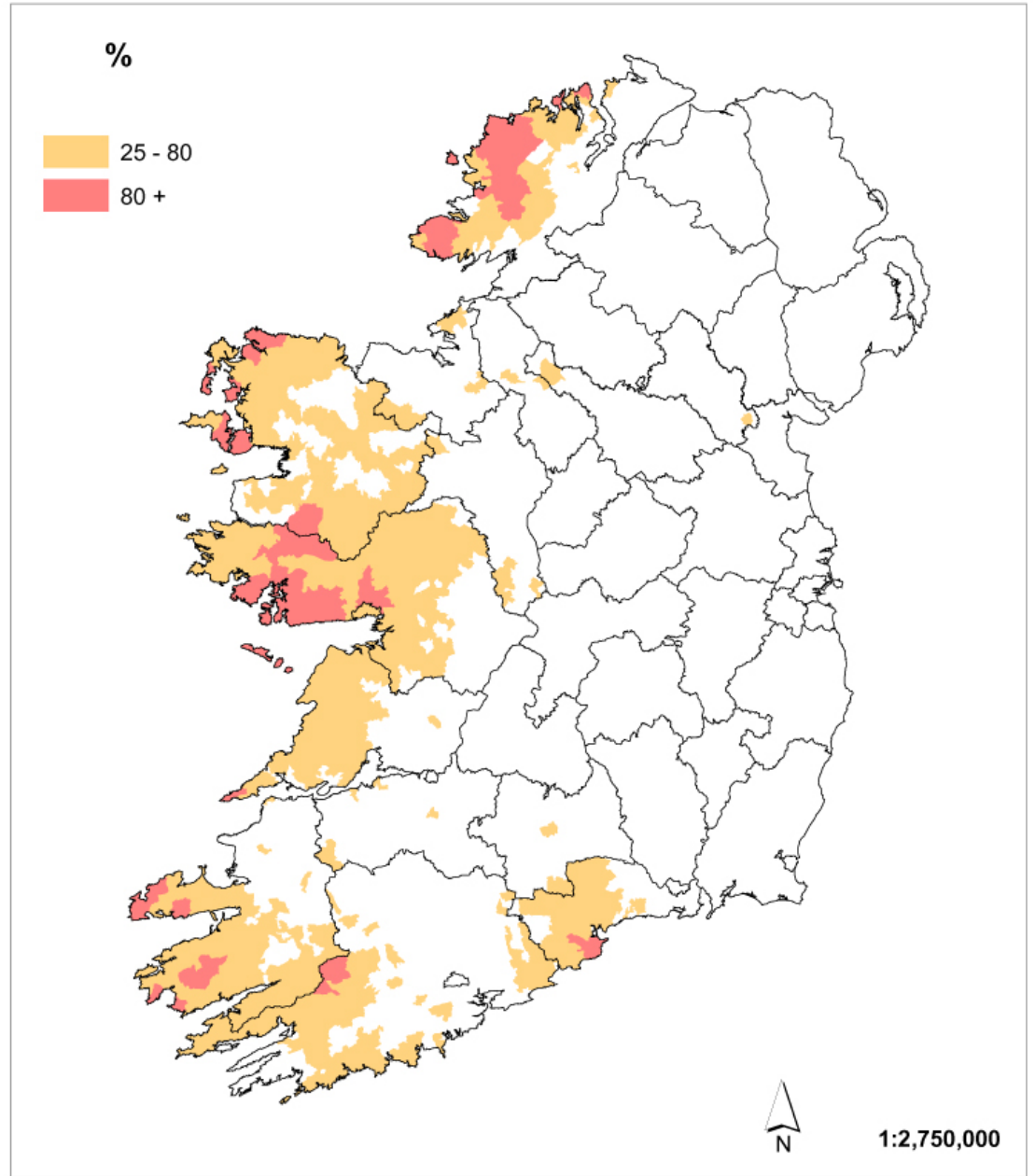
- **Derivative** of competing culture (Gaelic for English monolinguals) and **fanciful**

PART 2

Knowledge of
existential threat

Demographic Change and New Social Players

- Post-traditional society
- Change in the demographic make-up of the traditional community
- Inability of communal and State institutions to manage this change
 - CILAR 1975; Ó Riagáin 1992; 1997; Hindley 1990; Gaeltacht Commission 2002; Mac Donnacha *et al.* 2005
 - Ó Giollagáin 2002; 2004; 2005; 2008; 2009
 - Ó Giollagáin *et al.* 2007
 - Ó Curnáin 2009
 - Ó Giollagáin and Charlton 2015
 - Ó Giollagáin and Ó Curnáin 2016
 - Ó Neachtain 2016

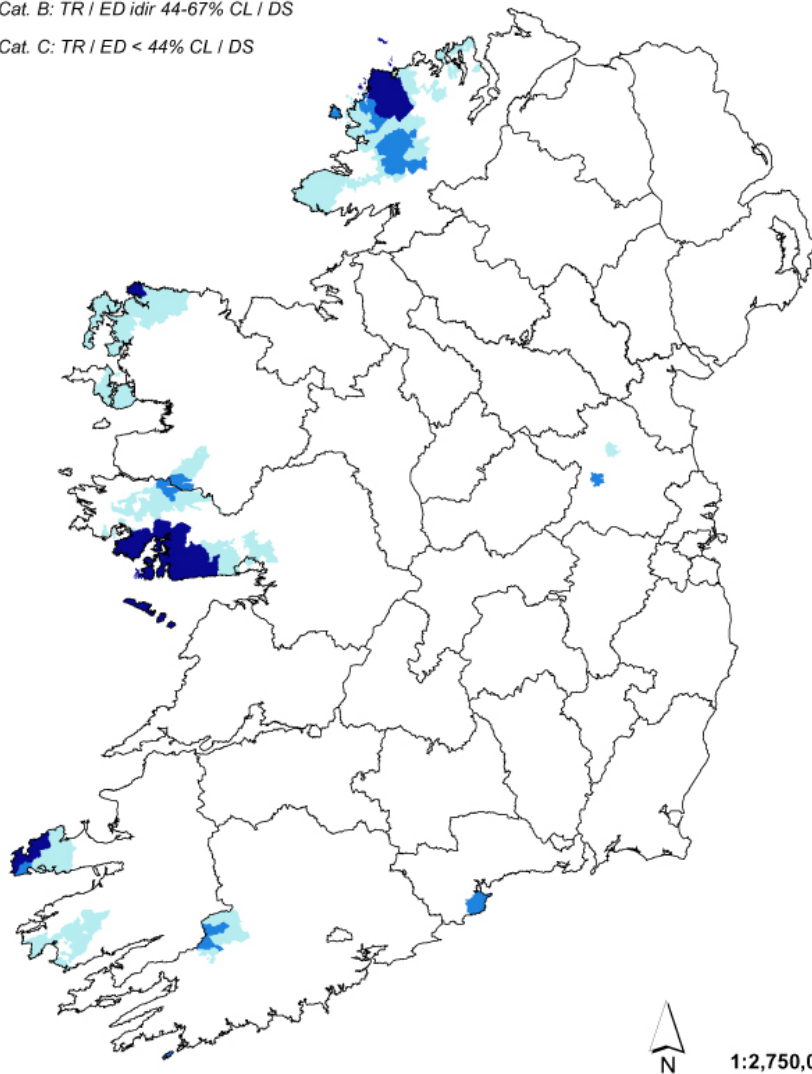


1926 Irish Census:
 Speakers of Irish as
 Total Percentage in
 Electoral Division
 In 80% +
 And 25-80% breaks

Cat. A: TR / ED le 67% + CL / DS

Cat. B: TR / ED idir 44-67% CL / DS

Cat. C: TR / ED < 44% CL / DS



A, B, C Gaeltacht Categories in Ó Giollagáin, Mac Donnacha et al. 2007. *Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the Gaeltacht*. Prepared by NIRSA. Copyright # MP 8252 , © OSI / Government of Ireland.



Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh
National University of Ireland, Galway

COMPREHENSIVE LINGUISTIC STUDY OF THE USE OF IRISH IN THE GAELTACHT



PRINCIPAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2007

Conchúr Ó Giollagáin Seosamh Mac Donnacha
Fiona Ní Chualáin
Aoife Ní Shéaghda
Mary O'Brien



ACADAMH
na hÉireann

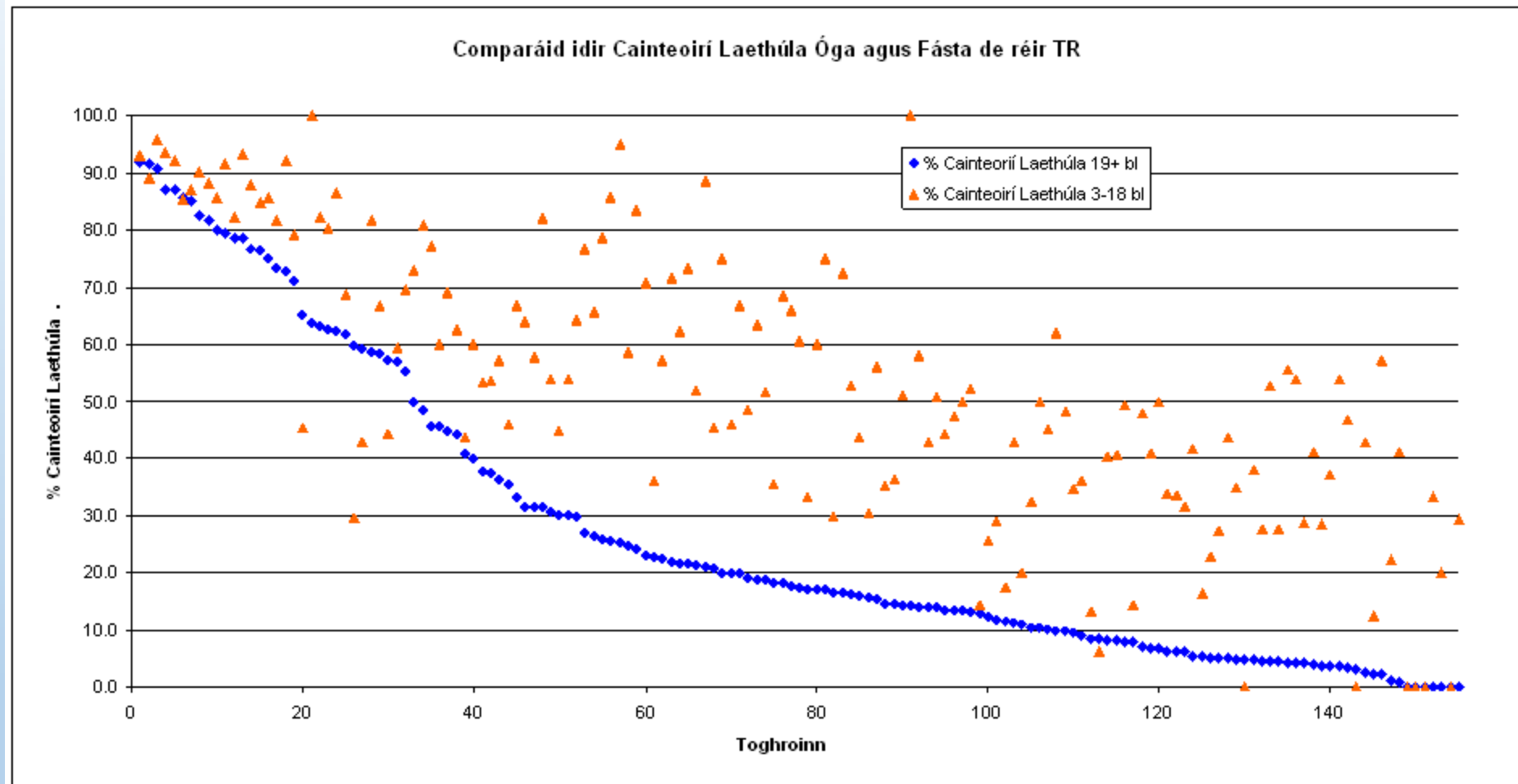
NIRSA

Air dochtúireacht na hÉireann
na hÉireann
na hÉireann

Aspects of the Demography and Sociology of the Minority Language Condition

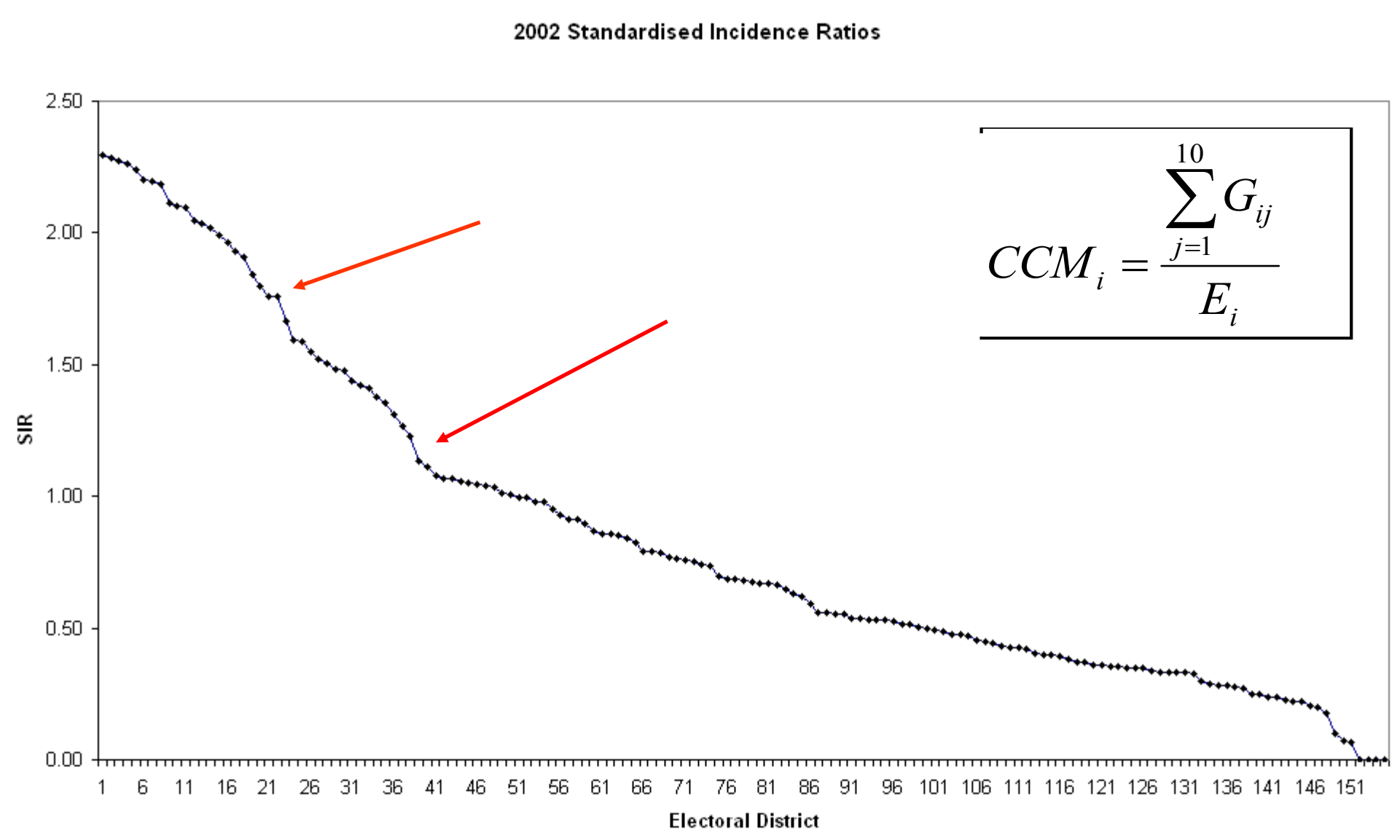
- Sustainability threshold of 2/3 of minority language community required to support communal use of language and resist pressures of language shift

Sustainability Threshold and Social Density of Speaker Group



**Daily Speakers of Irish:
3-18 yrs (Red) Vs 19+ yrs (Blue)**

Daily Speakers of Irish 2002

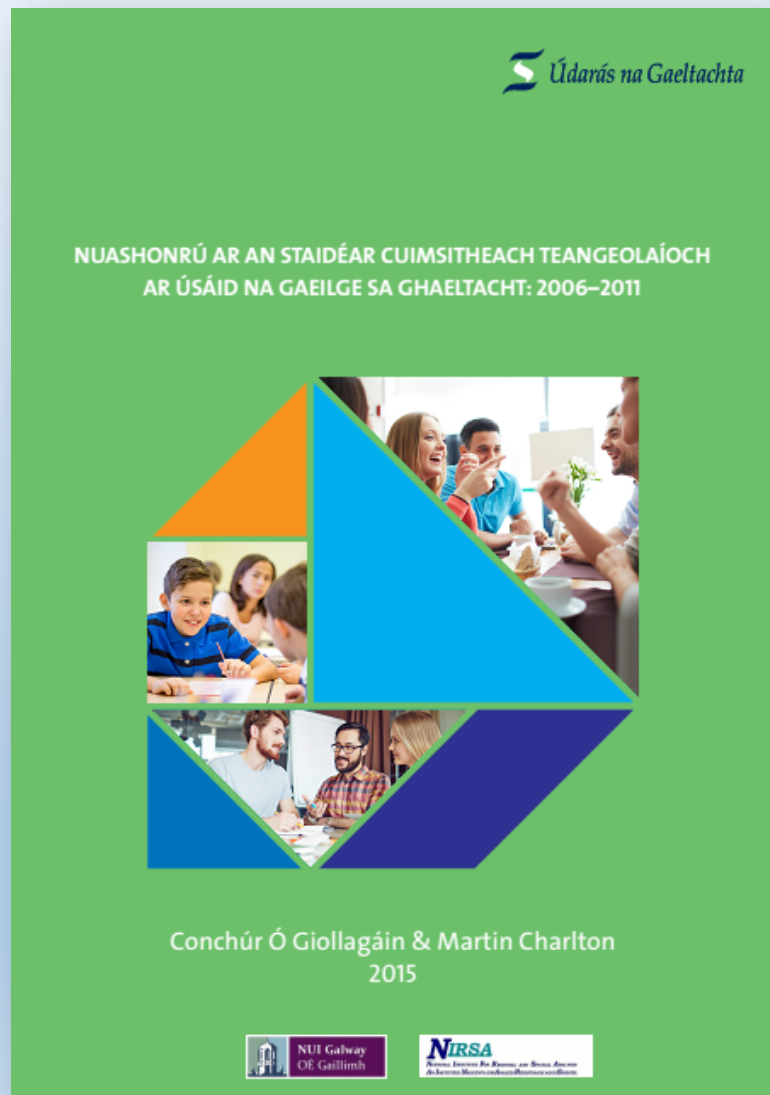


Update of Comprehensive Linguistic Study

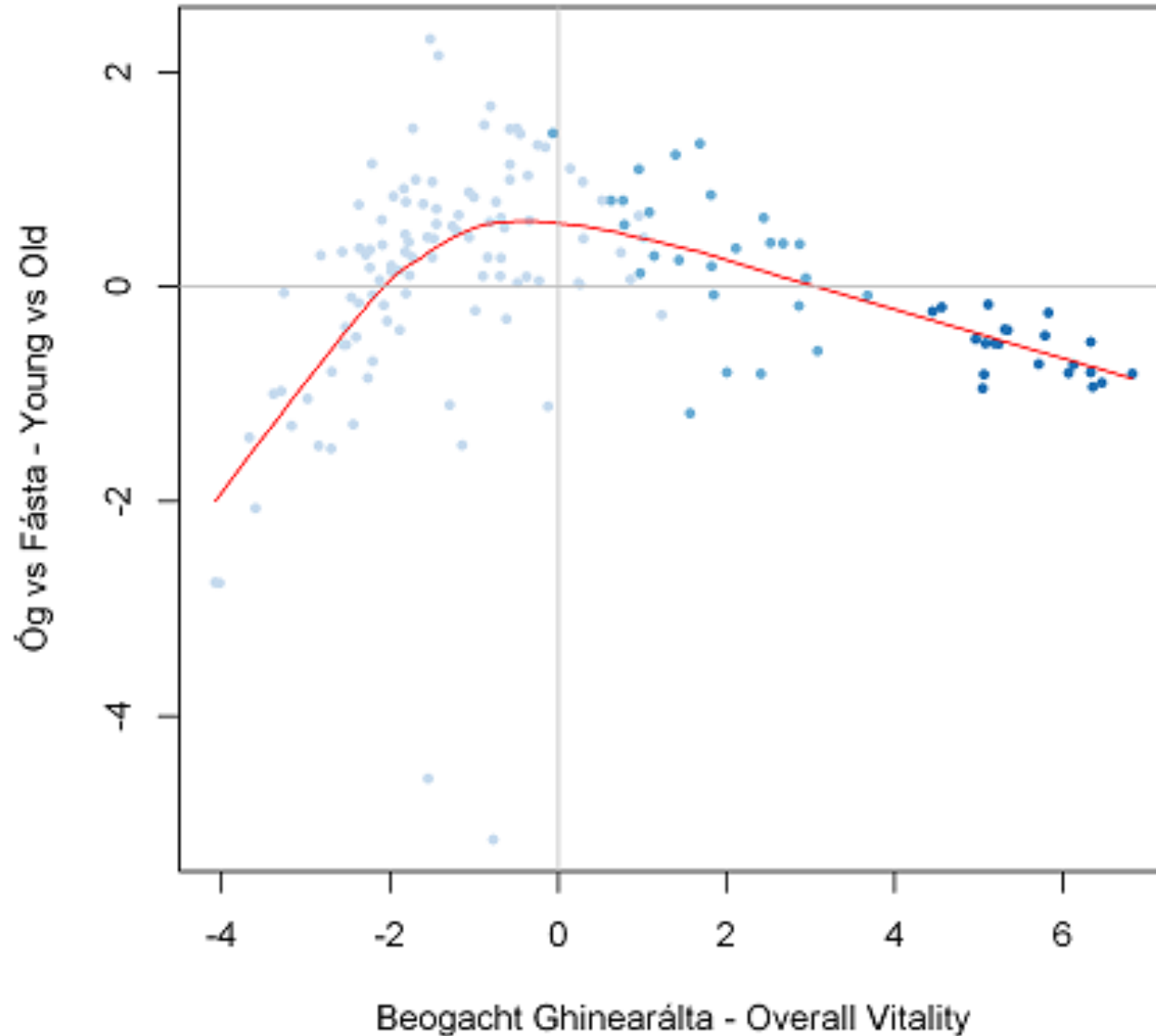
Ó Giollagáin and Charlton 2015

Update of Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the Gaeltacht: 2006-2011. (New CLS 2015)

Minority speaker groups need to be able to protect the social density of active speakers



An Chéad Dá Phríomh-chomhpháirt de réir Catagóirí First Two Principal Components by Categories



New CLS 2015:
2011 Census
Language Data

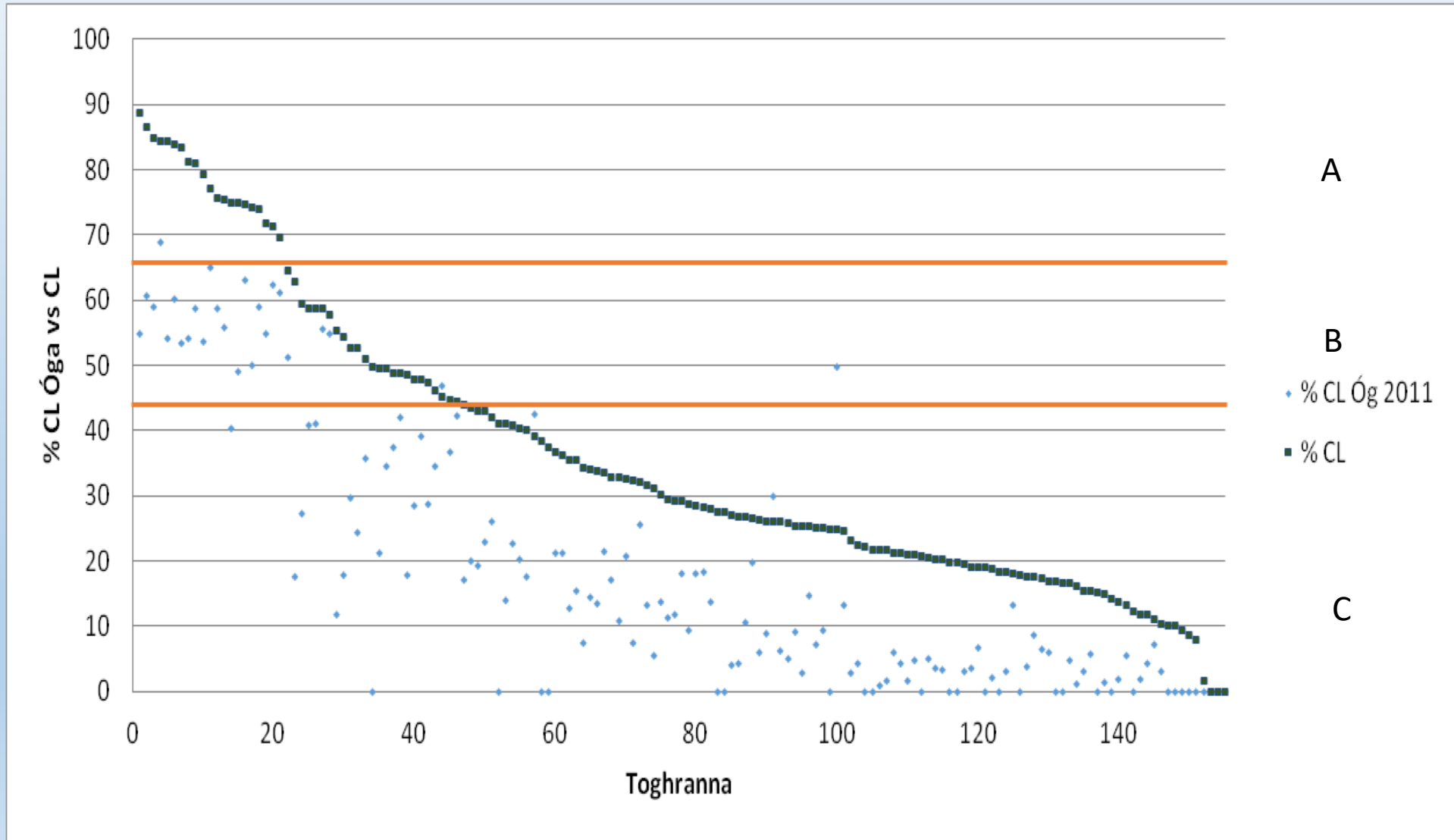
● = Cat. A Eds
● = Cat. B Eds
● = Cat. C Eds

Comparative
distribution of
Young and Old
daily Irish
speakers' data
across 155
Gaeltacht EDs.
in Cat.s. A, B, C

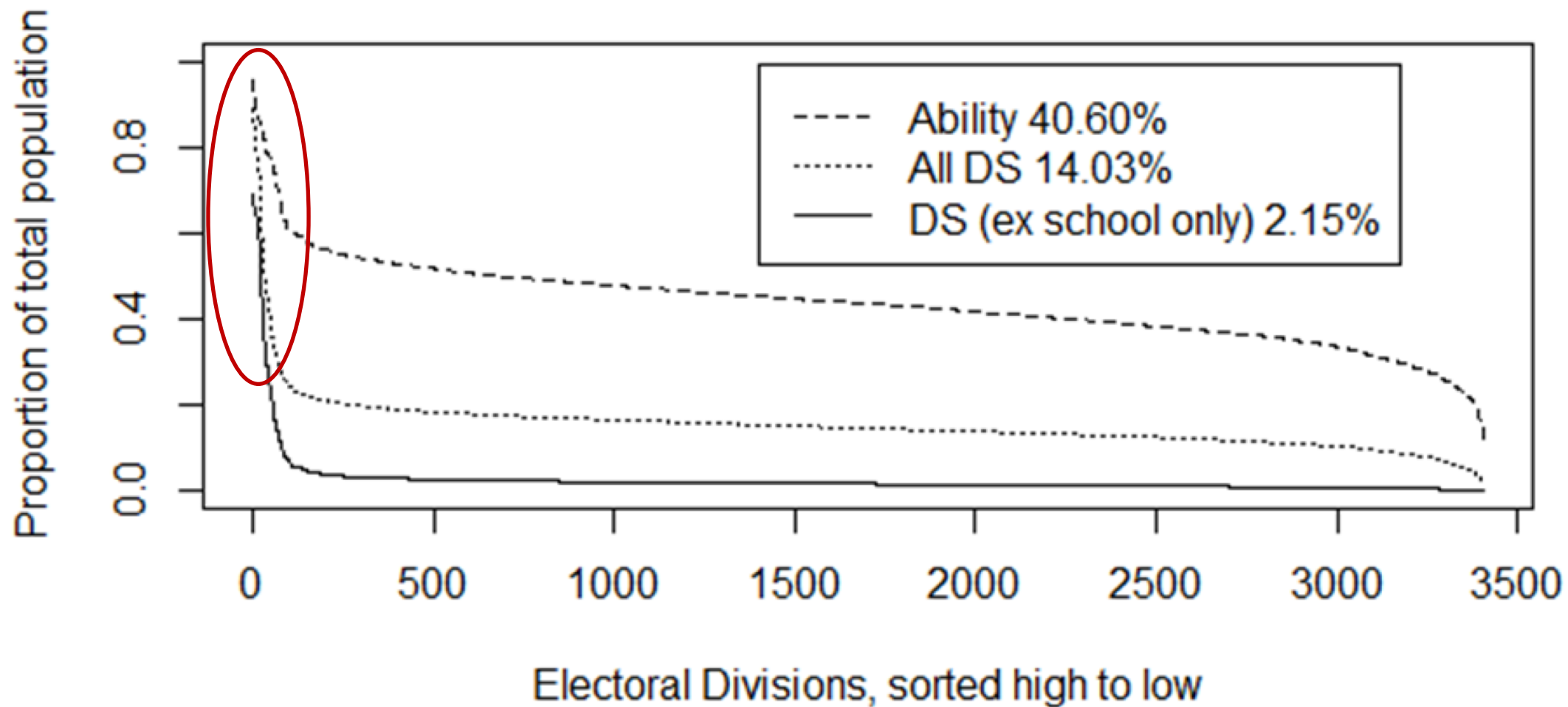
LÉARÁID 65:

SCAIPGHRAM COMPARÁIDEACH AR ANAILÍS AN CHÉAD DÁ PHRÍOMH-CHOMHPHÁIRT
AR FHAISNÉIS CAINTEOIRÍ LAETHÚLA FÁSTA GAEILGE AGUS CAINTEOIRÍ LAETHÚLA
ÓGA LAETHÚLA GAEILGE SNA TOGHRANNA GAELTACHTA, DAONÁIREAMH 2011 (Pointí
gorma dorcha = TR Chat. A; pointí gorma meánacha = TR Chat. B; pointí gorma éadroma = TR Chat. C)

Daily Speakers of Irish: Total population (dark blue) Young (light blue)



2011, Ability in Irish and Daily Speakers, Aged 3+

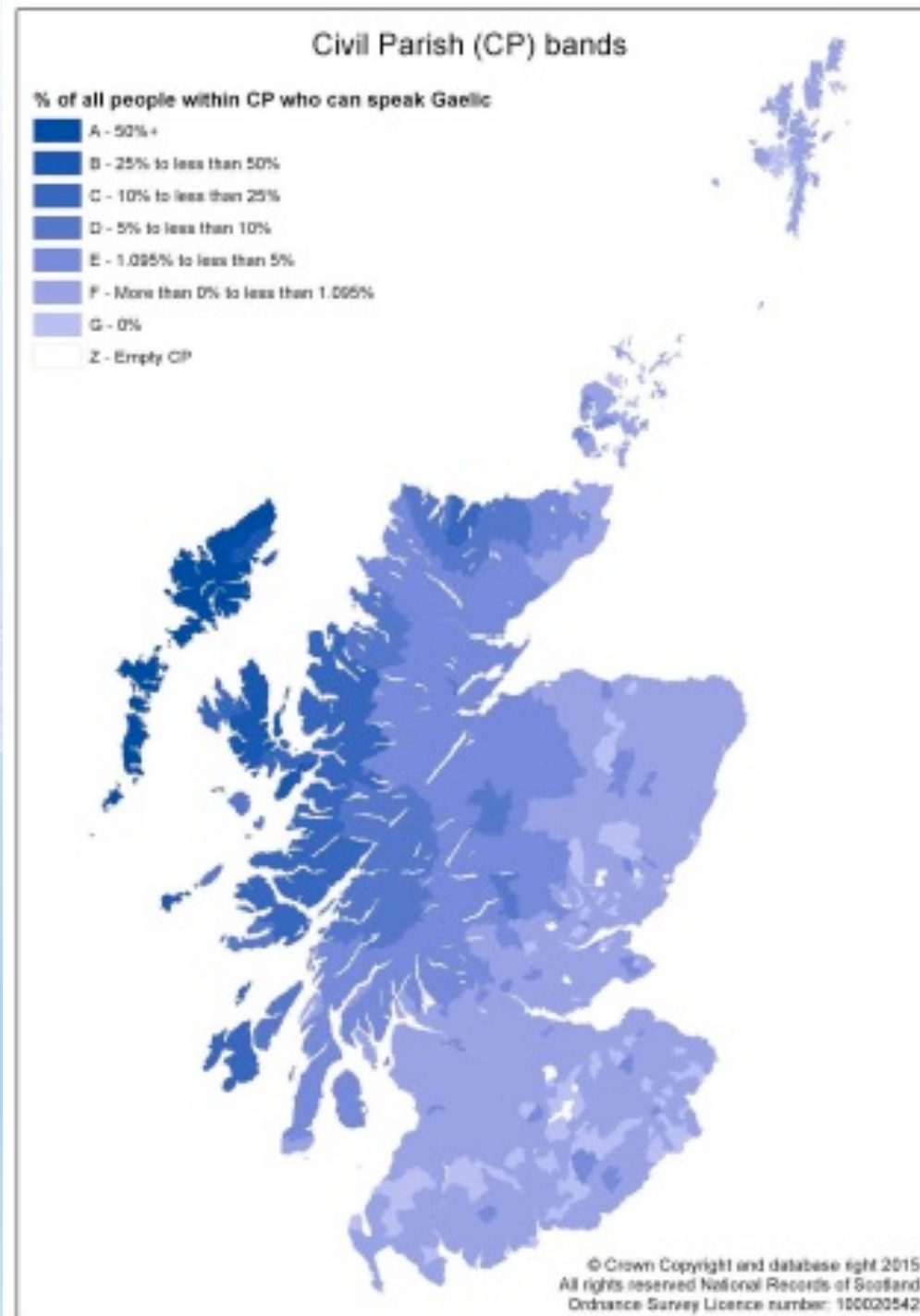


Source: Irish Census 2011

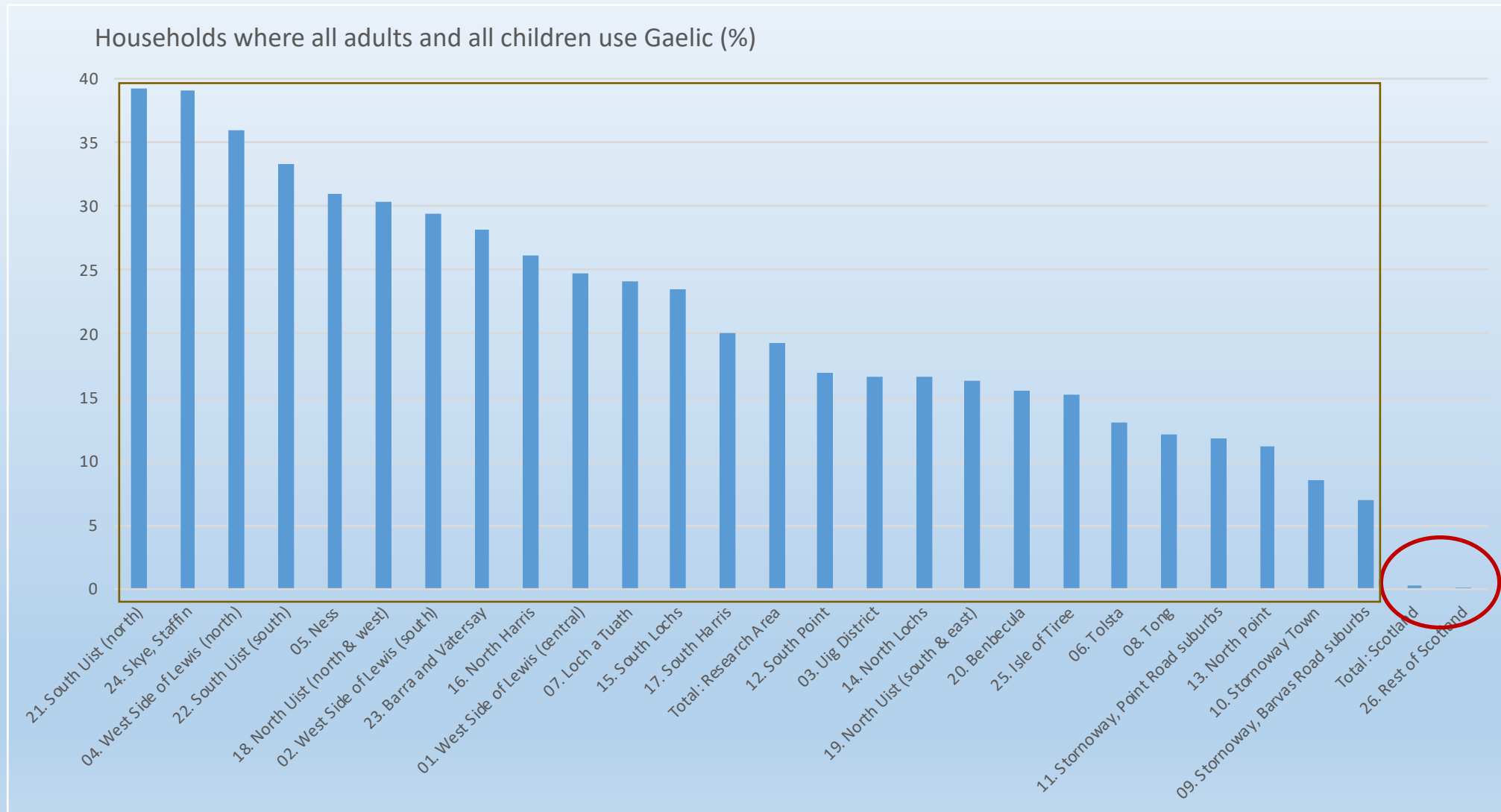
Distribution of ability in Gaelic by Civil Parishes in 2011 Scottish Census

Top aggregation in Darkest Blue 50%+

Source: O'Hanlon, F. & Paterson, L. (2015a) *Scotland's Census 2011: Gaelic report* (Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland)

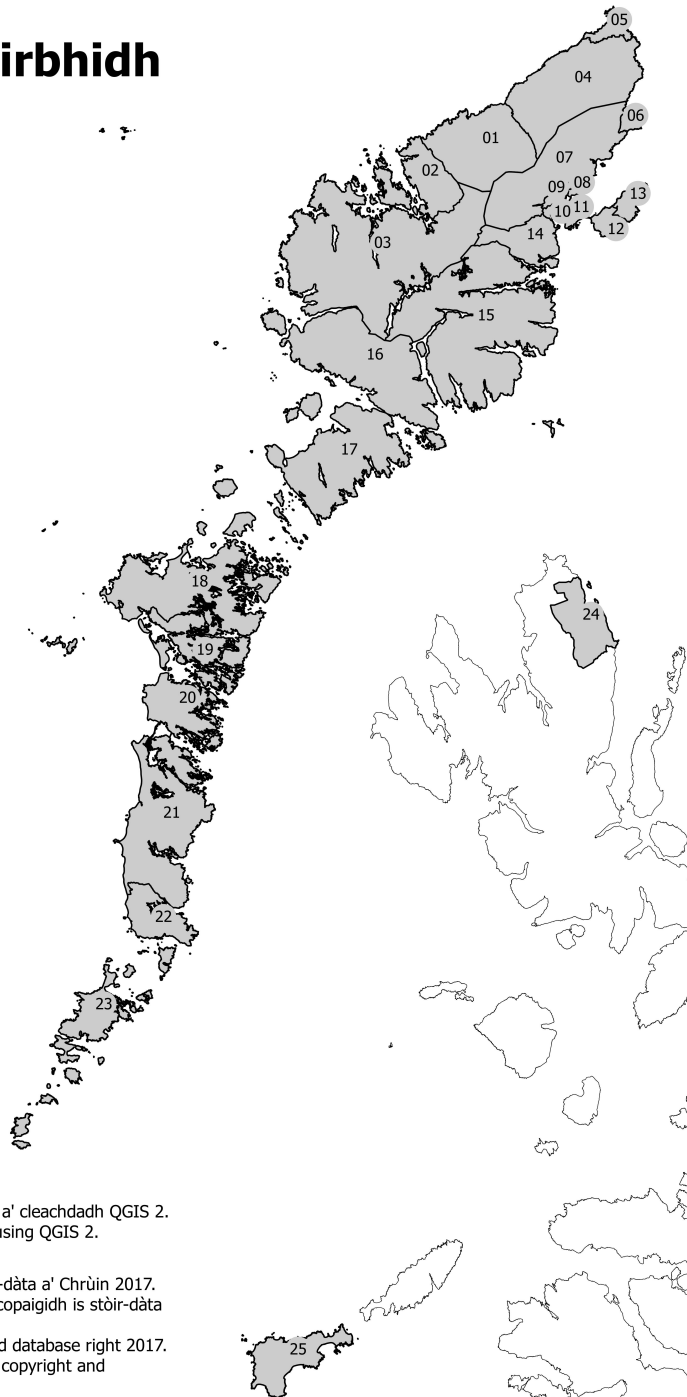


Households with Gaelic Speakers: Western Isles Vs. Rest of Scotland



Source/Tùs-dàta: Cunntas-sluaigh
na h-Alba/Scottish Census 2011

Sgìre an t-Suirbhidh Survey Area



Ó Giollagáin, C., Camshron, G., Moireach, P.,
Caimbeul, I., MacDonald, B. and T. Péterváry
(forthcoming) *Islands Gaelic Research Project:
A social survey of vernacular Gaelic in the
Scottish islands.*

Scottish Census data 1981–2011

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Luchd-labhairt Gàidhlig Cunntas 1981

Gaelic Speakers Census 1981

Ceàrnan sgrùdaidh
Study areas

Luchd-labhairt aois 3+ sa choimhearsnachd
Local proportion of speakers aged 3+

- <45%
- <60%
- <75%
- <90%
- 90%+



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Luchd-labhairt aois 3-17 sa choimhearsnachd
Local proportion of speakers aged 3-17

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Ó Giollagáin *et al.*
(forthcoming)
*Islands Gaelic
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Scottish Census
data 1981

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Scottish Census
 data 2001

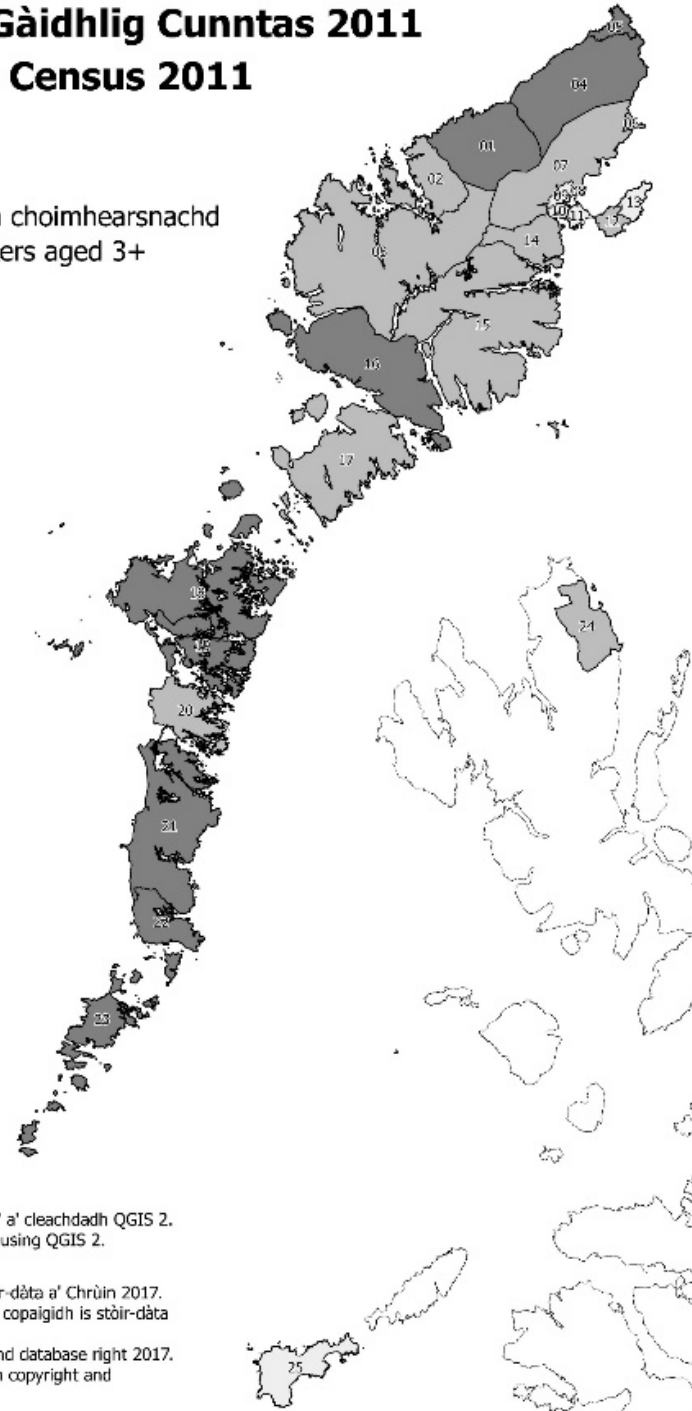
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Luchd-labhairt Gàidhlig Cunntas 2011

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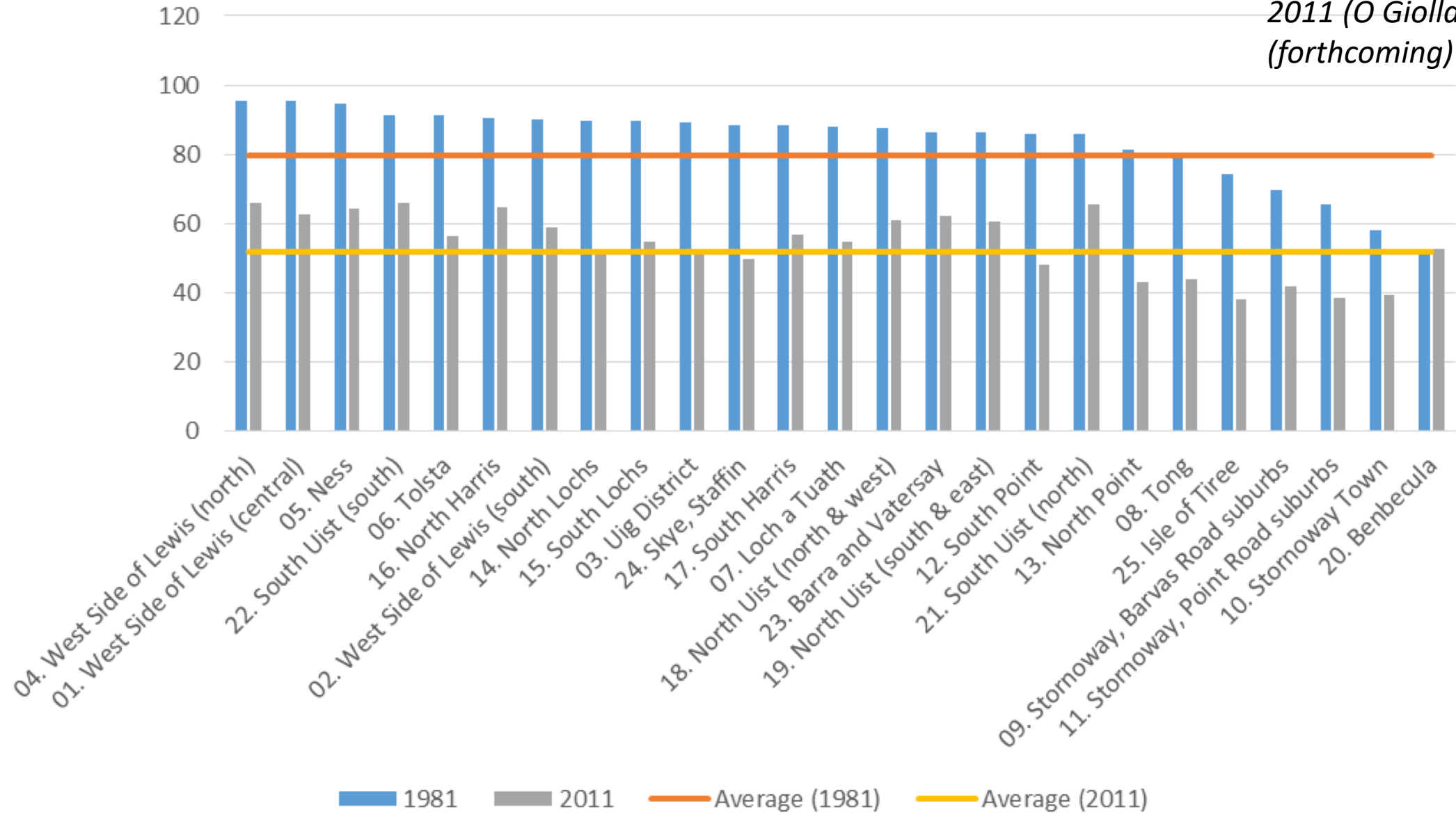
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the Scottish Islands.*

Scottish Census data
2011

Sgìrean a rèir comasan sa Ghàidhlig (%), 1981 & 2011

Ability in Scottish Gaelic in Speaker Areas, Isles, 1981-2011 (Ó Giollagáin et al. (forthcoming))



Map of the wards where over 70 per cent spoke Welsh, 1991, Hywel Jones (2007) in Gwerddon, Cyf. 1, Rhif 2, Hydref 2007

All aged 3+: % speaking Welsh, 1991

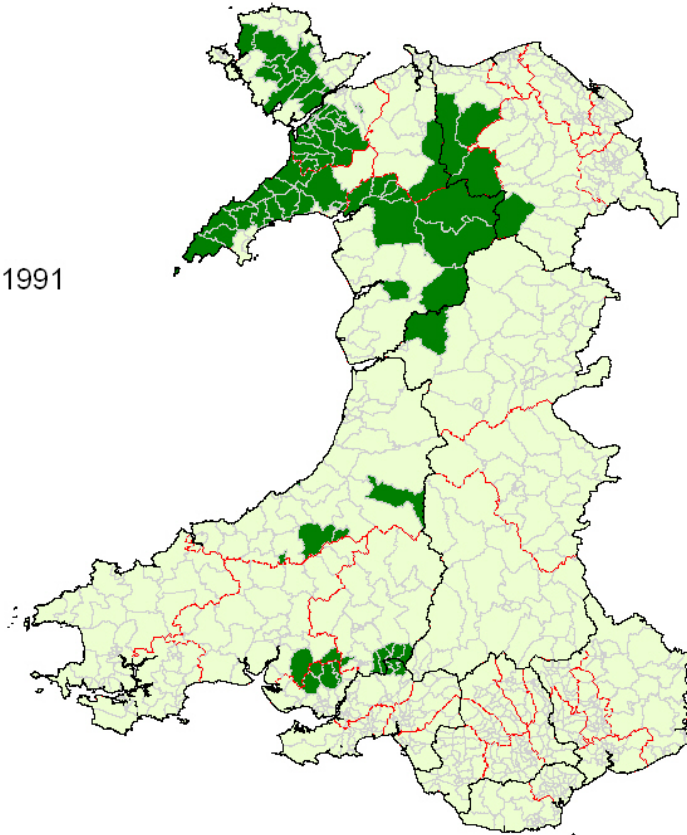
Wards (Number)

■ $\geq 70.1, < 91$ (87)

■ $0.6 < 70.1$ (821)

□ 1991 county boundary

□ 1991 district boundary



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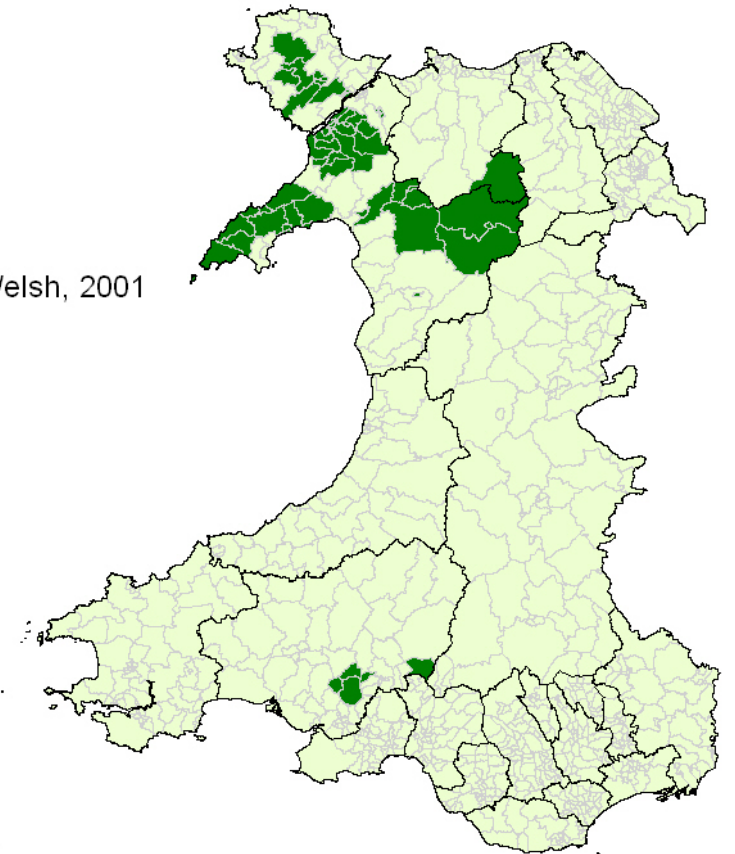
All aged 3+: % able to speak Welsh, 2001

Electoral divisions (Number)

■ $\geq 70.1, \leq 88.4$ (57)

■ $6.6 < 70.1$ (824)

□ County boundary

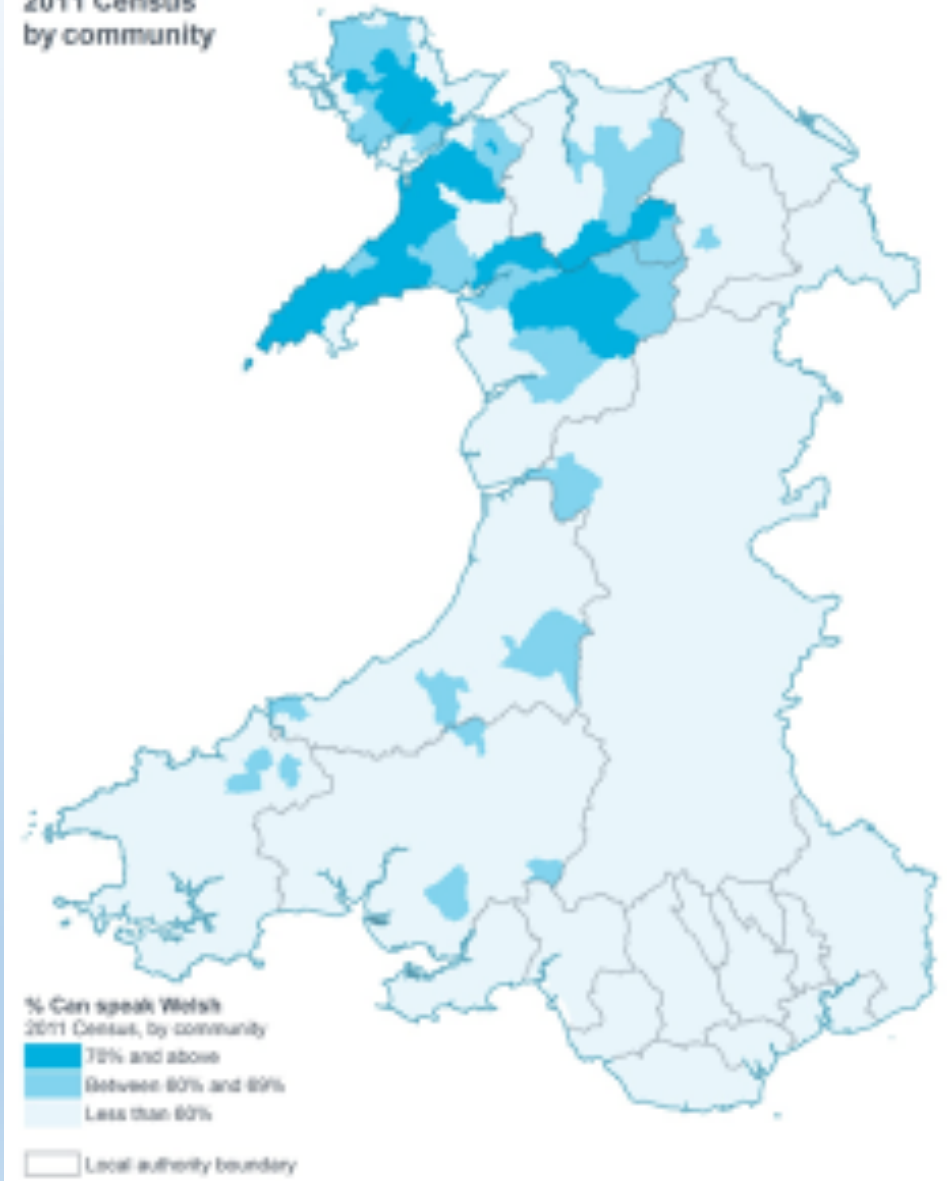


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1991

2001

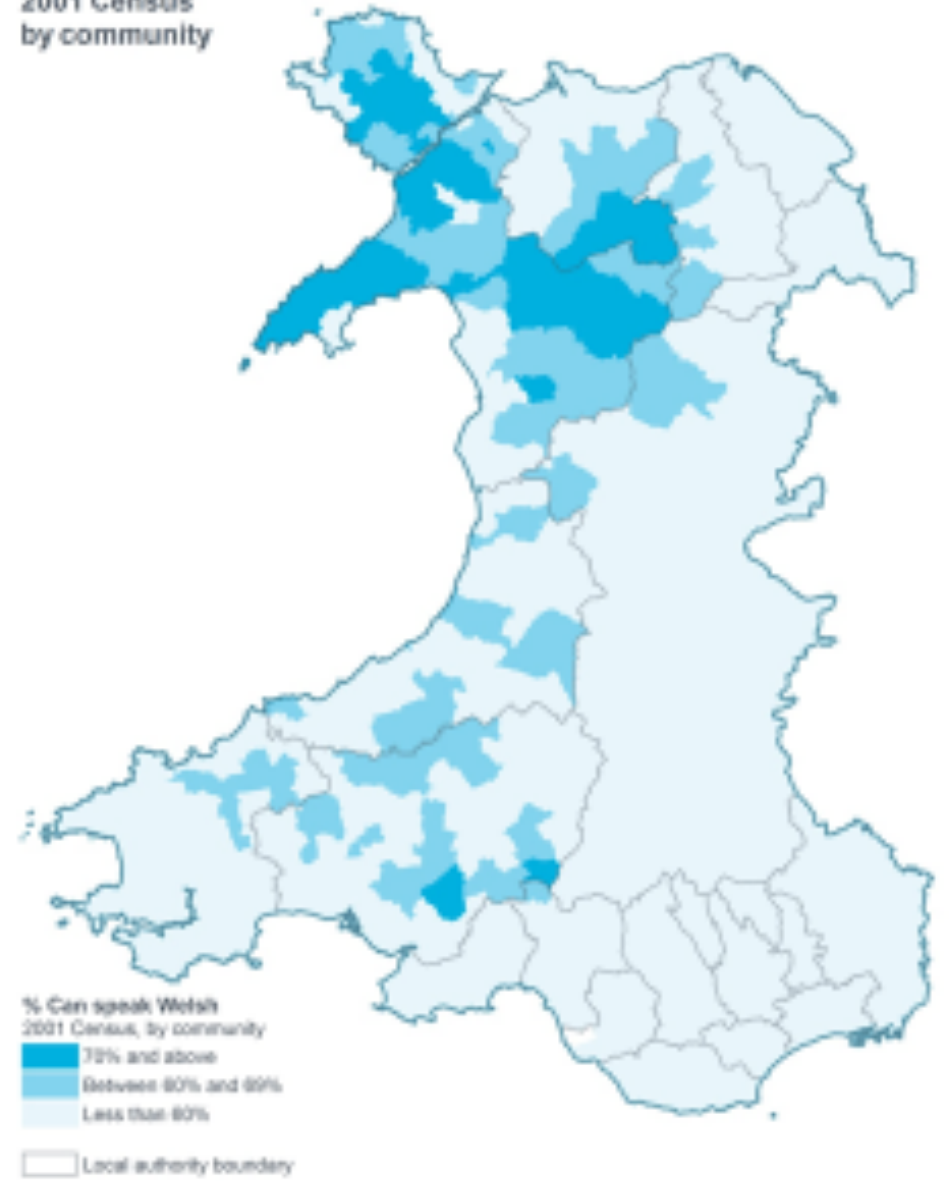
Percentage of the population able to speak Welsh according to the 2011 Census by community



Source: Office for National Statistics

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Percentage of the population able to speak Welsh according to the 2001 Census by community



Source: Office for National Statistics

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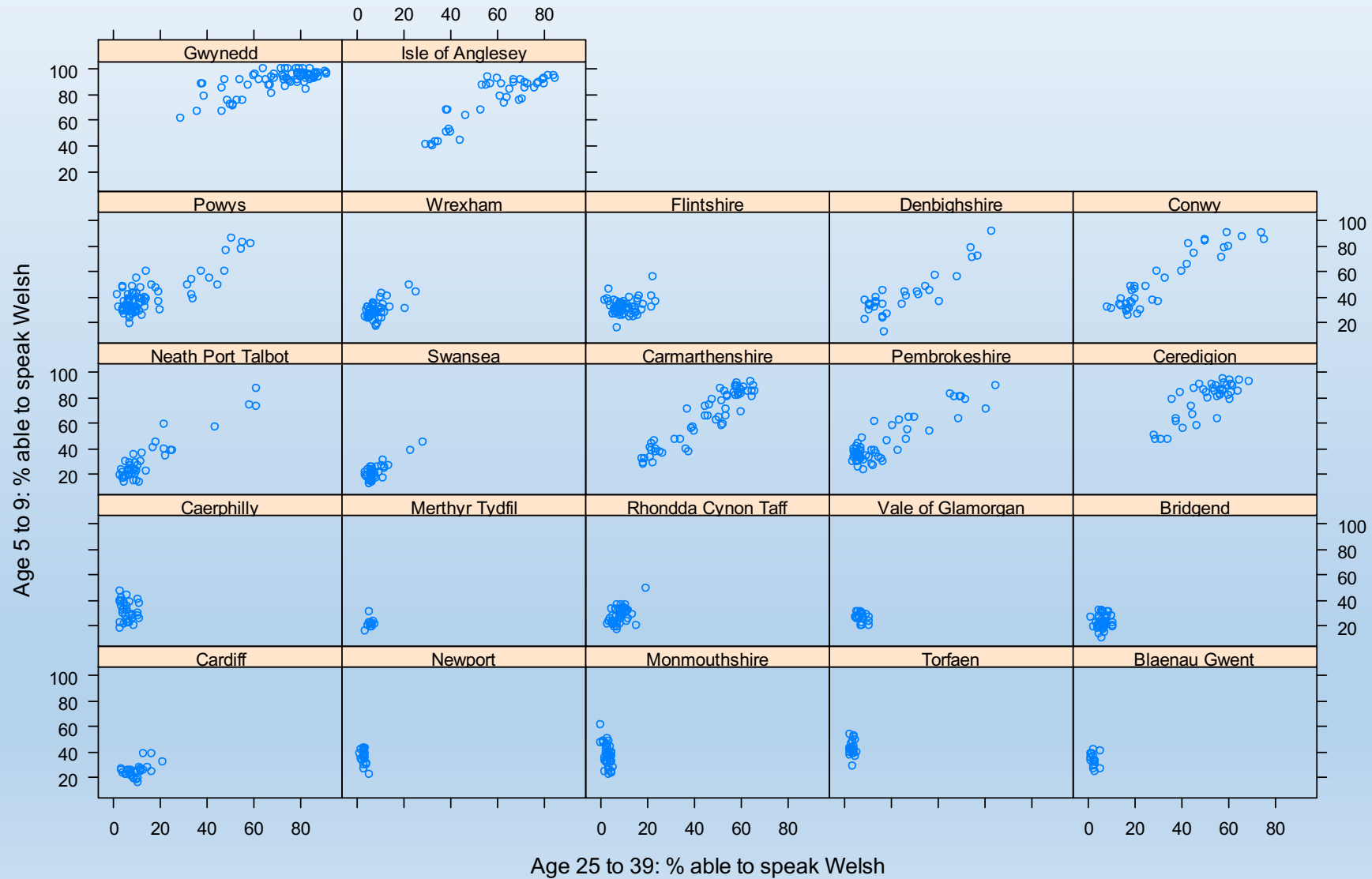
Office for National Statistics, Wales (2015).

Darkest Blue: communities with 70%+ Welsh speakers, 2001 Versus 2011 Census.

Hywel Jones (2007) in *Gwerddon*, Cyf. 1, Rhif 2, Hydref 2007

'The implications of changes in the ages of Welsh speakers and their spatial distribution'

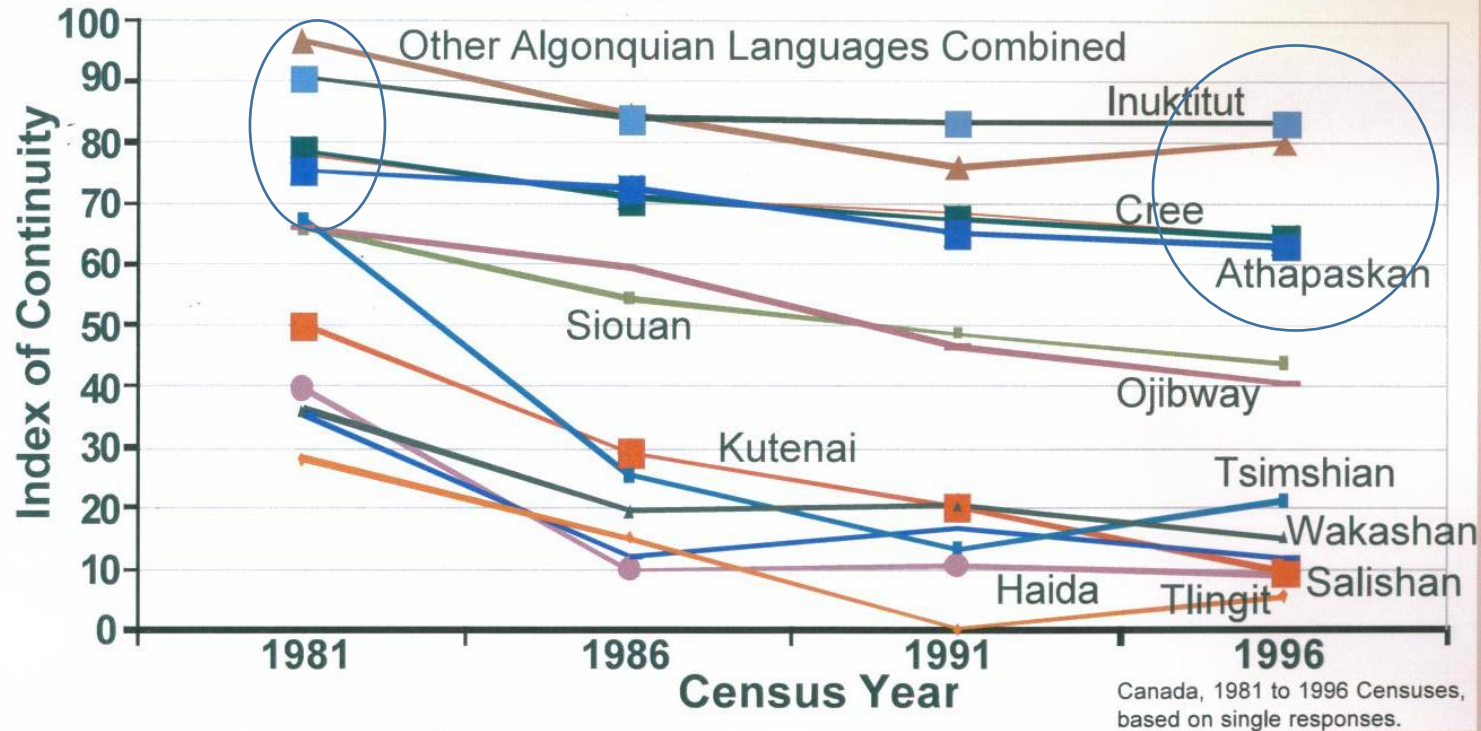
Figure 3: The relationship between the percentage that can speak Welsh at 5 to 9 years old and 25 to 39 years old, by county. 2001 Electoral divisions



TRENDS IN LANGUAGE USE AND MAINTENANCE

Continuity of Aboriginal Languages

- Although most languages experienced a steady erosion in linguistic vitality, endangered ones suffered the most.
- By 1996, for every 100 speakers with an Aboriginal mother tongue, an average of about 70 used an Aboriginal home language among viable groups, compared with 30 or fewer among endangered groups.



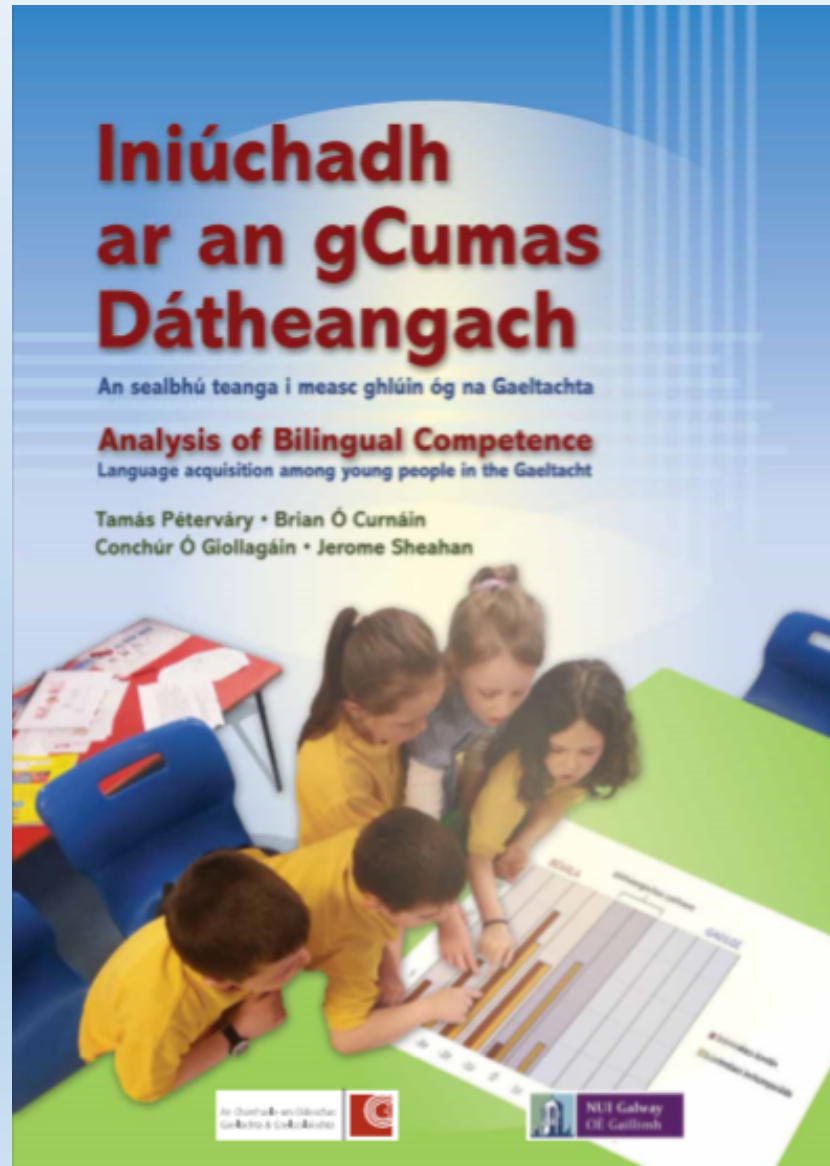
Norris, M.J. agus L. Jantzen. 2002: 26. *From generation to generation: Survival and maintenance of Canada's aboriginal languages within families, communities and cities.* Government of Canada. Indian and Northern Affairs. Ottawa: Canadian heritage.

Pax Anglophonica – Preventing us from facing reality

- Bilingual aspirations in the face of overwhelming sociological evidence of encroaching monolingualisation
- ‘... *solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant* [they make a desert, and call it peace]’, Tacitus Agricola, *Imperium*. →
- We talk **of** bilingualism but speak **in** English.

Analysis of Bilingual Competence:

Language acquisition among young people in the Gaeltacht 2014



Tamás Péterváry

Brian Ó Curnáin

Conchúr Ó Giollagáin

Jerome Sheahan
(2014)

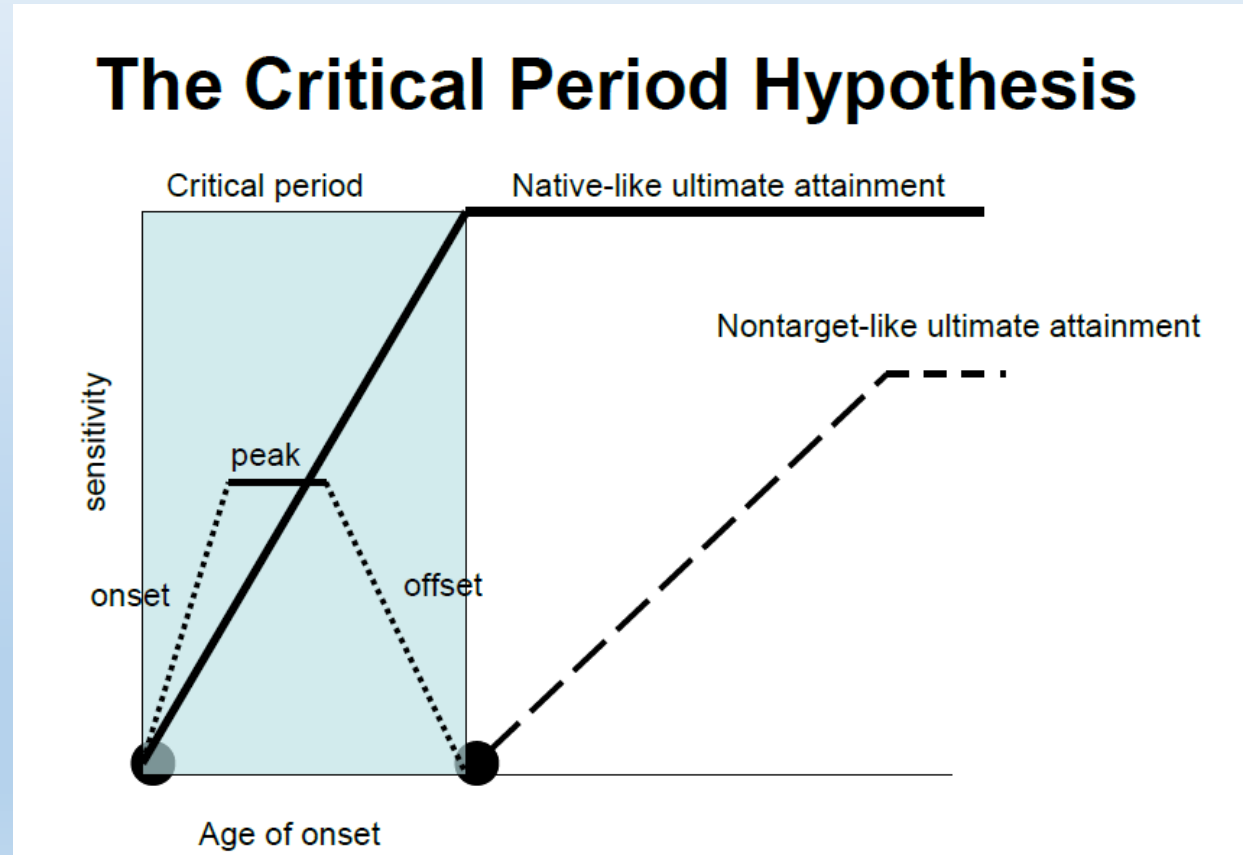
Dublin: Council for
Gaeltacht and Irish-
medium Education

Montrul (2008)

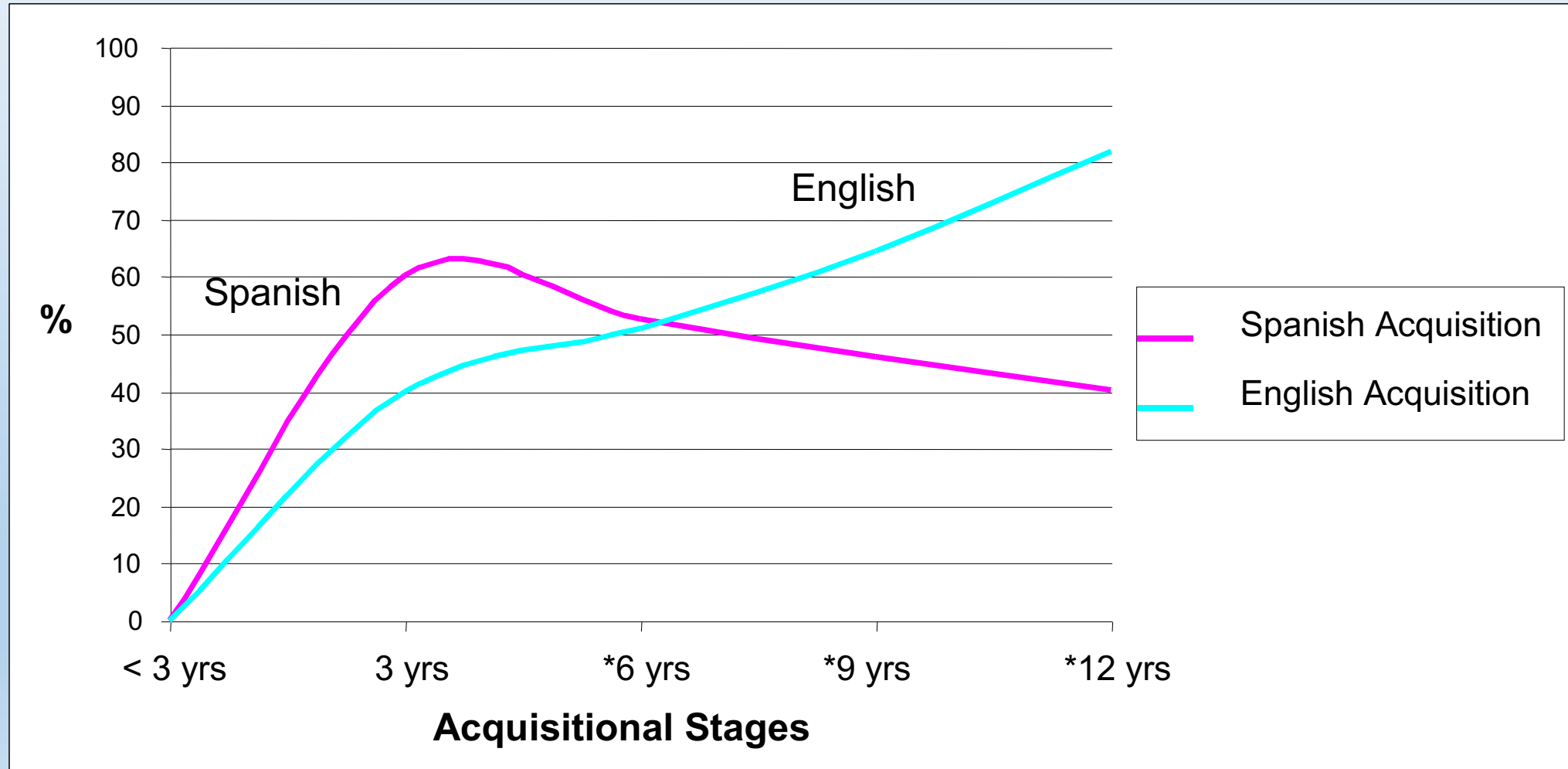
Incomplete Acquisition in Bilingualism

1. Critical Period

2. Reduced Input
→ Reduced
acquisition

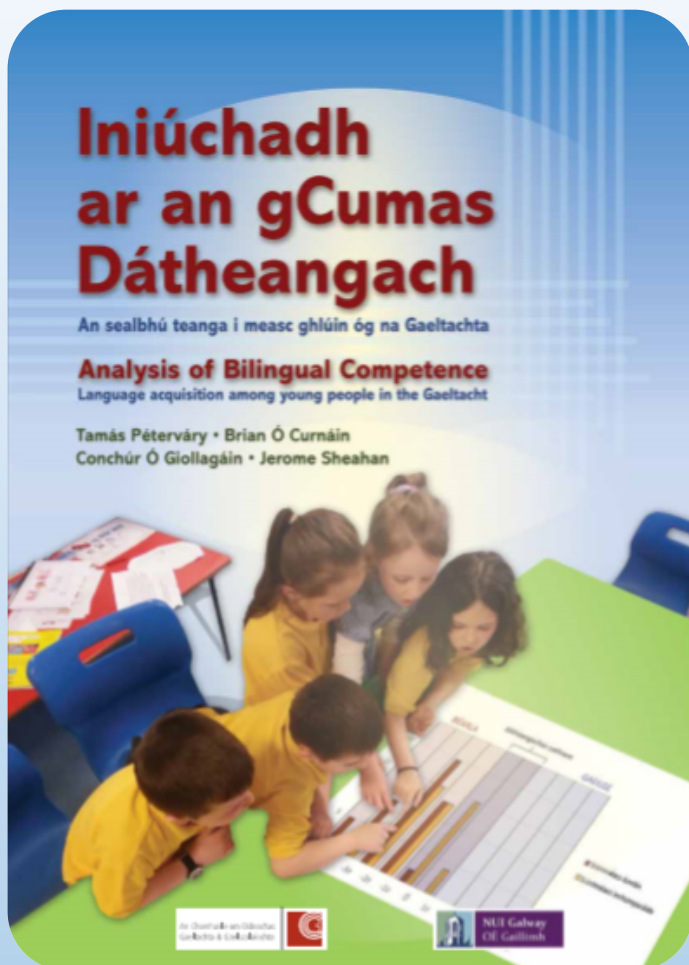


Hypothesised acquisitions of Spanish and English in four stages (hypothesised from Pearson *et al.* 1997)



Main Issues

1. 1st language not primary language
2. Minority bilingualisation – reduced acquisition
3. 15% mean difference of ability in English over Irish
 - a) Slightly greater **FLUENCY** in **Irish**
 - b) Greater **ACCURACY** and **FUNCTIONALITY** in **English**



Participants

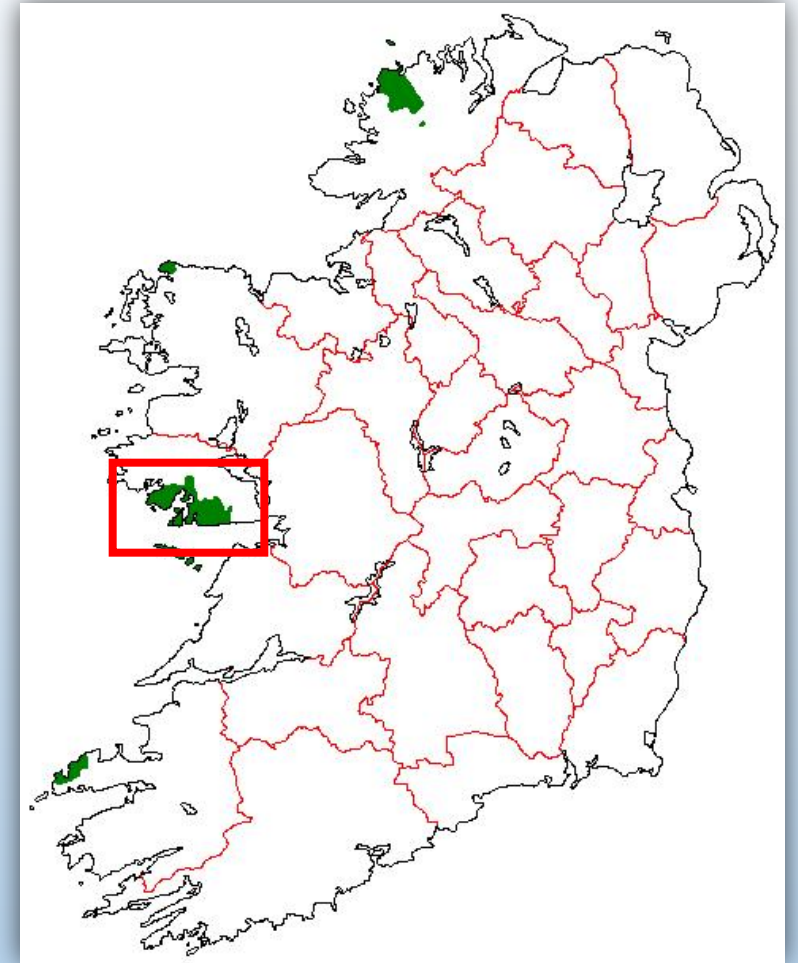
Sample: 50

Age: 7–12 years

Sex: Girls (24), Boys (26)

Home Language: Irish only

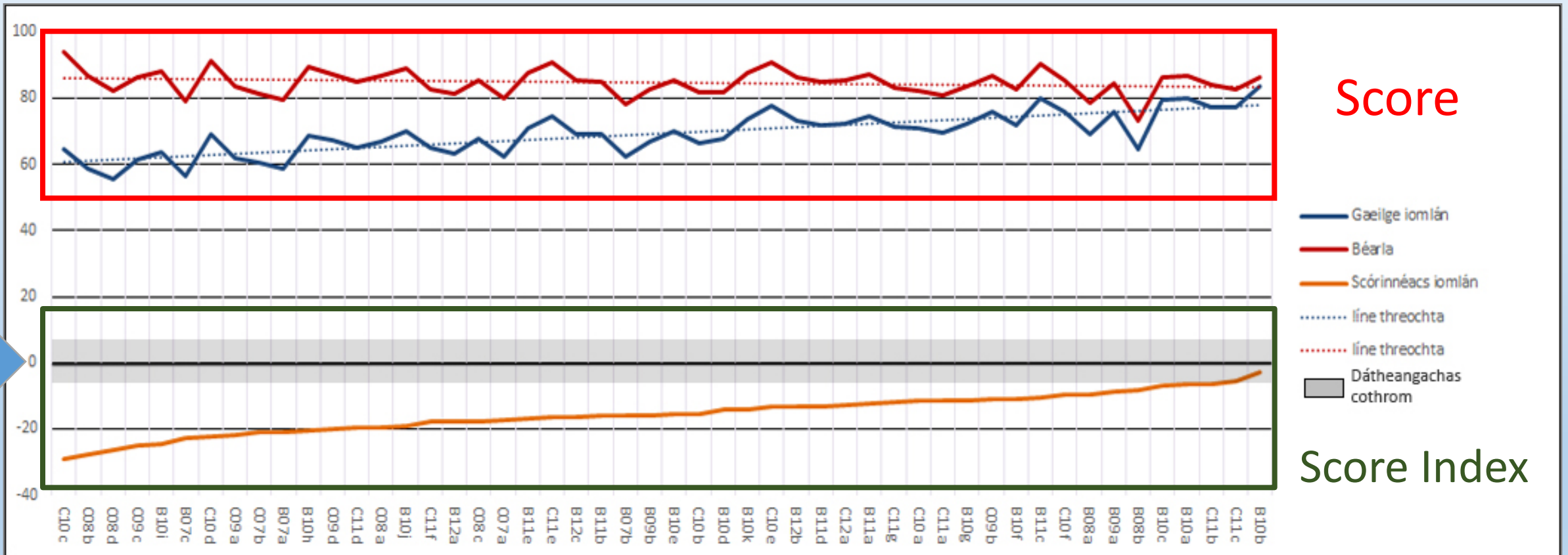
Location: Conamara, Category A Gaeltacht Area



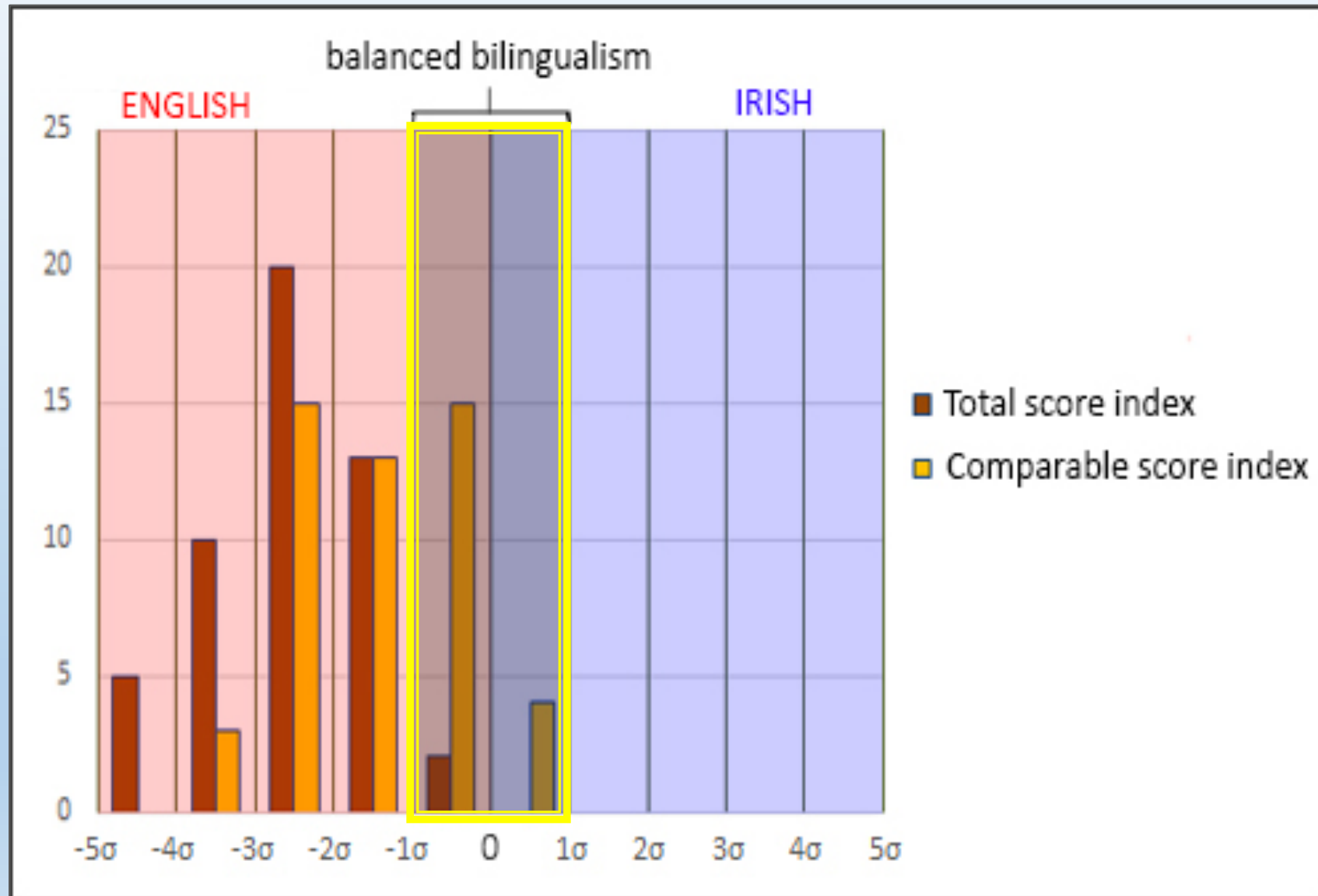
Variables of score-indexing

Variable	Weighting	Language	Meaning
Number of lemmata	1	E + I	% of calibrated lemmata
L1 lemmata	1	E + I	L1 lemmata
Appropriate lemmata	0.5	E + I	appropriate lemmata
Plural noun	1	E + I	nouns in the appropriate plural
Irregular verb	1	E + I	appropriate verb
Comparative adjective	1	E + I	appropriate adjective
Interrogative variety	0.5	E + I	variety of questions
Preposition	2	E + I	appropriate preposition
Word count fluency	0.5	E + I	number of words in minute's narration
Disfluency	1	E + I	features of disfluency
Proficiency statement	2	E + I	statement about language ability
Discourse markers	1	E + I	discourse markers (L1)
L1 Discourse markers	1	I	Irish discourse markers in Irish
Phonetics of <i>r</i>	1	I	<i>r</i> sounds
Copular pronoun gender	1	I	pronoun in the appropriate gender
Initial mutations	1	I	appropriate initial mutations

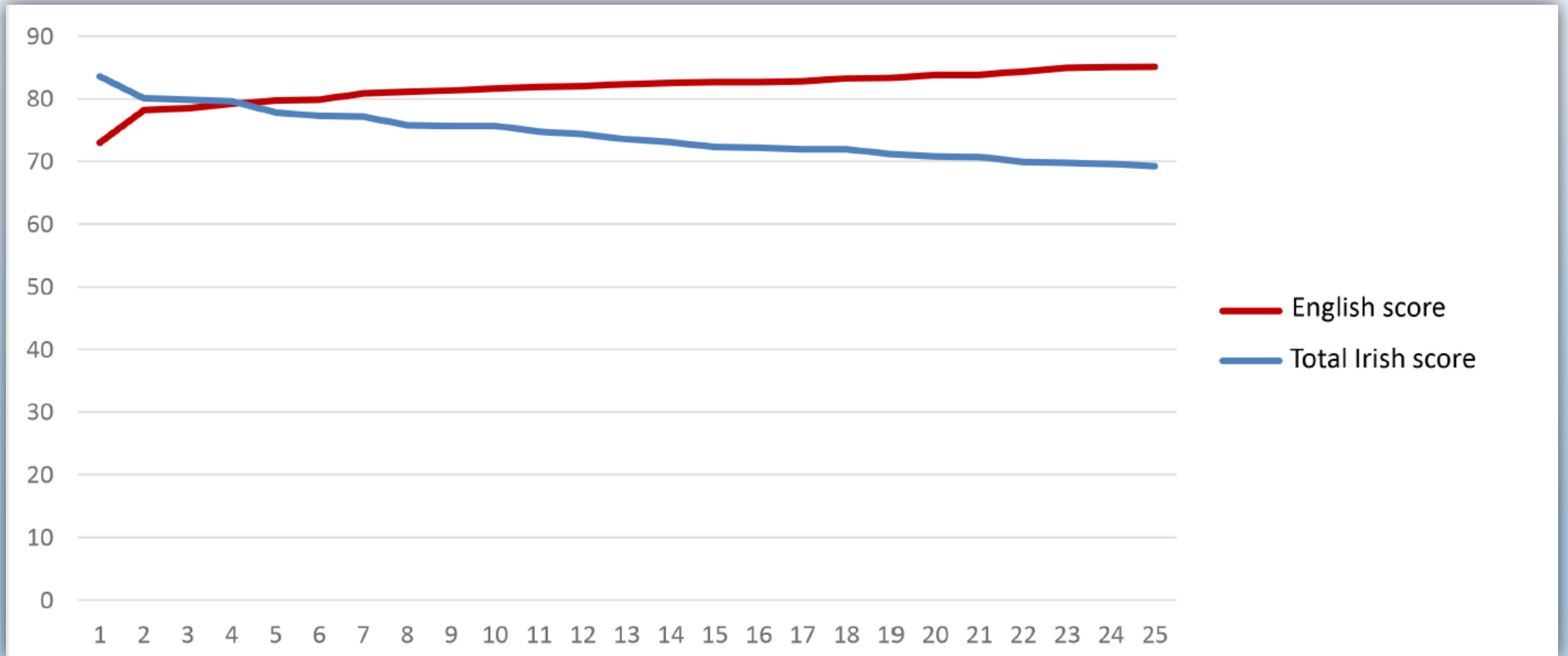
Irish – English = Score Index



Score Index

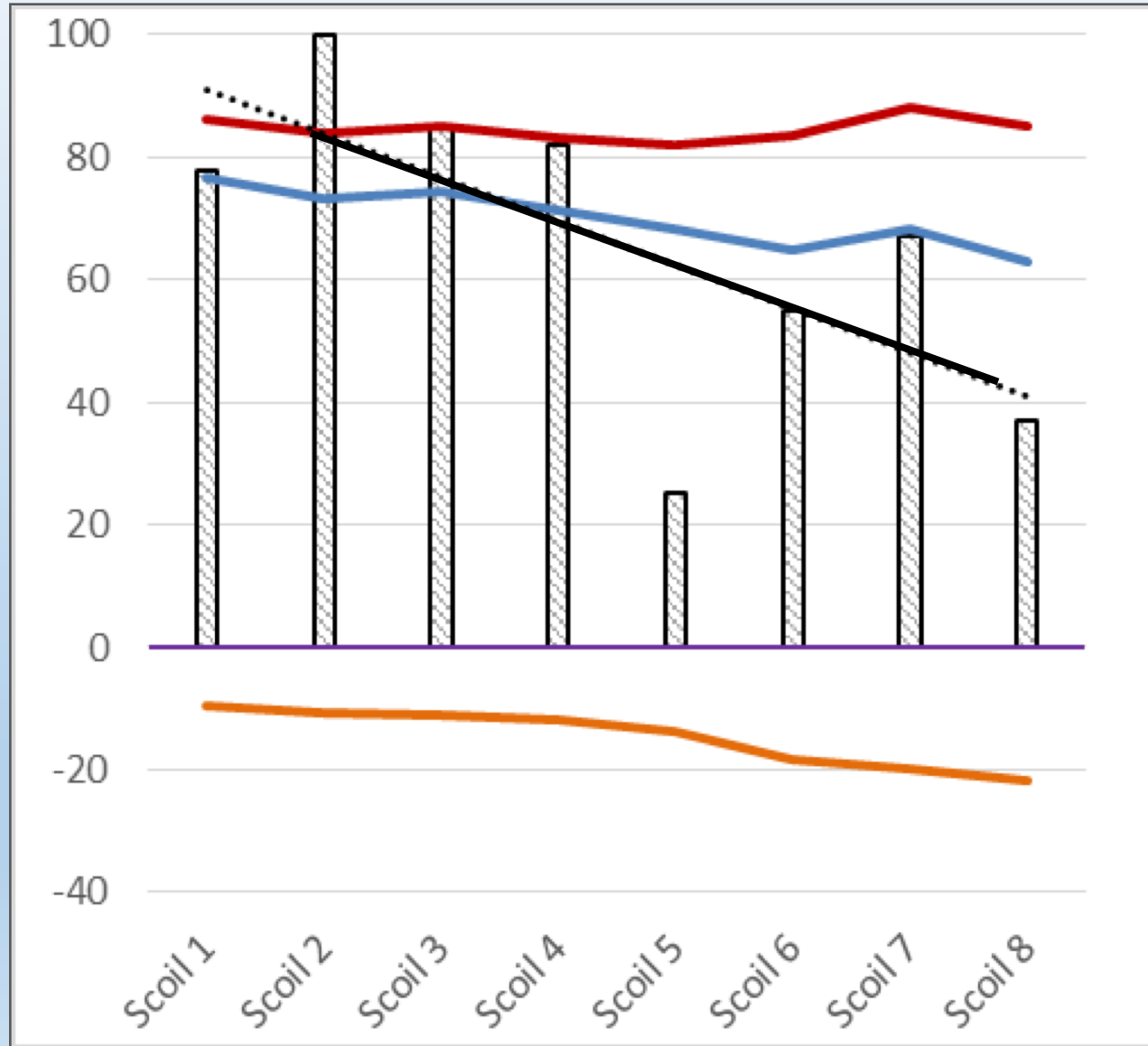


Highest and lowest scores



Highest pupil scores in total Irish score in comparison with lowest pupil scores in English score

Proportion of Active Irish Speakers



English

Irish

Irish
Speakers

Score Index

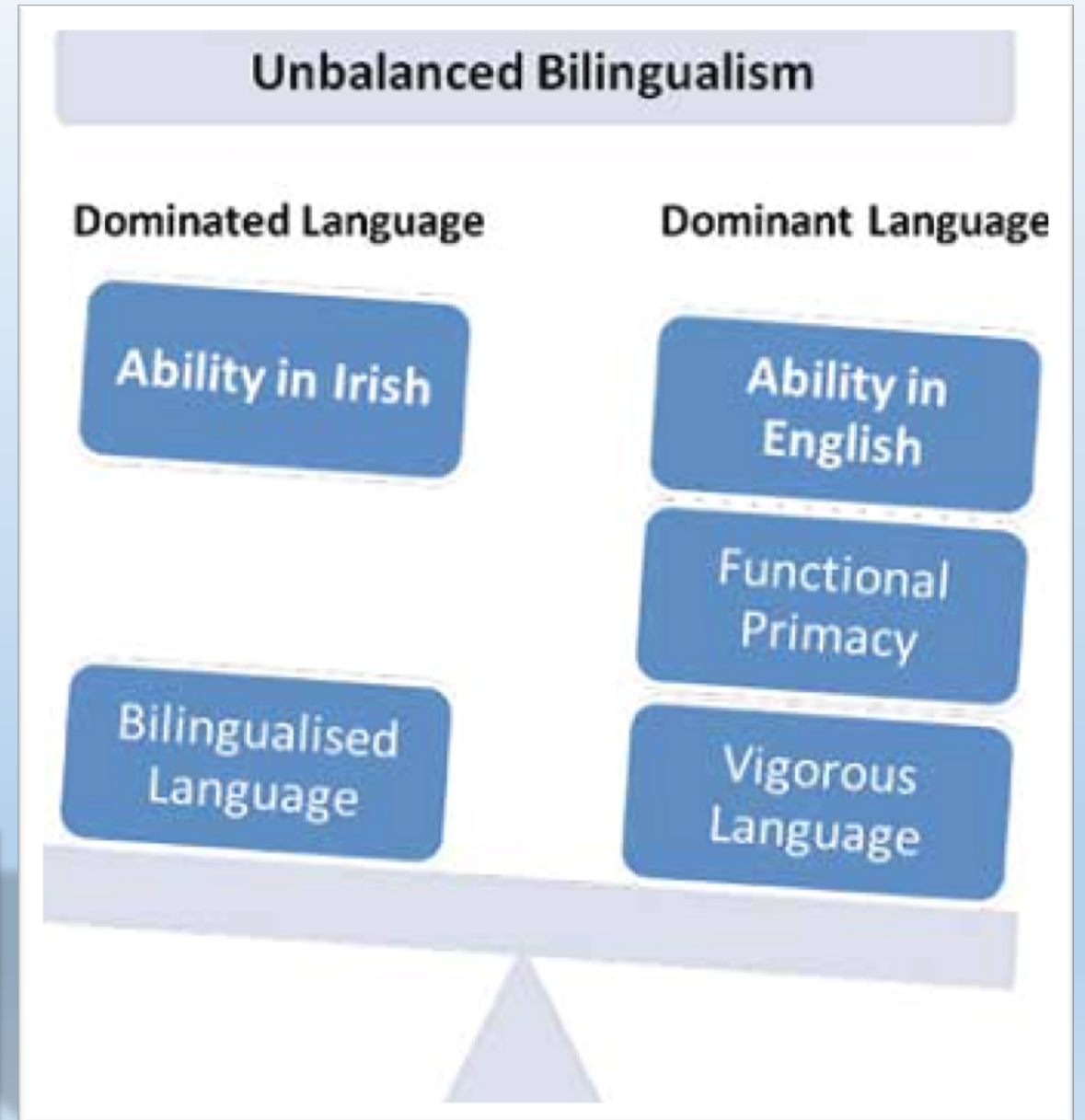


Primary Language

Imbalanced bilingualism in Minority Language Group:

- Full majority language acquisition
- Incomplete minority language in both **L1 and L2 contexts** (Ó Duibhir 2018)

Full majority language acquisition
=
Incomplete minority language acquisition



'Elaborated' Vs. 'Restricted code'

Basil Bernstein (1971)

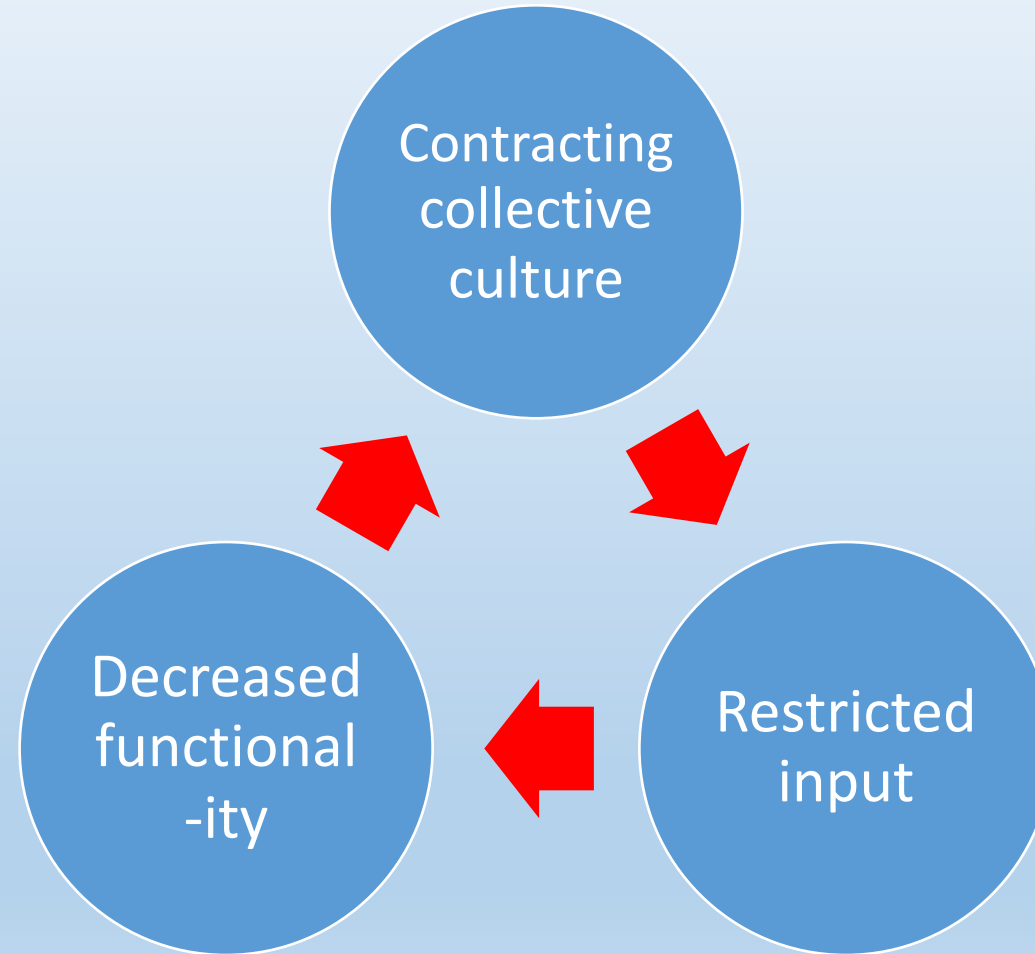
Majority Bilingualism

- Additive bilingualism
 - Cultural addition to elaborated code
- **Hulstijn (2015):** Higher Language Cognition (HLC) **Vs.**

Minority Bilingualism

- Subtractive minority bilingualism
 - Elaborated code in competing language
- **Hulstijn (2015):** Basic Language Cognition (BLC)
 - **ABC (2014):** Incomplete acquisition = **Problematic Basic Language Cognition (PBLC)**

Reduced Linguistic Commons in Minority Condition



Wickström *et al.* (2018: 59): 'When someone leaves the minority community, the further use of the language becomes less attractive for those remaining.'

Abstracted from Garrett Hardin (1968): 'The tragedy of the Commons', *Science* 162: 1243-1248

PART 3

Acknowledgement
of threat in policy

Current policy categorisation: rights-based civic projects with institutional supports

Wales

- Civic promotion
- Sectoralism*
- Postmodern revivalism
- National project

- **Welsh Language Act 1993**
- Cymraeg 2050: Welsh Language Strategy

Ireland

- Civic promotion
- Sectoralism*
- Post-revivalism, consumerist
- Post-Spatial (post-Gaeltacht)

- **Official Languages Act 2003**
- Gaeltacht Act 2012
- 20-year Strategy for Irish 2010-2030

Scotland

- Late-onset civic promotion
- Limited/late-onset sectoralism*
- Rights-based aspiration for secondary culture

- **Gaelic Language Act 2005**
- National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23

Sectoralism:* mainly focussed on educational provision; broadcasting; arts; academia; cultural interpretation/tourism; and weak on targeted supports for societal salience, community development

Ease of passage for discourses of civic promotion

- For this form of promotion to seem plausible, it requires:
 - **Demolinguistic set-aside** of speaker group contraction – *non-issue of social salience* (Ó Curnáin 2016: ‘disregard’ in discourse)
 - Acquiescence in **autochthonous epistemicide** – *status of cultural resource* (de Souza Santos 2014)
 - Deference to a **clericalism** in language scholarship – *linguism (words rather than people)* (Fennell 1971)
 - (mixed blessing of Celtic/Philological Studies of minority languages)
 - **Inadvertent reification** of language (G. Williams 1992) – *language as focus of an amalgamation of personal projects rather than an emergent feature of a collective culture*
- In addition to outgroup tolerance and the forbearance of their power class

Intellectual leadership: Ethnographic alchemy of minority language scholarship 1:

- **Celtic Studies through a British lens**
 - Intellectual heritage – high-water mark of British social and institutional formation (Simon Brooks and Richard Roberts 2015)
- **One of the most native aspects of the non-dominant autochthonous cultures in the islands of Britain and Ireland is also one of the most British**
 - Core elements of status bearing intellectual formation: philology, linguistic description, textual analysis, literary and cultural heritage, and minority creative literary expression

Intellectual leadership: Ethnographic alchemy of minority language scholarship 2:

- **Elaboration of sociolinguistic discourse within Celtic Studies framework, 1980s** →
 - 19th Century aesthetic sensibilities in 21st Century era of risk (Beck *et al.* 2010)
 - Scholarship at odds with contemporary concerns of the collective
- **High status Celticist aesthetics married to**
 - Post-structural sociology of language (sociolinguistics): cosmopolitan abstraction in a post-modern discourse (mirroring post-structural critical theory in literary analysis)
 - Enhances social distinction of practitioners (Bourdieu 1979)
 - Weak impact on Civic culture → anti-collective (Gramsci 1971 Ed.)
- **Scholarship of past cultural heritage wedded to the utopianism of postmodern heterogeneity**
 - Circular or closed discourse (see Edwards 2012: 38 – on in-house debate)
 - Failure to engage with reality (from the perspective of the collective) deprives the minority group of the intellectual support to inform interventions

Constraints in acknowledging level of threat in policy and collective action

Community

Minority language politics

Local activism in civic depletion

Contained and disempowered

Power

Political institutions

Public bodies

Derivative aspect of inherited legacy

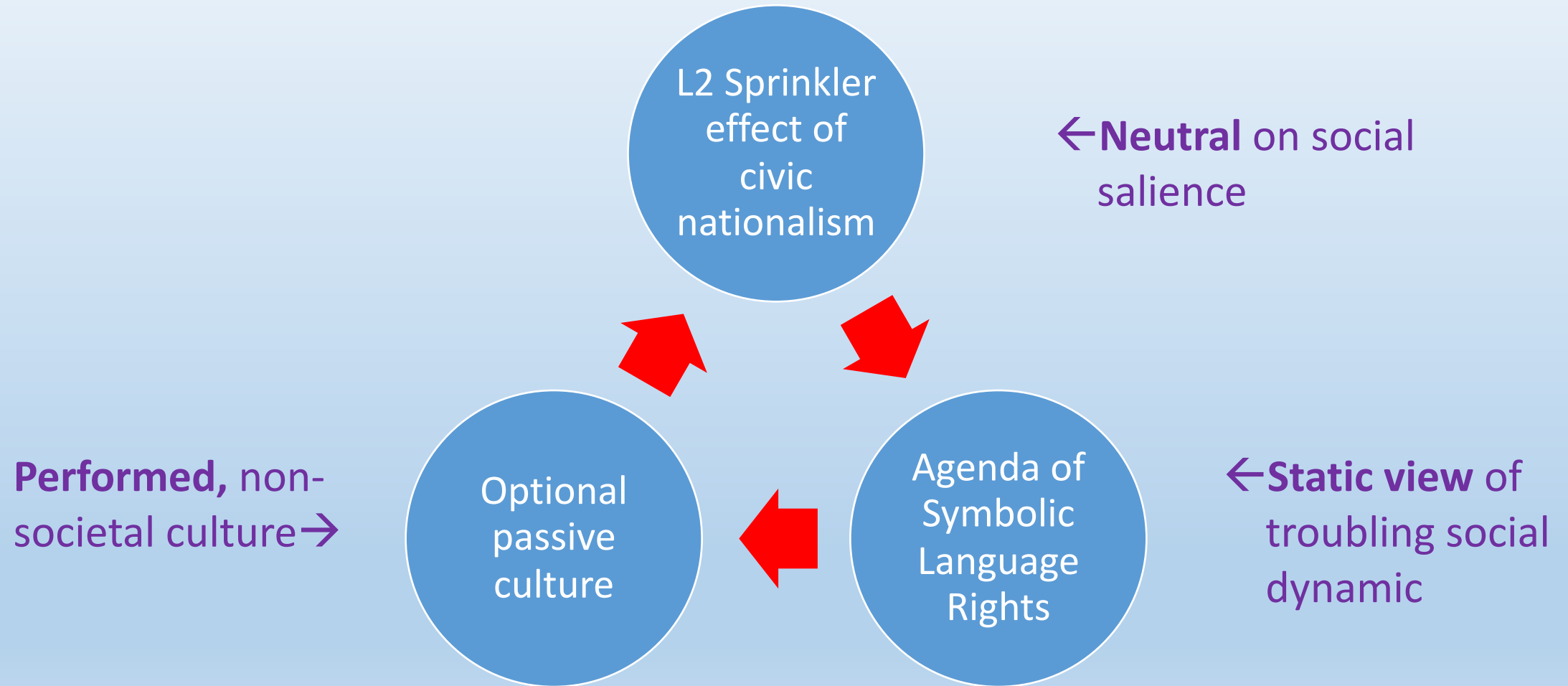
Intellectual leadership

Academia

Public discourse

Asocial and dissociated

Fragility in Commons of Minority Condition – Consumerist/Laissez-faire View of Culture



Grin *et al.* (2018: 37): ‘ensuring consistency between different measures and thus the coherence of the language policy as a whole [Mime Vade mecum]’

Anatomy of Minority Inertia:

← Ambiguous Leadership + Formal Structural Deficit + Civic Depletion

Descent into socio-cultural stagnation in engendered non-political view of the problematic condition (Ó Giollagáin 2014a, b)

- Endured demographic haemorrhage, recessive minority
 - Depoliticising the linguistic minority
 - Apparent acquiescence of language minority in their own demise, but a 'no-choice' scenario in reality (Z. Bauman 2001)
- Institutional mis-alignment, irrelevance of existing agency
 - Grin (2003: 52) 'Language Planning and Economics' – limitations of language rights-based approach, rights as norms competing for resources
- Self-censoring, highly circumscribed debate, as protective social psychology to avoid unpleasantness
 - → Minority left to their individual struggles
 - → Amplified post-modern condition: atomised and amorphous

'Trope of Hope' - Naïve tendency to talk about future to avoid examining the present

PART 4

Pragmatic agenda for
engagement: a rebalance

Hoping for the best, planning for risk (Ó Giollagáin and Ó Curnáin 2016)

- Assembly -> Adherence and Leadership
 - Executive power and support structure
 - Positioning the minority group in their own solution (Ó Giollagáin and Ó Curnáin 2016; Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, forthcoming)
- Communal Trust -> Economic Basis → Collective capacity building
- Strategic / Research Agency -> Intellectual backing of Empathetic Ethnography (Ó Giollagáin and Ó Curnáin, forthcoming)
- → Promoting the Linguistic Geography of the Minority -> protecting salience of language and social densities of speakers (Ó Giollagáin *et al.* 2007; Ó Giollagáin and Charlton 2015)

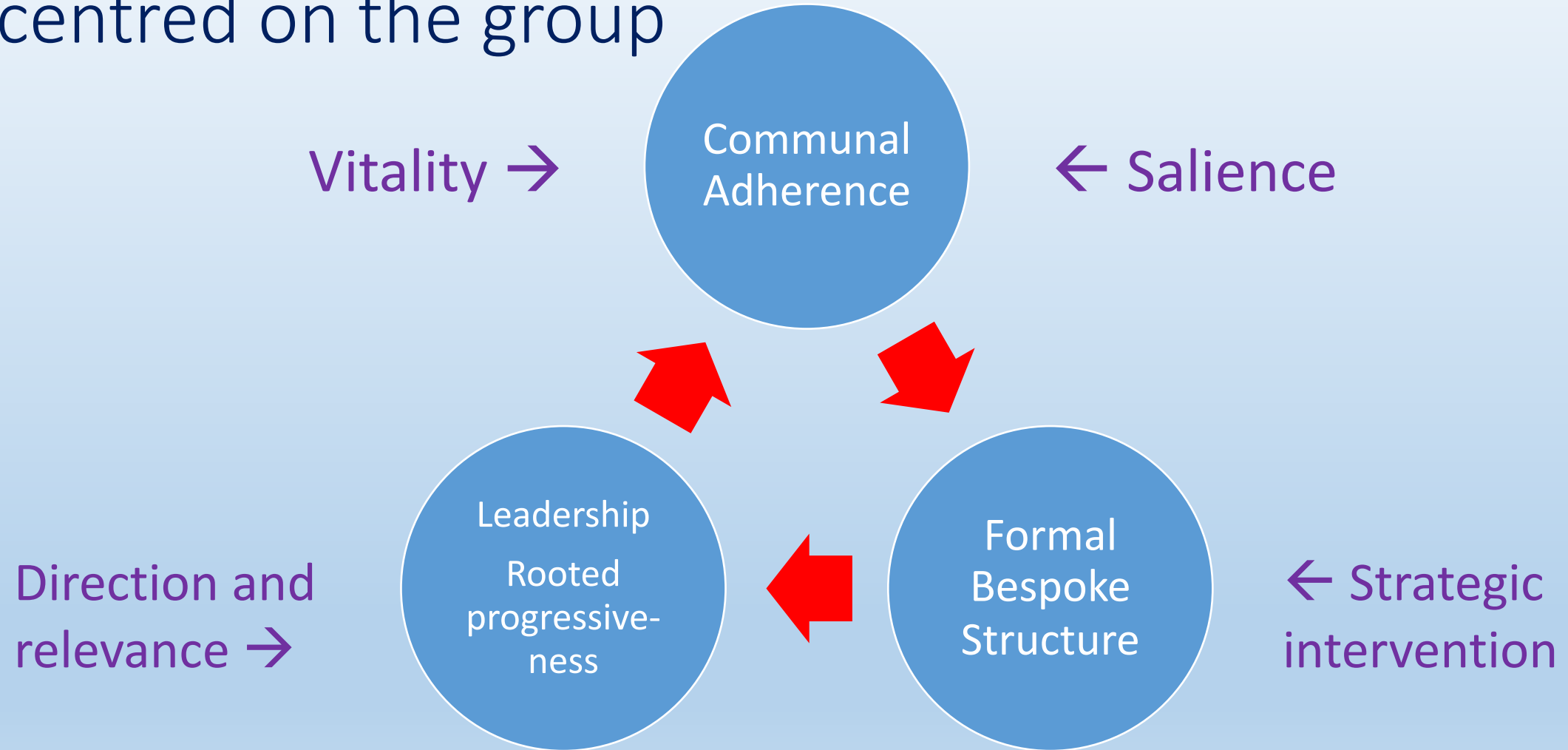
6 defining characteristics of minority languages

- **Demographic fragility**
 - Native-speaker base contracting at a faster rate than the development of productive learners
- **Habitat loss, geographic locus**
 - Minority language groups are losing the social dominance in the traditional locus
- **Linguistic imbalance**
 - Most minority speakers socialised in bilingualism have a higher linguistic proficiency in majority language
- **Social subordination, sociology of minoritisation**
 - Majority language youth socialisation processes predominate native communal contexts and institutional provision for the minority
- **Politics of power relations – civic institutional concern for a societal ‘non-issue’**
 - Minority language institutional discourse demonstrates a tendency towards utopian thinking: **not focused on actual community** and **abstracted as cultural/academic commodity**
 - Ascribing status which is in contradiction to weak position in discourse of power, limited socio-economic market to support adherents → **a feeling of in-group dissociation**
- **Symbolic constraints in addressing the social problem**
 - Symbolism of diversity easier to accept than social reality of erosion

Ethnolinguistic Reconstructionism

- **Group Social Dynamics**
 - Where is the capacity for communal leadership?
- **Diagnosis/Prognosis as Agreed Agenda for Action**
 - What is the collective mechanism to agree a differential diagnosis of the minority language condition?
- **Strategic Power**
 - What power structure(s) will devise targeted strategy?
- **Right of Assembly**
 - How does the threatened collective give consent?
- **Empowering a Societal Project**
 - Who will create relevant support structures?
- **Supporting market / Material rewards**
 - What socio-economic structure will reward adherence and participation in threatened collective?
- **Intellectual Leadership: Empathetic ethnography and language planning**
 - How do we enable a structure or agency to give intellectual leadership?
 - (1) Research, ongoing strategic advice for a societal project
 - (2) Recording and retrieving remaining ethnolinguistic resources as initiative against societal risk

Resilience in Commons of Minority Condition: centred on the group

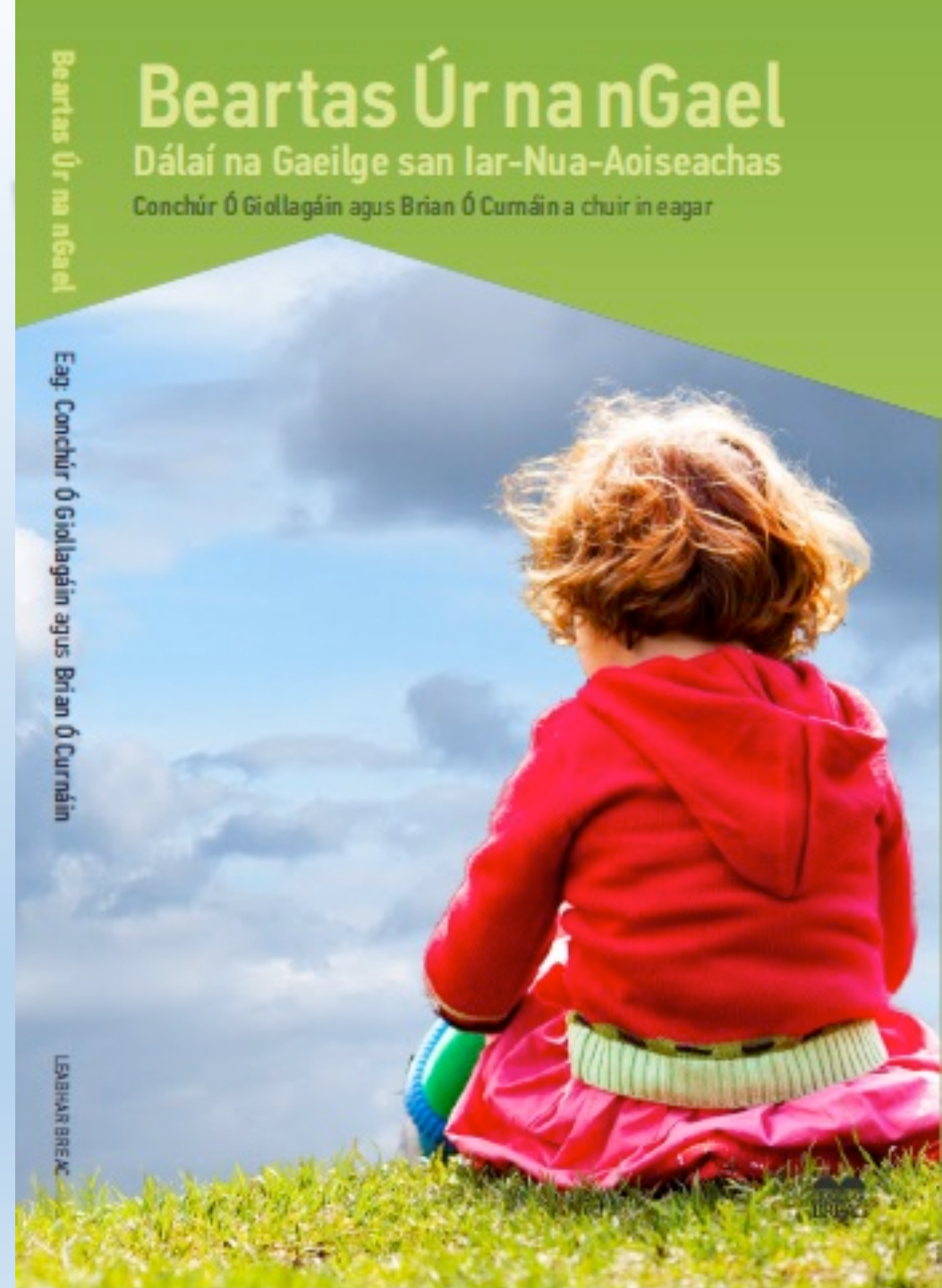


Thank you!

**Go raibh maith agaibh!
Mòran taing!**

Prof. Conchúr Ó Giollagáin

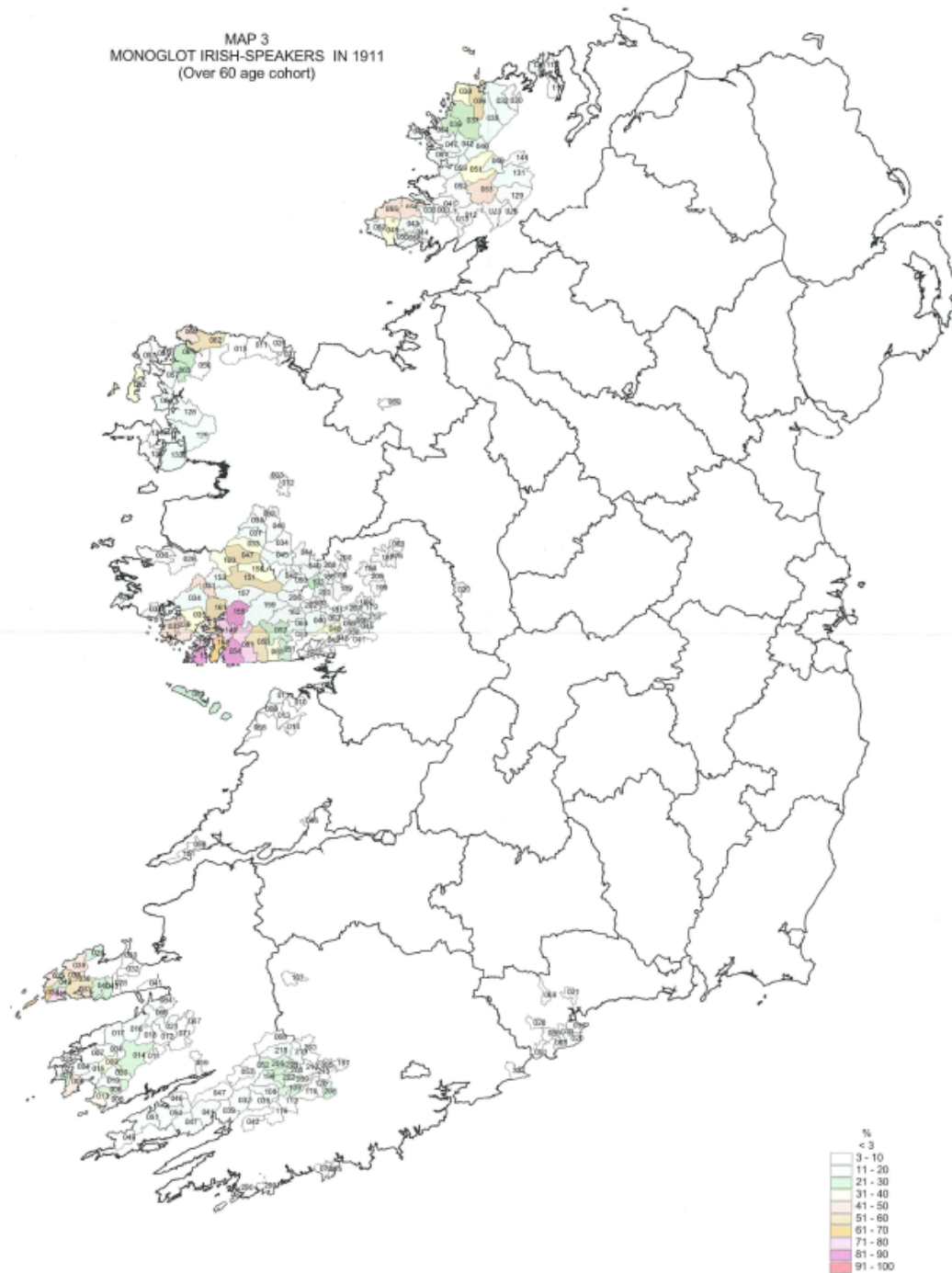
E-mail: conchur@uhi.ac.uk



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MAP 3
MONOGLOT IRISH-SPEAKERS IN 1911
(Over 60 age cohort)



1911 Census in Ireland:
Monoglot speakers of Irish as
Percentage breaks in
60+ yrs. Age Cohort