Languages in the UK and Ireland:
English Only or English Plus?

Intended Learning Outcomes:

1. UK has indigenous (Celtic) and ‘community’ languages with major policy differences.
2. UK’s minority languages are declining, but with attempts to revive and resurrect the Celtic languages.
3. The parallels with AZ Native American languages and US ‘immigrant’ languages are very close.
4. Education can successfully kill a language, provide token identity, or help maintain (even resurrect) a language. That is the same in the UK and AZ.
How Many Languages in the World?

- Estimates are 5500 to 7000 languages currently alive.
- Will they all survive?
- 50% world’s languages will die as not being reproduced in children; c.f.8% mammals, 3% birds.
- Only around 300 languages deemed safe (5%).
- Unless there is language conservation, language death will be rampant.
Number of Languages in the World

Numerical Size of Languages in the World

Dead or Dying

How would you feel if you were the last speaker of a language?

Marie Smith, the reputed last speaker of the Alaskan Eyak language, gave her answer:

‘I don’t know why it’s me, why I’m the one. I tell you, it hurts. It really hurts.’
Dead or Dying

Richard Littlebear, a Native American Cheyenne speaker, tells of his meeting with Marie Smith the reputed last speaker of the Alaskan Eyak language.

‘I felt that I was sitting in the presence of a whole universe of knowledge that could be gone in one last breath. That’s how fragile that linguistic universe seemed.’
Dying languages

• 516 of the languages listed in the *Ethnologue* are classified as nearly extinct i.e. when "only a few elderly speakers are still living."

• Africa (46 total)
• The Americas (170 total)
• Asia (78 total)
• Europe (12 total)
• The Pacific (210 total)

• Source: Summer Institute of Linguistics International

http://www.ethnologue.com/home.asp
• Achumawi
  Ahtena
  Apache Kiowa
  Apache Lipan
  Arikara
  Atsugewi
  Caddo
  Cahuilla
  Chetco
  Chinook
  Chinook Wawa
  Clallam
  Coos
  Degexit'an
  Gros Ventre
  Haida Northern
  Han
  Holikachuk
  Hupa
  Kalapuya
  Kansa
  Karok
  Kashaya
  Kawaiisu
  Klamath-Modoc
  Kuskokwim
  Kutenai
• Luiseño
• Lushootseed
• Maidu
• Mandan
• Menominee
• Miwok
• Nisenan
• Osage
• Panamint
• Pawnee
• Pomo
• Quapaw
• Quileute
• Salish
• Serrano
• Snohomish
• Tanacross
• Tanaina
• Tolowa
• Tübatulabal
• Tuscarora
• Tututni
• Wasco-Wishram
• Washo
• Wichita
• Wintu
• Yokuts
• Yuchi
• Yurok
English is dominant everywhere - pragmatically it is not possible for language planning to halt its expansion nor its threat to bilingualism.

Northern Ireland = 6.6% say they speak Irish (2001)

Ireland = 42% say they speak Irish (2002)

Scotland = 1.2% say they speak Gaelic (2001)

WALES = 21% say they speak Welsh (2001)

Isle of Man (Manx Gaelic) = 2% (2001)
Number of Gaelic Speakers in Scotland by Council, 2001 Census

- Shetland: 12,669 (6.1%, -1.1%)
- n=5,731 (1.0%, 0.0%)
- n=3,132 (0.7%, 0.0%)
- n=15,723 (59.3%, -6.7%)
Wales
Percentage of Welsh Language Speakers
by Census 1901 - 2001

Percentage of Population

NB: There was no Census in 1941; the figure is extrapolated.
Some of the interconnected Factors claimed to affect Language Shift in Celtic Languages

1. **Mass Communication**
   - TV - terrestrial and satellite, Radio
   - Telephone
   - Information Technology - World Wide Web

2. **Transport**
   - Railways, Cars and Motorways
   - Air travel

3. **Mobility of Labour / Population**
   - Emigration and Immigration
   - Tourism

4. **Industrialization**
5. **Urbanization / Suburbanization**

6. **Decline of Religion**
7. **Move to Anglo / American Cultures**

8. **Anglicization of Education**
9. **Economy - impoverished rural ‘Heartland’ language areas**

10. **Demise of communities**

......... Language transmission in the family and school? This is THE CRUCIAL factor.
A few positive PIs:

♦ Bilingual education - pre-school to University

♦ Welsh compulsory in schools 5 to 16 years as L1 or L2. 27% of Primary and 21% of Secondary schools are ‘bilingual’.

♦ Institutionalization: TV / Radio / e-learning / Language Planning Agency (Language Schemes) / pre-school playgroups (n=1000) / Community Schemes.

♦ 1993 Welsh Language Act giving LANGUAGE RIGHTS
A few negative PIs:

- Language reproduction in the family
  E.G. If both parents are Welsh speaking, there is a 91% chance of their child becoming Welsh speaking.

- 40% children fluent in Welsh at age 11 move to English-medium Secondary education

- Out-of-school use of English rather than Welsh

- Heartlands in relative economically deprived rural areas

- Technology / WWW
• **Language Planning: The Celtic & European Approach**

• **ACQUISITION**
  • (1) Family Language Reproduction
  • (2) Bilingual Education - pre-school to University
  • (3) Adult Language Learning

• **STATUS - societal**
  • (1) Institutionalization (e.g. mass media, government). Language Act (rights).
  • (2) Modernity (e.g. technology)
  • (3) Status Symbols (e.g. signage)

• **USAGE - individual**
  • (1) Economy - instrumental
  • (2) Culture, leisure, social - integrative

• **CORPUS**
  • (1) Linguistic Standardization (e.g. dictionaries, school, TV)
  • (2) Public Vernacular (e.g. Clear or Plain Welsh)
Figures represent numbers of Irish speakers as a percentage of the total population of each Gaeltacht area.

Community Languages

- Mostly in England – found in large cities throughout UK; also scattered Chinese

- No language question in the 2001 UK Census (or previously)

- Instead, there is an ‘ethnicity’ question

- England = 11.74% ‘ethnic’ … e.g. …..
  - Asian British = 4.57% (e.g. Indian origin)
  - Mixed ethnicity = 1.31% (e.g. White / Black Caribbean)
  - Black British = 2.30% (e.g. Black African)
  - British Chinese = 0.89% (e.g. Hong Kong origin)

- Guess that 2% to 4% of all people in England are bilingual

- Bilingual education for additional languages is very rare. Mainstreamed. UK Islamic leaders currently arguing for govt. funded bilingual (Arabic-English) schools.

- Language reproduction often via family and community effort (e.g. Saturday schools, mosque, temple, synagogue, Embassy).

- Three generation shift?

- No territorial argument
David Blunkett, Home Secretary,
September 2002

“Speaking English enables parents to converse with their children in English, as well as in their historic mother tongue, at home and to participate in wider modern culture. It helps overcome the schizophrenia which bedevils generational relationships.”
Isle of Man
MANX GAELIC LANGUAGE CENSUS

1874 approx 50% - around 12,350 speakers

1872 Education Act – banned Manx in schools – or punishment

1901 = 4,419 speakers – Education had a large effect
1911 = 2,382 speakers
1921 = 896 speakers
1931 = 531 speakers

1941 no Census as WW2

1951 = 355 speakers
1961 = 165 speakers
1971 = 284 speakers

(1974 Death of last native speaker Edward (Ted) Maddrell)

1981 Census question on Manx omitted

1991 = 643 speakers
2001 = 1,689 speakers (population of 76,315)

{Extinct according to the Ethnologue!}
The Manx Gaelic Language in 2003:

Driven by ‘heritage language’ enthusiasts

New native speakers

A (single) Manx medium Unit in a mainstream elementary school

Optional Second language Manx classes in Elementary (n=1,200) and High Schools (n=350)

Some bilingual signs, but Manx Gaelic banned from use in the Tynwald (government)

Growing interests in language for a separate IoM identity

The Big Issue: Language reproduction occurs in school and homes; language production in a few adult classes.

But Language reproduction is contingent on:

- Supply of parents (no native adult speakers)
- Supply of teachers (requires teachers as learners)
CONCLUSION One

English Only and English Plus in different regions.

Is this fair and just?

- Government supportive of Welsh and Gaelic but not of Community languages.

- Positive discrimination for one minority language and negative discrimination for the ‘additional’ languages of UK.

WHY?


Conclusion Two

Educational policy is capable of (but interactively with other elements):

- Language destruction (Manx Gaelic, ‘immigrant’ languages in England)
- Language for identity (Irish)
- Language revitalization (Welsh, Manx Gaelic)

Within a few decades, education can, almost by itself (religion apart), kill a language – among children, in homes, across domains, in society.

Can education revive a language?

Education can create potential language users but not language use in homes, streets, mass media, leisure, employment and the economy.

OVERALL
Education is strong at language destruction; weak at revival. Witness:

Ron Unz and bilingual education in AZ and CA ……

Native American education ……