LANGUAGE REVITALISATION IN GAELIC SCOTLAND
LINGUISTIC PRACTICE AND IDEOLOGY

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Language Revitalisation in Gaelic Scotland
Do Fhinn agus do Chiorstaidh
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Stuart Dunmore
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Gaelic-Medium Education as Revitaliser: A Pointer for Future Prospects?

Gaelic is the original language of the Scots, and it is still spoken. This is why Gaelic matters: it is foundational in Scottish culture as one of the defining attributes of the Scotti, the people who eventually developed into the Scottish nation of today. Recent decades have witnessed a change of fortunes for the language. It has been recognised, first as an official language of the United Kingdom (2003), and subsequently as an official language of Scotland (2005). A statutory language development authority, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, was subsequently created (2006), and a Gaelic media and broadcasting authority, MG Alba, with a Gaelic-medium television station, BBC Alba, was established (2008). The language has longer-standing official recognition, however, with statutory members on the Crofters’ Commission (from 1886) and the Scottish Land Court (established 1911); in education acts (from 1918), first as a school subject and later as a medium of education (from the earlier and mid–twentieth century, respectively); and in Gaelic-medium education (GME) as such (from 1985).

There has thus been a full generation or more since the beginnings of GME, and Stuart Dunmore’s study of its first generation of (mainly) new speakers is therefore timely. Since a question on Gaelic speaking ability first appeared in Scotland’s population census (1881), the language has been in conspicuous overall decline in terms of both numbers, and area where the language features as local community speech. Ostensible increases in numbers (1891, 1971) were chiefly due to changes in the wording of the census question. Recent censuses (2001, 2011), however, have witnessed some growth in the numbers of Gaelic speakers amongst young people, which is now beginning to overcome the loss of speakers (mainly) through death.

From its inception, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has made GME one of its principal strategies for language revitalisation, and has pushed strongly for further development of the sector, both in the Highlands and Islands ‘Gaelic-speaking areas’, and in urban, Lowland Scotland – this despite some admonition from the late Joshua Fishman
(father of the sociology of language) not to place too much reliance on ‘education and other higher order “props”’ (1991: 380, 391). The Bòrd has also been involved in the formulation of a National Gaelic Language Plan, and similar schemes potentially for all Scottish official authorities, Gaelic-medium broadcasting, research on Gaelic language in the community, and much else, as well as Gaelic educational policies. Its language plans are reviewed on a five-yearly basis. Some overall scrutiny and review of the effectiveness of its policies are now due, together with those of its non-statutory predecessor (from 2003).

Stuart Dunmore’s study provides a perspective on an important aspect of these policies: namely, whether the Bòrd’s educational policies have had any real effect on language revitalisation, and brought about any real prospect of a longer-term future for the language in Scottish society and culture. The study thus purposively sought a representative sample of the first generation of GME-educated ex-pupils, now adults, some with children of their own. The subjects were asked about the significance of Gaelic in their present lives: whether they still speak it, whether and how they use it, what significance they place upon it, how it relates to their own identities, what their own attitudes to GME are, and the likelihood of their own children acquiring the language. These are crucial questions for Gaelic language planners at the present time, and the study considers the future prospects for the language in the light of its findings, bearing in mind that respondents are likely to have been more favourably inclined towards the language, and possibly too more successfully acquisitive of it.

The final chapter on the bilingual life of ex-GME pupils after school is thus a crucial pointer to the future role of Gaelic in Scottish society. In reviewing other studies that had observed the language abilities, usages and attitudes of GME pupils and former pupils, Dunmore’s present work details the weaknesses of Gaelic in all these respects. The quoted objective of D. J. MacLeod (2007, 2009), regarding the prospects for the GME system creating ‘a new generation of Gaelic-speakers’, and for a revival evidenced by their children being ‘raised as mother tongue Gaelic speakers’, is thus still far from being demonstrated by the present findings, despite census data on increases in reported Gaelic language abilities amongst young people. The clear implication is that Gaelic language planners need to take a hard, unblinkered look at the realities demonstrated in this study. It might be salutary for consideration to be given as to what it would take to develop the system to enable MacLeod’s ‘new generation of Gaelic speakers’, or at least to develop it to the levels of performance noted by the corresponding immersion systems for Welsh and Irish. Could that even be a possibility for the Scottish education system? What, then, is envisaged by Gaelic language planners as a realistic, feasible and achievable future role for the language? A new, revitalised Gaelic-speaking generation? A Gaelic-using network linked by new media? A cultural coterie in its own cocoon?

Stuart Dunmore’s present study thus presents vitally important data on crucial current language-planning questions, and by extension develops an agenda for new directions in policymaking. In doing this, he has undertaken a landmark study in the field, which has very amply fulfilled the purpose of the Soillse project (from 2010, to create an ongoing contingent of advanced language researchers to support Gaelic language planning), of which he was amongst the first cohort.
Dunmore’s study reports at a time when the fortunes of Gaelic are challenged by formidable social, economic and political changes in wider society. The recently improving provisions of infrastructure, cultural support, and new opportunities for the language come at a very late stage in its history, and had they been implemented much earlier, they might, in all fairness, have given the language and its speakers a much firmer base on which to maintain its culture and place in what I have called ‘runaway language-shift’. This will call for its own study of external forces. What Stuart Dunmore has provided here, however, is the corresponding, penetrating and long called-for study of the internal motivations and attitudes of the new ex-GME generation, in which, importantly, we hear the actual voice of that generation itself. I am delighted to commend this study as an essential read for all those interested in the future prospects of Gaelic in Scotland, and to language planners and policymakers in particular.

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Ferintosh, the Black Isle, April 2019.
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Gaelic Scotland: Bilingual Life in the Twenty-First Century?

Introduction

Language decline and revitalisation are matters of increasingly urgent political concern internationally. Whilst bilingual education occupies a prominent position in policy to stem the loss of minoritised languages, various scholars have suggested that the long-term impact of such education on language revitalisation initiatives may be undermined by a complex assortment of sociolinguistic and psychological factors. Yet while the limitations of formal education for revitalising minority languages have been widely theorised, empirical research on long-term outcomes of minority language-medium education has been relatively scarce. This monograph seeks to contribute to filling this important lacuna by empirically assessing long-term outcomes of Gaelic-medium education (GME) in Scotland. This opening chapter will contextualise the key themes of the book within the sociological and historical setting of Gaelic in Scotland (1.1), and introduce the crucial issue of language revitalisation and the role assigned to bilingual immersion education in current initiatives to maintain and renew minority languages (1.2). Lastly, section 1.3 will outline the overall structure of the book, with a view to situating the wider study against this conceptual backdrop.

Gaelic has been spoken in Scotland for over 1,500 years, and was used over a major part of northern Britain – spoken throughout but not confined to the borders of present-day Scotland – in the medieval period (Dumville 2002; Woolf 2007; Ó Baoill 2010; Clancy 2011; MáRKUS 2017). Yet the language has now been in a state of decline for almost a millennium. From the twelfth century the ascendancy of a Norman French-speaking aristocracy combined with the increasing economic importance of the market burghs – where varieties of the Northumbrian ‘Inglis’ language predominated – effected a gradual transition among Scots in lowland areas from membership of a Gaelic-speaking, kinship-oriented society to an Inglis-speaking, feudalist one (Barrow 1989). Gaelic was increasingly replaced by Inglis as the language of social prestige and vernacular speech in most lowland districts, and from c.1500 the latter became increasingly known there as ‘Scottis’ (modern ‘Scots’), while the social
terrain of Gaelic became increasingly restricted to the mountainous Highlands and Islands (M. D. MacGregor 2009). One consequence of this dynamic was an increased ideological association of Gaelic with the Highlands and Islands, while Scots, and later English, became majority languages in the more densely populated Lowlands. From the mid-sixteenth century the extirpation of Gaelic and Highland culture became an explicit policy of the Scottish and, later, the British state (Withers 1984, 1988; MacKinnon 1991, 1993; MacGregor 2006).

MacKinnon (1993) notes that by the early nineteenth century, the proportion of Scotland’s population able to speak Gaelic was 18.5%; this had fallen to 6.3% by the end of that century, largely as a result of processes of land reorganisation and mass displacement that became known as the Clearances (Withers 1984; Richards 2007). This was compounded by the passing of the Education (Scotland) Act 1872, which made no mention of Gaelic (McLeod 2005; Dunbar 2006; MacLeod 2007). Responsibility for education in the Highlands, which had previously been administered by third-sector and church organisations, was transferred to local school boards, and in areas where schools had previously made provision for Gaelic its use consequently declined (Durkacz 1983; MacKinnon 1993; Macleod 2010). While Gaelic was used sporadically in education in different areas during the twentieth century (O’Hanlon 2012; O’Hanlon et al. 2012), the proportion of its speakers in Scotland continued to decline, falling to 1.6% by 1981 (MacKinnon 1993). GME, as it exists today, emerged from the grass-roots efforts of primarily Gaelic-speaking parents who were chiefly concerned for their children’s Gaelic language acquisition, but was quickly augmented by hundreds of non-Gaelic-speaking children (Comunn na Gàidhlig 1989; Fraser 1989).

Present-day GME in Scotland (see Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education 2011) started in 1985, when two classes offering instruction through the medium of Gaelic opened within primary schools in Glasgow and Inverness. GME grew rapidly throughout the first decade of its availability, and 1,258 students were enrolled in the system by 1995 (MacKinnon 2005: 7–8). This book examines outcomes of the system in terms of the manner and degree to which former pupils who started in GME during this period continue to use Gaelic in their daily lives, and provides an assessment of their language ideologies and attitudes.

The 2011 census showed a diminution in the decline of Gaelic speakers in Scotland, and for the first time marginal growth of 0.1% was recorded in the national proportion of speakers under the age of 20 (National Records of Scotland 2013a). Crucially, this growth was interpreted by policymakers such as Bòrd na Gàidhlig – the statutory agency charged with the promotion of Gaelic – as evidence of the role of GME in reviving the language (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2013, 2014). For example, in 2014 Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s then chief executive, John Angus MacKay, claimed that the 2011 census results that:

the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland has almost stabilised since the census of 2001. This is mainly due to the rise in Gaelic-medium education . . . [and] shows that within the next ten years the long term decline of the language could be reversed. (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2014)
Yet the census figures give only a limited picture of the actual language practices of reported speakers, the extent to which they use Gaelic, and their beliefs, feelings and attitudes regarding the language, a shortcoming typical of census data, regardless of geographical location. Internationally, little research appears to have been done on the life trajectories of adults who received a bilingual education: that is to say, on the long-term effects that systems of bilingual education may have on such individuals’ relationship to the minority language after formal schooling is ‘over and done with’ (Fishman 2001b: 470).

The first students to receive GME at primary school are now in their late twenties to mid-thirties, and prospects for the maintenance and intergenerational transmission of Gaelic by this group have not previously been examined. As a response, the principal research questions of the investigation outlined in this book comprise the following:

- What role does Gaelic play in the day-to-day lives of former Gaelic-medium students who started in GME during the first decade of its availability? How and when do they use the language?
- What sets of beliefs and language ideologies do these Gaelic-medium-educated adults express in relation to Gaelic?
- How do these beliefs and ideologies relate to their actual language practices, to their attitudes concerning the language, and to future prospects for the maintenance of Gaelic?

Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, this book provides an assessment of these overarching questions among a sample of 130 Gaelic-medium-educated adults. A thematic ethnography of speaking methodology is employed to analyse qualitative data from interviews with forty-six Gaelic-medium educated adults, whilst 112 responses to an online questionnaire on language use and attitudes are evaluated through correlational statistical analysis. Results are discussed with reference to extensive research literatures on the nexus of language, culture and identity, language revitalisation in the international context, and the limitations of GME in relation to the revitalisation of Gaelic. The first section of this introductory chapter (1.1) will introduce the current sociolinguistic situation of Gaelic in Scotland. In section 1.2, I introduce and conceptualise current ideas on language revitalisation, drawing particular attention to Fishman’s ideas concerning reversing language shift (RLS), and some of the major critiques of his theories. Finally, section 1.3 sets out the overall structure of the book.

1.1 Gaelic language and culture in Scotland

Gaelic speakers constitute a marked linguistic minority in modern Scotland. In the 2011 census, 57,602 people over the age of 3 were reported as being able to speak Gaelic, approximating to 1.1% of the total population of Scotland (National Records of Scotland 2013a). This figure amounted to 1,050 fewer speakers than were recorded in the 2001 census, a 2.2% decline in speaker numbers from ten years previously.
Language revitalisation in Gaelic Scotland (as against a decline of 11.1% between 1991 and 2001). Language shift is an increasingly common phenomenon in the international context; as the late Joshua Fishman (1991, 2001b, 2013) consistently observed, countless minority language communities across the world are currently attempting to maintain and revitalise their traditional modes of communication and cultural practice against an oncoming tide of global language loss. Various scholars have critiqued the notion of ‘endangerment’ in discourses of language minoritisation and shift, however, particularly problematising the nature of narratives that have come to predominate in certain contexts of language revitalisation (see chapter contributions in Duchêne and Heller 2007, for example). Similarly, Costa (2017) has recently argued that rationales for revitalisation movements may not, in fact, stem principally from linguistic concerns, but rather reflect broader sociocultural phenomena in late modernity.

Over 90% of the world’s estimated 7,105 languages are thought to be spoken by fewer than 1 million first-language speakers, with almost 50% spoken by fewer than 10,000 (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 2013: 496–7). Not all small languages are considered to be ‘endangered’, however. The Ethnologue listing of world languages identifies 906 of a total of 7,105 languages to be ‘dying’ at present (12.6%), with a further 1,481 (21%) thought to be ‘in trouble’. Some 377 languages are reported to have become extinct since the first Ethnologue estimates were made in 1950, a global language loss rate of 6 per year (Ethnologue 2017). Some scholars have been considerably more pessimistic than this figure would suggest, however, estimating that as many as 50% of the world’s languages are no longer being ‘reproduced’ among children, and that a further 40% are threatened or endangered at present (Baker 2011: 44). On this basis, Krauss (1992) suggested that, by the end of the current century, as many as 90% of the world’s languages could be either extinct or moribund. Language endangerment is a concern of increasing importance to scholars, activists and institutions of various kinds (Nettle and Romaine 2000). The United Nations, for example, has acknowledged the value of linguistic diversity through its educational, scientific and cultural organisation UNESCO (2003a, 2003b), a position that Nic Craith (2007: 180) has linked to a greater appreciation and promotion of cultural diversity among international organisations generally.

The figure of 57,602 reported Gaelic ‘speakers’ in the 2011 census may go some way to providing an estimate of the size of the Gaelic speech community in Scotland. As Romaine (2000: 36) points out, however, census data will often generate ‘quite a different perspective’ on questions of language use to that which might emerge from more fine-grained ethnographic or statistical analyses. It is essential to bear in mind the distortions that ‘self-reporting’ can have on data regarding language competence in surveys such as the national census, whether through over-reporting of language skills by individuals of limited proficiency, or under-reporting of skills by speakers lacking confidence (Wray and Bloomer 2006: 166–7). Romaine (2000: 41) notes, in any case, that in many instances ‘it may not be clear to community members themselves who is or is not a proficient speaker’ in minority language contexts.

Gaelic has now been in a state of language decline in Scotland for close to a thousand years. The generally accepted account holds that Gaels (Old Gaelic: Goídil; Latin: Scotti) from the kingdom of Dál Riata in north-eastern Ulster had established
settlements and maintained close contact with communities in Argyll (from Old Gaelic: *Airer Goidel*, ‘coastline of the Gaels’) from at least the beginning of the sixth century (Ó Baoill 2010; Clancy 2011; Márkus 2017). The Gaels (or ‘Scots’) extended their political and cultural influence across the mainland of northern Britain over the next 500 years, their language expanding as they did so at the expense of Pictish and Brythonic varieties that had previously been spoken within that territory (Dumville 2002). Ó Baoill (2010: 8) has observed that the decline of the Picts, and their language and society, from written records by the end of the ninth century reveals the extensive scale and degree of Gaelicisation (or ‘Scotticisation’) that occurred during the early medieval period, though Woolf (2007: 17) has cautioned that ‘textual evidence for social history of Scotland is appallingly slight’ for this period. Nevertheless, the preponderance of Gaelic place names over much of southern Scotland and even into northern England indicates the furthest extent of the Gaelic Kingdom of Alba in the early medieval era. Notably, however, Gaelic names are sparsest in south-eastern districts, which had been predominantly settled by Anglian peoples whose language – ‘Inglis’ – became established in that region, while the Gaels continued to expand their kingdom from the west (Barrow 1989; Woolf 2007; Clancy 2011).

The institutions of the Kingdom of Alba appear to fade rapidly from historical record around the early years of the twelfth century, increasingly being replaced by the families and institutions of the ascendant Anglo-Norman nobility (Barrow 1989: 70; MacKinnon 1991: 34). Subsequently, the combination of a French-speaking aristocracy and the increasing importance of the market burghs (where Northumbrian ‘Inglis’ varieties predominated) to Scotland’s economic development effected what Barrow (1989: 70) has described as ‘a gradual transition from membership of a Gaelic-speaking essentially kin-based society to that of a Scots-speaking feudal society’. In the later Middle Ages, Gaelic was increasingly replaced by ‘Inglis’ as the language of social prestige and vernacular speech in lowland districts, the latter becoming increasingly known as ‘Scottis’ from c.1500, while Gaelic was referred to as ‘Erse’ (‘Irish’; M. D. MacGregor 2009: 37). This dichotomy is partly paralleled in the Gaelic distinction between the Highlands (Gàidhealtachd; approximately, ‘Gaelic-speaking area’) and Lowlands (Galltachd, ‘foreign area’). To both groups, then, the Highland/Lowland divide first expressed itself in terms of a primarily (ethno-)linguistic distinction, and as a result of language shift (MacKinnon 1991; Withers 1984, 1988).

After the mid-sixteenth-century Scottish Reformation, hostility to Gaelic on the part of the crown became connected to policy to extirpate rebellious and resistant elements from the kingdom. Developments throughout the seventeenth century, starting with the 1609 Statutes of Iona, are regarded by Withers (1988: 157–8) as constituting an early wave of processes of ‘improvement’ and Anglicisation that instigated language shift to English in the traditional strongholds of the Gaelic language within the Highlands and Islands. The Statutes consisted of a series of measures aimed at undermining the effective autonomy that Highland and Island chiefs exercised over the region. Crucially, the Gaelic chiefs’ heirs were required subsequently to be educated in Lowland schools, with the express intention that they should henceforth be able to speak, read and write the English language (MacGregor 2006: 145).
As a consequence, the centuries-old link between the clan chiefs, their tenant vassals (tacksmen) and subordinate followers was severely disrupted. Processes of cultural transformation had therefore begun even a century before the onset of more explicit moves toward ‘improvement’ in the eighteenth century. Policy in this connection was linked in large part to notions of civilisation and enlightenment, particularly after the 1707 Union (Withers 1984, 1988). A central concern of philosophical enquiry in the eighteenth century, reflected in the thoughts and writings of philosophers such as Rousseau, Herder and von Humboldt, was the relationship of reason and culture as the distinguishing features of humanity – and the absolute centrality of language to these notions (Glaser 2007: 37). The Romantic, Herderian view of the nation drew upon the notion of a people’s ‘shared spirit’ (Volksgeist), which was chiefly manifested in their language and culture (Reicher and Hopkins 2001: 8). Yet, crucially, the conception of language that Romantic philosophers privileged in their enquiries pertained to varieties that were perceived to be of benefit for wider communication, such as French, German and English (see section 2.1, below, on Romanticism, language and identity). The English philosopher John Stuart Mill insisted, for instance, that:

Nobody can suppose that it is not more beneficial to a Breton, or a Basque of French Navarre, to be brought into the current of ideas and feelings of a highly civilised and cultivated people . . . than to sulk on his own rocks, the half-savage relic of past times . . . . The same remark applies to the Welshman or the Scottish highlander [sic] as members of the British nation. (Mill 1991 [1861]: 431)

Gaelic was perceived to be a barrier to the economic, moral and cultural development of Highlanders, and its extirpation (and replacement with English) was increasingly regarded by the ruling elite as a necessary goal of improvement (Withers 1988: 58). Additionally, Withers (1988: 58) identifies the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK) as an important instrument in this regard during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as the dominant educational institution at work in the Highlands, an explicit goal of which was to civilise the region through the propagation of English and Protestantism. Processes and ideologies of improvement in the Highlands came into fierce conflict with notions of dùthchas (‘heredity’, ‘tradition’, ‘heritage’) and Highland (Gaelic) understandings of what society was, and how it had always operated (MacKinnon 1991: 64–5). In particular, the cultivation of industry in the Highlands was actively encouraged by Enlightenment thinkers such as Adam Smith, who denounced traditional Highland society as an example of all that was worst about patriarchal, feudal society (Withers 1988: 58).

Landowners became increasingly concerned with economic reorganisation, in the belief that harnessing markets and cultivating industry would impart civilisation and cultural development in Highland Scotland (Withers 1988; Macleod 2010). The landed gentry, increasingly absorbed within the British aristocracy, took an ever greater interest in production and profit on their estates, exacting higher rents from tenants and developing the large-scale pastoral farming of sheep and cattle (Glaser 2007: 65). Faced with increasing economic pressures and loss of traditional livelihoods, Highlanders began to emigrate as early as the 1730s (Devine 1994: 16). Harvest
failures in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries exacerbated hardships for middle-class tacksmen and rural workers alike, and drove ever greater numbers to emigrate to the urban Lowlands, England or the New World (Glaser 2007: 65). Hunter (1976) has estimated that in 1803 alone up to 20,000 people may have left the Highlands for North America. Highlanders were increasingly encouraged or compelled to emigrate, in a process of land reorganisation and mass displacement that has become known as the Clearances (Withers 1984; Glaser 2007; Richards 2007).

McLeod (2005: 178) has stated of the relationship between the Clearances and language shift in the Highlands and Islands that ‘the dislocation and disruption caused by clearance . . . seem to have contributed to longer-term trends by which Gaelic was devalued and gradually abandoned’. The activities of the SSPCK and Gaelic Schools Societies in connection with their use of Gaelic for elementary tuition (in effect, to promulgate English) tended to reinforce general trends toward bilingualism in the Highlands (Durkacz 1983: 219–22; MacKinnon 1991: 64; see section 3.1, below). Responsibility for education that had previously been administered by SSPCK, Church and Gaelic Schools Societies was transferred to local school boards with the passing of the Education (Scotland) Act 1872, which made no mention of Gaelic (MacLeod 2007; Macleod 2010; McLeod 2005). Where schools had made provision for Gaelic prior to 1872, its use declined as a consequence of the Act (Durkacz 1983: 223–4; MacKinnon 2009: 588), although the 1918 Education (Scotland) Act required education authorities to make adequate provision for Gaelic to be taught ‘in Gaelic-speaking areas’ (MacLeod 2007: 1). Events in the next decades would further contribute to this decline, and the First World War in particular had a major, deleterious effect on Gaelic-speaking communities in the Highlands and Islands. Macleod (2010: 29) notes that the especially high proportions of young men from these communities who never returned from the trenches rapidly hastened the decline of Gaelic in Scotland.

Although a ‘complete social history’ of Gaelic in the twentieth century is currently lacking (Macleod 2010: 30), various researchers have traced initiatives related to the revitalisation of Gaelic from the 1960s developing in tandem with the ongoing decline of Gaelic in Highland and Island communities (MacKinnon 1977; Dorian 1981; Macdonald 1997; Oliver 2002; McEwan-Fujita 2003, 2010c). In particular, Macdonald (1997: 6) has referred to greater institutionalised provision for Gaelic since the early 1980s, as well as a general ‘growth of interest’ in the language in Scotland, as a ‘Gaelic renaissance’. McLeod (2014: 6) relates this growth to both greater perception of Gaelic ‘as a national language’, and ‘the increasing emphasis on Scottish political and cultural distinctiveness in general’, particularly since 1999.

In spite of developments related to the Gaelic renaissance in the late twentieth century, the language enjoyed no formal legislative protection prior to the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 (Dunbar 2006). Gaelic development agency Comunn na Gàidhlig had campaigned for legislative support for Gaelic since the passage of the Welsh Language Act 1993, which stipulated that Welsh and English should be treated on ‘a basis of equality’ in Wales (Jones and Williams 2009: 697). In post-devolution Scotland, the MacPherson Taskforce was set up in 1999 to look into possible legislation for Gaelic, followed by the establishment in 2001 of the Ministerial Advisory
Group on Gaelic (MAGOG; Dunbar 2006: 16). The MAGOG recommendations included the establishment of a Scottish Executive unit dedicated to Gaelic affairs, along with a language board, and the formulation of a language act conferring official status; the broad recommendations of the MAGOG were followed up in 2005, when the Act was passed unanimously in the Scottish Parliament (MacKinnon 2009: 644). The Act established the national language promotion agency Bòrd na Gàidhlig on a statutory basis, requiring it to produce a National Gaelic Language Plan every five years, and conferring upon it the authority to require public bodies to produce Gaelic language plans. The Act stipulated that this work be undertaken with a view to securing the status of Gaelic as ‘an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect with the English language’ (Walsh and McLeod 2008: 35).

McLeod (2014: 6) states that this expression of the language’s position in society constitutes the ‘most significant formal statement of Gaelic’s status as a national language’. Yet the wording of the phrase ‘equal respect’ has come under criticism on the grounds that it has no clearly defined legal meaning (Walsh and McLeod 2008: 35) and the legal requirements involved in securing ‘equal respect’ were intended to be less demanding than those in the Welsh Language Act’s ‘basis of equality’ (ibid.). Dunbar (2006: 17) argues that it is rather unclear where the status of ‘equal respect’ derives from, since it is by no means obvious that the Act itself confers such status. He regards this as an important failing, since it is by means of this sort of statutory legislative provision that status is ordinarily conferred on (‘national’) languages (ibid.). The 2005 Act is nevertheless seen as a ‘historic step forward for the language’ (Walsh and McLeod 2008: 35), even though in international terms it is a ‘relatively weak’ enactment (ibid.).

Crucially, while the availability of service provision through the language has an important role to play, Walsh and McLeod (2008: 24) argue that the goal of stimulating language use relies ultimately on the intrinsic motivations of speakers to do so, often involving ‘aspects of identity and ideology’. While the Gaelic language has long been regarded as a facet of an expressly Highland identity, positive attitudes to the language’s place in Scottish identity more generally have been revealed in surveys undertaken in recent years. For example, the 2012 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey found that 76% of a representative sample of the Scottish population (N=1,180) regarded Gaelic as ‘very important’ (30%) or ‘fairly important’ (46%) to Scottish culture and

### Table 1.1 Gaelic speakers in Scotland 1806–2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total Gaelic speakers in Scotland</th>
<th>% of total Scottish population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>297,823</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>254,415</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>95,447</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>79,307</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>65,978</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>58,652</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>57,602</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
heritage (Paterson et al. 2014: 10). Similarly, 87% of participants (N=1,229) felt that Gaelic should be encouraged, either ‘throughout Scotland’ (32%) or in areas ‘where it is already spoken’ (55%; Paterson et al. 2014: 11; see also Bechhofer and McCrone 2014).

On the basis of these findings, Paterson et al. (2014: 18) conclude that Gaelic is regarded as a ‘core part of Scottish life and identity’ (see section 5.2.4, below). Macdonald (1997: 256) similarly observes, on the basis of anthropological fieldwork conducted from 1983 to 1986, that Gaelic had ‘come to be accepted as a symbol of Scotland’s distinctiveness’, as a result of shifting perceptions linked to the Gaelic renaissance, and the effects of the increased visibility of Gaelic in Scottish popular consciousness. Gaelic speakers have therefore found themselves to be increasingly regarded as the repository of an important national resource (Macdonald 1997: 63), and the bounded and quasi-ethnic understanding of Gaelic as the language of the traditional Highlander is seen to have weakened (Oliver 2002, 2006). In the 2011 census, 48% of all Gaelic speakers were recorded outside of the traditional heartland areas in the Highlands and Islands (National Records of Scotland 2013a). Yet the historic perception of the Highlands and Lowlands as distinct ethnocultural zones still persists in certain quarters (Macdonald 1999: 106; Glaser 2006: 170), and Macdonald (1997: 131–2) notes that the link between the language and a specific sense of place remains strong in heartland communities.

On the basis of ethnographic research conducted among school pupils in Skye and Glasgow, Oliver (2002, 2005, 2006) observes that conceptions of Gaelic as a bounded language indexing an identity that is restricted, in both geographical and cultural terms, to areas where the language is widely spoken had weakened in the later twentieth century, giving way to broader understandings of the language’s relevance at a national level. The contrast is defined by Oliver (2005: 5; following Fishman 1972) in terms of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, conceived of as a distinction between ‘community’ and ‘society’. Yet Oliver (2006: 161) elaborates that the evolution of the Gesellschaft approach is often inhibited by the persistent association of Gaelic with the ‘traditional’, and asserts that the language is more frequently perceived as a marker of a specifically Gaelic identity than of Scottish identity in a wider sense (Oliver 2005: 9; Oliver 2006: 162). In recent decades, increasing numbers of people from a range of different cultural backgrounds have chosen to learn Gaelic, and the language’s role as a marker of identity among different Gaelic speakers today is seen to be far from straightforward (Glaser 2007: 247; McLeod et al. 2014: 27).

The hybrid nature of many learners’ identifications with Gaelic has often tended to be treated with a mixture of suspicion and scepticism in traditional (Gemeinschaft) contexts in the Highlands and Islands (MacCaluim 2007: 78–82), whilst being regarded as an advantage in the formation of emerging Gesellschaft identities in the Gàidhealtachdan ùra (new Gaelic-speaking communities) of the urban Lowlands (Glaser 2007: 258). At the same time, however, some have questioned the importance of the language to either Scottish or Highland identity (Rogerson and Gloyer 1995). Nevertheless, Dorian (2011: 468) has argued that revitalisation efforts on behalf of Gaelic have led to the ‘revalorization of a language that was once disdained’, with knock-on benefits for the psychological wellbeing and ‘self-regard’ of traditional speakers.
In spite of these benefits, Dorian (2011: 468) states that the long-term success of efforts to revitalise Gaelic remains to be seen; losses to speaker numbers that result from older speakers dying ‘still far outstrip gains in new speakers via home transmission and Gaelic-medium schools’, she argues, concluding that ‘the relatively favourable current position of Gaelic is very precarious’. On this point, Edwards (2013: 13) has argued that a qualitative distinction may be required between bilingual speakers in Gaelic ‘heartland’ areas and those ‘in Glasgow . . . or Edinburgh [who] have more formally set themselves (or been set) to become bilingual’. He argues that classifying speakers within these two groups ‘under a single “bilingual” rubric’– irrespective of language practices and abilities – ‘might give a rather inaccurate picture of the state of health of . . . Gaelic’ (Edwards 2013: 14). Indeed, Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s (2014) claim that an apparent diminution in the decline of Gaelic speakers in the 2011 census ‘is mainly due to the rise in Gaelic-medium education’ – and its statement that ‘within the next ten years the long term decline of the language could be reversed’ – must be carefully considered in light of current theory on language revitalisation.

1.2 Theoretical foundations: Language revitalisation and the role of education

Dunbar (2001: 234) states that a chief concern for linguistic minorities in contexts of language shift is often ‘the maintenance of their minority linguistic group identity’, in addition to that of their ‘distinctive language community’. The relationship between language and ethnic identity lies at the core of Fishman’s (1991, 2001b, 2013) model for the maintenance and revitalisation of threatened languages, or ‘reversing language shift’ (RLS; see section 2.1). Whilst his ideas and theoretical stance have been critiqued by scholars in various fields (see, for example, Baker 2011; Edwards 2009, 2010a; Romaine 2006; Williams 1992), Fishman’s theories continue to influence much discussion of language revitalisation. He states that RLS efforts often have ‘a stress on real and putative ethno-kinship . . . and identity (re)formation’ (Fishman 1991: 383). Crucially in this respect, Fishman (1991: 394) argues that relevant group boundaries must be maintained; the revitalisation of minority (‘Xish’) language and culture, he argues, rests largely on the ‘premises that Xmen are not Ymen and that Xish culture . . . is not Yish culture’. It is seen as imperative that ‘ideological clarification’ of these fundamental premises ‘must not be skipped over’ if RLS initiatives are to succeed (Fishman 1991: 394; see section 2.1, below, on contemporary notions of language and identity). Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998: 62) have argued that since such prior ideological clarification is in fact rarely achieved as a first step to revitalisation initiatives, considerable disparities often develop between speakers’ explicit goals in favour of RLS on the one hand, and deep-seated beliefs and feelings that continue to contribute to language decline on the other.

Subsequent to the theoretical ‘prior ideological clarification’ of group boundaries and rationales for RLS among ‘Xmen’ or ‘Xians’ (the traditional and ethnically defined minority community), Fishman’s (1991: 395) paradigm is based on winning back linguistic domains for the threatened ‘Xish’ language one at a time. The first
stages of his model, the ‘Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale’ (GIDS), involve
the ‘reassembly of Xish’ (through corpus planning and so on) to whatever extent is
necessary, and the attainment of diglossia, through concerted efforts at the ‘home–
family–neighbourhood’ level to re-establish intergenerational transmission (Fishman
1991: 395). Fishman’s most recent formulation of GIDS, which is designed to be read
from the bottom up, is as follows (2001b: 466; emphasis added in bold):

1. Educational, work sphere, mass media, and (quasi-)governmental operations
   in Xish at the highest (nationwide) levels.
2. Local/regional mass media and (quasi-)governmental services in Xish.
3. The local/regional (that is, supra-neighbourhood) work sphere, both among
   Xmen and among Ymen.
4a. Public schools for Xish children, offering some instruction via Xish, but
    substantially under Yish curricular and staffing control.
4b. Schools in lieu of compulsory education and substantially under Xish cur-
    ricular and staffing control.
B. RLS efforts to transcend diglossia, subsequent to its attainment
5. Schools for Xish literacy acquisition, for the old and/or for the young, and
    not in lieu of compulsory education.
6. The intergenerational and demographically concentrated home–
    family–neighbourhood–community: the basis of Xish mother-tongue
    transmission.
7. Cultural interaction in Xish primarily involving the community-based older
    generation (beyond the age of giving birth).
8. Reconstructing Xish and adult acquisition of Xish as a Second Language.
A. RLS to attain diglossia (assuming prior ideological clarification)

Stage 6 of Fishman’s GIDS, with its emphasis on the transmission of Xish within the
home–family–neighbourhood sphere, is regarded as the absolute focus and ‘dynamic
fulcrum’ of his theory; if this stage is not ‘attained and vigorously retained’, all efforts
concentrated at higher levels will be effectively undermined in bolstering the mainte-
interventions based in the school (stages 4b–4a) ‘will fail unless the minority language
has a society in which it can function, before school begins, outside of school, during
the years of schooling and afterwards, when formal schooling is over and done with’.
Indeed, he states categorically that ‘[w]ithout intergenerational mother tongue trans-
mision . . . no language maintenance is possible. That which is not transmitted cannot
be maintained’ (Fishman 1991: 113).

Yet Fishman’s views have subsequently been critiqued by a wide variety of the-
orists across various disciplines, including linguistics, sociology and psychology.
Sociolinguist Suzanne Romaine (2006: 443), for instance, has commented that it may
be necessary, in light of the enduring fragility of home transmission in many instances
of language shift, to ‘reconceptualize what it means for a language to be maintained
and survive without intergenerational mother tongue transmission’. John Edwards
(2010a: 67) has concurred with this view, observing that the maintenance by bilingual
speakers of ‘one language for home and hearth, another for the world beyond one’s
gate’ is often extremely difficult in situations of language shift.

Elsewhere, Romaine (2000: 54) has agreed in principle with Fishman’s theoretical
premise, observing that it is the ‘inability of minorities to maintain the home as an
intact domain for the use of their language’ that has often proved decisive in language
shift. Similarly, Nettle and Romaine (2000: 189) highlight that emphasising bottom-
up initiatives to secure intergenerational transmission in the home is indeed the most
crucial goal of language maintenance, rather than (as has often been assumed) persuad-
ing policymakers and governments to act on behalf of the threatened language. These
observations parallel Fishman’s emphasis on the difficult task of focusing on ‘lower-
order’ goals – such as securing Xish as the language of the home – and the failure to
do so contributing in large part to the failure of RLS (Fishman 1991: 406). Yet it is
chiefly in relation to diglossia, and Fishman’s approach to winning back domains on a
‘low-to-high’ basis, that Romaine (2006, 2013) has critiqued this model.

Diglossia is said to have been attained when each linguistic variety in a multilingual
community has a specific function, and is often regarded in sociolinguistic literatures to
that a classic example of the paradigm (which can be extended to discrete ‘languages’
functioning in this way in multilingual societies) is the differentiation of domains
occupied by ‘colloquial’ Egyptian Arabic (the ‘lower’ [L] variety that dominates in
the home) and ‘standard’ Arabic, the language of formal and public communication
and of writing (the ‘higher’ [H] linguistic domains). Romaine (2000: 55) states that
some minority languages ‘may never emerge from diglossia’, but may equally be in no
danger of language death, as long as functional differentiation has been firmly estab-
lished. Fishman (1991: 406) stresses that even where higher-order domains within the
spheres of education, work and the media are secured for the minority language, ‘they
must be translated into the lower-order processes’ of use in the home, and intergen-
erational transmission. Cultural autonomy within the ‘institutions of modernity’, he
argues, will do little for the minority language that has not been reproduced organi-
cally in the home (Fishman 1991: 406).

Yet Romaine (2006) has questioned the utility of this approach for restoring minor-
ity varieties to the condition of being fully sufficient for interaction. She stresses that
conceptions of languages in bilingual communities are often ‘ideologically linked to
and entangled with other dualities’ that contribute to and reinforce patterns of lan-
guage shift (Romaine 2006: 445). This point emphasises the importance of language
ideologies in situations of language shift (discussed further in section 2.2, below);
respective competing varieties may be ideologically associated with modernity or the
past, tradition or wider functionality. Edwards (2010a: 57) identifies various related
dichotomies that have been theorised to encapsulate the tension between the ‘benefits
and disadvantages of mobility’, whether parochialism versus intercourse, roots versus
options, tribalism versus globalism, or even Gemeinschaft versus Gesellschaft.

Following Fishman’s logic, Romaine (2006: 445) cautions that by seeking to rein-
force the ideological associations of a minority variety with the traditional and paro-
chial domains of the home–family–neighbourhood, activists on behalf of language
revitalisation might ironically reinforce ideologies that contributed to instigating
language shift in the first instance. In any case, Romaine (2013: 454) has also argued, appropriate language use within proper domains often becomes complicated in bilingual contexts, so that ‘domains become unclear and setting and role relationships [in social interaction] do not combine in the expected way’. Monica Heller (2007b: 9) has argued that whilst on the one hand Fishman’s theoretical approach appears to view domains as ‘primarily connected to social activities’ that are often institutional or connected to power and social status differences, it nevertheless tends to underplay the importance of such considerations.

As Romaine observes (2013: 463), ‘conflicts involving language are not really about language, but about fundamental inequalities between groups’. Pierre Bourdieu (1991: 57) argued that ‘those who seek to defend a threatened language . . . are obliged to wage a total struggle. One cannot save the value of a competence unless one saves . . . the whole set of political and social conditions of production’. Edwards (1984b: 304; 2004: 452; 2010a: 4) has consistently argued on this point that community language decline and attrition are symptoms of social contact and unequal power distribution, and as such, are extremely difficult to tackle in isolation, without at least in some manner unpicking the existing social fabric. Yet language maintenance efforts, he argues, generally have an emphasis on social evolution, not revolution (Edwards 2010a: 24). One of Fishman’s chief detractors in this regard has been Glyn Williams (1992), who critiqued Fishman’s theories as being essentially conservative in nature, downplaying the importance of differential power relations and political struggle by the minority group, whilst emphasising consensus, integration and cohesion in the pursuit of minority language rights. Indeed, rather than advocating a radical approach to redistributing power for minority language communities, Fishman (1991: 387) insisted that minority language activists are in fact ‘change-agents on behalf of persistence’.

A further, related criticism of Fishman’s model offered by Edwards (1984b: 304) is that shifts in language use ‘reflect powerful social changes, most of them economic. Appeals for revival or restoration’, he argues, ‘will not be successful if they are based essentially on cultural grounds.’ In Fishman’s (2001a) follow-up to *Reversing Language Shift*, Ó Riagáin (2001) argues on the basis of the Irish experience that economic incentives are often needed to persuade parents that intergenerational transmission is worthwhile, and to provide a rationale for using the language themselves. In this regard, Brian Barry (2001: 75) argues that whilst linguists and anthropologists ‘may well have professional regrets’ if a given language or culture declines, this in itself is ‘surely not an adequate basis on which to force people to perpetuate the language . . . against their own judgement as to where the advantage lies’.

Barry’s emphasis here on speakers’ ‘own judgement’ may again downplay the importance of power relations in minority language contexts, and how these can cause people to understand their options in certain ways. Alexandra Jaffe (2007b: 51) remarks that ‘the term “language shift” itself de-emphasizes language practice and human agency’, suggesting that judgement and choice in minority language use often are important. From a sociolinguistic perspective, and based on observations from years of extended fieldwork in Corsica, Jaffe (2007b: 51) argues that ‘the very notion of language shift . . . is linked to ideological constructs’: both that regarding ‘language’
as a fixed entity, and that of ‘shift’ as ‘a community transferring its allegiances and completely transforming its practices’. In reality, she suggests, the picture is often considerably more complex.

An additional critique that Edwards (2010a: 34) has levelled against Fishman is that the latter ‘implicitly and explicitly endorses a view of applied linguistics as both scholarship and advocacy’, arguing that in fact the two ‘do not always make happy partners’ (2010a: 5). Researchers debated best practice in relation to minority languages in the journal *Language* over twenty years ago. In a series of exchanges, Peter Ladefoged (1992) advocated a more detached, scholarly approach whilst Nancy Dorian (1993) responded that researchers of language revitalisation necessarily influence the communities they study, regardless of their stance, and as such, have a responsibility to advocate on their behalf. Dorian’s stance is explicitly promoted by some scholars (for example, Fishman 1991, 2001a, 2001b; Nettle and Romaine 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas 1988, 2000). In part, this approach was informed by the ‘ecology of language’ paradigm formulated by Einar Haugen, which conceived of society – by analogy with biological diversity – as the ‘true environment’ of language, which could in turn be more or less hospitable to linguistic diversity (Haugen 1974: 325). In one prominent example of the linguistic ecological paradigm, Romaine (2008: 19) argued that since linguistic and cultural distinctiveness have often served as ‘the basis for defining human identities . . . they are vital parts of local ecologies’. Edwards (2009: 238) has objected to such views on the basis that they tend to lack ‘a strong logical base’ since, ultimately, ‘language is not organic’, and never actually lives or dies (2009: 232).

As Ó hIfearnáin (2013a: 349) observes, the various critiques of Fishman’s (1991, 2001a, 2001b) theories do not recommend abandoning intergenerational transmission as a focal point for language revitalisation, but rather emphasise that the notion is still rather poorly theorised, and understood inadequately by researchers and activists for either to support it sufficiently. Various other models have been proposed to aid linguistic revitalisation since Fishman’s (1991) paradigm was published. Edwards’s (2010a: 100) own thirty-three-item typology for the classification of minority languages draws on eleven overarching disciplinary perspectives (from demography to linguistics, psychology and media) and the three criteria of speaker, language and setting, to provide what he regards as a richer conceptual starting-point for the analysis of minority language health than the ‘Richter scale’ of Fishman’s GIDS.

In somewhat less precise terms, David Crystal’s (2000: 141) *Language Death* theorises that an endangered language ‘will progress’:

- if its speakers can increase their prestige within the majority community, and simultaneously maintain a strong group identity that can resist the influence of the dominant culture;
- if its speakers can increase the domains of use for their language;
- if its speakers have a critical mass in demographic terms at the community level;
- if the language has a presence in schools and literate speakers; and
- if it can be used in electronic communication.
Miquel Strubell (1999) hypothesised that governments and policymakers can support minority language maintenance through the provision of services in the threatened language, thereby extending the potential number of sociolinguistic domains available and stimulating greater language use. Strubell’s (1999: 240–1) ‘Catherine wheel’ model theorises that competence in a minority language leads to greater use of it, which in turn stimulates demand and provision for services and products in the language, leading to greater language learning and increasing competence, and so on. Edwards (2004: 457; 2009: 62) has argued that securing ‘domains of necessity’ – those pertaining to the home, certainly, but also those of the school and workplace – is absolutely critical for language maintenance efforts, since each of these is tied closely to ‘the most central aspects of people’s lives’.

In a defiant rejoinder to some of the critiques discussed above, Fishman (2013: 486–7) re-emphasises his earlier observations on the role of formal education in RLS, insisting that whilst schools ‘can serve to further motivate and protect Stage 6, [the latter] must be alive and well for such motivation and protection to emerge’. In comparison with prevailing socio-economic circumstances two decades previously, Fishman (2013: 487) considers various processes linked to ‘postmodernisation’ to have ‘served to render the school–home continuity relationship more tenuous than ever before’ (see Duchêne and Heller’s 2012 considerations relating to bilingual practices in ‘Late Capitalism’). Activists on behalf of language revitalisation ‘may safely focus on the school, on the place of worship, or on the workplace’, Fishman (2013: 493) argues, ‘if specific non-mother-tongue functions are being aimed at’ (ibid.); yet none of these constitutes a substitute for the key focus of home–family–neighbourhood processes by which children are primarily socialised in a language. He further suggests that the inadvisability of supposing otherwise is revealed in the Irish experience of RLS, and the perceived focus on formal schooling in revival efforts there (Fishman 2013: 497).

Partly in response to the apparent extent of intergenerational disruption in Scotland generally (see Mac an Tàilleir 2010; National Records of Scotland 2013a), and even in the Western Isles communities where Gaelic is most widely spoken (Munro et al. 2010), increasing attention has been paid in the development of national language policy to GME as a means of developing the language (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2012b, 2018). GME was ‘prioritised’ as a development area in the second National Gaelic Language Plan 2012–2017, which aimed to double the annual intake of pupils entering the system to 800 by 2017 (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2012b: 22). Whilst it is still unclear (if highly unlikely) that this target was attained by the end of 2017, the focus on GME as a key means of generating greater numbers of Gaelic speakers and users was carried over in the Bòrd’s Draft National Gaelic Language Plan 2017–2022, a consultation on which was undertaken in Spring 2017, before eventually being published the following year as the third National Gaelic Language Plan 2018–2023 (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2017, 2018). Crucially, however, scholars have continued to caution against excessively prioritising immersion education as a strategy toward this end. Ó hIfearnáin (2011: 104), for example, states that while the ‘emphasis on immersion [education] as the most effective way to create new speakers’ in diverse contexts of language shift is understandable, in the international perspective ‘it is rare for schooling to lead to revitalisation or revernacularisation’.
1.3 Concluding remarks and book structure

There are a variety of paradigms and principles present in the literature that are important to bear in mind for the purposes of this book, including the implications of social variables such as identity, language socialisation and ideology for language use, and the limitations of bilingual immersion education in realising the objectives of language revitalisation. In the following chapters, I will firstly situate and contextualise the monograph in the wider fields it is situated within (Chapter 2), and introduce the specific context and research design of the study it draws upon (Chapter 3). In Chapter 2, I build on the review of theoretical literatures introduced in this chapter, examining the notional relationship of language and identities (section 2.1), as well as conceptualising the theoretical notions of language ideologies (2.2) and language socialisation (2.3), and, lastly, reviewing research literatures on language acquisition and attrition in immersion education, and contextualising this system within various settings internationally (section 2.4).

Section 3.1 provides a succinct overview of GME in Scotland, outlining the system’s growth and the expectations of parents and practitioners within the system in its earliest years, and situating the present research within the wider experience of GME in Scotland. Section 3.2 summarises the overall design of the research, which makes use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Semi-structured interviews and an online questionnaire are employed to examine language use and attitudes, and to facilitate data triangulation of research results. In section 3.3 I outline and describe the pool of participants among whom the research is conducted, and describe various methods used to contact this group, and to analyse the quantitative and qualitative datasets. The method of transcription, qualitative analysis and the methodological framework adopted will be described and explained in relation to the data. Attention will additionally be drawn to the data-collection process in the field before tracing the development of GME in Scotland and considering the major findings of research that has been conducted on various aspects of the system to the present day (section 3.3).

Chapter 4 provides a qualitative analysis of interviewees’ Gaelic language use (4.1), socialisation experiences in the home and community (4.2), and within the school setting (4.3), and additionally examines the interrelationship of these variables from a quantitative, statistical perspective (4.4). The holistic approach adopted, employing correlational statistical tests to investigate the relationships between non-parametric variables and thereby cross-check and contextualise results from the qualitative analyses, lends important empirical depth to the analysis. Chapter 5 analyses the language ideologies that informants conveyed (both explicitly and implicitly) in interviews, drawing on the overarching themes of Gaelic language use (5.1) and social identities (5.2) before exploring the relationship between language ideologies and attitudes (5.3). Finally, Chapter 6 draws together conclusions from the preceding, empirical chapters, and relates these findings back to the theoretical literatures discussed in Chapters 1–3 to make recommendations for policymakers, language advocates and educators.