From the history of standardization and multilingual policies in Iceland, Great Britain and Ireland

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Monolingual Multilingualism? Standard languages and their impact on multilingual policies and practices in Europe: a historical perspective

FU Berlin
The European Union: Focus on three different linguistic areas

Iceland

Ireland

Wales
Goal of this contribution

An assessment of the effects of standardization and multilingual policies on the linguistic behavior of a speech community:

- Iceland: standardization under specific political and social conditions and its effects during the past 40 years
- Wales, Ireland: multilingual policies under specific political and social conditions and their effects during the past 80 years
The language policy of the Council of Europe

Although Europe has grown together as a political, economic and cultural room, monolingualism tends to predominate among its citizens.

The European Commission has established a language division which formulated the following goals:

1. The Council of Europe accords special importance to fostering the linguistic and cultural diversity of its member states. Its activities in the field of languages aim to promote plurilingualism and pluriculturalism among citizens in order to combat intolerance and xenofobia.

(in: Mar-Molinero & Stevenson 2006: 239)
Language Policy of the European Council

2. Its activities are aimed at "encouraging all Europeans to achieve a degree of communicative competence ability in a number of languages and to continue their language learning on a lifelong basis."

and

3. "diversifying the range of languages on offer and setting up appropriate objectives for each language."

Language Planning

... refers to all institutionally organized activities that aim at affecting the sociolinguistic (as well as linguistic) development of a language (or, as in this case, several languages) into a predefined direction.
Processes and goals of language planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Codification</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Elaboration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purification</td>
<td>Revival</td>
<td>Reform</td>
<td>Standardization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spread</td>
<td>Lexical modernization</td>
<td>...</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Cross-tabulation of Haugen's processes with Nahir's goals (from Nahir 1984)
Corpus Planning: Iceland

ca. 290,000 speakers
Iceland - The background

Settlement between 870-930

Main source of evidence: *Landnámabók*

Origin of the settlers: Norway, British Isles, Ireland

Independent state: 930 (foundation of the *Alþing*)

„birth“ of the language: 930 or late 12th c. or 14th c.

Earliest linguistic sources: 12th c.
  - clerical texts, code of law (*Grágás*), fragments of Sagas
The development of a written standard

Two phenomena were particularly important for the standardization process in Iceland:

(3) The religious discourse took place mainly in Icelandic. Consequence: no diglossic situation as in other parts of Europe.

(2) The written standard was defined by oral heritage (indigenous story-telling). Holy translations were written in the popular style.
Language Preservation in Iceland
Language Preservation in Iceland

First attempts to carry out a systematic language preservation program arouse during the 16th century and were inspired by two phenomena:

• The fact that the Icelandic language had remained almost unchanged for centuries whereas Norwegian, from which it derived, had undergone important changes. Icelanders were still able to read original texts from the 10th century.

• Increasing influence from German and Danish on Icelandic, which might lead to unwanted changes of the original, „pure“ language of the first settlers.
Language Policies

Foundation of the *Lærdómslistafélagið* ('Society for learned arts') in 1779-96:

Goals

• "vardveita norræna Tungu" ("to preserve the Nordic tongue")
• "vidleitaz at hreinsa ena saumu fra utlendum Ordum og Talshaattum" ("try to purify it of foreign words and idioms")
• the use of "onnur gaumul edur midaldra norræn heiti" ("old or middle aged Nordic terms") to denote new concepts, as long as such terms are to be found

(Ottósson 1990: 42)
Modern Icelandic Language Policy

- Formulation of proposals by the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Iceland

- Directives or government papers from the Ministry of Culture

- Realization in public institutions (schools, the National Theatre, the State Radio)
Modern Icelandic Language Policy

Principles that guide the choice of variants

• Maintain the correspondence between written and spoken language
  (=preservation of the phonological system and the grammar)

• Transmit the language as unchanged as possible to new generations

(3) Nýyrðastefna (Neologism movement) - keep the language free from loan words
Icelandic

- Conservative with respect to morphology, but:
- Phonological changes, above all

  - diphtongization of long vowels (e.g. átt /auʰt/)
  - presaspiration (e.g. takk /taʰk/)
  - prestopped nasals and laterals (e.g. calla kaɬla/)
Example 1: Flámæli

= the lowering of mid high vowels /i/ and /u/ and merger with /e/ and /œ/:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flámæli</th>
<th>Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bíddu við 'wait a minute'</td>
<td>[viɛð]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flugu 'fly-DAT'</td>
<td>[flyœːɣy]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Árnason 2003: 206)

Guðfinnsson (1946): 52% of all speakers “suffer” from flámæli
geographical areas: east, south-west, north-west
Flármæli: From the 1940s to the 1980s

Based on Árnason (2003)

Age groups:
1 - 12 to 20 years
2 - 21 to 45 years
3 - 46 to 55 years
4 - 56 to 70 years
5 - > 70 years
Example 2: hv-pronunciation

speakers have the choice of pronouncing the word-initial sequence /hv-/ either as a fricative or as a stop:

\[ \text{hv\text{-}e}r \text{'who'} (/h\text{w}e\text{r}/ \text{vs.} (/kfe\text{r}/) \]
\[ h\text{v}ad\text{\text-} \text{'what'} (/h\text{w}a\text{d}/ \text{vs.} (/kfa\text{d}/) \]

hv-pronunciation: From the 1940s to the 1980s

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Age groups:
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3 - 46 to 55 years
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Example 3: "dative sickness" (þágufallssýkî)

refers to the use of case forms with a particular set of verbs (experiencer verbs denoting feelings, physical sensations and cognition) that require an oblique subject case:

(a)  *Mig* vantar penna. (ACC)
*Mér* vantar penna. (DAT - Dative sickness)
'I need a pen.'

(b)  *Hann* langar til að fara ut í synd. (ACC)
*Honum* langar til að fara ut í synd. (DAT - Dative sickness)
'He wants to go swimming.'
Barðdal et al. (2001) conducted a one-year pilot project to measure the extension of the dative sickness in Iceland.

Subjects tested: approx. 900 students born in the 1990s in 20 schools in Iceland.

Result: the dative sickness among the pre-adolescent population has increased for 25% since 1982 and is widespread in all parts of the country.
Summary Iceland

1. Linguistic innovations are not always manageable by language planning.

2. The effects of corpus planning seem to be rather arbitrary.
Part II

Status Planning:
Welsh and Irish
Welsh in Great Britain

- long history as inferior language
- disturbing detail for Anglo-Saxonists
- threatened the emerging national identity after roughly 250 years of Norman-French rule in Anglo-Saxon Britain
- political changes during the 1960s induced a change of the status of Welsh into a positive direction
## Welsh: Number of speakers

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of all persons speaking Welsh</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of all persons speaking Welsh only</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.** Speakers of Welsh from 1921 to 1991 (Census 1981: 50)
Language planning in Wales: Important steps

- The Welsh Language Act of 1967
- establishment of The Welsh Language Council in 1977
- The Welsh Language Act of 1993 (*Mentrau Iaith*)
- Education Act in 1988
- spread of bilingual education at primary and secondary school level
- foundation of a Welsh television service (*Sianel Pedwar Cymru*) in 1982
- establishment of a National Assembly for Wales in 1999
Goals

• enable the Welsh language to become self-sustaining and secure as a medium of communication,
• increase the number of speakers,
• provide more opportunities to learn the language,
• encourage people to take advantage of the use of Welsh

(Welsh Language Board)
# Welsh-speakers by age (1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Welsh speakers (as % of population, N)</th>
<th>Mother tongue speakers (as % of all Welsh-speakers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-15</td>
<td>5,094</td>
<td>32.4 (157)</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-29</td>
<td>4,809</td>
<td>17.8 (92)</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>5,741</td>
<td>16.7 (97)</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-65</td>
<td>6,674</td>
<td>18.7 (124)</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>5,335</td>
<td>24.2 (120)</td>
<td>79.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Welsh Office 1992)
## The status of Welsh in schools

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Welsh is the only or main medium of instruction</td>
<td>25.9% (445)</td>
<td>27.1% (460)</td>
<td>27.1% (455)</td>
<td>26.7% (499)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.8% (11)</td>
<td>5.7% (13)</td>
<td>7.5% (17)</td>
<td>7.9% (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Welsh is taught as a second language only</td>
<td>50.7% (870)</td>
<td>62.9% (1,068)</td>
<td>66.0 % (1,109)</td>
<td>67.6% (1,136)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.1% (129)</td>
<td>67.4% (153)</td>
<td>69.7% (159)</td>
<td>70.3% (161)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) no Welsh is taught</td>
<td>14.2% (244)</td>
<td>3.2% (54)</td>
<td>0.7% (11)</td>
<td>0.1% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.5% (22)</td>
<td>3.5% (8)</td>
<td>0.9% (2)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Welsh Office 1998)
The results

- a more positive attitude towards bilingualism and the use of Welsh in a Welsh-English bilingual community

- recognition for linguistic plurality

but

- lack of practical usefulness of and the justification for bilingualism for the people

- Welsh tends to be regarded as a second language by the younger speakers, due to education policies
Irish (Gaelic)

2006 census: approx. 1.6 million speakers

485,000 of them use the language in educational contexts only

53,000 (3.2%) speak Irish on a daily basis outside the educational context

Highest proportion of speakers in the age groups of 10-14 and 15-19, i.e. school-going population
The decline of Irish

... was induced basically by 3 important events:

(1) English is used in Church (1795)

(2) English is used in schools (Education Act of 1831)

- The Great Famine (1846-48)

(Tristram 2003: 17)
Language Planning in Ireland

1. Irish declared as national language (1939)
2. Irish = compulsory subject in schools
   • Spelling reform (1948)
     - publication of a normative grammar (1958)
   • Language test for officials
5. School of Celtic Studies in Dublin (1940)
   * Institúit Teangeólaíochta (National Language Institute)
   * Buan-Choiste Téarmaíochta (National Translation Department)
   * Irish Folklore Commission (1927)
   • Government support for the publishing of books in Irish
     - loans for citizens fluent in Irish
     - sending out of officials and children into Irish speaking areas
Results

English remained the working language in Ireland.

The speakers cultivate their Irish English.

The use of Irish Gaelic is symbolic, but not instrumental.
Reasons for the little success

(1) Irish adopted a highly symbolic, but no communicative value

(2) Teaching methods of Irish in school (out of date)

(3) Demographic conditions on the island (emigration)

(4) Geographical proximity to Great Britain

(5) No strategy developed for the use of English
Conclusions

Language Planning
Multilingualism in Europe
Corpus Planning & Status Planning

The outcome is unpredictable.

Linguistic behavior becomes symbolic, but the interpretation of the symbols does not depend on language planners, but on concrete sociolinguistic needs of the speakers.
Language Planning in Europe

Language planning in Europe can be successful only if two conditions are fulfilled:

(1) Focus on sociolinguistic aspects of the speakers and their needs rather than on the languages alone.

(2) Overcome the effects of nation-state formation:

Nationalism thus turned the focus away from communication [...] in the direction of an idiomatically 'perfect' use of one politically favored language, viz. the national language. (Braunmüller 2008: 9)
Recent developments in Europe

(1) Immigrant languages
(2) Tight political and economic relations
(3) Geographical mobility of the citizens
(4) Globalization and its effects on the new media and job opportunities
Multilingualism in Europe

Learn to distinguish between political identity and cultural identity, “ethnos” and “demos”:

A political unity is not identical with cultural, linguistic or religious homogeneity of different groups of citizens.
Literature I


