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Regimenting the Gaeltacht: Authenticity, Anonymity, and Expectation in Contemporary Ireland

Abstract

Drawing on the framework of authenticity and anonymity, this article explores the Irish State's mobilisation of these opposing yet interrelated language ideologies in efforts to regiment the use of Irish both within the traditionally Irish-speaking Gaeltacht areas and nationwide. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in western Ireland, we examine how non-traditional Irish speakers' understanding of the Gaeltacht and its native speakers as a resource for immersion in the authentic language shapes expectations of how native Irish speakers within these areas not only speak, but also live and act. This discussion highlights the interconnections between linguistic ideology, social action, and political economy.

Keyword

Regime of language, Ireland, authenticity, Gaeltacht, language ideology

Introduction

On a recent trip back to Ireland for the *Oireachtas* (an annually-held Irish language and cultural festival), we got chatting to the taxi driver about the Irish language. Like many Irish people, he spoke about learning Irish during his school years, about the fact that he regretted not using it more, and about his experience of the usual "slippage" phenomena (Ó Riagáin 1997) associated with losing one's Irish due to the lack of opportunities to use it. "It's our national language," he emphasised, noting the importance of preserving it because "it is part of who we are and it needs to be kept alive." He explained that he was not from the Gaeltacht, the small, scattered and geographically isolated communities of traditional Irish speakers located on Ireland's western and southern peripheries that have been geographically defined by the Irish State as the country's officially Irish-speaking areas; he had, however, visited these regions on several occasions. While he reported that he had heard Irish being used during his visits, he was disappointed that his interactions with the locals had been through English. His disillusionment with these Gaeltacht experiences also extended beyond the language of daily interaction:

during one of his visits to the officially Irish-speaking Aran Islands, he had been dismayed to find the donkey-and-cart rides offered as a local tourist attraction being given by cosmopolitan young islanders who skilfully managed to multi-task, harnessing the reins of the cart while sending text messages on their snazzy mobile phones. Neither did the image he had of the island as a rural, old fashioned and poverty-stricken place align with his observation of locals at the wheel of sleek Honda Civics.

While but a fleeting encounter, our conversation with the taxi driver pointed to the singularity of the Republic of Ireland as a terrain for exploring how language regimes not only organise language ideologies and linguistic practices, but also orient individuals' daily lives and everyday actions (Gal 2002). As we will argue in this paper, the Irish State's double-faceted language revitalisation efforts have instituted a language regime that draws on seemingly oppositional ideologies of language and, in doing so, generates expectations for both language and life in the Gaeltacht. Working with the framework of authenticity and anonymity (Woolard 2008; Gal and Woolard 1995), we will examine how the state's language policies for the Gaeltacht have drawn on ideologies of authenticity to maintain these geopolitically bounded regions as the repository of Ireland's linguistic and cultural heritage and thus as a model and a resource for the rest of the country, in which the state's revival policies have hinged on rendering Irish an accessible, valuable, and ultimately anonymous language through the education system. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork data from two sites in western Ireland located outside the Gaeltacht, we will explore how the Irish State's mobilisation of both ideologies in their efforts to regiment the use of Irish nationwide have effectively given rise, in non-Gaeltacht Ireland, to expectations of how native speakers within the Gaeltacht boundaries should not only speak, but also live and act. These analyses will thus emphasise a focus on language regimes as a means of both bridging language ideologies and connecting them with linguistic practices, discourses, and social action.

The following sections will discuss the authenticity and anonymity framework and the realisation of these ideologies in the Irish context, before turning to the analyses of our fieldwork data. It is worth first clarifying, however, how we understand language regimes and the regimentation of language. Kroskrity (2000) speaks of "regimes of language" as a means of bringing together language and politics. For him, regimentation relates to the way in which dominant discourses about language are both controlled and produced within a society, be that at an institutional level or by social actors themselves, as in the case of our taxi driver discussed above. Similar to Kroskrity, we take regimes to refer to the general ordering of language ideologies and to their circulation. However, we would argue that ideologies are just one, albeit

important, component of a linguistic regime. Similar to what Geismar (2015) has argued in the case of heritage regimes, linguistic regimes can be seen to encapsulate discourses, practices, governance, politics and knowledge. In this paper we use the terms “linguistic regime” or “linguistic regimentation” not simply as a shorthand for ideologies or institutional power but as a means of capturing the ways in which the political economy of language functions and is reproduced on the ground through the discourses and actions of social actors.

Ideologies of authenticity and anonymity

As a lens for examining the ideological construction of language, the framework of authenticity and anonymity emerged from wider scholarly debates about language ideologies and the relationship between social structures and linguistics practices (Woolard 1992; Gal and Woolard 1995; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). In their 1995 special issue, and in a subsequent edited volume (2001b), Gal and Woolard focus on and explore the role of linguistic ideology and practices in the making of political authority. They argue that, through anonymity, publics potentially include “everyone” but that in doing so abstract from people’s privately-defined characteristics (Gal and Woolard 1995, p.134). As such, publics legitimated by anonymous authority can thus be seen to “represent everyone because they are no-one in particular” (Gal and Woolard 1995, p.134).

However, as other authors in Gal and Woolard’s 2001 edited volume argue (cf. Hill, Errington, Gal, Bauman, Urla) alongside anonymity, we also find the authority of authenticity as an opposing legitimating authority in the public sphere. Although, as acknowledged by Gal and Woolard, pitching authenticity and anonymity as opposing ends of a spectrum may be too simplistic an approach, they explain the complexities of the opposing yet intricately interrelated authorities as follows:

Strategic glimpses of authenticity may actually serve the authority of the impersonal, clinching the force of public discourse [...] Or, the voice-from-nowhere may be constructed as the most authentic of voices competing for recognition as the embodiment of a particular community (Gal and Woolard 2001a, p.7).

Following Gal and Woolard’s initial examination of authenticity and anonymity (Gal and Woolard 1995; Gal and Woolard 2001a), Woolard (2008) furthered the discussion of the aforementioned ideologies of linguistic authority, applying them to the Catalan context. She

argues that the legitimacy that a language variety is awarded is influenced by either its perceived authenticity or anonymity, and explains the ideology of authenticity as locating the value of a language in its relationship to a specific community. Within the logic of authenticity, for a speech variety to have value it needs to be rooted in a social and geographic territory. For many European languages (including Irish), these roots are reified through of peasant folk purity (Woolard 2008).

In contrast to this, the ideology of anonymity foregrounds the objectivity of a language variety, or its construction as the ‘view from nowhere’ (Nagel, 1986 cited in Woolard 2008), as awarding it legitimacy. This links back to the previous discussion about how publics gain authority through their perceived anonymity (Gal and Woolard 1995): when applied to a language variety, the ideology of anonymity implies that the language belongs to everyone and no-one at the same time. It is perceived as the standard language, unmarked and accepted public language (Woolard 2008) and thus perceived as appropriate for use in the public sphere.

These contrasting and competing ideologies of authenticity and anonymity, as explained by Woolard (2008) are useful for understanding the complex dynamics of bilingual societies and of minority language contexts in particular (cf. Atkinson and Kelly-Holmes, 2016; O’Rourke and Ramallo, 2013; O’Rourke, 2015; Soler, 2012; Urla, Amorrortu, and Ortega, 2016). In minority language contexts, such as that of Irish, scholars have frequently found a strong link between the minority language and authenticity (Bucholtz, 2003; O’Rourke and Ramallo, 2011; Urla et al., 2016). However, the implication that the authentic variety is awarded authority because it is seen as “profoundly local” (Woolard 2008, p.304) and rooted in social or geographic spaces can be problematic in contexts of minority language revitalization, where the wider population may be deterred from speaking the minority language due to the possibility that they may not sound as ‘natural’ or the same as those who speak a “profoundly local” variety (O’Rourke 2015). In their discussion of authenticity and anonymity in the Galician context, O’Rourke and Ramallo (2013) argue that traditional native speakers of a minority language may create a “social closure” in which they position themselves as the legitimate and authentic speakers of the minority language and thus effectively close that legitimacy and authenticity off from non-traditional speakers. Similar discussions were found in the Basque context (Urla et al., 2016) where it was shown that ‘new speakers’¹ based their

¹The term new speakers is used here refer to minority language speakers who acquired the language outside of the home, generally through the education system or through other formal or informal means (see O’Rourke et al. 2015).

ideas of linguistic identity firmly in the ‘mother tongue ideology’ (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 1989), which holds that the language that speakers were socialized into in the home constitutes the foundation of their linguistic identity and is not subject to change throughout their lifelong linguistic trajectories. For ‘new speakers’ who wish to learn the minority language, such associations between the minority language and the ideology of authenticity that legitimates it can lead them to avoid speaking such language varieties altogether (McEwan-Fujita 2010; O’Rourke 2011).

In order to counter the ‘social closures’ referred to above, in many minority language contexts where native speakers and legitimacy are closely linked, revitalization initiatives have centred on processes of standardization whereby the aim of policy makers is to increase the anonymity of the minority language and make it a neutral and objective means of expression which is equally available to all users (Woolard and Frekko 2013) Thus, instead of being valued for its links to cultural or national identity, the minority language can become the “voice from nowhere” spoken by the “everyman” (Woolard 2008, p.306). Such efforts at the policy level to increase the anonymity of minority languages is apparent in the Spanish context, where the term ‘normalization’ is preferred to ‘revitalization’ (Urla et al. 2016). As this terminology choice suggests, minority language advocates in Spain see their project as not only involving the preservation of the language, but as a means of normalizing the use of the minority language in official institutions and public life (Urla et al. 2016). In this way, the language “becomes a resource which can potentially belong to anybody irrespective of group membership” (O’Rourke 2015, p.65), rather than being valued as an index of authenticity, be it national or cultural, and thus as “an inalienable characteristic of group members” (Heller 2003, p.474). This dynamic, we argue, lays the foundations for some of the tensions that we will explore in our analyses of fieldwork data from western Ireland.

As the following sections will now review, ideologies of both authenticity and anonymity have played a prominent role in the Irish State’s efforts to regiment the use of Irish in the Republic of Ireland.

Maintaining authenticity in the Gaeltacht

The ethnocultural discourses produced by our taxi driver can be traced historically to state-led attempts to regiment the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht, which effectively reified the native speaker and surviving communities of Irish speakers on Ireland’s peripheries. Although consisting of a predominantly rural peasant population, it was to these communities that

nineteenth-century nationalist movements looked in the construction of an Irish identity (Tovey et al. 1989). The symbolic significance of these communities was reinforced in the constitutional status awarded to Irish in 1937 as the first official language of what had become a twenty-six county Irish State in 1922 following the Anglo-Irish war. In the early years of political independence in Ireland, the maintenance of Irish in the Gaeltacht came to be seen as a key priority in formulating a language policy. The Gaeltacht was presented as a bounded and fixed spatial entity (O'Rourke and Walsh 2015; Walsh 2012), and its institutionalisation as a repository for the language in many ways served to lock these Irish-speaking communities in time and effectively deprive them of the modernization processes and economic development required to sustain them (Nic Craith 2002; Ó Tuathaigh 1990). In this sense, the Gaeltacht was constructed as a repository not just of linguistic heritage but also of socio-cultural authenticity. The construction of the Gaeltacht has thus not only sought to regiment language use in these bounded regions, but has also effectively worked to regiment life in the Gaeltacht through the effort to maintain these communities' 'traditional' lifestyle. The demarcation of the Gaeltacht and the way it was constructed by cultural nationalists and later by state policy, we will argue here, then generated expectations on the part of people outside of the Gaeltacht, in relation to both the way native Irish speakers speak and the way they live their lives inside the Gaeltacht; such expectations, for example, were manifest in our taxi driver's disappointment with the modernizing elements he found during his Gaeltacht visits.

However, despite the Irish State's attempts to regiment both language and life in the Gaeltacht so as to preserve the area as a symbol of national identity and a storehouse of authentic Irishness, English remained the language of social and professional mobility. Although Irish-speaking parents in the Gaeltacht were often represented as the ethnocultural compass for the fledgling nation-state, in practice they tended to prioritise their children's access to English and thus to a better future over the unbroken transmission of Ireland's linguistic heritage (Tovey et al. 1989; Watson 1989). English was thus seen as the language of the modern world, which was seen as located outside the Gaeltacht – a socio-spatial division that still seems to resonate today, as suggested by the taxi driver's disappointment at seeing thoroughly modern mobile phones and fancy cars in the bastion of Ireland's linguistic and cultural traditions. Historical attempts to regiment Irish in the Gaeltacht, and the ideologies of linguistic and socio-cultural authenticity they foregrounded, have thus not led to an expansion or even maintenance of the language in Ireland's traditional Irish-speaking areas. Sociolinguistic studies of the Gaeltacht suggest that the number of speakers in these communities continues to shrink and that the use

of the language amongst younger generations of Gaeltacht residents has declined (Ó Giollagáin et al. 2007).

Reviving anonymous Irish outside the Gaeltacht

The speakers of Irish we will be referring in our discussion later on, meanwhile, live outside the boundaries of the Gaeltacht and as such do not necessarily fit with traditional, more Romantic associations of language and place in Ireland. These new speakers of Irish are the product of the second element of the state's language regimentation efforts: a policy of revival that since the 1920s has hinged upon the national education system and its capacity to produce new generations of Irish speakers (Ó Laoire 2005). As part of the revival policy, Irish became a compulsory subject for schools nationwide and a requirement for both educational qualification examinations and entrance into the civil service (Kelly 2002).

Whereas the state's authenticity-based efforts to regiment Irish in the Gaeltacht have largely proved unsuccessful (see previous section), the revival policy has helped bring the language into new spaces where Irish is taken up by new profiles of speakers. While over 1.7 million individuals in Ireland self-reported as Irish speakers in the most recent census, fewer than 64,000 were residents of one of the official Gaeltacht regions (Central Statistics Office 2017). The overwhelming majority of Irish speakers are thus non-traditional ones, such as the taxi driver we discussed in the introduction, who have acquired varying levels of proficiency in Irish through the education system. In urban areas in particular, the language has notably gained ground amongst the more educated, middle class sectors of the population. This emergent class dimension stems in part from the Irish State's efforts to invest the language with cultural, social, and economic value through such measures as setting proficiency in Irish as a prerequisite for entry into the civil service and for accreditation in a range of professional fields (Ó Riagáin 1997).

This element of revitalisation policy and planning in Ireland can thus be seen as adhering to a skills-based orientation that sought to invest Irish with value in the public sphere by rendering the language a standardised and universally accessible competence – in other words, an anonymous language. The value of anonymity, as Woolard (2008) argues, lies in the role of language as a neutral, objective vehicle for expression to which all users have equal access. In seeking to position Irish as an anonymous language, the Irish State effectively institutionalised the language, bringing it into the public space and regimenting its use in the domains of education, the media, and public administration. English, however, remains the mainstream

language: as Woolard (2008) points out, failure to penetrate all spheres of public activity can prevent a minority language (such as Irish in our case here) from gaining what she describes as the anonymous invisibility of “just talk” which characterises a public language.

Nonetheless, while speaking Irish may remain highly visible and marked in many contexts, developments over the past number of decades have brought the language into spaces from which it was previously absent and normalized its use in modern, urban contexts. The Irish language television station TG4 (est. 1994) and the use of the language on social media, in stand-up comedy and by rap artists (see Moriarty 2015) has brought into question some of the older stigmas association with the language and its indexical link with rurality and poverty.

Authenticity, anonymity, and challenges to language ownership and linguistic legitimacy in contemporary Ireland

In supporting a shift of Irish out of Ireland’s traditional Irish-speaking regions and into spaces long dominated by English, the state’s efforts to regiment the anonymous use of Irish have introduced another layer of complexity to traditional ideologies of sociolinguistic authenticity and ownership (O’Rourke 2011). Although circulating ideologies of authenticity could be seen as establishing that Gaeltacht speakers ‘owned’ the language, this ownership is now open to contestation by speakers who have acquired the language outside of Ireland’s traditionally Irish-speaking heartlands. This was evidenced in the taxi driver’s remarks that “Irish is our national language. It is part of who we are and it should be kept alive”: the language may be most authentic in the Gaeltacht, but all Irish people can claim it as part of their national identity, native speakers or not. The new sociolinguistic dynamics generated by the process of attempting to revitalise Irish throughout the twentieth century have also foregrounded questions of legitimacy in relation to access to linguistic resources that have taken on (re)new(ed) economic and social value on the language markets of the Republic of Ireland, particularly with the emergence of sought-after jobs in the Irish language media and in light of the authenticating market differentiation now seen to be offered by the language in the commercial sphere (Brennan and Costa Wilson 2016; Brennan 2013; O’Rourke 2011).

At the same time, these shifts in Ireland’s sociolinguistic dynamics have spurred increased debate surrounding the Gaeltacht, its boundaries, and its place in modern Irish society. While the population of native speaker communities residing within the defined Gaeltacht has continued to decline, networks of new speakers have emerged throughout the country – and especially in cities and towns – as the driving force of Irish-language activity in Ireland today.

The Gaeltacht Act 2012 incorporated these evolving demographics and put forth revised measures for determining the boundaries of the Gaeltacht that for the first time move away from geographic considerations and towards linguistic ones (e.g. O'Rourke and Walsh 2015; Ó Giollagáin and Mac Donnacha 2007; Mac Giolla Chríost 2005). Despite the questions raised concerning its sociolinguistic sustainability and its boundaries, however, the Gaeltacht retains much of its socio-cultural value as the bastion of the authentic Irish language and its true native speakers. The Irish Government, for example, reaffirmed the significance of maintaining and supporting Irish in the Gaeltacht in its *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030*, pointing to the contribution of these efforts to “conserving and protecting the heritage, culture and richness of the language where it remains as a household and community language” (Government of Ireland 2010, p.5). The import of the Gaeltacht has also been highlighted in recent sociolinguistic research in Ireland which has explored how these regions’ legacy influences the interactional dynamics of encounters between speakers from inside and outside the officially Irish-speaking areas (O'Rourke 2011; O'Rourke and Ramallo 2011).

The Irish context thus provides a fascinating glimpse into how a focus on language regimentation, in this case state-led, brings into the analytical frame opposing yet interrelated ideologies such as authenticity and anonymity, the practices they inform, and the political economy that shapes such social action. While the state’s authenticity-informed efforts to regiment the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht have generated an enduring construction of these regions as the bounded territory of Ireland’s authentic linguistic and cultural heritage, the anonymity-oriented revival policies have rendered Irish accessible nationwide, both as a symbol of national identity and as an economically valuable skill. Nevertheless, as our following analyses will discuss, non-traditional speakers of Irish who seek to cultivate their or their children’s Irish outside the Gaeltacht still tend to see themselves as having recourse to the Gaeltacht and its native speakers as a resource for immersion in the authentic language. Their pursuit of this experience, however, reveals how the centrality of the ideology of authenticity to the state’s efforts to regiment Irish in the Gaeltacht has shaped expectations for not only language but also life in Ireland’s officially Irish-speaking areas.

Regimenting the Gaeltacht (and its speakers) from the outside: A case study of Cluan Lí and Baile Rua

We will now examine how the state’s language regimentation efforts resonate in two western Ireland towns where local language advocates are working to promote the use of Irish as a

community language. The two towns, Cluan LÍ and Baile Rua, are both located within the same county; Cluan LÍ is situated about an hour further west and is smaller than the larger urban area of Baile Rua.² Of particular interest here is the two towns' relationship to the Gaeltacht: both are located outside the Gaeltacht, and there are no officially Irish-speaking areas within the boundaries of their county. In both Cluan LÍ and Baile Rua, there were residents who could remember local people who had been native Irish speakers, but Irish had long ceased to function as a community language.

Nevertheless, Irish language activists in the two towns were seeking to revive Irish as a locally used language. In Cluan LÍ, a group of new speakers of Irish had come together to promote the use of the language in the town, with the goal of achieving the Irish Language Network status proposed by the Gaeltacht Act 2012. As mentioned above, this Act represents the first major instance of legislation in the Republic of Ireland addressing the Gaeltacht that takes into consideration speakers of Irish living outside the geopolitical boundaries of the current official regions. As one way of recognising such speakers, the aim of the Irish Language Network status is to develop and support opportunities for language socialisation and to enable communities that have the potential to develop a critical mass of Irish speakers to further foster socialisation through Irish. The Cluan LÍ group's ambitions, however, did not stop at the Irish Language Network level: their long-term goal was to achieve full Gaeltacht status for Cluan LÍ, despite Irish not having been spoken there as a community language in living memory. As explained by different members of the group, their explicitly stated aim recognises the element of resuscitation that achieving their goal would entail: they declare that their objective is to bring Irish "back from the grave".

In Baile Rua, meanwhile, a community language development organisation has also been overseeing efforts to achieve the Irish Language Network status, though they ultimately aim to promote the town as bilingual rather than as a traditional Gaeltacht area. Their efforts have largely focused on the coordination of cultural events and on education, with many activities designed to foster local children's engagement with the language. They work especially closely with the local *gaelscoil* (Irish medium primary school), which has grown so popular in recent years that parents remarked how difficult it can be to secure enrolment for their children. Featuring many small, family-owned shops, the town's business community also has a tradition of integrating the Irish language into their old-fashioned store façades, and the language

² The research in Cluan LÍ was carried out by O'Rourke as part of a larger project on new speakers of Irish. The research in Baile Rua was conducted by Brennan as part of her doctoral research on the promotion of Irish in business.

development organisation has sought to encourage local merchants to maintain and if possible expand their engagement with the language (see Brennan 2018; Brennan et al. 2016).

The following analyses will now focus in on individuals involved with promoting Irish in each town in order to explore how the ideologies of authenticity and anonymity embedded in the regime of language perpetuated by the Irish State articulate with social actors' situated positioning on and expectations of language and life in the Gaeltacht.

Gaeltacht speakers as service providers: Dissatisfaction and disappointment in Cluan Lí

Turning first to the Irish revival group in Cluan Lí, one of the group's regular activities is a weekly *ciorcal comhrá* ('conversation circle') organised in a coffee shop in town with the express intent of bringing people together to speak Irish, thus creating a safe space for speakers of all levels to come along and use whatever Irish they have. The discussion is part of a longer conversation with the founding member of the conversation circle, Cathleen, who has adopted Irish as her language of regular use and invested time and effort in becoming an Irish speaker. For Cathleen, the Gaeltacht and traditional native speakers helped to orient her own engagement with the language, and the Gaeltacht provided a resource which helped her on the journey to becoming an Irish speaker. She visited the Gaeltacht as a means of improving her Irish through immersion in what she saw as the authentic cultural milieu of Ireland's 'true' Irish speakers. However, similar to the taxi driver's experience discussed earlier on, these purportedly immersive experiences at times fell short of her expectations of authenticity. Cathleen reported that on one of her visits to the Gaeltacht as part of a weekend of immersion, one of the locals told her and her group of fellow learners that they "should give up speaking Irish let it go and die off altogether - to hell with it! It's no good to anybody." As Cathleen put it, "he didn't want it spoken, and he didn't want people coming in speaking it. But the college did something about that, because that's not supposed to happen, because they're grant-aided."

Cathleen thus expressed her dismay at the local Irish speaker's lack of support for the language and for her and other learners' attempts to speak Irish, giving voice to her disappointment that Gaeltacht natives did not all seem to share her enthusiasm for the language. Moreover, she felt that her investment in an authentic learning experience had not been fully rewarding, leaving her to conclude that she did not get 'value for money' for her efforts. In this sense, she had expected local Irish speakers to provide that authentic experience so that a fee-paying language learner such as herself could benefit from a particular service i.e. that Irish would be spoken to

her on demand. Cathleen even went so far as to report the local Irish speaker to the course organisers on the grounds that he had not played his part in ensuring that fee-paying learners would be provided with authentic Irish language interactions: she noted that it was the responsibility of local Gaeltacht residents to facilitate this experience, particularly in light of the grant support she believed them to be receiving from the state.³ Ultimately, Cathleen saw the Gaeltacht locals as refusing to recognise the value of Irish, and thus she resented them for failing to contribute to the survival of the language while she and other learners invested time and money into doing so.

Cathleen's resentment of the Gaeltacht local and his lack of support for Irish is even more notable in light of comments she had made earlier in the conversation when describing why Irish had ceased to be spoken in the area that she was from. Referring back to the time of the Great Famine in the mid-nineteenth century, Cathleen recounted how English had become a critical skill for emigration, employment, and ultimately survival, and thus parents had ceased to speak Irish to their children:

[It] around the time of the Famine, either directly before or after I'm not quite sure, but somebody was planted in the area who sat at the crossroads reading a paper with fine clothes on and the message was passed on to the local farmers: "your children will never read a paper." And it was tied with the Irish language because they won't get jobs if they go abroad, but if you go abroad and you learn English you'll be able to speak the language, and the best way to do that is not to speak the Irish and it was as simple as that, and everybody wanting to do what they could for their children encouraged the children, em, not to speak the language and they got involved with the school and the teachers and the priest and then the parents followed suit and encouraged the children to learn English as well.

³ In Ireland, Gaeltacht areas have historically benefitted from special grant schemes in line with national policy on socio-economic development in these areas and language policy promoting the maintenance of Irish in these communities. Measures put in place in the years following independence to socio-economically support Gaeltacht communities included annual payments available to Gaeltacht families for each school-age child for whom "it could be certified by the parent, local school manager, and principle teacher, and verified on inspection, that Irish was the language of the child's home" (Hindley 1990, p.48). These grants also linked to more valuable housing grants available only to Gaeltacht residents whose school-age children all qualified the annual payment (Ó Gadhra 1988, p.257). Particularly with the onset of Ireland's severe economic recession following the 2008 financial crisis, many of grants schemes available to Gaeltacht Irish speakers have been greatly reduced or entirely eliminated (Ó Ceallaigh n.d.; Walsh 2011).

Even though the Gaeltacht local evoked a similar theme in exclaiming that Irish was “no good to anybody,” Cathleen did not seem to connect her understanding of why people had historically stopped speaking Irish in the Gaeltacht with her incredulity that people living in the Gaeltacht today might not want to speak or support the language. Taken together with her orientation towards native speakers as role models for her own language learning and use, Cathleen’s positioning on Gaeltacht speakers points to an idealisation of traditional native speaker communities in the contemporary Gaeltacht, as she naturalizes connections between speaking Irish, nativeness and the traditional Irish-speaking areas of the Gaeltacht. However, despite both this admiration for Gaeltacht speech and her understanding of the historical reasons why Gaeltacht locals had ceased speaking Irish, her perceived inability to access these communities and their speakers today leads to frustration and a certain resentment of the very speakers whose (idealised) language use she aspires to emulate.

Cathleen’s account is thus particularly interesting as it concentrates key elements of a linguistic regime: language ideologies that shape social action (i.e., her seeking out of an immersive experience in the Gaeltacht), questions to access to resources (and frustration when that access is denied), and expectations for the behaviour, linguistic or otherwise, of the Gaeltacht natives long designated as the purveyors of Ireland’s authentic heritage.

Living in the language vs. making a living: Qualified praise for the Gaeltacht in Baile Rua

Over in Baile Rua, expectations surrounding language and life in the Gaeltacht also emerged from conversations with local promoters of the Irish language. David, a local new speaker of Irish and the owner of an independent bookshop in town, was involved in multiple areas of Irish language activity in Baile Rua. His engagement with the language stemmed from what he saw as its centrality to Irish identity, culture, and nationhood: he summarised his position on Irish in the phrase *tír gan teanga, tír gan anam* (‘a county without a language, a county without a soul’), a traditional rallying cry of nineteenth and early twentieth century cultural nationalism in Ireland. David had long incorporated Irish into his business by integrating the language into his shop’s signage and website, and he made an effort to speak Irish with customers whenever possible. He was supportive of the local organisation’s attempts to promote bilingualism in Baile Rua, explaining that it was important to “advance the case for Irish being spoken in [the town]” both for the sake of the language itself and to enhance Baile Rua’s distinctiveness as a tourism destination:

I think it's just very important, even in a little Midwest town, a small town in the west of Ireland, it's important that we put ourselves forward. It's a tourist town as well, and I think it's very important that you have that distinction, and the distinction is you have your own language. I think people, especially tourists, appreciate anything that makes you more Irish, and what can make you more Irish than a totally distinctive language?

Having developed his passion for Irish in school, David had also enrolled his children in the gaelscoil and sent them to intensive summer courses in Irish language colleges in the Gaeltacht. Like many of the other parents we talked to in Baile Rua, he stressed how important it was for parents to send their children to these summer courses. David related how his own daughter had benefitted from exposure to the regular use of Irish in the Gaeltacht the previous summer, sharing how she had been surprised to hear herself automatically responding to people in Irish on the train back home from the summer college. In response to our amazement at his daughter's progress, David explained how immersion in the "natural" use of Irish provided a critical contribution to fostering an appreciation of the language:

It is important that people if they have half an interest, or parents maybe, in advancing [Irish] that they send their kids to colleges like that because it does- it makes it right, they're put in kind of a milieu, in an environment where it's natural...and you know, for 11 months of the year they're just speaking English as normal, okay, but still I think that it could sow the seed and that's all you need to do, you know, you just need to furrow the ground and sow the seed and then let whatever happens happen.

Emphasising the invaluable nature of this opportunity to experience Irish in such an environment, David was adamant that an immersive Gaeltacht experience would be of benefit to anyone of any age, explaining that "it's be a great idea if you had time just to spend a year in the Gaeltacht there – we should all do it." Similar to Cathleen in Cluan Lí, David thus seemed to see the Gaeltacht as vital resource for anyone seeking to learn Irish and use it as the normal language of everyday conversation. Moreover, his insistence on the seeming moral imperative to go or send one's children to the Gaeltacht seemed to speak to the latticing of (seemingly oppositional) ideologies and social action through language regimentation efforts in Ireland: those who learned anonymous Irish outside the Gaeltacht had to physically relocate to these

Irish-speaking areas in order for the “seeds” of appreciation for the authentic language to be sown through immersion.

Such an authentic immersive experience, though, is of course not a one-way process: in order for summer college students or learners of all ages to be immersed in Irish in the Gaeltacht, the Irish speakers there were expected to provide the everyday interactions *as Gaeilge* essential to this process. The implicit expectation of the provision of these Irish-language experiences, however, brought forth a dimension of tension in David’s otherwise glowing review of the Gaeltacht as the unparalleled site for encountering Irish in its natural environment. Remarking that Irish was now a “business in the Gaeltacht,” David explained that Ireland’s Irish-speaking regions would suffer socio-economically if Irish were no longer a required subject in secondary school and demand for summer colleges dropped; nevertheless, he found it sad that such financial motivations might be keeping support for Irish and its regular use alive within the Gaeltacht itself. Thus while David, as mentioned earlier, was enthusiastic about the potential of Irish to contribute to the local economy in non-Gaeltacht Baile Rua by enhancing the town’s tourism draw as an attractive destination, he positioned the mobilisation of the language as a profit-generating resource by native speakers in the Gaeltacht as incongruent with the expected ethos of the region. He seemed disappointed that locals in the Gaeltacht might maintain Irish for the sake of their own economic well-being, rather than for the sake of the language – and therefore the soul – of Ireland. There was still the expectation that native speakers provide learners of anonymous, non-Gaeltacht Irish with an authentic linguistic and cultural experience, but David seemed to lament the possibility that the motivations behind the preservation of a “natural” Irish-speaking environment might not align with the historical construction of the Gaeltacht speakers as the romanticised guardians of the essence of Irishness, remote and removed from mundane questions of making a living.

Concluding discussion

As we have sought to explore through this comparative look at Irish language enthusiasts in two non-Gaeltacht towns, the long and symbolically charged history of language revitalisation efforts in the Republic of Ireland has generated a fertile terrain on which to study the situated realisation of language regimentation. As a lens for examining social action, a focus on regimentation brings to the fore questions of ideology, action, and political economy and the connections between them. One particular strength of this approach, as we have argued here, is its capacity to bridge seemingly oppositional ideologies and situate them in relation to each

other: a regimentation perspective allowed us to examine how ideologies of authenticity and anonymity have been drawn upon in distinct yet interrelated ways by the Irish State in their double-faceted approach to regimenting the revitalisation of Irish nationwide. Building on the cultural nationalist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the newly independent state instituted the Gaeltacht and remaining communities of native speakers living within its boundaries as a symbol of Irish nationhood and repository of Ireland's linguistic and cultural heritage; across the rest of the country, an education-based revival policy sought to render Irish an accessible, valuable, and ultimately anonymous language. Taken together, these two ideologically shaped dimensions of language regimentation were meant to bring into being an Ireland in which everyone could speak Irish.

Against this background, we then focused in on social actors involved in efforts to promote Irish as a community language in two towns located outside the Gaeltacht. In exploring their experience of and positioning on Ireland's officially Irish speaking regions, we sought to tease out how their discourses and actions reproduced the ideologies and political economy shaped by language regimentation in Ireland. Both Cathleen and David were learners of 'anonymous' Irish who constructed the Gaeltacht as an invaluable resource for enriching their own or their children's experience of the language: both saw it as necessary to go there for full immersion in the authentic language and culture of the native speakers. The construction of the Gaeltacht as the bastion of this linguistic and cultural authenticity, however, generated expectations for how these native speakers would speak and act. Having paid for her immersive experience, Cathleen from Cluan Lí came to resent a local resident who refused to speak Irish with her and decried her efforts to support the language – as a fee-paying language activist, she had expected to be addressed in Irish by Gaeltacht speakers who supported her work. She saw the Gaeltacht and its native speakers as a resource that she had paid to access, and was dissatisfied when this access was denied by someone whom she believed should speak Irish. Moreover, by pointedly mentioning the grant aid that she believed native Gaeltacht speakers received, Cathleen constructed the financial support (historically) offered by the state as being an element of institutional language regimentation in Ireland: the Gaeltacht speakers could access grants for speaking Irish and therefore they should do speak it, particularly with the non-Gaeltacht learners wishing to experience the Irish-speaking environment she saw as maintained by government grants. The grants thus represented a regimenting apparatus that, according to Cathleen, should exert a certain social pressure on Gaeltacht speakers to comply with – and embody – Ireland's language policy.

David from Baile Rua, meanwhile, could not speak highly enough of the benefits of immersion in the Gaeltacht for students and adults alike; he was disappointed, however, by the idea that native speakers might be providing this immersive experience as a way to make a living, rather than simply as a way of life. Though he himself acknowledged the value of Irish as a resource for Baile Rua's local economy, he seemed to expect that the Gaeltacht communities would draw on other, more lofty motivations for maintaining their use of Irish and sharing the language with the summer learner crowds. state-led language regimentation in Ireland thus appeared to have generated a catch-22 of non-Gaeltacht learners' varying expectations for Gaeltacht Irish speakers and how they conduct their sociolinguistic and socioeconomic affairs. Whereas some learners like Cathleen may be disappointed that Gaeltacht residents do not speak Irish despite being 'grant-aided' through the state's maintenance policies, others like David may be disappointed that Gaeltacht speakers – idealised as the guardians' of Ireland's linguistic and cultural heritage by nearly a century of Irish language policy – would need or even have any financial incentive to speak the language. In either case, though, it appeared that efforts to regiment language use across Ireland and in the Gaeltacht in particular have generated diverse, at times paradoxical, expectations of how native Irish speakers should live their lives, make a living, and maintain Irish as a living (and available) language.

Our focus on language regimes in this paper has attempted to highlight the interconnections between language ideologies, linguistic practices, discourses, social action and the broader political economy of Irish. In their efforts to regiment the use of Irish nationwide, the state's mobilisation of ideologies of authenticity and anonymity effectively gave rise to expectations of how native speakers within the Gaeltacht boundaries should not only speak, but also live, act, and manage their social relations.

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