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Relationships between identity and attitudes to the achievement of native speaker norms in adult L2 learners of Irish

Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics

2014

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University of Dublin, Trinity College
Centre for Language and Communication Studies

DECLARATION

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SUMMARY

This study examines how attitude, motivation and identity in adult learners of Irish are related to awareness of and commitment to different dialects and varieties of the language as learning targets. Specifically, it is concerned with learners' attitudes towards acquiring various traditional (Gaeltacht) and non-traditional (second language) varieties of the language. It proceeds to explore whether relationships exist between these attitudes towards varieties and learners' motivation and self-concept as second language speakers. Since there is a paucity of research on these issues in the context of adult learners of Irish, and indeed in relation to minority languages more generally, this study aims to contribute to existing research on both second language acquisition as well as the specific case of Irish.

Chapter 1 sets out the context of the study by examining the history of the Irish language, focussing on its decline and efforts towards revitalization. It is shown that regional dialects emerged as a result of the language's decline, and that efforts to standardize Irish were ultimately only truly successful in the case of the written language. The importance of these varieties is discussed in relation to Irish language teaching and learning. The recent rise in the numbers of adult learners of Irish, the cohort considered in this study, and the role dialects of Irish play in this context are also discussed. This chapter finishes with a brief overview of the place of these issues within the wider literature on language learning research and theory.

Chapter 2 provides a discussion of the native speaker model in second language learning. It discusses the reasons behind the traditional emphasis on the native speaker as well as recent attempts to problematize the construct. The various criteria which have been used for defining the native speaker are discussed as well as the nativelikeness/non-nativelikeness dichotomy in measuring ultimate attainment in second language acquisition. Research demonstrating the significance of affective variables such as attitude, motivation and identity in those cases where nativelike proficiency has been achieved is also examined. Finally, the social psychological implications of the native speaker model as a target for second language learning are considered in relation to majority and minority language contexts.

Chapter 3 provides an account of research into the three affective variables of interest in the present study, attitude, motivation and identity. We outline the main findings of research into these variables and demonstrate why they are investigated in the present study. Throughout the chapter connections are made between these affective variables and their impact on choosing target language varieties in language

learning. Where possible, research relating to the specific Irish language context is also presented.

Chapter 4 discusses the three-stage mixed methods research design employed in this study. The overall aims of the study and the design are presented as well as justifications for using a sequential explanatory strategy. The design and content of each research instrument is discussed in detail.

Chapter 5 presents findings from Stage I of the research: The Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners. This instrument collected background data and responses to eight separate attitude/motivation scales. Examination of the 157 responses reveals that learners are highly motivated, they are integratively oriented towards the language and the speech community, and the Irish language is an important part of their self-concept. The results also show that learners have a stronger positive attitude towards achieving native-like fluency than they do towards learning a particular variety of Irish.

Chapter 6 presents findings from Stage II of the research: the Speaker Evaluation Exercise. A subsample of 31 learners listened to the recorded speech of eight Irish speakers (six native and two non-native) and completed tasks which measured attitude towards language variation, ability to identify speakers' origin and reactions to potential target speech models. The data shows that native speakers were consistently rated higher than the non-native speakers on all scales. Native speech was also clearly preferred as a target model. Despite this, learners were not able to consistently identify speakers' origins.

Chapter 7 presents findings from Stage III of the research: Semi-structured interviews. These interviews, which were conducted with the same 31 learners that participated in the second stage, provided explanatory data in relation to the issues raised in the two previous stages. The findings confirmed that, for the most part, adult learners highly value the native speaker as a model and also the traditional varieties of Irish spoken in the Gaeltacht. However, aspects of their self-concept as learners, i.e. their attitudes and beliefs about themselves in relation to language learning, and their perception that they are very unlikely to be able to achieve such a level of proficiency, militate against a strong identification with native speakers.

Chapter 8 summarises the thesis and sets out the main findings within a unified interpretive framework. The framework draws on recent motivation research which focuses on language learner self-concept. It then proceeds to outline the implications for Irish language learning among adult populations and for SLA research more generally. The limitations of the project are discussed and recommendations are made for future research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I wish to thank my supervisor Dr. John Harris. I have benefitted immensely from his experience, guidance, advice and encouragement. His interest in this study was a source of inspiration. His friendship alongside his supervision is very much appreciated.

I express my sincerest thanks to the participants who took part in this study; without their co-operation this thesis could not have been completed. I would also like to thank the directors at the various language course providers surveyed in this study for allowing me access to their institutions. My research was generously supported by financial assistance from the following College sources: a 3-year Trinity College Postgraduate Research Studentship Award, the Trinity Trust Travel Grant Award Scheme and the Centre for Language and Communication Studies.

A number of staff members in the Centre for Language and Communication Studies also deserve recognition for their advice and support at various stages of this project. I would like to thank everyone who took the time to speak to me about my work at various stages. I will take this opportunity to thank in particular Ms. Denise O'Leary, Dr. Heath Rose and Professor Pádraig Ó Riagáin. Their willingness to share their expertise and excellent advice on a number of issues related to my research is greatly appreciated.

I would especially like to thank Professor David Singleton, Dr. Deirdre Murphy and Mr. Brian Conry for their advice, support and friendship over the years.

My fellow postgraduate students at Trinity College Dublin were also a source of support and advice along the way. I would especially like to thank Emma Riardan, Steve Lucek, Neasa Ní Chiaráin, Tobias Schroedler and Maria Reider in this regard. Outside of Trinity College, I would like to thank Niall Ó Duinneacha, Siobhán Patten, Éamonn Ó Dónaill, Darren Ó Rodaigh, Dr. Pádraig Ó Liatháin and Rónán Mac Murchaidh.

I have also had the love and support of many family members, especially my siblings, Patrick and Megan, and my aunt, Dr. Catherine Murphy.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife Denise for always being there. Her love, support and understanding from the start to the finish of the project was immeasurable.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Patrick and Helen Flynn. Their resolve to provide us with a first class education has been a constant source of inspiration.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents a mixed methods study of Irish language learners' awareness of and orientation towards various traditional (Gaeltacht) and non-traditional (learner) varieties of the language. It also explores the relationships which may exist between learners' attitudes towards target language varieties and their motivation and self-concept as second language speakers and learners of the language. Research has shown the importance of attitudes, motivation and identity, and to a lesser extent attitudes towards target language varieties, in second language learning (Ellis, 2008). Yet there is a general lack of research into these topics in the context of adult learners of Irish as well in relation to minority languages generally. Nevertheless, the growing number of post-school aged learners who are returning to the Irish language makes this an appropriate time to conduct such an investigation.

The Irish language, which does not have a standard spoken form, is learned as a second language by nearly all children in Irish primary and secondary schools and is a requirement for entry into a number of third level courses. However, varying experiences with the language within the educational system means that many school leavers have not achieved a high level of proficiency. Further, because of the above mentioned lack of a single spoken standard variety of the language, learners generally do not have a clear target speech model. In fact, in many cases, they are exposed to different varieties via different teachers during the course of their schooling. To further complicate the picture, they are also expected to become familiar with the three main regional dialects for the purposes of public examinations.

Anecdotal evidence indicates, however, that learners have positive attitudes to some varieties of Irish they encounter in the classroom and in examinations, and negative attitudes towards others. Such attitudes could potentially have implications for the target speech models that learners aim for in their later language learning. If learners identify more readily with one speech model rather than another, they may be motivated to favour the preferred one in their own learning and use. School-aged learners have little if any control over the various factors governing the varieties to which they are exposed, since teachers are appointed and curricular objectives implemented without their input. Adult learners, however, do potentially have some power over the types of Irish with which they choose to engage, and if attitudes towards particular varieties carry over from their experiences at school, they may orientate themselves towards, or away from particular earlier-encountered varieties.

Attitudes towards language generally, as well as towards different varieties as learner targets, are clearly central to language learning. Within the social psychology of

language paradigm, research on language attitudes has a long and fruitful history (Giles & Billings, 2004). Attitude has also been an important focus of research in second language acquisition (SLA) contexts, particularly in connection with learner motivation (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). In both cases, this research has been conducted in a number of language contexts, including English, French, Arabic and Spanish. In SLA contexts, attitudes towards specific target varieties have been subjected to much less empirical research and almost all of the existing work on target varieties has been confined to English language learning (see McKenzie, 2010). In the latter research, native and non-native speaker models of the target language, English, have been presented to learners for evaluation (e.g. Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck, & Smit, 1997; McKenzie, 2008b). Significantly from the point of view of the research reported here, learners in these studies were not only able to identify a range of language varieties, but they also evaluated them differently. They generally rated native speakers of English more positively in terms of prestige than non-native speakers and, crucially, the learners in most cases indicated a preference for the native varieties as models for their own L2 speech.

In addition to the fact that research on different language varieties as learner targets is largely confined to English, another central aspect of virtually all work in this area is its focus on the notion of the native speaker. The term native speaker is used in everyday parlance without much consideration of the difficulties of defining it. One normally uses the term to refer to a person who began acquiring a language at birth. A closer look, however, reveals that the concept is susceptible to many different interpretations and definitions (Davies, 2003). In the local context, the notion of a native speaker of Irish is perhaps particularly problematic. There are three main reasons for this. First, there are so few speakers falling into this category, no matter how broad the definition. Second, such native speakers are all bilingual and often, in fact, choose to speak English to learners of the language. Third, the linguistic authority of some such speakers has been questioned in any case because of their limited use of Irish (Ó hIfearnáin, 1999).

Despite the complexities of these issues and the importance of the implications for learners, no comprehensive research into the attitudes of adult learners towards native speakers, or towards the varieties of Irish associated with them, has yet been conducted. The present study promises to make a contribution to existing research on learners' language attitudes and motivation by providing data from a minority language learning context that is, in many other respects, relatively well researched. It is unique in bringing together in one study a number of affective factors relating to learner target varieties in a minority language context: awareness of and attitude towards target language varieties; learner attitude-motivation towards learning the language more generally; and, finally, identity. This study, therefore, is likely to contribute to existing Irish language research which has looked at these, and other elements of the learning experience, in isolation. In

addition, it can reasonably be expected to contribute to the larger literature on affective factors in target language varieties which up to now has been largely confined to English.

The methodology of this study has been designed to maximise its exploratory potential given the relative paucity of research referred to above. It combines the use of three research instruments in what has been termed a *sequential explanatory* design (Creswell, 2009). The instruments were administered in three separate data collection stages.

Stage I of the study involved the administration of an Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners which was distributed via teachers by six course providers, three in Dublin and one in each of the main Irish speaking regions of the country. The questionnaire contained a total of 69 items (19 background information items and 50 attitude/motivation scale items). A total of 157 learners responded to this questionnaire.

Stage II of the study made use of a Speaker Evaluation Exercise in which a subsample of 31 participants listened to eight speech samples recorded by two native speakers of each of the three regional dialects of Irish and two proficient second language speakers. The subsample was recruited via an item at the end of the first questionnaire which asked for volunteers. While listening to the samples, participants were asked to complete tasks designed to measure attitude towards the varieties of Irish, identify the speakers' origins and evaluate their own current and future speech models in relation to the recorded speakers.

Stage III of the project consisted of semi-structured interviews with the same subsample of 31 participants. The discussions focused on issues that were raised in the first two stages of the project and provided an opportunity to explore in a more open-ended way attitudes, beliefs and motivations.

Outline of the study

This thesis is comprised of eight chapters. Chapter 1 sets out the context of the study by examining the history of the Irish language, its decline and efforts towards its revitalization. The emergence of regional dialects vis-à-vis the language's decline is also discussed. Efforts to standardize Irish are then discussed and it is shown that they were only truly successful in the case of the written language. A description of the enduring place of these varieties in Irish language teaching is given in order to demonstrate the linguistic experience most learners have. We then turn our attention to adult learners of Irish, the cohort on which this study focuses, and the role dialects of Irish play in this context. This chapter finishes with a brief overview of the place of these issues within the wider literature on language learning research and theory.

Chapter 2 provides a discussion of the native speaker model in second language learning. Traditionally, a great deal of importance has been placed on the native speaker in

language learning. The reasons for this emphasis and recent attempts to problematize the concept are presented. We look the various ways in which the native speaker has been defined as well the nativelikeness benchmark in measuring ultimate attainment in second language acquisition research. Finally, the chapter considers the social psychological implications of the native speaker model as a target for second language learning in majority and minority language contexts.

Using conclusions drawn in the previous chapter regarding the important role of affective variables in nativelike achievement as a starting point, Chapter 3 provides an account of SLA research on attitude, motivation and identity (i.e. group identity and self-concept). In doing so, we outline the main findings of research into the three main variables for considered in the present study. In addition, links are drawn between these affective variables and their impact on choosing target language varieties in language learning.

Chapter 4 outlines the three-stage mixed methods research design employed in the current study. We start by outlining the five research questions addressed in the study, as well as the overall aims of the study and the design. Justifications for using a *sequential explanatory strategy* are also provided. The research instruments are presented individually and factors which influenced their design are discussed.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the data analysis and findings of the three stage sequential explanatory design. In the two latter chapters, findings are linked back to those presented in the chapters which preceded them. The aim of this strategy is to reinterpret findings, where necessary, in light of additional data generated by the subsequent methods.

Chapter 8 summarises the thesis and situates the main findings within discussions of the self-concept in SLA research. It discusses the implications of findings for Irish language learning among adult populations and for language learning research more generally. The limitations of the project are also discussed and recommendations are made for future research.

CHAPTER 1

The Irish language and adult learners of Irish

1.0 Introduction

This chapter has two broad aims: (i) to introduce linguistic, social and educational issues relevant to the context of this study, and (ii) to situate this study in the broader second language acquisition (SLA) research literature and the social psychological approach. We start by outlining the social, historical and linguistic background to this study. A brief discussion of the history of the Irish language, including an overview of the decline of the language and subsequent revival movements, introduces some of the factors determining its present position. This is followed by a discussion of the spoken varieties of the language vis-à-vis the written standard in Irish language teaching and learning. We then look at the specific context of Irish language learning among adult populations and consider the issue of target varieties for these learners. The chapter concludes by briefly locating the current study empirically and theoretically within the relevant research literatures as a prelude to the fuller discussion in Chapters 2 and 3.

1.1 The Irish language: Linguistic, social and educational context

Irish is currently a minority language which is spoken as a first language (L1) by a relatively small number of people. There are, however, a large number of second language (L2) speakers of Irish who learned the language initially in the education system. Some of these choose to continue learning the language as adults by attending evening classes. While most Irish speakers are native to Ireland, there is a growing number of L2 learners from other backgrounds, in Ireland and abroad, who started learning the language as adults. Nevertheless, teachers of adults often relay anecdotal evidence that Irish is considered by many to be a difficult language to learn. In particular, it is claimed that learners struggle with the various regional varieties of Irish (i.e. dialects). One of the very few studies which has focused on adult learners has found that learners attributed difficulties to 'personal factors' rather than language related issues (Devitt, Little, Ó Conchúir, & Singleton, 1983). It is interesting, however, that the same report also identified 'interference from past experiences' as being the most common non-course related reason for difficulty reported by learners (p. 77). While the authors do not provide further explanation of what these 'interferences' were, one possibility is that they had been exposed to a different variety of the language prior to starting on the course reported in that study, e.g. at school, and found the language

it contained to be sufficiently different as to cause them difficulty. We will return to this point again below when we consider the place of language varieties in Irish language teaching. First, however, we will look briefly at how the current position of Irish and the circumstances which lead to the existence of it modern form.

1.1.1 The Irish language

The Irish language has been spoken on the island of Ireland since the early centuries of the Christian era, with a written tradition which dates from the fifth century (Ó Riagáin, 2007). The historical development of the language can be divided into four periods: Old Irish (500-900), Middle Irish (900-1200), Early Modern Irish (1200-1600) and Modern Irish (1600 - present). Space does not allow for a detailed discussion here of the social, political and linguistic changes that took place in Ireland over the 15 centuries since the language was brought to Ireland by the Goidels. It will suffice to say that the current state of the language is weak. Optimistic estimates of the present number of native speakers (L1) of the language range from 60,000 to 100,000 (e.g. Ó Dochartaigh, 2006; Singleton, 2007). The majority of these L1 speakers live in the *Gaeltachtaí* (the traditional Irish speaking areas located mainly in the west of the country) in counties Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Kerry, Cork, Waterford, and Meath, while smaller numbers are dispersed throughout the rest of the country. These regions are visible on the map in Figure 1.1.

By the start of the seventeenth century, Irish had already begun to lose ground rapidly to English as the medium of spoken communication in many places throughout the country (Ó Riagáin, 2007). By the end of the nineteenth century, with the recession of Irish as spoken language to isolated pockets in the West, three distinct dialect groups had emerged: Munster (south), Connacht (west) and Ulster (north). In the province of Leinster (east), however, Irish had by this time 'ceased to be the language of common intercourse' (Ó Cuív, 1951: 24), and its quick decline in this region thereafter resulted in almost no Irish speaking community there by the twentieth century.

What is now known as Munster Irish refers to the variety spoken as a community vernacular primarily in West Kerry, but also in smaller pockets of Cork and Waterford. Connaught Irish is confined to parts of West Galway and Mayo. Ulster Irish is spoken in the remaining Gaeltacht areas in County Donegal. The latter is often referred to as Donegal Irish since the Ulster Gaeltacht is confined to that county. Each of these dialect areas shows a certain amount of internal variation in terms of their phonological systems and lexicons, but in general they are homogonous enough to be considered the same variety (Ó Siadhail, 1989).

The surviving regional varieties of modern Irish differ to greater or lesser degrees at morpho-syntactic, lexical and phonological levels, although it has been claimed that phonology is where the greatest divergence is found (Ó Dochartaigh, 1992). Word stress patterns are generally considered to be important distinguishing phonological features of individual varieties. In this regard, the language can be divided into northern and southern varieties. In the northern half of the country varieties demonstrate a pattern of initial stress, while in the south stress is shifted to long vowels in non-initial syllables (Ó Siadhail, 1989). In terms of syntax, the southern varieties are considered to be more conservative, especially in their use of synthetic verb endings (e.g. *bhíos* = I was). In the north, the norm in this regard is to use analytic forms (e.g. *bhí mé* = I was). In terms of phonology, however, the situation is reversed; northern varieties, particularly those of Donegal, show the most conservative phonological system and southern ones show the greatest divergence from Classical Irish (Ó Dochartaigh, 1992).

Figure 1.1

Map of Ireland showing Gaeltacht regions

(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gaeltachtai_le_hainmneacha2.svg#file)

1.1.2 Irish language learning: Dialects and standard

Traditional Irish-speaking communities have been in decline for a great many years and the plight of the Gaeltachtaí in the last century has been well documented by many authors (e.g. Denvir, 1999; Fennell, 1981; Hindley, 1990). However, constitutional recognition of Irish as the first official language of the State has meant that interest in maintaining and restoring the language inside and outside its traditional heartlands has remained constant since the time of independence. The responsibility for the restoration of the language outside the Gaeltacht has, for the most part, been borne by the educational system (Ó Laoire, 2005). With very few exceptions, all children who go through the mainstream educational system in Ireland study the Irish language for up to 14 years. For the vast majority of these children, however, Irish is learned as L2 and recent census data has again confirmed that the language is not used very often by these learners outside of the educational context (Central Statistics Office, 2012).

The position of dialects in the teaching and learning of Irish is rather complex. The traditional regional varieties of the language mentioned in the last section represent the main spoken varieties which have survived into the twenty-first century. It was also noted that each of the three main varieties is in fact made up of a number of sub-varieties which in some contexts may be considered relatively different from one another (see e.g. Ó Siadhail, 1989). While this variation has its roots in natural developments in the language over a period of centuries, the rapid language shift which took place in Ireland during the 18th and 19th centuries isolated communities of speakers from one another, geographically and socially, and served to accelerate its course (Ó Dochartaigh, 1992). Furthermore, these changes also coincided with the final collapse of the bardic tradition and with it the use of a standard written language by educated poets and scholars (O'Rahilly, 1932). The disappearance of the written standard would eventually have implications for the written and spoken forms of the language thereafter.

The persistence of linguistic variation in Irish came about, ironically, as part of language revitalization efforts in the late nineteenth century. By the year 1851 only 23% of the population were recorded as Irish speakers in the census. In response to these low figures, the close of the 19th century saw the establishment of some of the most successful organizations dedicated to the promotion of the Irish language, including *Conradh na Gaeilge* (The Gaelic League) which was founded in 1893 (Ó Baoill, 1988). This proved to be the most important of developments of the period, since the organization succeeded in promoting the language as an essential feature of the national Irish identity and as a distinguishing feature of Irish culture. The Gaelic League began organizing language classes and by the beginning of the 20th century

had succeeded in fostering a popular enthusiasm for the language at levels never seen before. By 1913, the organisation had completed a successful campaign to have Irish taught as a matriculation subject at the National University. This, in turn, resulted in the language being more widely taught at secondary level and creating a need for more textbooks and teaching materials which meant that written Irish was now to be used in genres in which it had not been used before (Ó Baoill, 1988: 110). In addition to the Gaelic League's role of reawakening interest in Irish identity and culture through the Irish language, education policy, teaching methods, teacher training and developing a standard language were all of great importance (Ó Riagáin, 1997: pp. 8-10).

This new chapter in the language's history re-opened an old debate over the form of Irish to be used in writing. One school of thought argued for a continuation of the archaic form used by 17th century scholars such as Seathrún Céitinn. The other wished to devise a new form of the language which would adhere to the conventions of *caint na ndaoine* (the language of the people). This second position was supported by the majority of the country's contemporary Gaeltacht writers, including the influential Fr. Peadar Ó Laoghaire (Ó Baoill, 1988: 111). Greene (1966: 13) tells us that those arguing for a return to a more traditional (classical) form of the language often cited the example of Wales where the sixteenth century translation of the model still provided the norm for literary Welsh. He argues, however, that the tradition had been unbroken in Wales, whereas in Ireland all contact with the classical norm had been lost, so it was not surprising that the debate was won by the advocates of natural speech of the people.

The position of those seeking to promote the model of the people's language (i.e. the natural speech of native speakers) for the new written standard was an enlightened one for the times (Greene, 1966; Ó Baoill, 1988). However, Greene (1966: 13) points out that this position 'ignored [...] the fact that in the modern world a standardised language is necessary for administrative and educational purposes'. The move away from the classical model towards the people's speech as a model for modern written Irish was not straightforward, and brought with it a number of orthographical problems:

> When the standardised literary language was established during the classical Irish period, the spelling problem was resolved. However, once *caint na ndaoine* (or the language of the people) was accepted as the norm at the end of the 19th century, the problem of spelling emerged again. While the classical literati had no problems with spelling because they ignored the spoken language, the writers of the late 19th century felt the need for a more simplified system corresponding to pronunciation.
>
> (Ó Laoire, 2005: 299)

These issues were not systematically addressed until after Ireland gained independence in 1922 when the new government entrusted the job of standardizing the spelling and grammar of Irish to *Rannóg an Aistriúcháin*, the Translation Section of the Houses of Parliament. The process, which lasted a number of decades (see Ó Baoill, 1988 for a full account), resulted in the publication of *Gramadach na Gaeilge agus Litriú na Gaeilge: An Caighdeán Oifigiúil* (The Grammar and Spelling of Irish: The Official Standard, Rannóg an Aistriúcháin, 1958). The Standard has recently received its first major revision and published under the new title *An Caighdeán Oifigiúil: Caighdeán Athbhreithnithe* (The Official Standard: A Revised Standard, Rannóg an Aistriúcháin, 2012).

The 1958 standard has been more or less accepted for use in most official written language by now, yet aspects of the three main regional varieties of Irish are still prevalent in course books and learning materials. This is true in terms of grammatical and lexical learning objectives in the secondary school curriculum (Department of Education and Skills, 2011). In the ordinary and higher level syllabuses for Irish, the word *canúintí* (dialects) is mentioned under four separate headings and many of the works of prose to be covered have been written in a regional dialect in terms of grammar and vocabulary. In addition, many of the course books aimed at adult learners focus on one of the three main regional varieties of Irish (Mac Gabhann & Hutton, 1997).

Since efforts to promote a national spoken standard have been largely unsuccessful (Ó Baoill, 1993, 1999), most teachers tend to base their teaching on the phonological, syntactical and lexical features of one of the three traditional dialects (Ó Baoill, 1999). This teaching focus on traditional dialects may come as a result of a teacher's personal familiarity with a particular regional variety or the location of the institution where the course is being taught. It has been noted that this trend continues in third level degree programmes in Irish and education (Mac Mathúna, 2008) and students are often required to choose one dialect to specialize in for the purposes of examination. One outcome of these traditions and practices is that learners are often exposed to more than one variety of Irish throughout the learning process simply because they will be taught by a variety of teachers over the course of their education. Teachers may or may not adjust their dialect to accommodate their learners, or may not adjust to the same extent. Furthermore, since the majority of teachers of the language are L2 speakers themselves, their students mainly interact with other non-native speakers of Irish, either teachers or other students. Needless to say, the impact on the type of language ultimately acquired by learners is complex. It has been

observed that many L2 learners of the language are drawn to one or another of these dialects as a target model (e.g. Mac Mathúna, 2008) and this has resulted in the emergence of a number of learner varieties which are based on core features of the regional dialects (Ó Dochartaigh, 2000).

Hickey (2011) argues that since Irish is restricted to small Gaeltacht regions, any spread of the language to other formerly Irish-speaking areas will not lead to a revitalisation of the local features from the latter. He notes that the norm among second language learners is to model their speech on the geographically closest surviving variety, i.e. people in Limerick will adopt the Irish spoken in the Dingle area of North-West Kerry. While any teacher or learner will tell you that this is the norm, there have been two exceptions to this rule: (a) the demand for qualified, enthusiastic teachers in some areas of the country means that not all teachers speak, even in general terms, the type of Irish associated with the region where they are based; (b) there are currently some grassroots movements in northern parts of the country which are attempting to restore local regional varieties and in doing so, actively distancing themselves from even the closest Gaeltacht variety (see e.g. O'Hare, 2013).

There is very little empirical evidence exploring the processes or outcomes of the type of Irish learned by L2 speakers (notable exceptions are Nic Pháidín (2003) and Ó Duibhir (2009)). It would appear, however, that despite, or perhaps as a result of, this varied exposure most learners develop what might be described as a neutral or blended variety, which does not conform completely to the norms of any single traditional dialect (Ó Dochartaigh, 2000; Ó hIfearnáin & Ó Murchadha, 2011). It is not entirely clear to what extent these L2 varieties constitute language fossilization, but it has been observed that '[p]artial mastery of certain target forms is routinely achieved [and] once these forms have stabilised they can be difficult to eliminate later' (Ó Duibhir, 2009: 265). These outcomes are generally considered to be negative and the pejorative term *Gaelscoilis* has been used to describe the variety of Irish acquired by students in immersion schools outside the Gaeltacht which is heavily influenced by English (Mac Mathúna, 2008). 'Book Irish' or 'school Irish' are other somewhat negative descriptions used to refer to the phenomenon in other contexts (Kabel, 2000; Nic Pháidín, 2003; Ó hIfearnáin & Ó Murchadha, 2011).

In relation to the acquisition of non-target like norms, it has been suggested by some (Ó Baoill, 1999; Regan, 2010) that the type of Irish acquired by L2 learners may not be solely a result of exposure to various kinds of Irish in the classroom or incomplete acquisition. Rather, this phenomenon may also be connected to issues of social and psychological distance between L2 and native-speakers communities. Indeed, Kabel (2000) notes the uneasy relationship between L1 and L2 speakers of

Irish, whereby on the one hard some 'language enthusiasts' resent the idea that Gaeltacht / L1 norms serve as the only appropriate model for L2 speakers. Gaeltacht speakers on the other hand disapprove of L2 speakers' use of archaic words, neologisms and mixing of dialects. This last point highlights the question of how L2 speakers who are part of a speech community which outnumbers the community of L1 speakers are to deal with the issue of target varieties. If we remove the geographical element, since most L2 speakers do not reside in one of the traditional Gaeltacht communities, then it might be expected that learners would aim towards the model most commonly encountered in communicative situations, which in this case is the L2 variety. We know, however, that this is not always the case and some learners do, in fact, model their speech on L1 varieties for reasons connected with affective, educational, social and political factors. While these motivations are not at present fully understood, it has been suggested that the 'native-speaker standard' in the case of Irish has been set by a small elite group who have already achieved this level of proficiency (Ó Baoill, 1999: 196).

Although the above mentioned studies have hinted at learners' attitudes to varieties of Irish, only Ó Murchadha (forthcoming, cited in Ó hIfearnáin & Ó Murchadha, 2011) has applied a quantitative methodology for measuring Irish speakers' (i.e. Gaeltacht teenagers) attitudes towards different varieties of the language. He found that local Gaeltacht youth speech and non-Gaeltacht speech were rated lower than traditional Gaeltacht speech. While this finding is important, very little is known about other learner groups. Ó hIfearnáin and Ó Murchadha argue that the central position of the 1958 *Caighdeán Oifigiúil* as the written standard in educational and professional contexts has resulted in its 'oralisation among learners and professional users of the language' (Ó hIfearnáin & Ó Murchadha, 2011: 100-101). This conclusion, however, would appear to be questionable since almost all of the forms selected for inclusion in the *Caighdeán Oifigiúil* are regular features of one regional variety or another. Since it is very unlikely that the majority of students and teachers of Irish at primary or secondary level have familiarized themselves with the published standard, it is just as plausible that their use of 'standard forms' results from direct exposure to different regional forms during their education leading over time to a blended spoken variety. Even if this is the case, it is the result of circumstance both at the individual and group level. In fact, we know very little about what types of Irish L2 learners aspire to, and what factors determine their preferences. Referring to the variety of Irish spoken by most L2 speakers as 'standard' may be misleading since it implies that they have chosen that form. Further, it links a certain prestige to the blended variety that may not have any basis in reality.

1.1.3 Adult learners of Irish

Language learning in adulthood is a regular focus of applied linguistic and second language acquisition (SLA) research. However, much of the discussion of adult learners as a distinct group in these disciplines concerned age related factors of ultimate attainment in language acquisition and classroom methodology (e.g. Krashen, 1982; McKay & Tom, 1999; Perdue, 1993; Singleton & Ryan, 2004). Adult language learning provides an interesting research context because these are learners who have elected to return to the Irish language, and are not constrained by curricular aims in the traditional sense. These learners are often in a position to choose a course which best suits their personal interests and needs in the language. In this section we will discuss the unique context of adult learners of Irish, their role in language revitalization efforts and the implications of their level of proficiency, language learning goals and orientations towards target varieties for the realization of such efforts.

Adult Irish language training is a growing sector in Ireland, and in some cases these learners choose to return to the language many years after leaving school (Ní Ghallachair, 2009). Numerous institutions offer Irish language courses to meet the needs of this group. For example, several of the country's main tertiary educational institutions offer Irish language courses for adult learners, though they vary in their aims, qualifications and methodologies. These institutions are complemented by private sector language schools which offer classes specifically designed for adults. This means that adults wishing to reinvest in the Irish language learning experience are provided with a great number of course types and institutions to choose from. Ní Ghallachóir (2009) recently outlined some of the types of students who return to Irish language learning in the Republic based on inquiries from potential students of the language classes offered by the Language Centre at NUI Maynooth. Among these are parents of children in immersion schools, administrative staff in these schools, public/civil service employees (in response to the Official Languages Act 2003), Irish speakers seeking employment as translators, interpreters and in the media, learners without honours level Irish in the Leaving Certificate seeking admission to primary education degree courses and non-native (i.e. non-national) Irish learners who seek the 'full Irish experience'. Although we have basic information about who is attending these classes, information about their views, perspectives and motivation in relation to the learning of Irish by adults have not been widely researched.

In the context of minority languages more generally, an interesting theme that researchers have recently begun to discuss is the importance of adult L2 learners in language revitalisation efforts (e.g. Baker at al. 2011; MacCaluim, 2007). It has been

argued that these learners are 'a key component in saving [the] treasury of [the world's] languages' (Baker et al., 2011: 41). These authors continue:

> [...] adult language learning is a way of increasing the stock of language speakers of a threatened language, not only as parents who transmit that language to their children, but also as employees, for example, to give the language a purpose and function.
>
> (Baker et al., 2011: 43)

The claim here is that, although intergenerational transmission is extremely important for both language planning and revitalisation, the adult language learner plays a separate, but important role by contributing to the support network for younger speakers both in the home as well as in the wider community. This sentiment has been echoed in relation to adult learners of Scottish Gaelic. One recent report concluded that '[a]dult learners of Gaelic should be recognised by [Bòrd na Gàidhlig] as playing a key role in Gaelic development in Scotland, and this recognition should be firmly embedded in Bòrd strategy and policy' (McLeod, MacCaluim, & Pollock, 2010: 62).

Traditionally, the above argument has not been an explicit feature of research which has considered adult L2 learners of Irish. Most of the work in this area has focused on pedagogical issues, such as syllabus design and teaching methodologies (e.g. Little, Ó Murchú, & Singleton, 1985). Some existing research has, however, highlighted interest in culture and personal identity as contributing to learners' motivation (Devitt et al. 1983; Flynn, 2009; Wright & McGrory, 2005). A more recent direction in Irish language research has emphasized the role of non-native or 'new' speakers in the maintenance of the language (e.g. O'Rourke & Ramallo, 2011). The term 'new speaker' is used by these authors to denote non-native speakers who have varying levels of proficiency in the minority language. The implication is that these L2 speakers represent a cohort that, if supported by language planning efforts and the active speech community, could make a substantial contribution to the revitalization of Irish. However, questions surrounding language legitimacy and the general difference between these two groups in terms of levels of proficiency present challenges for non-native speakers to make the necessary contribution to revitalization efforts. These will have to be overcome if such efforts are to be successful (O'Rourke & Ramallo, 2011).

There is a noticeable gap in this literature, however, since none of these studies has considered connections between learner motivation and identity in adult learners, and their desire to achieve particular levels of proficiency. The question of preferences for learning particular dialects of the Irish language has also been largely ignored. Any significant contribution by adult learners to the revitalization of Irish

depends on them achieving a level of proficiency which would allow them to interact with other proficient speakers at various social, professional and educational levels. Successful interaction may also depend on ability to speak or comprehend particular varieties of the language. Furthermore, learners may identify more readily with certain groups of Irish speakers and may therefore wish to adopt the speech norms of those groups.

Research has shown that the number of students in mainstream (English medium) schools who leave the system with such a high level of competency in the language is in decline (e.g. Harris et al. 2006). While the prognosis for Irish medium schools is somewhat better, the general lack of opportunities for language use outside the educational domain has implications for both cohorts in terms of learner motivation and their ability to access and identify with Irish language-speaking social networks (Murtagh, 2007). Such outcomes presumably have implications for school leavers' ability to maintain desirable proficiency levels over time and where a desire or need to use Irish arises later in life, they may need to seek out additional tuition.

Those who do eventually attend adult language classes will, generally speaking, have a different experience than when at school. For one thing, past learning experiences and prior exposure to a range of varieties of Irish while at school may mean that adult learners are in a better position to choose their preferred model target variety. Furthermore, the aims and location of the different types of courses available to these learners may enable them to pursue such a preferred variety. As mentioned above, very little research has looked at the type of Irish school or adult learners wish to acquire. In fact, only one study has attempted to address this question. Ihde (1995) conducted a survey among L2 learners of Irish in the United States to investigate whether their target language variety changed over time. He found that most learners' preference had changed from the time they started learning Irish and concluded that these learners moved away from the dialect of their first instructor to one with which they had ancestral links or one considered to be more popular.

As interesting as the findings of the last study are in the context of this thesis, the small sample size (N = 39), the nature of its methodology (a questionnaire of unreported length) and the context in which it was conducted (outside of Ireland) limit our ability to generalize the findings. As a result, it cannot be said that the attitudes of these or any other adult learners of Irish towards varieties of the Irish language have been systematically measured to date. This of course leaves many questions to be answered regarding these learners' model preferences.

1.2 The present study in the context of SLA research

Attitudes to different varieties of one's native language, as well as attitudes to various second and foreign languages, have been the subject of much research over the last fifty years (Giles & Marlow, 2011). An area that has received less attention, however, is learners' attitudes towards different varieties of a target language (Ellis, 2008; McKenzie, 2010). This thesis is concerned primarily with the latter, less explored question. More specifically, it deals with the attitudes of adult learners of Irish towards native and non-native varieties of the language, including the different traditional regional dialects and varieties of the language spoken by second language (L2) learners. It also examines how learners' preferences and choices in these matters are linked to motivation and identity. An aspect of the question which is of particular interest in the case of Irish is that, being a minority language which most people only encounter in school, there are considerably more learners than native speakers of the language at any given time.

Questions surrounding the appropriateness of the native speaker model in second language learning have been brought to the fore in the recent applied linguistics literature. Although it is not always implemented in the classroom, a now mainstream position among applied linguists is that success in language learning should not be measured in terms of adhering to the norms of the L1 community (see Cook, 2008: 172 ff). There are two main foundations for this view. The first is derived from psycholinguistic research and early research into L2 ultimate attainment which seemed to show that the achievement of nativelike competence in the target language was largely, if not solely, determined by the age at which learning commenced. The second argument against the native speaker model was based on theoretical and philosophical positions concerning the nature of bi/multilingualism and rise of English as a global language. By the end of the 1980s, many researchers began to view the multilingual and the monolingual person as being inherently different, based on the simple fact that the former has access to more than one linguistic system and, therefore, comparisons between the two were unproductive and unfair (Cook, 1992). More recent research has shown, however, that achieving native speaker norms in at least some aspects of an L2 is not as elusive as was previously thought. Studies have found that learners who attain nativelike competence later in life benefit from high levels of motivation, positive attitudes towards the language and its speakers and a strong sense of identification with the same.

One consequence of the debate about the native-speaker model in SLA has been that many researchers have begun to question the validity of the 'native speaker' concept itself. It is argued that the many assumptions made about the native speaker,

e.g. they have privileged knowledge of their language and do not make errors, are not justified (Piller, 2001). A central tenet of this new view is that languages are ideological constructs and the term 'language' is commonly used as a catch-all term for groups of related dialects, e.g. the English language. Further, the realization that multilingualism is the norm and not the exception means that there cannot be a homogeneous group of native speakers of any one language (Aronin & Singleton, 2008). Thus, few first or second language speakers are fully competent in all varieties of the languages they speak.

A separate, but related issue is one mentioned above in relation to Irish, i.e. second language learners' attitudes towards varieties of the target language. While much of the literature on the relevance of native speaker norms in SLA, and the appropriateness of native speaker varieties in second language learning contexts, has learners' interests at heart, it has been argued that the voices of the learners themselves are rarely heard on these matters (Timmis, 2002). Regardless of whether researchers think that the native speaker model is inappropriate, or unattainable, a learner centred approach to second language learning should consider the learner's opinions on these issues. Learners may have valid reasons for selecting a native speaker speech model as their target variety. Despite the low number of late L2 learners who achieve such levels of proficiency, research has shown that it is possible (Birdsong, 2007), and that motivation, attitude and identity play an important role in the process (e.g. Abu-Rabia & Kehat, 2004).

Though the issues of target language variety, learner motivation and identity have received attention (both individually and together) in the literature, they have been subjected to relatively little research in the context of Irish language learning. It is the aim of this study to investigate the role of three affective factors: attitude, motivation and identity (i.e. self-concept) in L2 goal setting and selection of target variety among adult learners of Irish. For reasons discussed below, this study aims to situate its methodology and findings in the wider areas of social psychology of language and SLA which have been the traditional areas for discussion of L2 attitude, motivation and identity.

1.3 Theoretical orientations of this study

This thesis takes a social psychological approach to SLA among adult learners of Irish. Following Noels (2008), the social psychology of language is adopted as the overarching theoretical perspective for the purposes of the study because it 'focuses on the role of language in the dynamics between individuals and their social world; language use is argued to affect and be affected by both psychological and social

variables' (Noels, 2008: 2655). This now well established field has a rich history of investigating the relationship between language, inter- and intragroup relations, bilingualism and language learning, language planning and language maintenance (e.g. Baker, 1992; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Giles, 1977; Giles & Byrne, 1982; Giles & St. Clair, 1979; Lambert, 1967; McKenzie, 2010). In these contexts, it has identified an enduring theoretical relationship between the three key constructs of attitude, motivation and identity. In addition, the methods chosen to investigate these three constructs in this study (discussed in Chapter 4) have traditionally been used in social psychological approaches to second language learning. Finally, the social psychological approach has also produced a large body of SLA and applied linguistics related research within which the findings of this study may be situated. For these reasons, the social psychological approach has been identified as the best theoretical framework for the present study.

The above notwithstanding, it is fully recognized that the roles of attitude, motivation and identity in language learning have been discussed beyond the social psychological and SLA literatures. Relevant research outside the latter areas is considered throughout the dissertation. For example, language attitude and identity have often discussed under the headings of sociolinguistics or the sociology of language (e.g. Fishman, 1972) and this is introduced at various point in Chapters 2 and 3. Motivation is an important area of research not only in social psychology, but in cognitive and educational psychology as well. L2 motivation research has incorporated findings from these three fields into its explanatory models. In its most current models, the field has also highlighted the importance of learner self-concept in mediating other psychological constructs such as attitude and motivation. This change in direction in the field has been viewed by some as a big departure from earlier models (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Nevertheless, the main tenets of these new models are still in keeping with social psychological theories of human behaviour and interaction. This is important as Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009a) provides a foundation for much of the discussion of L2 attitude, motivation and identity in Chapter 3 as well as the discussion of the study's findings in Chapter 8.

1.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have introduced the linguistic, social and educational issues connected with learning Irish. In doing this, we have highlighted the issue of regional and standard forms of the language and their place in Irish language teaching. We have also discussed the specific context of adult learners of Irish and the challenges and freedoms particular to this context. It has been noted that adult learners are

generally in the unique position of being able to seek out course types that cater to their specific language learning needs and goals. In the context of learning Irish, a less immediate need for developing a communicative competence leaves learners freer in some sense to pursue language learning aims such as those connected with their self-concept. One example of given is the desire to acquire features of a particular variety of the language.

In the second half of this chapter the present study was situated in the broader language learning research literature. Issues surrounding the native speaker model in SLA were discussed. It was noted that until recently the traditional notion of a native speaker has been used a benchmark of success in L2 learning. More recent discussions have problematized the concept of the native speaker and its suitability as a target in SLA. It was shown that social psychological research into language attitudes has recently been applied to SLA contexts by measuring L2 learners' attitudes towards varieties of the target language, including L1 and L2 varieties. Each of these topics is expanded in Chapters 2 and 3. We start with the native speaker concept as a target in SLA in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

The native speaker and target models in second language acquisition

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores a number of debates surrounding (i) defining the native speaker, (ii) how native speakers differ from second language learners of a language, (iii) how native speakers and second language speakers are similar, (iv) to what extent is it possible to reach nativelike proficiency in a second language and (v) to what extent is the native speaker model an appropriate benchmark for measuring success in second language learning.

These issues are of particular interest in the context of this study because, as noted in Chapter 1, teachers and learners of Irish often think in terms of teaching and learning a 'pure', nativelike spoken dialect of Irish. This thinking is based on views which have their roots in 19th century revitalization efforts and the promotion of *caint na ndaoine* (the speech of the people) as the basis for standard written Irish. However, despite being based on living dialects, the necessary compromise implemented in the written standard resulted in it being rejected by many native speakers and learners. Latter attempts at promoting a spoken standard, as we saw, were unsuccessful mainly because it was not accepted by the academic community and therefore never trickled down to the speech community (Ó Baoill, 1988). These outcomes have had major impacts on Irish language teaching and learning since loyalties to spoken dialects and the native speaker model persist among teachers and learners (Dorian, 1994). This, along with the fact that first language (L1) speakers of Irish are bilingual in English and display varying degrees of proficiency in the two languages, make defining the native Irish speaker problematic for learners and teachers. It is necessary then to examine the 'native speaker' concept closely in order to see how folk views on these matters relate to the research.

The issue of defining the native speaker and implementing the concept in various language related contexts is extremely complex and this chapter does not attempt to resolve the many questions that arise out of the abovementioned debates. Rather, by unpacking these issues, it serves to highlight their importance in the context of second language learning, and bilingualism more generally. Furthermore, the emphasis in this thesis on learners' attitudes towards the achievement of native speaker norms warrants a more detailed discussion of the implications of various

definitions of the native speaker phenomenon than was provided in Chapter 1. In addition, these criteria, as discussed in relation to native speaker status, are relevant to the process of selecting speakers used in the Speaker Evaluation Exercise recordings discussed in Chapter 4.

The first half of this chapter deals specifically with issues of language innateness, linguistic competence and performance, and critical periods for language development and their use as criteria for determining a speaker's native or non-native status. The second half of the chapter presents the notion of nativelikeness as it has been invoked in recent SLA research as a benchmark for success. We also consider some social psychological aspects of being a native speaker of majority and minority languages in bilingual contexts, as well as their connection with aiming for native speaker standards in second language learning.

2.1 The concept: Who is a native speaker?

The language of the native speaker may be likened to the land in which a person is born. It is what one knows best, it is where one is most comfortable, and it is where one grows and makes his first discoveries of the world. An analogy of this type does well to describe the way a native speaker feels about his language and what he does with it. It fails, however, to tell us who the native speaker is.

One way of starting this discussion of how one should define the native speaker is by looking at some of the terminology which is often used by people when discussing the phenomenon. Terms such as 'first language', 'primary language', and well as the more subjective terms 'native language' and 'mother tongue' have all be used to refer to the language a person learns from birth and continues to use as a primary mode of communication for the first years of life, and, in many cases, beyond. Each of these terms places a different emphasis on the nature of the language and its speaker. The necessity for different terms for a person's first or main language demonstrates the complexity of the problem of isolating one language with which a person should be associated. While terms such as 'first language' or 'primary language' allow us to differentiate between the order in which languages are acquired or the extent to which languages are used by a bilingual, terms such as 'native speaker' and 'mother tongue' allude to a person's origin and upbringing.

In many schools of linguistics (e.g. descriptive and generative linguistics) the native speaker has traditionally been held as the best source of information when attempting to describe the features of a language. Chomsky famously stated that '[l]inguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly' (Chomsky, 1965:

3), and in doing so reaffirmed the position of the native speaker at the heart of linguistic inquiry. Though this ideal has proven to be rather contentious when attempts are made to apply it to other fields of study, it seems very reasonable to adopt the (monolingual) first language speaker as a source of information if the aim of inquiry is to describe features of that language, since his knowledge of the language is assumed to be 'perfect'. A problem, perhaps, arises when one chooses to focus on only the native speaker when seeking to describe the processes of language acquisition. Language acquisition researchers who study the processes by which a child acquires language are clearly limited to data presented to and produced by the child, i.e. input and output. Though this data allows for a degree of scientific objectivity, the researcher is limited by the fact that the child is in most cases unable to communicate very much about his experience of the acquisition process. In other words, since it is widely agreed that the mental processes involved in L1 acquisition take place unconsciously (see e.g. Hendriks, 2000; Jackendoff, 2007), it follows that many assumptions about how linguistic evidence is processed by the child are limited to what we (i.e. researchers) can observe. For example, the child cannot tell us explicitly what his hypotheses were, how exactly he tested them, how he reformulated them when necessary or how he knew that they had been confirmed. In applied linguistics, however, particularly where the aim is applying linguistic science to language teaching, the role of the native speaker has been the cause of great debate over the last 30 years (e.g. Davies, 2004).

Traditionally, native-speaker proficiency has been at the heart of many language teaching/learning efforts; as a result, most teachers and learners implicitly or explicitly use the native speaker as the benchmark for success in language learning. However, globalisation, increased language learning opportunities worldwide and the emergence of English as an international language have all caused the suitability of the native speaker as a model for language learners to be called into question (Cook, 1999; Lee, 2005). Arguments in opposition to the promotion of the native speaker model range from practical to philosophical, and in some cased have political views attached to them. One often cited reason for moving beyond the native speaker model is that it is for many second language learners an unobtainable goal. The problem here lies in the fact that the 'mother' or 'native' tongue is often given special status and is thought of as being the property of a select few. Christophersen (1973: 35) attributes this exalted status to medieval ideas about 'motherhood, nurture and pristine innocence' and argues that such ideas often foster views which liken ones first language to 'a divine gift'. This implies that only those who are granted first access to the language have a full understanding and command of it, and that others will always be inferior.

Evoking any of the terms discussed thus far can only be done if we are making a comparison of who is and is not covered by any of them. Indeed, it is generally in bilingual contexts that such distinctions are necessary. From very early on, definitions of bilingualism have covered a wide range of proficiencies. Some have required the speaker to have 'nativelike control of two languages' (Bloomfield, 1933: 56), while for others simply the ability to construct 'complete meaningful utterances in the other language' (Haugen, 1953: 7). These definitions represent two distinctly different, yet vague descriptions of the phenomenon. They do, however, highlight the question of what constitutes a 'nativelike' ability. If we consider what criteria one must meet to be worthy of one label or another, i.e. native or non-native, it becomes clear how complex this business is. Further, applying any such criteria to L2 learning contexts is just as, if not more, complex.

When used in everyday speech, one generally knows what is meant by first or second language speaker, but understandings of terms like native or mother tongue speaker are more likely to vary. Though definitions of what constitutes a native speaker are wide ranging, there are some general criteria on which most would agree. First, it is generally accepted that a person is a native speaker of his/her first language (L1), that is, the language acquired first in sequential terms. Second, a native speaker acquires his L1 in the home, yet may or may not also make extensive use of it the immediate community (see e.g. Baker, 2001; Hamers & Blanc, 2000). Finally, the L1 speaker is also assumed to use the language more accurately, with greater ease and in a wider range of contexts (Davies, 2003).

The issues of a person's knowledge of and proficiency in the L1 are less straightforward. If we define the native speaker in terms of sequential acquisition, then he/she normally remains a native speaker despite any attrition, since one is considered to be a native speaker of the language(s) learned first. However, if we base our definition on other criteria, such as linguistic expertise, knowledge of linguistic history, access to a greater lexicon, advanced syntax, accurate phonetic features and colloquial idiomatic expressions, then attrition of the L1 may put 'native speaker' status in question. Can someone lose their status as a native speaker? If native speaker status is fluid, what questions does this raise about its importance in language learning (and language teaching). One author (Piller, 2001: 121) has gone as far as to deem the label 'native speaker' at best 'useless' and at worst 'debilitating and unfair' since, on the one hand, linguistically, it is an idealisation, and on the other, socially, it carries connotations of exclusion.

Despite the above mentioned difficulties, the fact that the term 'native speaker' is so prevalent means that it is worth attempting to unpack the various ways in which

the term can be defined. In the following sections we do this by looking at the concept in four contexts: (i) sequential order of language, (ii) levels of knowledge exhibited in different languages, (iii) how the term is used to define the person and the group to which he belongs, and (iv) how the term is used in second language research. The last context is particularly relevant to the present study since the notion of 'nativelikeness' is often exercised as a benchmark for success in SLA. In addition, it is often set by teachers and learners as the primary objective in classroom language learning.

2.1.1 Language in sequential terms

It was noted that one way to address the question of whether a person might be considered a native speaker of a particular language is to set the criterion of chronological language learning. In this case, a person is only a native speaker of the language which is learned first, as a child. For some this might seem to be a good solution to the problem, however, when we consider that monolingualism is only the norm in a few Anglophone countries, this criterion no longer seems suitable. Simultaneous bilingualism (i.e. bilingual from birth) is not uncommon and, therefore, this definition would fit beyond simple monolingualism. However, early sequential bilingualism, in which a second language is encountered at a young age, is perhaps more common than simultaneous bilingualism, and depending on factors such as age, context in which the second language is learned, attitude and motivation, a child's ability in both languages may or may not reach that of the monolingual or the simultaneous bilingual. However, all things being equal, i.e. linguistic knowledge and performance, a highly proficient sequential bilingual could only be denied the status of native speaker in the second language because of a delay in exposure. A connected issue arises, then, as to where the cut off point should be for one to be considered an early sequential bilingual? The answer to this question, however, is less than straightforward. Some researchers argue for very young cut offs for exposure to both languages (one month, De Houwer, 1995), while others are willing to include those who are exposed to additional languages up to the first few years (cf. Genesee & Nicoladis, 2007)

2.1.2 Language in terms of knowledge and proficiency

Another way to approach the matter of what is to be a native speaker is by describing the features that characterize the phenomenon (Cook, 2008: 171). On this approach, we may define the native speaker by setting criteria pertaining to linguistic abilities or knowledge of certain features of the languages. As Davies argues, this approach is particularly relevant for categorizing those who speak more than one language, since:

> [...] it affects the view many second (and foreign) language users have of their own control of a second or foreign language. But of equal importance is what view so-called bilinguals (especially those who acquire more than one language in early childhood) have of themselves. And the view we must take of them.
>
> (Davies, 2003: 29)

If one adopts these criteria, i.e. linguistic knowledge/performance, as a means of determining native speaker status, then we are forced to define what it is we mean by knowledge and performance. These two concepts are reminiscent of Chomsky's (1965) distinction between *competence* and *performance*, where competence (referring to the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) is the ideal and performance constitutes linguistic competence being deployed correctly or incorrectly in actual language use.[1] For Davies, however, the term 'competence' captures both of these domains:

> (1) Competence means performing without thinking (the notion of automaticity). The child can perform in limited ways, the ideal native speaker in all areas.
>
> (2) Competence does not mean performing in valued ways, that is doing it well; just as what distinguishes two runners or two pianists is not competence (they both have that) but level of performance.
>
> (3) Competence means knowing, being familiar with, all structural resources of a code, (though not with its rhetoric), and being able to make judgements about structural realisations.
>
> (Davies, 2003: 34)

A native speaker will, therefore, meet these criteria in both the knowledge and use of his native language. It follows then that if one can be a native speaker of more than one language (including a language that was acquired later than is normally allowed for by our definition of simultaneous bilingualism above), such a bilingual will have to meet these knowledge/performance criteria for all his 'native' languages, at least at some point in time.

2.2 First language acquisition: Everyone is a native speaker

The unique features of the human language faculty, and particularly its development in the child, have been studied as a window into human cognition as far back as the work of Plato. This section will provide a brief overview of the main features of theoretical

[1] Jackendoff (2007: 27-28) points out that Chomsky's impetus for making this distinction was most likely methodological convenience, which would allow for the study of features of language without having to worry about how the brain processes them. However, despite criticism from many outside theoretical linguistics, the distinction, once made, resulted in a tendency among linguists to view competency theories as 'immune to evidence from performance' (p. 28).

discussions of first language acquisition which seek to explain the uniformity of the end result. As mentioned, this uniformity of linguistic competence among members of a speech community may be used as grounds for acceptance of a person as a native speaker. Though this discussion comes under the heading of first language acquisition, except where a comparison of the two contexts is made explicit, bilingual first language acquisition is thought to be governed by the same processes. The following account of the processes involved in relation to a child's first language(s) will provide us with a baseline for comparison between those two contexts in our attempt to delineate useful criteria for categorizing native and non-native speakers of a language.

Chomsky's (1959) critique of B. F. Skinner's *Verbal Behavior* (1957), and behaviourist psychology more generally, signalled the start of a move away from behaviourist theories of learning and towards a mentalistic (i.e. cognitive) framework. For him, the behaviourist approach to language acquisition failed to take account of the true nature of human language. For Chomsky, the open-endedness and creative aspects of language are among those key to understanding its nature, acquisition and use (e.g. Chomsky, 1965, 1972). He argued that the fact that children regularly produce utterances that they have not previously encountered, or that an adult understands a sentence in the newspaper that he had not read before demonstrates that language cannot be a result of mere imitation of models provided to us (Chomsky, 1959). Another key element to the argument is the astounding rate at which normally endowed children everywhere master there first language(s). What is known as the Poverty of the Stimulus argument makes the claim that this rapid development of language cannot be explained by the type and amount of input children receive from their environment, since adults rarely, if ever, teach children the 'rules' of language. Children encounter *positive evidence*, i.e. utterances that actually occur in the language, from their environment and from this they work out the rules underlying grammatical structures of the language (Chomsky, 1981). On this view, the only plausible solution to the 'logical problem of language acquisition', i.e. the way we come to know language, is to postulate innate mental properties which are designed to process available input and allow the child to build an adult grammar (i.e. mature linguistic competence). This position is often referred to as the Innateness Hypothesis, and its supporters, nativists.

Linked to the Innateness Hypothesis is Chomsky's notion of linguistic universals. This postulation rests on the observation that the seemingly great variation among human languages is actually very superficial. That is, when one looks at the structure of any and all languages, it becomes clear that they only vary in a small number of ways (Chomsky, 2000: 13). Human language, therefore, demonstrates a

number of universal properties along which individual languages (i.e. Spanish, German, Japanese, etc.) can vary only in limited ways. These properties are known as 'principles' in Chomskyan terms and they account for the rules of language structure which determine grammaticality. The acquisition of language, then, is explained by the idea that the child inherits knowledge of these language principles via the genetic code. This pre-existing knowledge of the basic principles of language, termed Universal Grammar (UG), drives the acquisitional process and helps to explain how rapidly children master language despite the seemingly varied nature of input from the environment (Chomsky, 2000: 15). In sum, Nativists view the role of the environment is to simply provide linguistic data for the child to internalize. The acquisition process is then guided by UG, the child's biologically endowed blueprint for language.

This account of language has been most clearly developed in Chomsky's Principles and Parameters Theory (e.g. Chomsky, 1988), which, postulates, alongside the inborn knowledge of language principles, the knowledge of parameters, which constitute the ways in which languages can vary. Together these form the language faculty:

> We may think of the language faculty as a complex and intricate network of some sort associated with a switch box consisting of an array of switches that can be in one of two positions. Unless the switches are set one way or another, the system does not function. When they are set in one of the permissible ways, then the system functions in accordance with its nature, but differently, depending on how the switches are set. The fixed network is the system of principles of universal grammar; the switches arc the parameters to be fixed by experience.
>
> (Chomsky, 1988: 62-63)

Despite changes to details of the theory over the years, it is still among the most popular frameworks for acquisition research (Cook & Newson, 2007).

2.2.1 A critical period for language acquisition

Arguments supporting the nativist position on language acquisition have been linked to the evidence for critical periods of development, i.e. maturational constraints on development and learning. Applied to language acquisition, the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) postulates that neural maturation opens and closes a window of opportunity for successful (i.e. normal) first language acquisition (Lenneberg, 1967; Penfield & Roberts, 1959). The end of the critical period for language development, which is roughly thought to be the onset of puberty, and which coincides with brain lateralization, results in reduced neural plasticity and the individual no longer having access to the mental apparatus needed for language acquisition. The CPH has had a

direct impact on the issue of nativelikeness in second language acquisition, since acquisition outside of the supposed critical period results in language that is thought to be qualitatively different from the language of a person who has completed acquisition within the critical period, i.e. a native speaker. We shall return to this issue below.

The notion of a critical period for first language development is also supported by a great deal of empirical evidence of first language acquisition from children affected by exceptional developmental, environmental and medical circumstances. For example, the rate of language acquisition in children affected by Down Syndrome is typically delayed and an influential study by Lenneberg, Nichols and Rosenberger (1964) found no progress in children over fourteen years of age. Their language development ceased at whatever stage they had reached by this critical age. Cases of child neglect have also provided evidence for the cessation of language development around puberty. The case of Genie, a young girl who was severely neglected (physically and emotionally) by her parents, has also been used to demonstrate the upper limit of a critical period for language. She was apparently mute when she was discovered three months before her fourteenth birthday and, despite some initial improvement, her language production never reached a normal level (Curtiss, 1977; see also Singleton & Ryan, 2004: 50-53). Furthermore, evidence of the ability in children and adults to recover language after brain injury has shown that recovery is more likely in children than adults (Aram et al., 1997), and is almost certain in children under the age of 10 (Bishop, 1997). Finally, evidence from deaf children born to hearing parents and who only encounter signed input later in life suggests that they are unlikely to achieve a nativelike standard (e.g. Newport, 1990; see Emmorey, 2002 for an overview). Taken together, these studies provide substantial evidence that there are age related constraints on first language acquisition in certain circumstances. This evidence has led some researchers to be very clear about the nature of the critical period for first language acquisition. Pinker (1994), for example, states that 'acquisition of a normal language is guaranteed for children up to the age of six, is steadily compromised from then until shortly after puberty, and is rare thereafter' (Pinker, 1994: 293). However, while it is generally accepted that age is a factor in normal language development, statements about a critical period for language acquisition are not usually so concise. Guasti (2002), for her part, concludes that the evidence does indeed support the CPH, with some qualifications however:

> [T]he evidence to date shows that there are critical period effects for acquiring the phonology, morphology, and syntax of one's native language. While all human beings are endowed with a richly structured system of linguistic knowledge, this system can develop naturally and fully only if the individual is

> exposed to appropriate stimuli early in life. This explains the fact that acquiring a language (native or foreign) is a natural achievement for children and becomes more difficult as one gets older.
>
> (Guasti, 2002: 21)

The use of the phrase 'early in life' speaks to the acknowledged difficulty of identifying a clear start and end of any such critical period for all aspects of language acquisition (cf. Singleton, 2005). It is also worth mentioning here that it is well recognised that a person's first language normally continues to develop well into adulthood. Discussions of language use among adolescents, young adults and professionals highlight our ability to learn new words, phrases and linguistic registers in order to adapt to new social and professional settings (Singleton & Ryan, 2004: 55f). In closing, while a great deal of the evidence for a critical period for language has originated in first language contexts, the question of whether or not there is a critical period for language acquisition would appear to be particularly relevant to second language acquisition. Clearly it is only in exceptional cases that language is not acquired during the normal period, and many of these cases are marked by other, complicating factors which have made the evidence difficult to interpret. We shall return to this issue below again in the context of research on critical periods for second language acquisition.

2.2.2 Alternative accounts of language acquisition

We noted that nativist accounts of language acquisition posit an inborn mental faculty of the type postulated in Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device, while empiricist (i.e. behaviourist) accounts see the phenomenon as being a result of experiential learning which is dependent on positive reinforcement from caregivers. Typically the divide between various nativist and behaviourist accounts of learning and development is seen as resting on this question of innateness, or lack thereof. Fodor, Bever and Garrett (1974: 438-439) argue, however, that it is incorrect to compare these approaches in terms of innateness. They observe that empiricist theories of learning (implicitly or explicitly) attribute some role to innate mechanisms; if not for language, for spatial or sensorial detection. An organism, in their view, is 'prewired to choose' from hypotheses it has available to it for defining possible relations between training (stimuli) and transfer (responses) (p. 439). This position on innateness now underpins virtually all work in cognitive science (Pinker, 2003: 32ff.), and their conclusion that 'any organism which learns must have inherent principles for projecting its past experiences to new cases [and, therefore,] it is a question of brute fact whether such principles are species-specific or task-specific, or both' (Fodor et al., 1974: 439) is as true now as it was then. The by now general agreement on the fact that all learning is facilitated by

innate properties allows us to move on with our discussion of human language development and the role of internal and external factors which contribute to the process.

By putting aside the issue alluded to above by Fodor et al. of whether language is specific to humans (i.e. species specific), we can now look at the question of whether the innate knowledge that allows for human language acquisition is specific to language. It is generally accepted that human learning is predicated on access to some form of innate knowledge of the world. In the case of language acquisition, however, there is still a great deal of debate as to whether part of this knowledge is language-specific (i.e. a Universal Grammar) or whether language acquisition proceeds via general cognitive mechanisms which coincide with the child's normal mental development (Fernández & Cairns, 2010)

Explanations of language learning which are sympathetic to the second position generally come under the heading of cognitive development models of language acquisition. Most of the theorizing from this perspective draws on the work of Jean Piaget (e.g. 1960; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), which posits that the child is born with basic 'intelligence' and the ability 'to *assimilate new* experience to his/her internal organisation of the world and to modify or *accommodate* the latter to take new experience into account' (Singleton & Ryan, 2004: 156, italics in original). The Piagetian view of language acquisition is linked to four stages of cognitive development in the child: the sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational stages. According to Piaget, language emerges after the sensorimotor stage (roughly birth – 24 months):

> From the last stages of the sensori-motor period onwards, the child is capable of imitating certain words and attributing a vague meaning to them, but the systematic acquisition of language does not begin until about the end of the second year.
>
> (Piaget, 1960: 123)

An important element of the Piagetian account of language acquisition is that corresponds with the child's continuous development of existing cognitive structures to meet new situations through interaction with the environment. In Piaget's own words, 'it should be noted that the acquisition of language, i.e. the system of collective signs, in the child coincides with the formation of the symbol, i.e. the system of individual significants' (Piaget, 1960: 125)[2].

[2] Piaget defines *significants* as 'verbal signs or imaged symbols which are formed hand in hand with thought' (Piaget, 1960: 25).

The idea that language acquisition is linked to cognitive development has also been influential in 'social interactionist' theories of language acquisition (Field, 2004), however, these theories have draw more on the work of Lev Vygotsky (e.g. 1962) than on that of Piaget. Social interactionist theories reject the idea that language acquisition is guided solely by UG. This approach to language acquisition emphasizes environmental as well as the biological factors involved in the process. In the main, these theories argue that while the child is endowed with a strong predisposition to acquire language and an innate ability to recognize patterns in the linguistic data of the environment, social interaction between caregivers and the child, as well as the social contexts in which language-learning takes place, are equally important.

Jerome Bruner, for one, expanded these ideas on language acquisition (e.g. Bruner, 1983). He proposed the idea of a Language Acquisition Support System (LASS), which accompanies (and aids) the child's innate language processing mechanism (i.e. Chomsky's LAD). This approach rests on the notion that in order to become a 'native speaker', the child must master three facets of language: syntax, semantics and pragmatics, which are inextricably linked in the learning process. The interaction between child and caregiver provides all the necessary data for successful acquisition. The LASS, then,

> frames or structures the input of language and interaction to the child's Language Acquisition Device in a manner to "make the system function." [...] [I]t is the interaction between the LAD and the LASS that makes it possible for the infant to enter the linguistic community.
>
> (Bruner, 1983: 19)

2.2.3 Interim summary

The advent of generative grammar and its emphasis on language universals has changed the way first language acquisition has been studied. The approach advocated by Chomsky and his followers has revealed much more about the nature of human language and its acquisition by children than was possible within the behaviourist framework. While generative grammar quickly became the dominant school of linguistic thought in the second half of the twentieth century, the UG account of language acquisition has not been fully accepted by many researchers concerned with child language acquisition. Some researchers were not prepared to attribute to the environment the superficial role of initiating the process. As a result, a number of influential theories of language acquisition now exist that postulate important if not equal roles for biological endowment and social environment.

This last point is important; while there is debate as to its form and structure, it is now universally accepted that a form of innate knowledge aids language acquisition. If this is the case, normal first language acquisition is assumed to proceed with unhindered access to the necessary neurological and psychological mechanisms. Evidence for this is found in the universal end state of the language acquisition process in children from all cultures, provided there is no impairment. Further evidence for this has come from research into the notion of a critical period for language acquisition. The notion of a critical period is important for our present concerns. If the biological pre-disposition for language acquisition is constrained by a time frame for optimal success, any person who learns language outside that window should not acquire nativelike proficiency. Indeed, research has shown that the normal end state of first language development is rarely achieved when the process is interrupted during the hypothesized critical period for acquisition.

The above points are significant to any discussion of the criteria necessary for achieving native speaker status. From the psycholinguistic perspective, it is assumed that a person is born with innate knowledge that aids the acquisition of language. It is assumed that in order to reach the normal level of proficiency attained by other first language speakers, the native speaker has received appropriate input in the target language from members of his family of community to initiate and support the development of language. It is also assumed (or taken for granted) that the developmental process has taken place uninterrupted during childhood. This last assumption is, however, problematic for language acquisition in bilingual contexts. It is not problematic to say that a language must be acquired during such a critical period when only one language is presented in the child's environment. Yet children, and even adults, may subsequently learn a second language to a proficiency level approaching that of the monolingual first language speaker. The question remains then, how might we apply such psycholinguistic criteria to determining native speaker status in the bilingual. We will now turn to the second language acquisition literature where a great deal of debate has been generated by the notion of a critical period and nativelikeness in terms of ultimate attainment in additional languages.

2.3 Second language acquisition: Is anyone a native speaker?

Second language acquisition research has a long history of drawing on methods and findings from first language acquisition (Littlewood, 1984, 2004) and as a result SLA research has been influenced by generative linguistic accounts of language acquisition. Many of these early studies sought to compare the second language acquisition to first language acquisition. The findings from much of this research

determined that second language acquisition demonstrated many similarities to first language acquisition. For example, learners were found to produce errors that were apparently not the result of influence from their first language (Corder, 1967), suggesting that second language errors are produced independent of both the first language and target language systems. This has been likened to the types of overgeneralization errors that children make during first language acquisition.

Despite some well recognized similarities, there are a number of complicating factors in the context of (later) second language that may have an effect on the way learners access any pre-existing linguistic principles. For example, second language learners already speak a first language, and therefore have a full mental grammar in place. They are also cognitively more mature than first language learners and will have different needs and motivations for learning a second language. Cook (1985; Cook & Newson, 2007) highlights the issue of type and amount of positive and negative evidence learners encounter as another important difference between first and second language learners. Positive evidence, as we noted, consists of actual sentences in the target language and according to UG accounts, first language acquisition is thought to proceed mainly on this type of evidence. Negative evidence, however, can occur in two forms, direct (i.e. corrective feedback) and indirect (i.e. the absence of a particular feature of language in input) (Chomsky, 1981). While it has been shown that children receive very little direct negative evidence (Brown & Hanlon, 1970, cited in Cook, 1985), there is debate about the role of indirect negative evidence in first language acquisition. The problem lies in knowing what a child doesn't hear, and moreover, how this is internalised by the child (Cook, 1985). In second language contexts, however, there is a greater likelihood of encountering both types of evidence. Positive evidence comes from sentences the learner hears from the teacher and other proficient speakers, however, direct negative evidence is common as well, particularly in classroom settings. It has been argued as well that a form of indirect negative evidence may come via a process of comparison by the learner between the first language and the target system in order to determine what does not occur in the second language (Cook, 2008).

The notion of Universal Grammar is generally considered valid regardless of the number of languages being acquired. It is claimed by some that excluding additional languages from the theory is counterintuitive:

> Universal Grammar is a theory of natural languages, claiming it plays no part in second language acquisition would mean claiming that second languages are not natural languages.
>
> (Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 77)

Although Chomsky has never claimed explicitly that the theory is relevant to the acquisition of a second language, he does make reference to multilingual contexts in his writings. For example, he claims that universal principles should be available at any stage: 'Such phenomena are obvious to speakers of any language. The facts are known without relevant experience, and they need not be taught to a person learning Spanish or English as a second language' (Chomsky, 1988: 30). Furthermore, he has argued elsewhere – in acknowledgement of the fact that monolingualism is exceedingly rare – that everyone is essentially a multilingual since we all grow up hearing different languages. 'Sometimes they are called "dialects" or "stylistic variants" or whatever, but they are really different languages [...] So everyone grows up in a multilingual environment' (Chomsky, 2000: 59).

In relation to how UG handles this multilingual input, Chomsky makes the claim that the language faculty 'can assume many different states in parallel and we do not know how many states' (p. 59). It would appear, therefore, that the language faculty is not, in theory, limited to applying UG principles to just one language. In relation to late second language acquisition, however, Chomsky has stated that any restriction on learning additional languages later in life may result from neurological maturation, and not a property of the language faculty itself. He is also of the opinion that there may be multiple so called critical periods and that language learned after the end of these is somehow dependent on the first language. Furthermore, he argues that the issue is made more complex by the amount of individual variation among late second language learners (Chomsky, 2000: 60-61). These remarks demonstrate that, in Chomsky's view at least, UG is thought to be available for, and involved in second language acquisition.

As one would expect, however, the SLA literature on these matters is not that simple. Even if UG is available and involved in learning languages later in life, it is not clear how it might be accessed in the process of acquiring a second language. The difficulty of making claims regarding the involvement of UG in subsequent language learning is that the goal of Chomskyan approaches to language is to explain the transition from the initial state to the steady end state of the language faculty becomes extremely problematic (Flynn & Lust, 2002). If the end state is characterised by minimal change to the faculty, learning an additional languages later in life pushes the end line back indefinitely. It is this paradox that has led researchers to three possible positions on this question: (i) no access to UG, (ii) partial access to UG and (iii) full access to UG. A full assessment of the evidence for each of these positions is beyond the scope of our discussion here, however, the main tenets of each discussed briefly below are adapted from Mitchell and Myles' (2004) lengthy treatment of these issues.

The first of these positions, i.e. no access to UG, finds support from those researchers who argue for a strict critical period for language acquisition. They interpret the evidence of typical non-native like proficiency among late L2 learners as demonstrating a clear maturational constraint on language learning which involves a full restricted access to UG. On this view, any progress made in the second language is explained by other learning mechanisms, which are not language related. The second position which argues for partial access to UG is based on the belief that L2 learners access UG via their first language. Parametric settings from the first language, which cannot be reset, are applied to the second language. Any mismatch in the parameters of the two languages will have to be overcome by general problem solving strategies. Some who support this position argue that access to general UG principles may also be restricted, particularly if they are not applicable in the first language. In general this position is based on the belief that there is a critical period for accessing some features of UG, and therefore, for language learning as well. The final position, i.e. full access to UG, is based on evidence of L2 learners acquiring principles and parameters of the target language which were not in operation in the first language. Learners are thought to have full access to UG principles and the ability to reset parameters transferred from the L1 when new evidence from the L2 is encountered. There is some disagreement here over how quickly access to all principles and parameters become available, but those who support this position agree that they may eventually be accessed.

Proponents of these three positions accept that UG is available during the process of acquiring ones first language(s). The debate, however, arises in relation to the learning of additional languages later in life, and only those who support the (full access position argue against maturational constraints in the form of a critical period for language acquisition. While some researchers postulate that the ability to achieve a nativelike end state in a second language is dependent on whether or not the learner has access to all elements of his/her biologically endowed language faculty, achieving 'nativelikeness' is also thought be dependent on acquiring the target language during such a critical period.

2.3.1 The Critical Period Hypothesis in second language acquisition

The Critical Period Hypothesis, which was discussed above in connection with first language acquisition, has been explored extensively in second language acquisition research as well. In fact, there has probably been more research devoted to exploring the implications of the CPH for learning additional languages since the end result of the process is often very varied. While the notion of maturational constraints on the

learning of a first language is relatively uncontroversial, the so-called 'age factor' in SLA is far less straight forward, and as such, has generated a great deal of debate (see e.g. Singleton, 2005). The main question in the latter context is not whether a person can acquire an additional language beyond the critical period for language acquisition; learners achieve at least minimal levels of proficiency all the time. The question then is whether a person can achieve the same level of proficiency in an additional language as he/she does in a first language. For some, the answer to this question would appear to depend on knowing when any such critical period might end.

Based on traditional folk wisdom, it is often claimed that children are better at learning languages. If we exclude the rare cases of children reared in isolation, and the more common, yet still comparatively rare case of congenitally deaf children who learn a signed or spoken language later in life, one doesn't normally have to make this claim in relation to first language acquisition (cf. Dörnyei, 2009b: 240). What people are usually referring to, then, is the ease with which a child 'picks up' a second language. In fact, the simple 'younger = better' position, which is supported by many parents and teachers, has also made its way into the research literature. Newport, for example, states unequivocally that '[l]anguage learners who begin acquiring language at an early maturational state end up performing significantly better in that language than those who begin at a later maturational state' (Newport, 1990: 20). While this simplified position is often taken for granted, detailed analyses of the evidence available have concluded that the issue is very complex with more than just a learner's age having an impact on their ultimate achievement in the target language (e.g. Birdsong, 2005a; Muñoz & Singleton, 2011; Singleton, 2005). For this reason, it has been proposed that the myriad of conflicting evidence and contributing factors only allow us to be reasonably sure of one thing: younger learners have some long term advantages over older learners, particularly in naturalistic situations (Singleton & Ryan, 2004).

A great deal of the discussion surrounding the maturational constraints on SLA is concerned with evidence from naturalistic settings. The general trend in the findings of this research may be summarized in the following way. Younger learners outperform older learners in long term naturalistic settings, however, in short term naturalistic settings older learners show a greater rate of progression over younger learners for a period of about a year, after which younger learners catch up and subsequently surpass the older learners. In formal (school) settings, the evidence is somewhat more complicated in that it would appear to show an opposite trend. In this connection, Dörnyei (2009b) argues that few researchers are, in fact, willing to acknowledge that much of what is claimed about the CPH in SLA is untrue when applied to formal learning contexts. While younger learners may have some advantages in the long run

in naturalistic settings, most scholars now agree that younger learners do not outperform their older counterparts in formal classroom settings. Any advantage demonstrated by early start learners dissipates quickly with older learners catching up to them within a few years (e.g. Ellis, 1985; Harris, 1992; Nikolov, 2009; Nikolov & Djigunovic, 2006; Singleton, 1995). In a recent review of large and small scale studies of early language learners in various educational contexts, Nikolov (2009) also concludes that the evidence tends not to support 'the younger the better' position. Her overall position, however, is that the CPH is overemphasized as a basis for early start language programmes and that 'the age factor must be viewed in its context; all conditions have to be taken into consideration' (Nikolov, 2009: 26). Singleton and Ryan, for their part, argue as well for analyses in context when they conclude:

> Concerning the hypothesis that those who begin learning an L2 in childhood in the long run generally achieve higher levels of proficiency than those who begin later in life, one can say that there is some good supportive evidence and that there is no strong counter-evidence. The data from school-based investigations which seem to contradict this hypothesis do not in fact bear on it, if one takes naturalistic situations as the basis for one's definition of 'long run', 'eventual', etc., since L2 exposure-time involved in studies focusing on formal learning situations never approaches that involved in long-term naturalistic studies.
>
> (Singleton & Ryan, 2004: 115)

While those who argue that there is a critical period for successful language learning may choose to ignore them, the validity of the critical period hypothesis for second language learning achievement would appear to be called into question repeatedly by two types of evidence, summarised by Dörnyei as follows:

> On the one hand some learners who are young enough by any account to be considered within the CP [critical period] still fail to master the L2 to a native-like level. On the other hand there are adult learners whose AoA [age of onset of acquisition] is so late (e.g. learners in their twenties) that it simply has to be after the offset of the CP and yet who succeed in acquiring native-like proficiency.
>
> (Dörnyei, 2009b: 242)

The existence of such learners, particularly of the latter type, will always cast doubt on whether any such critical period for second language acquisition exists. And though their existence demonstrates that it is in fact possible to reach such an advanced level of proficiency, the relatively small number of adult learners who actually achieve this level raises questions about whether *nativelikeness* is an appropriate benchmark for success in second language learning. Furthermore, while some studies have found that very advanced learners may be identified as native speakers by L1 speakers of

the target language (see below for details), doubts have been expressed about whether even the most successful learners do actually reach a nativelike level of proficiency in all aspects of the target language.

2.3.2 Nativelikeness in second language acquisition

It was mentioned earlier that investigations of the upper limit of second language achievement and its connection to a critical period for language acquisition are really questions of whether a learner has the capability to achieve nativelike proficiency in the target language. In attempts to measure such an ability, '*[n]ativelikeness* is defined in the experimental context as L2 learners' performance that falls within the range of native control subjects' (Birdsong, 2005a: 120, italics in original). Nativelikeness is generally measured in two main ways. Learners may be subjected to a battery of tests designed to assess learners' ability to discriminate between words or judge the grammaticality/appropriateness of phrases in the target language. (The results are sometimes compared to a control group of L1 speakers of the language.) Alternatively, samples of the learners' speech maybe be recorded and presented to L1 speaker judges who evaluate their nativelikeness (see García Lecumberri & Gallardo, 2003 for a recent example of these methods).

The above discussion of the age effects on L2 ultimate attainment has demonstrated that, despite confounding evidence, many researchers adhere firmly to the traditional position that learners who start early have the best chance of reaching nativelike proficiency in the target language. Furthermore, a nativelike accent in the target language is often considered to be the one aspect of SLA that will ultimately elude even the most advanced learners (Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam, 2009; Long, 1990). While this position is supported by many empirical studies, Birdsong (2005b) rightly points out that over the last two decades a number of studies (now well into in the double digits) have found late L2 learners who perform in the native range. Nikolov (2000), for one, challenged the above received wisdom with her study of successful learners of Hungarian and English. She found that many of the 33 learners, who had a variety of first languages and all started learning the target language at the age of 15 or older, were judged to be native speakers of the target language by native speaker judges of different ages and educational levels. Abu-Rabia and Kehat (2004) also found that some late learners of Hebrew were judged to be native speakers by first language speakers of the language. These studies are not alone in providing evidence for the possibility of nativelike attainment among late learners of a second language. There is now a sizable body of literature demonstrating similar results (e.g. Birdsong,

2007; Birdsong & Molis, 2001; Bongaerts, van Summeren, Planken, & Schils, 1997; Ioup, Boustagui, Tigi, & Moselle, 1994; Moyer, 2007; Muñoz & Singleton, 2007).

While this level of nativelike attainment may be unusual when compared to the large number of L2 learners who never reach it, highly successful learners should not be considered mere exceptions to the rule. At the very least they provide justification for an argument that places the end of a critical period for language learning beyond puberty (Birdsong, 1992). Furthermore, evidence of such learners have encouraged researchers to enquire into what it is about them that makes them different from those who do not ultimately reach nativelike proficiency. Once we move beyond age, two main contributing factors have been identified in successful learners. The first of these is input, or to be more precise, the amount of input the learners receive. While a lengthy residence in the target language community is likely to aid learners by increasing the amount of input they receive, it is not a necessary prerequisite. Nikolov (2000) notes that her Hungarian learners of English had only spent limited time abroad. They did, however, actively seek other sources of input, e.g. books and the media, in order to improve their level of proficiency. The issue of phonetic training has also been raised. Some studies have attributed nativelike phonological attainment to extensive phonetic training in the target language (e.g. Birdsong, 2007; Bongaerts et al., 1997), however, the learners in Nikolov's (2000) study did not receive such training.

The second of these factors contributing to success are socio-psychological variables. Attitudes, motivation and clear goals which include sounding like a native speaker, for example, have been identified as a contributing factor in almost all studies involving nativelike attainment among late learners (Abu-Rabia & Kehat, 2004; Moyer, 1999, 2007; Nikolov, 2000). Furthermore, learner identity and language acculturation patterns have also been shown to influence a learner's degree of (desired) accentedness (Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997; D. Murphy, 2011; Polat, 2011; Polat & Mahalingappa, 2010). The role of these socio-psychological variables in second language acquisition more generally will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, however, it is important to highlight their importance here in the specific context of L2 ultimate attainment, pronunciation and nativelike proficiency. These studies do not on their own dispute the results of other studies that have found that younger learners outperform older learners in various respects of second language performance. They do, however, demonstrate that it is possible to reach a nativelike level of proficiency in a second language when learning begins after, and in some cases well after, the traditionally speculated terminus of the critical period for language learning. In such cases, the learner's attitudes towards the learning situation, motivation to learn the target language, type and amount of input and relationship with

speakers of the language may all help achieve any desired goal the learner might set for him/herself, including achieving nativelikeness.

2.3.3 Non-nativelikeness in second language acquisition

In the last two sections, the focus has been on L2 learners' capacity to achieve nativelike proficiency in a second language. We have looked at rates of success in both long and short term contexts and how the how successes and failures in achieving such a level of proficiency may be the result of biological, maturational and exposure constraints. This research, which highlights many learners' inability to achieve nativelikeness, has been termed the 'deficit model' (Birdsong, 2005b). While this approach has been useful in describing the hypothesized state of the language faculty in SLA and the likelihood that younger and older L2 learners will reach an eventual endstate that matches the outcome of normal L1 acquisition, we have ignored some very important issues. We haven't discussed explicitly, for example, the reasons learners may or may not want/need to achieve a nativelike standard in the target language. Furthermore, we have not discussed whether a nativelike standard is even an appropriate benchmark in the L2 context and to what extent learners need to reach such a level for the learning process to be deemed a success. If the answer to these questions is no, what does that mean for the aims of SLA research?

Non-nativelike attainment, despite being by far the most common outcome in L2 learning, is generally viewed as a failure since successful language learning has traditionally been measured against the native speaker benchmark. As a result, various labels including interlanguage, fossilization, deviant forms, non-target forms, and defective communication have been used to describe non-nativelike speech (e.g. Firth & Wagner, 1997). These terms all have an intentional or unintentional negative air about them. What's more, many consider comparing L2 learners to native speakers to be pointless, since the Chomskyan ideal of a homogeneous speech community made up of native speakers who know their language perfectly, is now generally considered to be just that, an ideal.

In rare cases where normal first language acquisition is interrupted or delayed in childhood, the language faculty will not reach its normal end state, i.e. nativelikeness. In addition, L1 speakers who proceed through normal acquisition often demonstrate differences in performance to the extent that that may be misidentified as L2 speakers by other L1 speakers (Nikolov, 2000). In fact, there is no guarantee that once the normal L1 end state is reached that the system will remain unchanged. The native speaker may suffer a brain injury resulting in aphasia or develop a neurological condition such as dementia, both of which may alter the way the L1 is accessed and

used (Ahlsén, 2006). Moreover, in some bilingual contexts language attrition may result in varied performance among native speakers as a result of neurophysiological, cognitive and social factors (Hopp & Schmid, 2013; Köpke, 2007). It would appear, then, that, beyond monolinguals, native speakers are moving the goal posts, and, therefore, many have called for the term 'native speaker' and the notion of native speaker norms to be redefined (e.g. Cook, 1999; Piller, 2001)

It is for many of the reasons mentioned above that Cook developed his notion of *multicompetence* (Cook, 1991, 1992). Arising out of dissatisfaction with the terminology used to describe the L2 speaker's knowledge of his L1 and the target system, he coined the term to describe both, as he sees it, interrelated systems:

> Since the first language and the other language or languages are in the same mind, they must form a language super-system at some level rather than be completely isolated systems. Multi-competence then raised questions about the relationship between the different languages in use.
>
> (Cook, 2003: 2)

While this concept originated in a critique of application of UG in SLA (Cook, 1991), it has inherent implications for the native speaker concept. This line of thinking is based on the view that a definition of the native speaker such as 'a monolingual person who still speaks the language they learnt in childhood' (Cook, 1999: 187), precludes the L2 speaker from ever becoming a native speaker. Therefore, on this view, the learner is seen as a multicompetent language user with access to two or more grammars in one system. Emphasis is placed on the unique features of the L2 experience in its own right, instead of comparing it to that of the monolingual native speaker. In practical settings, then, the L2 learner is not expected to model his language on the native speaker. As the argument goes, language teaching based on the native speaker model may set unrealistic goals for the learner, as well as limit the ways they use language, since it does not encourage them to use the multilingual store they already possess. These views are in line with a more widespread move away from the traditional view of the native speaker as the only appropriate model in language learning, which has been advanced particularly in relation to English language teaching (e.g. Canagarajah, 2006; Jenkins, 1998; Kachru, 1992; Lee, 2005). These discussions focus on the potential consequences (which are assumed to be mainly negative) of forcing particular native models of the target language on learners. Most of this work is couched in poststructuralist discussions of language and identity, and is concerned mainly with the globalization of English and teaching of English as an international language. According to this argument, since English has become an international lingua franca, used mainly among non-native speakers, the aim of English language teaching should

no longer be to prepare L2 learners of the language for communication with native speakers. It is for this reason that Jenkins (2002) has advocated the creation of a specific variety of English to be taught and used in international contexts.

In relation to L2 speaker/users themselves, the international English approach allows for the expression of a person's L1 regional/group identity via his/her L2 accent (Jenkins, 2002). This is in agreement with Cook's position that 'L2 users have to be looked at in their own right as genuine L2 users, not as imitation native speakers' (Cook, 1999: 195). There are, however, two points worth noting: first, the case of English as an international language is a specific context. Most other language learning contexts cannot be directly compared to it, and teachers need to be aware of this. Second it is well recognized, by Jenkins (Jenkins, 2002: 85) as well, that there are contexts in which learners should aim for native speaker norms, in teaching English as a foreign language and in cases where learners outside the Anglophone world, 'having heard the arguments, still wish to work towards the goal of a native speaker accent' (p. 101).

It has been argued that those who advocate a move away from the teaching of native speaker varieties in the classroom rarely consider the views (or attitudes) of the learners themselves (Timmis, 2002). At least in the EFL context, it would appear that these discussions are a top down approach, in line with what has been termed Critical Applied Linguistics (Pennycook, 2004), which seeks to challenge social and political injustices where language is implicated. In this case, the promotion of a one true form of language that learners should strive to achieve, e.g. British Standard English, is viewed as one such discrimination. There are other studies, however, that have considered learners' attitudes towards achieving native speaker norms, yet the native speaker model is often presented in some very general sense, i.e. 'would you like to sound like a native speaker of English?' (Kuo, 2006; Timmis, 2002), without addressing the issue of different target language varieties. This approach is based on the assumption that L2 learners know what the native speaker model sounds like. These studies, which have been conducted from a pedagogical perspective, have recently been augmented by research which has its roots in social psychology approaches to SLA (for an overview, see McKenzie, 2010).

We will consider the role of affective variables in SLA in detail in the next chapter, however, it is important highlight here the connection between these variables and ultimate attainment research which has evidenced cases of nativelike achievement among late L2 learners. Attitude, motivation and identity have been regularly identified as contributing to these learners' success (e.g. Abu-Rabia & Kehat, 2004; Nikolov, 2000). Many L2 learners who achieve nativelikeness have set this for themselves as a

goal. Such goals appear to be linked to affective orientations towards the target language and its speakers and ultimately the way these speakers sound (Nikolov, 2000). Taking the learner's such views into consideration in the context of language teaching may go some way towards helping them achieve whatever target language model and proficiency to which they aspire.

2.4 Other social psychological considerations for the native speaker in language acquisition and use

We have thus far focused primarily on psycholinguistic aspects of first and second language acquisition in an attempt to explain the similarities and differences between these processes and their end result. Our ultimate aim was to demonstrate the standard set by native speakers for second language learning. While such a standard may not always be appropriate for L2 learning, an argument was put forward that in some circumstances late L2 learners can, in fact, achieve nativelike proficiency in at least some aspects of the target language.

In the last section we introduced some contextual and affective variables which are seen to be connected with L2 nativelike attainment, and successful L2 learning more generally. These (social) psychological variables, i.e. attitude, motivation and identity, are not normally seen as being part of the cognitive mechanisms that underlie acquisition. Instead, they appear to work alongside these mechanisms by supporting them and directing them where necessary (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, 1993). Furthermore, any coherent explanation of L1 or L2 learning and use cannot, however, be divorced from context entirely, and although the above mentioned affective factors are learner internal, they are often shaped by external factors in ways that cognitive mechanisms are not. For example, a person's attitudes towards native and non-native language varieties are very often, if not always, linked to attitudes towards groups that use those varieties.

The use of two languages by an individual is generally termed bilingualism, while diglossia is the term often used to discuss more than one language at the societal level. Both terms may refer to two varieties of the same language or two distinct languages spoken within the same reason (Baker, 2001). Research on bilingualism is usually centred on issues of acquisition and proficiency, while the study of diglossia is focused on language use within speech communities. There is, however, a certain amount of overlap of these two remits. Since bilingual speech communities are very rarely balanced, majority and minority groups may use the codes available to them for different purposes. A group's choice of language for various functions may lead to different proficiency levels in the two language varieties (Grosjean, 2008: 22ff).

Furthermore, if one language is used in the home by some people and the other language, which is used in parts or all of the wider community, is not, a person may only become a proficient native speaker of the first language. The outcome of this process may serve to deepen any divisions that may already exist among different groups within in the community. This scenario highlights just one way in which individual bilingualism is linked to wider societal issues.

2.4.1 The native speaker in majority language contexts

One hardly needs to point out the very clear advantages of being a native speaker of the majority language in a community. The majority language is likely to be the medium of education, as well as the medium of interaction at the commercial and governmental levels (Baker, 2001; cf. Ferguson, 1959; Fishman, 1972). The dominance of one language situation at the societal level may lead to the language or variety spoken by the majority being viewed by both native speakers (majority) and non-native speakers (minority) alike as the more prestigious code. This was demonstrated in a landmark study in Montreal (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, & Fillenbaum, 1960). While these attitudes will undoubtedly be reinforced by societal practices in such a community, the process may start in the home. In general, a child's home network is what will determine '[t]he kinds of norms and values and the language model to which the child is exposed and which he will internalise' (Hamers & Blanc, 2000: 102). If the immediate community the child is born into is a monolingual majority one, even if they are situated beside another community with different linguistic practices, the connection between language and identity is generally unproblematic (Edwards, 2004; cf. next section). If, however, the community is more mixed, there may be some disadvantages for the monolingual majority language speaker in at least some bilingual contexts. There are many who argue that language is an integral part of a person's culture (e.g. Kramsch, 1998). In societies where language shift is advanced and the minority language is restricted to certain regions or social classes, the younger generations of families who no longer speak an indigenous minority language may not have full access to their own culture. Any such restriction on access to culture may either strengthen a person's desire to learn the other language(s), or it may lead to further isolation from the indigenous culture since the person cannot readily identify with it.

2.4.2 The native speaker in minority language contexts

It should be said from the outset that 'minority' does not always equate with a less well off group in terms of power, influence and rights. There are many examples from around the world of a minority group controlling larger groups, politically, culturally or

otherwise. However, this section will proceed from the view that a minority group has less cultural, linguistic and political influence. The language variety of a group of the latter type, presuming that it is different, is generally considered to be 'lesser used'. Lesser-used/minority languages may be immigrant or indigenous languages, and, in either case, they generally stand at a disadvantage to the majority language of the region. In contrast to the majority context outlined in the last section, minority languages are generally used in the home, with friends and family, and for social, cultural and religious purposes (Baker, 2001).

The native speaker of a minority language is faced with a number of challenges which relate back to some of the issues raised at the start of this chapter. First of these is that someone may in fact be a true first language speaker of a minority language without it being his dominant language in terms of proficiency. Limited domains of use in his home community or regional and/or international migration may have an impact on his proficiency in the minority language (see also the discussion of attrition in Section 2.3). Furthermore, in many instances the L1 minority language speaker may be bilingual from birth, if, for example, the parents are from different communities or cultural backgrounds. So, he may be a simultaneous native speaker of a minority and a majority language; however, even if this is not the case, he/she will most likely encounter the majority language at such a young age as to develop native-speaker proficiency. This may impact not only on his bilingual proficiency, since few bilinguals are truly balanced, but it may also impact on his orientation towards the two language groups.

The issue of what it is to be a native speaker of a minority language is also made more complex by the common inclusion of speakers who would normally be excluded from the category in other contexts. This is demonstrated by a couple examples from the Irish context. Christophersen (1973) cites a paper which argues that 'the words "native language" and "mother tongue" are conventionally used here [in Ireland] to refer to the ancestral language rather than to the language of the primary society into which the child is born' (O'Doherty, 1958: 284, cited in Christophersen, 1973). A second, more recent example comes from a study by Hickey (2009) who found that among responses to a survey carried out in parts of Ireland outside the traditional Irish speaking areas, more than a quarter of the sample nominated both Irish and English as their native languages. This can only be interpreted in the context of cultural identity, since linguistically it is very unlikely, if not impossible. The way the label 'native language' has been extended here, at both the societal and the personal level, demonstrates the importance a minority language can have for a people's identity.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored various ways of addressing the issue of the native speaker and its role in first and second language acquisition. We started out by looking at definitions of the native speaker. It was shown that the concept can be defined based on a number of criteria. In an attempt to locate the native speaker in language acquisition research, we delineated various criteria one might use to define the native speaker in terms of psycholinguistic, environmental and usage related factors. In reference to first language acquisition, we saw that normal, uninterrupted child language acquisition yields full L1 proficiency and that this process is not limited to one language. Children may learn multiple languages from birth and achieve full proficiency in each of them, and are generally considered native speakers of all. It was shown that all modern accounts of child language acquisition attribute this universal end state to some form innate mechanism that, once triggered by input from the immediate environment, aids the acquisitional process. Different theories place different emphasis on the role of the environment in this process, but none dispute the fact that children come into the world with a predisposition to learn language. Research in this area has also postulated that this predisposition may only proceed successfully if L1 acquisition takes place during a critical period of development, which is thought to end at around puberty.

It was also shown that, despite numerous similarities between the L1 and L2 acquisition, the outcomes of the two processes are generally very dissimilar. The developmental processes associated with acquiring one's first language yield an almost universal end state, while the attainment of nativelike proficiency in a second language, acquired later in life, is dependent on a number of variables. In this latter context, there has been debate as to whether the same internal mechanisms govern the acquisition process. Furthermore, the critical period hypothesis in relation to SLA has been very controversial, since older L2 learners do in some cases attain nativelike proficiency in at least some areas of the target language. As a result, the concept of nativelikeness has become rather problematic in SLA research. Some researchers adhere strongly to arguments in favour of maturational constraints on SLA and argue that few, if any, late learners ever demonstrate nativelike competency in all language skills. Others, however, argue that the fact that some learners do reach native or near nativelike proficiency in itself demonstrates that L2 learning cannot be determined by the same type of maturational constraints as those which are involved in L1 acquisition. Consequently, the argument goes, the process must be reliant on other psychological (i.e. motivation) and/or contextual (i.e. amount of input/output) variables. Still others contend that, since an L2 learner may never be considered a true native

speaker, regardless of level of proficiency, it is not reasonable to compare the L2 speaker to the L1 speaker at all. Instead the L2 learners should be viewed as a separate context, one which has important distinguishing features.

This last position is, however, only relevant to one particular definition of the native speaker, i.e. one that is based on sequential order of languages acquired, yet it is linked to a similar position which has arisen out of concerns for teaching native speaker norms in English for international purpose contexts. The argument here is that learning English outside of Anglophone countries should be preparing learners for their immediate target language community, who are mainly non-native speakers. It was argued, however, that this position may be relevant only to the specific case of English language learning in international contexts. Furthermore, rarely have learners' attitudes towards available models of the target language been considered. Taking account of and catering for learners' preferences in relation to native speaker norms in the target language may contribute a great deal towards sustaining learners' motivation and help learners to realizing their language learning goals. In conclusion, it is still heavily debated whether or not late L2 learners can perform in the nativelike range in all aspects of the target language. While some definitions of the 'native speaker' preclude such learners from ever donning such a label, the term itself is nothing more than a label. Denying learners the title says nothing of their ability to acquire nativelike proficiency in an L2. It is up to the learner then to decide whether or not such a target is appropriate for his language learning goals. Furthermore, some learners may use the term 'native' regardless of their proficiency in the language. In pedagogical contexts, however, it should be the aim of language courses and their instructors to aid learners in realizing whichever target they choose for themselves. In the next chapter, we will turn our attention to the role of attitude, motivation and identity in the SLA process. These three affective constructs, as we have seen, are thought to be crucial to both the achievement of nativelikeness in L2 learners and orientating learners towards it as a goal.

CHAPTER 3

Attitude, motivation and identity in second language learning

3.0 Introduction

We saw in the last chapter that in second language acquisition research rare instances of nativelike levels of achievement have been explained in terms of three main affective variables; attitude, motivation and identity. It was also shown that the same three affective factors are implicated in orienting learners towards such an ultimate goal in the first place. Because the current study is concerned with whether, and to what extent, adult learners of Irish pursue different language learning goals in terms of native speaker norms and proficiency or different language varieties, we need to examine research and theory on these three issues.

In this chapter, separate sections are dedicated to the topics of attitude, motivation and identity. However, some important areas of overlap are discussed in all three sections. We start off with a brief discussion of the notion of affect in second language learning. We then turn our attention to language attitude research. The construct of attitude is discussed and defined first. We then review studies which have measured native and second language speakers' attitudes to language variation. Next we look at L2 motivation and trace the development of the main theoretical models which attempt to explain the phenomenon over the last 50 years. It is shown that although the explanatory models and the terminology attached to them has change drastically over the years, the most recent models have incorporated salient features of older models and relabelled them rather than changing them in fundamental ways. The L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009a) is highlighted as the most recent model which may potentially have good explanatory power in the context of this study. Within this framework, a learner's L2 motivation is driven by self-guides which include the present and the potential L2 speaker.

The final sections of this chapter discuss notions of identity in second language learning. Again we take a historical approach and trace the theoretical perspectives which have been used to investigate or explain language learner identity. A distinction is drawn here between identity and self-concept, the former referring to a person's perceived group membership while the latter is an individual's beliefs about oneself. The most recent approach to L2 identity which is discussed in the last section has much in common with Dörnyei's model of L2 motivation and, for this reason as well, it is particularly suited to the aims of this study. Finally, we summarise the discussion

and indicate how attitude to language variation, L2 motivation and identity are interrelated in the context of Irish language learning.

3.1 Affective variables in second language learning

Arnold and Brown (1999: 1) provide the following definition for *affect:* 'aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behaviour'. In the context of second language learning, these aspects as well as a number of psychological variables have been examined under the heading of 'affective variables'. Such variables include attitude, motivation, cultural processes, identity, anxiety, learner styles and empathy. The recognition of the co-existence of these factors in the learner and their relationship to one another demonstrate why these variables are often studied in conjunction with one another:

> Although learning a language and using it are basically interactive activities that depend on varying types of relationships with others and with the culture as a whole, the second language acquisition process is strongly influenced by individual personality traits residing within the learner. The way we feel about ourselves and our capabilities can either facilitate or impede our learning; accordingly, the learner-intrinsic factors will have a basically positive or negative influence, though there can be a mixture of liabilities and assets for each. It should be noted, of course, that the various emotions affecting language learning are intertwined and interrelated in ways that make it impossible to isolate completely the influence of any one of them.
>
> (Arnold & Brown, 1999: 8)

Gardner and McIntyre (1992, 1993) have classified psychological variables contributing to second language learning as either 'cognitive' or 'affective'. The first category is comprised of different aspects of cognition, including intelligence, language aptitude, language learning strategies, previous language training and experience. The second category, affective variables, includes those attributes that involve individuals' reactions to any situation, e.g. attitudes and motivation, language anxiety, feelings of self-confidence about the language, personality attributes, and leaning styles. Furthermore, they argue that factors like age, or sociocultural experiences could have either cognitive or affective implications.

Schumann (1975), for his part, argues that since the biological elements connected with language learning (i.e. maturation and aptitude) are unchangeable, the 'affective argument' better explains the ability of some adult L2 learners to master the target language. In his three part model of SLA, affective factors (which he terms 'initiating factors') are the dominant variables in the process:

> This model assumes that when the initiating factors are operating such that the learner has empathic capacity, motivation and attitudes which are favourable to both the target language community and language learning itself, his cognitive processes will automatically function to produce language acquisition.
>
> (Schumann, 1975: 231)

He attributes differences between children and adults in terms of second language attainment as being the result of the fact that in children these initiation factors are favourably tuned to be receptive to language and therefore the cognitive processes will function to enable language learning. In adults, on the other hand, firm ego boundaries, attitudes and motivation orientations may have developed in these learners, placing constraints on these initiating factors such that they inhibit the cognitive processes from operating on the target language data to which they are exposed. However, since these non-biological factors are not unalterable, they can be reorganized to such an extent that they permit successful language learning (Schumann, 1975: 231-2).

Much theorizing and empirical research has continued to implicate affective variables in successful second language learning (e.g. Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Krashen, 1982; Krashen, 1985; Schumann, 1976a, 1999), and most researchers would agree that affective variables can play an important positive or negative role in various contexts. However, these models are not without their critics. For example, Singleton and Ryan (2004), focussing primarily on the work of Schumann, provide a somewhat sceptical view of the ability of affective variables to account for age related differences in SLA. They are, however, prepared to admit that affective explanations are supported by empirical evidence of the fact that that some adults do learn L2s to nativelike levels (p. 175). Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that positive affect, in conjunction with other variables, is an important feature of successful second language learning. And, in a more recent publication, Singleton himself makes a stronger statement in support of research into the role of affective variables in SLA research:

> [...] if we are to really to make progress in understanding the diversity of attainments evidenced in L2 acquisition we need to get beyond our obsession with the critical period notion and to *take a wide-ranging, fine-grained, qualitative* look at the entire context of *high-attaining and low attaining learners*. [...] Of course maturation has to come into the picture [...] but so do cross-linguistic including psychotypological factors; so does *quantity and quality of input*; so do general cognitive and educational variables; and so [...] does *the affective dimension*.
>
> (Singleton, 2013: 33, emphasis mine)

The three affective variables for special consideration in this study, attitude, motivation and identity, have already been introduced briefly. In the following sections

we will look at each of these in more detail and highlight their treatment in second language learning research, as well as in the psychological literature more generally.

3.2 The construct of attitude

Like many other subjects of interest in the areas of applied linguistics and language studies – some of which are being discussed in this thesis – the concept of attitude has been given multiple definitions with varying emphases to suit different contexts. However, many of the mainstream definitions of the term do well to highlight its central tenets. For example, Sarnoff (1970: 279) defines an attitude as 'a disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects'. While Eagly and Chaiken's (1993: 1) influential definition marks an attitude as 'a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor'. And more recently Maio and Haddock (2010: 4) have defined an attitude as 'an overall evaluation of an object that is based on cognitive, affective and behavioral information'. All three of these definitions express the evaluative nature of an attitude as it pertains to an object. Eagly and Chaiken (2007: 583) argue that '[a]nything that is discriminable or held in mind, sometimes below the level of conscious awareness, can be evaluated and therefore can function as an attitude object'.

In a very recent overview of relevant psychological literature on attitude, Bohner and Dickel (2011) demonstrate that another dimension along which definitions of the construct diverge is their tendency to conceptualize the phenomenon as either stable entities (stored in a person's memory) or temporary constructions (formed in the moment based on available information). However, Krosnick et al. (2005: 46-47) argue that this is hardly of great consequence since in the absence of a pre-existing opinion of the object of interest one will be formed as soon as it is encountered. Although these conventional definitions are a good starting point for telling us what an attitude is, they do little to express the complex nature of attitudes. This complexity, however, has far reaching implications, not least of which is its effect on how we approach and ultimately measure attitudes (Krosnick et al., 2005). The main features that one seeks to capture when measuring attitude is *valance* (i.e. direction – positive, neutral or negative) and *extremity* (i.e. strength) which makes up attitude structure (Fabrigar, MacDonald, & Wegener, 2005; Maio & Haddock, 2010). But even these useful distinctions do not fully capture the multifaceted nature of an attitude and therefore, a number of theories of attitudes have focused on their structure.

One of the most popular conceptualisations of attitude has come to be known as the tripartite theory, to which Maoi and Haddock's above mentioned definition of attitude alludes. This theory holds that attitudes are comprised of *affective*, *cognitive*,

and *behavioural* components. The affective component of an attitude is comprised of feelings or emotions about an object. The cognitive component of an attitude reflects beliefs about an object. And finally, the behavioural component refers to tendencies to behave in some way (i.e. past actions) towards the object. This tripartite model has been the dominant theory of attitude in social psychology since it was first formulated by Rosenberg and Hovland (1960). However, while recognizing the validity of the core tenets of Rosenberg and Hovland's work, later work in this area sought to modify the theory (e.g. Cacioppo, Petty, & Geen, 1989; cf. Fabrigar et al., 2005). These authors advanced a more complex and nuanced conceptualisation of attitude in which an attitude is a distinct entity which functions as a general evaluative summary of affective, cognitive and behavioural information.

3.2.1 Attitudes to language variation by native speakers

William Mackey (1978: 7) famously said, 'only before God and the linguist are all languages equal. Everyone knows that you can go further with some languages than you can with others'. Though this comment was originally made in connection to bilingual education, it has language attitudes at its core. Attitudes to language have been investigated in a wide variety of contexts since the middle of the last century. It would be impossible to provide an overview of all of this research here, and therefore, only the main findings that have emerged over the last 50 years will be presented in this section before we focus on the context of second language learning in the next.

It has been argued (e.g. Giles & Billings, 2004; Giles & Coupland, 1991) that modern language attitudes research began in the 1930s with Pear's (1931) study of listeners' description of personality profiles of BBC radio presenters. The original aim of the study was to determine whether personality traits could be derived from vocal features. However, the fact that the findings of the study suggested that hearing differing varieties of British English caused listeners to change their perception of the speaker meant that these evaluations were connected to their attitudes towards language (Giles & Billings, 2004). Since that time, many language attitudes studies have been conducted by sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists and others.

In terms of methodology, there are three main approaches to language attitudes research. The first of these is the *societal treatment approach* which involves observational or ethnographic studies of groups and their reactions to language. It may also include content analyses of historical writings or documents of public record which trace developments within a society and of aspects of social treatment of language varieties. The second, and perhaps most common of these methods, is the *direct approach*. This approach is characterized by the researcher, by means of his research

instrument, asking direct questions about participants' attitudes towards or preference for a language variety or its speakers. Sociological studies tend to utilize the questionnaire or interview method to elicit data in this way from large populations, yet, as we will see below, this method has also remained very popular in attitudinal studies of second language learning contexts. In addition to these methods, there is also the *indirect approach* which involves 'engaging in more subtle (even deceptive) techniques than directly asking overt questions' (Garrett, 2005: 1252). This approach is discussed in more detail below.

There has also been another approach to language attitudes research which has been devised in recent years, namely *perceptual dialectology*. Originating in folk linguistics, methods of *perceptual dialectology* have sought to redress the fact that respondents in language attitude studies are rarely asked to indicate where they think the speaker is from, and therefore these studies could not determine whether participants had any mental construct of the region where the voice could be from (Preston, 1999). This approach to folk linguistics has included varied operational techniques which include map-drawing, labelling, choosing from predetermined regional options and open-ended questions (see e.g. Garrett, Coupland, & Williams, 2003; Preston, 2011). These techniques have also been incorporated into applied linguistic and second language acquisition research in recent years (e.g. McKenzie, 2010).

Some thirty years after Pear's study, the introduction of a new method of inquiry changed the way language attitudes research would be conducted thereafter. A belief that participants' responses to a direct method questionnaire on language attitudes could not necessarily be trusted as a true reflection of their privately held views provided the impetus for Wallace Lambert and his colleagues to develop a more indirect method of measurement for such studies. Generally seen as the beginning of the 'speech evaluation paradigm' (Giles & Coupland, 1991), Lambert et al. (1960) developed what would become known as the *matched-guise technique*. This method is generally used to measure attitudes to languages or language varieties that a person is familiar with, but does not use. 'Judges' (i.e. participants) listen to pre-recorded passages and are then asked to evaluate various traits of the recorded speakers and/or their speech. The passages are recorded in different geographical or ethnic languages or varieties, and in most cases by the same person (hence the name 'matched guise'), yet, the judges are unaware of this. Their judgements are generally considered to represent stereotyped reactions to the given language varieties, since potentially confounding variables are constant across guises (i.e. speakers). The speech styles used in the samples are thought to act as identifiers which will invoke

social stereotypes. Therefore it is not the speech that is being evaluated, but rather the speaker (Edwards, 1982).

The original study (Lambert et al., 1960) investigated reactions of French Canadians and English Canadians to readings in both languages, and 'it was predicted that the differences in the favorableness of any [subjects] evaluations of the French and English guises of speakers would reflect his attitude toward members of his own and members of the other language group' (p. 44). The study's findings showed that, not only did the English Canadians rate the English guises more favourably over a wide range of traits (Height, Good looks, Intelligence, Dependability, Kindness, Ambition, and Character), the French Canadians rated the English guises more favourably on almost all of the same traits as well; in some cases they rated the English guises more favourable than the English Canadians. A second important result was that the English Canadians rated the French guises more favourably than the French Canadians did, on all traits except kindness and religiousness. The authors interpreted these findings as a minority group reaction on the part of the French Canadians to communitywide stereotypes of English and French speaking Canadians (p. 51). The methodology and the findings in the Lambert et al. study had a profound impact on researchers concerned with language attitudes. Giles and Coupland (1991) have describe the large number of matched-guise studies that followed as an 'empirical avalanche' (p. 37).

Many studies conducted around this time were concerned with the relationship between standard vs. nonstandard language as perceived by speakers of both varieties. Standard varieties of language are generally associated with socioeconomic status, power and the media, and as such are afforded prestige over regional, nonstandard forms (Giles & Coupland, 1991). Two early studies by Giles (1970, 1971) demonstrated this in the finding that speakers of Received Pronunciation (RP – a non regional standard variety of British English) were rated highly in terms of competence. However, the second of these studies (Giles, 1971) found that the regional dialects of Somerset and South Wales were rated favourably in relation to integrity and attractiveness. This line of line of research has produced similar findings in a variety of contexts. Cheyne (1970), for example, found that both Scottish and English judges had a tendency to rate Scottish speakers as lower in status than English speakers, and Tucker and Lambert (1969) found that both northern white and southern African-America judges rated the 'Network speakers' (i.e. standard English) most favourably. However, educated African American Southern speakers were the next favourably rated group.

Another early influential study conducted by Edwards (1977) investigated 178 Dublin-born secondary school children's evaluations of regional varieties of English as spoken by their teachers. The children, who were from different socioeconomic backgrounds, consistently rated the Donegal guise most favourably on traits reflecting competence, while the Dublin guise was rated least favourably. Dublin and Galway guises were, however, rated favourably in relation to social attractiveness. Edwards explained these findings in terms of the socio-political and historical significance of the north, which has resulted in 'an ambitious and business-like demeanour [being] associated with northern people' (Edwards, 1977: 284). Edwards later commented that because of stereotypes held in some segments of Irish society, the Donegal guise, despite it lacking the same status as RP, was functioning as the received variety in this context (Edwards, 1982). Further studies in educational settings have shown the importance of evaluations by both student and teacher in such contexts. Edwards (1979) demonstrated that the speech of children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds was less favourably rated by a group of student teachers on every dimension presented.

In a later study, Edwards and Jacobsen (1987) investigated evaluations of three regional varieties of Canadian English (mainland Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Island, Newfoundland) and one U.S. variety (Massachusetts). The authors reported that the Nova Scotia mainland speakers were rated favourably on dimensions relating to competence, however, there were no important differences detected between the four varieties on the dimensions of integrity and attractiveness. The conclusion drawn was that the Nova Scotia mainland variety was viewed as a regional standard, and therefore affording it prestige in relation to competence, but due to its local character was not rated unfavourably on the other two dimensions. This finding would appear to be in keeping with Edwards's 1977 finding in relation to varieties of Irish English, in so far as when there is no clear prestige variety presented, a regional standard or a variety that has at least some of the qualities of a prestige variety will be favoured on the competence dimension. Further evidence of this type has been recorded in other contexts where both a standard prestige form and a regional prestige form exist (e.g. Abd-El-Jawad, 1987).

Although research on attitudes to language is not as popular as it once was, studies which seeks to build on the traditional models and aims in this area are still being conducted. In a recent study (Grondelaers, van Hout, & Steegs, 2010), some conclusions of Edwards and others have been challenged. Here, Dutch speakers from different age groups, demographic and educational backgrounds were asked to evaluate four regional varieties of Dutch. The samples were all considered by the

researchers to approximate the standard, while still containing 'traces of a regional accent that can be determined in exclusively phonetic terms' (p. 104). The study's results showed, firstly, that native speakers of Netherlandic Dutch were able to identify three out of the four accents consistently, and secondly, that these accents have social meaning for listeners, since the attitude profiles limited by the dimensions of speaker status, speaker integrity, accent norm, and accent euphony were stable. These authors conclude that their findings strongly indicate that attitudinal description 'has to go beyond a purely social interpretation of Status and Attractiveness in order to recognize the linguistic ramifications of these dimensions' (p. 111). One way in which attitudinal studies might meet these criteria can be found in recent attitudinal research in the field of second language acquisition.

3.2.2 The role of attitudes towards speech varieties in second language learning

It is widely recognised that most language attitudes research has been focused on evaluations of listeners' first language, and as a result, there have been far fewer studies that have considered non-native speakers' evaluations of language varieties (e.g. McKenzie, 2010; Preston, 1989; Strother, 2004). In keeping with this tradition, a great deal of research has been done by applied linguists and SLA specialists, using a wide range of methodologies and instruments, to measure native speakers' evaluations of L2 speakers' errors (for an overview, see Eisenstein, 1983). In general, however, there has much more research into the role of attitudes (in relation to motivation) in the process of second language acquisition (for overviews, see Dörnyei, 2003; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972), than the attitudes of native speakers to learner varieties. This research, nonetheless, has tended to focus on global attitudes towards the target language (and its speakers) and rarely considers the question of target varieties.

The importance of attitude in language learning contexts has been noted by many. Much of the research concerned with identifying and describing the role of attitude in this connection, has attempted to explain the effects of attitudes on second language achievement, or conversely, the effects of second language acquisition on attitudes, with the former being the most common (Gardner, 1982). As mentioned, not many studies have focused on learners' attitudes towards specific varieties of the target language or the acquisition of native speaker norms. Most studies that have been done in this area have as their point of departure the idea that learners' attitudes towards different varieties are rooted in their desire to model their own language on a particular variety; nevertheless, it must be reiterated that this is not a common theme in second language research. There would appear to be an underlying assumption in the

field that L2 learners are aiming for the standard form of the target language (Ellis, 2008: 287). Learners may in fact aim for a standard variety, but when this is the case, it is unlikely that they have decided to do so in order to acquire a prestige form of the language; it may be that the standard form is the only one made available to them via the textbook or the teacher. Furthermore, language teachers may promote one variety over another – in many cases the standard variety – but this is most likely an attempt (conscious or unconscious) at prescriptivism and not because they believe one variety to be more useful than another, especially since learners are unlikely to encounter speakers of a standard form in most communicative contexts. Either way, learners in many cases seek to acquire a variety which resonates with their own preferences, and this may be the standard or some other variety of the target language (Beebe, 1985).

McKenzie argues that in the context of English language learning, where there have been some inquires into the attitudes of non-native speakers towards the language, there has been a tendency to conceptualize the language as a singular entity, i.e. attitudes towards English, without considering what role regional varieties might play in acquisition, and therefore the evaluation process (McKenzie, 2010: 58). Though this criticism would appear to be true in general, there have been some notable exceptions. Alford and Strother (1990), for example, employed the verbal guise technique, i.e. a variant on the matched guise technique where all recorded speech samples are provided by different speakers, to investigate the attitudes of 31 native and 66 non-native speaker university students towards three regional varieties of U.S. English. The study produced two main findings; first, they found that L1 and L2 subjects were able to perceive differences among the regional varieties, and second, that the perceptions of the two groups were different. They concluded that L1 perceptions of regional varieties come as a result of cultural stereotypes, yet the L2 perceptions were based solely on pronunciation and appeared to be free from native speakers' regional cultural biases.

In terms of learners' preference for a particular variety, a well know study by Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck, and Smit (1997) surveyed the attitudes of 132 university students of English in Vienna towards five varieties of English: three native accents, RP, near-RP and General American (GA), as well as two Austrian non-native accents of English: Austrian American and Austrian British. The respondents rated the three native accents highest on all dimensions, with RP receiving the most favourable rating. The two non-native guises were rated least favourably on all dimensions. Furthermore, the majority of the subjects supported RP as their favourite model of pronunciation which the researchers attribute to the respondents familiarity with the variety and the fact that it is the most commonly taught variety in Austrian EFL courses. There was

also a high (at least 85%) success rate in identifying the origin of each of the speakers presented. Ladegaard and Sachdev (2006) obtained similar findings among 96 Danish EFL learners. After surveying their attitudes towards British and American English, their subjects rated RP the most favourable on all dimensions relating to status and competence. Standard American English (SA) was rated second to RP on three out of five status and competence dimensions. In general, although the SA speaker was generally perceived as having greater personal integrity and social attractiveness, the RP speaker was clearly rated to be the most attractive model for the participants' pronunciation. Interestingly, the pronunciation of a subsample of learners was also tested and it was found that the majority of students read with a predominantly British accent, and that 100% of those who reported that they were aiming for a British accent had achieved this. Conversely, over 90% of those who indicated that they were aiming for an American accent in fact spoken with a British accent.

It has been shown as well that learners' level of proficiency may have an effect on their ability to distinguish between varieties of the target language and the extent to which their attitudes match those of native speakers. Although learners are usually able to make distinctions between varieties early on, more advanced learners are closer to their L1 counterparts (Eisenstein, 1982). Furthermore, although extended contact with speakers of a particular target variety is necessary for acquisition of features of that variety, this is not enough to guarantee such an outcome. This lead to the conclusion that affective factors, including identification, play a role in language acquisition and use, as well as the acquisition of dialect variants of the target language (Goldstein, 1987).

In summary, it must be said that the relatively small number of studies which have addressed the issue of model preference in L2 learners leaves us with very few clear conclusions. Nevertheless, we can see that many learners, particularly those at advanced levels, are able to identify regional and social varieties of the target language, and they often express differing evaluations of those varieties. Furthermore, in some contexts, learners demonstrate a clear preference for one variety over another on which they wish to model their own language. Though we know that they exist, the rationale for such preferences is not entirely clear. They may be the result of a desire to adhere to the norms of a particular group or they may come as a result of exposure to a particular variety in students' coursework or in the media. It is also possible that a preference may grow out of affection for the variety itself or the cultural artefacts associated with it.

3.3 Motivation in second language learning

Language learner motivation has been a topic of interest for second language researchers for quite some time, however, research in this area has not always been fully integrated into the wider second language acquisition literature leaving the field somewhat isolated (Ushioda, 2010). Nonetheless, since the pioneering work of Lambert, Gardner and their colleagues (e.g. Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972; Lambert, 1967) the field has flourished and many models and methods of inquiry have been developed for use by researchers. The emphases in these various models have changed considerably as well. While the so called social psychological approach was concerned with assessing the motivational patterns of whole language learning communities, later models aimed to explain motivational factors as they exist in actual language classrooms. The most recent discussions of L2 motivation, however, have been focused on illuminating the relationships that exist between macro factors, e.g. social milieu, classroom setting and characteristics of the individual learner. Each of these traditions is discussed in more detail below.

3.3.1 The social psychological approach

It is safe to say that the socioeducational model of second language acquisition (Gardner, 1985), which grew out of the early work of Gardner and Lambert, has been the dominant theoretical framework for L2 motivation research until recent times. The crux of this model is an *integrative motive*, which he defines as a 'motivation to learn a second language because of positive feelings towards the community that speaks that language' (Gardner, 1985: 82-83). The *integrative motive* is comprised of three factors; integrativeness (i.e. interest in foreign languages and attitudes towards the L2 community), attitude towards the learning situation and motivation. It is clear that the sociopsychological construct of attitude plays an important role in operationalizing motivation in this model. The model in many ways originates from the observation that classroom language learning differs from the learning of other subjects. 'In the acquisition of a second language, the student is faced with the task of not simply learning new information [...] which is part of his *own* culture but rather of *acquiring* symbolic elements of a *different* ethnolinguistic community' (Gardner, 1979: 193, italics in original). Based on this observation, Gardner predicted that 'the relative degree of success will be influenced to some extent by the individual's attitudes towards the other community or other communities in general as well as by the beliefs in the community which are relevant to the language learning process' (Gardner, 1985: 146). This line of research resulted in the now famous dichotomy of *integrative* (i.e. a desire to integrate with or become similar to the target community) and *instrumental* (i.e. a

practical/utilitarian interest in the language) orientations in language learners. It should be noted though that, despite their common use in this way, these orientations are not motivation in themselves, but rather they give rise to motivation and direct it towards a particular goal (Gardner & Tremblay, 1994).

Much of the early work carried out by Gardner and his colleagues in the Canadian context suggested that L2 achievement was most strongly correlated with an integrative motivation (e.g. Gardner & Lambert, 1972), however, research in a wider variety of learning contexts has in some cases provided contradictory results (cf. Ellis, 2004). Instrumental orientation, which was initially considered an external factor as it did not feature in Gardner's Integrative motive model (Gardner, 1985), has been shown to play an important role in some learning contexts, e.g. where direct contact with the target language community is not an immediate goal (cf. Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2006).

Empirical research attempting to test the socioeducational model has gone some way to verify Gardner's claims by showing correlations between achievement in language learning and positive attitudes towards various social objects and the learner's overall orientation in second language study (Gardner, 1979). The model has been modified numerous times over the years (see e.g. Gardner, 1985; Gardner, 2001; Gardner, 2010), yet as Dörnyei (2005: 71) points out, by 1979 the model 'already contained all the major elements' and consequently has not developed much since that time.

3.3.2 The process-oriented approach

The above mentioned lack of development in the social psychological tradition meant that Gardner's model began to fall out of favour with some researchers, especially those who felt that L2 motivation research should be brought into line with motivation research in cognitive and educational psychology (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Ushioda, 1994). Subsequently, a number of models were developed which attempted to incorporate findings from mainstream motivational psychology and classroom situated research (for a review of these, see Dörnyei, 2005: 74 ff). The period is generally referred to as the 'cognitive-situated period'.

It was during this phase of research that Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) developed a process-oriented model of L2 motivation aimed at accounting for the temporal variation of motivation in L2 learners. With the impetus of addressing deficiencies found in existing models of L2 motivation (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998: pp. 43-44), the authors devised a three phase model of L2 motivation which 'organises the motivational influences of L2 learning along a sequence of discrete actional events within the chain

of initiating and enacting motivated behaviour' (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011: 65). The first of the model's two main dimensions, the *Action Sequence* encompasses three stages; *the preactional phase, the actional phase* and *the postactional phase*. The preactional phase, where motivation is generated, involves the setting of goals, the forming of intentions and launching action. The actional phase, in which generated motivation is sustained, entails generating and implementing subtasks, a complex appraisal of one's achievement, and the application of action control mechanisms. The final phase, the postactional phase, involves learners' reflections on the learning experience and the forming of causal attributions, elaborate internal standards and strategies as well as a plan for further action. The model's second dimension, *Motivational Influences*, encompasses all the various motives having direct influence on the learner's actions, including cognitive, affective, and situational factors.

An important foundation of this model is the distinction between *choice motivation* and *executive motivation* (Heckhausen, 1991, cited in Dörnyei and Ottó 1998). The former refers to the driving force behind an initial decision to pursue a goal, while the latter is the action taken to realize the goal. It is argued that motivation research has tended to focus on the identifying motivational 'choices', while largely ignoring the type of motivational behaviour implemented in order to achieve goals. A number of empirical studies have been conducted to address this gap in the L2 motivational literature. The work of Ushioda (e.g. 1994; 1996, 2009) has been largely concerned with the temporal aspects of learners' motivation. By using qualitative methods to illuminate potential changes in learners' motivation over time, she found that most learners' motivation was sustained by positive learning experiences, rather than future goals. In one study (Ushioda, 1998, cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) the motivation of 20 university level learners of French in Ireland was traced over a 16 month period. She was able to identify their reasons for embarking on the language learning process, as well as the factors which impacted their motivation over time. While all the learners remained motivated to lesser or greater degrees for the duration of the study, it was found that successful learners attributed their positive L2 outcomes to their own personal ability as language learners, and it was this that sustained their positive orientation towards the learning process over time. Conversely, the less successful learners' motivation was maintained by more instrumental future objectives, e.g. travel and working abroad.

Shoaib and Dörnyei (2005) also studied the dynamic nature of L2 motivation over time by eliciting retrospective data via autobiographical interviews with 25 adult learners of English. The main finding of this study was that there were 'patterns of motivational change that seemed to be present across varied learning situations' (p.

31). They identified a total of six '*motivational transformation episodes*' (p. 31, italics in original) among the participants: Maturation and gradually increasing interest, stand-still period, moving into a new life phase, internalizing external goals and 'imported visions', relationship with a 'significant other' and time spent in the host environment. These 'episodes' served to explain the ebbs and flows of motivation to learn the language over a span of many years.

The picture that emerges from these and other process-oriented studies is that not only are motivational levels subject to change over time, but the role of individual motivators may vary throughout the language learning process with new factors entering the mix and others leaving at various points. The ability of learners to self-regulate these factors would appear to be key part of maintaining the high levels of motivation crucial to achieve even the most moderate of L2 goals (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

For the reasons mentioned in this section, it is now generally accepted among researchers that, despite many sound logistical reasons for doing so, measuring motivation at any given time is likely to only reveal part of the collage which makes up learners' impetus for engaging in the learning process (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998; Ryan & Dörnyei, 2013; Ushioda, 1996, 2009; Williams & Burden, 1997). Nevertheless, it could be said of the process-oriented approach described above that it was relatively short lived as a separate research paradigm. It was quickly absorbed into what are now the most current approaches to L2 motivation which attempt to account for the myriad of social, personal and contextual factors, as well as the temporal aspects of the phenomenon during the L2 learning process (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

3.3.3 The socio-dynamic approach

As we have seen, approaches to researching the phenomenon of motivation have changed radically over the last 50 years. The biggest change in recent times has been the shift away from attempts to find linear cause-effects relationships between variables connected with motivations in favour of accounts that seek to uncover the interaction of such variables and the ways in which such relationships may change in specific language learning contexts (cf. Dörnyei, 2009b; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008; Ushioda, 2009). Among the main factors contributing to this change in focus have been both the growth of English as a global language and the increased use of some minority languages in local and global contexts (Aronin & Singleton, 2008). Research in multilingual contexts has taught us that languages are no longer associated with their traditional functions as foreign or

local languages, and, therefore, researchers must not rely on traditional views of motivations for learning particular additional languages.

The most coherent model of L2 motivation to emerge in this latest period of research is Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009a). This model, like many of those which came in the interim, grew out of concerns about the theoretical content of the socioeducational model of SLA. But, also like the others, it is not a complete departure from Gardner's model either. The problem, as it were, lay in Gardner's integrative and instrumental labels, as they have been shown to be problematic in many language learning contexts (e.g. Coetzee-van Rooy, 2006), at least when they are seen as separate or opposing entities. Csizér and Dörnyei (2005), for example, showed through structural equation modelling that, although integrativeness was the most important factor in L2 motivation, the role of other motivational variables was mediated through the link between integrativeness and the criterion measures of L2 choice and intended effort (p. 30). They conclude that 'not only can instrumentality complement integrativeness, but it can also feed into it as a primary contributor' (p. 27). Furthermore, it would seem obvious that in some learning contexts learners do not have direct access to the target language community and therefore, as observed by Dörnyei (2009a: 24) '[t]his lack of a specific target L2 community, in turn, undermines Gardner's theoretical concept of integrativeness'. In an attempt to redefine and restructure (and relabel) the variables that make up the L2 motivation concept, Dörnyei's model incorporates theories of self in psychology research (e.g. Markus & Nurius, 1986) alongside the notions of integrativess and instrumentality. It is argued that the notion of possible selves, which involves imagery and sensorial capabilities, serves as a future guide when a person is engaged in goal-directed behaviour, allowing him to become what it is he wants to be, and avoid what he does not. Pavlenko, who has been very critical of the shortcomings of the traditional affective approaches in SLA (i.e. attitudes and motivation), has welcomed this new brand of L2 motivation research and its attempts to take the field beyond the 'affective factors' paradigm (Pavlenko, 2013).

The L2 Motivational Self System is comprised of three components: (1) *Ideal L2 Self* – the L2-specific component of one's 'ideal self'; (2) *Ought-to L2 Self* – attributes that a person believes he/she ought to possess in order to meet expectations and evade potential negative outcomes; (3) *L2 learning Experience* – the situated or executive motives connected to the immediate learning environment (e.g. the teacher, the curriculum) and experience (e.g. peer groups, successes). In the context of this study, Dörnyei's recent model would appear to have greater potential explanatory power for a number of reasons. First, in this model the traditional notion of

integrativeness has been relabelled and equated with the *Ideal L2 Self*, and thereby explaining not only the more personal, self-related motivations for learning a language that may not be directly connected to a desire to integrate into the target community, but it also appears to explain contexts where attitudes towards the L2 community and instrumentality are mediated through integrativeness (Dörnyei, 2009a: 26-28). Second, the trend in L2 motivation research has been one of building on previous models, and the L2 Motivational Self System is no exception. It has been stated clearly that that the model 'synthesizes a number of influential approaches to motivation and at the same time broadens the scope of L2 motivation theory to make it applicable in diverse language learning environments in the current, increasingly globalized world' (Dörnyei, 2009b: 212). It has been argued, for example, that this model appears to work well in the context of minority language learning where learners may have more cultural or identity-based motivations to learn a language (Flynn, 2012).

In terms of empirical research, this model has already been applied to many of the diverse language learning environments it aims to cover. For example, Csizér and Kormos (2009) investigated the role of the ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self as well as L2 learning experience in secondary and third level learners of English based in Hungary. They found for both groups that learners' ideal L2 self and the L2 learning experience contributed significantly to learners' motivated behaviour. They also found, however, that the ought-to L2 self had limited power in predicting students' invested effort in learning the language. They interpret these findings first, by comparing Dörnyei's ideal L2 self concept to the notions of intrinsic interest and strong self concept which have been shown in educational psychology research to have greater power than extrinsic motivations in predicting students' effort and in relation to goal achievement. Second, they argue that 'in the Hungarian setting the students' views about the global significance of English do not act as an extrinsic motivating factor, but are internalised motives that are very strongly related to the students' L2 self-concept' (p. 107). For these learners, then, a 'knowledge orientation' contributes to positive attitudes to the use of English as an international language, since 'English serves as an important tool for gaining knowledge about the world around them via the information channels provided by globalised mass media such as the Internet' (p. 107).

In a large qualitative study, L. Murphy (2011) explored how motivation was maintained over time by beginner learners of French, German and Spanish in distance courses. Retrospective verbal reports provided evidence that participants' ideal L2 self helped maintain motivation throughout the duration of the course, however, their additional (learner) identities, e.g. mother, child of aged parents, worker, conscientious learner, etc., were also important to their motivation. In other words, 'participants'

vision of themselves was a significant factor in sustaining motivation, whether or not this vision had a language learning focus' (p. 122).

3.3.4 Studies of L2 motivation in adult learners of Irish

There have been relatively few investigations of motivation among adult learners of Irish. There have been, however, a few intermittent studies which have highlighted motivational aspects of adult learners' experience. These studies vary greatly in their aims and learning contexts, yet they demonstrate that there is a small existing body of research which has revealed the presence of different affective and cultural motivations among this population of learners.

Wright and McGrory (2005) conducted one of the few studies to look specifically at motivation among adult learners of Irish. They investigated levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among 104 adult learners of Irish in Belfast and found that over half (58%) of the sample were intrinsically motivated, acknowledging the pleasurable aspects of the learning process. Other important motivators for these learners were social contact, family connections and friends (45-46%). Furthermore, participants demonstrated motivations connected with the learners' desire to reaffirm their sense of identity and culture. These authors claim that the evidence also suggests an integrative orientation among the learners since they can use the language when visiting the Gaeltacht, among Irish-speaking circles and avail of Irish language services on radio and television or in the local cultural centre. While this may in fact be true, their study did not investigate to extent to which learners do any of these things and the responses to items which present these scenarios hypothetically show that less than half of the sample responded in even a moderately positive way.

A study carried out by Nic Craith & Leyland (1997) in North West England examined the presence of the Irish language in the region and offered a profile of adult learners of Irish attending evening classes. In relation to learner motivation, the study found that reasons related to culture, heritage and ancestry were used by survey respondents to describe their motivation to learn Irish. Learners in this study also mentioned reasons connected to their sense of identity. In terms of language use, most learners wished to have more opportunities to speak the language. This may indicate that they do not have many opportunities at present, yet this is not reported.

Arthur and Beaton (2000) investigated the motivation, attitude and learning needs of adult foreign language learners at Goldsmiths College in London. Although the study was not restricted only to learners of Irish, Irish was among the 10 languages taught at the college when the study was carried out. The researchers found that factors such as positive learning experiences at school, childhood exposure to a

second/foreign language, friend or family connections to the language and travel to a region where the target language is spoken, were among the motivating factors identified by the learners. Although individual motivating factors cannot be directly linked to the learners of Irish, the study shows that there were both positive attitudes towards the target language community and utilitarian reasons contributing to the learners' motivations.

Two additional studies were conducted in the Republic of Ireland. The first of these (Devitt et al., 1983) surveyed the attitudes, expectations and learning experiences of a 171 adult learners (in Ireland) following the multimedia course *Anois agus Arís*. Although the majority of the participants were born in Ireland, other nationalities were represented in the study as well. The study found that the most prominent reasons for doing the course were desire to be able to speak the language (25%), sense of patriotism (23%), to help children with studies (22%) and interest in the language itself (16%). A sizeable minority also express a desire to 'remedy a sense of inadequacy' (13%). It is also important to note that very small percentages specifically mentioned reasons connected with developing other communicative-integrative skills in the language, e.g. reading (5%), accessing TV/radio programmes (5%) and improving comprehension (3%). It is possible that learners who were seeking to improve their spoken Irish felt that this terminology subsumed the other skills. It is also possible, however, that having the ability to speak Irish was sufficient for these learners without actually engaging in integrative type behaviour. This is all the more plausible when we consider that only 3% of the learners mentioned wanting to have more contact with the Gaeltacht.

Flynn (2009) surveyed motivations for learning Irish among a small, yet diverse group of beginning learners. He found that the 12 learners interviewed demonstrated multiple motivation types, often at the same time. The different motivational categories were labelled *cultural and linguistic*, *integrative*, *instrumental*, *culture-heritage related*, *goal-oriented* and *significant other-related*. He also found that most participants expressed a desire to acquire a spoken proficiency in Irish, but that four of them had very modest goals in this connection and only wished to attain a basic level of competency.

In sum, these studies reveal strong associations between Irish language learning and cultural, patriotic and identity related factors among adults. However, while these studies consider learner motivation to greater or lesser degrees, none of them have implemented methodologies associated with measuring the construct, e.g. attitude/motivation scales. Furthermore, since some of these studies were conducted with learners outside the Republic of Ireland there are limits on the extent to which their

findings can explain the motivational patterns of adult learners in the Republic. For one thing, most non-Irish born learners, in particular those who are learning outside the country, will not have had the same educational and social experiences regarding the target language. These findings also raise questions regarding learners' desire to actively participate in the target language community.

3.3.5 L2 motivation and target language varieties

The role of motivation in selecting and achieving a L2 target speech model would appear to be obvious, yet very little research has explicitly investigated connections between the two. If language learners set for themselves clear targets in terms of a target language model, we would expect them to be highly motivated to work towards that goal. A possible explanation for the lack of research in this area is the researchers, and perhaps their L2 subjects, view the language learning process as subsuming individual target speech goals. Therefore, L2 motivation would include motivation to learn a particular variety of the target language. However, the virtual absence of commentary on target language varieties, speech models and L2 subgroup identification, seems to point to the fact that mainstream motivation research is more concerned with global issues such as the suitability of explanatory models in particular contexts. This is surprising, however, given the debate over whether native or non-native varieties of English should be taught in international contexts. However, some commentary has recently appeared on the issue. Ushioda (2013) argues that teaching varieties of the English which emphasize mutual intelligibility over the approximation of native speaker norms, e.g. the Lingua Franca Core (Jenkins, 2002), may have a negative impact on the L2 motivation:

> Such a language curriculum policy would clearly have significant motivational repercussions for learners who, for whatever reason, may aspire to native speaker English models and standards and feel frustrated by the models and targets presented to them in the classroom.
>
> (Ushioda, 2013: 12).

This recognition of the importance of such issues for L2 motivation research is important, and it should not be restricted to the English learning context alone. As we saw in Chapter 1, languages like Irish, which similarly to English have a small number of L1 speakers compared to the number of L2 speakers and learners, and which made up of multiple regional varieties, cannot ignore this issue either.

In research outside the field of L2 motivation, one finds some discussion of the issue of native and non-native models in connection with language learning goals. Piller (2002), for example, in her discussion of highly successful L2 learners who 'pass'

for native speakers in some contexts addressed the methodological issue in ultimate attainment whereby researchers often seek out expert L2 users who can pass for native speakers in standard varieties of the L2. The issue here, she claims is that the learners may actively choose to model their speech on non-standard varieties (both native and non-native) of the target language, and therefore, they may be overlooked.

McKenzie (2010), in a large scale study of attitudes towards varieties of English among L2 learners in Japan, found that both standard and non-standard varieties of UK and US English were positively evaluated in terms of competence and social attractiveness. He concluded that recruiting teachers of English who speak non-standard native varieties of English 'would not significantly reduce their motivation for learning the language' (McKenzie, 2010: 149).

In sum, the issue of L2 learners' orientation towards differing target language varieties has been largely ignored in most L2 motivation research. However, the examples cited here demonstrate the theoretical relevance of this issue for motivation research. If learners orientate themselves (or become orientate by an external force) towards a particular variety of the L2 they are learning, then their motivation to learn this, as opposed to other varieties, should be investigated in order to explore the possibility of a relationship with other variables, e.g. input, contact with language variety subgroups, and social, political or cultural factors.

3.4 Identity in second language learning

Scholars from various disciplines have studied the concept of identity for hundreds of years (Baumeister, 1987), but it is obviously not a straightforward concept for which a clear definition can be provided unless we narrow the discussion to a certain context (Fishman, 2010). Edwards (2009: 2) states that 'identity is at the heart of the person, and the group, and the connective tissue that links them', and in doing so, highlights the multifaceted nature of identity. The word identity, however, has powerful connotations. There are inherent difficulties in defining identity and these difficulties are often compounded by the differing views held by ingroup and outgroup members, those who wish to become members of a community, and insiders and outsiders who wish to define the phenomenon on their behalf or on behalf of others (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Edwards (2009) captures this nicely when he says about identity:

> A word to conjure with, to be sure, and one whose use often implies an alliance with the angels; in an age when politically correct impulses coincide with claims for group 'recognition' and for the pre-eminent importance of 'self-esteem', sins against 'identity' are of the mortal variety.
>
> (Edwards, 2009: 16)

Though there are numerous perspectives from which identity can be viewed, the term is used here as a synonym for self-identity (Giddens, 1991). This conceptualisation affords the individual the power to construct and reconstruct his self image by reflecting on life experiences. One such type of life experience might be language learning, and this would seem especially relevant to adult language learners, whether they continue to learn a second language encountered early in life or start on a new language as an adult.

In contexts where it is necessary to make a finer distinction, it has been argued that identity and self should be distinguished from one another, since 'identities are the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is, [and] together, identities make up one's self-concept' (Oyserman, Elmore, & Smith, 2012: 69). A person's self concept can also be divided into multiple entities, i.e. 'multiple selves', such as the person we think we are now, the person we would like to be in the future and the person who others think we should be (Markus & Nurius, 1986). As discussed above, L2 motivation research has recently begun to draw on findings from self research and Dörnyei's L2 motivational Self System draws specifically on the notion of possible selves.

In philosophy, a key element of discussions of the self revolves around the distinction between the active and passive form of the self. According to Seigel (2005: 15), the latter is derived from the work of David Hume, who argued that passivity was a feature of most or all mental states. He claimed that the self was based on the feelings, impressions, or ideas that occupied one at particular moments, so that the self was an empty vessel which was filled with different experiences at different times. The former was born out of Immanuel Kant's rejection of this account. He argued that experience in and of itself begins with sense impressions, and requires an active subject. On this view, feeling and impressions must belong to a subject who possesses them. Without this, they cannot be considered experience since they would remain raw sense data with nothing to connect them (Seigel, 2005).

Another underlying issue in discussions of self and identity is change. How is one's self concept or group identity altered as one gains more and varied experience of the world? Further, this accumulation of experience generally coincides with a person's physical and mental growth. Erik Erikson's (1959 [1980]) account of identity, which he defines as 'a conscious sense of individual identity [...] an unconscious striving for a continuity of personal character [...] a criterion for the silent doings of ego synthesis [...] a maintenance of an inner solidarity with a group's ideals and identity' (Erikson, 1959 [1980]: 109), outlines psychosocial developmental stages which begin in infancy and

carry on at least until early adulthood. On this account, a person revaluates his or her self concept at various stages of life, each time redefining the self in relation to personal and social experience.

To return now to language and language learning, the issue of 'identity' has been at the core of sociolinguistic, social psychological and applied linguistic work for some time. However, as mentioned above, the term itself is used in various ways in relevant literatures. The focus in the following sections will be on language speakers' and language learners' personal identity, i.e. self concept.

3.4.1 Early approaches to identity in second language research

Early work on the role of identity in second language learning drew heavily on the psychoanalytic tradition (see e.g. Block, 2009; Singleton & Ryan, 2004). The Freudian notions of 'super-ego' and 'libidinal relations' were viewed by some researchers as explaining the difficulty adult L2 learners have identifying with the target language community and their language. As a result, they experience great difficulty in acquiring the latter. Singleton and Ryan (2004: 165ff.) cite the work of the Freudian psychologist Erwin Stengel (1939) who believed that the process of identification, defined as the desire to be like others plays a crucial role in child language learning since it forms the basis of the super-ego (i.e. rules for good and bad behaviour). According to this account, the super-ego monitors language use. A strict super-ego may inhibit the adult by creating 'doubts whether some chosen word really reflects the idea of the object' and thus having 'a retarding effect on the development of speech' (Stengel, 1939: 473, cited in Singleton & Ryan, 2004: 166). The child, however, whose super-ego has not fully developed, makes use of his/her available language for communication and in doing so is unconcerned with the possibility of forming words or expressions incorrectly. Another element of the adult learner's psyche implicit in second language learning is narcissism. A highly narcissistic personality type will lead adult learners to think that their own language (L1) is more universal, important, richer and truer than the L2, while at the same time, the adult will feel shame when using the new language as they are reminded of an infantile stage of personal development (Singleton & Ryan, 2004: 167).

The psychoanalytic account of second language acquisition and use discussed in the last paragraph emphasizes the negative effect the fully developed psyche of a normal adult can have on learning an additional language. There has been some work in this tradition, however, that highlights possible benefits for the learner's psyche of having an additional language available. Pavlenko (2013) cites work by European psychoanalysts (e.g. Buxbaum, 1949) who relocated to North and South America after

the Second World War. They found that some patients' opted to use a shared L2 during therapy sessions as served the dual purpose of allowing them to talk more easily about taboo subjects, e.g. sex or childhood traumas, and at the same time suppressing some events which would be triggered by using their L1.

Some years later, Guiora (1972) introduced the notion of a 'language ego', a maturational concept which he sees as analogous to Freud's 'body ego':

> Body ego thus, refers to a self-representation with physical outlines and firm boundaries. Permeability in these boundaries (as in the case of the gifted pilot or race-car driver) is individually determined and will depend on crucial events in early life.
>
> Language, too, will have, similar to the body ego, its physical outlines and firm boundaries. Grammar and syntax are the solid structures on which speech hangs, lexis the flesh that gives it body, and pronunciation its very core. Pronunciation is the most salient aspect of the language ego, the hardest to penetrate (to acquire in a new language), the most difficult to lose (in one's own).
>
> (Guiora, 1972: 144-145)

The essence of his theory is that pronunciation is at the very core of the language ego since, contrary to vocabulary, syntax, and grammar, pronunciation seems to be immune to loss even if one suffers impairment or dysfunction. He argues, 'however distorted his speech may become, a native speaker will never be mistaken for a foreigner' (Guiora, 1972: 145). While this last statement is unlikely to be true in light of both neuroscience research (i.e. foreign accent syndrome) and second language acquisition research which has shown that native speakers can be mistaken for non-native speakers in some contexts, his general position is in keeping with evidence which shows that pronunciation is the last frontier for advanced L2 speakers before reaching nativelikeness. Further, the idea that pronunciation is important for self-representation is in line with more recent approaches to L2 identities discussed below.

The issue of identity in second language learning has also been approached from social psychological perspectives as well. In a series of influential articles, Schumann (e.g. 1975; 1976a, 1976b) reintroduced the notion of ego-permeability, alongside other social and psychological mediating factors, and posited their importance in processes of adult second language acquisition. In the context of this work he developed the concepts of *social* and *psychological distance* as part of the pidginization hypothesis. The hypothesis, which applies primarily to immigrant groups, states that 'the speech of the second language learner will be restricted to the communicative function if the learner is socially and/or psychologically distant from

speakers of the target language' (Schumann, 1976a: 396). The socially distant learner is one who is in a subordinate position in the host society, feels forced to assimilate and is enclosed in his the immigrant community (e.g. separate churches, schools, clubs, etc.). The psychologically distant learner suffers from such issues as language shock, culture shock and has low levels of integrative motivation and ego-permeability. Less socially/psychologically distant learners, belong to a political, cultural or economic group which is equal (or superior) to that of target language group. They experience a process of acculturation (i.e. adapt to the lifestyle and values of the target language group without losing their own culture or ingroup relations), intend to stay in the target language area for a greater length of time and generally have a positive attitude towards the target language community and value its culture. In these terms, then, the successful language learner is one who is willing to incorporate aspects of the target language culture into his/her personal identity. In this connection, the crux of Schumann's argument is that, while the work of Guoira and his colleagues suggests that older learners' maturationally firm ego boundaries may prevent successful L2 learning (or at least acquisition of nativelike pronunciation), 'successful adult second language acquisition might be explained by the fact that under certain conditions adults can overcome the social and psychological barriers to their learning' (Schumann, 1975: 230). And, overcoming relevant internal and external factors 'might foster ego permeability such that the learner is able to partially or temporarily give up his separateness of identity from the speakers of the target language (Guiora et al.) and to incorporate a new identity so essential to bilingualism' (Schumann, 1975: 230-231).

Related to Schumann's idea of partial identity shift in L2 learning is the useful distinction between additive and subtractive bilingualism, first formulated by Lambert (1974). Like Schumann's social and psychological closeness/distance, Lambert's additive and subtractive bilingualisms relate to positive and negative language learning contexts respectively. An additive context would allow for the learning of an additional language without any pressure, social or psychological, to give up their ethnic language and/or culture. Conversely, subtractive bilingualism results from social and educational policies or pressures which force minority group members to give up their ethnic language in favour of a national language. This, he argues, may result in a loss of the minority group member's ethnic or personal identity. He maintains, however, that a loss of identity may also result from successful acquisition of an additional language. He cites data from previous studies in which it was found that highly motivated learners who successfully learned the target language experienced a conflict of identity or alienation once the learner became skilled enough to be an accepted member of a new cultural group.

L2 motivation research has also focused a great deal on links between identity and motivation. Until recently, however, much of this work has focused on intergroup relations and the willingness of these groups to learn the language of the other (Clément, 1980; Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972; Giles & Byrne, 1982; Taylor, Meynard, & Rheault, 1977). Identity in this context was generally used to signal ethnic group membership. More recently, however, as was discussed in Section 3.3.3, learner identity has been re-conceptualized in relation to the individual's self concept and how it might relate to the language being learned (Dörnyei, 2009a). Indeed, the self-concept construct has also featured recently in a number of related areas of the SLA literature (see below).

3.4.2 Recent approaches to second language learner identities

Language learner identity has again become a topic of recent interest for SLA researchers. As discussed above, L2 motivational research has of late explicitly incorporated issues of self and identity into its explanatory models, yet issues of identity in relation to bilingualism was earlier highlighted by Lambert (1974), among others. Indeed, as we have seen, identity has been implicated in much of the social psychological work on language attitudes and language learning. However, one criticism of such work is that it viewed identity as static, and focused on what were perceived to be 'fixed personality traits, learning styles and motivations' (Norton & Toohey, 2011: 419).

More recently, second language researchers have adopted a broader range of theoretical perspectives in which to frame the notion of language learner identity. Many of these theories emphasize poststructural understandings of identities and in general see identity as fluid, context-dependent, and context-producing (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Furthermore, some, if not most, theories underline the notion of multiple identities. Of course, identities can be distinguished along lines of nationality, social group, ethnicity, career, etc, not to mention a person's role at the familial (e.g. brother, sister, father, mother, wife, husband) or community level (e.g. coach, church-goer, organisation member). In the context of language one can be a native speaker, non-native speaker, language learner, language user, etc. However, at the group level, there can be a conflict between one's self image and his perceived group identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Fishman, 1997). The point here is that in any of these contexts we can be all of these things all of the time, or some of them some of the time, depending on timing and on our surroundings. One recent model which attempts to capture multiplicity of this type is Omoniyi's (2006) Hierarchy of Identities, in which he asserts that in order to understand the complexities of the multiple identities any given

person might possess, a person must discover the identity options available. These options he argues can then be allocated among a hierarchy according to their importance at a given time and in relation to internal and external factors. 'Identity options are co-present, the difference between them being in the degree of salience that they command which determines their position on a hierarchy of identity' (Omoniyi, 2006: 30). This model also stresses the idea that salience of a particular identity is situational, and therefore its place within the hierarchy fluctuates based on its salience at any given moment.

The notion of self-concept has also begun to make its way into the second language learning literature. Self-concept (and related terms such as self-image and personal identity) refers to the theory one has of oneself, i.e. the way we think and feel about ourselves as individuals. These beliefs and feelings in turn conjure up an image of who and what we are. 'Self-concepts are cognitive structures that can include content, attitudes, or evaluative judgments and are used to make sense of the world, focus attention on one's goals, and protect one's sense of basic worth' (Oyserman et al., 2012: 72). Based on the content of one's self-concept, the self can be a motivating force behind decisions and actions through which people create or maintain certain self-images, self-beliefs, or self-evaluations in their own minds (Leary, 2007). One's self concept is not, however, an entirely stable construct. Research has shown that while some elements of the self are, in fact dynamic, others remain stable once they are formed (McCrae & Costa, 2003; Mercer, 2012). Changes in the dynamic elements of the self are argued to be context specific: 'people have a sense that they know what their self is, even though what exactly it refers to differs from situation to situation. (Oyserman et al., 2012: 94).

Mercer (e.g. 2011; 2012) has been one of the first to make extensive use of the self in relation to second language learning. Her work has emphasized the dynamic nature of L2 learners' self-concept and evokes complexity theory to unite competing perspective and conflicting findings concerning the self (Mercer, 2011). In relation to the important of a learner's self-concept to the language learning context she argues that it is 'central in guiding their behaviours and approaches to learning as it connects together many other aspects of their psychology such as their beliefs, motivations, affective responses, self regulatory competence and strategy use' (Mercer, 2011: 58). It is important here to emphasize not only the interconnectedness between the self and other psychological constructs such as motivation and 'affective responses', i.e. attitude and evaluations, but also the point that the self would appear, at least in some contexts, to be the basis for such phenomenon. She cites evidence for this in an advanced adult learner of English named Carina. It was found that one way in which

this learner's language learning was linked to both her current and future self-concept was through goal setting, and motivation to learn a particular variety of the target language, i.e. American English. Furthermore, she believes achieving a native like accent in American English is possible since she has a 'gift' for language learning (Mercer, 2012: 19-20).

In another self-related inquiry, Pavlenko (2006) investigated the extent to which bi/multilinguals felt their persona changes, i.e. different selves, when speaking the various language in their repertoire. She found that 65% of the sample indicated that they do feel their selves change when speaking different languages. These source of these differing selves were attributed to linguistic and cultural differences; learning contexts; different in language emotionality and level of language proficiency. She argues that some bi- and multilinguals may come to perceive the world in different ways through changes in perspective, ways of thinking, and verbal and non-verbal behaviours when switching languages. Yet, this type of self-related change may produce positive or negative outcomes for learners since they may experience pleasure or pain from being split between two (or more) worlds. The conclusion, however, is that this is an inevitable part of the bilingual human condition.

In the context of this study, we are primarily concerned with issues of nativelikeness and perceived group membership. It is not suggested that learners should be categorised solely along those lines, however, the premise here is that if an L2 speaker aspires to a particular model of language use (phonologically, syntactically, lexically, or socially) then his or her self concept and/or group identity is likely to play an important role in the decision making process. For example, the learners' self image may include membership of a particular dialect group, or not. In the case of learning Irish, as with many other minority languages, a particular speech community which shares the same language variety (i.e. Munster, Connacht or Ulster Irish), may not be readily accessible to the learner. Nevertheless, the learner may make a conscious decision to learn a particular variety based on other reasons, some of which may be linked to his self image, i.e. who he is as an Irish speaker. Though there has been some research into issues of identity in relation to the Irish language (e.g. Tovey, Abramson, & Hannan, 1989), this research has almost always considered the issue from a global perspective, i.e. the Irish people and the Irish language. Very little research has considered the issue of identity negotiation in the context of Irish language learning. There have been some recent exceptions to this trend. O'Rourke (2011), for example, revealed that proficient L2 Irish speakers are forced to re-evaluate (and in some cases reconstruct) their social identity when they come into contact with L1 speakers of the language, since their status changes from expert to novice. Regan

(2010), for her part, has demonstrated links between identity construction among teenage L2 Irish immersion school students and language variation. These learners have been observed to openly reject traditional ideas of Irishness as they pertain to purity of language form. The present study seeks to add to this body of research by investigating the extent to which older learners, as a result of processes of self identification, wish to model their own Irish on the norms of any particular group, native speaker or otherwise. Their attitudes towards various subgroups of Irish speakers and the varieties of the language they speak may be an important in determining the extent to which they are able to identify with them and their speech model.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the role of affective variables in second language research has been discussed. Section 3.1 introduced the general theme of affect in second language research and highlighted the three variables of attitude, motivation and identity as central to the concept for lengthier discussions in individual sections. Section 3.2 introduced the construct of attitude and definitions for the phenomenon which highlight the multifaceted nature of attitude were provided. The subsections which followed presented research from the field of language attitudes, including a discussion of recent research into attitudes towards target language varieties among second language learners. The conclusion was put forward that, while the relatively small body of research into this particular issue has provided very few strong conclusions, it is clear that many L2 learners are able to identify regional and social varieties of the target language and evaluate them differently. In addition, they often demonstrate a clear preference for a particular variety of the language on which they wish to model their own language. Extended exposure to a particular speech form in the community, acquaintance with the variety through their studies, a personal connection to a region or culture were all offered as variables which may determine a learner's orientation to a target variety. The results of these studies also show that the native speech model is still a valued target for learners, despite theoretical and practical claims which seek to de-emphasize the importance of the native speaker in SLA.

Section 3.3 presented an overview of L2 motivation research and a number of theoretical models which have been developed to explain the construct. The last 50 or so years of research into L2 motivation were presented according to three main approaches: social psychological, process-oriented and socio-dynamic. Each of these approaches developed out of the weaknesses and strengths of the ones that came before them. The most recent socio-dynamic approach has been marked by a shift in focus and represents an attempt to bring to the fore relationships that exist between

macro factors, e.g. social milieu, classroom setting and characteristics of the individual learner. This has been most fully captured in Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System model, which, it was argued, has great potential for explaining motivation in both majority and minority language learning contexts.

Section 3.4 outlined a number of theoretical accounts of identity. It was shown that philosophical discussions of self and identity provide a basis for many of the modern accounts of personal identity in psychology. The remaining subsections provided a discussion of the various ways the concepts of self and identity have been used in second language learning research, and how the most recent discussions of learner self-concept bare striking similarities to the use of 'possible selves' in recent L2 motivation work. It was argued that theoretical definitions and empirical evidence indicate that in, at least some contexts, learners' attitudes and motivation may be arise from learners' self-concept.

We have discussed the treatment of these three variables in the SLA, social psychological and sociolinguistic literatures in sufficient detail to demonstrate that it is now accepted by most researchers that they are of central importance in any discussion of second language learning. Despite this fact, it must be re-emphasized that although the three individual topics of attitudes to language variation, motivation and identity are well established in the literature, it is only very rarely that have they been considered in connection with each other in a single study. Finally, despite the fact that these issues appear to be of considerable interest to speakers of Irish and a subject of periodic debate, almost no research has been conducted on them in the case of adult learners of Irish. In the next chapter we look at the methodology and research instruments used in this study which seeks to address this gap in the literature.

CHAPTER 4
Research Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the design and methodological procedures used in the present study. It was shown in the preceding chapter that nativelike speech is considered by many to be the desired target in language teaching. The native speaker concept is repeatedly used as a benchmark for measuring L2 success in research and in the classroom. However, this goal is rarely realized, especially among late L2 learners. We saw that in Ireland, where the language and its speech community maintain an idealized position in connection with language revitalization efforts, large amounts of evidence show that most do not reach nativelike levels of proficiency despite studying the language in primary and secondary education. Nonetheless, the native speaker of Irish still represents a linguistic ideal. Yet, since the traditional Irish speech community is fragmented, both geographically and linguistically, and it is generally unclear to what native target learners outside the Gaeltacht should be aspiring. In most cases, students are exposed to competing target norms through their coursework and sometimes through different teachers. Teachers are often L2 speakers themselves and their own allegiances to one dialect or another come as a result of their own learning experiences and these may be replicated in the Irish classroom.

The present study is concerned with adult learners' perceptions of different varieties of the Irish language and how these attitudes are related to their L2 motivation and identity. It was shown in the first chapter that the question of target language varieties is central at all levels of Irish language learning, yet very few studies have considered this issue and none have provided a comprehensive treatment. This study, therefore, aims to address this gap in the literature by exploring how attitudes to traditional (i.e. regional/native) and non-traditional (i.e. L2) speech varieties among adult learners of Irish are linked to learners' motivation to learn the language. It also seeks to explore whether these learners wish to model their own Irish on any of these varieties. In the remaining sections of this chapter we will look at how this study addresses these issues methodologically. The first section presents the specific research questions this study attempts to answer. The second section discusses the three-stage mixed methods research design implemented in the study and the reasons for adopting a sequential explanatory strategy. The third, fourth and fifth sections present detailed discussions of the three individual stages of the study and the research instruments designed for use in each one.

4.1 Objectives of this study

The present study aims to investigate adult learners' perceptions of native and non-native varieties of the Irish language and how these attitudes are related to their language learning motivation and identity. It was argued above that the question of target language varieties is central at all levels of Irish language learning, yet very few studies have provided a comprehensive treatment of this issue. This study, therefore, aims to address this gap in the literature by exploring how attitudes to traditional (i.e. regional/native) and non-traditional (i.e. L2) speech varieties among adult learners of Irish are linked to learners' motivation to learn the language. It also seeks to explore whether these learners wish to model their own Irish on any of these varieties. In considering these issues, this study contributes an Irish language perspective on more general questions disused in the SLA literature. First, as it is primarily concerned with surveying learner attitudes towards target language varieties, it adds to the relatively small body of research dealing with this subject. As we saw in Chapter 3, most studies dealing with the question of attitudes towards target language varieties have been conducted in the context of English language learning and while their findings are important for the field, the Irish context is different in a number of obvious ways (see Chapter 1). This study is the first in-depth investigation of this issue in the context of adult learners of Irish and therefore illuminates a minority language perspective. Second, this research provides a discussion of motivation in adult learners of Irish, which to date has received very little attention. It was shown in Chapter 3 that very few studies have looked specifically at motivation among these learners and many of those that have were conducted with learners outside of Ireland and, for methodological reasons, e.g. once off questionnaires or isolated questions about the phenomenon, they were not particularly rigorous in their analysis of the construct. Third, the data gathered in this study provides an opportunity for an exploration of links between attitude to language varieties, L2 motivation and identity in a way that have not been done before among this group. This is accomplished through the use of a multi-method research approach designed to investigate these relationships (see below) and which allows for interpretations that traditional single-method studies do not.

In bringing the above issues together in one study, it is hoped that a clearer picture will emerge of what drives learners to work towards achieving certain norms in their spoken Irish. To this end, this thesis sets out to examine and develop the notion that relationships exist between learners' attitudes towards regional varieties of the Irish language, their motivation to learn the language and their identity as Irish speakers. More specifically, the following research questions are addressed:

- What are adult learners' attitudes to different native (i.e. Gaeltacht) and non-native (i.e. L2) varieties of Irish?
- To what extent have adult learners settled on a clear target in terms of the kind of speaker (language variety/dialect and level of proficiency) they aspire to? Is native-like (Gaeltacht) Irish a goal for learners, or is a high level of proficiency with or without the native 'accent' more important?
- How is a learner's investment in the language learning process connected to his or her self-image and personal identity? Are learners' motivations to learn and/or use Irish linked to a personal identity as Irish learners/speakers?
- Are features of learners' sociocultural or educational backgrounds (e.g. place of origin, familial connection to the language and previous learning experience) connected to the pursuit of acquiring different varieties of spoken Irish?
- How do preferences about language variety relate to the individual's motivation to learn the language and his or her self image?

4.2 Research methodology

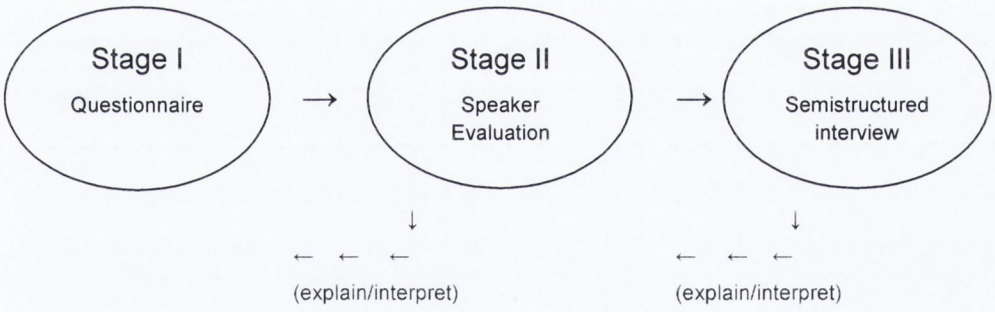
The methodology employed in this study makes use of multiple methods of data collection and analysis. The ever increasing popularity of mixed methods studies is not without warrant. An increasing number researchers are now mixing research methods in the same study in order to show broad quantitative trends among large groups of learners through statistical analyses of data sets, while, at the same time, using qualitative data to give depth and richness to their research (Dörnyei, 2007). In fact, there is a growing realization among social science researchers that notions of allegiance to single method paradigms can be counterproductive and may not be in the interest of best practice. Choice of method, it is often argued (e.g. Dörnyei, 2007: 307ff; Gorard & Taylor, 2004: 3-7; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991: 14), should not simply reflect personal allegiances or fear of unfamiliar procedures, rather choices should be based on careful consideration of what instrument(s) will best investigate the research questions as indentified. In this view, researchers need to have more than one method in the arsenal if they hope to tackle complex phenomena. This approach to methodological choice has been termed by some as *pragmatic research* (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). In the context of multimethod research, Gorard and Taylor (2004) argue that research instruments 'are nearly always more powerful when used in combination than in isolation' (p. 4).

4.2.1 Research design employed in this study

Since the overall aim of this study encompasses the need to (a) elicit information about Irish language learners, (b) their attitudes to varieties of Irish, (c) their motivation for investing in the language learning process and (d) investigate how these may be related to their sense of identity, three separate approaches were chosen to investigate these issues. The *Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners* was designed to gather background information from a large number of adult learners attending general language courses. It also included a number of scale items designed to measure learners' attitude to the language, language learning, achieving certain levels of proficiency and learning particular varieties of Irish, motivation and their identity/self-concept. The *Speaker Evaluation Exercise* was designed to look specifically at the issue of target varieties. This method recorded learners' evaluation of recorded speech representing different native and non-native varieties of Irish and their desire to model their own speech on them. Finally, the *Semi-structured Interview* schedule was developed to give participants the opportunity to discuss these issues in depth and less structured manner. Each of these instruments in discussed in detail in Sections 4.3 - 4.5 below.

Figure 4.1

Sequential explanatory research design used in this study



The research design employed in this study makes use of a *sequential explanatory strategy* (Creswell, 2009). This type of research design uses a set of qualitative data to 'explain and interpret quantitative results' (p. 211) gathered in the first stage of research. To this end, two separate quantitative methods have been utilized, i.e. a questionnaire and a speaker evaluation exercise, as well as a further method which is qualitative in nature, i.e. semi-structured. While these instruments are broadly classed as being quantitative and qualitative, and the research design as mixed, they are not only concerned with data that is solely quantifiable or qualifiable. Rather, the instruments, particularly the questionnaire with its inclusion of open-ended

items, are mixed as well. Figure 4.1 visualizes the ordering of the instruments within the three stage research design.

Previous studies which have studied these types of affective variables have used both quantitative and qualitative methods (for recent examples see Murray, Gao, & Lamb, 2011; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009). Although most L2 attitude and motivation research has been quantitative in nature, there have been repeated calls to add a qualitative dimension to discussions of motivational and attitudinal factors in L2 learning (e.g. Ushioda, 1994, 2011). In the context of the present study, it was felt for two main reasons that an investigation of the research questions outlined above would be best served by the kind of rich data associated with qualitative methods. Firstly, there are almost no existing data on the issues under investigation in the specific case of Irish and very little research of this type has been carried out in relation to other minority languages – a noted exception is the work of Hoare (2000, 2001) – giving this study, at least in part, an exploratory role. Secondly, qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, for example, provide research subjects with an opportunity to explain their experience and give context to their behaviour (Seidman, 2006). Notwithstanding the above, it was decided that a quantitative element would also benefit this study, since at least general data can be elicited from a larger sample size through the use of a carefully constructed questionnaire and increase the generalizability of findings. Furthermore, using such a questionnaire may also increase the chance of identifying between-participant and between-group variation.

As mentioned above, there are persuasive arguments for making use of multiple data collection methods where possible (e.g. Dörnyei, 2007; Gorard & Taylor, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), but there are also a number of issues for consideration when adopting this approach. For example, a researcher must choose from a range of design constructs, such as dominant and less dominant research methods within a design (i.e. QUAL/quant. vs QUANT/qual.) or concurrent vs. sequential designs (e.g. QUAN + QUAL or QUAL → QUAN), all of which have advantages in various contexts (Dörnyei, 2007).

Although the overall aims of a study, or the research paradigm within which it is conducted, may aid the researcher in making decisions about design construct (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), there can be other, more immediate factors arising out of available research designs which may potentially influence the data gathered and must, therefore, be carefully considered. In the present study, one such issue in relation to the latter is the influence one collection method may have on another, depending on the order of implementation; such an effect might potentially put the validity of the data and its interpretation in question:

> When a sequential mixed research design is used, it is possible that the metainference that arises is solely or largely the effect of the sequencing itself. For example, if the results and interpretations would have been different if the order the quantitative and qualitative phases originally presented had been reversed, then this would indicate that the sequencing itself was a threat to legitimation.
>
> (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006: 58)

In an attempt to prevent this effect, a QUAN → qual design[3] is used here, one in which the data collection sequence is initiated by one quantitative methods, i.e. a questionnaire. This method is then followed by two further data collection methods, one quantitative, i.e. speaker evaluation exercise, and one qualitative, i.e. semi-structured interviews. These two additional methods are used with a subsample of participants (see below) in subsequent data collection sessions.

Decisions regarding the ordering of methods in sequential research design generally should be based on the aims of the research. Qualitative methods may be used first in order to identify research questions which will be tested in a larger population using a quantitative method. Alternatively, the design may employ quantitative methods first to illuminate particular questions which will be investigated in greater depth with a smaller cohort using qualitative methods. The latter was the reason behind the design in the present study. Since the present research design employs three research instruments, two quantitative and one qualitative, the decision to sequence the data collection methods in the Quan → quan → qual order was also based on the belief that any in-depth, interview-type discussion of issues connected to the research questions prior to the implementation of the quantitative methods could influence participants' responses to items in quantitative instruments. Of course, by engaging with the research topic through a questionnaire and speaker evaluation exercise the participants will undoubtedly begin considering issues which are raised by these instruments, at least subconsciously. But, this need not be a negative outcome; as long as these two quantitative instruments are free of researcher bias, the subconscious level on which the learners engage with the topics addressed by these instruments should serve to enrich their responses to items asked during the qualitative interviews.

In the same connection, Dörnyei (2007: 170-171) highlights known weaknesses in questionnaire research in that they often fail to elicit anything more than a shallow

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[3] Capital letters followed by lowercase letters denote that this mixed design is primarily quantitative, i.e. two quantitative methods are followed by one qualitative method.

engagement from respondents, present difficulties for interpreting unexpected results and, when relationships between variables are observed, tell us relatively little about the nature of a given relationship. He argues that supplementing questionnaire data with a subsequent qualitative element can help to overcome these weaknesses by giving the researcher and the participants the opportunity to elaborate on any perceived patterns.

4.2.2 Overall aims of this methodology

The various methods and instruments being used in this study each serve slightly different research aims. Each method has the potential to generate different types of data, which will contribute in different ways to the interpretation of the study's overall findings. The questionnaire, as the first method of inquiry, is aimed at gathering information in relation to participants' backgrounds and language learning experience, motivation language learning goals, attitudes towards varieties of the language (in general terms) and attitudes towards language use in various contexts. This information, although potentially useful in its own right, is complimented by data gathered using a speaker evaluation exercise, which records learners' attitudes towards specific varieties of Irish including native and non-native speech, a topic which is only dealt with briefly in the initial questionnaire.

This second method is used with a subgroup of the study's sample (see Section 4.2.3). This subsample also partakes in an individual interview. This qualitative method aims to provide depth to data gathered by the quantitative methods discussed above. Questions in the interview schedule ask participants to discuss further issues that were addressed in the questionnaire and/or speaker evaluation exercise. Furthermore, the semi-structured nature of the interviews will provide participants, as well as the researcher, with an opportunity to develop undiscovered issues connected to the study. This type of mixed methods design has been recognised as having the potential to provide further information about the nature of relationships found in questionnaire data by asking respondents to 'explain or illustrate the obtained patterns, thereby adding flesh to the bones' by Dörnyei (2007: 171).

The features of the individual methods are discussed in Sections 4.3 through 4.6. However, Table 4.1 provides an overview of the research design. This table will help to provide a concise picture of the various stages of data collection, the sequencing of instruments and the research questions each one is designed to answer.

Table 4.1

Overview of research design

Phase	Method/Instruments	Aims	Research questions addressed
Stage I	Questionnaire Instrument: *Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners*	- Gather background details - Survey L2 attitude and motivation, attitude towards levels of achieving different levels of fluency and/or target varieties, and cultural preferences - Determine learners' willingness to participate in further stages of the project	- What are adult learners' attitudes to different native (i.e. Gaeltacht) and non-native (i.e. L2) varieties of Irish? - To what extent have adult learners settled on a clear target in terms of the kind of speaker (language variety/dialect and level of proficiency) they aspire to? Is native-like (Gaeltacht) Irish a goal for learners, or is a high level of proficiency with or without the native 'accent' more important? - How is a learner's investment in the language learning process connected to his or her self-image and personal identity? Are learners' motivations to learn and/or use Irish linked to a personal identity as Irish learners/speakers? - Are features of learners' sociocultural or educational backgrounds (e.g. place of origin, familial connection to the language and previous learning experience) connected to the pursuit of acquiring different varieties of spoken Irish?
Stage II	Verbal-guise technique Instrument: *Speaker Evaluation Exercise* (recordings and booklet)	- Survey learners' attitudes to specific varieties of Irish language - Measure ability to identify varieties - Explore issues of learners' self-image in relation to language varieties	- What are adult learners' attitudes to different native (i.e. Gaeltacht) and non-native (i.e. L2) varieties of Irish? - To what extent have adult learners settled on a clear target in terms of the kind of speaker (language variety/dialect and level of proficiency) they aspire to? Is native-like (Gaeltacht) Irish a goal for learners, or is a high level of proficiency with or without the native 'accent' more important?
Stage III	Individual interviews Instrument: *Interview schedule*	- Gather further explanatory data on issues raised in Stages I & II	- To what extent have adult learners settled on a clear target in terms of the kind of speaker (language variety/dialect and level of proficiency) they aspire to? Is native-like (Gaeltacht) Irish a goal for learners, or is a high level of proficiency with or without the native 'accent' more important? - How is a learner's investment in the language learning process connected to his or her self-image and personal identity? Are learners' motivations to learn and/or use Irish linked to a personal identity as Irish learners/speakers? - How do preferences about language variety relate to the individual's motivation to learn the language and his or her self image?

4.2.3 Sampling and participants

In an attempt to maximize the study's ability to gather large quantities of reliable data, a tiered system of participant contribution has been employed. Six Irish language organizations which provide adult courses were contacted by phone or in writing, i.e. email or post. (See Appendix 1.3 for descriptions of the course providers.) Upon securing their agreement to allow the researcher to make contact with individual students, questionnaires and stamped, addressed envelopes were sent to the course providers so that they might be distributed by course instructors, acting as gatekeepers, to learners in various classes. The cover letter provided information in clear, non-technical terms, about the researcher and the institution with which he is affiliated. It also outlined the project's aims and its methodology. Those learners who agreed to participate in the study were asked in the cover letter to fill out the questionnaire and post it back to the researcher using the envelope provided. This questionnaire constitutes the first stage of participation.

The questionnaire also contained a section on the last page which asks participants to indicate if they are willing to participate in additional aspects of the study, i.e. speaker evaluation exercise and individual interviews. Participants who were willing to hear about how they might contribute further to the study were asked to provide contact details so that the researcher could contact them and explain the further stages of the study. The research attempted to contact all of those who provided contact details by email or phone, and if they were willing and available to meet arrangements were made to do so.

It was decided that the sample would be elicited from learner groups at various ability levels starting at the intermediate level (B1 – C1 in the CEFR) who were attending courses provided by the six language schools and organisations mentioned above. In order to achieve this, the course providers were informed that the questionnaires should only to be distributed in classes advertised at the intermediate level and above. Though this point was made as clear as possible, there is little that could be done to prevent learners who are attending a course that is above their current proficiency level from filling out the questionnaire. Moreover, it would appear that there may be some variation between course levels as offered by the course providers. For these reasons is was deemed necessary to include self rating proficiency level scales in the questionnaire in order to better assess the level of participants Irish speaking proficiency (see Section 4.3.1).

The decision to sample learners from intermediate and above proficiency levels was made for the following reasons. First, this study is primarily concerned with learners' attitudes towards different Irish language varieties, and although lower-level

learners may be aware of the fact that dialects exist in modern Irish, they are unlikely to be aware of the extent to which they differ. Secondly, this study aims to survey factors contributing to decisions made by learners regarding the type of Irish they wish to acquire, as well as attitudes about the appropriateness of using different varieties of Irish in various contexts. It was felt, therefore, that learners with proficiency levels of B1 or higher would be better able to distinguish between different varieties of spoken Irish, since they would have the ability/opportunity to use or encounter spoken Irish outside the classroom situation. Both of these issues could affect the ability of learners with lower proficiency levels to engage with the research instruments. This was thought to be especially true of the speaker evaluation exercise.

4.2.4 Ethics

This study has followed standard procedures outlined by the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College Dublin, regarding research ethics. A research ethics application was submitted to the School's Research Ethics Committee, and having been approved on March 31, 2011, data collection began. Questionnaires containing a participant information leaflet were distributed by gatekeepers to potential participants in participating schools. Willing participants were asked in the information leaflet to post the questionnaire back to the researcher using the stamped, addressed envelope provided. As mentioned, an item was included in the questionnaire for participants to indicate their willingness to hear about other data collection activities to be conducted as part of the study. Where respondents are willing to be contacted, the researcher will make use of details provided to contact the participants and tell them about Stages II and III of the project (i.e. speaker evaluation exercises and interviews). Arrangements were made to meet learners who agreed to take part in these subsequent stages of data collection in a convenient location. No written consent was required in the case of questionnaires used in Stage I of the project, however, participants signed research consent forms for additional stages of the research project when they meet the researcher. Consent form templates are included in Appendices 2 and 3.

4.3 Stage I of data collection: Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners

The questionnaire designed as a first level data collection instrument (Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners – see Appendix 1.6) serves two main purposes. First, it provides a portion of the quantitative data for this research project. Second, it served as a means of initially identifying potential participants for the additional stages of the project. In terms of its design, the questionnaire used in this study draws on the

tradition of quantitative research methods connected with the social psychological paradigm in L2 attitude-motivation research and in constructing this first instrument, many items and categories were adapted from existing work in this area. (See the next section for more detail in relation to this issue.) The questionnaire makes use of both close-ended items which allow for statistical analysis, and a lesser number of open-ended items included to add a qualitative dimension to the instrument.

4.3.1 Questionnaire items

As the questionnaire used in this study is wide ranging, the following procedures were followed in its design. Where possible, items and/or scales were adapted from existing instruments. For those issues particular to this study, which have not previously been treated in existing instruments, new items were developed. The final questionnaire, after piloting (see Section 4.3.2), contains 69 items, divided into four sections. A fifth section of the questionnaire asked respondents whether they were interested in being contacted to hear more about Stages II and III of the project, i.e. speaker evaluation exercise and interviews.

The opening section of the questionnaire asks learners to provide information in relation to five topics: previous Irish language learning experience in the educational system, whether any family members speak Irish, prior exposure to Irish outside of the classroom (i.e. via the media), prior experiences of learning foreign languages, i.e. other than English or Irish, and there proficiency level in other learned languages. These items provide a background profile for each respondent which may be used to compare learner groups or individuals.

As mentioned earlier, course providers and instructors were asked to distribute questionnaires in classes at the intermediate level or above. As most adult Irish language course providers do not use placement tests to evaluate learners' proficiency level prior to their beginning a course, it was deemed necessary to include a section in the questionnaire that would provide an accurate measure of the learners' proficiency level so that any trends in the data that may be attributable to this variable might be examined more fully. To this end, two self-assessment ability scales were included in the second section of the questionnaire. The first six point scale was taken from the Committee on Irish Language Attitudes Report (CILAR, 1975). Though this scale is potentially problematic due to the somewhat vague descriptors it uses (e.g. 'the odd word', 'native speaker ability'), it has been widely used in language attitude surveys in Ireland and it was therefore felt to be appropriate for inclusion in this study. To compensate for the shortcomings of the CILAR scale, a second scale was constructed using 'can-do' statements developed by the Association of Language Testers in

Europe (ALTE). Because these statements were developed in line with the CEFR proficiency levels, they were thought to be a more sensitive assessment tool as each statement defines levels of ability in terms of what language users can typically do with the language at each level of the ALTE Framework.

The third section of the questionnaire is comprised of 50 items belonging to eight separate scales and an additional six miscellaneous items. Thirty-eight of the items in this section use a seven-point Likert response format (Likert, 1932) ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (7), and 12 items use binary (true/false) format. The items are presented under thematic headings which incorporate one or more scales in each. It should be noted that all 50 of these scales items were originally Likert-type items, but the response format for two scales was changed after piloting the questionnaire (see Section 4.3.2 and Appendix 1.4).

It was decided that a 7-point Likert scale response format would be used for all items of this type in the questionnaire. The literature is in general agreement that the number of points used in a rating scale is to a great extent reliant on the question being asked or the attribute being measured. Where a binary response format may be appropriate for an item that only requires a positive or negative response, e.g. Have you attended any language courses prior to this one? In another context, a multiple point response format may be more appropriate, e.g. attitudinal statements (DeVellis, 2012).

Likert scales generally range from 3-9 point response options, though Likert himself originally used a 5 point scale (Likert, 1932). The question of how many points to use in a scale depends on two main issues, 1) the extent do we wish to discriminate differences in the underlying attribute, and 2) the ability of respondents to discriminate meaningfully between response options. In L2 motivational and attitudinal research, 5-, 7- and 9-point scales have all been used, yet, Krosnick and Presser (2010), providing a thorough review of the evidence, have recommended a 7-point scale for most circumstances, particularly those involving visual administration of questionnaires (p. 274).

There would appear to be a certain amount of debate in the literature regarding whether or not a midpoint option should be included in scale response options (i.e. an odd or even number of response options). These arguments focus on the fact that without a midpoint a respondent is forced to provide either a positive or negative response, which may keep respondents from satisficing, i.e. 'sitting on the fence'. On the other hand, this format does not provide an appropriate option for those respondents who really do have a neutral opinion on the issue as presented resulting in either an inaccurate picture. Respondents may either select an option that is not in

line with their true opinion, or they may choose not to respond at all leaving the researcher with incomplete or missing data (see e.g. DeVellis, 2012; Kline, 2005; Krosnick & Presser, 2010).

From an analysis standpoint, it would appear that there is no statistical advantage to either option, i.e. midpoint or no midpoint (Kline, 2005: 65), yet, Krosnick and Presser (2010: 274), citing evidence from O'Muircheartaigh, Krosnick and Helic (1999) of improved reliability and validity of ratings, conclude that including a midpoint is preferable. For this reason, the use of a midpoint has been adopted here. However, in choosing this option one is faced with a number of potential wordings for this centre point (DeVellis, 2012). For the purposes of this instrument, the mid-point on the scale response options has been worded as 'Neutral', as is the case with Harris and Murtagh's (1999) questionnaire discussed below.

Three of the scales used in the questionnaire, *Attitude to Irish speakers*, *Integrative orientation to Irish* and *Instrumental orientation to Irish* (15 Likert items in total) were adapted from Harris and Murtagh's (1999) questionnaire designed to survey attitudinal and motivational factors in primary school learners of Irish. The scales in question were adapted by these authors for use in their own study from the *Attitude Motivation Test Battery* (Gardner, Clément, Smythe, & Smythe, 1979, cited in Harris & Murtagh, 1999). It was necessary in some cases to alter the wording of individual items in these scales to make them appropriate for the adult learner context. It was also deemed appropriate to omit certain items that did not suit the context. This was the case for the *Attitude to Irish speakers* scale, where two items were not used, and the *Instrumental orientation to Irish* scale where one item was not used. A scale was developed using items from Gatbonton, Trofimovich and Segalowitz's *Ethnic Group Affiliation Questionnaire* employed in a recent study by these researchers (Gatbonton, Trofimovich, & Segalowitz, 2011). For the purposes of this study this scale has been labelled the *Cultural Activities and Preferences* scale (5 items).

The remaining scales in the questionnaire were designed specifically for use in this study: *Self confidence in speaking* (11 items), *Identity/Self-concept* (4 items), *Proficiency aims and goals* (4 items) and *Attitudes to learning dialects of Irish* (5 items). Six miscellaneous items were also included. These items seek learners' opinions on a number of related issues. A more detailed description for each of the eight scales is provided below, but it is worth mentioning some technical points in relation to the development of the scales in this questionnaire and the response format used for each item.

In relation to scale construction, there would also appear to be some debate over whether or not to use both positively and negatively worded items in a scale.

Many authors suggest using an even number of both types of items for reasons relating to avoidance of agreement response bias, using both extremes of the response categories and nonattentive response patterns (e.g. Barnette, 1999; Dörnyei, 2007). On the other hand, there is a relatively large body of literature which advises the researcher to approach this issue with caution (e.g. DeVellis, 2012; Kline, 2005; Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003). These authors draw attention to the possible drawbacks of using negatively worded items. Netemeyer et al., for instance, warn that:

> [n]egatively worded items do not exhibit as high a reliability as positively worded items do or can be confusing to respondents. Such items also may contribute to a methods factor in factor analytic models because positively worded items tend to load highly on one factor and negatively worded items tend to load highly on another factor. [...] With that possibility in mind, the researcher must weigh the potential advantages and disadvantages of using negatively worded items in the item pool.
>
> (Netemeyer et al., 2003: 99)

In light of the foregoing, negatively worded items have been used sparingly in this instrument. In cases where existing scales were adapted for use in this instrument, e.g. scales adapted from Harris and Murtagh (1999), the wordings of scale items were not changed to make them negative, even where the number of positive and negatively worded items were unbalanced, very low or non-existent. In the construction of new scales, negatively worded items were used only when it was deemed appropriate for measuring a given construct. (See Appendix 1.7 for grouped scale items.)

Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners

Attitudinal/motivational scales

1. *Attitude to Irish speakers.* This eight item scale contains statements about Irish speakers, all of which are positively worded. A high score on this scale indicates a positive attitude towards Irish speakers.

2. *Integrative orientation to Irish.* The four positively worded items in this scale focus on the extent to which learners would like to interact with or become like Irish speakers. A high score on this scale demonstrates that a learner favours integrative reasons for learning Irish.

3. *Instrumental orientation to Irish.* The three positively worded items in this scale centre on pragmatic or utilitarian reasons for learning Irish. A high score on this

scale demonstrates that a learner favours instrumental reasons for learning Irish.

4. *Self confidence in speaking.* This eleven item scale presents learners with statements focusing on speaking Irish in and outside the classroom context. Seven items are positively worded and four are negatively worded. A high score on this scale reveals that a learner is content to use Irish in various contexts.

5. *Identity/Self-concept.* This four positively worded item scale has been designed to assess the importance of speaking Irish to learners' self image. A high score on this scale demonstrates that being able to speak Irish is an important part of a learner's self concept.

6. *Proficiency aims and goals.* The four positively worded items in this scale have been designed to assess the extent to which learners would like to model their own Irish on native speaker norms. A high score on this scale reveals that a learner aims to model his or her spoken Irish on the speech of L1 speakers in terms of proficiency level.

7. *Attitudes towards learning dialects of Irish.* This five positively worded item scale aims to assess learners' attitudes towards learning regional varieties of Irish. The term 'dialect' has been used in these scale items in place of the more technical term 'variety' since it was felt that this term would be more familiar to learners. A high score on this scale indicates that a learner has a positive attitude towards learning particular regional varieties of the language.

Non-attitudinal/motivational scales and items

8. *Cultural Activities and preferences.* The five positively worded items in this scale measure the extent to which a learner regularly engages with the language outside the classroom through cultural events or artefacts. A high score on this scale indicates that a learner regularly engages with Irish in non-pedagogical contexts and may have a preference for Irish cultural artefacts produced in a particular regional variety of the language.

9. *Miscellaneous.* These items do not constitute a scale since they measure different constructs. They seek learners' opinions on issues such as a hearing

Irish in a relaxed environment, learning Irish because of their children's education, the type of Irish they speak, the importance of maintaining dialects of Irish and having more opportunities to speak Irish to native speakers.

4.3.2 Pilot study

A draft version of the Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners was piloted with two separate learner groups at Oideas Gael, Gleann Cholm Cille between May and June, 2011. The first group was made up of 14 advanced adult learners of Irish who were at approximately the B2/C1 level on the CEFR. All of the learners in this group were born in Ireland or Northern Ireland except one, a Dutch woman, who teaches Irish in the Netherlands. The questionnaire was returned by 11 participants. The second group comprised nine Irish-born learners who were at approximately the B2 level on the CEFR.

The pilot version questionnaire contained a participant information leaflet on the inside cover which was read aloud to the learners after it was distributed. The learners were asked to fill in the questionnaire on their own time (i.e. outside of the classes provided during the weekend course) and return it in the sealed envelope provided to a designated box in the school bearing the researcher's name. This version of the questionnaire contained 60 items and it also contained an extra page which asked participants to provide further feedback on the questionnaire (i.e. its layout and content), if they were so willing. A number of changes were made to the instrument following responses and feedback from the first group. Changes made to the questionnaire took three forms, (i) changes to the wording of items, (ii) changes to the response format of items; and (iii) adding additional items. (See Appendix 1.4 for details of the changes.)

4.3.4 Main study

Once the questionnaire was deemed to be ready for use the main study, the six adult course providers were contacted in order to ask for their permission in administering questionnaires to individual learner groups. In June, 2011 a letter was sent by post or by email to the three Gaeltacht based course providers first. These organisations only run courses during the summer months and, therefore, it was felt that it would be necessary to survey groups in these locations first.

All three Gaeltacht course providers agreed to allow the researcher to send them questionnaires which would be distributed by their teaching staff. Upon receiving this permission, a research pack containing an appropriate number of questionnaires, a gatekeeper's copy of the research information leaflet, and a note which outlined

instructions for course administrators and gatekeepers was sent to each course provider. The instructions for administrators and gatekeepers included information about the class levels which were considered appropriate for this study and were asked to only distribute questionnaires to learners groups at these levels, i.e. B1-C2 on the CEFR. The number of questionnaires sent to each provider was based on their enrolment figures for appropriate classes at the time of contact.

Questionnaires were distributed by gatekeepers, who, in most cases, were the course instructors for each group. Instruction sheets were provided by the researcher which outlined how the questionnaires were to be distributed and to which class levels they were to be given. As mentioned, the questionnaire contained a participant information leaflet on the front cover which outlined the aims and nature of the research. A similar document was provided for the gatekeepers. This gatekeeper's version of participant information leaflet also contained further instructions, such as when and where certain pieces of information should be pointed out and what should be done with any questionnaires that were left behind by learners who did not wish to participate.

Stamped, addressed envelopes were provided for every questionnaire and willing participants were asked to send the questionnaires back to the researcher by post. All questionnaires were sent to the researcher's address in the Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College Dublin where he has a post box.

4.4 Stage II of data collection: Speaker Evaluation Exercise

Stage II of this project involved the Speaker Evaluation Exercise. This method, which is also known as the verbal guise technique (e.g. Garrett, 2000, 2010), is a variation on the matched guise technique (Lambert et al., 1960) described in Section 3.2.1. As we have seen, this has been a popular methodology employed in sociolinguistic research over the last 50 years and is generally used to survey attitudes towards different languages or language varieties.

In using only one speaker to produce each of the codes for evaluation, the matched guise technique seeks to control all other variables (e.g. pitch, rate of speech and tone), leaving only the manipulated independent variable (the language variety) to explain patterns in responses of listener judges (Garrett et al., 2003). Yet, in situations where it is thought that believable guises will be difficult to create using the same speaker (mainly due to that speaker's inability to accurately represent more than one language variety), a variation on this technique is used in which the contrasted speech styles are produced by different speakers, i.e. the verbal guise technique (Garrett et

al., 2003; Ryan, 1979). In fact, Hudson (1980) argues that 'there is little difference between the results produced by the matched guise technique and those where the voices were each produced by different speakers' (p. 205). Furthermore, L1 speakers of Irish are often unfamiliar with particular features of varieties of the language other than their own. Speakers of other languages often have greater exposure to different varieties of these languages via the media, however, in the case of Irish it has been the researcher's experience that L1 speakers of Irish rarely access media which is not produced by speakers of their own dialect. For these reasons, it was felt that asking any single L1 speaker to produce multiple guises (i.e. using multiple varieties of Irish) for the purposes of this study would prove to be problematic and, therefore, it was decided that different speakers would be used to produce the various speech samples as required.

4.4.1 Recorded speech samples

As described above, one of the main overall objectives of this study is to measure the attitudes of adult learners of Irish towards spoken varieties of the language. In this phase of data collection, this study seeks collect data on attitudes towards:

(i) regional varieties of spoken Irish
(ii) native (L1) and non-native (L2) varieties of spoken Irish

In order to investigate possible differences in attitude towards these varieties and whether they wish to model their own speech on any of them, eight speech samples featuring different varieties of Irish were recorded for use in the exercise: two L1 speakers of each of the three main regional varieties (Munster, Connacht and Ulster) and two highly proficient L2 speakers. The recordings were presented to participants in random order without any information about their background and they were asked to express their attitudes to these varieties via a speech evaluation instrument, i.e. a booklet (see next section).

The speakers recorded were asked to provide directions from one point to another on a fictitious map (see Chapter 6 for a copy of the map). This technique has been used by McKenzie (2008a, 2008b) to elicit speech that is factually neutral, yet authentic at the same time. Furthermore, this method of eliciting stimulus recordings attempts to control for some of the potentially confounding variables associated with normal unstructured speech (e.g. Garrett et al., 2003; McKenzie, 2010), since all informants are asked to complete the same task. However, it is recognised that using a less structured method of this type to record speech samples for evaluation by study

participants requires careful screening of the samples to ensure that references to culturally specific, offensive or biased language are avoided. It was therefore necessary to compile a database of speakers/recordings from which the eight most appropriate samples were selected for use in the study (cf. Garrett et al., 2003; McKenzie, 2010). Since all speakers were asked to complete the same task, the recordings' average length was approximately 1.5 minutes. Recordings of a similar length have been used in many matched guise and verbal guise studies (e.g. McKenzie, 2008b). Finally, all speakers recorded were females between the ages of 24-38. This was done in the hopes of furthering McKenzie's (2010) aim of redressing gender bias in speaker evaluation studies, which has traditionally used mostly male guises. Furthermore, using speakers from only one gender group has the potential to limit the complexity of the study design and the number of confounding variables (Garrett et al., 2003: 99; McKenzie, 2010: 77). Background details and other relevant information for the speakers and their speech varieties are provided as part of the data analyses in Chapter 5.

4.4.2 Speaker Evaluation Exercise tasks

The Speaker Evaluation Exercise instrument (see Appendix 2.8) takes the form of a booklet with three parts. Each part is comprised of tasks which ask learners to react to the recorded speech samples described above by responding to a number of items. Part I of the booklet is comprised of a set of 7 point semantic differential scales containing eight bi-polar adjective pairs, i.e. friendly/unfriendly. These adjectives represent traits on which the speaker can be rated, e.g. friendliness, clarity, confidence, etc. There are three main strategies for devising suitable adjectives to be used in a speaker evaluation exercise of the type used here. Some researchers have used adjectives found in previous studies, while others have developed a set of adjectives based on the study's aims. Another approach has been to run pilot studies which are conducted for the purpose of identifying such adjectives (Garrett et al., 2003); a combination of the last two methods has been used here (see Section 4.4.3). The final adjective pairs shown in Figure 4.2 were selected during the pilot study stage and used in the main study. (See Appendix 2.6 for the adjective collection task used in the pilot study.) One set of these semantic differential scales is provided for each of the eight speakers to be rated. Each item within the scales makes use of bipolar adjectives and learners are asked to mark the scale on a point at or between the two extremes. It is important to note that the adjectives and their polar opposites making up each scale are presented in random order in the instrument and the positive and negative poles for each item are alternated in order to avoid superficial responding.

Figure 4.2

Semantic differential scales used in Part I of the Speaker Evaluation Exercise

This person sounds:

friendly	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unfriendly
unnatural	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	natural
interesting	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	uninteresting
poorly spoken	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	well spoken
intelligent	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unintelligent
not confident	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	confident
clear	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unclear
reserved	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	outgoing

Part II of the Speaker Evaluation Exercise booklet is comprised of items which ask the participant to indicate where he/she believes the speakers are from by choosing one of the eight locations provided. This type of question has become popular in language attitudes research under the banner of *perceptual dialectology* (e.g. Preston, 1999), as it is often unclear whether judges in speaker evaluation exercises have the ability to identify the speech varieties that they are evaluating. This part also contained an item that asked participants to rate the speaker's level of proficiency on a 5-point scale ranging from 'a beginning learner' to 'a native speaker'. As mentioned already, all eight speakers were highly proficient in Irish, however, the lower proficiency descriptors were included as a means of gauging whether certain varieties or accents are associated with learners of particular proficiency levels.

Part III contains items which ask participants to comment on the type of Irish they currently speak or would ideally like to speak at some point in the future in relation to the Irish they have heard in the recorded speech samples. This part also includes an item which asks participants to identify contexts, i.e. television/radio, the classroom and casual conversation, in which they would like to hear the types of Irish spoken by the guises.

4.4.3 Pilot study

Following McKenzie (2008a, 2008b), a pilot study was conducted with a group of eight adult learners of Irish comparable to the learners who would participate in the main study. These pilot study participants listened to the eight speech samples and were asked to provide descriptive adjectives for each of the speakers. An additional list of

adjectives which were felt to be particularly relevant to the research questions being investigated was also compiled by the researcher. The adjectives in the latter list were presented to the group after they have made their own list. They were asked to select adjectives from this list which they felt were appropriate and had not already provided. The final eight scales (see Figure 4.2) were constructed using the most frequently mentioned adjectives.

4.4.4 Main study

After piloting, the Speaker Evaluation Exercise was completed with a subsample of 31 participants from the first stage of the study. The exercise was conducted with each learner in the subsample individually. Those learners who were based in Dublin were asked to meet the researcher in Trinity College Dublin where a room was made available by the Centre for Language and Communication Studies. In the case of learners who were based outside of Dublin, a date and time was arranged and the researcher travelled to their location for the purposes of data collection. In each case the session started by having the participant reading and signing a Participant Consent Form. Immediately after this, the participant was given a Participant Information Leaflet which contained the same information as the consent form.

The Speaker Evaluation Exercise booklet was then presented to the participant and he/she was asked to read the instructions on the cover. At this stage the data collection began and participants were asked to listen to all guises a total of three times. Each time they heard the eight recordings they were asked to complete one of the three sections of the evaluation instrument, i.e. Part I, II and III. Before the recordings were played each time, the researcher demonstrated to the participant what was to be done in the relevant part of the instrument in order to ensure the instructions had been understood. Each session lasted approximately 30 minutes.

4.5 Stage III of data collection: Semi-structured interviews

The third stage of data collection in this study took the form of semi-structured interviews with the same 31 subsample participants who took part in Stage II. Interviews are a common method of data collection in social science and educational research, often being used as a stand-alone method of inquiry where rich data is desirable, e.g. case studies and ethnographies. In applied linguistics research, however, the interview has been used as a versatile instrument, serving multiple purposes including a follow-up method to explain and interpret quantitative findings (Dörnyei, 2007). As mentioned earlier, recent discussions of mixed method research (e.g. Gorard & Taylor, 2004; Yardley & Bishop, 2007) have argued for the use of

qualitative interviews as a complementary instrument to more quantitative approaches, e.g. questionnaires, in order to increase a study's potential to explain and interpret relationships among data (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, with these aims in mind, the interviews conducted as part of this study seek to further explain, data collected by the quantitative methods used in the first and second stages. A semi-structured interview format was employed in the present study in order not to limit the depth and scope of the data collected.

4.5.1 Interview schedule

The interview schedule consists of two broad lines of questioning, (a) introductory questions aimed at gathering additional background information about the participants, their past experiences with the Irish language and what courses, if any, have been attended; (b) questions focused on a range of affective issues connected with learning Irish, including attitudes to native speakers and learners of the language, attitudes to varieties of the language, aims and goals regarding proficiency level and variety of Irish, and self-concept as learners. Both groups of questions aim to confirm and elaborate on language questionnaire and speech evaluation exercise data collected prior to the interviews.

Although a set of predetermined questions has been devised in the form of an interview schedule (see Appendix 3.3), which provides the interviews with a clear focus, ample opportunity was given to participants to elaborate on particular issues. The schedule contains subgroups of questions which deal with of different issues. These are grouped under broad headings, and transitions were made to new topics by providing short linking statements. The interviews lasted 15-30 minutes and they were recorded using a digital recorder in all cases. Participants were asked most of the outlined questions. Questions were omitted only if irrelevant or answered in response to another question. Follow-up questions or probes were used in cases where it was deemed appropriate or necessary to encourage further development.

4.5.2 Main study

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the subsample participants on the same day as their participation in Stage II. The participant was given a short break following the Speaker Evaluation Exercise, after which time another consent form was read and signed, and another Participant Information Leaflet was given to the learner. The researcher then outlined in general terms the topics to be covered in the interview schedule. Once the participant was ready to begin, the digital recorder was switched and the interview began. All interviews were conducted in English, but participants were told that they could use Irish at any point in the interview

if they wished to do so. This decision was taken because learners with differing levels of proficiency in Irish were to be interviewed and conducting the interview in that language might prove difficult. Furthermore, English was the L1 of all but two of the subsample participants, however, English was these learners' dominant second language.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research design and multiple data collection instruments used in this study. We outlined the research approach used in this study, a sequential explanatory design, as well as the role of the three stages of the design. The details of the design and implementation of each of the methods used in the three stages, including pilot work and changes made to the research instruments, where applicable, have also been discussed. Given the broad range of objectives this study addresses, an important part of this discussion has been the relevance of a mixed methods approach in this context. It was argued early on that separate methods were needed to elicit the type of data needed to answer different research question. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the findings of Stages I, II and III of this study individually, before drawing the three stages together for a fuller analysis in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 5

Stage I: Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the first of a three stage of data collection process employed in this study. This research was driven by a clear set of research questions, which were outlined in the last chapter. However, the general paucity of research on the issues of attitudes towards varieties of the Irish language among adult learners, links between such attitudes and learners' motivation to learn the language and adult language learners' L2 identity, has meant that parts of this study are exploratory in nature. The data sets from each stage of the research design are presented in this chapter, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 in the sequence in which they were collected.

It will be remembered from the last chapter that this study makes use of a sequential explanatory research design (Creswell, 2009). The main feature of the design is that one form of data collection follows and informs another. This study employed three methods (a questionnaire, a speaker evaluation exercise and an interview), which were implemented sequentially in separate data collection sessions. The questionnaire was aimed at surveying the attitudes, motivation, language preferences and linguistic behaviour of as many learners as possible. The subsequent speaker evaluation exercise and qualitative interviews were used to collect data from a subsample of learners in order to provide further information on the issues covered in the questionnaire. While the second and third instruments both seek to explain data from the first, the quantitative and qualitative nature of these instruments allow each to do this differently. However, since these three phases were carried out independently, albeit with a subsample of the same participants in the latter two, the presentation of the data sets generated by them are first presented in separate chapters. After the presentation of data, a discussion of the potential of the data sets to inform one another in terms of interpretations is offered in the final chapter of this thesis.

Details of the research design and instruments have already been presented in Chapter 4, and, therefore, only a brief recapitulation is necessary here. The Stage I questionnaire (the Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners) was distributed to learners attending classes run by six course providers in four separate locations in the Republic of Ireland. Participants for the second and third data collection sessions (the speaker evaluation exercise and semi-structured interviews) were recruited from among those participating in the first study who provided contact details when they

filled out the questionnaire. The final sample who participated in Stage I (N = 157) and the subsample (N = 31) who participated in Stages II and III encountered the three research instruments in the following order:

Stage I	**Stage II**	**Stage III**
Questionnaire →	Speaker evaluation → exercise	Semi-structured interview
QUANT/qual	QUANT/qual	qual/quant
(N = 157)	(N = 31)	(N = 31)

The sequential explanatory design seeks, via additional data collection, to provide further information that help expand on and/or explain issues which are uncovered in the first data collection and analysis. In this study, the general nature of some of the questions and scale items in the questionnaire are expanded on (both conceptually and explicitly) in the speaker evaluation exercise and semi-structured interviews. The more detailed nature of the latter research approaches makes them particularly suited to use with a smaller subsample.

5.1 Stage I data and participants

This remainder of this chapter discusses data that was generated by the Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners in Stage I of data collection. We start by looking at the procedures implemented in order to prepare the data for analysis. Key background details of the sample are then discussed. A portion of this data is also reported in Murphy and Flynn (2013).

5.1.1 Data preparation

All questionnaires were distributed in hard copy (paper) form and were returned by post to the researcher. For the purposes of analysis, the data were entered into a database using the PASW Statistics 18.0 software package (other versions known as SPSS). In general, the returned questionnaires were complete. However, there were a few cases of missing or contradictory responses. For example, some questionnaires contained a small number of items which were answered in a way that stood in contradiction to a response provided for another item. There were also some instances where no response was recorded for items. Finally, there were a few instances in which respondents included a note beside an item to indicate the reason it was omitted. In any of the above mentioned cases, an attempt was made, by taking cues

from responses to other items, to determine whether a response could be entered on behalf of the participant (Dörnyei, 2007). Where this was not possible it was recorded as missing.

5.1.2 The participants

The Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners was distributed by teacher-gatekeepers to learners who were attending classes run by the six course providers discussed in Section 4.2.3 of the last chapter. Three of these providers were based in Dublin and three in the Gaeltacht (one in each of the main Gaeltacht regions). Based on correspondence with the course providers regarding course enrolment numbers, a total of 273 questionnaires were supplied for distribution by teachers in suitable classes (intermediate and advanced levels). 157 completed questionnaires were returned by learners which equates to a response rate of 58%[4]. The distribution of questionnaires returned from the various regions are summarised in Table 5.1. One of the main aims of the questionnaire was to collect general, as well as some specific background information for the participants. This information is summarized in the following sections.

Table 5.1

Respondents by course location

	n	%
Donegal	35	22.3
Connemara	32	20.4
Kerry	30	19.1
Dublin	60	38.2
Total	157	100.0

[4] All percentages in the body of the text are rounded to the nearest whole number. Tables contain percentages rounded to the first decimal. In some cases figures may not add up to exactly 100%.

Figure 5.1
Respondents' birthplaces by province

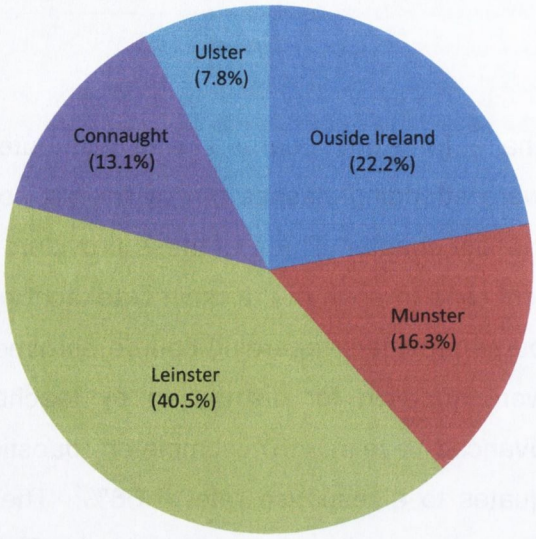
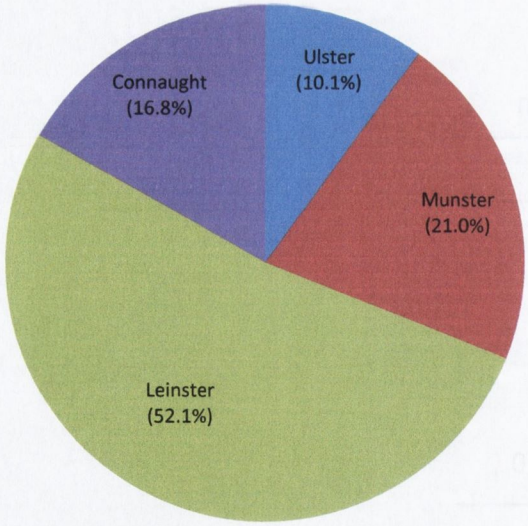


Figure 5.2
Irish born Respondents' birthplaces by province



The respondents to the questionnaire hail from a number of countries. While the majority were born in the Republic of Ireland (n=119 or 76%), smaller numbers were born in Northern Ireland (n=4), The United States (n=16), England (n=7), Canada (n=3), Australia (n=1), Scotland (n=1), Germany (n=1), Hungary (n=1), The Netherlands (n=1), Russia (n=1) Spain (n=1) and Tanzania (n=1). Of the respondents

who were born in the Republic, 52% were born in the province of Leinster. Respondents' birthplaces are presented in Figures 5.1 and 5.2.

The gender distribution in the total sample was 53% female and 47% male. However, when we look at the gender according to their place of origin, we see that the numbers are less balanced. (See Table 5.2.) The largest group of learners were in the 26-45 year age range (39%), followed by those in the 46-65 year age range (38%). The younger and older age groups (18-25 and 65+) made up smaller portions of the sample at 12% and 11% respectively. The lower number of younger learners may be indicative of a common tendency for there to be a relatively large gap in time between leaving school and returning to Irish language learning in adulthood (Ní Ghallachair, 2009).

Table 5.2

Gender of respondents by birthplace

	Rep. of Ireland		**Northern Ireland**		**Outside of Ireland**	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Male	48	40.3	3	75.0	23	67.6
Female	71	59.7	1	25.0	11	32.4
Total	119	100.0	4	100.0	34	100.0

5.1.3 Previous exposure to Irish in school

Most of the learners had been exposed to the Irish language prior to attending adult classes. All except one of those who were born in the Republic of Ireland studied Irish as a subject in both primary and secondary school. There was a similar pattern among those born in Northern Ireland. Three of these four learners had previous experience of learning Irish at school (two of the four had Irish as a subject in secondary school and one in primary school). Of the thirty-four learners born in other countries, 32% (n = 11) indicated that they had previous experience learning Irish at school. Five claimed that they had Irish to Leaving Certificate level (secondary school). Qualitative data provided in the last section of the questionnaire confirms that these learners were born outside of Ireland, but relocated to the country at a young enough age not to have been exempt from the subject. The remaining six indicated they had learned Irish at degree (n = 1) or some 'other' (n = 5) level.

Another background item on the questionnaire addressed the variety of Irish spoken by learners' primary and secondary school teachers. Respondents were

presented with five response options: 'Munster', 'Connacht', 'Ulster', 'Neutral' and 'Not applicable'. They were asked to indicate all the varieties which were spoken by both their primary school and secondary school teachers. In both contexts, Munster Irish was the most commonly selected, with nearly double the percentage of responses (49% for primary and 47% for secondary) compared to the next highest option, Connaught Irish (25% for primary and 25% for secondary). Ulster Irish was the least common variety encountered by these learners in school (6% primary and 9% secondary). Interestingly, only approximately 20% claimed that the dialect their primary or secondary school teachers spoke was 'neutral'. This is surprising since many teachers of Irish are second language learners themselves and it was expected that a higher number of learners would have encountered teachers who spoke a variety of the language that was less regional, i.e. neutral. While, we cannot be sure how accurate these responses are, they do seem to indicate fairly firm perceptions and certainly a level of dialect awareness among learners. This issue was addressed in the second stage of the research and is discussed further below.

Table 5.3

Overview of main sample by demographic origin and Irish language experience

Variable		**Rep. of Ireland**		**Northern Ireland**		**Outside of Ireland**		**Total**	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender	Male	48	40.3	3	75.0	23	67.6	74	47.1
	Female	71	59.7	1	25.0	11	32.4	83	52.9
Age	18-25	15	12.6	0	0.0	3	8.8	18	11.5
	26-45	45	37.8	0	0.0	17	50.0	62	39.5
	46-65	46	38.7	2	50.0	12	35.3	60	38.2
	65+	13	10.9	2	50.0	2	5.9	17	10.8
Irish at school	No	1	0.8	1	25.0	23	67.6	25	15.9
	Yes	118	99.2	3	75.0	11	32.4	132	84.1
Level of Irish at school	Junior Cert.	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6
	Leaving Cert.	103	86.6	2	50.0	5	14.7	110	70.1
	Degree	7	5.9	0	0.0	1	2.9	8	5.1
	Other	7	5.9	1	25.0	5	14.7	13	8.3
	N/A	1	0.8	1	25.0	23	67.6	25	15.9

We now have a general picture of the participants in the first stage of the study that shows that in many ways the sample of learners is a diverse one (e.g. age, place of birth, exposure to varieties of Irish at school). Yet among certain subgroups, learners' experience has been rather homogeneous (e.g. nearly all Irish born participants had Irish to Leaving Certificate level, while most of those born outside the country did not). The main background variables just discussed are summarized in Table 5.3 above. It is worth noting at this point that the profile of learners in this study, particularly in relation to number of participants, age groups and previous exposure to Irish, is comparable to that of another large scale study of adult learners of Irish in the Republic conducted by Devitt, Little, Ó Conchúir, & Singleton (1983). Indeed, in many respects the samples in the two studies are very similar. In the next sections, we will look at some further background details and responses to other questionnaire items in detail.

5.1.4 Previous exposure to Irish outside of school

Since the participants in this study are all post secondary school learners of Irish, it is of interest to know more about their experience and exposure to Irish during and since leaving school. We know from the data above that a large number of participants had Irish as a subject at some level in their schooling.

However, two items on the questionnaire dealt with this issue specifically, one directly and another indirectly. First, the indirect question (item 3) asked participants to indicate whether other members of their families speak or spoke Irish. The reasoning behind this question is that learners may have had opportunity to speak or hear Irish in the home even if it wasn't the primary language. Immediate family members (i.e. mother, father, siblings and grandparents) were recorded using a closed response format. An open response option was also provided under the heading 'other' to record extended family members if applicable. A little more than half (54%) of the sample indicated that some member of their family, immediate or extended, speaks/spoke Irish. Learners' parents were the most frequently named (mother 22% and father 19%). This was followed by siblings (brother 15% or sister 16%) and then grandparents (grandfather 7% or grandmother 8%). 13% of the respondents indicated that some other member of their family spoke Irish.

A second, two-part item asked learners directly how much exposure learners had to Irish through the media (TV, newspapers, etc.) prior to attending adult classes, with choices of 'none', 'a little' or 'a lot'. The most common response was 'a little' (71%). Responses to this item according to learners' place of birth are provided in Table 5.4. The second part of the question asked what dialect was most prevalent in

these media. Responses to this item were more balanced than those to the question about varieties of Irish in school. Here Connaught Irish (54%) was the most commonly encountered variety in the media, followed by Munster (25%). Ulster (23%) was again the least encountered variety however a considerably larger number of participants were exposed to this variety through the media than they were in school. Interestingly, a large number said that a neutral variety (24%) was the one they had most exposure to through the media. One explanation for the prevalence of the Connaught variety in the media is the fact that the national Irish language television station (TG4) and the national Irish language radio station (Raidió na Gaeltachta) have their head offices and primary studios in Connaught. It is possible, therefore, that there are more presenters from this region than the others.

Table 5.4

Cross tabulation of level of previous exposure to Irish via media by birthplace

	Rep. of Ireland *n*	**Northern Ireland** *n*	**Outside of Ireland** *n*	**Total** *n*
None	12	1	15	28
A little	91	3	17	111
A lot	16	0	2	18
Total	119	4	34	157

5.1.5 Experience of Irish language learning outside of school and level of proficiency

An overwhelming majority (95%) of the sample indicated that they had attended an adult Irish language course since leaving school (prior to taking part in this study). The mean number of Irish language courses attended by respondents was 3.5 (*SD* = 4.2), however, the most frequent number of previous adult courses attended since leaving school was one.

In terms of their level of proficiency in Irish at the time they completed the questionnaire, participants' self assessments ranged the gamut. There were two measures of Irish language proficiency on the questionnaire. We will refer to these here as 'level' and 'ability'. Learners' level of Irish was measured on a six point scale: 'no Irish', 'the odd word', 'a few simple sentences', 'parts of conversations', 'most conversations', 'native speaker ability'. This is a commonly used scale in Irish language research. The second measure consisted of 'can do' statements based on Common

European Framework of Reference for Languages descriptors (CEFR). Both of these measures were discussed in the last chapter. (See Section 4.3.1 above).

Responses to the former measure show that 92% of respondents evaluated themselves as being at the 'parts of conversations' (42%) or 'most conversations' (50%) levels. Much smaller numbers of learners rated themselves at the highest and second lowest levels (approximately 4% each). These figures are much higher than those in national surveys carried out over a span of three decades where about 50% of the population said that they had a 'the odd word' or 'no Irish' and 40% said they could handle 'a few simple sentences' or parts of conversations' (Ó Riagáin & Ó Gliasáin, 1994).

The 'can do' statements which make up the second measure correspond to A1 (beginner) through C2 (mastery) levels in the CEFR. Responses here indicate that the largest percentage of respondents (33%) rated themselves at the B2 level, followed by C1 (22%), A2 (20%), B1 (18%) and C2 (8%). The two proficiency measures (level and ability) were strongly correlated, $r = .69$, $p < .01$ (two tailed). These figures are important mainly because post-beginner learners were targeted for this study for a number of reasons discussed in Section 4.2.3 of the last chapter.

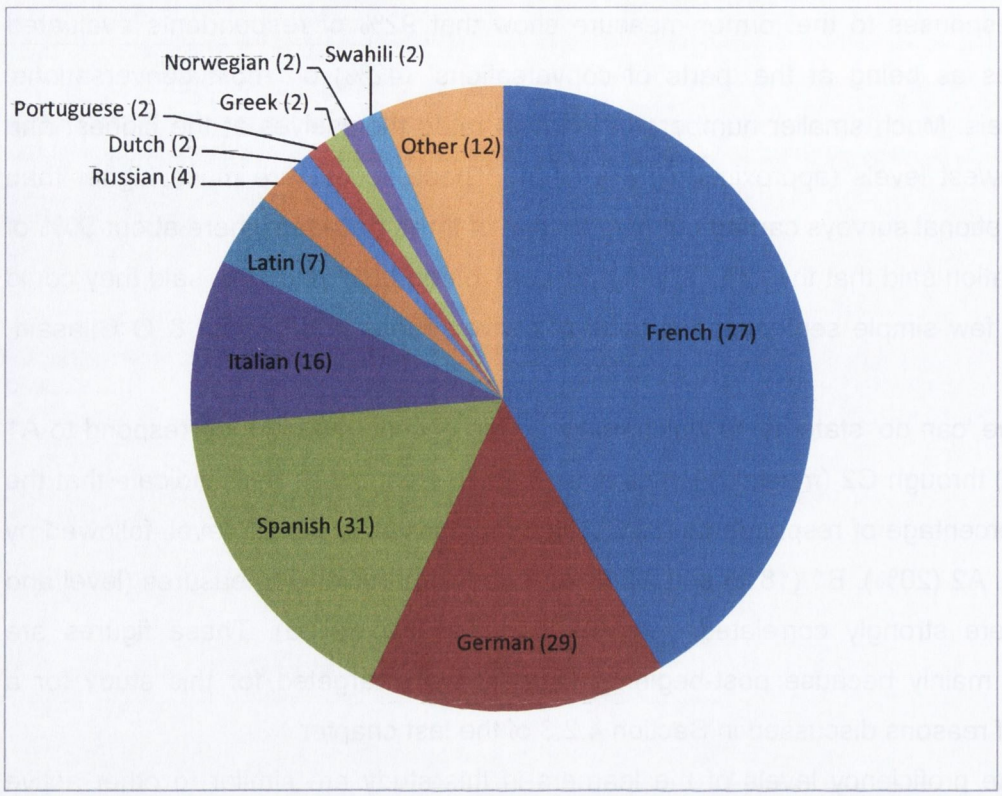
The proficiency levels of the learners in this study are similar to other active adult Irish language learners surveyed in previous studies (Devitt et al., 1983; Murtagh & van der Slik, 2004; Ó Laoire, 2007) in that their self assessments of ability in Irish are higher than those of the general public. Interestingly, Murtagh and van der Slik (2004) reported that recent school leavers' self perceived proficiency in Irish was lower eighteen months after they had left school than it was when they were at school. However, scores of proficiency tests administered at both times showed no significant decline in competency. It is possible that the national figures described above reflect a continued decline in self perceived proficiency over time among people who have not attended an Irish language course of any type since leaving school. Conversely, the higher levels of self reported competency among active adult learners may be the result of renewed regular contact with the language via the learning context.

5.1.6 Other language learning experiences

Data was also collected on additional languages spoken by participants. 68% ($n = 107$) of the total sample indicated that they speak at least one language other than Irish or English. The most popular languages were French ($n = 77$), German ($n = 29$), Spanish ($n = 31$) and Italian ($n = 16$). Figure 5.3 shows the number of participants who speak various additional languages. It is interesting to note that only one of the learners in this study claimed to speak another Celtic language, i.e. Welsh.

Figure 5.3

Number of participants who speak individual additional languages



Other: Ulster Scots (1), Welsh (1), Latvian (1), Chi chewa (1), Flemish (1), Finnish (1), Danish (1), Basque (1), Nyakyusa (1), Hebrew (1), American Sign Language (1), Arabic (1)

Learners were also asked to indicate where they learned their additional languages. The responses show that the most popular learning context was in formal educational with 75 of these respondents (70%) stating that they learned an additional language at school. Thirty-two said they learned languages through travel and 23 learned additional languages by attending adult education classes. The other contexts mentioned were university courses (n = 18), self study (n = 14), living abroad (n = 13) and religious organizations (n = 1). In addition, 5 learners claimed to be native speakers of at least one of their additional languages.

An additional item asked respondents if they had ever lived outside of Ireland in a country where a language other than English was spoken, and if yes, whether they had learned the local language(s). Sixty-three (41% of the sample) said that they had lived in at least one non-English speaking country, and 55 said that they learned the local language(s). 25 (or 45%) of those learners said they learned one local language fluently, 10 learned a second local language fluently and two learned a third language fluently.

These figures show the multilingual nature of the adult Irish language learners which make up the sample for this study. They also show that, along with their

previous experience of learning Irish, many bring with them experiences of learning modern European and non-European languages to the classroom. Finally, a small number of learners also have experience of learning other lesser spoken languages such as Welsh, Basque and Ulster Scots.

5.2 Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners: Scale item data

In this section we look at the responses to items which make up the eight scales in the Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners. First, an overview of the eight scales, including the mean scores and reliability estimates, is presented. These are discussed in relation to other studies using these or similar scales. Next, data from responses to scale items in detail is presented. In each case descriptive statistics, i.e. means, frequencies and percentages, for the scale and selected items are presented. This section also presents response data from miscellaneous Likert-type items which are not part of individual scales. The advantage of this detailed approach is that important information which may potentially be concealed by variable reduction (i.e. scale means) is not overlooked (Baker, 1992). This is particularly important in the context of the present study since we have, in general, very little in the way of comprehensive data on adult learners of Irish.

5.2.1 Overview of scale data

The eight scales that make up the bulk of the questionnaire items (n = 44) were discussed in the previous chapter. They include scales from previously published studies as well as those constructed specifically for this study. Table 5.5 shows mean scores and standard deviations for the eight scales used in the Questionnaire. The table also shows the reliability estimates, i.e. Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951), for each scale. The reliability estimate measures the internal consistency of the whole scale, i.e. the extent to which each item within the scale is measuring the same construct.

The alpha coefficients for the scales demonstrate that the three scales adapted from Gardner's AMTB show a satisfactory level of internal consistency (α .61 - .73). In fact, the alpha coefficients for these scales are very close those found in Harris and Murtagh's (1999) study. The new scales, also performed well with internal consistency ranging from α .68 - .76. While some authors warn about alpha coefficients that fall below .7, Kline (2000) has demonstrated that social science data which attempts to measure psychological constructs often falls below this mark (cf. Field, 2009). This is echoed by a number of other authors (e.g. Aiken, 2002; Dörnyei, 2007), particularly in the context of exploratory research (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

Table 5.5

Mean Scores and reliability estimates for attitude/motivation scales used in the *Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners*

Scales	Item mean score*	SD	Scale Score (Min, Max)	Scale Score Mean	Scale Score SD	Reliability (Cronbach Alpha)
Integrativeness scales (AMTB based)						
Attitude to Irish speakers	6.15	1.02	8, 56	49.17	5.10	.73
Integrative orientation to Irish	5.47	1.47	4, 32	21.88	4.47	.73
Other Scales (AMTB based)						
Instrumental orientation to Irish	4.48	1.82	3, 21	13.44	4.15	.61
Non-AMTB based scales						
Identity/Self-concept	6.28	0.96	4, 28	25.07	2.97	.76
Proficiency aims and goals	6.16	1.02	4, 28	24.65	3.06	.74
Attitude to learning dialects of Irish	4.64	1.72	5, 35	23.21	5.69	.68
Cultural activities and preferences	3.46	1.97	5, 35	17.32	6.78	.72
Self confidence in speaking	1.62*	0.39	11, 22	17.81	2.15	.68

* A 7-point Likert scale response format was used for all scale items except the *Self confidence in speaking* scale, which used a dichotomous true/false scale format.

5.2.2 Motivational orientations

While we expect adult learners attending the types of courses surveyed in this study to be motivated, it is important to know what types of motivational orientations are present in such learners and whether one type is more dominant than another. In terms of motivational orientation we can see that these learners are more integratively motivated than instrumentally with item mean scores of 6.15, *SD* = 1.02 on the *Attitude to Irish speakers* scale, 5.47, *SD* = 1.47 on the *Integrative orientation to Irish* scale and 4.48, *SD* = 1.82 on the *Instrumental orientation to Irish* scale respectively. The responses to a few items from these scales help to illustrate learners' levels of

integrative and instrumental orientation to learning Irish at present. Table 5.6 presents the numbers of learners agreeing/disagreeing with selected items.

Table 5.6

Percentage of learners agreeing 'slightly-strongly' with statements about integrative and instrumental orientation

Questionnaire items	Percentages of learners agreeing with statements
Integrative orientation to Irish (items 24, 27)	
'Learning Irish is important to me because it will allow me to speak to different people.'	72.0
'Learning Irish is important to me because it will allow me to read books and understand Irish songs and Irish TV/radio programming.'	94.3
Instrumental orientation to Irish (items 28, 30)	
'Learning Irish is important to me because it will help me to get a job or a promotion in my current position.'*	35.1
'Learning Irish is important for me because people will have more respect for me if I speak the language.'	41.4

*Five participants did not respond to this item. The valid percentage is reported here.

One item in the *Instrumental orientation to Irish* scale (number 29) demostrated a different response pattern. 83% of the learners agreed with the item which states 'It is important to me to learn Irish because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.' While this item was included in Gardner's (e.g. 1985) original battery, it is the only one in the scale that does not refer to another person or organisation. This raises questions about the instrumentality of the statement, and, therefore, it is plausible that what the learners are reacting positively to is connected to their self concept.

5.2.3 Learner identity and self-concept

The *Identity/Self-concept* scale is designed to assess the importance learners ascribe to the ability to speak Irish for their self-concept. A high score on this scale indicates that being able to speak Irish is an important part of a learner's self concept. The

average item score for this scale was 6.28 (*SD* = 0.96), which demostrates that the language is of great importance to these learners' self concept. Table 5.7 shows the response pattern for the most directly worded item in the scale: 'The ability to speak Irish is an important element of my personal identity.' 87% agree with this statement, while 9% are neutral on the issue and a little over 4% disagreeing.

Table 5.7
Responses to the statement 'The ability to speak Irish is an important element of my personal identity.'

Response options	***N* = 157**	**Percentages of learners' responses**
Strongly Disagree		0.6
Disagree		2.5
Slightly Disagree		1.3
Neutral		8.9
Slightly Agree		16.6
Agree		28.0
Strongly Agree		42.0

One item in this scale attempts to go beyond the question of ability. Learners were asked to respond to the statement 'The quality of the Irish I speak (pronunciation, grammar, idioms) is important to me.' 98% of respondents agreed with this statement, with 52% agreeing strongly. None of the participants were neutral on this issue.

5.2.4 Self confidence in speaking

Alongside the measures for integrative orientation in adult learners of Irish, two scales were constructed to measure the extent to which learners engage in behaviour consistent with relatively high integrativeness. The first of these is the *Self confidence in speaking* scale, a 11 item scale which presents statements which are to be responded to a dichotomous scale of 'true' or 'false'. Responses to the seven positively worded items in the scale were coded as 2 (true) or 1 (false) and responses to the four negatively worded items were reverse coded as 2 (false) or 1 (true). A high score on this scale would indicate a high level of comfort in speaking Irish in various contexts.

The mean total score out of a maximum of 22 for this scale was 17.81 (*SD* = 2.15), which is relatively high. The majority of learners responded positively (true) to

the statements about using Irish inside and outside of the classroom. A majority of learners also responded negatively (false) to three of the four language anxiety statements included in the scale. Table 5.8 presents responses to five sample items from this scale.

Table 5.8

Responses to selected items from the *Self confidence in speaking* scale

Questionnaire items	**Percentages of learners' responses***	
	True	False
Positively worded items		
'I speak Irish as often as possible.'	58.6	41.4
'I speak in Irish to my classmates in the Irish classroom.'	92.8	7.2
'I speak in Irish to my classmates outside of the Irish classroom.'	74.2	25.8
Negatively worded (anxiety) items		
'Speaking Irish in public makes me uncomfortable.'	29.7	70.3
'I feel uncomfortable speaking Irish to people who have better Irish than I do.'	48.1	51.9

*Up to 4% of the sample did not respond to some of these items. The valid percentages are reported here.

While the majority of respondents reported that they speak Irish as often as possible, there was still a very sizable minority (41%) who do not. The responses show that these learners clearly speak the language with fellow learners. While a very high number of learners speak Irish to classmates in the classroom setting, not as many do outside the classroom. It is worth noting that the statement regarding language use with classmates outside the classroom had one of the higher rates of non-response on this scale (4%). This may indicate that either some learners choose not to speak Irish with their classmates outside the classroom setting or that, despite a desire to do so, they do not have the opportunity, and, therefore, could not state whether it is true of false. Interview data discussed in Chapter 7 suggest the latter. While most learners are comfortable speaking Irish in public, a superior proficiency level in an interlocutor appears to invoke anxiety in many learners, since only just slightly over 50% are

comfortable speaking to those who have a higher level of proficiency in the language then their own.

Two additional items in this scale which are of particular interest here are those that specifically mention speaking to people who are not classmates, i.e. family members (item 33) and employees of government agencies (item 38). In the case of the former, 34% said this was true, while in the case of the latter only 11% said this was true. In general, then, these adult learners speak Irish mainly to their classmates, and particularly to those who have the same (or perhaps lower) proficiency levels then they do.

5.2.5 Cultural activities and preferences

The second scale dealing with integrative behaviour is the *Cultural activities and preferences* scale. The Likert-type scale contains statements about cultural activities in which learners may engage. This scale differs from the scale discussed in the last section in two ways. First, this scale does not deal with speaking the Irish language. Rather, the statements refer to activities where Irish is likely to be used. Second, none of the items mention activities connected with formal language learning (i.e. classroom contexts).

The response pattern for items in this scale is rather different to those in the *Self confidence in speaking* scale. The overall item mean score for the *Cultural activities and preferences* scale is 3.46 (*SD* = 1.97), signifying that the general response to the scale was negative. However, a closer look at the item response percentages shows that while 40-51% of learners selected a negative response option for items in the scale, 10-33% were neutral on these items. This means that between 16-50% of learners responded positively to these items. It is important to note, however, that among the positive responses 'Slightly Agree' was the most popular response on all but one of the items. Much smaller percentages selected one of the other positive responses. There were two items in particular that had very high percentages of neutral responses. Both of these items are statements of preference regarding Irish music and literature from particular regions of the country and the responses for each are summarized in Table 5.9.

The generally negative or neutral responses to these scale items reveal that only small percentages of these learners regularly engage in cultural activities associated with the Irish language. It may be the case that learners' proficiency level does not allow them to engage in such activities. However, only a medium strength correlation, $r = .31$, $p > .01$ (two tailed) was found with learners' ability in Irish.

Table 5.9

Responses to the *Cultural activities and preferences* scale (selected items)

Questionnaire items	Percentages of learners' responses*		
	Agree (strongly-slightly)	Neutral	Disagree (strongly-slightly)
'I prefer to listen to Irish songs from a particular Gaeltacht region.'	16.0	32.7	51.3
'When I read in Irish (e.g. books, newspapers, magazines) I prefer to read materials that are written in a particular dialect of Irish.'	24.3	26.9	48.7

* < 1% of the sample did not respond to these items. The valid percentages are reported here.

5.2.6 Proficiency aims and goals

This scale and the next include items connected to the level of proficiency and type of Irish these learners would like to achieve. The *Proficiency aims and goals* scale contains four items which seek responses to statements about the Irish of native speakers. The underlying aim of the scale is to measure learners' attitude towards the prospect of achieving native speaker proficiency in Irish. The item mean score for this scale is 6.16 (*SD* = 1.02), which indicates a high level of agreement with these items.

While 3-11% of the respondents provided a neutral response to these items, only 1-3% disagreed with any item. The positive responses to these items are summarized in Table 5.10. The overall finding here is that these learners value native speakers of Irish and would like more opportunities to speak the language with them. In addition, they would clearly like their own level of proficiency in Irish to mirror that of native speakers.

One important feature of the response pattern to these items is that, while the responses to item 51 ('sound like a native speaker') is very positive, *M* = 5.94 (*SD* = 1.18), the percentage of learners agreeing with the statement (87%) is less than all other items in the scale. This is particularly clear when it is compared to item 49 ('would like my level of fluency in Irish to equal that of a native speaker'). The percentage of learners agreeing with the latter is 8% higher. This suggests that these learners differentiate to some degree between fluency (i.e. proficiency) and 'sounding like' (i.e. mimicking the syntactic, lexical and/or phonetic norms of native speakers). This finding raises questions about the extent to which learners who want to be as fluent as native speakers also want to sound like a native speaker. If so, do they have

a preference for a specific target speech model (i.e. a preferred target dialect)? Are these preferences this part of these learners' overall language learning goals? These questions are in part answered in the next section.

Table 5.10

Responses to *Proficiency aims and goals* scale items

Questionnaire items	**Percentages of learners agreeing with statements***
'Ideally, I would like my level of fluency in Irish to equal that of a native speaker of the language.'	94.8
'The Irish of native speakers sounds more natural than the Irish of learners.'	93.5
'I would like to sound like a native speaker when I speak Irish.'	86.6
'I would like to have more opportunities to speak Irish to native speakers.'	93.7

* < 2% of the sample did not respond to some of these items. The valid percentages are reported here.

5.2.7 Attitudes towards learning dialects of Irish

The final set of scale items to be discussed here are those that make up the *Attitudes towards learning dialects of Irish* scale. These five items present statements which aim to gauging learners' disposition towards traditional varieties of Irish (i.e. regional dialects) and whether they might be oriented towards learning a particular 'type' of Irish. It is important to note that the statements in this scale referred only to the notion of dialects and not individual varieties.

The item mean score for this scale is 4.64 (*SD* = 1.72), which, compared to the previous scale discussed, is relatively low. In terms of the overall response to this and the last scale, it would seem that these learners' attitudes towards learning varieties of Irish are less strong than their attitudes towards achieving native like fluency. If we look at responses to the individual items, however, we see that the issue is a little more complex than that. The item in the scale with the highest mean score (5.43, *SD* = 1.57) is item 53, which states 'I have a definite preference for a particular dialect of Irish.' Conversely, the item with the lowest mean score (3.86, *SD* = 2.00) is item 52, which states 'There are some dialects of Irish that I dislike.' At first glance, the latter item may

appear to be a negatively worded item warranting a reverse coding, however, this is not the case. First, the item-total correlation for this item is α .31. While this is lower than the other items, it is still in a satisfactory range (De Vaus, 2002a). Second, there is no reason to assume that having a preference for a particular variety of Irish would result in having a dislike for another variety. The collapsed 'Agree – Neutral – Disagree' response pattern for these two items is provided in Table 5.11. The response distribution clearly shows that a large majority of these learners have a moderate to strong preference for a particular variety of the language, but a less pronounced dislike for any variety. In the case of both items, positive responses were fairly evenly spread over the three options, i.e. 'Slightly agree', 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree'.

The high number of learners (80%) who have a definite preference for a particular variety of the Irish language is qualified through their responses to other items in the scale (items 54-56). Just under half (49%) of the learners agreed with the statement 'Learning a particular dialect of Irish is important to me because I identify with speakers of that dialect', however, 28% took a neutral position on this issue. Such a high percentage of neutral responses to this item may be the result of feeling that the perceived difficulties of achieving a high enough proficiency level in a given variety as spoken by its speakers (i.e. native speakers) would make it difficult to identify fully with the target group. Alternatively, pursuits towards acquiring a particular variety of the target language may not be connected to an attempt to integrate into its community of speakers.

Table 5.11

Responses to the *Attitudes to learning dialects of Irish* scale (selected items)

Questionnaire items	**Percentages of learners responses***		
	Agree (strongly-slightly)	Neutral	Disagree (strongly-slightly)
'There are some dialects of Irish that I dislike.'	38.5	19.8	41.7
'I have a definite preference for a particular dialect of Irish.'	80.1	9.6	10.3

* < 1% of the sample did not respond to these items. The valid percentages are reported here.

A majority (60%) of learners agreed that learning a particular variety of Irish makes you sound more like a 'genuine Irish speaker' (item 55). However, the most

common response option for this item was 'Slightly agree' (24%) and there was again a relatively large neutral cohort (22%). Conflict among participants on the issue of identifying with speakers of a variety may be linked to the issue of becoming a genuine speaker of Irish. The higher number of learners who agree with the latter statement may be linked to the high number who stated that they have a definite preference for one variety. Having a preference and wanting to sound like a 'genuine' speaker of the language appear to be somewhat divorced from the issue of identifying with other speakers of that variety. The final item in the scale (item 56) states that 'It is better to first learn one dialect in Irish and then learn the other dialects.' 51% of learners in the study agreed with this statement; however, the largest number of neutral responses for items in this scale was recorded for this item (30%).

Overall, the responses to the items in this scale are much more balanced than the responses to the *Proficiency aims and goals* scale discussed in the last section. These results show that while many learners in the study have a preference for a variety of the target language, this preference may not be linked to their language learning goals. Learners may not identify strongly with speakers of their preferred dialect. It is possible, then, that a weak identification is the result of not being from the same place or, as mentioned earlier, the perceived difficulties in successfully learning one dialect to a native speaker level of proficiency prevents them from identifying with that group. An alternative explanation might be that previous positive exposure or experience at school or since returning to Irish as an adult has influenced learners' attitude towards varieties or the Irish language. It is important to note here that responses to another, miscellaneous non-scale item which asked if it was thought to be important that the Irish language maintains its different regional varieties in the future (item 57), 70% of the learners agreed that it is important, 17% were neutral and 14% disagree ('Slightly disagree' was the most popular negative response (6%). This would indicate that for these learners, whether or not they have a preference for one or more of these, they are generally not opposed to the existence of regional varieties of the language, and would like to see their existence continue into the future.

5.2.8 Miscellaneous questionnaire items

The questionnaire contains a small number of miscellaneous items that were not associated with the background items or any of the scale variables. One of these items has already been discussed in the last section (item 57). The remaining miscellaneous items are presented here in the order in which they appear in the questionnaire.

Item 32 (a true/false item) states 'I would like to speak Irish more often.' All but one participant (99.4%) indicated that this statement was true. This is interesting when

compared to the *Self confidence in speaking* scale item 'I speak Irish as often as possible' which was reported above in Table 5.9. Only 59% agreed with the latter item, which would seem to indicate that a large percentage of these learners do not speak Irish as often as the opportunity presents itself, but that they would like to change this.

The remaining miscellaneous items are Likert-type statements with a 7 point response format. The positive responses to these items are summarized in Table 5.12. The mean score for item 43 ('familial connection') was low (2.56, SD = 2.07). The low number of learners agreeing with this statement demonstrates that a relatively small number of learners recognize a familial connection to a *Gaeltacht* area. Further, with only small number of neutral responses (6%), and nearly half (47%) strongly disagreeing to this item shows that these learners were prepared to disagree with the statement.

The next statement refers to target language variety change over time ('The type of Irish I learned at school is the type of Irish I speak now'). The mean score for this item is 4.82 (SD = 1.83) shows that response trend is only marginally positive. It is important to note, however, that, while a majority of these learners agree with this item (60%), a relatively large number of learners (18%) selected the neutral option.

Table 5.12

Responses to the miscellaneous Likert-type questionnaire items (no. 43, 46, 58, 60)

Questionnaire items	**Percentages of learners agreeing with statements**
'My family has a connection to a part of the country where Irish is spoken.'	21.2
'The type of Irish I learned at school is the type of Irish I speak now.'*	61.6
'I like to hear Irish being spoken in a natural setting where people are not worried about grammar, pronunciation, etc.'	89.1
'Learning Irish is important to me because my children are learning Irish at school.'**	18.5

* 7% of the sample did not respond to this item.
** 11% of the sample did not respond to this item.

Further, 7% did not respond to the item. The neutral and non-responses may be the result of either a lack of awareness about 'type' of Irish they spoke while at school or

the fact that some learners did not have Irish at school (16% of the total sample). Either of these conditions would make it difficult for them to respond to the statement. It is interesting, however, that so many learners indicated that their target language 'type', i.e. variety, has not changed since leaving school.

Unsurprisingly, a very clear majority agreed that they like to hear Irish being spoken in natural settings without having to worry about accuracy. This is interesting when compared to responses to items in the *Cultural activities and preferences* scale and the *Self confidence in speaking* scale, which showed that learners mainly use the language with other learners in classroom settings. It may be the case that these learners do value the idea of using Irish in informal settings where grammatical accuracy is not considered a requirement, as it would be in the classroom, yet they may not have opportunities for such informal language use.

The final miscellaneous item is connected with learners' reasons for learning Irish, namely because their children are learning the language. A very small number of learners agreed with this statement, indicating that this potential motivator for language learning is not a strong part of their own motivation to learn Irish. This item had the highest number of neutral (35%) and non-responses (11%) of all the miscellaneous items, along with the above interpretation may also be the result of many learners not having school-aged children who are actively learning Irish.

5.3 Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners: Scale correlation data

Having looked in detail at participants' responses to individual variables, we can now turn our attention to relationships between the scale variables described thus far. In the context of this thesis we are particularly interested in learners' attitudes towards learning varieties of the Irish language, how their motivation to Irish might be linked to these attitudes and both may be connected to their self concept as a language learner. For this reason, correlation tests were conducted on the eight scales discussed earlier in this chapter: *Attitude to speakers*, *Integrative orientation*, *Instrumental orientation*, *Identity/Self-concept*, *Proficiency aims and goals*, *Attitude to learning dialects*, *Cultural activities and Self confidence in speaking* in order to explore relationships which may exist among them. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 5.13 (p. 125).

Based on de Vaus's (2002a) guidelines for assessing strength of association between variables, the correlation matrix below shows a number of strong (r = above .50), medium (r = .30 - .49) and weak (r = .10 - .29) positive correlations between mean scale scores for the sample. Further, many of these correlations are statistically significant at p-values of .05 or .01. In the remainder of this section we will discuss these correlations. In interpreting the relationship coefficients for variables of this study,

correlations ranging from .35 to .65 are viewed as having some predictive power for the group (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Further, similar to the matrix in Table 5.14, the discussion below will be presented under subheadings that correspond to the first four of the scale variables in order to avoid redundancy.

5.3.1 Attitude to Irish speakers

We have already seen that the *Attitude to Irish speakers* scale had one of the highest total item mean scores in the questionnaire data. Column one of the matrix below shows that all other scale variables are significantly correlated with this variable. While most of the scale variables are only weakly correlated with this one, there are two variables that are strongly correlated with learners' attitude to speakers of Irish: *Identity/Self-concept* (r = .54) and *Integrative orientation to Irish* (r = .46). Thus, learners who have a positive attitude towards other speakers of Irish generally value the language in terms of their own self concept, and are interested in interacting with the wider Irish language speech community. While this relationship might not be surprising, the very low correlation between attitude to learning dialects of Irish and learners' attitudes towards speakers (r = .16) is interesting. It suggests that a desire to integrate into a speech community may not mean that one is necessarily positively dispossessed towards learning the variety of Irish spoken by natives of that community. This would lend weight to the interpretation of responses to individual items in the *Attitude to learning dialects of Irish* scale in Sections 5.3.5 and 5.3.6. It was argued that learners differentiate between fluency (i.e. proficiency) and adhering to norms of native speech and that acquiring a particular variety of the target language may not be linked to a desire to integrate into its community of speakers. This is supported by a weak correlation between the scales.

5.3.2 Integrative orientation to Irish

Integrative orientation is operationally defined as having a positive attitude towards speakers of the target language and their culture. It is not surprising then that the two scale variables which correlate highest with learners' integrative orientation are *Attitude towards speakers of Irish* (r = .46) and *Cultural activities/preferences* (r = .46). Learners' language *Identity/Self-concept* was also strongly correlated with their integrativeness (r = .45). Unexpectedly, there was a medium strength correlation between learners' integrative and instrumental orientations (r = .37). Harris and Murtagh's (1999) data showed a similar pattern, however, in their study the correlation was even stronger. While these authors did not offer such an explanation, one might expect that in a minority language context such as Irish, the problematic nature of

integrativeness and instrumentality might yield similar response patterns on items designed to test such constructs, i.e. a learner might be integratively orientated, and as a result wish to work in the language sector. We have already discussed at least one issue arising out other the wording of the wording of some of the instrumental orientation items borrowed from Gardner's AMTB in Section 5.2.1. Further, Flynn (2009) showed that a number of different types of motivation, including integrative and instrumental, can be present in adult Irish language learners at one time.

The three variables that showed the weakest association with *Integrative orientation to Irish* were *Attitude towards learning dialects of Irish* (r = .31), *Proficiency aims and goals* (r = .23) and *Speaking performance self-confidence* (r = .23). This finding also demonstrates that learners' attitude to learning a particular type of Irish or their desired level of proficiency in the language does not seem to be connected to their desire to integrate into the language community.

5.3.3 Instrumental orientation to Irish

Other than the above mentioned association with *Integrative orientation*, no other scale variable correlated with *Instrumental orientation to Irish* beyond what we have defined as a weak association (r = .10 - .29). In fact, three scale variables (*Identity/Self-concept*, *Proficiency aims and goals* and *Self confidence in speaking*) did not reach even this level, demonstrating almost no association with instrumentality. Of the weak correlations, the highest was with *Attitude to learning dialects of Irish* (r = .24). One plausible explanation for this result is that some learners may have an instrumental reason for learning a particular variety of Irish. A job or course opportunity in a particular part of the country could, for example, be an incentive to learn the variety of Irish spoken in that region.

5.3.4 Identity/Self-concept

The Irish language has shown to be an important element of learners' self concept, therefore, making it a potentially strong facet of their motivation to learn the language. It is clear then why this variable shows a relatively high level of association with almost every other variable, except *Instrumental orientation* with which it does not correlate at all. Self-concept correlates most strongly with *Attitude to speakers of Irish* (r = .54). Four of the scale variables correlate at a medium level with self-concept (in descending order of strength): *Integrative orientation*, *Proficiency aims and goals*, *Cultural activities and preferences*, and *Attitude to learning dialects of Irish*. The remaining scale, *Self confidence in speaking*, was only weakly correlated with this variable (r = .28).

Table 5.13
Correlation matrix for all scale variables in the study

	Attitude to Irish speakers	Integrative orientation to Irish	Instrumental orientation to Irish	Identity/ Self-concept	Proficiency aims and goals	Attitude to learning dialects	Cultural activities and preferences	Self confidence in speaking†	*M*	*SD*
Attitude to Irish speakers	1.00								6.15	0.63
Integrative orientation to Irish	.46**	1.00							5.47	1.12
Instrumental orientation to Irish	.21**	.37**	1.00						4.51	1.37
Identity/ Self-concept	.54**	.45**	.08	1.00					6.27	0.75
Proficiency aims and goals	.28**	.23**	.04	.44**	1.00				6.17	0.76
Attitude to learning dialects of Irish	.16*	.31**	.24**	.32**	.28**	1.00			4.65	1.14
Cultural activities and preferences	.29**	.46**	.19*	.45**	.20*	.22**	1.00		3.45	1.36
Self confidence in speaking†	.28**	.23**	-.04	.28**	.26**	.08	.42**	1.00	17.85†	2.19

Note: (N = 153); * $p < .05$ (two-tailed); ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)
† This scale has a dichotomous (true/false) response format. The mean reported here is a based on a total scale score out of 22.

5.4 Influence of background variables on responses to select scales

In order to explore the role of key background variables in determining learners' attitudes towards the achievement of nativelike fluency and the desire to learn particular regional varieties of Irish, a series of statistical tests, i.e. one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and *t*-test, were run on the data. The independent variables in these tests were age, gender, proficiency level in Irish, place of birth and course location. The two dependent variables in these tests were the total item mean scores for the *Proficiency aims and goals* scale and the *Attitude to learning dialects of Irish* scale. Table 5.14 presents the overall results of these tests in terms of statistical significance. It shows that only two independent variables, proficiency in Irish and course location, showed statistically significant variance between groups and these were restricted to responses to the *Proficiency aims and goals* scale variable.

No additional attempts were made to look for interactions among the data, e.g. two-way ANOVAs. As shown in Tables 5.15 and 5.16, the number of observations per cell (i.e. the number of participants in independent variable subgroups) was less than 20 in some cases. Furthermore, the cell numbers were often very unbalanced. Both of thesis issues result in violations of assumptions of the appropriate statistical tests and increase the risk of Type I (False positive results) and Type II (false negative results) errors (Field, 2009; Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn, 2011). It was found that comparing responses across more than one independent variable resulted in even smaller and/or more unbalanced cell numbers. This level of analysis was, therefore, deemed inappropriate for this study's sample.

Table 5.14

Overall results of one-way analyses of variance

Independent variables	***Scale variables***	
	Proficiency aims and goals	Attitude to learning dialects of Irish
Age	ns	ns
Gender*	ns	ns
Proficiency in Irish	$p < .001$	ns
Place of birth	ns	ns
Course location	$p < .05$	ns

ns = not statistically significant

* Variance determined by an independent samples *t*-test

In relation to the ANOVA tests which were run, one possible explanation for the absence of statistically significant variance in the case of most background variables is that the numbers within the categories (i.e. subgroups of learners) were too small or too unbalanced (Field, 2009). One method of overcoming this issue is to combine groups which show similar response patterns in order increase the number of cases for variable subgroups. This, of course, must be done in a logical manner so that groups are not combined simply to increase numbers. Rather, the groups must have a clear link, even if it is only a tentative one for the purposes of exploring interactions in the data, in order to justify combining them (De Vaus, 2002b).

Table 5.15

Mean item scores of independent variable subgroups on *Proficiency aims and goals* scale

Independent variables	**Scale variable**				
	Proficiency aims and goals				
	subgroups				
Age	**18-25 (n=18)**	**26-45 (n=62)**	**46-65 (n=60)**	**65+ (n=16)**	
	M = 6.26 (SD = 0.76)	M = 6.09 (SD = 0.81)	M = 6.24 (SD = 0.68)	M = 5.97 (SD = 0.93)	
Gender	**Male (n=74)**	**Female (n=82)**			
	M = 6.09 (SD=0.80)	M = 6.22 (SD=0.74)			
Proficiency in Irish	**A2 (n=31)**	**B1 (n=27)**	**B2 (n=51)**	**C1 (n=34)**	**C2 (n=13)**
	M = 5.73 (SD = 0.76)	M = 6.03 (SD = 0.73)	M = 6.44 (SD = 0.60)	M = 6.11 (SD = 0.89)	M = 6.42 (SD=0.62)
Place of birth	**Outside of Ireland (n=34)**	**Leinster (n=62)**	**Munster (n=24)**	**Connaught (n=20)**	**Ulster (n=12)**
	M = 6.26 (SD=0.67)	M = 6.12 (SD=0.84)	M = 6.22 (SD=0.61)	M = 6.05 (SD=0.67)	M =6.04 (SD=.94)
Course location	**Donegal (n=35)**	**Connaught (n=32)**	**Kerry (n=30)**	**Dublin (n=59)**	
	M = 6.16 (SD=0.77)	M = 6.48 (SD=0.63)	M = 6.12 (SD=0.62)	M = 6.00 (SD=0.86)	

Table 5.16

Mean item scores of independent variable subgroups on *Attitude to learning dialects of Irish* scale

Independent variables	Scale variable				
	Attitude to learning dialects of Irish				
	subgroups				
Age	**18-25 (n=18)**	**26-45 (n=62)**	**46-65 (n=57)**	**65+ (n=17)**	
	M = 4.50 (SD = 1.19)	M = 4.74 (SD = 1.09)	M = 4.52 (SD = 1.16)	M = 4.85 (SD = 1.20)	
Gender	**Male (n=74)**	**Female (n=82)**			
	M = 4.57 (SD=0.98)	M = 4.70 (SD=1.27)			
Proficiency in Irish	**A2 (n=31)**	**B1 (n=27)**	**B2 (n=51)**	**C1 (n=34)**	**C2 (n=13)**
	M = 4.57 (SD = 1.08)	M = 4.42 (SD = 1.29)	M = 4.55 (SD = 1.10)	M = 4.77 (SD = 0.95)	M = 5.2 (SD=1.41)
Place of birth	**Outside of Ireland (n=34)**	**Leinster (n=62)**	**Munster (n=25)**	**Connaught (n=20)**	**Ulster (n=11)**
	M = 4.86 (SD=0.94)	M = 4.36 (SD=1.09)	M = 4.67 (SD=1.45)	M = 4.73 (SD=0.97)	M = 5.27 (SD=1.20)
Course location	**Donegal (n=34)**	**Connaught (n=32)**	**Kerry (n=30)**	**Dublin (n=60)**	
	M = 4.44 (SD=1.24)	M = 4.93 (SD=0.88)	M = 4.87 (SD=1.30)	M = 4.48 (SD=1.08)	

In order to determine whether this strategy was appropriate in the current research, mean plot graphs showing each subgroup's mean item score on the *Proficiency aims and goals* and *Attitude to learning dialects of Irish* scales were created. (See Figure 5.4 below for an example.) The resulting graphs were then examined for similarities of response patterns among the subgroups. Where there was a logical way of combining subgroups into two groups (to increase the cell numbers), this was done and an independent samples *t*-test was run. Table 5.15 and Table 5.16 show the mean item scores for subgroups of learners on the two scales. Table 5.17 shows the two independent variables (place of birth and course location) which produced statistically significant results when subgroups which performed similarly were combined. In the next subsections we will discuss those variables on which various subgroups demonstrated significant variance in their mean responses.

Table 5.17

Overview of *t*-test results on collapsed independent variable groups

Independent variables	Scale variables	
	Proficiency aims and goals	*Attitude to learning dialects of Irish*
Place of birth (Leinster/Other)	ns	$p < .05$
Course location (Dub+Don/Con+Kerry)	$p < .05$	$p < .05$

5.4.1 Influence of proficiency level on responses to Proficiency aims and goals scale

A one-way ANOVA was used to test whether there were significant differences in attitude towards achieving nativelike proficiency among five proficiency level groups A2 (M = 5.73, SD = 0.76), B1 (M = 6.03, SD = 0.73), B2 (M = 6.44, SD = 0.60), C1 (M = 6.11, SD = 0.89) and C2 (M = 6.42, SD = 0.62). Attitudes differed significantly across the groups, F (4,151) = 5.26, p = .001. The effect size was rather large (eta squared = .122). Tukey post-hoc comparisons of the five groups indicate that the B2 and the C1 proficiency groups displayed a significantly more positive attitude to the idea of achieving nativelike fluency than the A2 group, $p < .05$. The other groups did not differ from each other significantly. While not entirely straightforward, this result suggests that a higher level of proficiency in the target language has a positive effect on learners' attitude towards working towards achieving nativelike fluency.

5.4.2 Influence of course location on responses to Proficiency aims and goals scale

A one-way ANOVA was used to test whether there were significant differences in attitude towards achieving nativelike proficiency among four course location groups, Donegal (M = 6.16, SD = 0.77), Connemara (M = 6.48, SD = 0.63), Kerry (M = 6.12, SD = 0. 62) and Dublin (M = 6.00, SD = 0.86). Attitudes differed significantly across the groups, F (3,152) = 2.88, p = .04. The effect size was moderate (eta squared = .054). Tukey post-hoc comparisons of the five groups indicate that the Connemara group displayed a significantly more positive attitude to the idea of achieving nativelike fluency than the Dublin group, $p < .05$. The other groups did not differ from each other significantly.

The implication of this finding is that learners who attend a Gaeltacht based course may have a stronger positive attitude towards achieving nativelike fluency in Irish. The fact that only the Connemara course group showed a more positive attitude which was statistically significant variance is difficult to explain.

5.4.3 Influence of course location on responses to Attitudes to learning dialects of Irish scale

As shown in Table 5.14, the one-way ANOVA test did not detect any statistically significant variance between means of learners on the *Attitude to learning dialects of Irish* scale when grouped by course location. However, after examining a means plot (see Figure 5.4 below), it was decided to collapse the learners into two groups, Dublin + Donegal and Connemara + Kerry and retest for variance between the two groups. An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean scores of these two groups. It was found that there was a significant difference between scores for Dublin/Donegal group (M = 4.47, SD = 1.13) and Connemara/Kerry group (M = 4.90, SD = 1.10), $t(154) = -2.37$, $p < .05$. However, their was only a small to moderate effect size (eta squared = .035) with course location explaining only 3.5% of the variance in attitude towards learning dialects of Irish. Despite this finding, it is not easy to explain why the Connemara/Kerry would show a more positive attitude towards learning dialects of Irish. It is plausible that the Dublin based courses and the Donegal based course attract learners with similar backgrounds which influence their attitudes towards the notion of learning certain traditional varieties of Irish. One such variable may be place of birth, i.e. more Dublin-born learners were attending both the Dublin and Donegal courses. We discuss the role of learners' birthplace in the next section.

To further illustrate the above finding regarding course location, a cross tabulation of the collapsed responses to the *Attitudes to learning dialects of Irish* scale - 'Disagree' (1.00-3.99); 'Neutral' (4.00-4.99) and 'Agree' (5.00-7.00) - showed that learners attending Dublin-based courses had the highest number of mean scores that fell within the 'Neutral' category of all groups. Further, in two of the three Gaeltacht-based course groups, a higher frequency of mean scores that fell in the 'Agree' category were observed than 'Neutral' or 'Disagree'. The learners on the Donegal-based courses, however, showed a different response pattern with a higher number disagreeing than agreeing. Figure 5.5 visualizes these response patterns.

5.4.4 Influence of place of birth on responses to Attitude to learning dialects of Irish scale

As shown in Table 5.14, the one-way ANOVA test did not detect any statistically significant variance between means of learners when grouped by province of birth (i.e. Munster, Connaught, Ulster and outside of Ireland) on the *Attitude to learning dialects of Irish* scale. After examining a means plot (see Figure 5.6 below), it was decided to collapse the learners into two groups, those born in Leinster and those born outside of

Leinster, and retest for variance. Since we were now looking at two groups, an independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean scores of these two groups on the scale. There was a significant difference between scores for Leinster-born learners (M = 4.36, SD = 1.09) and those born in other provinces and countries (M = 4.38, SD = 1.14), $t(150) = -2.56$, $p < .05$. However, their was only a small to moderate effect size (eta squared = .042), with place of birth explaining 4.2% of the variance in attitude towards learning dialects of Irish. It is interesting thought that learners born in Leinster, the only province without a traditional Gaeltacht area, show less positive attitude towards learning particular dialects of Irish. Interview data discussed in Chapter 7 offers some further insight into this phenomenon. A Small number of the learners born in Dublin, which is in Leinster, expressed the desire to speak 'Dublin Irish' (see Section 7.2.2).

Figure 5.4

Mean scores for learners by course location on the *Attitude to learning dialects of Irish* scale

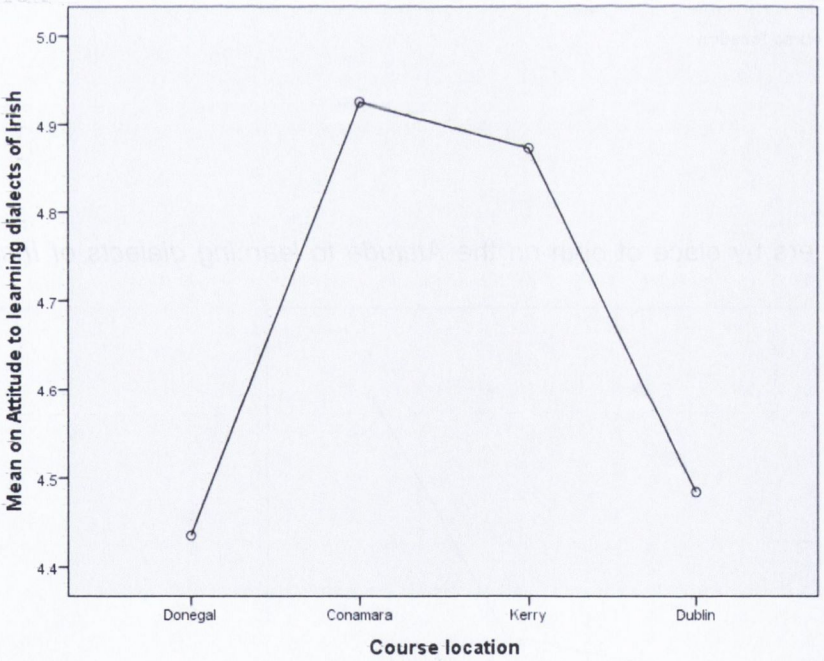


Figure 5.5

Cross tabulation of responses to the *Attitudes to learning dialects of Irish* scale by course location

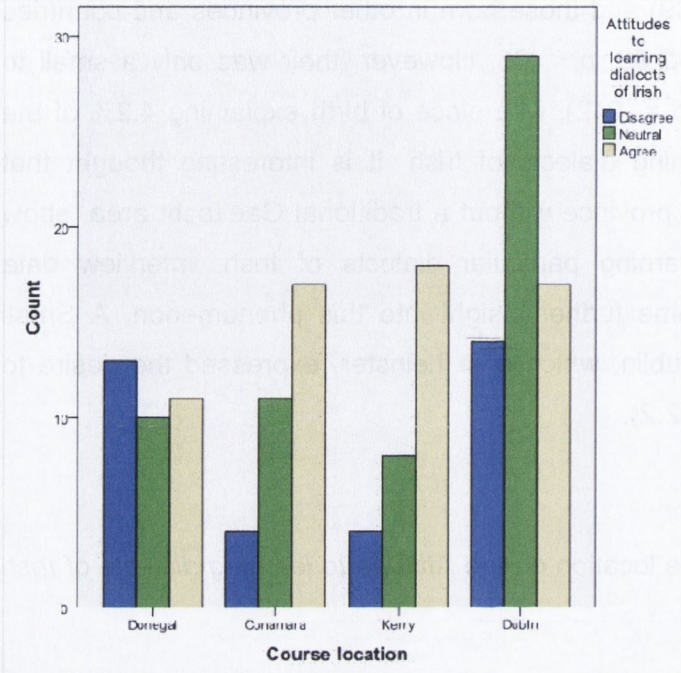
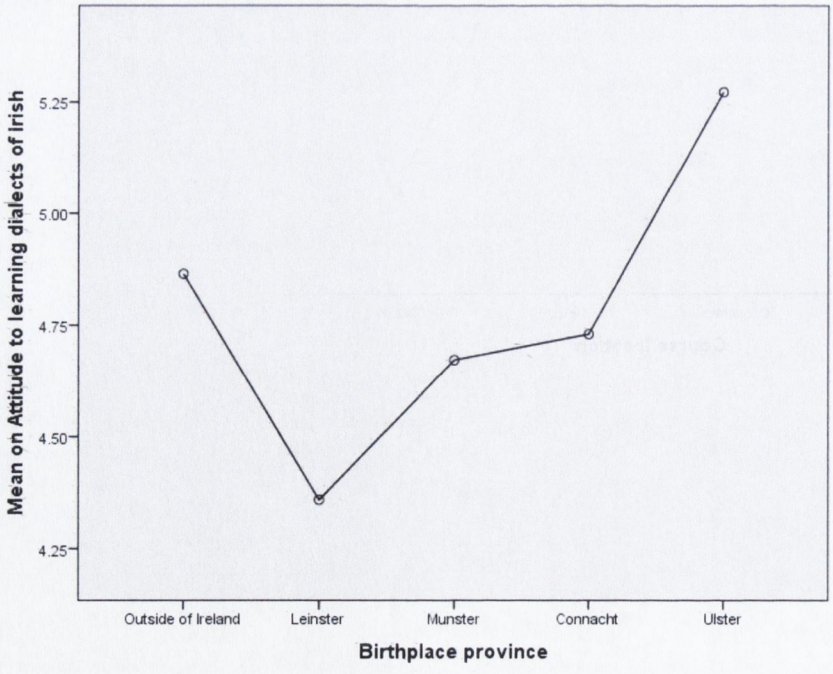


Figure 5.6

Mean scores for learners by place of birth on the *Attitude to learning dialects of Irish* scale



5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has reported on responses to the Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners used in Irish Stage I of this study. The first part of this chapter looked at the background information gathered on the 157 learners who returned the questionnaire. The majority of the sample was born and/or raised in Ireland, but that there was also a sizable number of responses from learners born and currently living elsewhere. The non-Irish portion of the sample hailed mainly from other European countries and the United States. In terms of gender, the full sample was relatively balanced, but within birthplace subgroups this was not the case. In the Irish portion of the sample, 60% were female. In the other subgroups, there were higher percentages of males.

As most of the participants grew up in Ireland, they had previous experience of learning Irish in primary and secondary school. A small number also studied Irish at third level. In terms of the varieties of the language they were exposed to at school, Munster Irish was the most commonly mentioned (49% for primary and 47% for secondary) and Connaught Irish the second most common (25% for primary and 25% for secondary). Via the media, however, participants said they were most often exposed to the Connaught variety (54%), with less than half as many being exposed to Munster (25%) or Ulster (23%). A roughly even proportion of learners said that they were most exposed to a neutral variety of Irish in school (20%) and through the media (19%).

In terms of proficiency levels, 71% of the sample was at the intermediate level (A2-B2 on the CEFR), which we noted is above the national average when compared to survey data. Such a spread of proficiency levels was planned in the context of the research design. Following Ihde (1995), beginner level learners were not surveyed in this study. It was felt that they would not be far enough along in the learning process or have enough experience with different varieties of the language to have strong attitudes on the issue of target varieties in Irish.

It was also shown that the sample was multilingual to lesser or greater degrees. 68% of them said they could speak at least one language other than Irish or English. French was the most popular additional language, followed by Spanish and German. While most learned their additional languages in school, 41% of the sample had lived in a non-English speaking country. Nearly all of these participants learned the local language of the country they resided in to varying degrees of proficiency. These figures are broadly in line with other studies of Irish adults' knowledge of foreign languages in terms of individual languages learned, and to a lesser extent, levels of proficiency (e.g. Ó Riagain & Gorman, 1999).

Analyses of responses to scale items on the questionnaire provided the bulk of the data described in this chapter. It was shown that learners in the sample were more integratively oriented than instrumentally oriented and that Irish was central to their identity/self-concept. However, mean item score on scales that deal with integrative type behaviour were less straightforward. While they responded positively to most *Self confidence in speaking* scale items and indicated that they speak Irish regularly to fellow learners, in general, learners responded negatively to items which deal with speaking Irish outside the learning context. This was particularly true in relation to the *Cultural activities and preferences* scale. Together, these findings suggest that, while learners would like to 'integrate' into the wider Irish language speech community, they are either not getting the opportunity to do so or not taking advantage of those opportunities which do present themselves.

Two scales in the questionnaire deal specifically with attitudes towards achieving target language proficiency levels, accent and variety. Responses to the *Proficiency aims and goals* scale indicate that learners have a positive disposition to native speakers of Irish and would like more opportunities to speak the language with them. In addition, they would like their own level of proficiency in Irish to equal that of native speakers. Some questions remain about the extent to which they would also like to sound like a native speaker in terms of accent. The percentage of learners agreeing with the one statement in the scale which used the words 'sound like' was slightly lower, yet it was still a very positive response over all. It is possible, however, that learners make a distinction between having nativelike Irish in terms of proficiency level and sounding nativelike in terms of accent.

Responses to statements on the *Attitudes towards learning dialects of Irish* scale were considerably less positive than the previous discussed scale. Learners demonstrated a strong preference for a particular variety of Irish, but only a small-moderate dislike for other varieties. A majority of learners, however, felt that learning a particular variety of Irish makes you sound more like a genuine Irish speaker. Overall, these results suggest that many learners in the study have a preference for a variety of the target language, but that this preference may not be linked to their personal language learning goals. Further evidence for is provided by the low positive correlation between this scale and others, especially with the *Proficiency aims and goals* scale (r = .28).

Finally, the role of key background (independent) variables (i.e. age, gender, proficiency level in Irish, place of birth and location of the course) in determining attitudes towards achieving nativelike fluency (*Proficiency aims and goals* scale) and learning particular regional varieties of Irish (*Attitude to learning dialects of Irish* scale)

was tested. The results for most of these tests were not statistically significant, i.e. the mean scores for subgroups of learners on these scales were not significantly different when divided by gender, age group or place of birth. However, a statistically significant difference between the means of learners at different levels of proficiency was found for attitudes towards achieving nativelike fluency (*Proficiency aims and goals* scale). More proficient learners tended to have a more positive attitude towards the ideas of achieving native fluency. When divided by course location, a significantly more positive attitude towards achieving this level of proficiency was found among learners attending the Connemara based Gaeltacht course when compared to the Dublin group. The relative importance of these findings notwithstanding, it was noted that part of the problem with running these tests of variance was that individual groups were often too small and/or unbalanced, thus violating certain statistical assumptions and increasing the chances of committing Type I and Type II errors. By collapsing variable groups, where it was deemed appropriate to do so, we raised cell numbers of variable subgroups in some cases and retested for variance on the two dependent variables. It was then found that learners born in provinces other than Leinster (where Dublin is located), and indeed those from outside of Ireland, had a significantly more positive attitude towards learning dialects of Irish. It was also found that that Learners attending courses in Connemara and Kerry has a more positive attitude towards learning dialects of Irish than those attending course in Dublin and Donegal. In the latter case, it was noted that there may not be a clearly logical basis for combing these course location groups and, therefore, the finding itself may be called into question. And although we cannot rely entirely on the statistical significance of these findings, it was not deemed necessary to transform the data further to run additional tests since this study relies on additional research methods to explain salient findings. However, these results do lend support to the overall observation that Dublin learners of Irish seem to hold considerably different views on the questions desired level of fluency and target speech model than learners from other places in Ireland and/or abroad.

In the next chapter we present the results of the Speaker Evaluation Exercise which was employed in Stage II of the study. Findings from the present chapter will be reintroduced alongside those from the second stage where they appear to have explanatory power.

CHAPTER 6

Stage II: Speaker Evaluation Exercise

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents results from Stage II of the current study in which a Speaker Evaluation Exercise was administered to a subsample of learners recruited from the larger sample described in Chapter 5. The purpose of this evaluation was to measure learners' attitudes towards traditional (regional) and non-traditional (L2) varieties of the Irish language. It also aimed to test participants' ability to identify these varieties and measure their desire to hear different varieties in classroom and non-classroom contexts.

Recording participants' reactions to various target speech models allows us to determine the extent to which adult learners of Irish demonstrate preferences for various varieties of the language. Questionnaire data from Stage I of the study showed that a large majority of participants had a preference for a particular variety of Irish, however, fewer, but still a large number, dislike some varieties. In order to achieve a clearer picture of what varieties might be favoured or disfavoured it was necessary to measure their reactions to, preferences for and knowledge of various varieties via a separate method. A number studies, many of which were discussed in Chapter 3, have measured second language learners' attitudes towards target language varieties, however, this has hitherto not been done in the context of adult learners of Irish. The remaining sections in this chapter report the results of the first study in this context. The findings will be interpreted in connection with findings from the Stage I data.

6.1 The Speaker Evaluation Exercise: Participants, instrument and method

Stage II of the data collection began approximately six months after the end of the Stage I questionnaire study. This second stage of the project was conducted with a subsample of 31 learners who indicated on the Stage I questionnaire that they were willing to be contacted about additional data collection. In total, 103 learners indicated that they were willing to hear more about the continuing research. For practical reasons, however, only those learners who were based in Ireland (including Northern Ireland) were contacted by email or phone in order to provide them with the relevant information. After details of the second and third stages of the project were explained to the learners, appointments were arranged with those who were willing to participate further. The final subsample which participated in Stages II and III of the project was 31 learners.

6.1.1 The participants

Eliciting the subsample of learners was completely dependent on their being willing and available to participate within a reasonable timeframe. Nonetheless, an attempt was made to ensure as wide a spread of learners types as possible, e.g. place of origin, proficiency level, course location, etc.

Just under half (48%) of these participants were born in the province of Leinster, 23% in Munster, 13% in Ulster, 7% in Connaught and 10% outside of Ireland. A very large majority (74%), however, are currently living in the province of Leinster, and smaller numbers living in Ulster (13%), Connaught (10%) and Munster (3%). In terms of the location of the course they were attending when they filled out the Stage I questionnaire, 42% were in Dublin, 29% in Donegal, 13% in Connemara and 16% in Kerry. The most common proficiency level or among the subsample was B2 (42%). In general, these figures for background variables are fairly representative of the makeup of the main 157 learner sample in Stage I.

6.1.2 The speakers

The speech samples that were used in the Speaker Evaluation Exercise were elicited from native (L1) speakers of Irish and two non-native (L2) speakers of the language, all of whom were female. The decision to use all female speakers has already been discussed in Chapter 4. A large number of speakers were recorded in preparation for the study and relevant background details were collected for each person. (See Table 6.1 below.)

The speakers were asked to engage in the factually neutral task of providing directions to a hypothetical listener using a map adopted from McKenzie (2008b, 2010). The map is shown below in Figure 6.1. Native speakers were asked to assume they were giving directions to someone from their own native speech community, and therefore, their speech should be as dialectal as possible. Non-native speakers were asked to provide clear instructions for a hypothetical fluent speaker of Irish. Both groups were asked not to use any English words in their directions.

Once all the speech samples were collected they were examined to determine their suitability for the study. The final eight speakers selected for use in the instrument were chosen for the sound quality of their recordings. Any speakers who were, for example, overly hesitant or spoke too fast were not selected. There were also a couple of recordings that had excessive background noise and these were not deemed suitable either. Further, the native speakers' speech was analyzed to determine whether they used any language forms that were recognizable deviant from that of

their native speech community. In cases where this was found the speakers were deemed unrepresentative of the dialect in question and were not chosen.

Figure 6.1

Speech collection map task for Irish speakers (Adapted from McKenzie, 2010)

Speech Collection: Map Task

Please give directions from the START position to the CASTLE.

R.M. McKenzie, *The Social Psychology of English as a Global Language*, Educational Linguistics 10, DOI 10.1007/978-90-481-8566-5,
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The six native speakers were born and raised in Gaeltacht regions in the north, west and south of the country. Two speakers were from different villages or areas in

the respective regions were selected. This was done in order to represent as much diversity within the three main traditional dialects as possible. Diversity among the non-native speakers was represented by selecting two speakers from different areas of the Ireland. Background details for the final eight speakers are presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

Speaker Evaluation Exercise: Speaker background details

Speaker	Alias	Age	Birthplace	Hometown	Home/ community language	Language of Primary Education
1	CON1	32	Galway City	Inis Meáin, Galway	Irish	Irish
2	L2 north	26	Letterkenny, Donegal	Castlefin, Donegal	English	English
3	DON1	38	Letterkenny, Donegal	Gaoth Dobhair, Donegal	Irish	Irish
4	CON2	24	Galway City	An Ceathrú Rua, Galway	Irish	Irish
5	MUN1	28	Dungarvan, Waterford	An Rinn, Waterford	Irish	Irish
6	DON2	32	Letterkenny, Donegal	Gort a' Choirce, Donegal	Irish	Irish
7	MUN2	36	Tralee, Kerry	Cill Chúile, Kerry	Irish	Irish
8	L2 south	32	Limerick City	Limerick City	English	English

For the purposes of designing this instrument, speakers were considered to be native if Irish was both the primary language of the home and the primary language of the community in which they were raised. For these six speakers, their hometown is inside the official boundaries of the Gaeltacht as determined (see the map of Ireland in Chapter 1). The two L2 speakers were born and raised in English speaking communities outside the Gaeltacht.

6.1.3 The speech samples

The map task described above yielded speech samples that were relatively similar in length. The eight samples used in the instrument ranged in length from forty-one seconds to one minute, twenty-eight seconds. The average length of the recordings

was one minute, fifteen seconds. They were recorded using a digital recorder and unnecessary silence at the start of the beginning of the recordings were edited out using WavePad Audio Editing Software produced by NCH®.

The eight samples are transcribed below in full. For individual speakers the term 'Gaeltacht' signifies native speaker status and the term 'Non-Gaeltacht' refers to an L2 speaker. A single asterisk (*) beside a word indicates a phonological, lexical or syntactical form specific to (or commonly associated with) the speaker's region. Two asterisks (**) indicate a form used by an L2 speaker which deviates from norms of the Gaeltacht region closest to where she was born. Finally, a cross (†) indicates a departure from normal Irish phonology which is typical of L2 speech. In order to determine the uniqueness of dialect forms, a number of published studies of individual dialects were consulted (Breatnach, 1947; Ó Baoill, 1996; Ó Murchú, 1998; Ó Sé, 1995). For L2 speech, Hickey's (2011) recent survey of modern Irish provides the most comprehensive discussion of the subject to date. Finally, where syntactical or lexical errors where present, the item is followed by [sic]. Decisions regarding errors were made on the basis that the form produced violated accepted norms of the language, regardless of the speaker's variety. For example, in all varieties of Irish, the simple preposition *ar* (on) causes nouns which follow it directly to be lenited (represented in the written language by inserting an 'h' after the first consonant of the noun) when indicating a physical position, e.g. *ar **ch**athaoir* (on a chair). There were a number of cases where L1 and L2 speakers did not lenite the noun after the preposition *ar*. In each case, this was marked as an error, i.e. with [sic]. Another common error among speakers was the failure to employ the correct initial mutation in accordance with noun gender.

The purpose of providing these transcripts is to demonstrate the level to which dialect variation is represented in the speech samples. Is was not necessary, therefore, to provides full phonetic transcriptions of every word. Instead, orthographic transcriptions are provided for each of the samples and certain lexical items are transcribed phonetically when the orthography does not represent the spoken form used by the speaker. In the interest of readability, only the first usage of these forms by each speaker is transcribed phonetically. However, all occurrences of the form are marked in the text with one of the symbols described above (i.e. *, **, †) to show consistency in the sample. The transcriptions use a form of the International Phonetic Alphabet devised for Irish (Ní Chasaide, 1999). Since the task was designed to elicit forms associated with different regional and L2 forms of the Irish language, English translations would not serve to highlight these forms. Nevertheless, the first sample

has been translated into English in order to demonstrate a typical task response for non-Irish speakers.

For the Gaeltacht speakers, the salient dialect forms have been confirmed as being among the normal pronunciations in the speaker's native region, as well as being different from other regions, by consulting the dialect studies mentioned above. It is recognized, however, that while we are discussing three main regional varieties of Irish here, i.e. Munster, Connaught and Ulster, the language may be divided further into a great number of subvarieties. For this reason, forms produced by the L1 speakers in this study may not be the most common form in neighbouring regions in the dialect area. However, by using two speakers from each of the general Gaeltacht regions, a number of salient forms have been included for each.

Speaker 1 (Connacht Gaeltacht)

Téire* [tʲairʲə] soir an bó[th]ar* [bˠo:rˠ] chomh fada leis an séipéal. Cas ar chlé agus coinnigh ort díreach. Tóig* [tˠoigʲ] an chéad chasadh ar dheis agus siúl thar na cnoic, beidh siad ar taobh [sic] na láimhe clé. Coinnigh ort a' siúl díreach chomh fada leis an droi[ch]ead* [dˠrˠaidˠ]. Tóig* an chéad chasadh ar chlé agus lean ort díreach chomh fada leis an loch. Nuair a shroicheann tú an loch, coinnigh ort a' siúl síos an bó[th]ar*. Beidh an bolcán ar taobh [sic] na láimhe deise, agus coinnigh ort a' siúl díreach chomh fada leis an aerfort. Cas ar chlé arís agus tiocfaidh tú go dtí an monarcha* [sic] agus cas ar chlé ansin agus siúlfaidh tú suas an bó[th]ar* chomh fada leis an óspidéal*. Tóig* an casadh ar taobh [sic] na láimhe deise agus siúl soir an bó[th]ar* arís, agus ansin casann tú ar chlé agus sroicheann tú an cuisleán*.

(Sample English translation - *Go east along the road as far as the chapel. Turn left and keep on straight. Take the first turn on the left and walk past the hills, they will be on the left hand side. Continue on walking straight as far as the bridge. Take the first turn on the left and continue on straight as far as the lake. When you reach the lake, continue walking down the road. There will be a volcano on the right hand side, and keep walking straight as far as the airport. Turn left again and you will come to the factory and turn left there and you will walk up the road as far as the hospital. Take the turn on the right hand side and walk east along the road again, and then you turn left and you reach the castle.*)

Speaker 2 (Ulster Non-Gaeltacht)

Tosaigh agus téigh go dtí an dheis [sic] go dtí an caisleán [sic]. Nuair a shroicheann** tú an caisleán [sic], téigh díreach ar aghaidh** [ai] agus cas go dtí an dheis [sic]. Beidh

tú ag dul** [eʲ dˠulˠ] in aice leis na sléibhte. Téigh díreach go dtí an droichead ansin. Téigh faoin droichead agus cas go dtí an clé [sic] agus ansin an dheis [sic], in aice leis an locht [lˠokˠ]. Ag deireadh an locht téigh dheis [sic] in aice le bolcán agus t-aerfort [sic]. Ag an aerfort, téigh clé go dtí monarcha, ansin téigh clé go dtí an t-ospidéal. Ag an t-ospidéal [sic], téigh dheis [sic] go dtí an caisleán.

Speaker 3 (Ulster Gaeltacht)

Gabh díreach ar aghaidh* [eːj] go dtí go bhfaighidh tú fhad le* teach an phobail*. Ansin, tiontaigh* ar chlé. Téann tú díreach ar aghaidh* aríst ar feadh tamaill, agus ansin tionta[í]onn* tú ar dheis. Beidh cnoic ar thaobh na lá[i]mhe* [l̥ˠaːwə] clé, agus téann tú thart le casadh* [kˠasˠuː] beag sa bhealach*, agus tiocfaidh tú chomh fada le droichead. Téann tú faoin droichead, agus ansin téann tú thart le casadh* aríst agus ... emm ... i ndiaidh tamaill, tiocfaidh tú chomh fada le loch. Lean ort, lean ar an bhealach* agus i ndiaidh an locha, rachaidh tú ar dheis. Lean an bealach* aríst agus beidh sliabh eile ar thaobh na lá[i]mhe* deise... emm. Agus ansin, tiocfaidh tú chomh fada le aerfort. Téann tú thar an aerfort, agus téigh díreach ar aghaidh* aríst agus tiocfaidh tú chomh fada le teach ag an choirnéal* ansin. ... emm, tá casadh eile sa bhealach* agus téann sé ar chlé, agus ansin téann tú díreach ar aghaidh* aríst go dtí go dtiocfaidh tú chomh fada le ospidéal agus beidh an t-ospidéal ar thaobh na lá[i]mhe* deise. Eh, rachaidh tú ansin ar thaobh na lá[i]mhe* deise agus téann tú díreach ar aghaidh* aríst, casadh amháin eile ansin ar chlé agus beidh an caisleán ansin go díreach romhad* [rˠoːdˠ].

Speaker 4 (Connacht Gaeltacht)

Okay, so, tosaíonn tú amach. Téann tú díreach ar aghaidh* [ai] go dtí an séipéal. Nuair a shroicheann tú an séipéal, casann tú ar chlé. Téann tú ar aghaidh* písín* beag eile agus tá casadh sa mbóthar* agus leanann tú leis an gcasadh sin. Téann an casadh sin ... emm ... casann sé ar dheis agus leanann tú ar aghaidh. Téann tú thart timpeall ar na cnoic. Lean ar aghaidh díreach. Téann tú isteach ... síos faoin droichead. Leanann tú ar aghaidh* agus tá casadh eile sa mbóthar*. Leanann tú an casadh sin ... téann sé ar chlé. Coinníonn tú ort. Casann tú aríst ar dheis agus téann tú thart timpeall loch [sic]. Tá loch ar taobh [sic] na láimhe clé. Casann tú aríst ar dheis. Leanann tú ar aghaidh*. Tiocfaidh tú chomh fada le bolcán. Tá sé sin ar taobh [sic] na láimhe deise. Coinníonn tú ort, leanann tú an bóthar. Agus tiocfaidh tú chomh fada le aerfort. Ag an aerfort, casann tú ar chlé. Coinníonn tú ort chomh fada leis an monarchan*. Ag an monarchan*, casfaidh tú aríst agus casfaidh tú an t-am seo ar chlé ... aríst. Coinníonn tú ort chomh fada leis an easpaicil* agus ag an easpaicil* casfaidh tú aríst ... ar dheis

... agus coinníonn tú ort chomh fada leis an gcuisleán* [gʸʌʃʲaːnʸ]. agus feicfidh tú an cuisleán* ['kʸʌʃʲaːnʸ]. ar taobh [sic] na láimhe clé, agus beidh tú ann.

Speaker 5 (Muster Gaeltacht)

Siúil i dtreo an tséipéil. Cas ar chlé agus lean an bóthar thimpeall* [hʸaimʲpʲəlʸ] an chúinne*. Cífidh* tú na sléibhte* [ʃʲeːtʲə] ar do thaobh chlé. Lean ar aghaidh. Teir* [tʲərʲ] tharstu san* agus lean ar aghaidh* [aiɟ] go dtí go bhfeiceann tú an droichead. Teir* fén* droichead. Eh, lean an bóthar thimpeall* aríst, tá an bóthar casta. Casfaidh tú ar dheis agus cífidh* tú loch ar do thaobh chlé. Cas ar dheis ansan*. Lean síos an bóthar agus cífidh* tú bolcán ar do thaobh dheis. Lean ort síos an bóthar go dtí go dtagann tú chomh fada leis an aerfort. Teir* thar an aerfort agus cífidh* tú ... teir* díreach ar aghaidh i dtreo monarcha [sic] ar an gcúinne agus cas ar chlé. Lean an bóthar aghaidh* ansan* agus tiocfaidh tú go dtí cúinne eile agus cífidh* tú óspidéal* ar an gcúinne ansan*. Cas ar dheis agus leanfaidh sé sin isteach tú i dtreo an chaisleáin.

Speaker 6 (Ulster Gaeltacht)

Le dhul* [hʸulʸ] ag an chaisleán*, téigh síos an bóthar seo agus ag teach an phobail* cas ar chlé agus ar aghaidh* [eːj] leat síos an bealach* ansin agus casfaidh tú thart ar choirnéal eile ansin agus tifidh* tú na sléibhte ansin ar taobh [sic] chlé duit ansin. Téigh ... ar an taobh eile de na sléibhte sin, casfaidh tú ar choirnéal beag eile. Téigh faoin droichead ina dhiaidh sin agus ar aghaidh* leat fá choinne* tamalt* beag eile agus tifidh* tú an loch ansin. Cas thart ar an choirnéal sin aríst, díreach thart ar an choirnéal sin agus ar aghaidh* leat síos an bealach* ansin fá choinne* tamalt* fada chomh* [gɔ] maith* [mʸai] agus tiocfaidh tú fhad leis* an aerfort ansin. Agus ag an aerfort, cas timpeall díreach air sin agus tiocfaidh tú fhad leis* an mhonarchan. I ndiaidh an monarchan [sic] ansin, tá tú chóir bheith* ann, agus má théann tú díreach suas an bealach* ansin, cas ar dheis ansin thart fán* ospidéal agus téigh díreach síos an bealach* tamalt* beag eile ansin agus tiocfaidh tú fhad leis* an chaisleán ansin díreach romhad* [rʸoːdʸ].

Speaker 7 (Muster Gaeltacht)

Lean ort díreach ar aghaidh* [aiɟ] go dtí go dtiocfaidh tú chomh fada le sáipéal*. Cas ar chlé ansan* ag an sáipéal* agus lean ort díreach ar aghaidh* síos go bun an bhóthair. Cas ansan* ar dheis agus tabharfaidh tú fé ndeara* sléibhte* [ʃʲeːtʲə] ar thaobh na láimhe clé agat. Lean ort díreach ar aghaidh*. Tiocfaidh tú chomh fada le droichead. Teir [tʲerʲ] thíos [sic] fén ndroichead* agus ansan* cas ar chlé. Lean ort díreach ar aghaidh* agus tabharfaidh tú fé ndeara* loch ar thaobh na láimhe clé agat. Agus

ansan* nuair a bheidh tú imithe thairis an loch, cas ar dheis agus lean ort díreach ar aghaidh*. Cífidh* tú bolcán ar thaobh na láimhe deise. Teir* thairis agus cífidh* tú ansan*, thíos i mbun an bhóthair, aerfort ar thaobh na láimhe deise chomh maith agus cas ar chlé ansan* ag an aerfort. Lean ort díreach ar aghaidh* síos chomh fada leis an monarchan a bheidh* [vʲeɟ] ar thaobh na láimhe deise agat. Nuair a thiocfaidh tú chomh fada leis an monarchan, cas ar chlé agus teir* ort, lean ort díreach ar aghaidh* síos go bun an bhóthair agus cífidh* tú ansan* ar thaobh na láimhe deise óispidéal*. Agus nuair a thiocfaidh tú chomh fada leis an óispidéal* san*, cas ar dheis. Em ... lean ort síos go bun an bhóthair sin. Tabharfaidh tú fé ndeara* an bóthar ag casadh aríst ar chlé agus is ansan* atá an caisleán.

Speaker 8 (Munster Non-Gaeltacht)

Siúil díreach† [dʲiːɹək] ar aghaidh* [aiɟ] agus nuair a sroicheann† [sic] [sʏrʏIcən̪ʏ] tú an séipéal*, cas ar chlé. Ba cheart† [kʲaɹtʏ] duit† [dʏitʏ] leanúint* ag siúl díreach† ar aghaidh* agus an chéad† [keːdʏ] chasadh† [kʏasʏə] ar dheis a ghlacadh. Siúlfaidh tú thar sléibhte* [sic] [ʃlʲeːtʲə] ar thaobh na láimhe clé agus tar éis** duit† dul faoi** dhroichead, ba cheart† duit† casadh ar chlé. Ansin, glac an chéad chasadh eile ar chlé agus siúil thar loch a bheidh ar thaobh na láimhe clé. Ag an bpointe sin, ba cheart† duit† casadh ar dheis agus siúl díreach ar aghaidh*. Siúlfaidh tú thar bholcán ar thaobh na láimhe deise agus nuair a sroicheann* [sic] tú an t-aerfort, ba cheart† duit† casadh ar chlé. Ansin, ba cheart† duit† siúl díreach† ar aghaidh* agus nuair a sroicheann* [sic] tú an monarcha [sic], ba cheart† duit† casadh ar chlé. Siúil díreach ar aghaidh* agus nuair a sroicheann [sic] tú an t-ospidéal**, ba cheart† duit† casadh ar dheis. Ag an bpointe sin, tá tú beagnach ann agus ba cheart† duit† dul díreach† ar aghaidh* agus casadh ar chlé chun an caisleán a bhaint amach.

6.1.4 Variety traits found in speech samples

The speakers in the recordings demonstrated the general phonological traits associated with their region of origin. For example, among the northern and western speakers, primary stress was placed on the initial syllable in individual words, while the southern speakers attached stress to the second or third syllable of a word. This pattern was observed in all cases, except in words where the stress is always on the second syllable in all varieties, e.g. adverbs such as *amháin* [əˈvʏaːnʲ].

The speakers also adhered to the lexical and syntactical norms of their respective varieties. Modern Irish has a number of lexical items which are commonly associated with certain Gaeltacht regions. This is not to say that these regional forms are (were) not known in other areas, however, they tend to be extremely rare if used at

all, outside the areas with which they are currently associated. Each of the Gaeltacht speakers recorded in this study made use of multiple words and phrases that are particularly common in their regional variety and they did not make use of any forms that are particularly associated with other regions. The L2 speakers, however, made use forms that, while correct, are associated with more than one regional variety, i.e. they made use of multiple varieties of Irish at the same time, and therefore, may be said to speak a 'mixed' variety.

In terms of speech errors in the samples, these were confined mainly to morpho-syntactical inaccuracies. There was only one lexical error, i.e. use of the wrong word, in the eight samples (made by the L2 north speaker), however, many of the samples contained at least one grammatical error. In relation to the morpho-syntactic type, missing initial lenition on nouns was the most common of these. In many cases, L1 and L2 speakers alike failed to lenite the noun *taobh* (side) after the preposition *ar* in the phrase *ar thaobh na láimhe clé/deise* (on the left/right hand side). Another common error among speakers was the implementation of the correct initial mutation in accordance with noun gender. The number of such inaccuracies was higher in the speech of the L2 speakers.

As a group, the L2 speakers exhibited a number of inaccuracies in their pronunciation which were not found in the speech of the L1 guises. The first of these is the realization of the Irish /x/ as [k] in various word positions. The second was failure to distinguish between palatal and non-palatal sounds in word-final position, i.e. use of [tʏ] in place of /tʲ/. Third, there was failure to lenite certain verbs after the relative particle *a*. A fuller list of variety features is provided in Appendix 2.7 summarizes linguistic features of the eight speech samples.

6.1.5 Method

The recordings were played three times to all 31 subsample participants in the order they are presented in Table 6.1. Each time the recording was played, the learners were asked to complete one section in the Speaker Evaluation Exercise booklet (see Appendix 2.9). The instructions for each section of the instrument were read first by participants and they were subsequently explained in brief by the researcher to ensure that they were understood; the researcher clarified any uncertainties at this point. The Speaker Evaluation Exercise was followed by a qualitative interview with each participant. Interview data is reported in Chapter 7.

6.2 Overview of speaker ratings

Before looking at participants' evaluation of individual traits, the overall ratings of the speakers is presented here. This gives us a general impression of how the participants reacted to the native and non-native speakers guises. Table 6.2 shows the mean ratings for all eight speakers across the eight traits measured.

The Munster Gaeltacht 2 speaker (from the West Kerry Gaeltacht) is the clear favourite amongst these learners (M = 5.86, SD = 0.74). The second and third most positive evaluations were the two Donegal Gaeltacht speakers. The final speaker in the top half of the evaluations was the Connaught Gaeltacht 2.

Table 6.2

Overall mean scores for speakers across all traits

Speaker	Speaker origin/status	*M*	*SD*
1	Connaught Gaeltacht 1	4.72	0.99
2	L2 (north)	4.82	1.11
3	Donegal Gaeltacht 1	5.31	0.92
4	Connaught Gaeltacht 2	4.84	0.86
5	Munster Gaeltacht 1	4.21	0.72
6	Donegal Gaeltacht 2	5.29	0.77
7	Munster Gaeltacht 2	5.86	0.74
8	L2 (south)	2.98	0.58

The lower half of the overall evaluations contains both of the L2 speakers as well as two of the native speaker guises. Interestingly, the L2 north guise was rated more favourably than the two native speaker guises in this group. The L2 south guise was the lowest rated guise of all, and it is the only guise for which the overall mean score falls on the negative side of the seven point scale.

6.2.1 Ratings on individual traits and dimensions

The eight adjectival pairs used in the semantic differential scales in Part I the Speaker Evaluation Exercise booklet belong to two dimensions, *Status* and *Social Attractiveness*, shown below in Figure 6.2. Participants' ratings of the speakers along dimensions were collapsed in order to create a new composite variable for further

statistical testing. We will return to these data below. First, we shall look at the ratings of individual traits for the speakers.

Figure 6.2

Individual speaker traits divided by dimension

Status		
well-spoken	-	poorly spoken
clear	-	unclear
intelligent	-	unintelligent
confident	-	not confident
Social Attractiveness		
outgoing	-	reserved
interesting	-	uninteresting
natural	-	unnatural
friendly	-	unfriendly

Table 6.3

Mean ratings for each speaker along individual traits as presented in the questionnaire

Speaker	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Origin/Status	CON1	L2(n)	DON1	CON2	MUN1	DON2	MUN2	L2(s)
Traits								
Friendly	4.81	5.19	5.03	5.77	4.39	5.13	6.16	4.03
Natural	4.77	4.83	6.23	4.81	3.74	6.16	6.03	2.23
Interesting	4.03	4.52	5.10	4.77	3.87	5.10	5.42	2.68
Well-spoken	5.10	4.73	5.68	4.77	4.39	5.87	6.26	2.65
Intelligent	4.87	4.81	4.90	4.55	4.42	4.90	5.55	3.65
Confident	4.71	4.84	5.71	3.81	3.94	5.81	5.84	1.84
Clear	5.74	5.35	4.97	5.19	5.37	4.81	6.10	4.06
Outgoing	3.74	4.32	4.87	5.03	3.52	4.55	5.55	2.71

The mean ratings for each speaker along individual traits are presented in Table 6.3. It is worth drawing attention in the first instance to the fact that some speakers were rated in a very consistent manner across all or most traits. For instance, The Munster Gaeltacht 2 speaker was rated highest on all traits except one (i.e. *naturalness*). The Donegal Gaeltacht 2 speaker was rated second highest on five out of eight traits. On the lower end of the evaluations, the L2 south speaker was rated lowest on all traits. The Munster Gaeltacht 1 speaker was rated lowest on six of eight traits.

Further consistency is shown by the fact that the one trait on which the Munster Gaeltacht 2 speaker was not rated highest (i.e. *naturalness*), she was in the top three. In addition, the Donegal Gaeltacht 2 speaker who was rated second highest on five traits was in the top four on the two of the three remaining traits (i.e. *outgoingness* and *friendliness*).

Some of the guises, i.e. the two Connaught guises and the L2 northern guise, received more mixed ratings on the various traits. The Connaught Gaeltacht 2 guise was rated second highest on the friendliness trait and second lowest on the confidence trait. The L2 north guise was third highest on friendliness, but never rose above fourth on any other trait. Even those guises which were described above as being relatively consistent tended to be rated differently on at least one trait. For example, both Donegal Gaeltacht guises were rated high on most traits, yet they were second and third lowest on the clarity trait. Conversely, the Munster Gaeltacht 1 guise, who was rated second lowest on most traits, was rated third highest on clarity.

Table 6.4

Mean scores for composite variables of 'Status' and 'Social attractiveness'

Speaker	Status	Social Attractiveness
1. CON1	5.10	4.34
2. L2 north	4.94	4.72
3. DON1	5.31	5.31
4. CON2	4.58	5.10
5. MUN1	4.52	3.87
6. DON2	5.35	5.23
7. MUN2	5.94	5.79
8. L2 south	3.05	2.91

Finally, it is important to draw attention to the way in which the two L2 guises were rated on individual traits. It is clear from Tables 6.2 and 6.3 that the L2 south

guise was rated lowest on all individual traits and, as a result, this speaker received the lowest over all mean score. The L2 north speaker, however, was not rated in the same consistent manner. This speaker was rated was rated third on friendliness and fourth on naturalness, interestingness, intelligence, confidence and clarity. This means that this L2 speaker was rated more positively than at least three native speakers on six of the eight traits. This stands in stark contrast to the L2 south speaker. Some reasons for this difference, as well the differences between the ways native-speaker guises were rated are offered in Section 6.2.3.

The next step in this analysis was to create mean scores for the speakers for each of the two dimensions, i.e. Social Attractiveness and Status. These scores are presented in Table 6.4. In general, the speakers were rated higher on the Status traits than they were on those pertaining to Social Attractiveness, the one exception being the Connaught Gaeltacht 2 guise.

The two highest and the two lowest rated guises on the Status dimension are the same speakers who received the highest and lowest overall rating ratings displayed in Table 6.2, i.e. Munster Gaeltacht 2, Donegal Gaeltacht 2; L2 south, Munster Gaeltacht 1. On the Social Attractiveness dimension, the two lowest rated guises remained the same, i.e. L2 south and Munster Gaeltacht 1. The Munster Gaeltacht 2 remained the highest rated on this dimension, however, the Donegal Gaeltacht 1 guise was rated second highest. The L2 north guise was rated fifth on both dimensions. The Connaught Gaeltacht guises were rated fourth or sixth on the two dimensions.

6.2.2 Speakers' perceived origin

The second part of the Speaker Evaluation exercise consisted of two tasks. First the participants were asked to indicate where the speaker was from. The eight speech samples were played again in the same order and the participants were asked to select one of the eight potential places of origin presented in the questionnaire for each speaker. The places of origin covered the three major Gaeltacht regions (i.e. *A Gaeltacht area in Donegal/Connaught/Munster*) as well as non-Gaeltacht areas of those regions (i.e. *A non-Gaeltacht area in Ulster/Connaught/Munster*). The options also contained two well known regional descriptors (i.e. *The Midlands* and *Dublin*).

The aim of this task was to determine to what extent learners were capable of recognizing the varieties they were asked to evaluate in terms of geographic location. It has been argued that language attitude research should determine if judges have an idea of where the voice they are being asked to evaluate could be from (Preston, 1999, see Section 3.2.1 above). In the context of this study, it is important to know whether

learners recognize the traits of various potential speech models, and in particular any model(s) to which they may oriented. Table 6.5 shows the percentages of participants who correctly identified the place of origin of each speaker. We can see that the place of origin of only three of the speakers was correctly identified by a majority of learners, and these were the three northern guises. It is interesting that the Munster Gaeltacht 2 guise, which was rated highest on almost all traits and both dimensions, was only correctly identified by 23% of the learners.

The origin of the Munster Gaeltacht 1 guise was not correctly identified by any of the participants and the Connaught Gaeltacht 2 guise was only identified correctly by one participant. In general, then, only the northern speakers were identifiable to these learners by their immediate region.

Table 6.5

Percentages of correct identifications by immediate region for each speaker

Speaker	%
1. CON1	35.5
2. L2 north	54.8
3. DON1	61.3
4. CON2	3.2
5. MUN1	0.0
6. DON2	51.6
7. MUN2	22.6
8. L2 south	12.9

Notwithstanding the importance of the above finding, it is also important to know whether these low numbers are the result of participants not knowing where the speakers were from in broad terms, or their being unable to determine, for example, whether or not the speakers were from Gaeltacht regions. In order to determine this, responses for each speaker were grouped by province. Table 6.6 presents the percentages of participants who correctly identified the speakers by their home province (i.e. Munster, Connaught and Ulster). The province of Leinster was not an option on the questionnaire, however, the Midlands and Dublin cover a great deal of that particular province.

The revised results show that the home province of five of the eight speakers was correctly identified by a majority of participants. In some cases there was a substantial increase in correct identification when analysed this way. For example,

correct responses for the Munster Gaeltacht 1 speaker went from zero to 32%, correct responses for the Connaught Gaeltacht 2 speaker went from 3% to 26% and correct responses for the Munster Gaeltacht 2 speaker went from 23% to 55%. In only one case did the percentage of correct responses not increase when considered by province, i.e. the L2 south speaker. This is, in part, explained by the fact that an overwhelming majority of participants (74%) incorrectly thought that this speaker was from Dublin and no-one thought she was from the Muster Gaeltacht. Therefore, unlike other speakers, removing the regional Gaeltacht/non-Gaeltacht divide did not serve to increase the percentage of correct responses.

Table 6.6

Percentages of correct identifications by province for each speaker

Speaker	%
1. CON1	54.9
2. L2 north	61.3
3. DON1	64.5
4. CON2	25.8
5. MUN1	32.3
6. DON2	71.0
7. MUN2	54.9
8. L2 south	12.9

In general, it is clear that a much greater number of learners were capable of correctly identifying the speakers' home province, i.e. Munster, Connaught or Leinster, than they were their home region, i.e. Gaeltacht vs. Non-Gaeltacht regions within a province. It is also clear that recognizing speakers from the Gaeltacht is relatively challenging for learners. In the next section we turn our attention to participants' perception of the eight speakers' level of proficiency.

6.2.3 Native speakers vs. non-native speakers

The second task in Part II of the Speaker Evaluation Exercise questionnaire asked participants to indicate what level of proficiency each speaker had in Irish. The questionnaire presented participants with five options ranging from 'a beginning learner of Irish' to 'a native speaker of Irish'. This task followed the identification of origin task reported in the last section and the aim was to record learners' impression of the speakers' proficiency in Irish independent of where they thought the speaker was from.

It was thought that participants might potentially associate certain speech types, i.e. Gaeltacht vs. L2 varieties, with different levels of proficiency.

Before reporting the participants' evaluations, it should be mentioned that all the speakers who provided speech samples for this task are highly proficient in the language. At the time of recording, they were all working in the Irish language or education sectors. The native speakers were all living in Dublin at the time the samples were collected. However, they indicated to the researcher that they return their hometown often. They also have regular contact with the wider Irish language community outside their home region through work and social groups.

Of the second language speakers, one is a primary school teacher and the other is a qualified barrister who was working as an administrator in an Irish language organization. Despite their high level of proficiency, there are noticeable differences between their speech and that of the native speakers in terms of phonological, grammatical accuracy and confidence. This is evident in the transcriptions provided in Section 6.1.3. These differences will be discussed further in the contexts of the results below.

Table 6.7 shows the percentages of participants who rated the speakers at various proficiency levels. At first glance, we can see very few majorities in the table. This indicates that participants were far from united in their evaluations of these speakers in this context. It is striking that, while six of the eight speakers are native speakers of Irish, only two were believed to be so by a majority of participants. The two

Table 6.7

Participants' ratings of speakers' proficiency level by descriptor

Speaker	A beginning learner	An established learner	An advanced learner	An advanced learner with near native competency	A native speaker
1. CON1	3.2	29.0	12.9	22.6	32.3
2. L2 north	3.2	48.4	32.3	12.9	3.2
3. DON1	0.0	6.5	3.2	12.9	77.4
4. CON2	12.9	29.0	16.1	38.7	3.2
5. MUN1	12.9	45.2	35.5	6.5	0.0
6. DON2	0.0	6.5	3.2	16.1	74.2
7. MUN2	3.2	6.5	25.8	45.2	19.4
8. L2 south	74.2	25.8	0.0	0.0	0.0

Donegal Gaeltacht guises were believed to be native speakers by approximately 75% of the participants, yet none of the other Gaeltacht guises were thought to be native speakers by more than 32% of them. On the other end of the spectrum, 74% of the judges thought the L2 south guise was a 'beginning learning of Irish' and the remaining 26% thought she was 'an established learner'. This is even more interesting when compared to the L2 north guise, which received a much more balanced evaluation. The majority of participants rated her as 'an established learner' (48%) or 'an advanced learner' (32%), however, one person thought she was 'a native speaker'.

The data presented in the last number of tables demonstrate a number of important points. First, these learners were not, in general, able to recognize the speakers' origin or their status as native speakers with much accuracy. Second, one regional variety appears to be more readily recognizable than the others, i.e. Donegal Irish, and in particular traditional Gaeltacht varieties of this dialect. However, this was only the case for no more than 61% of participants. Third, there are features of both first and second language speakers' Irish that lead some participants to judge them as being beginning and/or established learners of the language, even though the speakers are in fact native speakers or advanced learners of Irish. This last point is particularly interesting with respect to the L2 speakers. The L2 south guise, which received low ratings on all evaluations, was, in fact, more grammatically accurate in her speech than the L2 north guise. She did, however, demonstrate a greater number of pronunciations which deviate from the phonological norms of Gaeltacht varieties. The L2 north guise was, by comparison, much more fluent, i.e. fewer pauses and more fluid, than the L2 south speaker. This would seem to indicate that fluency of speech is more important than grammatical accuracy in this context.

6.2.4 Learners' present and target speech models

Part III of the Speaker Evaluation Exercise questionnaire asked learners to listen to the speech samples a third and final time, and complete three tasks. First, they were to indicate which of the speakers they sound like most at present. Second, they were asked to indicate which of the speakers they would ideally like to sound like in the future. Finally, they were asked to select the contexts in which they would like to hear the type of Irish spoken by each guise. We will deal here with the first two of these tasks and the third in the next section.

The first question in this part of the questionnaire asked participants 'When you speak Irish, do you think you sound similar to any one of these speakers?'. The results for this question are presented in Table 6.8. The most popular response was the L2 south guise, followed by the L2 north guise. In total, 60% of the participants thought

they currently sound like one of the second language speakers. Of the two, many more participants indicated that they sound like the L2 south guise, i.e. the one which was rated lowest on all traits in the first section of the questionnaire. The native speaker guises were selected by fewer participants. The most popular of these were the Munster Gaeltacht speakers with a total of 8 participants (27%) selecting these. Three selected one of the Connaught Gaeltacht guises and only one selected one of the Donegal Gaeltacht guises.

Table 6.8

Numbers and percentages of learners who think they currently sound like various guises in descending order of popularity*

Speaker	*n*	%
L2 south	13	43.3
L2 north	5	16.7
MUN1	4	13.3
MUN2	4	13.3
CON2	2	6.7
CON1	1	3.3
DON2	1	3.3
DON1	0	0.0

* One participant did not complete this question, therefore, the total number of responses is 30.

Table 6.9

Learners' present speech model cross tabulated by self-reported proficiency level

	Learners' proficiency level				
	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
CON1	0	0	1	0	0
L2 north	1	1	3	0	0
DON1	0	0	0	0	0
CON2	0	0	1	1	0
MUN1	0	0	2	1	1
DON2	0	0	1	0	0
MUN2	2	0	0	2	0
L2 south	3	4	4	2	0
Total	6	5	12	6	1

Furthermore, these self evaluations in relation to the recorded speakers appear to be linked to the learners' current proficiency level. Table 6.9 demonstrates that cross tabulation of learners' selection by their self-reported proficiency level revealed that larger percentages of learners in the lower proficiency levels (A2-B2) said their sound like one of the L2 speakers. 67% of A2 level learners said they sounded like one of the L2 guises, 100% of the B1 level learners said they sound like an L2 guise and 58% of B2 learners said they sound like an L2 guise. Conversely, only 33% of the C1 learners said they sound like an L2 guise and the one C2 learner did not select one of the L2 guises.

The second question in this section of the questionnaire asked learners 'Would you like to sound more similar to any one of these speakers in the future?'. The results for this question are presented in Table 6.10. The figures show a very clear shift away from the L2 speech models, since only one participant chose an L2 guise as the speaker they would like to sound similar to in the future. The Munster Gaeltacht 2 guise was the most popular response to this question. Interestingly, of the four participants who indicated in response to the last question that they currently sound like this guise, only two of them desired to sound like her in the future. The other two participants would both like to sound like the Donegal Gaeltacht 1 guise, which in dialectal terms, is at the other end of the spectrum. Only one participant would like to sound like one of the L2 speakers.

Table 6.10

Numbers and percentages of learners who would like sound like various guises in the future in descending order of popularity*

Speaker	*n*	%
MUN2	12	40.0
DON2	7	23.3
DON1	6	20.0
CON1	4	13.3
L2 north	1	3.3
CON2	0	0.0
MUN1	0	0.0
L2 south	0	0.0

*One participant did not complete this question, therefore, the total number of responses is 30.

6.2.5 Contexts in which participants would like to hear various speech varieties

The final question on the Speaker Evaluation Exercise questionnaire asked participants to indicate, from a list of three contexts, where they would like to hear the kind of Irish spoken by the various guises. The results for this question are presented in Table 6.11. It is clear from these figures that higher percentages of participants would like to hear all of the varieties in casual conversation. With the exception of the L2 south guise, all the guises were supported by a majority in this context. In the media and classroom contexts the results are more mixed. Most of the native speaker varieties were strongly supported in these two domains as well. However, the Munster Gaeltacht 1 and the Connaught Gaeltacht 2 guises received lower levels of support here. Finally, while the L2 south guise received the lowest number of positive responses for all three contexts, the L2 north speaker's variety received a more positive evaluation than as many as two native speaker guises across the three domains.

Table 6.11

Percentages of learners who would like to hear the Irish spoken by guises in various contexts

Speaker	Media	Classroom	Conversation
1. CON1	48.4	58.1	74.2
2. L2 north	25.8	41.9	61.3
3. DON1	67.7	41.9	77.4
4. CON2	35.5	35.5	71.0
5. MUN1	16.1	29.0	58.1
6. DON2	65.4	65.4	87.1
7. MUN2	74.2	71.0	77.4
8. L2 south	12.9	19.4	41.9

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented findings from the Speaker Evaluation Exercise used in Stage II of this project. A subsample of 31 learners from the first stage of the study was asked to evaluate the recorded speech of eight Irish speakers (six native speakers and two non-native speakers). The exercise was comprised of six tasks which were divided

into three sections in the instrument booklet. In the recordings, the native speakers were made up of two speakers from three different Gaeltacht areas; two from Donegal (Ulster), two from Galway (Connaught), one from Kerry (Munster) and one from Waterford (Munster). One non-native speaker was from a non-Gaeltacht area of Donegal (Ulster) and the other was from Limerick (Munster). The recordings were played three times in the same random order during the exercise. The learners were unaware of where the speakers were from and/or whether they were native speakers or not.

The first part of the evaluation asked learners to rate speakers on eight personality traits which made up two dimensions; status and social attractiveness. The results show that the native speakers were clearly rated more positively by participants than the non-native speakers. The Kerry Gaeltacht speaker was rated highest overall on all traits. The two Donegal Gaeltacht guises were rated second and third highest. The two non-native speakers were in the bottom half of the overall result. The L2 south guise (Limerick) speakers consistently rated lowest across all traits. The L2 north (Donegal non-Gaeltacht) guise was rated fifth overall, putting her ahead of two of the native speaker guises.

The second and third task asked participants to identify the speakers' place of origin and their level of proficiency in Irish. In general, participants were not able to consistently identify either of these. Only three speakers' place of origin was correctly identified by a small majority (52-61%). There are three interesting points here. First, the Kerry Gaeltacht speaker's immediate place of origin was only identified by 23% of the learners, and her home province was only identified by 55%. This is interesting because she was rated highest across all but one trait in the first task. Furthermore, she was only identified as a native speaker by 19% of participants. It is possible then that participants were responding positively to non-variety specific features of her speech, e.g. clarity and fluency. By contrast, the specific region of origin for both Donegal Gaeltacht guises was correctly identified by 52-61% of the participants and their province of origin by 65-71%. Both speakers were also identified as native speakers by 74-77% of participants. Second, the Waterford Gaeltacht speaker's region of origin was not identified by any of the participants and her province or origin was only identified by 32%. Further, she was the lowest rated native speaker in the combined ratings. It was noted that particular featured of her regional dialect may have been unknown to the learners causing them to think that she was a non-native speaker and rating her lower. Third, while the L2 south speaker was rated lowest across all traits, the L2 north speaker was rated above two of the native speakers overall, and above three native speakers on the naturalness, interestingness, intelligence,

confidence and clarity traits. She was even thought by one participant to be a native speaker. It is interesting that she was rated so positively compared to the other L2 south speaker even though her level of grammatical accuracy was lower. It is possible that learners responded more positively to the fact that the L2 north guise's speech was more fluid than that of the L2 south guise.

The third part of the evaluation included three tasks. The first asked participants to select the speaker they sounded most similar to at present. The L2 speakers were selected by 60% of the participants. It was shown that these self comparisons appear to be linked to learners' current level of proficiency, since most low proficiency learners felt that they currently sound like one of the L2 guises. The second task asked learners to select the speaker they would ideally like to sound like in the future. In response to this question only one of participant selected an L2 guise, and this was the L2 north guise who was more positively rated than the other L2 guise. All other participants chose a native speaker as their future speech model. The final task asked participants to name the contexts in which they would like to hear the types of Irish in the recordings. Overall, native speaker varieties were strongly supported for use in the media and in classroom contexts.

The findings discussed in this chapter demonstrate that learners in this study clearly hold favourable attitudes towards native speaker varieties of Irish. Most Gaeltacht guises were positively evaluated across various personality traits and they were selected as representing future target speech models for nearly all participants in this study. The L2 guises were, by contrast, negatively evaluated over all. However, these two speakers were not rated in the same fashion. The L2 north guise was more positively rated that the L2 south guise. However, it is not entirely clear from the data why the two non-native speakers were evaluated so differently. One plausible general explanation is that the L2 south speaker exhibited more learner features in her speech than the L2 north speaker and that this was perceived negatively. Furthermore, it is important to note that the L2 north speaker's place of origin was correctly identified by a majority of participants. This means that most learners knew she was from a rural, non-Gaeltacht area. The L2 south speaker's place origin was only correctly identified by a small number of participants. Most learners thought she was from Dublin. This misidentification may have had a negative impact on this speakers overall evaluation.

In the next chapter we will present the third and final stage of this study. Semi-structured follow-up interviews were conducted with the same 31 participants who were reported on in the present chapter. The function of these interviews within the overall research design is to give participants the opportunity to elaborate on and

explain further their views on issues raised in the other stages of the study. The interview data may go some way towards reconciling findings presented thus far.

CHAPTER 7

Stage III: Semi-structured Interviews

7.0 Introduction

In this chapter, data are presented from the semi-structured interviews which were carried out with each of the 31 subsample participants in Stage III of the study. The purpose of this third and final research strategy was to give participants an opportunity to discuss and expand upon the issues that were raised by the two previous research instruments. While the qualitative data reported in the present chapter helps explain salient quantitative findings which were reported in the previous two chapters, it also raises additional issues that were not anticipated in original conception of the project.

As the final stage in a sequential explanatory research design, the order of information presented in this chapter follows the general path of research issues dealt with in other instruments. Background information and motivational types are discussed first. The next section considers interviewees language learning goals in relation to level of proficiency and what they would like to be able to do with the language. Next, learners' views on the type of Irish, i.e. variety, would like to speak and learn are discussed. These last two topics, i.e. desired level of proficiency and target speech model, are at the very heart of this study and are, therefore, dedicated a great deal of space in the chapter. The next sections present data related to learners' use of Irish outside the classroom, the importance of learning Irish in the Gaeltacht and, finally, participants' self-image as an Irish speaker. Wherever possible, relevant data from the two previous stages of the project are reintroduced to facilitate the explanatory role of the interview data.

7.1 The semi-structured interviews: Instrument and method

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the same subsample of learners which took part in Stage II of the project which was reported in the last chapter. The aim of this last data collection method was to develop further in an explanatory fashion the issues which were raised by the Stage I questionnaire (Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners) as well as those particular to the Speaker Evaluation Exercise questionnaire.

The interview schedule itself consists of two broad lines of questioning, (a) introductory questions aimed at gathering additional background information about the participants, their past experiences with the Irish language and what courses, if any, have been attended; (b) questions focused on a range of affective issues connected

with learning Irish. Individual questions are grouped together under a number of subtopics for discussion. Both question types allowed the learners to discuss in greater detail issues that were already raised in other instruments, as well as provide additional information connected with their language learning experiences which were hitherto not dealt with. (See Appendix 3.3 for the full interview schedule.)

7.1.1 Analysis and presentation of interview data

The recordings of the individual interview sessions were transcribed and analyzed in order to identify common responses and themes. The primary aim of this analysis was to provide explanatory data. To this end, transcripts were read numerous times and notes were made of sections of interviews that supported or clarified data originating from Stage I and Stage II of the research.

The data is presented below verbatim with only minor changes where the clarity was an issue in the original. A broad transcription style was implemented as it was deemed unnecessary to transcribe details such as intonation, false starts or pause length. Lengthy quotes are provided, where possible, in order to give the fullest context of participants statements. The following conventions were used in the transcriptions included here:

Participant 1	participant number
...	pause
#	indecipherable
(?#)	unsure if preceding word is accurate
[sic]	incorrect/unusual form as spoken by participant
[...]	text omitted
Italics	words in Irish
(parentheses)	explanations by author
"quotation marks"	participants quoting their own speech or the speech of others
CAPITALS	words with particular emphasis

Six sample interview transcripts have been included in Appendix 3 in order to provide a general feel for the learners' discussions with the researcher. These interviews were selected because they are particularly illustrative of the types of responses included in this chapter. A number of terms and placenames, in Irish and in English, feature frequently enough in the interviews to warrant their being glossed together rather than

beside each occurrence in the excerpts below. These items presented in alphabetical order in Appendix 3.10 (Irish terms) and Appendix 3.11 (English terms).

7.2 Interview content

Interview content is presented here in the order it was elicited during data collection. The questions for discussion were connected with six main topics:

1. Personal and language learning background
2. Language learning goals
3. Importance of the type of Irish learners speak and learn
4. Learners' use of Irish outside the classroom
5. Learning Irish in the Gaeltacht
6. Self-image as an Irish speaker.

7.2.1 Personal and language learning background

Interview participants were all asked a series of questions in connection with their background and language learning experiences. In all cases their answers confirmed basic information about their place of birth, whether or not they had Irish as a subject at school and the other languages they learned and the contexts in which they learned their languages. In addition, a question was asked about learners' mother tongue. This question was not asked on any of the other questionnaires, however, learners' place of birth provided an indication as to what their primary languages might be. Responses to the question of learners' first language in the interview confirmed English was the first language of all the subsample participants who were born in Ireland. Two of the participants spoke languages other than English as their first language.

All of the learners in the subsample claimed to have some knowledge of at least one language other than English or Irish. Other European languages, which were learned at school, were the most commonly mentioned (see Section 5.1.6 above). Nearly all of the interviewees stated that they have a general interest in learning languages. Some linked this with a belief that they have an aptitude for language:

> I have an aptitude for languages and do speak a little bit of French and German, so I like languages, but probably didn't speak as much Irish as I did French and German when I left school. (Participant 9)

In terms of previous experiences learning Irish, there were mixed responses. Some of the participants stated that although they liked the language itself, they

disliked the subject when they were at school. This was most common among the older participants and they generally attributed this to poor teachers and poor teaching methods:

> In common with most Irish people, my experience of Irish at school was dismal because the method of teaching it. And even as a very young pupil at primary school and later at secondary school, I was aware that I was very interested in Irish and wanted to be able to speak it but it seemed an impossibility in the school because of the method of teaching and because of the corporal punishment which existed at the time. (Participant 3)

The majority of interviewees, however, said they did like Irish at school. Many learners who liked Irish as a subject at school, regardless of age and despite any negative experiences or lack of success with the language at school, attributed their fondness for the language as a subject at school to an inspirational teacher:

> I learned Irish at school to start with. My primary school teachers were, in my memory, excellent and there was a lot of natural Irish throughout the school. I remember a lot of teachers spoke Irish to each other. And then when I went to secondary school I had an excellent secondary school teacher all the way through secondary school which I think had a very positive influence on my interest in Irish. (Participant 17)

When asked why they returned to Irish in adulthood, a number of reasons were offered. Somewhat expectedly, many of the learners held the view that the Irish language was an important part of their culture. With their underlying motivation being to (re-)gain proficiency in the language, three separate motivational categories emerged from responses to this question. First, returning to Irish has been a goal ever since leaving school, but the opportunity had not presented itself until recently. As one learner put it, there was unfinished business:

> It's very much unfinished business. It's something I quite liked [at school]; I had a positive attitude towards. I would probably consider myself a nationalist. However, there was very little opportunity or stimulus to practise Irish either when I was studying in England or when I was in Brussels. (Participant 16)

For some participants, a feeling that learning Irish would allow them to feel more complete in terms of their sense of Irishness contributed to their motivation to engage with the language again:

> I felt that there was something cultural missing ... a bit of a void that needed to be filled. My personal jigsaw wasn't fulfilled without making some effort, even if only a token effort, but making some effort to become reasonably fluent. (Participant 19)
>
> I like languages to begin with, but I think the Irish language is important as an Irish person. You know it is a huge part of our heritage and our culture and I'd love to be fluent in it myself. (Participant 2)

A few learners also mentioned other pragmatic reasons for learning Irish as an adult. These motivations were generally connected with seeking employment in the education sector:

> I loved Irish as school, but there was no exposure so there was never a chance to practise. Then you sort of lose it and you think you can't do it anymore. I'm a primary school teacher. I was living in north of Ireland for 10 years so I definitely never spoke one word of Irish but then I decided to get my Irish qualification (An Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge, S.C.G.) in case I ever wanted to return home. (Participant 17)
>
> I started to study Irish four years ago because I am a primary school teacher and i need to do the SCG (*An Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge*) or OCG (*Oiriúnú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge*). I've always been interested in languages but it wouldn't have been a choice if I didn't have to do it at the beginning. I'm happy to do it because I have kids and I'm happy that I'll be able to do it and after investing so much time in it, I want to keep it up. I was in the Gaeltacht and I loved it. And i think it's important to keep it. (Participant 31)
>
> What brought me back to learning Irish would have been two main focuses. The main focus of the two would have been to acquire a job, primary school teaching. The lesser, still is important to me, in a personal respect, would be to speak MY native language. (Participant 26)

While the motivations cited above are rather distinct, there was a tendency for individual learners to cite emotional, integrative and pragmatic reasons together for returning to the language. This explains the fact that Stage I questionnaire data showed high levels of both integrative and instrumental motivation in the larger sample. It would appear to be common for adult learners of Irish to have multiple motivations for learning the language (cf. Flynn, 2009).

7.2.2 Language learning goals

Throughout this thesis, learners' language learning goals have been discussed in connection with their attitudes towards pursuing specific target language speech

models. However, in light of data collected in the three empirical stages of this study it is clear that learners of Irish draw a distinction between achieving certain language learning goals and adhering to the norms of any one regional variety of Irish. Questionnaire data from Stage I reveal that respondents have a stronger positive attitude towards the scale which contained items relating to achieving a competency level equal to that of native speaker than they do to the scale dealing with adhering to particular native speaker varieties. This means that learners are more concerned with being fluent than sounding like a particular type of native speaker; this was reiterated in the interview data:

> I think it is not feasible (nativelikeness), but I also think it is not necessary. I don't need to sound like a Donegal native, but I do try to pronounce Irish in a more authentic manner or in a non-flat Dublin manner. (Participant 5)

> I haven't set anything in stone, but I'd love to be able to speak Irish and write Irish to same degree that I can in English. I'm a long way away from that, especially on the written side, but I think it is achievable because I have learned so much in a couple of years. [...] No, I'm quite open to dialects. I never been like "oh, I can't speak that dialect because it is strange". (Participant 7)

However, not all learners equate fluency with adhering to a particular speech model. Over and over, interviewees stated that their main goal was to be a fluent Irish speaker. However, a small number of learners, all of whom were from Dublin, stated that they would like to speak Irish like most fluent speakers from their own area do. One learner considered this to be the most natural approach:

> I suppose that I am very conscious that people from a Gaeltacht area, be it Donegal, Connaught or Munster, their speaking Irish in a natural way, the way we or I speak English. I'm from Dublin and I speak like somebody from a Dublin background and I suppose I'd be conscious that if Irish did take greater hold in the country ... to respond to it in the most natural way regarding ... taking your background into consideration. (Participant 6)

While the interview data confirms that fluency, regardless of regional accent, is a more immediate, and perhaps a more important, goal for these learners, they also provide an explanation for this attitude. Learners commented on the difficulty of attaining nativelike fluency and a lack of access to native speech communities as contributing to their desire for fluency over accentedness:

> I don't think it is possible for a flat *Jackeen* (a derogatory term for a Dublin person) to ever sound like a native speaker. You can get near it, but you'll never sound like the real thing. (Participant 5)

> I would have decided long ago that [sounding like a native speaker] will never be possible. And I doubt if that can be achieved by anyone other than somebody who grew up in a nearly complete Irish environment. (Participant 23)

Two learners also mentioned that the type of Irish spoken by native speakers is not desirable target for them. Both of these learners mentioned the common practice among Gaeltacht speakers of borrowing and adapting English lexical items in their spoken Iris. They consider this practice to be problematic, and, therefore, it does not represent an appropriate speech model for them. One of them was, however, somewhat accepting of these borrowings, even though he doesn't want to speak that way himself. He recognized that this is 'natural' for the native speaker, regardless of whether it is 'correct' or not.

> A lot of the native Irish is actually a broken Irish, you know. It's not the most grammatically correct. I hear my wife sometimes, and she is a scholar, not only did she grow up with Irish, but she has a degree in Irish: *Cén t-am a bheidh an t-eitleán ag* land*áil?* (what time will the plane be landing?), you know .. and this is fine, you know talking to her brother you know ... and all this, *tá sé dhá mo* b*h*other*eáil.* (He is bothering me.) This phraseology, which is broken Irish ... and they use that as their everyday Irish experience and it's natural to them. [...] I might use those phrases, I don't know, but I'm actively working on constructing something I think is correct Irish. I don't have that natural flow to use that stuff. (Participant 30)

The second interviewee was less tolerant of these forms. He feels that they are too common in Gaeltacht speech and that only 'educated' native speakers would avoid these forms. For this reason, he feels that the traditional Gaeltacht native speaker has little, if anything, to offer him in the way of a target:

> I don't wish to have Irish like a native speaker because I'm not sure that native speakers, in the true sense of the word "native speaker" ... I don't think they would be able to provide me with much in that regard. [...] I would like to attain a level of Irish that is spoken in urban areas, particularly in urban areas of the six counties in the North [...] where there is a new kind of Irish and that there is a confidence in it, and there is also an avoidance of what is called *Béarlachas* (Anglicisms), which to me is not true of true native speakers unless they are very academically orientated. Most native speakers will use English from time to time, and particularly in Connemara. The Connemara dialect is polluted with

> 'Conamarachas', I call it; and in particular with the verbal nouns (e.g. *ag misseáil* = missing). (Participant 25)

A few learners stated that their low proficiency level at present prevented them from setting specific long-term language related goals. These learners mentioned short-term goals such as passing proficiency exams, e.g. Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (teg), achieving a level of proficiency that would allow them to move to the next level of courses or carry out work related tasks:

> Short term is passing my exam at Easter. Long term is to keep it up ... if I pass the exam. If not, I will have to continue until I pass the exam ... and keep it up for the girls, and for myself. I would love to be fluent. I don't know what the possibilities are for that. (Participant 31)

Despite the above comments, achieving (near-) nativelike fluency is clearly an important long-term goal for most adult learners of Irish. When asked, nearly every learner said that ideally he/she would like have a level of fluency equalling that of a native speaker. The native speaker represents a level of ultimate attainment which, if attainted, would allow learners to feel that they are true Irish speakers. The ease with which native speakers communicate in Irish, their command of the lexicon and their use of idioms is something that learners admire and ultimately aim to achieve:

> Yes, I would love to speak Irish as an Irish speaker, with the fluency and everything.
> *(Researcher) Like a native speaker?*
> Oh God, aye. Because it's spoken, you know ... even the turn of phrase. Everything, the way it is spoken, everything is so different than speaking English. Because if I'm talking Irish, I'm just translating each word as I go along, you know. It's not coming very natural to me. (Participant 1)

7.2.3 Importance of the type of Irish learners speak and learn

In this section we will consider the 'types', i.e. varieties, of Irish to which learners are orientated as distinct from their desired level of fluency. The data presented in the last section showed that achieving fluency may take priority over acquiring a nativelike accent, i.e. 'sounding' like a native speaker. However, the Stage I questionnaire data did show that a majority of learners have a preference for a particular regional variety of Irish. In addition, Speaker Evaluation Exercise data revealed that, in general, Gaeltacht varieties received the highest ratings, and that the two Donegal Gaeltacht

speakers and one of the Munster Gaeltacht speakers were rated highest in most categories.

The interview data revealed similar patterns in terms of the varieties of Irish to which the subsample learners are drawn. Despite their recognition of the difficulties associated with achieving nativelike competency in a Gaeltacht variety of the language, learners still claimed one of these as a preferred variety. When asked if there is a particular accent or dialect of Irish they like more than others, a clear majority (28 out of 31) named one or more of the regional dialects as their preferred variety. Reasons for having such preferences varied considerably, but the most common were related to previous experience and exposure to that variety, mainly at school or in adult classes:

> Yeah, me personally, I'd like to be able to speak with the perfect *blas* (accent) from Connemara. I suppose that just comes from my mother's side. (Participant 10)

Five learners indicated that their preferred variety was that of the dialect region with which their families have a historical connection. Two learners cited a new family (i.e. marriage) or social connection. Two of the non-Irish born learners also cited academic interests as being connected to their choice of preferred dialect. One of them said he was initially under the impression that he had historical familial links with a particular dialect area. But when he discovered that this may not be true, he was happy to carry on studying that variety based on his academic interests:

> I myself prefer Munster Irish. When I started learning Irish, I decided to try to concentrate on Munster, if I could, mostly based on a story that family is from the Cork area. I've since found out that my family is from a number of branches all around the island, so that doesn't really hold up. Since then, through studying Old Irish and Middle Irish, I found that the Munster dialect has a lot of very interesting historical ways of doing things that are unique to Munster Irish, as opposed to Connemara or Ulster Irish, and I like that. (Participant 28)

Paradoxically, only half of the learners who nominated a preferred variety (14 out of 28) indicated that it is also their current target speech model. The others maintained that, while they preferred certain varieties over others, it was not particularly important for them to learn or speak those dialects. Instead, their current objective was to become fluent in Irish without aspiring to the norms associated with one regional variety. The most common reason given for naming a preferred, non-target variety was that it was the variety they were most exposed to at school. The most common reason

for not aspiring to the norms of their preferred dialect in terms of their own speech was that it is more important to focus on becoming a fluent speaker of Irish, rather than aspiring to the norms of any one variety. Other explanations given in this connection are that, (i) adhering to the norms of a single variety was not desirable at the learner's current level of proficiency; (ii) having been exposed to multiple varieties from different teacher, they have no allegiance to any one; and (iii) adopting a type of Irish, i.e. accent or dialect, spoken in a part of the country other than a speaker's place of origin is objectionable. This last group of responses were the only ones which represented a strong objection to L2 speakers aspiring or adhering to native speaker norms, yet they were restricted to only three participants. Of the three, one did say that he had a preferred variety, yet did not see it as a speech model for his own Irish. This learner's objection was that some urban L2 speakers, a group to which he belongs, produce a somewhat theatrical Irish accent when attempting to sound nativelike and that this does not sound natural.

It is of interest as well that some of the interview data suggest that learners may not have any great knowledge of, or experience with, different varieties of Irish. Learners sometimes made statements about the pronunciation of regional forms that were incorrect. Other learners made statements concerning speakers of preferred or disfavoured varieties, e.g. sounding very authentic or being unable to understand them. In some cases, however, they were attributing dialects to speakers who did not belong to the group:

> I suppose the Connemara one would be nice. I watch Ros na Rún and it's nice to hear John Joe (the actor is actually from the Donegal Gaeltacht) or the other guy, the crazy guy, the old guy talking in Irish because they're real native speakers, so it's nice to hear that. But then I wouldn't understand them as easily as I would understand some of the other actors. (Participant 24)

In cases where learners have a preferred dialect and see it as a model for their own speech, such unfamiliarity could affect their ability to consciously work towards that model since they would be unable to identify the relevant forms they would need to incorporate into their speech:

> [I like] the Déise Irish of An Rinn (a Gaeltacht village in Waterford). And I must say that I only have limited acquaintance with it, but I am always impressed by it. I don't know if it's the dialect or the accent or what, but that Irish for me is number one. (Partcipant 11)

Two of the learners stated that they are particularly interested in learning varieties of Irish that are no longer spoken as a vernacular, e.g. East Ulster Irish. This was based on their place of origin. They felt a special connection with the region despite the fact that the language is not widely spoken in the region any longer. They both stated that it would help them reconnect with their ancestors, heritage and culture. One of these learners also mentioned that he is also interested in speaking a type of Irish which is spoken in urban areas, particularly in the North of the country, i.e. Belfast:

> A dialect I like is a dialect called Oriel Irish because it is the dialect of Irish that was spoken in my area of north County Dublin up to 200 years ago. It's a dialect that is under revival in Armagh and County Down and areas up around the border and it's been revived in a very passionate way by people there that is not evident to me in the traditional Gaeltachts on a new basis. That is the dialect I would strive to have mainly, but also some of my Dublin kind of dialect as well, which I hear a lot from younger people, particularly on Raidió na Life. (Participant 25)

It is also of interest that many learners, whether or not they nominated a particular target variety, stated that they have no interest in learning the '*caighdeán*' (standard). This declaration is seemingly linked to a common misunderstanding of what standard Irish is, and what its intended domains of use are. We saw in Chapter 1 that Irish does not have an official spoken standard. In everyday parlance, however, the term *caighdeán* often denotes a spoken form used primarily by L2 speakers. Such a form is viewed as being contrived and devoid of the richness that is considered to be characteristic of native, Gaeltacht speech:

> Yes, I am very interested in the Connaught dialect of Irish, the south Connemara dialect. I'm not interested at all in the *caighdeán* (standard), the Caighdeán Oifigiúil (the Official Standard).
> (Participant 3)

> I don't like the sound of the *caighdeán* (standard) or standardized [Irish]. (Participant 21)

Although they do not often use the term to describe their own Irish (see below), some learners talked about the '*caighdeán*' or 'standard' as a lesser or undesirable variety of the language which second language learners speak because they have been exposed to numerous teachers who provided them with different models:

> I would have spoken Kerry Irish, but it's a lot more 'blandified' or homogenised

now. It's more of a Caighdeán Oifigiúil, I suppose.
(Participant 15)

> I think there is a huge interest in looking away from a standard among a lot of the people I would speak with. They learn a standard in school or in a course and then as they progress within themselves, they generally want to look outside what a standard is and look at things that didn't make it into the textbooks.(Participant 7)

During the course of the interviews, 21 learners clearly stated that they currently speak a particular 'type' of Irish. In most cases they described their current variety as something other than their target variety. Only seven learners said that they speak one of the main regional varieties (Munster = 2, Connaught = 3, Ulster = 2). They attributed this to either their own place of origin, and therefore, it being the one to which they have been most exposed, or to a concerted effort made to learn the variety because of family connections.

> I suppose it's Munster. I suppose I was trying to concentrate on being fluent and that's the easiest one for me because obviously I have the pronunciation from that. (Participant 13)

The majority of the learners (14 out of 21) felt, however, that their spoken Irish does not presently conform to the norms of any one traditional variety. Many of them said they speak no particular dialect. Others used various labels to describe their Irish; these included 'mixed', 'urban', 'school' and 'bastardized' Irish. Only 3 of the interviewees used the term *caighdeán* (standard) or *Caighdeán Oifigiúil* (Official Standard) when describing their own Irish, one of whom only said that his Irish had been influenced by the standard:

> I think I have a bastardised Irish. My current teacher is from Ulster and I've probably picked up some things appropriate to the northern part of [Ireland]. I think the very first teacher I had in national (primary) school came from Clare. I know my wife points out to me that I'm inclined to put a '*do*' before the aimsir *chaite* (past tense), which I think is a characteristic of the southern part of the country, but I imagine that by the time I got to the secondary school it was the Caighdeán. I don't really know the answer to that question, but I'd imagine that it's a mixture of everything and anything and dominated by the Caighdeán. (Participant 23)

Learners were asked to compare their own Irish to that of native speakers in terms of

accent, level of proficiency, lexicon, etc. The metaphor of a continuum between a native speaker and the 'average L2 speaker of Irish' was used to give their comparison some focus. None of the participants described their own Irish as being near to that of native speakers, and, as pointed out earlier, many of them commented that they did not think it was even possible to reach such a standard if you were raised outside of the Gaeltacht. However, many of the learners did say, however, that they thought their Irish was better than the average L2 speaker who learned Irish in school and placed themselves 'halfway' between the two groups:

> A lot of my friends who learned Irish [at school] would say that they haven't a word of Irish now ... those people who are not in the educational system would say they can't remember a thing. Every so often, it amuses them to think that they do remember any of it. But as regards a native speaker, I wouldn't say that I'm anywhere near anybody native ... absolutely not. I suppose I'm maybe halfway between the two. (Participant 17)

A follow-up question asked learners to compare the Irish of learners to that of native speakers. One of the major differences between native and non-native speakers cited by learners in this context had to do with the idea that L2 users need to translate everything from their L1 into Irish and native speakers do not. It was commented that L2 speech was laboured and as a result learners lack confidence in their Irish. A few learners went as far as to say that L2 Irish is not pleasant to listen to:

> It's pretty horrible (learners' Irish), if that doesn't sound too damning to myself, because I speak it. I think, and I know this from my own Irish, it sounds mashed up because you're picking words from all over the place. You don't have an "I'm from here" sound. (Participant 15)

Learners were also asked to comment on the type of Irish spoken by L2 speakers more generally and its role in the language's future. Virtually all of them everyone felt that L2 varieties are important simply by virtue of their existence. They felt that it is important that second language speakers of Irish use the language, regardless of any differences that might exist between their varieties and those of native speakers. At the same time, many of the same interviewees stated that the type of Irish typical of L2 speakers is not as authentic, natural, accurate and/or complex as that of native speakers. The emphasis in these statements was, for the most part, focused on nativelikeness or lack thereof, rather than regional accent. Most responses highlight an undesirable influence of English on the Irish language, and though they recognize that

this is happening in the Gaeltacht among L1 speakers as well, they are particularly concerned with its impact among the largest cohort of Irish speakers.

> Well, it is sort of a double edged sword. The globalization has certainly diminished any purity that's there. But the very fact that there are non-native learners it may be the only way that the language is going to survive. There are a few non-Irish people in the class and I think they have better accents in that they have embraced an Irish accent rather than Dublin accented Irish. (Participant 12)

> I think people are right to be worried that we'll end up with a fairly 'newspapery' Irish, an Irish that loses its jokes, its slang, it's natural, fluid, inventive characteristics. (Participant 29)

> I think Irish, if it's going to survive, is going to have to survive as a bilingual language. [...] I think that a few things can simplify, as long as the sentence structure doesn't just become English sentence structure, I think it's a good thing, if it makes it more accessible. As long as it doesn't just become English using Irish words, would be my view. (Participant 27)

Though they are were in general agreement that the increase in L2 speakers is a good sign, some were concerned that the increasing use of the language by L2 speakers vis-à-vis the decline of native speakers of the language will over time dilute the language. The term 'purity' is used by more than one person. The fear is that Irish, as used by L2 speakers, is on the one hand becoming (or will become) heavily influenced by the English language and on the other is becoming restricted in terms of lexicon, idioms and traditional nuanced structures:

> It may well change it. What I'm thinking of is in one of the classes I did, *Cruinneas sa Ghaeilge* (accuracy in Irish). It was a particularly interesting class for me because it was about idiom and about the way native Irish speakers would say things. And some of the expressions I have never heard of before. So in the case of second language speakers, people like me, we won't have heard those so we won't be continuing them on. If you're a native speaker, that is just the way you speak. (Participant 9)

Another important issue which was raised in the interviews was the notion of *blas* or accent. When used in the context of speech, *blas* is defined as 'accent' or 'mode of pronunciation'. In the interviews, the terms *blas* and accent were regularly used when comparing L2 to speech to L1 (native) speech, however, they were used to denote more than just the stress patterns or intonation of speech. The terms were evoked in an attempt to describe the *je ne sais quoi* of Gaeltacht Irish which is seen as lacking in

L2 speech, and is, therefore, something desirable:

> So, I think the *blas* (accent) is very important. I do think that living language has a blas, and a character and a personality. (Participant 30)

Two further issues were raised in relation to the native speaker model and target varieties of Irish. Interviewees were relatively split on the importance of their teacher speaking a particular variety of Irish. Just under half of the interviewees (n = 13) said that it is important to them, when attending a course, that the teacher speaks their preferred variety. However, one of these learners said that his opinion would depend on the aims of the class; if it was a written grammar class, he wouldn't mind what dialect the teacher spoke. These learners felt that a teacher who happened to speak their preferred variety would not only provide them with their desired speech model, but would also be easier to understand and therefore facilitate their learning:

> I'd rather it was somebody with Munster Irish that I could emulate, rather than trying to translate. I mean one of the teachers I had in Conradh (Conradh na Gaeilge/The Gaelic League)was actually a wonderful teacher, wonderful blas (accent) but from Connemara, so you are kind of mentally translating and going "I'll emulate that bit, but not that bit" or "I'll pick up this word or that phrase, but not the other". (Partcipant 15)

For a majority of learners (n = 18) though, it is not overly important that their teacher speak any particular variety of Irish. By way of qualification, however, some of these learners did say that given a choice they would prefer that the teacher speak their preferred variety, but that it was not something they would actively look for in a course instructor nor is it something that would discourage them from attending a course. Interestingly, a few learners asserted that it could be helpful to have a teacher who speaks a variety other than their preferred or target variety, since this would allow them to become more familiar with other varieties of the language.

Interviewees were also asked whether it was important to them that their teacher be a native speaker of Irish. Despite having placed great emphasis on the native speaker model at other points in the interview and in response to items on other instruments, a large number of learners (n = 21) stated here that it was not important that their teacher be a native speaker. They feel that being highly proficient and knowing how to present the language to learners is more important than whether the teacher is an L1 or L2 speaker of Irish. It is of interest that one learner went as far as to

say that he would prefer that his teacher not be a native speaker. His rationale was that he would feel a sense of comfort in knowing that the teacher had been through the process of learning Irish as a second language:

> Yeah, I'd probably feel better is the teacher was NOT a native Irish speaker. I'd probably feel more comfortable in that I'd know that they learned the language and they were teaching it, so I'd feel more confident. If someone who was a native Irish speaker was teaching me, I wouldn't feel AS confident at it. (Participant 2)

Those learners who do feel that it is important that their teacher be a native speaker argued that L1 speakers bring credibility, accuracy to the learning context, and that they generally have a better intrinsic knowledge of the language.

> Yes. I think the course I did last summer, they were all native speakers and it did make a difference. I guess it gave them credibility; they had a natural flow of Irish about them. (Participant 30)

7.2.4 Learners' use of Irish outside the classroom

Responses to items in the Stage I questionnaire revealed that most learners do not use Irish much outside the classroom setting. Further, when they do speak Irish, it is mostly with other learners and they prefer these learners to be at the same level or lower in terms of proficiency. 59% of the sample claimed to speak Irish as often as possible. In the interviews, most learners did say that they speak Irish outside of the classroom, but when asked to whom they speak Irish most, they only named a limited number of friends or colleagues. This was often qualified by stating that it is just a few words or phrases that they use in these contexts:

> There are a few people in work and I know they're from Gaeltacht regions and I would make the effort to say "Hello. How are you getting on?" Just casual. No more than that. (Participant 12)

Interviewees confirmed that the majority of these Irish speaking contacts are other L2 speakers and very few are native speakers. They tend to know these speakers/learners through Irish classes, discussion groups or Irish language organizations. In some cases they are work colleagues or friends from the participants' schooldays who have also maintained an interest in Irish. When asked about levels of

proficiency amongst these peers, they indicated that they range from a few basic phrases to relatively fluent. Two of the participants spend extended amounts of time in the Galway Gaeltacht; one lives there full time and the other has a holiday home in the area. Both have more regular contact with native speakers than is typical of the other participants. One of these learners is highly motivated to learn the local Conamara variety of Irish and, to this end, he regularly interacts with locals. The other participant does not have the same desire to learn the local Connemara variety of Irish. He finds the locals very difficult to understand, but he still makes an effort to engage with them in Irish as often as possible.

These last two examples are in fact exceptional among this group of learners, who generally have limited opportunities to use Irish for interpersonal communicative purposes outside of pedagogical contexts. While they may actually speak Irish as often as possible, the small number of Irish speakers they have the opportunity to engage with means that the number of real opportunities they have to speak the language is very small. It is also the case that these learners do not actively seek out speakers of their preferred variety of Irish in order to practise it. Only one learner said that he does this:

> Most of the people I wish to speak to would be fluent Irish speakers because I seek them out. Many of them are native speakers. I do have quite a few friends who are not native speakers. Some are learning Irish to varying degrees of proficiency. (Participant 3)

It is relatively clear from these data that learners do not, in general, have many opportunities to use Irish outside of the classroom. In the absence of real communicative opportunities for language use, learners tend to turn to the media for additional language input. Various programme types were cited by learners as being attractive or instructional for them. Overall, however, learners generally opt for content over language variety when choosing whether or not to tune into Irish language programming. Documentaries were often mentioned in this connection. A few learners do, however, choose to tune into regional radio programmes as a result of personal connections with the area from which it originates:

> I use the RTÉ player, the RnaG player (online streaming of RnaG). I'll listen to Barrscéalta or Rónán and wash the dishes. Yeah, I'll do that about a half hour a day. [...] I've met Rónán a few times and a few of my friends will send texts and things in, so I do feel like I connect up with people that I feel friendly towards. (Participant 29)

7.2.5 Learning Irish in the Gaeltacht

As the primary locus of the Irish-speaking community, the Gaeltacht plays important symbolic and practical roles in Irish language learning. This is true for most school-aged learners of Irish as well as for many adult learners. Half of the course providers whose classes were surveyed in Stage I of this study were located in the Gaeltacht and 62% of responses to the initial questionnaire were from learners attending these Gaeltacht courses. 58% of the subsample in Stages II and III was made up of participants who were attending a Gaeltacht course when they filled out the Stage I questionnaire.

The 31 interview participants were asked whether they had attended a course in the Gaeltacht as an adult. This question aimed to determine if those learners who were attending Dublin-based courses (n = 13) had attended a course in the Gaeltacht since leaving school. Eight of these learners had attended a Gaeltacht-based course as adults. In addition, this question sought to determine if those attending a Gaeltacht course at the time of the study (n = 18) had done so previously. Five of these learners had attended a Gaeltacht course previously. In total, this means that 13 of the subsample participants had attended a Gaeltacht based course prior to taking part in this study.

Learners were also asked if there was any reason that they chose to attend a course in specific Gaeltacht areas. In some cases learners (n = 6) admittedly chose to attend a course which was run in the region where their target variety was spoken.

> I'm trying to learn the Munster dialect, if I can, and I figured that going to any Gaeltacht would help, you know, if I'm there for a week in any given place, it would be a week's worth of help, so then it just came down to preference of the Gaeltacht. (Participant 28)

Among those who had a preference for one Gaeltacht area over another, the decision for some was based on familiarity, i.e. they had been there before as children. One learner joked, however, that she chose one course location over another because she didn't want to have to learn a 'new Irish':

> I think they do adult class in Glencolmcille and Ballyferriter and I didn't know [Gleann Cholm Cille] so I went to Ballyferriter. I know Corca Dhuibhne. I was in Ventry as a kid, so that's why I did it. Donegal, well, you know ... I'd like to get my Irish back rather than learn a new Irish (laughs). (Participant 27)

Interestingly, some learners' interest in a particular region came as a result of previous, positive experiences of attending courses in that Gaeltacht as an adult. These learners were exposed to a number of different varieties while at school, however, after attending a course in the Gaeltacht and enjoying the experience they took a special interest in the regional variety of Irish spoken where the course was held:

> Now that I have been there a few times, we (friends) sit down and decide "when are we going to Donegal?" it's because we've developed a bit of a preference for some of the types of music, some of the characters you get up there (laughs). (Participant 7)

In other cases, choice of a particular Gaeltacht was simply a case of recommendation, convenience of location, price, course activities, schedule of courses or accommodation options. Further, some learners were unaware that such courses were run in locations other than the one where they attended. This may be the result of the marketing and promotional materials available for these courses. More than one learner said that when they searched on-line, they found it difficult to find information such courses and simply chose the one they found.

Interviews also revealed that a few learners had also visited Gaeltacht areas for non-pedagogical reasons, yet during these visits they had little interaction with the locals and in some cases they didn't know it was an Irish speaking region:

> Yeah, yeah. You go on holidays to places in the West, but you don't get to interact properly with people. (Participant 15)

7.2.6 Self-image as an Irish speaker

Responses to Stage I questionnaire items showed that the language is an important part of learners' self concept. We saw that the mean item score for the *Identity/Self-concept* scale was 6.28 (*SD* = 0.96), and 70% of the sample agreed or strongly agreed with the statement about Irish being an important element of their personal identity. It was shown in Sections 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 that, despite having a clear preferred variety of Irish, learners' overall learning goals are more concerned with attaining fluency to a nativelike level than adhering to the norms of any particular variety of the language. In terms of correlations in the Stage I questionnaire data, the *Identity/Self-concept* scale correlated strongly with the *Attitude to Irish Speakers* scale (r = .54), the *Integrative orientation* scale (r = .45) and the *Proficiency aims and goals* scale (r = .44). It correlated less strongly, however, with the *Attitude to learning dialects* scale (r = .32). It

is also important to remember that it was observed in the Stage II (Speaker Evaluation Exercise) data that learners recognize L2 traits in their own Irish at present, but they aspire to sound like one of the native speaker guises in the future. The data in this section provides an explanation for these findings.

The question of self-concept was raised in the interviews through a series of questions that asked learners how they feel when they speak Irish. The first question presented learners with the idea that some people feel that they take on a new or different persona when they speak another language. Interviewees were asked to comment on this phenomenon and tell the researcher if they had ever experienced such a feeling. Just under half the learners (n = 14) stated clearly that they don't believe their persona changes in any way when they speak different languages. Four of them, however, made similar statements about the fact that Irish is an extension of their existing persona:

> No, I don't. It's another part of being Irish. I'd have a strong sense of Irishness anyway, and it certainly would be reinforced through the language. (Participant 8)

A small majority of learners (n = 17) said that they could identify with the idea that they take on a different persona when speaking an L2 as opposed to their L1. Explanations provided by participants varied a great deal, however, these can be grouped into two broad themes: negative changes and positive changes to learners' personality. Learners in the first category feel that they are more conservative when speaking a language other than their native tongue. The main idea among this group was that their limited vocabulary in the L2 would keep them from expressing themselves in same way they would in their L1. This was perceived as being a negative change in character, since they could not interact with interlocutors in the manner they would like to. This was the more common response type and adjectives such as 'limited', 'restricted' and 'reserved' were used in this connection:

> I've reasonable experience of this because speaking French in Belgium and I feel that when I'm speaking another language I come across deader, much less lively. I use safe formulations, repetitive formulations. I follow cues from what other people are saying. I'm much less in control of the conversation. So I feel that I'm maybe only projecting 70% of what I can project. I'm sure it's the same in Irish. It's less probably. More so because my Irish is not as good as my French was. So I just feel less of a person. I don't feel more poetic or more thoroughgoing (?#) or anything. I just feel diminished slightly. (Participant 16)

The second, less common category of responses emphasized positive changes to learners' personality. For these learners, speaking in the L2 allows the freedom to express themselves in a different way, one that is less constricted and, to some extent, increases their confidence. One participant likened this feeling to that of being a child at school who is rewarded for good performance:

> Yeah I think it does ... once the confidence comes, it's a bit like when you are at school and you used to get a gold star or you won the little trophy at the end of the week and you took it home and you were chuffed with yourself. So, I think that kind of kicks in. (Participant 7)

Learners were also asked a more direct question about whether they feel the same or different when speaking in Irish as opposed to in English. This question helped some learners who struggled to conceptualize changes in their persona in the last question. Like those in relation to persona, the responses were mixed with more interviewees recognizing a positive difference than a negative one. The most common positive feeling experienced by learners when speaking Irish was a sense of pride. Some learners' pride was linked to their sense of Irishness, while for others it was a result of their personal achievement, i.e. learning Irish to a level that would allow them to speak the language which is part of their identity:

> Yeah, I probably feel a little bit empowered. Probably pep in my step and happy with myself. A sense of achievement, a sense of I nailed this ... self-fulfilment, self-contentment, any of those kind of words. I don't think I behave differently because of it, but it's just ... again that higher level stuff. (Participant 14)

> I would say that one part of my persona or psyche or whatever you want to call it that is affected by this is that rather old fashion point I suppose of identity and continuity with my cultural heritage. I mean these are very strong feelings in people. It reaffirms that deeper sense of Identity. (Participant 11)

There was, however, a negative feeling attached to speaking Irish for some participants (n = 6) as well. Most of these learners felt that speaking Irish required a great deal of thought and effort which resulted in it being less fluid and unnatural, and therefore, diminishing their confidence:

> No. I'd probably feel less confident and I would be thinking more about what I'm saying because I have to think about what I'm saying. (Participant 9)

A follow up question asked interviewees if they feel like they are part of a particular group or community when they speak Irish. This question aimed to explore whether or not learners feel a sense of identity with other Irish learners or Irish speakers more generally. In this context, it is important to know into which groups learners feel they have integrated. The two most common groups mentioned by participants were 'learners' and 'Irish speakers'. It is interesting that participants used these two labels. It is possible that some learners' lack of contact with the latter group, i.e. daily speakers of Irish, has left them with only their fellow course mates as a readily identifiable community for integration purposes. It is also possible that their current proficiency level determines the group with which can readily identify. Only two interviewees mentioned a native speaker/Gaeltacht group of which they feel a part and a third interviewee stated that he and the native speakers are in the same group in terms of attitude towards of promoting the language. This, he feels, is particularly true when we consider the number of people in Ireland who have a negative attitude towards the Irish language. He feels that those who have such a negative attitude tend to see anyone who speaks Irish as the same:

> Yes, I would. And equally, the fact that I have an interest in Irish also makes people put you as part of another community. There would be a number of people who either have no interest in or a negative view towards Irish and they see you as 'one of them'. Myself and the native speakers, in that particular context, are in there together. (Participant 8)

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented qualitative data from a series of semi-structured interviews carried out in Stage III of this project. This data has served to provide a more in depth account of the more quantitative findings from Stages I and II. Section 7.2.1 showed that the learners in this study generally had positive experiences of learning Irish at school and many of them had fond memories of inspirational teachers who fostered their interest in Irish. The few older learners who did not have the same positive experiences said that this did not change their positive view of the language. They blamed poor teaching methods for their dislike of Irish class as children. Learners' reasons for returning to Irish via adult classes were also discussed. While cultural reasons were the most common, some learners offered more personal reasons such as wanting to finish something they started in childhood. There were also some more pragmatic motivations mentioned, e.g. passing exams, however, these more utilitarian

reasons were not these learners' sole motivation for attending courses. They cited affective motivational factors alongside their instrumental orientations.

Section 7.2.2 provided evidence that most learners' main aim is to reach a reasonable level of fluency in the language. Their non-Irish speaking upbringing and the difficulties associated with achieving nativelike fluency in the language were mentioned in connection with their goal setting. Nonetheless, nearly every learner felt that ideally they would like to be as fluent as a native speaker, since reaching this level would make them feel like a true Irish speaker.

Data in Section 7.2.3 demonstrated that nearly all the learners have a preferred traditional (regional) variety of the language and that they have various reasons for holding these preferences. Past, present social or familial connections to regions, past learning experiences, e.g. teachers or schools, and academic interests associated with dialects or regions were all mentioned in this connection. Three additional findings emerged from in this section. First, only half the learners who have a preferred variety currently aspire to it as a target speech model. Second, some of the data suggests that learners may not have a detailed knowledge of their preferred variety. This would seem to explain the fact that, while large numbers of learners indicated in Stage I that they have a definite preference for one variety of Irish, the numbers of participants who were able to identify various spoken varieties presented for evaluation in Stage II were relatively low. Third, the term 'standard' or its Irish equivalent '*caighdeán*' was used pejoratively by some learners to refer to an undesirable L2 model. Furthermore, although these learners feel that their own level of proficiency in Irish is higher than the average L2 speaker, they used labels such as 'mixed' or 'school Irish' to describe the variety they speak.

In relation to the type of Irish spoken by teachers, most stated that it was not important that course instructors be native speakers or use their preferred variety in class. They feel that it is more important that their teachers have a high level of proficiency and good teaching skills; speaking their preferred model would only be a bonus. Those who would prefer to attend a class taught by a native speaker felt that such a speaker bring credibility and accuracy to the learning context.

Section 7.2.5 discussed learners' preferences for Gaeltacht based courses. It was found that only six interviewees chose to attend a Gaeltacht course in the region associated with their preferred variety of Irish. The majority of learners gave reasons such as convenience of location, price and extra-curricular activities as a basis for choosing a course.

Issues connected with learners' self-concept were discussed in Section 7.2.6. Seventeen learners indicated that they feel different when speaking an L2. A majority

of those felt it impacted negatively on their personality. They attributed this to being unable to express themselves properly due to limited vocabulary. The few learners who said that they experience positive changes to their personality when speaking in an L2 cited increased confidence based on performance and freedom as the reason for this. In the specific case of speaking Irish the trend was reversed. Most learners said that they felt good when speaking Irish, regardless of proficiency level, because it gives them a sense of pride and achievement. However, most learners struggled to identify a particular group with which they personally identify when they are speaking Irish. While some said they feel part of a community of learners, others said they feel part of the Irish speaking community more generally, and no real pattern emerged from statements on this issue.

In the next chapter we provide a more comprehensive discussion of the individual findings presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 and an exploration of how they provide answers to specific research questions which were outlined in Chapter 4. We also consider potential pedagogical implications of the findings as well as the study's limitations. Finally, we make recommendations for future research in connection with issues raised in this study.

CHAPTER 8

Discussion and conclusions

8.0 Introduction

This study set out to explore adult learners' awareness of and orientation towards different varieties of Irish as language learning targets. Attitudes towards these target varieties have been located within the context of learners' more general attitudes towards Irish, their motivation to learn it and aspects of their identity. The relative paucity of research among this cohort, especially in relation to the variety and level of proficiency they wish to acquire, makes this both a challenging and important area of inquiry. There are a number of factors in relation to adult learners and the context in which they learn the language that distinguish them from other groups which have been the focus of this kind of research.

First, the lack of either an official or unofficial accepted spoken standard for Irish means that traditionally regional dialects have been promoted as appropriate speech models for learners at all levels of the educational system. The three main regional varieties of Irish, which are primarily associated with the provinces of Munster, Connaught and Ulster, differ significantly in their spoken form. In many cases, individual teachers favour one or another of these varieties in their teaching, presumably based on their own preferences or knowledge. In the east of the country, especially in urban areas around Dublin, learners tend to be exposed to more than one variety of the language during their time at school since they are likely to come into contact with multiple Irish teachers at different levels of their education. Understandably, school age learners have little if any control over the type of Irish promoted in the classroom and they may not be fully aware of differences among the various types. By contrast, adult learners who attend courses by choice are, to some extent, in a position to discriminate between course types, teachers, materials, etc. based on their own preferences.

Second, despite Irish being one of the official national languages of Ireland, the number of L1 speakers of the language is extremely small (approximately 5% of the population). This has resulted in only a small number of L1 teachers of the language, and many of the speakers one hears in the media are L2 speakers of the language. L2 learners then are presumed to have limited contact with native speakers of the target models traditionally endorsed in learning contexts. This means that many learners have to rely on textbooks, classroom materials, knowledgeable L2 teachers and the media to inform them of the features of the various target varieties to which they may

aspire. While in theory this sounds like a workable compromise, it has been shown that L2 varieties do not adhere to the norms of any one traditional variety. To date, there has only been limited commentary on this in the research literature and as a result it is unclear whether learners aim for L2 varieties or whether they emerge as a result of unsystematic input during the learning process. Some of the research carried out with school age learners suggests that it may be a combination of both of these (Ó Duibhir, 2009; Regan, 2010). The present study has set out to investigate these issues among adults who are actively engaged in Irish language learning.

Due to the scarcity of research on these topics and the types of data necessary to carry out a comprehensive study of them, a multiple stage mixed methods research design was used here. Stage I of the study consisted of a broad based quantitative inquiry with as large a group of learners as it was possible to assemble. Stages II and III gathered richer and more detailed quantitative and qualitative data from a subsample of those participating in Stage I with the aim of contextualising and explaining findings from the larger cohort. 157 learners returned the questionnaire in Stage I, and a subsample of 31 learners participated Stages II and III.

This chapter provides a more comprehensive discussion of the individual findings presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 and an exploration of the extent to which they provide answers to the specific research questions outlined in Chapter 4. Links between issues raised in the three data sets are highlighted in the course of this discussion. At the end of the chapter, we consider potential pedagogical implications of the findings, weakness of this study and the road to future research connected with these issues.

8.1 Discussion of findings in relation to research questions

Five research questions were outlined in Chapter 4. These served as a guide in presenting the findings in this study in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. In the following sections we now examine the extent to which the findings answer each of the questions individually.

8.1.1 Attitudes towards L1 and L2 varieties of Irish

Research question: What are adult learners' attitudes to different native (i.e. Gaeltacht) and non-native (i.e. L2) varieties of Irish?

It is clear from all three stages of the study that adult learners of Irish hold mild to strong attitudes towards L1 and L2 varieties of the Irish language. They are aware that

these different varieties exist and they evaluate them differently. In response to the Stage I questionnaire, learners indicated that they have a clear preference for some varieties of Irish and a mild to moderate dislike of other varieties. The mean score for the item which asked if they had a definite preference for a particular dialect of Irish was 5.43 (*SD* = 1.57), while the mean score for the item which asked if they dislike some varieties was 3.86 (*SD* = 2.00). Since 7 was the most positive point on the scale, we can see that learners have a more positive attitude towards a preferred variety and a more negative attitude towards the idea of disliking others. However, the total mean item score for the *Attitudes towards learning dialects of Irish* scale, to which the above items belong, was only slightly on the positive side (*M* = 4.64, *SD* = 1.72). This scale assesses attitudes towards learning regional varieties of Irish and a high score would indicate a positive attitude towards learning particular regional varieties of the language. Therefore, the learners' positive attitude was not very strong in this context.

In Stage II of the project, when the subsample was asked to rate the recorded speech of L1 (Gaeltacht) and L2 (non-Gaeltacht) speakers of Irish, participants' responses to scales measuring perceived status and social attractiveness showed that the L1 speakers, with one exception, were rated higher than the L2 speakers. The one L1 speaker (from the Ring Gaeltacht in Waterford) who was rated lower than one of the L2 guises used a number of local forms in her speech that the learners may not have recognised or associated with L1 speech and rated her lower accordingly. Of the two L2 speakers, the L2 south speaker was consistently rated lowest on all trait scales (e.g. friendliness, clarity, naturalness, etc.) across the two dimensions (i.e. status and social attractiveness). The L2 north speaker, however, was rated higher than at least three of the native speakers on some trait scales (i.e. naturalness, interestingness, intelligence, confidence and clarity), and her overall rating was fourth from the bottom on both the status and social status dimensions. This finding suggests that some L2 varieties may be tolerated more than others by learners in certain contexts. McKenzie's (2008b) study of Japanese learners of English produced a similar finding. The top rated speaker over all was the West Kerry Gaeltacht speaker; however, she was followed closely by both the Donegal Gaeltacht speakers. The Connaught Gaeltacht speakers received middle of the road ratings over all.

Despite their clear preference for the speech of L1 compared to L2 speakers, the two Donegal Gaeltacht speakers were the only native speakers whose regional place of origin was correctly identified by a majority of participants. The L2 north speaker's origin was also correctly identified by a majority of participants. However, in all three cases it was a small majority of learners who identified their origin correctly. No-one correctly identified the place of origin for the Waterford Gaeltacht speaker. This

speaker received the lowest rating of all the L1 speakers. This finding may be interpreted as evidence that learners were wholly unfamiliar with her variety of Irish and, therefore, presumed her to an L2 speaker. When the speakers' perceived origins were grouped together according to province, the percentage of correct identifications rose to a small majority (50-60%) for all except three speakers (two Gaeltacht and one L2). In addition, only two of the L1 speakers (both Donegal Gaeltacht guises) were identified as native speakers by a majority of participants. All of the other L1 speakers were thought to be 'learners' with varying degrees of proficiency by a majority of learners. These findings show that while adult learners do prefer the varieties of Irish spoken by native speakers, what they may be responding to is their manner of speaking, their control of the language and perhaps their phraseology, and not necessarily cues which mark them are L1 speakers or features of L1 varieties themselves, since they are generally unable to identify them. Nonetheless, the L1 speakers' varieties were also strongly supported for use in classroom and media contexts.

In the interviews, learners spoke about the differences between the varieties of Irish spoken by L1 and L2 speakers in a number of contexts. However, only rarely did they mention linguistic features of the various regional varieties. In most cases, they commented on the fluency, naturalness and authenticity of L1 varieties, in contrast with the stilted and laboured Irish spoken by L2 learners. In this connection they were particular concerned by the way that L2 varieties are influenced by English.

A large number of learners also named a preferred regional variety and only a few mentioned an L2 or non-traditional variety, e.g. 'Dublin' or 'Urban' Irish, in this connection. It is important to emphasize, however, that the native speaker did not receive universal praise. In the interviews, some learners commented negatively about the type of Irish used by some native speakers. Some claimed it is very hard to understand Gaeltacht speakers, yet most of these participants said this was a result of their own proficiency level. Codeswitching and lexical borrowing of the kind typically used by L1 speakers were also viewed negatively. However, one participant stated that, although he did view codeswitching as a negative attribute, he admired the native speakers' ability to do it so naturally. This would seem to support the conclusion that while L1 speech is highly valued by nearly all learners, it is not necessarily a target for them. It is interesting in this connection that in the Speaker Evaluation Exercise, the Donegal Gaeltacht speakers were both rated highest of all the guises on the naturalness scale, but second and third lowest on the clarity scale. In the interviews, many participants said that they find Donegal Irish the most difficult to understand and this puts them off that variety. However, some learners did state that they are generally

less familiar with Donegal Irish and that this contributes to their feeling about the variety.

Overall, it can be said that learners have a positive affective orientation towards L1 varieties of the language and a more negative attitude towards L2 varieties. This is consistent with the general findings of similar studies (e.g. Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997; Ladegaard & Sachdev 2006; McKenzie, 2008b). Furthermore, despite most learners naming a preferred traditional variety, e.g. Munster, Connemara, Donegal, etc., their ability to identify the corresponding spoken varieties is questionable. McKenzie (2008a) also found relatively low rates of identification for certain varieties of English among Japanese learners. He attributed the higher rates of misidentification for some L1 varieties to lack of exposure to those varieties, as well are the open-ended format of the instrument, i.e. participants had to give the speakers' origins without a predetermined list provided. In the present study, a closed-ended response format was used, and, therefore, the most plausible conclusion is that these learners are unfamiliar with variety specific features due to a lack of experience with speakers who use them. As a result, they cannot consistently identify them when they hear them.

8.1.2 Target speech models

Research question: To what extent have adult learners settled on a clear target in terms of the kind of speaker (language variety/dialect and level of proficiency) they aspire to? Is nativelike (Gaeltacht) Irish a goal for learners, or is a high level of proficiency with or without the native 'accent' more important?

As discussed above, learners demonstrated a clear preference for L1 spoken varieties of Irish, it is also important to know whether or not learners actually aim for any particular speech model or variety as part of their language learning goals. Potential target speech models which might serve as goals were presented in the form of three main regional varieties, Munster, Connaught and Ulster Irish, as well as an L2 variety which might be termed as 'mixed', i.e. it did not adhere entirely to the norms of one regional form. An additional dimension to the target speech models is the nativelikeness/non-nativelikeness of the varieties. The L2 models are considered to be non-nativelike since they exhibit a higher number of phonological and morpho-syntactical inaccuracies, i.e. they break core rules of all traditional varieties of Irish (see Appendix 2.8).

Starting with the nativelikeness/non-nativelikeness dimension of target speech models, the data shows learners rated native speech higher than L2 speech. Stage I questionnaire data showed that responses to scale items which measured learners'

attitude towards the prospect of achieving native speaker proficiency in Irish were very positive (*Proficiency aims and goals* scale, $M = 6.16$, $SD = 1.02$). This positive attitude was also supported in their positive evaluation of L1 guises in the Speaker Evaluation Exercise. However, this finding is complicated by the fact that they failed to identify most L1 guises as native speakers in a uniform fashion (see last section).

In terms of learners' orientation towards a learning particular traditional (regional) or non-traditional (L2) variety of the language, this was most explicitly dealt with in Stages II and III. There were two main findings from the data collected in these stages. First, it was found that all but one of the learners chose an L1 guise as a speaker they would like to sound like in the future in the Speaker Evaluation Exercise. The West Kerry Gaeltacht guise was the most popular ($n = 12$), and was followed closely by the two Donegal Gaeltacht guises ($n = 7$ and $n = 6$). However, when added together, more learners selected northern Gaeltacht guises ($n = 13$) than Western ($n = 4$) or Southern Gaeltacht guises ($n = 12$). Only one person selected a non-Gaeltacht guise (L2 north) as an ideal target speech model.

Second, in the interviews, consistent with the questionnaire findings, nearly all the learners named a traditional/regional variety of Irish as a preferred form, i.e. they made statements like 'I like Munster Irish'. However, only half of them claimed that their preferred variety was a current speech model for them. They provided three main reasons for this. (i) Some claimed that adhering to the norms of a single variety was not desirable due to their current level of proficiency. (ii) Others said that because they had been exposed to multiple varieties from different teacher they do not have a strong allegiance to any single one. (iii) A small group ($n = 3$) said that adopting a variety of Irish, i.e. accent or dialect, spoken in a part of the country other than their own would be objectionable. In connection with overall goals, most interviewees claimed that they wanted to be fluent in Irish. Other responses regarding the 'type' of Irish they would ultimately like to attain emphasized being able to use the language naturally, like a native speaker, without a heavy cognitive load, i.e. thinking, translating and searching for the right word or phrase.

It is clear then that learners value the native speaker model and the regional varieties associated with it. As we saw, many learners have a preferred native speaker variety of Irish and some of them are actually working towards achieving the norms of that variety. This is in line with findings from other studies which have considered L2 learners' preference for a specific L1 model out of many potential L1 models presented (e.g. Ladegaard & Sachdev 2006). However, many learners in the present study stated that they are not as concerned with learning a particular variety of the language (e.g. sounding like a native speaker of Munster Irish) as they are with not sounding like a

'learner'. They desire to sound nativelike, but in a more general way, i.e. proficiency and fluency. By contrast, the L2 model is generally devalued, despite that fact that learners recognize that in effect they currently adhere to the norms of that variety.

8.1.3 Motivation and self image

Research question: How is a learner's investment in the language learning process connected to his or her self-image and personal identity? Are learners' motivations to learn and/or use Irish linked to a personal identity as Irish learners/speakers?

Adult learners of Irish are can considered to be motivated by the fact they self-elect to return to the language outside of curricular necessity. However, their individual reasons for (re-)learning the language at this stage in life reveals a number of motivational types (Flynn, 2009). The current study seeks, in part, to illuminate connections between learners' self-concept, personal or group identities and L2 motivation. Self-concept is operationalized here as learners' view of themselves in relation to Irish language learning and use, while personal identity refers to the group of language users with which they identify.

Participants showed a strong positive response to the *Attitude to Irish speakers* scale (M = 6.15, SD = 1.02) and to the *Integrative orientation to Irish* scale (M = 5.47, SD = 1.47). They showed an even stronger positive response to the *Identity/Self-concept* scale (M = 6.28, SD = 0.96) which measured the importance learners ascribe to the ability to speak Irish for their self-concept. There was also a strong positive correlation among responses to these scales (r = .45 - .54). Conversely, learners' responses to the *Instrumental orientation to Irish* scale was rather neutral (M = 4.48, SD = 1.82) and this scale did not correlate to the others in any meaningful way. Taken together, these figures show that the Irish language is a strong part of learners' self concept and that they are integrative motivated towards the Irish speaking community.

Conversely, responses to two other scales included in the Stage I questionnaire, the *Cultural activities and preferences* scale and the *Self confidence in speaking* scale demonstrated that learners do not engage in integrative-type activities, e.g. attend concerts, read Irish language literature, or speak the language outside the classroom context, as much as one would expect of 'integratively-oriented' learners. The interview data confirmed that the Irish language is an important part of learners' self-concept and that a type of integrative orientation to the language and its speakers is present. However, this emerged in the form of a positive affective orientation towards the language and, theoretically, the Irish language community, since they do not have regular opportunities to speak the language outside the learning context. It has been

argued previously (Ó Laoire, 2000; Singleton, 1987) that the language classroom (and to some extent learning materials themselves) may represent a viable target language domain for learners of Irish, since they do not have regular access to larger groups of Irish speakers outside this context. The findings of this study provide at least some empirical evidence for this position. This, of course, does not necessarily mean that learners do not want more opportunities to speak Irish; on the contrary, both the questionnaire and interview data suggest they do. In the absence of such opportunities, however, their fellow classmates provide enough of a target community to keep them motivated to learn the language (See Feuer (2007) for a similar case among Hebrew heritage learners.)

The above mentioned self-concept aspect of learners' motivation may be also powerful enough on its own to keep learners motivated throughout the difficulties of the language learning process (Mercer, 2012). In the case of learners in the present study, wanting to be an Irish speaker, i.e. having the capacity to use the language in relevant contexts, communicative or otherwise, is at the core of their L2 motivation. Commentary on the problematic nature of the Gardnerian concept of integrativeness is also particularly relevant here. It has been claimed, for example, that the concept is generally ambiguous, since it is not clear what the target of integration is and in some learning contexts it does not seem relevent (Dörnyei, 2009a: 23ff). It cannot be claimed based on the findings of this study alone that linguistic integration into the Irish-speaking community is not a potential or real motive for adult learners of Irish. However, in relation to cultural integration, the above criticism seems appropriate in the current context. Adult learners of Irish, in particular those who are based in Ireland, are arguable already integrated into the target community (cf. Flynn, 2012). This is especially true if we consider the Irish speaking community to extend beyond the physical boundaries of the Gaeltacht. We will return to the issue of motivation again below (in relation to target speech models), but to conclude here it seems that future L2 self-guides and goals (Dörnyei, 2009a) have greater explanatory power in the context of adult learners of Irish, particularly if we see them as equating to or subsuming integrativeness (Dörnyei, 2009a).

8.1.4 Influence of background variables on target speech model selection

Research question: Are features of learners' sociocultural or educational backgrounds (e.g. place of origin, familial connection to the language and previous learning experience) connected to the pursuit of acquiring different varieties of spoken Irish?

Knowing that learners are oriented in meaningful ways towards various potential speech models, i.e. variety or level of proficiency, is useful on its own. However, knowing what variables might account for learners' preferences in this regard would be useful indeed. It has been accepted for some time that there is nothing intrinsic to differing language forms which can explain varying attitudes to them (Edwards, 1982), and, therefore, evaluations must be socially and/or experientially rooted. By extension then, a person's desire to acquire a certain form of language is likely to result of experiential variables. The Stage I questionnaire data revealed statistically significant results for learners' self reported proficiency level and course location as predictor variables for responses to the *Proficiency aims and goals* scale. All other background variables tested (age, gender and place of birth) were not significant. Further, none of the background variables proved to be significant in predicting attitudes towards learning dialects of Irish. As mentioned (see Section 5.4), a potential explanation of the failure to find significant between group variance for these variables is that the numbers within the categories of the variables were too small or very unbalanced. As a means of exploring the data, certain independent variable subgroups were combined to increase the numbers within the categories. Significant variance was found in responses to the *Attitude to learning dialects of Irish* scale for place of birth when learners born in Leinster were compared to all other learners Significant variance between group responses were found for both the *Proficiency aims and goals* and the *Attitude to learning dialects of Irish* scales when course location locations were combined (Dublin+Donegal vs. Connaught+Kerry). It was noted, however, that we must approach these findings with caution. The present study was not designed to test particular hypotheses regarding the role of background variables in attitude formation. Rather, we approached this topic in an exploratory fashion based on emergent data. Such hypotheses could only truly be confirmed by analyzing a larger, more balanced data set.

In the interviews, a number of reasons were provided for learners' preference for particular varieties. The most common of these were previous exposure at school or adult classes and familial connection to a region. These motives would appear to be in agreement with the significance of place of birth and course location as predictor variables on the two scales mentioned above. Surprisingly, only half of the interviewees said that their preferred variety of Irish is also their current target variety. However, those who did gave the same reasons for actively pursuing those speech models as they did for naming it a preferred variety, i.e. previous exposure and familial connections. Another important finding from the interview data is that many learners named Donegal Irish as being the most difficult variety in terms of comprehension and

acquisition. Some learners went as far as to say that they avoid the variety. Further questioning revealed, however, that these attitudes were more often based on a lack of experience with the variety rather than a reaction to some quality associated with it.

8.1.5 Identity, motivation and target speech model

Research question: How do preferences about language variety relate to the individual's motivation to learn the language and his or her self image?

This question relates to the overarching theme of this thesis, uniting the main objectives and findings of the study. We have already discussed findings which illuminate various motivations for learning Irish in adulthood, as well as learners' attitudes towards L1 and L2 speech varieties. We have also touched on some of the complexities of their L2 self concept and identities. What remains for us to do, then, is discuss the place of these attitudes and motivations in relation to learners' self-concepts and identities. In order to do this, we may want to use self-concept as the largest of these constructs, in which the others (attitudes, motivation and identities) are housed. Of course, this does not mean that the self-concept dictates the content of the other constructs; rather, its own make-up depends on them. Further, at least some elements of a person's attitudes, motivation and identities are dynamic and may change with experience over time, which may potentially affect the self-concept (cf. Oyserman et al., 2012).

Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005, 2009a), as we have seen, brings elements of self-related psychology research to L2 motivation research in the form of *possible selves*. His model is comprised of three key elements: *Ideal L2 Self*, *Ought-to L2 Self* and *L2 Learning Experience*. Not only does this model incorporate the self into the motivation construct, but it does so in way that accounts for other important factors which has been shown to influence motivation, i.e. attitudes to the L2 community, instrumentality and past learning experience and context (Dörnyei, 2009a: 27-31). The remainder of this section will use Dörnyei's general framework as a means of interpreting the main findings of the present study which have been discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter. We will discuss them under the following headings: (i) Positive L2 learning experiences, (ii) Learners' ideal self as an Irish speaker and (iii) Learners' ought-to self as an Irish speaker.

Positive L2 learning experiences: The vast majority of learners in this study had extensive experience of learning Irish within the State educational system. In addition, many of them had attended adult classes in the last number of years before participating in this project. Overall, these experiences were positive enough to sustain

their interest in the language and the learning process. Even where learners were not overly successful in terms of experience or acquisition, their positive affective orientation towards the language did not wane. Positive experiences with influential and effective teachers (at all levels) were a particularly salient factor in maintaining this orientation. Not only did these classroom experiences sustain their interest, they also had an impact, at least in some cases, on the variety of Irish to which learners were drawn. Adult learners are often assumed to be fearful of returning to the learning context (Rogers & Horrocks, 2010). In the case of Irish language learning, these fears are in some cases connected with revisiting 'painful' memories of school language classroom (see Section 7.2.1). These anxieties may have, in part, been eased by the memory of a particular teacher who had a passion for the language, spoke it well, and more importantly, taught it well (see Section 7.2.1). In addition, their experiences on adult courses have been positive to the extent that they have made lasting friendships with other learners and look forward to meeting them in the learning context and beyond.

Learners' ideal self as an Irish speaker: The Irish people have a rather unusual relationship with the State's first national language. On the one hand, repeated national surveys have recoded positive attitudes towards the language and efforts to revitalize it (Committee on Irish Language Attitudes Research, 1975; Ó Riagáin & Ó Gliasáin, 1994). On the other hand, the number of regular speakers of the language remains low (Central Statistics Office, 2012). It is clear that the language is an important element of the national identity and the personal identity of much of the population, yet learners like those in this study represent a subgroup of the population who desire not only to support the language, but also to improve their spoken language skills. The findings of this study raise questions about the degree to which these learners want to actually speak Irish on a regular basis, but they support the idea that they want to be able to speak it well when they take the opportunity. They also support the claim that being a fluent Irish speaker is an important part of adult learners' self-concept. However, where they have yet to reach their desired level of proficiency it is a clear target – their ideal L2 self – and attending adult classes is a means of reducing any discrepancy between their current and ideal L2 selves (Dörnyei, 2009a: 29). Learners' positive attitudes towards Irish speakers generally, and native speakers specifically, also play a role in L2 goal setting and help to maintain their motivation to achieve their aims. Important too are their positive and/or negative attitudes to particular L1 and L2 varieties of the language. According to the L2 Motivational Self System model, possible selves must be plausible as well as desired. Learners in this study have demonstrated that they are well aware of how difficult it can be to reach nativelike proficiency in Irish, both in terms

of fluency and variety features, and they are ready to adjust their ideal target accordingly. In relation to learners' possible selves it is possible that when the self-assessed implausibility of a particular ideal L2 self-related goal requires it to be sacrificed in order to maintain motivation, learners may opt for either preferred level of proficiency or target variety depending on their overall L2 self-concept.

Learners' ought-to self as an Irish speaker: This element to L2 motivation concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and, therefore, is based on external (societal) pressures which are internalized into the learners' self-guides (Dörnyei, 2009a: 29). The above mentioned importance of Irish to the national identity is particularly strong among these learners who have taken it upon themselves to return to learning the language in adulthood. They appear to be particularly affected by the generally acknowledged feeling among most Irish people that they *should* be able to speak Irish, particularly given its central place in the national curriculum. One quote from the interviews which seems to capture this well is that learning Irish is seen by adult learner as 'unfinished business' (see Section 7.2.1). This is not an undesired pressure to improve their Irish; learners generally enjoy the process and want to do it for personal reasons as well. There is, however, another level to learners' internalization of social pressures regarding language in this context. It would appear that the native speaker model is seen by most learners as appropriate, even necessary, as a result of its historical idealization (Ó Baoill, 1999). However, other research shows that, where there is a difference, language learners (L1 or L2) acquire the language model of their peers rather than that of adult speakers in their immediate environment, i.e. teachers or parents (cf. Beebe, 1985; Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). The argument goes that language acts as an identification marker and that learners adhere to the model spoken by those they most identify with, i.e. their peers. In the case of the learner's in this study, the apparent lack of any such peer group, at least one which they interact with on an extensive basis, has lead them to aim for a more remote, traditional model. In addition, these learners' immediate domain for language use is the classroom, where, as mentioned, there is a greater emphasis on traditional, regional language varieties.

In sum, the findings of the current project reveal a struggle between elements of learners' *ideal* and *ought-to* selves. It has been shown that many learners do, in fact, value highly the native speaker and the language varieties associated with the regions where most native speakers live. However, we also saw that learners are realistic about what they can achieve in their language learning pursuits. This leaves them in a position where they potentially, (1) value the ideal L1 model, but fear that they cannot realistically achieve its norms, and (2) devalue the typical L2 model, which they

recognize in their on L2 speech to varying degrees, and try to move away from it. The data suggests that a potential strategy for compromise is to aim for nativelike fluency and accuracy, and set aside variety specific speech norms as a target. It is possible, however, that this may only be a temporary concession, since learners remain favourably disposed to a preferred variety even if it is not their current target speech model. And, if the self-concept is in fact susceptible to change over time and in different contexts, as many researchers believe it is (e.g. Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Markus & Kunda, 1986; Mercer, 2011), a future Ideal L2 self may arise which incorporates achieving the norms of a particular variety of the target language alongside nativelike fluency and serve as a viable self-guide.

8.2 Pedagogical implications

This study has important instructional implications for Irish language teachers and course designers. The growing number of adult learners returning to Irish language tuition in formal and informal setting means that research like the type reported on here has the potential to inform classroom practice. As we have shown, learners' motivation to acquire a particular variety of Irish (regional, L1 or L2) may be linked to their sense of self as an Irish learner or user. Existing research has shown the importance of possible selves in academic settings in relation to learner motivation among minority groups (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006). In line with this work, it has been argued that taking a self-concept approach to research has the potential to illuminate important goal-setting and motivational aspects of second language learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Mercer, 2012).

In the specific context of adult Irish language learning, there are a number of self-related findings which carry implications for the learning context. First, potential conflicts between current, *ideal* and *ought-to* L2 selves may stand in the way of learners' progress. Learners may feel that their current speech model (e.g. 'learners' Irish', 'Mixed Irish', 'Dublin Irish') is not good enough and, therefore, do not seek out more opportunities to interact with more capable speakers to improve their Irish. Their views on the potential of ever reaching nativelike levels of proficiency may also keep them from joining the target speech community, i.e. they may feel condemned to the 'learner community'. Second, learners whose self-concept, present or future, is linked to a particular variety of Irish (L1 or L2) should be encouraged to continue to work towards that goal. Course instructors will have a role to play here, since the learning will naturally need guidance. Of course, it would not be practical or necessary for all teachers to become experts in all varieties of the language. They should, however, have some knowledge of these varieties and be in a position to recommend readings,

learning materials, classes, groups, etc., which relate to learners' linguistic and cultural interests. While supporting the linguistic needs and interests of individuals can be rewarding for both the teacher and the learner, attempts to steer learners away from desired target models could have detrimental effects on their learning. Therefore, focusing on any such individual target-related needs must be handled with caution in the context of the class, since it is unlikely that all students will share the same target model. This is where teachers' ability to provide follow-up readings, exercises, etc. will become useful. Finally, course instructors need to be aware of the potential change in the L2 self-concept over time. Learners' desire to achieve particular levels of proficiency and use certain varieties of Irish may be context specific and change accordingly.

There are other, more basic, implications for the learning context as well. Many learners in this study indicated that they do not have regular opportunities to speak Irish outside the classroom context and that they would like more. Further, most of their Irish speaking contacts are other learners at the same or a lower level of proficiency. Besides making recommendations for contexts where learners can engage in meaningful exchanges through the medium of Irish outside the classroom, concerts, workshops, lectures, etc., teachers should ensure that their classes include appropriate and realistic opportunities for conversation activities.

This study also found evidence that some learners, even those who have a preferred target speech model, may not have the necessary knowledge of features specific to various varieties of Irish. Having at least a basic knowledge of the core features of different regional varieties of the language would likely assist them in realizing their linguistic goals. There are a number of textbook and classroom material options suitable for adult learners which would enhance their knowledge of these varieties. However, instructors will have to be cautious and creative when introducing such materials into their classes, as they are not all in keeping with most common recommendations for communicative language teaching (e.g. Ó Siadhail, 1988).

8.3 Limitations of the current research

The present study has demonstrated the capacity of a mixed methods approach to shed valuable light on a number of affective variables connected to Irish language learning and use among adult learners. It has also provided a useful framework for interpreting both the qualitative and quantitative findings in relation to similar second language acquisition research in other language contexts. Nevertheless, the study is also limited in a number of ways and it is important to consider the limitations in some

detail since they undoubtedly impact the claims made in this thesis. In addition, an attempt to address weaknesses would benefit future research of this type

While Stage I of this study attempted to survey as many adult learners of Irish as possible, there were elements of the sampling strategy which were purposive. That is, the population targeted in the research possessed a certain characteristic and the sample was chosen for a specific purpose (Cohen et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2007). First, learners with a particular level of proficiency in the language (intermediate or above) were sought. As discussed in Section 4.2.3, it was felt that learners with a lower level of proficiency in Irish, i.e. ab initio, may not have formed any strong attitudes to different varieties of the Irish language, and, therefore, may not have set any particular goal for themselves in relation the various speech models available to them. Second, it was felt necessary to seek participants who were actively attending a course since they would have the most regular contact with different varieties of Irish. Third, it was important in this study to survey both Dublin and Gaeltacht-based courses. Dörnyei (2007) claims that non-probability sampling, of which purposive sampling is one type, is actually the most common strategy in applied linguistics research. However, this type of sampling strategy has limitations; the main one being the ability to generalize findings from such a sample to the wider population (Cohen et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2007).

In addition to the more general sampling issues described above, the very nature of the present research has required participants who are likely to be relatively highly motivated in their aim of re-learning Irish, i.e. active language learners. Adult learners of this type generally dedicate a great deal of time and effort to attending evening classes and immersion-type Gaeltacht courses. These activities are costly and most of those who undertake them are determined to see them through. This does not mean, of course, that motivation and levels of effort do not change over time, however, the cross-sectional methods employed in this study are not designed to capture these types of fluctuation.

In terms of methodology, a mixed methods research design attempts to increase the strengths while eliminating the weaknesses of individual quantitative and qualitative instruments and approaches (Dörnyei, 2007). However, no research design is without weaknesses. This project has collected data from a relatively large main sample and additional detailed data from approximately 20% of that cohort. At every stage of the project, both qualitative and quantitative analyses were conducted, however, there are, of course, differences in balance and, as a result, perhaps, different levels of subjectivity and objectivity.

The three methodological tools used in this study also have individual weaknesses which must be acknowledged. Questionnaires, like the one used in Stage I of this research, must be simple enough to be understood by potential respondents. However, a researcher has no real way of knowing that the questions were in fact understood or that the answers provided are accurate (Dörnyei, 2010). This is particularly true of questionnaires which are completed by respondents on their own, since they have no opportunity to ask the researcher for clarification. Careful construction and piloting the instrument help to address this issue, yet the threat still remains.

While care was taken to control for confounding variables in the Speaker Evaluation Exercise used in Stage II of the research (see Section 6.1.2), the possibility still exists that some of the evaluations recorded were due to non-linguistic variables in the speech samples. Nonetheless, the relatively consistent manner in which the two guises representing each of the different varieties of Irish were rated goes someway in reassuring us that the measures taken to eliminate any such confounding variables have been successful. There is also the possibility of an order effect on the ratings of the speech samples since they were played for all participants in the same order. This was done deliberately, since this method was only used with a subsample of 31 participants, yet it is possible that the order in which the samples were encountered had an impact on the ratings.

A further threat associated with all three instruments is social desirability bias in participants' responses. Research participants may have a desire to meet the researcher's or society's expectations when they take part in a project. They may over-report desirable attitudes in their answers and under-report those that may be considered socially undesirable. In the context of the present study, learners may have, after Stage I, realized what the research was about and formed their responses based on this. The researcher's association with a prestigious university may have also had an impact on their responses. The research has carefully constructed, ordered and administered the data collection instruments in this study in order to combat these types of biases. However, it cannot be said for certain that they do not exist.

Finally, one finding of the current research is that previous experience with and exposure to different varieties of Irish influences learners' attitudes towards and motivations to learn these varieties. In the context of this study, we rely on learners' self-reported and self-assessed exposure to varieties at school and through the media. It is not possible, using this approach, to know whether these reports are accurate, and, therefore, the background variable influencing the orientation may be questioned. However, without access to detailed educational records, we have no other way of

investigating such a connection. Either way, if a learner reports exposure to a variety at school and maintains a positive orientation to that variety as an adult learner, the affective association is still valid; it is only an empirical question as to whether the former is accurate (see next section).

8.4 Future research

The area of adult Irish language learning has, in general, received very little attention in the research literature and, therefore, the current project makes a significant contribution to the fields of adult SLA, bilingualism and minority language learning and revitalisation. There is, however, much more work to be done and the present research has produced a number of findings which warrant further investigation. This was true at every level of the project and these will be addressed here in broad terms.

In terms of sampling, this study attempted to survey as wide a range of active adult learners of Irish as possible. The Stage I questionnaire was distributed in hard copy form to learners via six large adult course providers in Dublin and three Gaeltacht areas in the Republic of Ireland. It was thought that the Dublin and Donegal Gaeltacht courses would have attracted a number of learners born or based in Northern Ireland. Unfortunately, this was not the case and so the Northern Ireland population of learners/speakers is underrepresented in the sample. While the data does not suggest this, it is possible that learners in Northern Ireland, especially those who did not have Irish at school, have significantly different orientations towards varieties of the language. A similar study among northern learners would generate useful comparative data.

Data from the second and third stage of the project highlighted some interesting issues in relation to the Donegal variety of Irish. In the Speaker Evaluation Exercise, the Donegal speakers were rated highest in terms of naturalness and lowest in terms of clarity. In the interviews, many participants made comments to the effect that they find Donegal Irish the most difficult to understand. An experiment could be designed to investigate whether this is actually the case for some learners. It is possible, as some learners suggested in the interviews, that native speakers are in general more difficult to comprehend than fellow L2 speakers. It would be useful to know whether there are features of varieties which impede comprehension.

Related to the latter topic is the phenomenon of codeswitching among native speakers or of Irish. Codeswitching was controlled for in the Speaker Evaluation Exercise, and, therefore, it was not a variable in this study. However, some learners expressed negative attitudes towards the phenomenon in the interviews. A follow-up

study could be designed to measure learners' evaluations of codeswitched speech alongside non-codeswitched speech in various contexts.

Finally, the current project set out to investigate issues connected with adult learners' attitudes, motivation and self-concept in relation to target varieties of Irish. It did not, however, investigate the extent to which learners have successfully acquired features of their preferred or target variety. A logical next step would be to do so. Learners' ability to acquire valued features of the language could potentially have an effect on their L2 motivation and self-concept, as well as their group identity.

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Appendix 1

Stage I of the study

Appendix 1.1

Letter sent to adult course providers (Irish)

Centre for Language and Communication Studies,
Trinity College Dublin,
Dublin 2

<Name of director>
Stiúrthóir
<Name and address of school>

Tionscadal taighde ar fhoghlaim na Gaeilge i gcás daoine fásta

A <ainm an stiúrthóra>, a chara,

Is mac léinn taighde mé i gColáiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath agus tá mé ag lorg cuidiú uaitse agus ó chuid de na foghlaimeoirí agus de na múinteoirí in *<ainm na scoile>*. Tá tionscadal taighde ar siúl agam ina bhfuil mé ag déanamh staidéir ar dhearcadh foghlaimeoirí fásta i leith chanúintí agus úsáid na Gaeilge. Is é an aidhm atá ag an taighde seo ná tuiscint níos fearr a fháil ar an chineál Gaeilge is mian leis na daoine seo a fhoghlaim, a úsáid agus a chloisteáil i gcomhthéacsanna áirithe.

Le cead uaitse, ba mhaith liom cóipeanna den cheistneoir a bheidh mar chéad chéim sa tionscadal seo a chur chugat sa phost. Iarrtar ort ansin iad a thabhairt do na múinteoirí le go scaipfear iad ar fhoghlaimeoirí atá ag freastal ar ranganna ón **mheánleibhéal** suas. Ní gá do na múinteoirí ach ceistneoirí a scaipeadh agus réamhrá don tionscadal a léamh os ard ar mo shon. Faoi na foghlaimeoirí iad féin a bheidh sé an t-ábhar a thabhairt abhaile agus an cinneadh a dhéanamh faoi pháirt a ghlacadh nó gan páirt a ghlacadh sa tionscadal seo. Cuirfear clúdaigh litreach a bhfuil seoladh agus stampa orthu ar fáil chomh maith le go mbeidh na foghlaimeoirí ábalta an ceistneoir a chur ar ais chugam, más mian leo.

Tá sé i gceist agam agallaimh agus cleachtaí measúnú cainteoirí (*speaker evaluation exercises*) a bheidh bunaithe ar ábhar taifeadta a dhéanamh mar chuid den taighde seo freisin. Tá rannóg ann ag deireadh an cheistneora inar féidir le rannpháirtithe spéis a léiriú i bpáirt a ghlacadh sna páirteanna seo den tionscadal. Is mian liom a fháil amach uaitse an mbeadh *<ainm na scoile>* sásta cead a thabhairt dom na seisiúin seo a reáchtáil in bhur n-ionad má léiríonn aon duine de na foghlaimeoirí spéis sna gnéithe seo den tionscadal.

Cuirfear aiseolas faoin tionscadal seo ar fáil go fonnmhar duit nuair a bheidh sé críochnaithe agam. Creidim gur tionscadal fiúntach atá ann agus go gcuirfidh sé lenár dtuiscint ar an chineál Gaeilge is mian le foghlaimeoirí fásta a fhoghlaim.

Cuirfidh mé glao ort i gceann cúpla lá leis an taighde seo a phlé leat agus aon cheisteanna a bheadh agat ina thaobh a fhreagairt.

Le gach dea-mhéin,

Cóilín Ó Floinn
087 9817846
cjflynn@tcd.ie

Appendix 1.2

Letter sent to adult course providers (English)

Centre for Language and Communication Studies,
Trinity College Dublin,
Dublin 2

<Name of director>
Director
<Name and address of school>

Research project in relation to adult learners of Irish

Dear <name of director>,

I am a research student at Trinity College Dublin and I am seeking assistance from you and from some of the instructors at *<name of school>*. I am currently undertaking a research project in which I am investigating adult learners' attitudes towards varieties of Irish and language use. This research aims to increase our understanding of the type of Irish these learners wish to learn, speak and hear in various contexts.

With your permission, I would like to send you copies of the questionnaire which will be the first stage of this project in the post. I would ask you then to pass them on to your teachers so that they may distribute them to learners attending classes at the intermediate level and above. Teachers will only be asked to distribute questionnaires and read an introductory statement to the project aloud on my behalf. It will be up to the learners to read the information leaflet and decide then if they would like to participate in this project. Stamped addressed envelopes will also be provided so that the learners can send the questionnaires back to me, if they will to do so.

I also intend to conduct interviews and speaker evaluation exercises which will be based on recorder materials as part of this research. There is a section at the end of the questionnaire where participants can indicate whether or not they are interested in taking part in these additional aspects of the project. I would like to ask you if <name of school> would be willing to permit me to run these sessions in your centre should any of the learners show an interest in these aspects of the project.

I will happily provide you with feedback about this research once it has been completed. I believe that this is a worthwhile project and that is will serve to increase our understanding of the type of Irish adult learners wish to learn.

I will contact you by phone in a couple of days to discuss this research with you further and answer any questions you might have in relation to it.

Best wishes,

_____

Colin Flynn
087 9817846
cjflynn@tcd.ie

Appendix 1.3

Descriptions of the course providers surveyed

Learning institutions surveyed in this study

Six Irish language course providers were contacted in relation to this research project, all of which allowed the researcher to survey learners attending their courses. Below is a brief description of these organizations.

Gaelchultúr Teoranta

Gaelchultúr Teoranta (www.gaelchultur.com) was founded in 2004 with the aim of promoting the Irish language and various aspects of Irish culture, including music, song and dance, in Dublin and other parts of Ireland. The company is a private enterprise and provides Irish language courses for adult learners at eight levels. According to the company's course brochure (accessed from www.gaelchultur.com), six of the eight course levels conform to corresponding levels within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR - Council of Europe, 2001): A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2. Two further levels are offered which they have labelled 'Accuracy in Irish 1' and 'Accuracy in Irish 2' that focus on grammatical concepts and on developing participants' reading and writing skills. Courses are offered to the general public as well as public sector bodies. The majority of these courses are run in Dublin, but a smaller number of courses take place in other areas of the country. These courses generally involve two contact hours per week, with the exception of some intensive preparatory courses offered over a one or two day period and, therefore, none of these courses could be considered to be immersion courses.

Conradh na Gaeilge

Conradh na Gaeilge (www.cnag.ie), or the Gaelic League, was founded in Dublin in 1893 and historically, the organisation has been the leading institution promoting the Gaelic Revival being linked to nationalist movements. Conradh na Gaeilge has remained one of the most active voluntary Irish language organisations campaigning for an urgent review of the teaching of Irish in our education system, and for the rights of Irish speakers in general. The organisation currently offers nine course levels for adult learners which are compatible with *Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge's* (The European Certificate in Irish, www.teg.ie) syllabuses, which are also linked to the CEFR. Most courses are run in Dublin, but other courses are offered in other areas of the country in cooperation with local organisations. All Dublin based conversational and grammar courses consist of two contact hours per week.

Gael Linn

Gael Linn (www.gael-linn.ie) was founded in 1953 and the organisation's main aim is to foster and promote the Irish language and its heritage throughout Ireland as a living language and as an expression of identity. In addition to a number of other services, the organisation runs courses for both second level and adult learners. For adult learners, Gael Linn offers both Dublin based evening classes as well as immersion courses in the Gaeltacht. The Dublin based adult courses are offered at three levels, Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced.

Oideas Gael

Founded in 1984, Oideas Gael (www.oideas-gael.com) is based in the Donegal Gaeltacht and offers weeklong immersion courses for adult learners of Irish, as well as hillwalking, music and cultural activity programmes. The language courses cater to learners at beginners, intermediate and advanced levels, yet no syllabuses or level descriptors are provided on the website or in the course brochure. Course levels are determined on a group to group basis. Weeklong courses are offered from June to August. Weekend courses are also offered a few times a year. The school draws learners from all over the Ireland and abroad, but a significant portion of these come from the six counties of Northern Ireland. There is great emphasis placed on the social element of these courses. Learners and teachers alike are encouraged to socialise through the medium of Irish in the local pubs, restaurants and shops. Learners are normally housed in local bed & breakfast, hostel or self-catering accommodation, which in most cases are run by Irish speakers, for the duration of their stay.

Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge

Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge (www.acadamh.ie) was established under the auspices of the National University of Ireland, Galway in 2004, to support the sustainable development of Irish-medium courses, research activity and other services. A range of graduate and postgraduate degree programmes are offered by the Acadamh as well as providing Irish language course for adult learners in the heart of the Conamara Gaeltacht. During summer months, the Acadamh runs one, two and four week intensive Irish courses for adult learners at various levels. No syllabuses or level descriptors are provided on the organisation's website or in the course brochure, but various courses offered are advertised as being appropriate for either Irish national and non-national groups based on whether learners had Irish at school. Accommodation is arranged for participants in private houses with Irish-speaking families. The immersion element of the courses is emphasised on the school's website by stating that 'Irish is the usual day to day language of the course and all

aspects of the course (tuition, social activities, accommodation etc.) are conducted through Irish'.

Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne

Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne, situated in the West Kerry Gaeltacht, is in existence since 1980. Through the promotion of a great many local language and heritage projects, the organisation seeks to emphasize the Irish language, as well as traditional arts, music and literature both for the local people and visitors to the area. Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne offers Irish language courses at five levels: beginners, post beginners, intermediate, advanced and writing skills/grammar. Another language course is offered which is called 'Oral fluency in Irish'. This course does not constitute a level separate from those mentioned above, but it differs in it aims as it is tailored to persons/teachers who wish to improve their oral and written skills and knowledge of grammar combined with an introduction to the dialect of Corca Dhuibhne.

Appendix 1.4

Summary of changes to Stage I questionnaire after piloting

Changes made to the questionnaire took four forms, i) changes to the wording of items; ii) changes to the response format of items; and iii) adding additional items:

- *Changes to the wording of items* – In a couple of instances, the wording of individual items was changed in order to increase clarity and comprehensibility. For example, item number 53 in the pilot questionnaire stated 'I regularly buy Irish language music, i.e. CDs, DVDs.' And was reworded to read 'I regularly buy (or borrow from the library) Irish language music, i.e. CDs, DVDs.' in the questionnaire used in the main study.

- *Changes to the response format of items* – a number of pilot participants felt that certain items were difficult to answer on a scale of Strongly Disagree (1) – Strongly Agree (7) and that these items would be better served by a binary response format. To accommodate this, the response format for a number of items was changed to a binary 'True'/'False' format. The change served another purpose as well. There was concern that responding to the original 50 Likert scale-type items could prove to be a tedious task and some participants might lose the desire to complete the questionnaire, therefore, by changing the response format for some items the burden of this task is reduced (cf. DeVellis, 2012).

- *Adding additional items* – The addition of a small number of items to the questionnaire used in the main study came as a result of a surface analysis of responses to pilot study items. Once the pilot questionnaires were returned it became clear that the questionnaire/data would benefit from more background information on each participant. To this end, six items were added to the opening section of the questionnaire. These items are concerned with previous exposure to the Irish language and experiences of learning other foreign languages. Since there were now a greater number of background related items in the questionnaire, these items were divided into separate sections (I and IV) in the final questionnaire.

Appendix 1.5

Introduction to the research project (Gatekeeper Copy)

Note to Gatekeepers (i.e. teachers, school directors) – **NOT TO BE READ ALOUD**:
After reading the introduction below, please distribute one questionnaire packet, i.e. an information leaflet, a consent form and a questionnaire, to each of the learners in your group. Please collect any unused documents and return them to the administrator in your institution, so that I may collect them at a later stage. Please inform the learners that you are reading the below statement which appears on page one of the questionnaire on behalf of the researcher. Thank you for your help with this project.

TO BE READ ALOUD by gatekeepers on behalf of the researcher:
You are invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out by **Colin Flynn,** a postgraduate research student at **Trinity College Dublin**, under the guidance of **Dr John Harris**. This research is being conducted as part fulfilment of a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics.

This study is all about why people choose to learn (or relearn) Irish in adulthood, and about related issues such as what kind of Irish they are learning at present and what kind of Irish they would like to learn. We hope that through this research we will gain some insight into whether learners like some types of Irish better than others and the kind of Irish that people might prefer to learn and/or use.

As part of this research we are asking learners to fill out a questionnaire. The questions cover various things about your motivation to learn Irish, and whether you have any preferences about different kinds of Irish or the kind of Irish you might ideally like to speak. We also ask you about your own Irish at present (pronunciation, grammar, etc.) and whether you use it at any time outside class. It should take about 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

So, today we are asking you to complete a questionnaire and nothing more. Of course, you are under no obligation to do this and there will be no negative consequences of any kind for you if you decide not to participate. Nevertheless, we would greatly appreciate it if you should choose to fill out this questionnaire. There are no right or wrong answers and the information you provide will be used for **this study only**.

You now have a copy of the questionnaire to review. If you do decide to participate, please fill it out and post it back to the researcher using the stamped addressed envelope provided. If you would prefer not to participate, then please just leave the forms behind you as you leave the classroom.

Finally, there are other parts to this study that we hope to carry out at a later stage and so, we would also like to ask you if you would consider taking part in any of these other aspects of the study. On the last page of this questionnaire we ask you if you would be willing to consider this [GATEKEEPER, PLEASE SHOW THE LEARNERS THE RELEVANT SECTION ON THE LAST PAGE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE]. You will only have to provide contact details so that I can get in touch with you to discuss this further. Remember, even if you say yes, you are not committing to anything other than allowing me to contact you to explain these additional aspects of this study. If you change your mind later when I do get back to you, it will not matter at all and there will be absolutely no expectation that you will take part.

Should you have any questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact the researcher, Colin Flynn (cjflynn@tcd.ie). You may also contact the project's supervisor, Dr John Harris (harrisjo@tcd.ie).

IRISH LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR ADULT LEARNERS

Information about the research project

You are invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out by **Colin Flynn,** a postgraduate research student at **Trinity College Dublin**, under the guidance of **Dr John Harris**. This research is being conducted as part fulfilment of a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics.

This study is all about why people choose to learn (or relearn) Irish in adulthood, and about related issues such as what kind of Irish they are learning at present and what kind of Irish they would like to learn. We hope that through this research we will gain some insight into whether learners like some types of Irish better than others and the kind of Irish that people might prefer to learn and/or use.

As part of this research we are asking learners to fill out a questionnaire. The questions cover various things about your motivation to learn Irish, and whether you have any preferences about different kinds of Irish or the kind of Irish you might ideally like to speak. We also ask you about your own Irish at present (pronunciation, grammar, etc.) and whether you use it at any time outside class. It should take about 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

So, today we are asking you to complete a questionnaire and nothing more. Of course, you are under no obligation to do this and there will be no negative consequences of any kind for you if you decide not to participate. Nevertheless, we would greatly appreciate it if you should choose to fill out this questionnaire. There are no right or wrong answers and the information you provide will be used for **this study only**.

You now have a copy of the questionnaire to review. If you do decide to participate, please fill it out and post it back to the researcher using the stamped addressed envelope provided. If you would prefer not to participate, then please just leave the forms behind you as you leave the classroom.

Finally, there are other parts to this study that we hope to carry out at a later stage and so, we would also like to ask you if you would consider taking part in any of these other aspects of the study. On the last page of this questionnaire we ask you if you would be willing to consider this. You will only have to provide contact details so that I can get in touch with you to discuss this further. Remember, even if you say yes, you are not committing to anything other than allowing me to contact you to explain these additional aspects of this study. If you change your mind later when I do get back to you, it will not matter at all and there will be absolutely no expectation that you will take part.

Should you have any questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact the researcher, Colin Flynn (cjflynn@tcd.ie). You may also contact the project's supervisor, Dr John Harris (harrisjo@tcd.ie).

i. Language learning experience

In this section of the questionnaire we would like you to answer a few questions about your background and your past experience learning Irish.

1. a. Did you learn Irish in school or higher education? Yes □ No □

   b. If yes, what level did you reach? Junior Cert. □ Leaving Cert. □ Degree □

   Other_____

2. What type of Irish did your teachers speak when you were at school? (tick as appropriate)

At primary school: Munster □ Connacht □ Ulster □ Neutral □ Not applicable □

At secondary school: Munster □ Connacht □ Ulster □ Neutral □ Not applicable □

3. Do / Did members of your family speak Irish? (please tick as appropriate)

Mother □ Father □ Grandmother □ Grandfather □ Brother(s) □ Sister(s) □

Other(s) _____

_____

_____

4. a. How many Irish language courses, if any, have you attended since leaving school? _____

   b. How many of those courses did you complete? _____

5. a. Prior to attending adult Irish language classes, how much exposure did you have to Irish through the media, e.g. TV, Newspapers? a lot □ a little □ none □

   b. What dialect(s) of Irish was most prevalent in these media? (tick as appropriate)

   Munster □ Connacht □ Ulster □ Neutral □ Don't know or N/A □

6. a. Do you speak any languages other than English or Irish? Yes□ No□

b. If yes, what other languages do you speak?

_____

_____

c. Where did you learn these languages?

_____

_____

7. a. Have you ever lived outside of Ireland where a language other than English was spoken? Yes□ No□

b. If so, in what country/countries did you live?

_____

_____

_____

8. a. If you answered yes to question 7, did you learn the language(s) of that country? Yes□ No□

b. If so, what level of proficiency did you reach in each of these languages?

Language: _____ Fluent □ Intermediate □ Basic □

Language: _____ Fluent □ Intermediate □ Basic □

Language: _____ Fluent □ Intermediate □ Basic □

Language: _____ Fluent □ Intermediate □ Basic □

II. Your Irish language ability

In this section, we would like you to answer a few of questions about your level of ability in Irish at present.

9. How would you describe your level of Irish at present? (Please tick one box below)

no Irish.....	☐
the odd word	☐
a few simple sentences.....	☐
parts of conversations.....	☐
most conversations.....	☐
native speaker ability.....	☐

*For the items below relating to your **ability in Irish**, please tick 'Yes' or 'No' in each case.*

10. I can understand basic instructions or take part in a basic factual conversation on a predictable topic. Yes ☐ No ☐

11. I can express simple opinions or requirements in a familiar context. Yes ☐ No ☐

12. I can express opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way or offer advice within a known area, and understand instructions or public announcements. Yes ☐ No ☐

13. I can follow or give a talk on a familiar topic or keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics. Yes ☐ No ☐

14. I can contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work or keep up a casual conversation with a good degree of fluency, coping with abstract expressions. Yes ☐ No ☐

15. I can advise on or talk about complex or sensitive issues, understanding colloquial references and dealing confidently with hostile questions. Yes ☐ No ☐

III. Irish language learning and use

(1) In this part of the questionnaire, we would like you to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Irish and the people who speak it. Please record your reaction by circling one of the seven numbered response options below (i.e. 1 'Strongly Disagree' – 7 'Strongly Agree') for each statement.

Strongly		Slightly		Slightly		Strongly
Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	**Agree**
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. Most people who speak Irish are friendly and easy to get along with.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. The more I get to know Irish speakers, the more I want to speak the language.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. The Irish language is an important part of life in Ireland.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. The Irish language is an important part of Irish culture.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. If Ireland lost the Irish language, it would be a great loss.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. People in Ireland who cannot speak Irish should try to learn the language.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. People who speak Irish help to make Ireland special and different from other countries.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

23. I would like to meet more Irish speakers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(2) People have different reasons for learning Irish as adults. Here, we would like you to indicate your feelings about the particular reasons why you are learning the language. Please record your reaction by circling one of the numbered response options for each statement.

Strongly		Slightly		Slightly		Strongly
Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	**Agree**
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

24. Learning Irish is important to me because it will allow me to speak to different people.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. Learning Irish is important because it will allow me to take part in cultural activities like *Oireachtas na Gaeilge*, *Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann* and Irish dancing.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

26. It is important for me to learn Irish because it will allow me to feel more at ease around people who speak Irish.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. Learning Irish is important to me because it will allow me to read books and understand Irish songs and Irish TV/radio programming.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

28. Learning Irish is important to me because it will help me to get a job or a promotion in my current position.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

29. It is important to me to learn Irish because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

30. Learning Irish is important for me because people will have more respect for me if I speak the language.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(3) When do you like to speak Irish? With whom do you like to speak it? Please tell us how you feel about speaking Irish by answering 'True' or 'False' to each of the following statements.

31. I speak Irish as often as possible. □ True □ False

32. I would like to speak Irish more often. □ True □ False

33. I speak Irish to people in my family. □ True □ False

34. I answer in Irish when someone speaks to me in the language. □ True □ False

35. I speak in Irish to my classmates in the Irish classroom. □ True □ False

36. I speak in Irish to my classmates outside of the Irish classroom. □ True □ False

37. By speaking Irish outside the classroom, I encourage others to do likewise. □ True □ False

38. I speak Irish when I contact government offices, e.g. The Revenue Commissioners, the County/City Council. □ True □ False

39. Speaking Irish in public makes me uncomfortable. □ True □ False

40. I am more comfortable speaking in Irish with learners who are at the same level as I am. □ True □ False

41. I feel uncomfortable speaking Irish to people who have better Irish than I do. □ True □ False

42. I feel embarrassed when friends who don't speak Irish themselves hear me speaking Irish. □ True □ False

(4) In this section, we would like to explore any personal connections you may feel in relation to Irish. Please record your reaction to each of the statements below by circling one of the numbered response options (i.e. 1 'Strongly Disagree' – 7 'Strongly Agree') below each statement.

Strongly		Slightly		Slightly		Strongly
Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	**Agree**
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

43. My family has a connection to a part of the country where Irish is spoken.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

44. Being able to speak Irish well is important to me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

45. I feel a sense of pride when I speak Irish.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

46. The type of Irish I learned at school is the type of Irish I speak now.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

47. The quality of the Irish I speak (pronunciation, grammar, idioms) is important to me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

48. The ability to speak Irish is an important element of my personal identity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(5) Languages often have different written and spoken varieties. In this section, we would like you to respond to the statements below about the type of Irish, or the variety of Irish, you would like to learn.

Please use the numbered response options as before:

Strongly		Slightly		Slightly		Strongly
Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	**Agree**
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

49. Ideally, I would like my level of fluency in Irish to equal that of a native speaker of the language.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

50. The Irish of native speakers sounds more natural than the Irish of learners.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

51. I would like to sound like a native speaker when I speak Irish.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

52. There are some dialects of Irish that I dislike.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

53. I have a definite preference for a particular dialect of Irish.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

54. Learning a particular dialect of Irish is important to me because I identify with speakers of that dialect.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

55. Learning a particular dialect of Irish makes you sound more like a genuine Irish speaker.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

56. It is better to first learn one dialect in Irish and then learn the other dialects.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

57. It is important that the Irish language maintains its different dialects in the future, e.g. Munster, Connaught, Donegal Irish.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(6) Now, we would like you to give your opinion on some social and cultural aspects of learning and using the Irish language.

Please use the numbered response options as before:

Strongly		Slightly		Slightly		Strongly
Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	**Agree**
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

58. I like to hear Irish being spoken in a natural setting where people are not worried about grammar, pronunciation, etc.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

59. I would like to have more opportunities to speak Irish to native speakers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

60. Learning Irish is important to me because my children are learning Irish at school.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

61. I regularly attend concerts featuring Irish language music groups.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

62. I regularly buy (or borrow from the library) Irish language music, i.e. CDs, DVDs.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

63. I make a point of buying (or borrowing from the library) and reading Irish language short stories or novels.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

64. I prefer to listen to Irish songs from a particular Gaeltacht region.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

65. When I read in Irish (e.g. books, newspapers, magazines) I prefer to read materials that are written in a particular dialect of Irish.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

IV. Personal details

Finally, a few questions about your background:

66. Where were you born? (choose one of the following)

☐ In the Republic of Ireland _____ (town & county)

_____

☐ In Northern Ireland _____ (town & county)

_____

☐ Outside of Ireland _____ (town, province & country)

_____

_____

67. In what age group are you? (circle one) 18-25 26-45 46-65 65+

68. What is your gender? Female □ Male □

V. Your reasons for learning Irish

69. Please use the space below to describe in your own words the reason(s) you are learning/continuing to learn Irish at present.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

V: Further participation

Thank you very much for answering the above questions and for contributing to my research project.

There will be other aspects to this study which we hope to conduct in the near future. We are looking, therefore, for learners of Irish to participate in 'speaker evaluation' exercises. This will involve listening to recorded voices and assessing various aspects of the language you hear. We would also like to conduct individual interviews and focus groups in which learners will be asked to discuss in a little more detail some of the topics that arose earlier in the questionnaire.

You are under no obligation to take part in any of these additional elements of the study, but if you would be willing to hear more about them, and possibly take part, I would like to be able to contact you.

Can you now please indicate whether you are willing to discuss taking part in further aspects of this study? You can signal your willingness by ticking the box below. Otherwise, just leave it blank. Thank you again.

Yes, please contact me regarding further aspects of this study: ☐

Contact details

If you ticked '**yes**' above, please provide contact details below so that I may get in touch with you to tell you more about the project.

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Appendix 1.7

Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners (scales)

Irish Language Questionnaire for Adult Learners

Scales

(Item numbers are the same as on the instrument)

Attitude to Irish speakers (8 items)

Likert scale response format: Strongly disagree (1) – Strongly agree (7)

16. Most people who speak Irish are friendly and easy to get along with.

17. The more I get to know Irish speakers, the more I want to speak the language.

18. The Irish language is an important part of life in Ireland.

19. The Irish language is an important part of Irish culture.

20. If Ireland lost the Irish language, it would be a great loss.

21. People in Ireland who cannot speak Irish should try to learn the language.

22. People who speak Irish help to make Ireland special and different from other countries.

23. I would like to meet more Irish speakers.

Integrative orientation to Irish (4 items)

Likert scale response format: Strongly disagree (1) – Strongly agree (7)

24. Learning Irish is important to me because it will allow me to speak to different people.

25. Learning Irish is important because it will allow me to take part in cultural activities like *Oireachtas na Gaeilge*, *Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann* and Irish dancing.

26. It is important for me to learn Irish because it will allow me to feel more at ease around people who speak Irish.

27. Learning Irish is important to me because it will allow me to read books and understand Irish songs and Irish TV/radio programming.

Instrumental orientation to Irish (3 items)

Likert scale response format: Strongly disagree (1) – Strongly agree (7)

28. Learning Irish is important to me because it will help me to get a job or a promotion in my current position.

29. It is important to me to learn Irish because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.

30. Learning Irish is important for me because people will have more respect for me if I speak the language.

Identity/Self-concept (4 items)

Likert scale response format: Strongly disagree (1) – Strongly agree (7)

44. Being able to speak Irish well is important to me.

45. I feel a sense of pride when I speak Irish.

47. The quality of the Irish I speak (pronunciation, grammar, idioms) is important to me.

48. The ability to speak Irish is an important element of my personal identity.

Proficiency aims and goals (4 items)

Likert scale response format: Strongly disagree (1) – Strongly agree (7)

49. Ideally, I would like my level of fluency in Irish to equal that of a native speaker of the language.

50. The Irish of native speakers sounds more natural than the Irish of learners.

51. I would like to sound like a native speaker when I speak Irish.

59. I would like to have more opportunities to speak Irish to native speakers.

Attitude to learning dialects of Irish (5 items)

Likert scale response format: Strongly disagree (1) – Strongly agree (7)

52. There are some dialects of Irish that I dislike.

53. I have a definite preference for a particular dialect of Irish.

54. Learning a particular dialect of Irish is important to me because I identify with speakers of that dialect.

55. Learning a particular dialect of Irish makes you sound more like a genuine Irish speaker.

56. It is better to first learn one dialect in Irish and then learn the other dialects.

Cultural activities and preferences (5 items)

Likert scale response format: Strongly disagree (1) – Strongly agree (7)

61. I regularly attend concerts featuring Irish language music groups.

62. I regularly buy (or borrow from the library) Irish language music, i.e. CDs, DVDs.

63. I make a point of buying (or borrowing from the library) and reading Irish language short stories or novels.

64. I prefer to listen to Irish songs from a particular Gaeltacht region.

65. When I read in Irish (e.g. books, newspapers, magazines) I prefer to read materials that are written in a particular dialect of Irish.

Self confidence in speaking (11 items)

Dichotomous response format: True-False

31. I speak Irish as often as possible.

33. I speak Irish to people in my family.

34. I answer in Irish when someone speaks to me in the language.

35. I speak in Irish to my classmates in the Irish classroom.

36. I speak in Irish to my classmates outside of the Irish classroom.

37. By speaking Irish outside the classroom, I encourage others to do likewise.

38. I speak Irish when I contact government offices, e.g. The Revenue Commissioners, the County/City Council.

39. Speaking Irish in public makes me uncomfortable. (Reverse coded)

40. I am more comfortable speaking in Irish with learners who are at the same level as I am. (Reverse coded)

41. I feel uncomfortable speaking Irish to people who have better Irish than I do. (Reverse coded)

42. I feel embarrassed when friends who don't speak Irish themselves hear me speaking Irish. (Reverse coded)

Miscellaneous items (6 items)

Dichotomous response format: True-False

32. I would like to speak Irish more often.

Likert scale response format: Strongly disagree (1) – Strongly agree (7)

43. My family has a connection to a part of the country where Irish is spoken.

46. The type of Irish I learned at school is the type of Irish I speak now.

57. It is important that the Irish language maintains its different dialects in the future, e.g. Munster, Connaught, Donegal Irish.

58. I like to hear Irish being spoken in a natural setting where people are not worried about grammar, pronunciation, etc.

60. Learning Irish is important to me because my children are learning Irish at school.

Appendix 2
Stage II of the study

Appendix 2.1

Participant information leaflet for speakers (speech samples)

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College Dublin

Research Participant Information Leaflet

(Speaker Evaluation Exercise)

Working thesis title:

Relationships between identity and attitudes to the achievement of native speaker norms in adult L2 learners of Irish

You are invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out by **Colin Flynn,** a postgraduate research student, under the guidance of **Dr John Harris**. Your participation is voluntary. Even if you agree to participate now, you can withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind.

This research is to be conducted as part fulfilment of a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. The study is designed to investigate adult learners' attitudes towards different types of Irish (e.g. dialects, pronunciation, etc.) and what role these attitudes play in decisions learners make about the type of Irish they would ideally like to learn and use. The study will also investigate how these attitudes are connected to learners' personal motivation to learn the language.

If you agree to participate, this will involve you recording a speech sample which will be used in a *speaker evaluation exercise* in which Irish language learners will be asked to give their opinion about 8 Irish speakers which will be presented to them in a recording. You will also be asked to answer a few questions in writing about your own linguistic background. This should take approximately 15 minutes.

Although you will not benefit directly from taking part in this project, **this research may benefit** the disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching.

Any information or data which we obtain from you during this research will be recorded and safely stored in the locked office of the principal researcher (Colin Flynn) or that of the project supervisor (Dr John Harris) for a mandatory 5 year period.

Participant confidentiality will be ensured in the presentation of any and all findings through the use of a coded system to represent individual responses. NO NAMES will be used at any time and any identifying information will also be removed or altered to ensure confidentiality. Data from this research project may be published in future (e.g. in academic journals), in which case the same procedures for ensuring participant confidentiality will be followed.

If you have any questions about this research please feel free to ask me in person or contact me by email (**cjflynn@tcd.ie**). You are also free, however, to contact Dr John Harris (**harrisjo@tcd.ie**) to seek further clarification or information.

Appendix 2.2

Consent form template for Irish speakers (speech samples)

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College Dublin

Research Participant Consent Form

(Speaker Evaluation Exercise)

Working thesis title:

Relationships between identity and attitudes to the achievement of native speaker norms in adult L2 learners of Irish

I am invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out by **Colin Flynn,** a postgraduate research student, under the guidance of **Dr John Harris**. My participation is voluntary. Even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind.

This research is to be conducted as part fulfilment of a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. The study is designed to investigate adult learners' attitudes towards different types of Irish (e.g. dialects, pronunciation, etc.) and what role these attitudes play in decisions learners make about the type of Irish they would ideally like to learn and use. The study will also investigate how these attitudes are connected to learners' personal motivation to learn the language.

If I agree to participate, this will involve me recording a speech sample which will be used in a *speaker evaluation exercise* in which Irish language learners will be asked to give their opinion about 8 Irish speakers which will be presented to them in a recording. I will also be asked to answer a few questions in writing about my own linguistic background. This should take approximately 15 minutes.

Although I will not benefit directly from taking part in this project, **this research may benefit** the disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching.

Any information or data which is obtained from me during this research will be recorded and safely stored in the locked office of the principal researcher (Colin Flynn) or that of the project supervisor (Dr John Harris) for a mandatory 5 year period.

Participant confidentiality will be ensured in the presentation of any and all findings through the use of a coded system to represent individual responses. NO NAMES will be used at any time and any identifying information will also be removed or altered to ensure confidentiality. Data from this research project may be published in future (e.g. in academic journals), in which case the same procedures for ensuring participant confidentiality will be followed.

If I have any questions about this research please feel free to ask the researcher in person or contact him by email (**cjflynn@tcd.ie**). I am also free, however, to contact Dr John Harris (**harrisjo@tcd.ie**) to seek further clarification or information.

Signature of research participant
I understand what is involved in this research and I agree to participate in the study. I have been given a copy of the information leaflet.

---------- ----------
Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher
I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

---------- ----------
Signature of researcher Date

Appendix 2.3

Participant detail form for Irish speakers (speech samples)

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

Trinity College Dublin

Research Participant Detail Form

(Speaker Evaluation Exercise Informant)

Working thesis title:

Relationships between identity and attitudes to the achievement of native speaker norms in adult L2 learners of Irish

Name / Ainm:

_____

Age / Aois:

_____

Place of birth / Áit ar rugadh tú:

_____

Hometown / Baile dúchais:

_____

Primary language spoken at home / Príomhtheanga a labhair tú sa bhaile:

_____

Primary language spoken at school / Príomhtheanga a labhair tú ar scoil:

Primary school / Bunscoil _____

Secondary school / Meánscoil _____

Primary language spoken in home community / Príomhtheanga a labhair tú i do phobal dúchais:

_____

Appendix 2.4

Participant information leaflet for learners

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College Dublin

Research Participant Information Leaflet

(Speaker Evaluation Exercise)

Working thesis title:

Relationships between identity and attitudes to the achievement of native speaker norms in adult L2 learners of Irish

You are invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out by **Colin Flynn,** a postgraduate research student, under the guidance of **Dr John Harris**. Your participation is voluntary. Even if you agree to participate now, you can withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind.

This research is to be conducted as part fulfilment of a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. The study is designed to investigate adult learners' attitudes towards different types of Irish (e.g. dialects, pronunciation, etc.) and what role these attitudes play in decisions learners make about the type of Irish they would ideally like to learn and use. The study will also investigate how these attitudes are connected to learners' personal motivation to learn the language.

If you agree to participate, this will involve you taking part in a *speaker evaluation exercise* in which you will be asked to give your opinion about 8 Irish speakers which will be presented to you in a recording. You will also be asked to answer a few questions in writing about your own Irish in relation to the speakers heard in the recordings. This should take approximately 30 minutes.

Although you will not benefit directly from taking part in this project, **this research may benefit** the disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching.

Any information or data which we obtain from you during this research will be recorded and safely stored in the locked office of the principal researcher (Colin Flynn) or that of the project supervisor (Dr John Harris) for a mandatory 5 year period.

Participant confidentiality will be ensured in the presentation of any and all findings through the use of a coded system to represent individual responses. NO NAMES will be used at any time and any identifying information will also be removed or altered to ensure confidentiality. Data from this research project may be published in future (e.g. in academic journals), in which case the same procedures for ensuring participant confidentiality will be followed.

If you have any questions about this research please feel free to ask me in person or contact me by email (**cjflynn@tcd.ie**). You are also free, however, to contact Dr John Harris (**harrisjo@tcd.ie**) to seek further clarification or information.

Appendix 2.5

Consent form template for learners

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College Dublin

Research Participant Consent Form

(Speaker Evaluation Exercise)

Working thesis title:
Relationships between identity and attitudes to the achievement of native speaker norms in adult L2 learners of Irish

I am invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out by **Colin Flynn,** a postgraduate research student, under the guidance of **Dr John Harris**. My participation is voluntary. Even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind.

This research is to be conducted as part fulfilment of a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. The study is designed to investigate adult learners' attitudes towards different types of Irish (e.g. dialects, pronunciation, etc.) and what role these attitudes play in decisions learners make about the type of Irish they would ideally like to learn and use. The study will also investigate how these attitudes are connected to learners' personal motivation to learn the language.

If I agree to participate, this will involve me taking part in a *speaker evaluation exercise* in which I will be asked to give my opinion about 8 Irish speakers which will be presented to me in a recording. I will also be asked to answer a few questions in writing about my own Irish in relation to the speakers heard in the recordings. This should take approximately 30 minutes.

Although I will not benefit directly from taking part in this project, **this research may benefit** the disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching.

Any information or data which is obtained from me during this research will be recorded and safely stored in the locked office of the principal researcher (Colin Flynn) or that of the project supervisor (Dr John Harris) for a mandatory 5 year period.

Participant confidentiality will be ensured in the presentation of any and all findings through the use of a coded system to represent individual responses. NO NAMES will be used at any time and any identifying information will also be removed or altered to ensure confidentiality. Data from this research project may be published in future (e.g. in academic journals), in which case the same procedures for ensuring participant confidentiality will be followed.

If I have any questions about this research please feel free to ask the researcher in person or contact him by email (**cjflynn@tcd.ie**). I am also free, however, to contact Dr John Harris (**harrisjo@tcd.ie**) to seek further clarification or information.

Signature of research participant
I understand what is involved in this research and I agree to participate in the study. I have been given a copy of the information leaflet.

---------- ----------
Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher
I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

---------- ----------
Signature of researcher Date

Appendix 2.6

Adjective collection task for pilot learners

Speaker Evaluation Exercise

(Pilot Study)

Instructions (to be read aloud by the researcher)

Introduction:
In this pilot study we are interested in your reactions to different speakers of Irish. We often hear people on the radio or telephone without being able to see them and in such situations we often form initial opinions about that person and/or the language they use. You are being asked here to give us an idea about what these initial opinions are. Pease remember that there are no right or wrong answers. We only want to know what YOU think, so please express your opinions freely.

You will hear 8 adult female Irish speakers in the same order a total of three times. What we would like you to do is write down any adjectives (i.e. describing words) that come to mind which you might use to describe the speakers you hear. Feel free to write down both positive and/or negative adjectives. Please list as many adjectives as you can in the space provided below; there is no limit.

1) Please write all adjectives here.

Positive:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Negative:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2) Can you now tell us if you would consider any of these adjectives below useful for describing the speakers that you just heard? Please circle any of these adjectives which your think would be useful. (If an adjective you already listed on the other page is found here just circle it again on this page.)

pleasant	unpleasant
authentic	inauthentic
interesting	uninteresting
well-spoken	poorly spoken
intelligent	unintelligent
prestigious	low-status
careful	careless

Appendix 2.7

Variety features in Speaker Evaluation Exercise speech samples

	Region of origin	Variety traits	Speech errors
Speaker 1	Connaught Gaeltacht	West Galway Gaeltacht: • *Téire* [tʲairʲə] (regional form of imperative of *téigh* [go]) • *Tóig* [tʸoigʲ] (regional form of imperative of *tóg* [take]) • *bó[th]ar* [bʸoːrʸ] local pronunciation of *bóthar* [road]) • *droi[ch]ead* [dʸrʸaidʸ] (local pronunciation of *droichead* [bridge]) • *cuisleán* [kʸʌʃlʲaːnʸ] (local pronunciation of *caisleán* [castle]) • *óspidéal* [oːʃpʲədʲ eːl̥ʸ](local form/pronunciation of *ospidéal* [hospital])	• *ar taobh* (missing lenition after preposition *ar* [on]) • *an monarcha* (missing lenition feminine noun after definite article *an* [the])
Speaker 2	Ulster non-Gaeltacht	Mixed variety: • *sroich* (verb unusual in Ulster Irish, associated with southern varieties) • *aghaidh* [ai] (Southern/western pronunciation of the noun *aghaidh*, normally [eːj] in Ulster Irish) • *ag dul* [eˌ dʸulʸ] (Southern form and pronunciation of the verbal noun *ag dul* [going])	• *dheis/an dheis* (unnecessary lenition of noun) • *an caisleán* (lexical error, speaker misnamed the church as a castle) • *an clé* (missing lenition feminine noun after definite article *an* [the]) • *an loch* [lʸokʸ] (non-native pronunciation, /x/ → [k] in word final position) • *t-aerfort* (unnecessary prefix [*t*-] on noun) • *ag an t-ospidéal* (unnecessary prefix [*t*-] on noun in dative/prepositional case)

Speaker 3	Ulster Gaeltacht	North West Donegal: • *aghaidh* [eːj] (regional pronunciation of *aghaidh*) • *fhad le* (regional phrase meaning 'as far as') • *teach an phobail* (regional phrase denoting a church) • *tiontaigh* (a regional verb for 'turn') • *lá[i]mhe* [l̪ʸaːwə] (regional pronunciation of genitive singular form of lámh [hand]) • *casadh* [kʸasʸuːˑ] (regional pronunciation of the verbal noun of *cas* [turn]) • *bealach* (noun used with the regional meaning of 'road', generally 'way' in other dialects) • *ag an choirnéal* (noun lenited in the dative case) • *romhad* [rʸoːdʸ] (regional form of the prepositional pronoun *romhat* [before/in front of you])	none
Speaker 4	Connaught Gaeltacht	West Galway Gaeltacht: • *aghaidh* [ai] (regional pronunciation of *aghaidh*) • *sa mbóthar* (regional eclipsis of a noun after *sa* [in the]) • *easpaicil* (regional form of *ospidéal* [hospital]) • *cuisleán* [kʸʌʃʲaːnʸ] (local pronunciation of *caisleán*)	• *timpeall loch* (nominative form of noun instead of genitive, i.e. *locha*) • *monarchan* (genitive instead of dative, i.e. *monarcha*. This is very common in Gaeltacht speech.)
Speaker 5	Muster Gaeltacht	Waterford Gaeltacht: • *thimpeall* [hʸaimʲpʲəlʸ] (local form and pronunciation of *timpeall* [around]) • *Cífidh* (regional future tense form of the verb *feic* [see]) • *sléibhte* [ʃʲeːtʲə] (regional pronunciation of the plural form of *sliabh* [mountain]) • *Teir* [tʲərʲ] (regional form of imperative of *téigh* [go])	• *i dtreo monarcha* (nominative form of noun instead of genitive, i.e. *monarchan*)

		• san (regional form of the demonstrative adjective *sin*) • aghaidh [aiɟ] (regional pronunciation of *aghaidh*) • fén (regional form of faoin [under the]) • ansan (regional form of the demonstrative adverb *ansin*) • óspidéal [oːʃpʲədʲeːl̪ʏ] (regional form of *ospidéal* [hospital])	
Speaker 6	Ulster Gaeltacht	North West Donegal: • *dhul* [hʏulʏ] (regional pronunciation of the verbal noun (lenited) *dul* [to go]) • *ag an chaisleán* (lenition on the noun in the dative/prepositional case) • *teach an phobail* (regional phrase denoting a church) • *aghaidh* [eːj] (regional pronunciation of *aghaidh*) • *bealach*(noun used with the regional meaning of 'road') • *tifidh* (regional future tense form of the verb *feic* [see]) • *fá choinne* (regional compound preposition meaning 'for') • *tamalt* (regional form of the noun *tamall* [a while]) • *chomh* [gɔ] (regional pronunciation of the adverb *chomh* [as]) • *maith* [mʏai] (regional pronunciation of the adjective *maith* [well]) • *fhad le* (regional phrase meaning 'as far as') • *chóir bheith* (regional phrase meaning 'almost') • *fán*(regional form of *faoin* [around the]) • *romhad* [rʏoːdʏ] (regional form of the prepositional pronoun *romhat* [before/in front of you])	• *ar taobh* (missing lenition after preposition *ar* [on])
Speaker 7	Muster Gaeltacht	West Kerry Gaeltacht: • *ar aghaidh* [aiɟ] (regional pronunciation of *aghaidh*) • *sáipéal* (local/regional form of *séipéal* [church])	• *thíos* (the motion form of the adverb 'down', i.e. *síos*, should have been used after the verb *téigh* [go])

		• *ansan* (regional form of the demonstrative adverb *ansin*) • *fé ndeara* (regional form of *faoi deara* [*tabhair faoi deara* = notice] • *sléibhte* [ʃlʲeːtʲə] (regional pronunciation of the plural form of *sliabh* [mountain]) • *teir* [tʲerʲ] (regional form of imperative of *téigh* [go]) • *fén* (regional form of faoin [under the]) • *ndroichead* (regional form of the noun in the dative/prepositional case. The consonants 'd' and 't' resist eclipses in all other dialects in this case.) • *cífidh* (regional future tense form of the verb *feic* [see]) • *bheidh* [vʲeɟ] (regional pronunciation of the future tense for of the verb *bí* [be]) • *óispidéal* (regional form of *ospidéal* [hospital])	
Speaker 8	Munster non-Gaeltacht	Mixed variety: • *aghaidh* [əiɟ] (southern pronunciation of *aghaidh*) • *séipéal* (southern stress on second syllable) • *leanúint* (southern form of the verbal noun of the verb *lean* [follow]) • sléibhte [ʃlʲeːtʲə] (southern pronunciation of the plural form of *sliabh* [mountain]) • *tar éis* (pronunciation of both parts of this compound preposition is common among L2 speakers. In southern and western dialects where this phrase is used it is realized as *théis, tréis* or *téis*.) • *faoi* (This form of the preposition 'under' is not a feature of Munster varieties. It is associated with western and northern Gaeltacht varieties.)	• *díreach* [dʲiːɹək] (non-native pronunciation of /x/ as [k] in word final position) • *a sroicheann* [sic] [sɣɾɣlkən̥ɣ] (failure to lenite the verb after the relative particle *a* and non-native pronunciation of /x/ as [k] in word middle position) • *cheart* [kʲaɹtɣ] (non-native pronunciation of /x/ as [k] in word initial position) • *duit* [dɣitɣ] (failure to palatalize 't' after a 'slender' vowel, i.e. 'i')

		• *ospidéal* (In southern dialects, the usual form of this noun [hospital] is ó[i]spidéal.)	• *chéad* [kʲeːdʲ] (non-native pronunciation of /x/ as [k] in word initial position) • *chasadh* [kʲasʲə] (non-native pronunciation of /x/ as [k] in word initial position) • *thar sléibhte* (missing lenition after preposition *thar* [past]) • *an monarcha* (missing lenition feminine noun after definite article *an* [the])

Appendix 2.8

Speaker Evaluation Exercise booklet

Speaker Evaluation Exercise

Participant no. _____

Questionnaire no. _____

Instructions (to be read by the participant)

Introduction:
In this part of our study we are interested in your reactions to different speakers of Irish. We often hear people on the radio or telephone without being able to see them and in such situations we often form initial opinions about that person and/or the language they use. You are being asked here to give us an idea about what these initial opinions are. Pease remember that there are no right or wrong answers. We only want to know what YOU think, so express your opinions freely.

You will hear 8 adult female Irish speakers in the same order, a total of three times. You will be asked to carry out the following three tasks:

1. Having heard the speakers for the *first time*, you will be asked to complete a simple exercise.

You will be asked to rate each speaker according to different pairs of adjectives like those in the sample below (e.g. 'simple'- 'complicated' or 'good' - 'bad'). Adjectives will represent topics such as intelligence, attractiveness and authenticity.

Using the scales provided, please indicate your impression of each speaker by placing an 'X' in the position that most closely corresponds to your opinion. For example, if you feel strongly about one adjective or another, you mark an 'X' in the space directly next to that adjective; otherwise, you choose another space between the two adjectives. Like this:

SAMPLE:
This person sounds:
simple _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : __X__ complicated
good _____ : _____ : __X__ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ bad

2. When you have heard the speakers a second time, you will be asked to answer two questions.

A. Where is she from?
You will be asked to select one of a number of regions around the country (or Gaeltacht area) from which the speaker might hail.

B. Is she a native speaker of Irish?
You will be asked to categorise the person you are listening to according to the labels provided, e.g. a beginning learner of Irish, an advanced learner of Irish, a native speaker of Irish, etc.

3. When you have heard the speakers for a third time you will be asked to answer a few final questions about the type of Irish you speak yourself compared to the speakers in the recordings.

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. We only want to know what you think.

Speaker characteristics: Part I

Please listen to these recordings and quickly rate the speakers according to each description item below. (Please place an x in the appropriate location on each line.)

Speaker 1

This person sounds:

friendly	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unfriendly
unnatural	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	natural
interesting	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	uninteresting
poorly spoken	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	well spoken
intelligent	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unintelligent
not confident	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	confident
clear	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unclear
reserved	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	outgoing

Speaker 2

This person sounds:

friendly	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unfriendly
unnatural	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	natural
interesting	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	uninteresting
poorly spoken	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	well spoken
intelligent	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unintelligent
not confident	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	confident
clear	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unclear
reserved	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	outgoing

Speaker 3

This person sounds:

friendly	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unfriendly
unnatural	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	natural
interesting	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	uninteresting
poorly spoken	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	well spoken
intelligent	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unintelligent
not confident	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	confident
clear	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unclear
reserved	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	outgoing

Speaker 4

This person sounds:

friendly	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unfriendly
unnatural	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	natural
interesting	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	uninteresting
poorly spoken	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	well spoken
intelligent	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unintelligent
not confident	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	confident
clear	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unclear
reserved	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	outgoing

Speaker 5

This person sounds:

friendly	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unfriendly
unnatural	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	natural
interesting	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	uninteresting
poorly spoken	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	well spoken
intelligent	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unintelligent
not confident	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	confident
clear	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unclear
reserved	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	outgoing

Speaker 6

This person sounds:

friendly	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unfriendly
unnatural	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	natural
interesting	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	uninteresting
poorly spoken	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	well spoken
intelligent	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unintelligent
not confident	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	confident
clear	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unclear
reserved	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	outgoing

Speaker 7

This person sounds:

friendly	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unfriendly
unnatural	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	natural
interesting	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	uninteresting
poorly spoken	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	well spoken
intelligent	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unintelligent
not confident	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	confident
clear	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unclear
reserved	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	outgoing

Speaker 8

This person sounds:

friendly	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unfriendly
unnatural	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	natural
interesting	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	uninteresting
poorly spoken	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	well spoken
intelligent	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unintelligent
not confident	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	confident
clear	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unclear
reserved	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	outgoing

Speaker characteristics: Part II

Now listen to these speakers again and as the audio recording proceeds complete tasks A and B below for each one. Please read the options in each task before you begin to make sure you understand what you are being asked to do. Tasks A and B are the same for each speaker.

SPEAKER 1

A) Please indicate where you think this person hails from by ticking one of the regions below.

- □ A Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ Donegal Gaeltacht
- □ A Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ The Midlands
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Ulster
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ Dublin

B) Also please indicate whether you think this person is (tick one):

- □ A beginning learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish
- □ A native speaker of Irish
- □ An established learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish who has near native speaker competency

==========

SPEAKER 2

A) Please indicate where you think this person hails from by ticking one of the regions below.

- □ A Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ Donegal Gaeltacht
- □ A Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ The Midlands
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Ulster
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ Dublin

B) Also please indicate whether you think this person is (tick one):

- □ A beginning learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish
- □ A native speaker of Irish
- □ An established learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish who has near native speaker competency

==========

SPEAKER 3

A) Please indicate where you think this person hails from by ticking one of the regions below.

- □ A Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ Donegal Gaeltacht
- □ A Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ The Midlands
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Ulster
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ Dublin

B) Also please indicate whether you think this person is (tick one):

- □ A beginning learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish
- □ A native speaker of Irish
- □ An established learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish who has near native speaker competency

==========

SPEAKER 4

A) Please indicate where you think this person hails from by ticking one of the regions below.

- □ A Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ Donegal Gaeltacht
- □ A Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ The Midlands
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Ulster
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ Dublin

B) Also please indicate whether you think this person is (tick one):

- □ A beginning learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish
- □ A native speaker of Irish
- □ An established learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish who has near native speaker competency

SPEAKER 5

A) Please indicate where you think this person hails from by ticking one of the regions below.

- □ A Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ Donegal Gaeltacht
- □ A Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ The Midlands
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Ulster
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ Dublin

B) Also please indicate whether you think this person is (tick one):

- □ A beginning learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish
- □ A native speaker of Irish
- □ An established learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish who has near native speaker competency

==========

SPEAKER 6

A) Please indicate where you think this person hails from by ticking one of the regions below.

- □ A Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ Donegal Gaeltacht
- □ A Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ The Midlands
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Ulster
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ Dublin

B) Also please indicate whether you think this person is (tick one):

- □ A beginning learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish
- □ A native speaker of Irish
- □ An established learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish who has near native speaker competency

==========

SPEAKER 7

A) Please indicate where you think this person hails from by ticking one of the regions below.

- □ A Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ Donegal Gaeltacht
- □ A Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ The Midlands
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Ulster
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ Dublin

B) Also please indicate whether you think this person is (tick one):

- □ A beginning learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish
- □ A native speaker of Irish
- □ An established learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish who has near native speaker competency

==========

SPEAKER 8

A) Please indicate where you think this person hails from by ticking one of the regions below.

- □ A Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ Donegal Gaeltacht
- □ A Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ The Midlands
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Connaught
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Ulster
- □ A non-Gaeltacht area in Munster
- □ Dublin

B) Also please indicate whether you think this person is (tick one):

- □ A beginning learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish
- □ A native speaker of Irish
- □ An established learner of Irish
- □ An advanced learner of Irish who has near native speaker competency

Speaker characteristics: Part III

Now, I am going to ask you to listen to the speakers one more time. This time, I want you to think about the kind of Irish you speak in comparison to the speakers represented in the recordings.

Please listen to the speakers one last time and answer each of the questions below the best you can. There are no right or wrong answers. It is quite probable that no one speaker's Irish is exactly like yours. In that case, please just choose the one that most closely represents your Irish. Please read the three questions below carefully before you begin and make sure you understand what you are being asked to do.

1. When you speak Irish, do you think you sound similar to any one of these speakers?

Speaker 1 ___	Speaker 2 ___	Speaker 3 ___	Speaker 4 ___
Speaker 5 ___	Speaker 6 ___	Speaker 7 ___	Speaker 8 ___

2. Would you like to sound more similar to any one of these speakers in the future?

Speaker 1 ___	Speaker 2 ___	Speaker 3 ___	Speaker 4 ___
Speaker 5 ___	Speaker 6 ___	Speaker 7 ___	Speaker 8 ___

3. In what context(s) would you like to hear the type of Irish spoken by each of the speakers? (Please tick any of the three contexts across the top in which you like to hear the Irish spoken by each speaker.)

I would like to hear people like ...	on the television/radio	in the Irish classroom	in casual conversation
Speaker 1			
Speaker 2			
Speaker 3			
Speaker 4			
Speaker 5			
Speaker 6			
Speaker 7			
Speaker 8			

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

Appendix 3

Stage III of the study

Appendix 3.1

Participant information leaflet for learners

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College Dublin

Research Participant Information Leaflet

(Interview)

Working thesis title:

Relationships between identity and attitudes to the achievement of native speaker norms in adult L2 learners of Irish

You are invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out by **Colin Flynn,** a postgraduate research student, under the guidance of **Dr John Harris**. Your participation is voluntary. Even if you agree to participate now, you can withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind.

This research is to be conducted as part fulfilment of a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. The study is designed to investigate adult learners' attitudes towards different types of Irish (e.g. dialects, pronunciation, etc.) and what role these attitudes play in decisions learners make about the type of Irish they would ideally like to learn and use. The study will also investigate how these attitudes are connected to learners' personal motivation to learn the language.

If you agree to participate, this will involve you taking part in a short interview in which you will be asked to discuss your personal background and language learning experience, what type of Irish you speak (e.g. dialect, vocabulary, accent), how you view yourself as an Irish speaker and your language learning goals. This should take approximately 15-20 minutes.

Although you will not benefit directly from taking part in this project, **this research may benefit** the disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching.

Any information or data which we obtain from you during this research will be recorded and safely stored in the locked office of the principal researcher (Colin Flynn) or that of the project supervisor (Dr John Harris) for a mandatory 5 year period.

Participant confidentiality will be ensured in the presentation of any and all findings through the use of a coded system to represent individual responses. NO NAMES will be used at any time and any identifying information will also be removed or altered to ensure confidentiality. Data from this research project may be published in future (e.g. in academic journals), in which case the same procedures for ensuring participant confidentiality will be followed.

If you have any questions about this research please feel free to ask me in person or contact me by email (**cjflynn@tcd.ie**). You are also free, however, to contact Dr John Harris (**harrisjo@tcd.ie**) to seek further clarification or information.

Appendix 3.2

Consent form template for learners

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College Dublin

Research Participant Consent Form

(Interview)

Working Thesis title:
Relationships between identity and attitudes to the achievement of native speaker norms in adult L2 learners of Irish

I am invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out by **Colin Flynn,** a postgraduate research student, under the guidance of **Dr John Harris**. My participation is voluntary. Even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind.

This research is to be conducted as part fulfilment of a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. The study is designed to investigate adult learners' attitudes towards different types of Irish (e.g. dialects, pronunciation, etc.) and what role these attitudes play in decisions learners make about the type of Irish they would ideally like to learn and use. The study will also investigate how these attitudes are connected to learners' personal motivation to learn the language.

If I agree to participate, this will involve me taking part in a short interview in which I will be asked to discuss my personal background and language learning experience, what type of Irish I speak (e.g. dialect, vocabulary, accent), how I view myself as an Irish speaker and my language learning goals. This should take approximately 15-20 minutes.

Although I will not benefit directly from taking part in this project, **this research may benefit** the disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching.

Any information or data which is obtained from me during this research will be recorded and safely stored in the locked office of the principal researcher (Colin Flynn) or that of the project supervisor (Dr John Harris) for a mandatory 5 year period.

Participant confidentiality will be ensured in the presentation of any and all findings through the use of a coded system to represent individual responses. NO NAMES will be used at any time and any identifying information will also be removed or altered to ensure confidentiality. Data from this research project may be published in future (e.g. in academic journals), in which case the same procedures for ensuring participant confidentiality will be followed.

If I have any questions about this research please feel free to ask the researcher in person or contact him by email (**cjflynn@tcd.ie**). I am also free, however, to contact Dr John Harris (**harrisjo@tcd.ie**) to seek further clarification or information.

Signature of research participant
I understand what is involved in this research and I agree to participate in the study. I have been given a copy of the information leaflet.

---------- ----------
Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher
I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

---------- ----------
Signature of researcher Date

Appendix 3.3
Semi-structured interview schedule

Individual interview schedule

Introduction (to be read by the researcher once the formal interview has begun)

Welcome, and thank you for agreeing to take part in this project. The recording has now begun. For the record, I will now state that this interview is taking place with participant 'X'. If the content of this interview is reproduced a pseudonym will be used instead. Your real name will not be used at anytime. This interview will last approximately 15-20 minutes.

The purpose of this interview is to find out what your feelings are about different issues connected with learning Irish. The questions will cover topics including your personal background and language learning experience, what type of Irish you have learned or speak (e.g. dialect, vocabulary, accent), learning Irish in the Gaeltacht, how you view yourself as an Irish speaker and your language learning goals. Each time I introduce a new topic I will start by saying something like 'Now I would like to ask you a few questions about ...'. If there are any questions or topics that you would prefer not to discuss, you only have to indicate this to me and we will move on to the next question.

Finally, if you wish to stop this interview at any point, please just tell me and the interview and recording will cease immediately. Are you ready to begin?

1. Personal and language learning background information
Could you tell me about your background and how you started learning Irish?

Further topics to be discussed if not mentioned by the participant:
- Place of birth
- Mother tongue
- Past experiences of learning Irish and/or other languages
- Why return to Irish

2. Language learning goals
What goal(s), short or long-term, do you have in relation to learning Irish?

Further topics to be discussed if not mentioned by the participant:
- Importance to participant of speaking a particular kind of Irish (i.e. dialect)
- Participant's Irish in relation to the Irish language spoken by other learners or native speakers
- The kind of Irish you are learning in relation to the future of the Irish language more generally

3. Importance of the type of Irish you speak and learn

Would you say you speak a particular dialect of Irish? If so, what dialect would you say you speak? Is there any reason you choose or happen to speak that dialect?

Is there a particular accent or dialect of Irish you like more than others?

Would you like to acquire native-like fluency in Irish?

Further topics to be discussed if not mentioned by the participant:

- Significance, if any, to the participant of the dialect his/her teacher speaks/teaches
- Importance, if any, to the participant of whether or not teacher is a native speaker of Irish
- Significance, if any, to the participant of the dialect used in the learning materials he/she is using

4. Irish outside the classroom

Do you ever get the chance to use Irish outside the classroom? Who do you speak Irish with most?

Further topics to be discussed if not mentioned by the participant:

- Do any of the people just mentioned speak Irish fluently?
- Are any of these people native speakers?
- Would you like to have opportunities to use Irish (more often than you currently so) in your daily life?
- Watching or listening to Irish programming in order to connect up with the language when you don't have opportunities to speak to people

5. Relevance of learning Irish in the Gaeltacht

*Have you attended a course in the Gaeltacht recently? Was there any reason you chose to attend a course in that Gaeltacht region?**

Further topics to be discussed if not mentioned by the participant:

- Trips to the Gaeltacht for other, non-pedagogical, reasons?

6. Self-image as an Irish speaker

Some research shows that people feel that, to some extent, they take on a new or different persona when they speak another language. What are your thoughts on this?

Do you feel the same or different when you are speaking Irish, as opposed to English, or any other language?

Do you feel like you are part of a particular group or community of Irish speakers when you're speaking Irish?

Do you watch TG4 or listen to Raidió na Gaeltachta in order to connect up with particular group or community of Irish speakers?

Further topics to be discussed if not mentioned by the participant:

- Words such as 'heritage' or 'roots' or 'culture' in relation to the participant's motivation to learn Irish
- Does the participant have any feeling of belonging or attachment to a particular Irish speaking community?

Appendix 3.4
Sample interview transcript 1
Participant 3

Researcher: *Could you tell me about your background and how you started learning Irish?*
Participant: In common with most Irish people my experience of Irish at school was dismal because the method of teaching it. And even as a very young pupil at primary school and later at secondary school, I was aware that I was very interested in Irish and wanted to be able to speak it but it seemed an impossibility in the school because of the method of teaching and because of the corporal punishment which existed at the time. I was interested in Irish from about the age of 13 onwards and made attempts to learn several times it by doing night classes. When I left school I left school without a lot of Irish but I still maintained an interest in learning it, went to live on the continent (Europe) so there was no opportunity to speak it or to learn it for many years. When I came back to Ireland, more and more, I wanted to be able to speak it and speak it fluently. To that end I moved, relocated to a Gaeltacht area. The one I knew best was the Galway area, where I'm currently residing.

R: *Since you grew up in Dublin, I presume English was the main language spoken.*
P: I was brought up in a suburb of Dublin. English was the language. There was no Irish in the family, in fact not very much at all.

R: *What goals, short or long-term, do you have in relation to learning Irish?*

P: I would like to be able to speak Irish to native fluency, and possibly even teach it to beginners and others who want to learn it, maybe foreigners who are interested in learning it.

R: *Do you place any importance to participant of speaking a particular kind of Irish, i.e. dialect?*
P: Yes, I am very interested in the Connaught dialect of Irish, the south Connemara dialect. I'm not interested at all in the *Caighdeán* (standard), the *Caighdeán Oifigiúil* (the Official Standard).

R: *Is there any reason you have chosen that dialect over another?*
P: No. If I had happened to Munster or Ulster, I would have learned the dialect of those respective areas. But, because I had family connections in the Galway area,

which is what brought me here in the first case, I decided if I am in Galway, I'm going to learn Galway Irish.

R: *Do you have a family connection to the Gaeltacht area?*
P: None whatsoever.

R: *Do any of your family members speak Irish?*
P: No, but I have siblings who have great interest in it and under different circumstances they would have been almost as fanatical I'd say as I am, but they are living in America and there probably isn't a whole lot of opportunity for them. But we do speak it as much as we can when together, and on Skype and so on, and even on Facebook.

R: *How would you compare your own Irish to other learners or native speakers?*
P: My interest in the Connemara dialect has made me want to speak like the local native speakers. I'm not at all like Dublin school learners.

R: *How do you think the kind of Irish you are learning will impact on the future of the Irish language more generally?*
P: I think it is very important that the dialects are not diluted by the government or officialdom through the native Irish being looked down upon. I'm aware that most speakers of Irish are learners, or were learners, regardless of what level of fluency they have achieved, and that the native speakers are in the minority. So, because of the bias in my opinion against the dialects, it is possible that the new Dublin kind of Irish will prevail eventually. Personally speaking, I would prefer it is everybody tried to attain a level of fluency the same as or approaching native speakers of whatever dialect they choose to take an interest in.

R: *Do you speak a particular dialect of Irish?*
P: I fully intend to be able to speak to native speaker fluency in that dialect (South Connemara).

R: *Does it make any difference what type of Irish your teacher speakers?*
P: It does. It is very important to me that the teacher be from the Connemara Gaeltacht.

R: *Would you prefer it if the teacher was a native speaker?*
P: Definitely!

R: *What about the materials? Is important to you what type of Irish they use?*
P: Yes, I would prefer that they be in the Connemara dialect. Which brings me around to the *Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge* (The European Irish Language Certificate) exam system. It appears to me to be a mish mash of all of the dialects, and none sometimes. I would prefer if they stuck to one dialect or had separate papers for people who are living in those particular districts or learning that particular dialect, rather than they mix. I'd definitely like the learning material to be in one dialect or the other and not a mix of all the dialects.

R: *Do you get a chance to use your Irish outside of the classroom?*
P: I use Irish in the shops with people even if they're not Irish, so I am constantly pushing the Irish.

R: *Who do you speak to most?*
P: People in the area that I'm living in. Quite often they are not from the area, but that's the area I'm living in and I have the opportunity mostly to speak to people from the area. Most of the people I wish to speak to would be fluent Irish speakers because I seek them out. Many of them are native speakers. I do have quite a few friends who are not native speakers. Some are learning Irish to varying degrees of proficiency.

R: *When you listen to Irish language programming, do you use that as a method of connecting up with a particular community?*
P: I do listen to Raidió na Gaeltachta, in particular the programmes that use the Irish of Connemara.

R: *Do you ever visit Gaeltacht areas for non-pedagogical reasons?*
P: Yes, I do.

R: Is it different in any way?
P: It is a different experience simply because sometimes you don't know anyone in that area and it's difficult to get speaking with people from the areas.

R: *Do you feel like you take on a different persona when you speak different languages?*
P: That can be true. Because I have a love for the Irish language, I feel myself a little bit more connected to my Irish roots than the average Irish person.

R: *Do you feel different when you are speaking Irish as opposed to English?*

P: No, I can't say that I do.

Appendix 3.5
Sample interview transcript 2
Participant 7

Researcher: *Could you tell me about your background and how you started learning Irish?*
Participant: I'm from Dublin and my first language was always English, but my dad had Irish at home. He used to use is a little bit when I was a kid. I always enjoyed it at school whereas a lot of people didn't. Then when I was in my twenties, after I finished College, I was looking for an evening past-time and I saw Irish evening classes going on and I signed up, and that's about 6 or 5 years ago now.

I went to the Gaeltacht when I was in school, the Donegal Gaeltacht, Árainn Mhór, when I was 12 and 13. To get that experience, I suppose I associated speaking Irish with a lot of fun. So that is why I always had a very positive attitude towards it.

R: *Why did you come back to Irish as an adult?*
P: It was kind of half and half, to challenge myself and see if I could, because I had a good level in school ... to see I still had it and what I could do with it. And like that, to meet people with a similar mindset. And of course with the language comes the music and generally a lot of social activities as well. It all kind of tied into one.

R: *What goals, short or long-term, do you have in relation to learning Irish?*
P: I haven't set anything in stone, but I'd love to be able to speak Irish and write Irish to same degree that I can in English. I'm a long way away from that, especially on the written side, but I think it is achievable because I have learned so much in a couple of years. It doesn't seem to be that hard to do. And something I'd like to do, if I am ever lucky enough to have a family, I'd like to bring my kids up through Irish as well because I think if you have it when you're so young your brain isn't recognizing it as a different language and putting up barriers.

R: *Do you place any importance on speaking a particular kind of Irish, i.e. dialect?*
P: No, I'm quite open to dialects. I never been like "oh, I can't speak that dialect because it is strange." In fact, I want more exposure because I feel like I've narrowed my experience so far because I keep going back to the same area every summer, in Donegal, and it's lovely and it's great but I would nearly need to go to other places as well to see what my level is there. I'm really comfortable in Donegal now, but maybe I'd be lost if I was in Galway.

R: *How would you compare your own Irish to other learners or native speakers?*
P: I'm a bit of a … I kind of mix things up. I mix phrases that I have learned from people who are fluent and I'll use it and somebody says "oh, you're fluent" and I say "well, no it's just one little thing I've borrowed from somebody". You know, if I'm talking to somebody who is maybe just learning or just beginning. And I know sometimes I've got the Irish from school and then I use Donegal Irish and Ulster phrases, so I really kind of mix my experience up a bit. But I don't think that I am a very high standard. I think that I fit in easy enough into all conversations that I come across now. I'm not stuck, but I am not a very high level to command the conversation.

R: What do you mean by your Irish from school?
P: I think it would have been Munster and Connaught Irish that we would have learned in school, but I find myself using bits of Donegal dialect more. A simple example is that we used to always say "Conas atá tú?" (southern form of 'How are you?'), but I can't help myself. I always say "Cad é mar atá tú?" (northern form of 'How are you?'), and I say "Go raibh maith [maij] agat" instead of "Go raibh maith [ma] agat" (northern and southern pronunciations of *maith*. Interestingly she uses the southern form [rev] in both cases.) It is just little sounds. It's where I've practiced my Irish has been in Donegal. I think that's why I go to speak it like that a lot of the time.

R: *What, in your opinion, is the relevance of the type of Irish learners speak for the future of the language?*
P: I think it is positive that more people are speaking the language. It's a pity that there aren't more native people [sic] speaking it, but if a language isn't spoken it is going to be dead. So if there are more people speaking it has a stronger chance of it staying alive. I think there is a huge interest in looking away from a standard among a lot of the people I would speak with. They learn a standard in school or in a course and then as they progress within themselves, they generally want to look outside what a standard is and look at things that didn't make it into the textbooks. I think if you've got a few people who've got that kind of knowledge and they can impart that and teach that, hopefully it won't get lost down through the generations.

R: *Do these people tend to focus on one specific dialect or are they interested in all 'non-standard' dialects?*
P: Some people I know are very specific because they get involved in a dialect from where they grew up or something like that. And then I know other people who are generally interested and I think I'd put myself in the generally interested category

because, coming from Dublin, there isn't a native Gaeltacht area for me to cling to in the city as such, so I have a broader view point ... I don't feel like I'm tied to one section of the country.

R: *Do you speak a particular dialect of Irish?*
P: I don't know. It's a real mixture that I've picked up over the years. Because when you're doing a course you meet different people from different parts of the country and different parts of the world and you just fall into a habit of swapping phrases in conversation. I think you do that in English as well, in any language. You kind of imitate what you're listening to and you repeat it back. So I think I've got a real mix at the moment.

P: But there are a few of us who were in the Glen (Gleann Cholm Cille) together and who are based in Dublin and we try to get together to practice our Irish and we always wind up using Donegal Irish because that is where we met. (N.B. This was said later in the interview but relevant here.)

R: *Is it common among learners of Irish, that they have a mixture?*
P: I'd say it's common among people from Dublin that I know of. It seems to be more prevalent because, like I said, we don't have a specific (Gaeltacht) area. But I know people from other parts of the country, and they're much more ... they've learned what they've learned and they kind of want to stick with that. Even though they'll still have conversations with other people, they'll still use their way of saying it to explain something to you and they won't ... if you don't get it the first time, they'll say it 3 or 4 times. So I think if you've grown up near a Gaeltacht area you probably going to be tied more to using that dialect. If you're further away you're a bit freer.

R: *Would you like to acquire native-like fluency?*
P: Yes, definitely. I don't know if it's possible, but I'd like it.

R: *Does it make any difference to you if the teacher is a native speaker or not?*
P: Not particularly. Not so far, but I have benefitted more from teachers that I've had ... I haven't had a preference going in where they come from, as long as they got a good standard to teach, but I think I've probably gained the most from the people who actually were from a native Irish speaking environment.
What about the materials?

R: *Does it make any difference what type of Irish your teacher speaks or if they have a strong dialect?*

P: No, it doesn't. If anything, I kind of want to come across people like that because you learn more from it and you can get more out of it. Because if you don't understand it, then you're going to have to figure it out.

R: *Do you find some dialects harder to understand than others?*

P: No, not really. But I haven't had that much face to face experience with people in Kerry or Galway and that, so I might find trouble [sic]. But listening to it on a tape or something, I generally don't have any issues.

R: *Do you get a chance to use your Irish outside of the classroom?*

P: I use it every day.

R: *Who do you speak to most?*

P: The children I look after at my job. I speak Irish to them a lot. Ant at home when I am on the computer, I'm always messaging people and nine times out ten it's through Irish. Or maybe a mixture of Irish and English, depending on their level.

R: *What, in your experience is the significance of learning Irish in the Gaeltacht?*

P: Well, immersion into anything is a good test to see whether you really enjoy it and whether you get anything out of it. It's fine going to an evening class and sitting down and having a cup of tea and a biscuit and talking about the weather, but when you're with people for a whole week and you end up find out so much about people and you suddenly realize that confidence comes about halfway through the week that you didn't realize that you could actually speak to this many people. And like that, outside of your individual class, there'd be other classes and you end up talking with people on a higher level, people who speak seven or eight languages and you suddenly realize that there are so many facets, so many levels within learning a language. It just gives you a different perspective on learning a language ... to go to an environment, not where you HAVE to speak, but where you're encouraged to use every little word you have to get your meaning across.

R: *Do you have any preference for particular Gaeltacht regions to do a course?*

P: As I said, in secondary school I'd been to one in Donegal and that was purely because we got some leaflets through the school ... I begged my parents and a group of the girls went. And then the second time I got the chance to go, when I was older, like that leaflets were handed to us in the class and because I had been to

Donegal before, I thought "oh, it won't be that bad", and other people wanted to go and we kind of went as a team ... we'd support each other. And once we got there, between the landscape and the language, the *craic* (fun) and the *ceol* (music), it was just a really good environment to learn in.

Now that I have been there a few times, we (friends) sit down and decide "when are we going to Donegal?" it's because we've developed a bit of a preference for some of the types of music, some of the characters you get up there (laughs). But like I said, I would like to spend time in other areas as well. But Donegal as a county seems to pull me there anyway. The landscape up there is just fabulous.

R: *Do you feel like you identify with Donegal people or Donegal Irish on any level?*
P: My mom reckons I must have lived there in a past life (laughs) or that I'm going to end up retiring up there. I don't know, when I talk to anybody from Donegal I always have a really easy going time and connect to people really well and built a lot of good friendships with people from Donegal. I think it is just an attitude of being laid back and I have a bit of experience of that in a couple of other places, but Donegal is strong for that and I just seem to agree with them.

R: *Do you ever go to the Gaeltacht on non-pedagogical trips?*
P: I would have spent a bit time in Ring (Co. Waterford) as a kid. My dad's friend lived down there ... just a few days in the summer time ... going into the shop and asking for a bag of ten penny sweets.

R: *In Irish?*
P: Just about. I remember feeling really embarrassed in the shop that I was going to say something wrong. I was really unsure of how to go about asking for something so small because we just did speak Irish in school.

R: *Do you feel like you take on a different persona when you speak different languages?*
P: My mother kind of commented on that about a year after I got stuck into the language. She said that she could see a lot of me when I was younger kind of coming back. I suppose I got a bit serious when I was at college (laughs) and she said my attitudes were much more positive and everything was about having fun, all of a sudden, instead of paying a bill. Because I suppose the emphasis ... suddenly there was a new outlet, new people, new social life and experiences. Yeah I think it does ... once the confidence comes, it's a bit like when you are at school and you

used to get a gold star or you won the little trophy at the end of the week and you took it home and you were chuffed with yourself. So, I think that kind of kicks in.

R: *Do you feel more confident when you are speaking Irish?*
P: I think I do, because I'm more sure of myself if I'm saying things in Irish ... maybe because I am at the at intermediate level ... if I say something I'm going to mean it. In English, a lot of the time, you feel like you're making excuses ... I think I definitely speak differently. Yeah.

R: *Do you watch TG4 or listen to Raidió na Gaeltachta in order to connect up with particular group or community of Irish speakers?*
P: No.

Appendix 3.6
Sample interview transcript 3
Participant 12

Researcher: *Could you tell me about your background and how you started learning Irish?*
Participant: From Dublin, and it is relevant that both my parents were English, so there was no Irish at home. But, they would have been very keen, so we were packed off to the Gaeltacht at 10. So I went to Irish college (summer camp) in Donegal when I was 10.

I remember coming back from the Gaeltacht in *Tír Chonaill* (Donegal) and some of the words were different from those that I had learned at school and I used to take great pleasure in throwing the cat among the pigeons. So then a year later I went off to Connemara for a term from Easter to summer, so it was just normal school with a family. I enjoyed that immensely I have to say.

I was working in Galway a few years back and occasionally you'd get someone in from Arranmore (a Gaeltacht island community, *Inis Mór* in Galway) or *Inis Meáin* (a Gaeltacht island community in Galway), and it amazed me that there were still these old guys who had NO English and it actually disturbed me that I couldn't converse with them because the Irish I had learned at school bore no relationship to my job, which was "do you have a pain in your belly? Are you sick? Do you have a cough?" And then I moved back to Dublin and I never spoke Irish again until last year when I decided to do a course.

R: *What made you come back to do the Irish course last year?*
P: Nothing else to do. My home family circumstances are such that I need to get out once a week ... I look after my mother at home. So, the year before I had done sign language. That feel through because they became very politicized ... "you have to go to college to do sign language, no casual sign language courses anymore." So I needed something that I could do in an evening and that I'd be interested in. And I thought, "I'll do an Irish class".

I have to say that I'd always listen to the news in Irish. It never held any difficulty for me. Whereas I mightn't converse in Irish, if there was a programme in Irish on TV I'd watch it ... and the subtitles always annoy me. I never had any difficulty with it but I had no occasion to speak Irish. Something came up ... and I was appalled at my lack

of communicative skills. I thought, "I should be able to do this". I used to be able to converse freely.

R: *What goals, short or long-term, do you have in relation to learning Irish?*
P: I'm a complete dilettante. This summer I'm going back to do French conversation. I went to Italy and did a course in Italian. I just find it interesting

I suppose my goal would be to feel confident to go into an Irish (speaking) environment and not feel a blundering idiot ... that I wouldn't be stumbling.

R: *Do you place any importance on speaking a particular kind of Irish, i.e. dialect?*
P: I would like to think, although I don't think I do, that I have a dialect that I would have learned in Connemara. But of course, what I meet, you know radio, TV, there's such a conglomeration that I am sure that it's not true to anything. I'm sure it is just bland.

R: *How would you compare your own Irish to other learners or native speakers, say on a continuum between native speaker and learner?*
P: In terms of accent, I'd by quite happy that I am nearer to the native than to the learner. I think vocabulary is something that I would have forgotten, but that wouldn't be insuperable.

R: *What, in your opinion, is the relevance of the type of Irish learners speak for the future of the language?*
P: I think there are two elements. It distresses me that native speakers have diminished in number, but there is an inevitability about it in globalization, that is just the way it is. But that globalization may be advantageous in that it's now open to other people ... people with no baggage are learning Irish because of a desire to do so. Well, it is sort of a double edged sword. The globalization has certainly diminished any purity that's there. But the very fact that there are non-native learners it may be the only way that the language is going to survive.

There are a few non-Irish people in the class and I think they have better accents in that they have embraced an Irish accent rather than Dublin accented Irish.

R: *In there any particular type of Irish you like?*
P: I would prefer Connemara Irish. I find Donegal Irish difficult ... more difficult.

R: *Why is it more difficult?*

P: I don't think there is the same differentiation between accented and non-accented vowels ... a certain flatness there. The '*bh*'s all merge into the '*mh*'s. The stresses are different. There are some vocabulary differences as well, but you can pick them up in context.

R: *Would you like to be as fluent as a native speaker?*

P: Oh yeah. ... as I would in any language.

R: *Does it make any difference what type of Irish your teacher speaks or if they have a strong dialect?*

P: Not particularly. I don't think at this stage the accent or dialect has a huge impact, whereas if I were starting from scratch any inconsistency makes it difficult.

R: *Does it make any difference whether or not the teacher is a native speaker of Irish?*

P: Yes. I think so. I would feel far more confident in what I would glean from the class.

R: *Do you get a chance to use your Irish outside of the classroom and outside of work?*

P: Very little.

R: *Who do you speak Irish with most?*

P: There are a few people in work and I know they're from Gaeltacht regions and I would make the effort to say "Hello. How are you getting on?" Just casual. No more than that.

R: *Would you like to have opportunities to use Irish?*

P: I would. I think to be honest, if I was more determined ... I'm not really ... I would be able to commence a conversation in Irish and I would get people to respond. But not in my day to day practice, I just don't.

R: *Do you watch or listen to Irish programming in order to connect up with the language when you don't have opportunities to speak to people?*

P: I wouldn't use it purposely, but I do listen on a daily basis to the *nuacht* (news). Purely because that is the way it is. When I turn on the radio the news is on, but it's not for that purpose.

R: *Have you ever attended any Gaeltacht courses?*
P: No. I would like to but I am not in a position to do so.

R: *Do you ever go to the Gaeltacht on non-pedagogical trips?*
P: No.

R: *Do you feel like you take on a different persona when you speak different languages?*
P: I think it's actually quite valid. Just the other day we were talking about a colleague who his mother is Italian and he goes to Italy every summer with his children, and we were joking that whenever he mentions Italy his whole stance and he shrugs his shoulders and gesticulates in a totally different fashion than when he speaks English in its normal state. I think people do change and I think I do as well whether it's when I'm speaking French or speaking in Irish I make a conscious effort to speak in a certain way. I suppose it's because it isn't natural to me.

R: *Do you feel the same or different when you are speaking Irish, as opposed to English, or any other language?*
P: Apart from feeling that it's an accomplishment, I don't really feel different.

R: *Do you feel more confident or outgoing?*
P: I'd probably feel a bit more confident because I'm making an effort.

R: *Do you feel like you are part of a particular group or community of Irish speakers when you're speaking Irish?*
P: The only group I speak to in reality is my class group.

R: *Do you identity with them as a group?*
P: In a way I think I would identify with a group as LEARNERS, but whether that's to do with learning Irish, no, no, no. I mean if I were learning bridge, you'd be identifying with group with a particular aim rather than the inherent Irishness of the group.

Appendix 3.7
Sample interview transcript 4
Participant 16

Researcher: *Could you tell me about your background and how you started learning Irish?*
Participant: I'm from South Derry. I went to college in South Armagh where I did A Level Irish. I then studied in Oxford. Worked then in the European Commission in Brussels and had French as an everyday work language. While there I picked up some workable German and some workable Spanish. There I became aware of people with strong linguistic abilities, people with three of four languages who could speak it, so it was quite different than the context in Ireland.

My wife, who is Irish, is quite a keen Irish student and has a positive attitude towards the language.

I returned to Ireland about 15 years ago. I hadn't practised Irish since college (secondary school), since the age of 18. About 2/3 years ago I decided to brush it up again.

My father was positive minded about the language, but was not a fluent speaker.

We had three very good teachers while at school. They were all very good teachers and very enthusiastic, so my experience of learning Irish is quite different from the norm in the South, where my own kids found Irish very grammatical and difficult.

I found the social and sexual experience of being in the Gaeltacht really fun and I really enjoyed those three summers in the Gaeltacht. I bonded with the areas that I went to. So my experience was quite positive.

R: *What made you come back to do the Irish course last year?*
P: It's very much unfinished business. It's something I quite liked; I had a positive attitude towards. I would probably consider myself a nationalist. However, there was very little opportunity or stimulus to practise Irish either when I was studying in England or when I was in Brussels. In Brussels there were two Irish officials who practised Irish; I didn't. I wasn't confident enough in my Irish.

R: *What goals, short or long-term, do you have in relation to learning Irish?*
P: Yeah, I have set goals. I'd like to be able to read Irish without too much difficulty. I mean I know I need a dictionary but I's like to, for example there's an Irish language newspaper called *Gaelscéal*, I'd like to be able to glance through that fairly quickly and get the gist of what's being said.

I quite enjoy the programmes on TG4, but I know that's quite lazy because if they took away the subtitles I'd be lost.

I ... THINK I'd like to be able to conduct conversations in Irish with people, but I am a bit inhibited by the fact that it is my language; it's probably not the language of the person I'm talking to, so it's a slightly artificial exercise and it's a bit unjustified. I mean if I met an Italian and the only language we had in common was French, I could understand that, but the effort here ... I'm not convinced about that. At the same time, I went to Oideas Gael and did the Siúl Sléibhe (Hill Walking) course which we enjoyed mightily and we both quite enjoyed having conversations in Irish with people who were there, but that was a particular context, you were in the Gaeltacht, you were there with people, no one was overhearing you talking bad Irish. You were with people who were enthusiastic about it, so I quiet enjoyed that experience and I would like to get greater fluency than I have, because I don't have fluency at all.

R: *Do you place any importance on speaking a particular kind of Irish, i.e. dialect?*
P: Not really. I mean we learned Ulster Irish and the only Gaeltachts I've been to have been in Donegal, so I feel very natural about that, but I don't have a very high sensitivity to different dialects. You'll probably read my answers (the speaker evaluation exercise) that I didn't spot where the people were from.

For me, Ulster Irish is the easiest one to learn, but if I got into a situation where I inherited land in Kerry and I was able to practise Munster Irish, I'd be quite happy with that.

R: *How would you compare your own Irish to other learners or native speakers, say on a continuum between native speaker and learner?*
P: Well, I have A Level Irish of 30 or 40 years ago. When I went to Oideas Gael, they put me in a class, of 1 to 5, they put me in 4 ... close to the top. I'm doing evening

courses in Gaelchultúr and I'm in the upper middle class, if you like. Where do I put myself? I put myself a quiet a rusty conversationalist. So, average.

***R:** What, in your opinion, is the relevance of the type of Irish learners speak for the future of the language?*
P: Part of me believes that the language can only be transmitted by native speakers, on the other hand I was quite impressed by the people I met in Oideas Gael, in Glencolmcille, in that they seem to have quite good fluency and naturalness in Irish and clearly were not native speakers. So the gap can be bridged. I have one or two friends who were at school with me and married native speakers and whose family life is in Irish, so I'm aware that is can be done. I'm also aware that Irish has become more attractive to adults to learn with the range of approaches and techniques being used.

***R:** Differences between Irish of learners and native speakers?*
P: I'm not sure I can discriminate much between different categories of speakers, but I just think that native speakers have a much better accent and they pronounce the words in a way that non-native speakers never manage to do. Their cadence and their rhythm is something that non-native speakers find it very difficult to pick up on.

***R:** Would you like to be as fluent as a native speaker?*
P: Yeah, I'd like to sound as much like a native as I could ... ideally, yeah. I don't see any other ideal state to aim for.

***R:** Is there a particular accent or dialect of Irish you like more than others?*
P: Just an affection for Ulster Irish, but that's force of habit. I mean I don't feel that it's more beautiful or superior, it's just the one I feel most natural listening to or expressing in.

***R:** Does it make any difference what dialect your teacher speaks?*
P: Not really. Not at my level.

***R:** Is it important to you whether or not teacher is a native speaker of Irish?*
P: I've little experience of that. No, it's not a big deal for me.

***R:** Do you get a chance to use your Irish outside of the classroom and outside of work?*

P: The only opportunity I had was in Oideas Gael. I'm not in any social group that speaks Irish, although one of my thoughts for this year would be to join a ... there's a group of hill climbers who speak Irish, *Na Cnocadóirí* (The Hill Climbers) ... I was thinking I might join them. I'd be quite open to that. I mean if I could get the time or if a friend of mine was a member, I'd be quite happy to do that.

R: *Do you watch or listen to Irish programming in order to connect up with the language when you don't have opportunities to speak to people?*
P: Yeah I do. I always check what's on TG4. Occasionally, I try and watch the news to improve my Irish, so that I can get the vocabulary and a fair idea of what it's about. I try, with very little success, to read Gaelscéal. I want to know what's going on in the world of Irish. [...] I kind want to be informed about that. It's a subpart of Irish life that I'd like to be knowledgeable about.

R: *You recently attended a course in the Gaeltacht, was there any reason you chose that Gaeltacht area?*
P: No. It was really a toss of the coin. It was a choice between Oideas Gael and the other one in Kerry (Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne). The main reason I chose Oideas Gael is that it seemed to have a very good reputation and I knew some other people who had been to it.

R: *Have you ever gone to the Gaeltacht when you weren't doing a course?*
P: Yeah. I have spent holidays in Dingle. I've spent holidays in Connemara ... a week or two at a time with the family.

R: *Did you use Irish?*
P: No. I tried to listen in the pubs to see if people were talking in Irish, but no, I didn't.

R: *Do you feel like you take on a different persona when you speak different languages?*
P: I've reasonable experience of this because speaking French in Belgium and I feel that when I'm speaking another language I come across deader, much less lively. I use safe formulations, repetitive formulations. I follow cues from what other people are saying. I'm much less in control of the conversation. So I feel that I'm maybe only projecting 70% of what I can project. I'm sure it's the same in Irish. It's less probably. More so because my Irish is not as good as my French was. So I just feel less of a person. I don't feel more poetic or more thoroughgoing (?#) or anything. I just feel diminished slightly.

R: *Do you feel like you are part of a particular group or community of Irish speakers when you're speaking Irish?*

P: I feel as if I am doing something socially useful ... Irish as a useful part of the greater Irish consciousness.

Appendix 3.8
Sample interview transcript 5
Participant 17

Researcher: *Could you tell me about your background and how you started learning Irish?*
Participant: I'm from Carrickmacross in Co. Monaghan. I learned Irish at school to start with. My primary school teachers were, in my memory, excellent and there was a lot of natural Irish throughout the school. I remember a lot of teachers spoke Irish to each other. And then when I went to secondary school I had an excellent secondary school teacher all the way through secondary school which I think had a very positive influence on my interest in Irish.

My mom was very supportive and so spent quite a few summers in the Gaeltacht.

I went back to the Gaeltacht twice or three times as an adult.

I had no exposure to Irish outside the school.

R: *What brought you back to Irish?*
P: I loved Irish as school, but there was no exposure so there was never a chance to practise. Then you sort of lose it and you think you can't do it anymore. I'm a primary school teacher. I was living in north of Ireland for 10 years so I definitely never spoke one word of Irish but then I decided to get my Irish qualification (An Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge, S.C.G.) in case I ever wanted to return home. So through studying Irish, I was doing my S.C.G. exam for my teaching qualification, and all the classes were in the south of Ireland, so I thought if I sat down for six hours and did it myself I could do it because I know that I had good enough Irish at the time, so I just sat with my dictionary and I watched TG4 and I listened to the radio in the car and when I was doing that I just really enjoyed it and that's what made me think "oh, I quite like this. I'd like to get back into Irish", but also it was for part of my job as well that I need to have Irish ... to an extent. But it is avoidable in my job as well, if I wasn't interested in it.

R: *What goals, short or long-term, do you have in relation to learning Irish?*
P: Not really. The financial aspect of learning Irish is something that holds me back, because the only place I can learn Irish is in the Gaeltacht and there is a financial commitment there that not everyone has, so no, I don't have any goals.

R: *Do you place any importance on speaking a particular kind of Irish, i.e. dialect?*
P: It's not that I think it's so important. I suppose I assume that I speak Ulster/Connaught Irish. I've had a mixture of teachers from both Ulster and Connaught. I just, I suppose, avoid Munster Irish, but I don't know that I pay much attention when I read articles.

R: *How would you compare your own Irish to other learners or native speakers, say on a continuum between native speaker and learner?*
P: A lot of my friends who went to school with me, who learned Irish would say that they haven't a word of Irish now ... those people who are not in the educational system would say they can't remember a thing. Every so often, it amuses them to think that they do remember any of it. But as regards a native speaker I wouldn't say that I'm anywhere near anybody native ... absolutely not. I suppose I'm maybe halfway between the two.

R: *Is the type of Irish learners speak important for the future of the language?*
P: Oh definitely, even in the Gaeltacht areas the younger generations don't seem to carry it on the way the older ones do. So their proficiency isn't as good and it's being diluted all the time, isn't it? So I think it's going to have a big impact on Irish.

R: *What are some of the differences between Irish of learners and native speakers?*
P: I think confidence is the main issue.

R: *Would you like to be as fluent as a native speaker?*
P: I'd love to.

R: *Is there a particular accent or dialect of Irish you like more than others?*
P: I prefer the Donegal Irish, but any summer I've ever spent in the Gaeltacht has been in Donegal, which is probably linked to happy memories as well as the actual Irish.

R: *Does it make any difference what dialect your teacher speaks?*
P: I honestly haven't had enough exposure to Munster Irish to make a call. So maybe that's avoidance on my part. I don't know that it consciously was. I'd probably have to sit with somebody from Munster and have a lengthy conversation to know if I could cope with it or not. I definitely wouldn't feel like I wouldn't like to be exposed. I'd like to have more knowledge of all the provinces, but I don't think that I have.

R: *Is it important to you whether or not teacher is a native speaker of Irish?*
P: No, it's not important, so long as I still have something to learn from somebody. I'm still happy to learn from that person.

R: *Do you get a chance to use your Irish outside of the classroom and outside of work?*
P: No. Not unless I visit the Gaeltacht. I do have one fluent friend; I do have a sister who would be on a par with me with Irish and we choose not to speak it I suppose. But part of it is just that it's not natural for me to speak Irish with them.

R: *Would you like to have opportunities to speak to native speakers?*
P: No. I don't think so. Well, native speakers who are patient and don't mind the fact that you're not fluent and appreciate the fact that you're making an effort definitely wouldn't bother me. Anybody who didn't have patience or understanding would bother me. And definitely I think that learners together help each other out and make discoveries together and have a bit of fun as well.

R: *Do you watch or listen to Irish programming in order to connect up with the language when you don't have opportunities to speak to people?*
P: I do, a little bit. Not loads because with TG4 I'm distracted by the fact that there are words in English and I can't help but read the subtitles all the time. Sometimes (said hesitantly) I'd listen to the radio, but not really. Not loads. It's more to do with the choice of music on Raidió na Gaeltachta. I find that I'd prefer other stations for what comes in between the speech.

R: *You recently attended a Gaeltacht course. Was there any reason you chose that Gaeltacht?*
P: I think really whenever I was doing the SCG, there were only certain colleges that had recognized SCG courses and Gleann Cholm Cille (Oideas Gael) and actually, this is a ridiculous reason but, it was because in Gleann Cholm Cille you could do self catering accommodation and as an adult, I didn't want to go into a dormitory or a *bean an tí* (a term used to refer to a Bed-and-Breakfast style accommodation in the Gaeltacht, literally 'house wife'). And then, I went back there because I loved it. The area itself is fabulous and it's just refreshing.

R: *Have you ever gone to the Gaeltacht when you weren't doing a course?*
P: No. Never.

R: *Do you feel like you take on a different persona when you speak different languages?*

P: I don't intend to act differently, but I think that the limitations of my Irish probably make me not be exactly who I am in English because I just don't have the natural flow to be exactly the same person. Not on purpose, but I am probably held back from being 100% me in Irish.

R: *Do you feel the same or different when you are speaking Irish, as opposed to English, or any other language?*

P: Yeah. I feel different because I have to think constantly before I speak or I suppose a lot of times when I speak Irish I have been given something to discuss. It's maybe not always natural conversation.

R: *Do you feel like you are part of a particular group or community of Irish speakers when you're speaking Irish?*

P: Yeah I suppose you are. I've never really considered it, but I suppose you are. Definitely in the Gaeltacht you feel part of a group if you're part of a class and you are speaking Irish and you get to know each other or you discuss things. You definitely feel part of a group.

R: *Do you think you represent any group when you're speaking Irish?*

P: No. I don't think I have a strong enough Irish fluency to represent anything with my Irish, unfortunately.

Appendix 3.9
Sample interview transcript 6
Participant 18

Researcher: *Could you tell me about your background and how you started learning Irish?*

Participant: I'm from Dublin. I studied French and Irish for leaving cert. I wouldn't have studied any other language at all. I would have been terrified doing my LC.

I went to Irish college in Corca Dhuibhne in at the end of Transition Year (fourth year of secondary school) and that changed my feelings about the language. I suppose I associated it with this beautiful place, having lots of fun and being away from my parents for three weeks. I got interested in Irish after that.

R: *What brought you back to Irish?*

P: When I was doing my PhD fulltime in UCD I would have done the *Bord na Gaeilge* classes because they were affordable, being free! I suppose it was always something that I meant to go back to.

Last January I wound up in a *sean-nós* dancing workshop that was in Irish and it was really the first time I had done anything socially through Irish and seen people just talking Irish to each other just as a normal language and something sort of clicked and I thought "I want to do that" and I signed up for classes in *Conradh na Gaeilge* like the next day.

R: *What goals, short or long-term, do you have in relation to learning Irish?*

P: Yeah. So I did the TEG B1 exam last April.

R: *Do you place any importance on speaking a particular kind of Irish, i.e. dialect?*

P: As a computer scientist I hate being wrong. So that's why I'm doing the Cúrsa Cruinnis (Accuracy course, i.e. grammar). Even if I was writing an email in English, I'd hate if there were mistakes in it and I'd be like that about my Irish as well.

With regards to dialect, I hope in the future there will be a Dublin *canúint* (dialect). Like people with native speaker levels of proficiency with a Dublin accent. Because at the moment I nearly feel like if someone has a Donegal Irish or they have a Connemara /Galway accent, like that's real Irish. And somebody who is speaking grammatically perfect Irish but with a Dublin accent then that's Trinity College Irish,

you know what I mean? You hear this kind of "ah, I don't like talking to people with that Trinity Irish". I know English people who have adopted a thick Galway accent for speaking Irish and I just not sure about it.

R: *How would you compare your own Irish to other learners or native speakers?*
P: I suppose, because I learned my own Irish in school, that it's real *caighdeán* (standard) Irish, that it's real Dublin Irish, But I think that shouldn't be looked down upon.

R: *Is the type of Irish learners speak important for the future of the language?*
P: I suppose even as a learner I notice there are a lot of people floating around learning Irish for the last 15 years and they don't put any value on grammatical accuracy or anything like that at all, and I think that would be a real loss if that became the main type of Irish that was spoken. I think that is the main problem. Some people might not be setting themselves very high goals, so if they can kind of muddle through and people kind of know what they're talking about that that's kind of good enough, and I feel like a lot would be lost if that ... that's certainly not what I want to do. I just want to have good Irish that is accurate.

R: *Would you like to be as fluent as a native speaker?*
P: Yeah, absolutely, but I wouldn't want to feel like I have to put on a Donegal accent or something. I'd like to be able to do that with my Dublin accent. I'm from Dublin.

R: *Is there a particular accent or dialect of Irish you like more than others?*
P: No. I don't think so.

I used to find Munster Irish a lot easier to understand and Donegal Irish very difficult. So when I was in school, I would have found Donegal Irish to be an impregnable fortress. When that bit came on in the Leaving Cert (aural examination) and you're like "ah, it's the Donegal one, just ...". I would find it very difficult to figure out what they were saying at all. But I spent a bit of time up in Oideas Gael and even after just a couple of weeks you can kind tune into it and it gets much easier. But at the moment I listen to *Raidió na Gaeltachta* a lot and I can just switch between them. I really not very good distinguishing, but I can understand them all pretty well now.

R: *Does it make any difference what dialect your teacher speaks?*
P: No. Because if I find the accent difficult, it's only going to be a help to get used to the accent and if it's one I find easy, then that's great.

R: *Is it important to you whether or not teacher is a native speaker of Irish?*
P: No. Why would it matter? If I was to think that somebody can only have great Irish if they're a native speaker, doesn't that undermine my own attempts to learn the language? To me that would be sad.

R: *Do you get a chance to use your Irish outside of the classroom and outside of work?*
P: Yeah, but I made a big effort to find those opportunities.

R: *Who would you speak Irish to most?*
P: I'm a civil servant so I've tracked down a couple of *Gaeilgeoirí* (Irish speakers) on my floor at work, so we have a bit of a chat a couple of times a week. And I go to the *Ionad Buail Isteach* (The Drop In Centre) on Fridays at lunch time in Temple Bar (an area in Dublin city centre). And there's a few of us who met up in Oideas Gael and we tend to meet up and go to see Rónán Ó Snodaigh (an Irish language/traditional musician) in *Conradh na Gaeilge* and have a bit of a chat.

But again you have to go out looking for those opportunities. It's not easy.

R: *Would you like to have opportunities to speak to native speakers or other learners?*
P: Yeah, absolutely.

R: *Are any of the people you speak to regularly native speakers?*
P: Yeah, some of them in the *Ionad Buail Isteach* would be.

R: Are the others fluent?
P: Yeah.

R: *Do you watch or listen to Irish programming in order to connect up with the language when you don't have opportunities to speak to people?*
P: Yeah, I do. I'm doing a pretend total immersion thing in Dublin for myself as much as I can. So I pretty much only listen to *Raidió na Gaeltachta* and I'm only reading books in Irish at the moment.

Another thing, what's driving me mad at the moment is that you can't turn off the subtitles so if I close my eyes I'll translate in my head and I understand and I'm

hearing what they're saying. But if I have my eyes open, I can't stop myself from reading the subtitles. It's very frustrating as well when you realize that what the subtitles are saying is different.

R: *You recently attended a Gaeltacht course. Was there any reason you chose that Gaeltacht?*

P: I went to Oideas Gael in Glencolmcille because it was the cheapest and because when I was doing the classes in Conradh na Gaeilge, I'd been talking to people who had been there and they said it was all great fun. And when you're learning Irish you keep meeting girls, probably my age, who want to go into teaching and there's kind of one problem with that, they're not really interested in the language. It's kind of utilitarian and it's not really a basis to make friends with them. And a lot of the people who had done the three weeks in the Gaeltacht because they had to (teachers in training) and hated it, they all seem to have gone to Galway somehow, and that kind of put me off going in that direction.

R: *Have you ever gone to the Gaeltacht when you weren't doing a course?*

P: No.

R: *Do you feel like you take on a different persona when you speak different languages?*

P: I've found that people ask more direct questions in Irish. Maybe it's because a lot of the people I'd speak to, we'd all be learning and maybe we haven't got the equipment to put out questions together is quite so finely worded a way.

R: *Do you feel the same or different when you are speaking Irish, as opposed to English, or any other language?*

P: I suppose I'm happy I'm getting the opportunity to learn Irish.

R: *Do you feel like you are part of a particular group or community of Irish speakers when you're speaking Irish?*

P: Not particularly, because if you asked me what that group or community be, I wouldn't be able to define it. The people who speak Irish are so diverse and so few of them would have ever been to any of the place I go to. There are an awful lot of fluent Irish speakers in the city who would have no contact with any of the Irish language organizations or anything like that.

Appendix 3.10
Glossary of Irish terms and placenames used in interviews

Blas: accent, as opposed to *canúint*

Caighdeán: standard

Caighdeán Oifigiúil: Official Standard

Canúint: dialect

Cois Fharraige: a coastal Gaeltacht region west of Galway city. The local variety of Irish considered to be a sub-dialect area of Connemara Irish

Conradh na Gaeilge: The Gaelic League

Corca Dhuibhne: The West Kerry peninsula

Dún Chaoin: a Gaeltacht village in Kerry

Gaelcholáiste / Gaelcholáistí: Irish medium secondary school, singular / plural

Gaelscoil / Gaelscoileanna: Irish medium primary school, singular / plural

Gaeltacht: an Irish speaking community or region, sometimes used as a collective for all such communities. The term is often used with the plural marker -s when speaking in English

Inis Meáin: the middle island of the Aran Islands

Inis Mór: the largest of the Aran Islands

Oiriúnú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (O.C.G.): a qualification exam for primary school teachers who were trained outside of the Republic of Ireland

Raidió na Gaeltachta: the Irish language radio service of the public service broadcaster Raidió Teilifís Éireann

Raidió na Life: A Dublin based Irish language radio station

Ros Muc: a Gaeltacht village in Connemara

Ros na Rún: An Irish language soap opera

Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (S.C.G.): a qualification exam for primary school teachers who were trained outside of the Republic of Ireland

Séimhiú: lenition, a grammatical term denoting an initial mutation in consonants. In some cases, either the *urú* or the *séimhiú* may be employed in the same construction depending on dialect norms

Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG): The European Irish Language Certificate

TG4: the Irish language television station

Tír Chonaill: Donegal

TnaG (Teilifís na Gaeilge): now TG4, the Irish language television station

Urú: eclipsis, a grammatical term denoting an initial mutation in an Irish word. In some cases, either the *urú* or the *séimhiú* may be employed in the same construction depending on dialect norms

Appendix 3.11
Glossary of English terms and placenames used in interviews

Arranmore: the largest of the Aran Islands: Árainn mhór, also called Inis Mór

Aran Islands: three Gaeltacht islands off the coast of Galway: Na hOileáin Árann

Ballyferriter: a Gaeltacht village in West Kerry: Baile an Fheirtéaraigh

Ballyvourney: a Gaeltacht village in West Cork, Baile Bhuirne

Barna: a Gaeltacht village in Galway: Bearna

Carna: a Gaeltacht village in Galway: Carna

Carraroe: a Gaeltacht village in Connemara, Galway: An Cheathrú Rua

Connemara: a Gaeltacht region in the West of County Galway: Conamara

Connaught: the western province of Ireland: Cúige Chonnacht

Falcarragh: a Gaeltacht village in Donegal: An Fál Carrach

Glencolmcille: a Gaeltacht village in South West Donegal: Gleann Cholm Cille, sometimes referred to as Glen

Leaving Certificate: commonly referred to as the 'Leaving Cert' is the final examination in the Irish secondary school system

Leinster: the southern province of Ireland: Cúige Laighean

Munster: the southern province of Ireland: Cúige Mumhan

Ranafast: a Donegal Gaeltacht village: Rinn na Feirste

Ring: a Gaeltacht village in Waterford: An Rinn

Spiddal: a Gaeltacht village in Galway: An Spidéal

UCD: University College Dublin

Ulster: the northern province of Ireland: Cúige Uladh

Ventry: a Gaeltacht village in Kerry: Fionntrá