1   The Emergence of the New Speaker Phenomenon

Introduction

This volume is an exercise in interrogation which attempts to answer the question of whether there is a genuine and sustainable sociolinguistic policy dimension to the new speaker phenomenon. The question would seem to be open to empirical verification by the mustering of observational facts. So many specialists discuss new speakers as part of their repertoire that it must be a significant element in our evolving societal landscape. Be that as it may, does it necessarily follow that such discussions and analyses feed into our official language policies, especially those concerned with minority language communities? That is the question I seek to answer.

Let us start with a preliminary definition of the new speaker concept. Most interpreters identify new speakers as those who relate to and make regular use of a language that is not their first language or the predominant language used within the household as they matured. This is meant to relate to a language they acquired outside of the home, often through the statutory education system or as adult learners. O'Rourke and Walsh (2020) urge us to remember the difference between a 'learner', someone only learning a target language in an educational setting, and a 'new speaker', someone who makes social and economic use of it in other non-institutional settings.

It is immediately evident that such a broad definition can mask a multitude of grades of identification, association and cognitive affiliation. In short it would seem at first sight to be a complex phenomenon and one not easily able to be categorised or manipulated in a consistent manner. The broad range of experiences covered by the new speaker phenomenon will thus be an intriguing subject to dissect and interpret.

In the absence of a single precise definition, together with other emerging debates, such as those on racial linguistics, translanguaging and the impact of the global pandemic, the emergence of the new speaker phenomenon is something of an enigma, a conundrum, almost a paradox. On the one hand there are signs that something unprecedented in scale and volume is happening as more people take on additional identities as a result of linguistic transitioning.

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Whether this movement is described in terms of producing super-diversity, hybridity, a melding or a melange of cultures, there is undoubtedly an increase in the range of identities with which we interact in daily life.

On the other hand, to call new speakers a fresh sociolinguistic category is to downplay the many immigration waves in history which peopled settler communities in the USA, Canada, Australia and Argentina, whose progeny matured to become new speakers of English, French or Spanish and who by the third generation had generally shifted their linguistic repertoire from their historic familial language to the language of their native soil. It also ignores the thousands of individuals who, as a result of betterment, economic deprivation or fears of genocide, were forced to quit their homeland, some of whom became stellar representatives of their adopted countries and whose origins could scarcely be detected, such was their mastery of the new language and culture to which they contributed. One need only think of personalities such as Isaiah Berlin, born in Riga in 1909 before moving to the UK in 1921, or André Previn (Andreas Ludwig Priwin), born in Berlin in 1929, whose family settled in Los Angeles in 1938.

It is said that history is a common ground, but it is also a battleground for language contact and conflict. The roots of current difficulties reach back centuries, as is the case in the conquest of Wales and Ireland by the proto-English state and the imposition of the English language and laws by force. The same may be said of Basque and Catalan as these languages and their associated social orders struggled with the imposition of rule from Madrid. Their leading role in Spanish industrialisation and wealth creation did not save them from a more authoritarian impress, made all the more unbearable by defeat in the Spanish Civil War (17 July 1936–1 April 1939) and the subsequent acts of suppression under the dictatorship of General Franco which lasted until his death on 20 November 1975. The transition to democracy, the establishment of seventeen Autonomous Communities under the 1978 Constitution together with the Statutes of Autonomy of the bilingual communities, heralded a new dawn. This new political framework has allowed for a remarkable recovery of self-worth, involving political divergence and the search for economic autarchy, if not always harmony.

However, the long shadow of history still falls on the not forgotten cleavages which are recast in contemporary times in the struggle for linguistic authority and national self-determination. Structural strains and animosities are fuelled by each new discovery of an atrocity unearthed in the archaeology of grievances!

For some, the recruitment and retainment of new speakers into their language rather than a rival one is a driving force that sustains extraordinary efforts which go way beyond rational thought and practice. It is part of the collective struggle for survival. The fact that most new speakers of a minority

language also by default have to learn the state's hegemonic language does not deter such enthusiasts, so long as an additional tongue and soul is added to the ledger sheet of the linguistic balance.

Yet describing new speakers as a single, unproblematic category also underplays the inherent complexity of the range of experiences summed together as the new phenomenon. Thus, the experiences of new speakers represent a continuum rather than a single category. The difficulty is in establishing the parameters of this spectrum, for the truth is that many new speakers are hiding in plain sight.

More disturbing still is the realisation that once an attempt is made to translate the needs, interests and aspirations of new speakers into an organised body of fact and action, the resultant policy recommendations can appear fatuous and incapable of being incorporated into mainstream language and educational strategies. Accordingly, the discerning person would abandon the category and seek more tangible, manageable issues. And yet, there is a challenge wrapped up in the phenomenon to be unpicked, rearticulated and refined into realisable policy proposals. My intention in writing this volume is to contribute to this process of understanding the parameters of this new phenomenon without judging in advance its pertinence to decision makers and policy formulation. In that sense it is a study in exploration. Despite the increased energies being expended in the development of new speaker studies, it is surely wise to be cautious, if not overly critical, of the potential which this paradigm holds, lest we promise too much and deliver too little.

We recognise that the new speaker is not a singular identity conferred by naming but rather a plural reality, spearheaded by a language not originally one's own. The academic use of the term refers to those who are fluent regular speakers of languages which were not the dominant language of their rearing in early childhood. The popular use may be less specific and is often used as a synonym for a learner because it would appear to have a less pejorative and more encouraging meaning.[1] This simple distinction in use makes it hard to interpret what precisely is being referred to in official documents and political statements. Does it refer to those who have made some sort of linguistic transition or simply learners who are seeking to gain an improved competence in a chosen language?

An abiding concern of those who work on the issue of new speakers is to construct a satisfactory working definition of the concept and the phenomena it seeks to describe. The definition adopted here refers to individuals who identify with and make regular use of a language that is not their first language. This is

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[1] See for example its use in Wales, where the term 'siaradwr newydd' is a popular term replacing 'dysgwr' as discussed by Dafydd Iwan on BBC Radio Cymru, Rhaglen Ifan Evans, 15 October 2020; www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/live:bbc_radio_cymru (accessed 15 October 2020).

meant to relate to a language they acquired outside of the home, often through the education system or as adult learners. This interpretation may not satisfy all, but it is a good approximation to cover the range of scenarios and situations within which the concepts and paradigms which undergird new speaker discussions may lie.

Rather than be preoccupied with precise definitions, some of the leading scholars in the field aver that despite the lack of definitional precision the concept itself has captured a momentum and a trajectory which is significant both in terms of the specific cases analysed and as an added value approach to language policy analysis.[2]

Soler and Darquennes (2019b) have demonstrated how the new speaker research feeds into a revised approach to language policy, especially in relation to the contribution of more discursive and ethnographically oriented perspectives (Barakos and Unger, 2016; Hornberger and Johnson, 2007; Johnson and Ricento, 2013). A distinction is made between the experience of new speakers in three settings: minority languages, migrant and transnational settings (O'Rourke and Pujolar, 2013). At one level, it is quite legitimate to include all these experiences as relevant to new speakers, but for policymakers such a general categorisation can appear daunting and in consequence may limit their scope of action, for it is hard to know where best to intervene in the many domains which pertain to their initiatives and programmes.

The cynic may reasonably ask why if the new speaker paradigm is little more than a nuanced extension of long-established descriptors, such as advanced language learners, L2 speakers and the like, there should be calls for a fresh appreciation of this phenomenon. Surely enough is known about language learning and socialisation! Accordingly, can we not simply transfer the narratives and pedagogical techniques from the experience of majoritarian languages, such as happens in the learning of Spanish, French and English, to minority language situations? Cannot the great weight of research and practice which has been accumulated in acquiring world languages be applied as best practice to inform developments in the minority new speaker work? Yes and no. There is undoubtedly a great deal of similarity, of common process, whether cognitive or socio-cultural, involved in the acquisition of any additional language. For curriculum development, techniques of instruction, classroom practice, the application of online teaching, terminological development, AI and digital advances and a host of other features of gaining competence in a language, the experience of hegemonic languages is most valuable to minority language development.

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[2] In interview at Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), Barcelona, 20 March 2018, both Joan Pujolar and Maite Puigdevall believed that the current emphasis on new speakers had opened up new avenues of enquiry and enriched the methodological and epistemological approaches used in their fieldwork and analysis.

However, certain factors make the automatic transfer into a minority language situation somewhat problematic. Whether by design or convention, the whole apparatus of the state, the economy, the media and social and cultural activities reinforce the utility, legitimacy, prevalence and pressure exerted by a hegemonic language. There is hardly any need for conscious interventionist language planning for English in the UK or the USA as everyday society performs this function most effectively in both conscious and subliminal ways. The most obvious consideration is scale and numbers. The acquisition of English by newcomers or migrants to the UK or the USA boosts the hegemonic position of a well-established dominant language. The acquisition and use of English in Europe or South Asia undoubtedly contribute to the development of New Englishes or new varieties of English which may have a legitimacy all of their own. In both cases the political, communicative power of English is enhanced and becomes a cumulative force for its wider diffusion and relevance.

In contrast, given the smaller numbers of new speakers involved in minority language settings, their net worth as a contributing factor, while valued, is not necessarily going to change the dynamics and diffusion of the language in question, either geographically or in terms of domain and functional usage. In addition, for most newcomers, migrants or refugees, their way into the formal acquisition of the minority language is normally through instruction in the state's hegemonic language. Thus, such learners are often involved in a double language learning process, elements of which may not be completely understood, let alone mastered, for quite some time. Thirdly, the resources available to help learn a minority language will undoubtedly be fewer and presumably less widely used within society. Fourthly, when a new speaker of French or Spanish wishes to engage in a conversation or purchase an item, they have only to step outside their door in Toulon or Seville and conduct an everyday transaction in the default language of the local context, in which they may also earn their living in society. Mutual daily reinforcement and meaningful interaction is the best teacher. By contrast a new speaker of Gaelic or Welsh may find it very difficult to locate another speaker in many domains and even then there is no guarantee that the interaction will be satisfying, regular or sustained. Most people struggle to live full and fulfilling lives entirely through their minority language without constant reference to the ubiquitous majority language. So many basic socio-economic needs may not necessarily be fulfilled within the minority language and thus it is always in competition with the dominant language in the public realm and often with a different mother tongue within the home environment. For all these reasons and others, the stability and reassurance of the minority new speaker experience are assumed to be more fragile than for a learner of a majoritarian language.

A further difficulty in assessing the salience of the new speaker concept is determining what exactly is being discussed in official reports and documents. It

is evident that for some their use of the term merely means an additional learner in the classroom or community, whereas for others it denotes an active desire to become fluent in the target language and be accepted as a fully functional interlocutor. Often official pronouncements contain a fair degree of lip service and equivocation, as if by intoning the term new speaker, alongside other elements, the government or official agency is both conscious of, and committed to, the needs of such distinct segments within the population. At other times no such distinction is entertained, and the crude use of the term is merely an apologia, an expedience and a lightly considered appendage to more mainstream considerations. However, it is only by reviewing the evidence over time and by seeking to understand what policy formulators had in mind when drafting official documents for their political masters that one can come to a judgement about the salience of the new speaker concept within official discourse.

By focussing on policy implications this volume has less to say about ethnographic explorations into what it feels like to be a new speaker of a particular language. Rather my aim is to establish what considerations are being made in the provision of policy programmes and interventions to encourage the social integration of new speakers into host communities.

The New Speaker Enquiry

In previous work I suggested that there was little explicit reference to the needs of new speakers in several European government strategies for official language policy.[3] This is a justifiable tendency given the recent nature of interdisciplinary work on new speakers.[4] However, what is missing from the cogent and well-researched evidence undertaken by both the COST New Speakers Network members and others is the perspective of the policy community we seek to influence. It is my contention that, without knowing the predisposition of key decision makers to act so as to strengthen the needs and likely requirements of new speakers in context, well-formulated recommendations will not gain much purchase and would be seen as being one step removed from the

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[3] In preparation for my plenary address at the Coimbra New Speakers conference in September 2017, I investigated the degree to which the needs of, and considerations related to, new speakers of selected minority languages in Europe were reflected within a variety of official language strategies and policy documents. Based on this search, the plenary address identified some of the current trends and possible challenges faced by those who sought to influence key decision makers and senior civil servants but argued that the emphasis within the New Speakers Network had been mainly on describing and evaluating the needs of new speakers within a variety of domains and contexts.

[4] I am grateful to the Chair of the COST New Speakers Network, Professor Bernadette O'Rourke for encouraging me to undertake this set of interviews and fieldwork as part of the COST impact and engagement mission.

policy landscape they seek to influence.[5] Thus in order to exercise any degree of influence I will argue that we need to address some of the issues, uncertainties and prejudices which decision makers may hold regarding their approach to, and responsibilities for, meeting the needs of new speakers in their communities and networks. Current hegemonic state language policies are often at odds with or slightly removed from the constituent official minority languages within their jurisdiction. How much more so, then, might the interests of new speakers of minority languages be marginalised and in need of being foregrounded within the administrative cultures of senior civil servants and their political masters?

Accordingly, I sought to interview and interact with decision makers, senior civil servants and specialists in several jurisdictions to ascertain how they thought about the issue of incorporating the needs of new speakers into their policy formulation processes. The eight themes I selected for investigation are reproduced below and the full interview questions and permission form template are reproduced in the Appendices.

Key Research Questions

- How can the new speaker concept inform language policy scholarship?
- How do different jurisdictions interpret the role and potential contribution of new speakers to the vitality of the target language population(s)?
- How do decision makers, senior civil servants and politicians interpret the contribution of new speakers to their policy portfolios?
- What have been their responses to date?
- What policy outcomes can be identified in terms of inequalities and social stratification affecting new speakers more directly?
- What are the ideas and beliefs of different sorts of actors about new speakers in a given setting?
- What particular aspect does the new speaker concept illuminate more clearly than other related concepts?
- What are the theoretical and methodological challenges encountered when trying to capture the link between horizontal and vertical layers of governmentality and regimentation?

Approach and Methodology

The salient feature of new speakers is their dynamism for, as a Summary Report of the COST New Speakers Network suggested: 'new speakers are multilingual citizens who, by engaging with languages other than their "native" or

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[5] The COST Action focussed on the dynamics involved in becoming a 'new speaker' of a language in a multilingual Europe. The Action (2013–17) was part of an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST).

"national" language(s), cross existing social boundaries, re-evaluate their own levels of linguistic competence and creatively (re)structure their social practices to adapt to new and overlapping linguistic spaces' (COST, 2018).

The New Speakers Network has produced fascinating data on issues such as the adjustment process undertaken by speakers of additional, non-mother tongue languages; the role of immigration and mobility in inducing someone to become a new speaker; the underlying and trigger factors which conduce to the transition towards being competent and confident in an additional language; the emotional and psychological factors involved with the *mudes* transition;[6] the melding of several disciplines so as to produce a syncretic overview of the new speaker process; the reinforcement of linguistic anthropological methodology as a suitable means of garnering data and evidence; the introduction of the new speaker concept into the public discourse on language, education, the health services, mobility and immigration. I would add that one of the more intriguing characteristics of the experience of becoming a new speaker is its liminal quality for in too many cases the transition is accompanied by ambiguity, confusion, a degree of emotional upheaval and doubt as to whether, even having achieved a high level of confidence, one may fit in to the host community.

In welcoming these fresh insights there is a need to translate the descriptive and ethnographic results into realisable policy recommendations so that the interests of the new speakers may be incorporated into mainstream public policy. This is easier said than done in a crowded policy environment. One of the key determining factors in navigating this busy scene is the attitude, predisposition and value judgement of senior policy advisers and decision makers regarding the necessity and pragmatism of foregrounding new speakers as a policy item. To that end the research investigation sought to interrogate the opinions of decision makers from significant agencies together with senior public servants in several jurisdictions and to report on their views prior to presenting a series of domain-specific policy recommendations which may be of value in the formulation of future policy objectives and best practice actions. These findings were calibrated by discussions with a range of leading actors in the field from academia, politics and civil society so as to contextualise the interpretation.

The investigation sought to undertake a preliminary analysis in respect of three mutually reinforcing areas of work, specifically:

1. To conduct face-to-face interviews and follow-up requests for additional material and opinion from within a select group of senior public servants

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[6] The *muda* framework 'invites us to rethink the assumed purposes of minority language sociolinguistics and to formulate more general questions of what it means to be a legitimate speaker' (Pujolar and Puigdevall, 2015, p. 170).

and policy advisers. These enquiries were conducted within the following jurisdictions: the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) and Navarre, Catalonia, Finland, Galicia, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, with supplementary material gathered through interviews in Canada.[7]

2. To explore the potential policy implications of the data and evidence generated from within the New Speakers Network, specifically Work Group 8 and Work Group 9 during their lifespan (2015–17). My active participation within the WG9 and early sight of the final reports of selected Work Groups have allowed me to harvest good ideas and experiences at a variety of levels of interaction and to gauge the tendencies reported within the network as to the relevance or not of the new speaker phenomenon.

3. To extend a long-running interpretation of the official language strategies discussed below and to undertake further work to harness the latest material and insights so as to ascertain how integral (or not) any reference to new speakers is to several of the revised language strategy and policy reforms currently being undertaken.

The resultant interpretation does not offer a systematic comparison of all the jurisdictions, despite using a common interview frame. Rather the focus has been on those agencies most conducive to the promotion of the needs of new speakers and will vary from investigating, for example, the community enterprise organisations in Wales, the Gaelic parental support agency in Scotland and the work of the Consorci and Voluntariat per la Llengua in Catalonia. Whilst not claiming that such agencies are fully representative of each country, they do at least offer valuable insights into how localised, ground-up interventions manage the challenge of offering additional opportunities for the integration of new speakers into the community and its networks. Each case study is prefaced by contextualised data on demographic trends, educational overviews and idiosyncratic features not necessarily replicated elsewhere.

I am conscious that this analysis concentrates on a small sample of minority language jurisdictions, but in principle several of the recommendations and examples of good practice should be transferable to other contexts, either in terms of raising awareness or in relation to broad policy developments in education, local administration, community engagement and civil–government interactions.[8] Of course, the long-term aim is to influence outcome-related behaviour through such policy interventions. I am also conscious that there may be an element of composition or confirmatory bias in some of the answers and discourses, as some of the proponents of a new speaker perspective may

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[7] Advice from members of the COST NS network was sought to identify key interviewees in Catalonia, Finland and Ireland.

[8] Cornwall, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands do not figure in this analysis.

seek to exaggerate the impact which this new awareness has either on their work or on those organisations with which they have dealings.

One feature of the New Speakers Network interaction was the production of a wide array of publications describing the situation in many jurisdictions and the related aspects of the transformative processes by which new speakers were produced.[9] A second feature was the attempt to engage and empower local communities in discussing a range of issues and aspects of how new speakers were welcomed and treated.[10] A third was the production of a set of guidelines to stakeholders. However, to date there is little evidence on whether the guidelines have been adopted or have had a positive effect.[11] It could be argued that it is too early to expect such an impact and a better gauge would be to test to what extent the concepts discussed within the network appear in the next round of official language strategies being prepared currently. Nevertheless, the interviews which were conducted sought to find material related to changed attitudes, more inclusive behaviour and plans for the future.

Official Language Strategies

In order to gauge the future impact of a new speaker perspective on language policy it is necessary to outline the embedded context of thought and action represented within and by official language strategies. This is intended as a framework to gauge how reactive they may be to including aspects of new speaker considerations and to offer an overview as to how formulators of strategies conceive and manage the needs of the diverse population groups which constitute their audience. A subsidiary justification is to enable those who wish to advance the cause of new speakers to know how and where to influence official strategies in the name of civil society.[12]

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[9] However, there is one ironic feature of an Action designed to analyse 'New Speakers in a Changing Multilingual Europe', namely the hegemonic position of written English as most of the network's outputs are in English. This may be the nature of the academic publishing beast, but to mitigate this somewhat it would be good to anticipate a range of future publications in Polish, Catalan, Irish and Galician (even if some of these are national reports to a 'local' readership).

[10] Many of the meetings held under the auspices of this Action were in fact at least bilingual if not more generally multilingual, so that the contributors practise what they preach about the value of linguistic diversity.

[11] Many of the Action activities took place in a wide variety of contexts – academic, stakeholder, lobby group meetings – resulting in a very good geographical spread, both large and small polities and jurisdictions and with the co-operation of many institutions.

[12] Earlier work on comparing official language strategies may be found in Williams (2013; 2015). My original interest was prompted by an invitation to contribute to the thinking of the NPLD and its preparation of a European Language Roadmap.

The following strategies were subjected to a detailed analysis in terms of aims, content, methodology and implementation:

> Criterios para la normalización del uso del euskera en las administraciones públicas (Eusko Jaurlaritza, 2007)
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> Plan general de promoción del uso del euskera (Eusko Jaurlaritza, 2003)
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> Iaith Pawb (Welsh Government, 2003)
>
> A Living Language: A Language for Living (Welsh Government, 2011)
>
> 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language (Government of Ireland, 2010)
>
> Plan general de normalización lingüística (Xunta de Galicia, 2004)
>
> Plan general de normalización lingüística del catalán en las Islas Baleares (Comunidad Autónoma de las Islas Baleares, 2009)
>
> The Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008–2013 (Government of Canada, 2008)
>
> Pla general de normalització lingüística (Generalitat de Catalunya, 1995)
>
> First National Plan for Gaelic 2007–12 (Scotland, 2006)
>
> National Gaelic Language Plan II (Scotland, 2011)
>
> Plan xeral de normalización da lingua galega (Xunta de Galicia 2008)
>
> Development Plan of the Estonian Language, 2011–2017 (Estonian Language Foundation, 2011).

Additional detailed investigation was carried out for their successor strategies in the decade 2011–21. None of the strategies which held sway for the period 2000–17 includes a specific section on new speakers per se, and where there is any mention at all it is usually in a commonplace reference to additional or new speakers of Basque/Catalan/Irish/Welsh being welcomed and not to any transitional identity process as encapsulated in the *muda* concept. However, the latest iterations of the Gaelic and the Basque strategy in Navarre do include sections on and reference to the relevance of new speakers and this might act as a precedent for additional references in future language strategy revisions elsewhere.

The desire to influence behaviour so as to promote the target official language(s) certainly informs this current analysis as it is the logical corollary of advancing best practice language policy. At one level this is the stock-in-trade of all public policy, namely, to identify and then action realistic targets so as to fulfil the legal or political obligations of the state or local state. But at another level behavioural modification is also part of the evolving science of 'nudge theory' whereby those in authority seek to modify behaviour, usually in an indirect manner.

While official regional and minority languages are our focus, the discussion relates consciously and explicitly to a broader language continuum including,

by definition, official state languages with a global reach, such as Spanish and English, for they are the default operative languages of authority, officialdom and citizen–state interaction in many cases. Regardless of whether or not we typify the relationship between the prevailing state language and a localised language as the interaction between dominant and subordinate, hegemonic and non-hegemonic or majoritarian and minoritised languages, the key issue is that this interactive relationship is at the heart of the manner in which we manage the myriad needs of speakers in tandem. In consequence, the tone adopted in this volume is one of inclusion not exclusion, of multiplicity not uniqueness and of the often flexible, hybrid and idiosyncratic nature of sociolinguistic change rather than adherence to some notion of linguistic purity or conservation. Ultimately, the fundamental question is whether or not language strategies are effective and if so which elements of good practice and new recommendations can be identified so as to inform future policy and debate in this field.

Turning to notable absences in most strategies it is evident that hardly any of them discuss issues of added economic value, finance, setting budgets or identifying target thresholds by which progress may be measured.[13] Canada has been the pioneer in inculcating within its strategies strong elements of fiscal evaluation and justifications for its linguistic duality approach in terms of value added, which is linked strongly to the view that the language skills of its citizens and public servants are an economic asset, a resource to be nurtured by the system. Indeed, the very essence of the current Action Plan 2018–2023 is encapsulated in its title 'Investing in Our Future' and each of the three pillars of involvement is accompanied by detailed targeted budgets. Appendix 1 of the Action Plan summarises the cumulative expenditure over the first five years of the long-term strategy totalling 2,653.91 ($m) between 2018 and 2023. Clearly this level of detail is meant to reassure citizens that the current government is fully committed to official languages. But it is also intended as an indictment of the relative lack of funding expended by the earlier Conservative Governments led by Prime Minister Harper between 2008 and 2015.

A second lacuna is the relative absence of discussion on outcomes as opposed to outputs. Behaviour-changing strategies derived from social psychology, behavioural science, applied economics and public administration are ripe for inclusion in the current round of strategies being prepared as so much of the justification for moving things forward is to increase the actual use of the target languages in as many domains as possible. In several other government strategies, nudge theory and other intellectual frameworks derived from behavioural economics have already established themselves as proven instruments informing policy. Thus, one can expect to see a far greater reference to key concepts such as the design of choices and encouraging positive helpful

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[13] This lacuna has much to do with the broader culture of the public service within a state or region.

decisions, together with more subtle indirect techniques of persuasion and behaviour-changing impulses.

Many universities now have institutes which are devoted to analysing and influencing policy options, such as the Bennett Institute of Cambridge University[14] which seeks to focus upon: 'the promise of digital government; the growing imperative to bring a place-based perspective into the understanding and practice of policymaking; the imbalanced and unpredictable character of the emerging digital economy; the need to interrogate and reconfigure the relationship between science and democracy' (Bennett Institute, 2020). An intriguing feature of this Institute's commitment is to harness local knowledge as stated: 'We will go further still and explore the limitations of the state's understanding of its peoples – despite the stocks of knowledge it holds about them – and explore how policymaking might better engage and harness local, situated forms of knowledge and identity' (Bennett Institute, 2020). Such think tanks, if they could also be persuaded to focus on the plight of lesser-used languages and the manner in which policies designed to address their needs are actually implemented, would go a long way to answering several of the questions raised in this volume.

However, the best-known instigator within the UK policy sector is the work of Nesta: The Innovation Foundation which seeks to provide robust answers to several challenges, such as boosting economic performance, translating innovative designs into manufacturing production, innovation mapping and testing innovation in the real world, whilst their Innovation in International Development programme is organised around four interconnected themes: 1. How to fund innovation, 2. How to organise for innovation, 3. How to harness new partnerships and collaborations, 4. How to scale innovations and change systems.[15]

These elements are important for they seek to track the whole process of innovation from the design stage to the change-inducing triggers required. Too often in my survey of official language strategies and interviews with their formulators, other senior civil servants and academic specialists, all were content to itemise issues of funding, or partnership and co-creation, but were silent as regards how to bring about the most fundamental outcome, namely behavioural change in language interaction. Put starkly, how to change language regimes and language systems did not figure often. Now, one can be sympathetic to the framers of documents if they refrain from claiming too much for their programme aims, but to abrogate responsibility for charting and guiding change is not advisable especially as the whole aim of the strategy is

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[14] www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/blog/new-public-policy-institute-age-disruption/.
[15] Formerly Nesta, National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, which was established in 1998 with an £250 million endowment from the UK National Lottery and in 2012 became an independent charity.

to intervene so as to change the status quo ante! I am confident that as developments in other spheres of policymaking will filter across, we shall see much more reference to, and action plans for, behavioural modification in boosting language use.

A further area ripe for improvement is the capacity of the authorities to gather time-series data so as to construct evidence-based policy. There is a general concern about the range and quality of data associated with the preparation and evaluation of language strategies. Whilst calling for core sociolinguistic and economic data regarding language, I am acutely conscious that in so many jurisdictions even the most fundamental source of population data, the decennial census count, is undergoing widespread change. This change threatens to no longer include language-related questions, either because they are better garnered from more frequent sample surveys which can ask a range of questions and then be aggregated to cover the whole of the population, or because those in authority wish to ask questions about more recent societal trends, such as the availability and use of digital technologies in the household or access to the Internet for online shopping in a post-Covid environment. Even when robust evidence is available it is often subject to challenge, such is the contested nature of the public space in these trying times.

Official language strategies offer an insight into how governments view their responsibilities and statutory obligations towards designated languages. The practice for many is barely one generation old, whereas Canada's language policy has been over fifty years in the making.[16] The rich inheritance, despite new challenges, offers strong evidence that official bilingualism will remain a cornerstone of Canadian public life, and in so many ways is capable of reacting to the increasing demands of a multicultural polity where the position and proportion of Francophones continue to decline (Clément and Foucher, 2014).

In Europe revised language strategies are being prepared and they will be dealing with the demands of new legislation, reacting to the increased recognition of linguistic human rights, the reform of school organisation and the introduction of new curricula, harnessing the pressures of fiscal reform either as a result of the long-term effects of the 2008 banking crisis or the Covid-19 pandemic, seeking to ameliorate the continued concern with losing speakers and the atrophying of territories and heartlands, all within the context set by the challenges of globalisation, increased immigration or emigration and the consequent emergence of the phenomenon of new speakers.

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[16] I recognise that so much of the infrastructure and framework of the Canadian language planning experience predates the Action Plan of 2003. In turn the Action Plan would not have come about in its specific form were it not for the claims of language groups and the type of language planning in place since the late 1980s.

Notwithstanding that many strategies achieve a large proportion of their stated aims the process is not as proficient as many believe. I have previously identified inherent contradictions, tensions between the promotional and regulatory arms of language management, structural barriers, such as the lack of interdepartmental co-ordination, political about-turns and programme cancellations, court challenges and judicial reviews (Williams, 2013a; 2021a). For at the heart of official language strategies lies political expedience.[17] The survival of many lesser-used languages requires long-term strategic thinking and support. However, so much of political life is short-to-medium term and as a consequence few governments are really committed to levels of investment and intervention which carry over into decades rather than the life of a single or two-term administration. There are exceptions of course, the most notable being the Welsh Government's Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Act makes it clear that the listed public bodies must work to achieve all seven of its goals, not just one or two, and to ensure compliance there is a Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.[18] It is likely that under the influence of the Climate Change initiatives, such as the commitment to net zero carbon, more long-term programmes will be put in place across many departments of government and thus both the strategic and financial models will be adjusted to take account of such paradigmatic shifts. The science of well-being is an important source of fresh ideas and justifications which can penetrate so many concerns and reconfigure a debate on what we value and how we account for things in the marketplace. Support for lesser-used languages, as an expression of ecological and linguistic diversity and social well-being, may yet climb up the hierarchy of collective values, although there can be no certainty given past trajectories.

Even so the focus of policy success must be emotional intelligence and a commitment to policy implementation, else not only will the target population cry foul but so also will opposition political parties, ever willing to cite failings in government programmes. Procedural damage limitation is an important feature of government practices but tends not to be as readily applied when it comes to minority issues as opposed to mainstream programmes and the fulfilment of majoritarian democratic mandates.

A more incontrovertible conclusion is the assertion that if language policies are to be successful, they have to be redesigned so as to include people's linguistic resources, registers and repertoires and their uses in the everyday

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[17] I acknowledge the idiosyncratic and unusual workings of government and administration. Many of the successful elements have been the result of the enthusiastic and committed efforts of parents and activists as interpreted by key political actors, senior public servants and organisational managers in tandem with members, agencies and organisations from within the target community itself.

[18] www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/.

complex through the 'ordered' reality of languaging. Part of this reconceptua-lisation involves foregrounding the agency of language practitioners in decid-ing on language policies. However, it is quite another matter as to who among the contending interest groups of a linguistically diverse citizenship will be selected to be representatives and whether their participation is by invitation or because, being motivated, they push themselves to act as informants and stakeholders. The outcome has more to do with political projection and expe-dience than any demonstrable sociolinguistic theory or evidence-based need. Uncertainty, fragmentation and a certain creative ambiguity will doubtless characterise the formulation of language strategy from the European level down to that of the sub-state and the evidence suggests that in this hybrid, super-diverse context, it is the abstract, flexible, catch-all rhetoric of political pronouncements and official strategy which will prevail, rather than any detailed assessment of the needs of new speakers.

The Policy Community

The policy community itself is a diverse array of interests, resource allocation imperatives and competing political ideologies. For agencies and departments concerned with language promotion, regulation and revitalisation there is a clear understanding that the contribution of 'native or indigenous speakers' is vital as a source of legitimacy, authenticity and creativity in reproducing both language and its associated culture(s).[19] However, policymakers are less cer-tain as to how to categorise or operationalise programmes which also seek to acknowledge the salience and contribution of new speakers as opposed to early-stage L2 learners. Given this, there is no prior expectation that there will be a comprehensive interpretation of the requirements and roles of new speakers in language policy development expressed by those official represen-tatives interviewed in this research exercise. Rather some critical detective work and creative trajectories are needed to tease out some of the salient features of official responses to the questions posed.

Joan Pujolar and Bernadette O'Rourke, two of the leaders of the New Speakers Network, have traced how their theoretical lens has moved from a native speaker/new speaker perspective to one which incorporates all speakers by focussing on research which seeks to dissect the political economy of speaker categorisation in specific contexts, thereby illuminating how lan-guage participates in struggles over access to resources (Pujolar and O'Rourke, 2019).[20] The concern with resources gets to the heart of the relevance of the

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[19] The interpretation is concerned with instances of language revitalisation although Catalan and Canadian data relates to localised majorities.

[20] The authors argue that 'this "speaker" perspective will allow researchers to further illuminate who has access to which codes, how and where they are able to deploy them, and with what

new speaker paradigm within the political economy of most states. Indeed, it could be argued that the new speaker lens opens up new possibilities for interpreting long-established discussions on language pedagogy, in-group and out-group membership, migration and adjustment, open and closed boundaries and the like. Ultimately how new speaker policies are framed is a reflection of underlying political cultures covering the entire spectrum of European (and other) jurisdictions from Conservative through Liberal and Social Democratic to Socialist/Communist precepts. Ministerial decisions are crucial but so also is the context of the respective public administrative and governmental departments acting as a key influence on the predisposition of public servants to consider integrating new speaker requirements into their programmes.

Given the complex nature of decision-making, evidence gathering and policy formulation, one would not expect to see a tailor-made, stand-alone new speaker policy, even if one were considered feasible. Rather it was anticipated that green shoots, fragments of an argument, elements within a policy agenda would be identified. This is because I assumed that, as the new speaker phenomenon was recent, civil servants would only now be beginning to consider extending their established language policies to reflect a changing environment. Neither was it assumed that the responses derived from civil service experience would fit neatly into any linear conception of policymaking. Indeed, the opposite was assumed, and thus I sought to focus on the degree to which understanding, awareness and conviction would influence the agenda-setting stage.

A clear demarcation of the successive stages of policymaking has been constructed by Cairney (2012; 2016) whose six stages are: 1. Agenda setting; 2. Policy formulation; 3. Legitimation; 4. Implementation; 5. Evaluation; 6. Policy maintenance, succession or termination. However, this apparently rational process of policy delivery is compounded by a number of inherent difficulties which relate to the gathering of data, the separation of fact and value, and the downward pressures exerted by ministers who often want relatively quick, expedient solutions to the issues of the day. Cairney (2016) alerts us to several features we should consider, such as problems with the supply of evidence, problems with the demand for evidence, the competition or policymakers' attention, overcoming the evidence-policy gap and the psychology of policymaking.

Managing our expectations as to how much interest and evidence one would find in relation to the new speaker awareness among policymakers, let alone concrete policy implementation, is thus a necessary precondition to our enquiries. Reality has a coercive force and even when policymakers have sincere

social and economic consequences, across a wide range of settings in today's multilingual, globalised Europe' (Pujolar and O'Rourke, 2019).

intentions to focus more on advanced learner provision and new speaker needs, the expedient pressure of governance can dent such fine ambitions. The policy environment is a competitive one. Getting ideas on the agenda is a tough process, especially for 'minority' interest issues.

Gathering the Evidence: Case Study Findings

Between 2015 and 2021 a series of interviews were conducted with key agencies, senior civil servants, politicians and academics in several jurisdictions.[21] These were supplemented by an analysis of official documents, significant statements and the core messages and programmes of relevant organisations. It may be asked, what precisely is under investigation? If I ask questions on new speakers in an interview or consultation, does it necessarily follow that my interlocutors will perceive the concept and phenomenon in the same manner? This is especially tricky in those jurisdictions, such as Finland or Canada, which have not been exposed to the level of activity that characterises, for example, Galicia in relation to the *neofalantes* as an active minority pressure group.

Returning to the matter of definition, participants in the New Speakers Network have proposed relatively similar definitions of the term and descriptions of the people targeted. Here I commend the interpretation offered by McLeod and O'Rourke (2017) who suggest that the term 'new speaker of Gaelic' is used to refer to:

people who did not acquire Gaelic in the home when growing up but have nevertheless acquired Gaelic to a significant degree of competence and are now making active use of the language in their lives. This is itself a fairly expansive definition and there are significant divergences in the learning trajectories and language use patterns of the participants in this study. (McLeod and O' Rourke, 2017, p. 1)

I embrace this definition because, in almost all of the jurisdictions, the main avenue of learning the target language was the statutory education system which produced active speakers of the 'new' language not initially acquired within the home. Thus, in rank order we would expect our interviewees to be concerned with new speakers produced through the education system and the community, followed by migrants and then refugees who have gained competence in the language. The overwhelming majority of new speakers are the

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[21] Given that key decision makers and policy formulators spoke in confidence, while they granted permission for me to record the interviews and to use the material which they shared, I have adopted a policy of rarely using direct quotations and attribution by name. Interviews, discussions and commentary by academics have been treated in a more direct manner, using significant direct quotes as and when appropriate. In all cases I have sought to weave the answers to my interview questions into a holistic narrative so as to provide a more consolidated interpretation of the issues under discussion.

product of the statutory and adult education system and in consequence it may be difficult for decision makers to discern any special need for new speakers as distinct from the general population who attend minority immersion or bilingual educational establishments. We shall see!

However, first we need to give some consideration to the characteristics and experiences of new speakers before we embark on our policy-oriented analysis. For those who wish to trace the experiential nature of such linguistic transformations there are many excellent interpretive case studies, as what we know about the experiences of new speakers comes from studies in education and ethnography (Higham, 2020; Puigdevall, 2014; Walsh and Ní Dhúda, 2015; O'Rourke and Walsh, 2020).

Selected Features of New Speaker Profiles

Let me preface this section by stating that, in most cases, new speakers are made very welcome by the host community of speakers. The majority of new speakers produced by the statutory education system are hardly distinguishable from their neighbours who have not become competent in the chosen language as happens within Ireland, Wales or Scotland.

Yet such is the fragility of host speaker numbers in several contexts that new speakers may be seen as the salvation of the language and are thus treated with great respect and 'loved into the community'. The more so if they are identifiably very different in their country of origin or socio-cultural background. This could range from Irish speakers from Poland, Welsh speakers from among the Bengali or Somali population, Basque speakers from among the Mapuche or Catalan speakers born in China. This new diversity not only reflects globalising trends but also bespeaks a welcome, open and hospitable stance which minorities are very keen to advance, for it distances them from majoritarian, hegemonic tendencies and practices. In a more symbolic form, it may also echo and resonate generations of minority support for the struggle of peoples to become independent from former colonial masters; for many autochthonous minorities in Europe would claim to have been internal colonies of powerful 'foreign' overlords who were central to the process of state formation they now endure. This expresses solidarity with the call to liberty which was so prominent in the 1960s and 1970s and also seeks to absolve certain minorities who would claim not only to have suffered from similar forms of internal colonialism but also to have been forced to serve as unwilling participants in the colonial struggle for European mastery in such places as Colombia, Sri Lanka, Egypt or the Congo. This revisionist narrative faces difficulties in accounting for the activities of Scottish, Irish and Welsh slave-traders, plantation owners, administrators, merchants and soldiers in the colonial impress, while proponents are keen to celebrate the contribution of

seafarers, farmers, commercial agents, politicians and the professions to the settlement of North America, Southern Africa, Australia and New Zealand, all of which reflect a distinctive Celtic influence on the landscape and structure of settler societies. However, we should be careful not to accept uncritically all the elements of a grievance narrative which characterises so many of the minorities we are considering.

Identification, empathy and solidarity have become the watchwords of the new speaker's path of acceptance. Accordingly, in most minority situations they are celebrated and valued as a net addition to the community. However, their demographic weight and significance for policy formulation vary. In Galicia, the *neofalantes* are a small but highly visible proportion of all Galician speakers. In Scotland they are critical to the survival of Gaelic as total speakers constitute only 1 per cent of the nation's population while in Wales they are the product of a statutory education system and tend to blend into the mainstream Welsh-speaking populace. Consequently, identifying distinctive policy initiatives for new speakers as a subset of more holistic policies remains a challenge and we should not therefore anticipate too many well-developed programmes at this stage. Green shoots rather than fully mature policies are the order of the day.

Why is it significant that we search for these green shoots? With the atrophying of traditional homelands and communities and the demise of so many indigenous minority language networks, it is logical to expect that the new speakers produced through the statutory and adult education systems will comprise a greater proportion of minority language speakers in the future. Accordingly, it is imperative that we seek to learn as much as possible about their profiles, their motivations, their ability to integrate and the manner in which cumulatively they are influencing the speech community.

Learner Development

The rich literature on language learning offers insights into how language is acquired, internalised, reproduced and communicated. What is not so clear is at what stage an individual chooses to take on additional identities through becoming competent in an additional language. Work on second language acquisition, such as the learning of Italian or German by a British student, does not pretend to suggest that such endeavours lead to an identity transition or that by such means students wish to be accepted as a new member of an Italian or German community. By contrast most new speaker research to date is ultimately concerned with social cohesion as individuals seek to be incorporated into their local host environment. What are the mechanisms by which such transitions operate and with what consequences?

Mudes

Catalan researchers have coined the term *mudes* to describe key turning points or specific biographical junctures in the transition from habitually using one language to another, seeking thereby to integrate into a new speech community (Pujolar and Puigdevall, 2015). *Mudes* is the Catalan term for variations in social performance, such as dressing up for an event or changing one's appearance generally (Pujolar and Gonzalez, 2013). This concept has been adapted in contexts such as Ireland, the BAC and Galicia (Walsh and O'Rourke, 2014; Puigdevall et al., 2018; Lourido and Evans, 2019). An important element of this approach is the assertion that by tracking changes in language behaviour, demonstrating how linguistic practices may evolve and change throughout the life cycle of individuals, ethnographers are able to provide a more nuanced view of the linguistic ideologies that underpin linguistic practices. These insights may be applied to improve the teaching of a target language, to ease the acceptance of new speakers into a host community or to raise awareness among native speakers of the significance of welcoming a more diverse and dynamic set of fellow speakers. A particular concern is to counter the view that seeks to reduce these practices to their base instincts so as to construct a defence for ethnolinguistic belonging, reinforcing the 'we' against the 'other' in society.

Role Models and Authenticity

Who counts and who is accepted? How are the rules of incorporation framed? Is it essentially a matter of linguistic skills and competence or are there deeper cultural norms that have to be imbibed and demonstrated as testimony to one's new identity? New speakers can struggle with their own authenticity. They often describe the range of their language skills, registers and usages as being different from those of the native speakers they seek to emulate. This is not necessarily an unalloyed deficiency, for although their language may not be as idiomatic, rich, intuitive or colourful as that of native speakers, they do possess 'skills associated with more modern functions and new terminology required in these new contexts which many native speakers are seen to be lacking' (McLeod and O'Rourke, 2015, p. 157).

On the other hand, a young new speaker seeking to emulate or pattern their speech on an older native speaker will experience a time lag, for older speakers often derive their linguistic behaviour and repertoire from an earlier socialisation period when the community norms and style were quite different from those which the new speaker would encounter today. This is also true of the cultural material, songs, dances, Scripture-based stories and general experiences gained in a more limited face-to-face age as opposed to a digital context. Many new speakers report being at a loss when several cultural clues,

memorised poems and songs of childhood are shared in gatherings and as a consequence they feel inadequate because such elements of one's identity do not intuitively resonate with them. This in turn leads to concerns over imposter syndrome and a fear that they will never fully fit in or be accepted. Emotional and psychological elements constitute an essential part in the confidence levels of new speakers as they hone their new identities in challenging environments.

An earlier concern with authenticity has been expressed by Kathryn Woolard and Alexandra Jaffe. Woolard has commented that

If local linguistic varieties index authentic local identities, by the same logic they are off-limits to outsiders. Lack of control of such a variety can indicate that one does not share an essential identity. To learn such a language secondarily through study is a contradiction in terms, marking the learner as inauthentic. Heritage language learners and what are now often called 'new speakers' in settings around the world have been reported to experience this contradiction. (Woolard, 2016, p. 24)

Jaffe reports that heritage Corsican learners fear making inauthenticating errors, and that having to learn one's 'own' language in school was in itself 'viewed by people as a contaminating, deauthenticating, act'. The requirement to teach it in order to ensure its survival 'could be seen as collectively deauthenticating' for the linguistic community. (quoted in Woolard, 2016, p. 24). Generalising is difficult but one prescient insight which is useful for the arguments of the new speaker proponents is that 'anonymous languages supposedly can be learned by anyone, but authentic language can be learned by no one; speakers are supposed to come by them "naturally" rather than working to acquire them' (Woolard, 2016, p. 24).

Issues of identity, authenticity and belonging suffuse the new speaker experience. Charles Taylor (1991) has identified the importance of recognition and acceptance for identity construction. He argues that 'on the intimate level, we can see how much an original identity needs and is vulnerable to the recognition given or withheld by significant others. It is now surprising that in the culture of authenticity, relationships are seen as the key loci of self-discovery and self-confirmation' (Taylor, 1991, p. 49). Equal recognition and fair treatment of the other become the hallmarks of a just society. Their denial is a form of oppression. But such discrimination and hurt can be manifested also by sincere and well-meaning individuals in the manner in which they continually remind new speakers of their origins and of their differences when compared with indigenous speakers. What is meant as a sincere compliment can appear patronising and a ready reminder of being not quite fully accepted by the host community.

There is an assumption that many learners, and most new speakers, aspire to gain native speaker competence. While this may be achieved, especially if the

person starts learning the target language at a young age, the majority of learners and new speakers will still portray their individual characteristics, whether it be because of the influence of their native tongue, their accent or their idiosyncratic patterning and distinctive use of language. Many teachers and their students are under the impression that the most authentic and justifiable manner of gaining an acceptable standard of speech performance is to imitate a native speaker, even if this may at times conflict with the student's self-perception and identity. The truth is that some new speakers may struggle to attain a native speaker level of performance, leading specialists to argue that the ideal native speaker model is something of a myth and certainly can lead to difficulties if people feel that they are underperforming or falling short of the mark. Davies (2007) and Crystal (2003; 2019) point to the inherent tension between the need to be intelligible and the need to assert or protect one's identity when learning languages. They argue that just as there is no absolute native speaker model to which one may aspire so there is no absolute learner model or by extension absolute new speaker model to emulate. Rather there are multiple role models which contain an enormous amount of variation in form, accent, dialect and overall speech pattern. To add to this difficulty, one must take note of the listener's reaction to the conversation and ascertain to what extent the new speaker feels comfortable or well received by the host community. In strong ethnolinguistic communities such as Catalonia, the host population is willing to accept a wide variety of speech behaviour on the part of the new speakers, whereas in more linguistically fragile communities, such as Gaelic-speaking networks in Scotland, the degree of accommodation may be much less. It all depends on how far the host community feels any sustained threat to the integrity of their language and culture by the emergence of a new speaker cohort.

Geolinguistic and Territorial Perspectives

Geography also matters. All the cases dealt with here are characterised by a set of territorial spaces we may call homelands, places which are or have been until recently a redoubt for the languages, offering both a core area for cultural reproduction and a bastion against the atrophying pressures of modernisation. In the recent past newer, non-territorial, non-contiguous spaces have been produced enabling new communities of interest to be established – what geographers and urban planners have termed 'community without propinquity' (Webber, 1963). And yet in so many cases new speakers and learners are socialised into believing that periods spent in historical homelands will strengthen their appreciation of the language, add meaning to their existence and help them identify with native speakers in some version of communal solidarity. Intuitively one would expect new speakers who are socialised within

heartland regions to have a more complete grasp of the language and its associated cultures, as opposed to new speakers who gain meaning only from non-territorial social network interaction. But is this necessarily true? If so with what consequences for policy and for intervention? If it does not necessarily hold, can one sustain a viable, robust language network without recourse to spatial and geographical referents, by using digital opportunities and resources within an epoch of deterritorialisation?

This might seem a tall order. Is it the case, as Robert Ardrey postulated in 1966, that the territorial imperative governs human no less than animal behaviour? It is claimed that it serves a psychological need, and the possession of a territory serves the purposes of security, stimulation and identity, which W. D. Davies explores so exquisitely in his analysis of the territorial dimension of Judaism (Davies, 1982). And yet, given that the overwhelming majority of new speakers of Basque, Irish and Welsh live cheek by jowl in contentment with neighbours who do not have any compunction to return to the heartland or sojourn for a few weeks in the summer in heartland communities, is the return to the land a necessary feature of their experience? I think not. What is distinctive is their yearning for safe spaces, for pockets of security within the multilingual metropolis or city region where they can feel secure, where their language is respected and nourished by a wide range of social and performative activities. Perhaps this is the post-modern expression of the territorial imperative, where the same virtues of security, stimulation and identity can be enjoyed. It may also be the physical representation of the *muda* concept, wherein entering safe spaces can encourage steps in the transition process and allow someone to feel comfortable, confident and stimulated in such milieux. However it is described, it is certain that new geographies of communities of practice are being shaped.

Opportunities and Legitimacy

A common complaint made by new speakers is the relative lack of opportunity to use their language except in dedicated centres or 'safe places' where almost everyone else is using their language and they thus would feel more comfortable participating. It is as if such spaces draw them out and offer them a genuine set of places to be heard and be counted.

For some, having located routine safe places, such as conversation classes, choirs, social activities, bars and cafes, sporting clubs, they are still disconcerted by native speakers' attitudes and behaviours towards them. This may take the form of having to justify their membership of the community or group, to identify where they are from, when and where they learned the language, for how long and by whom were they taught, which regional dialect and accent did their tutors impart to them, do their

partners and children also speak the language, if not why? Several of these enquiries can appear to be aggressive intrusions or almost accusations by less sensitive interlocutors, the more so when individuals are constantly reminded that 'we do not say it like that' or 'you need to mutate there if you want to speak correctly', 'the language has its own words for these loan words, you know'. For some native speakers the emergence of a large number of new speakers may be unsettling. They may complain that the quality and purity of their language is being diluted, grammatical forms being overturned, mutations being mangled and far too many loan words being used so that the resultant admixture of majoritarian and minority language use renders the new speaker a poor representative of the speech community.

Other more discriminating stances can remind the new speaker that although they may have learned the language, they are still not members of the host community by virtue of several other cultural markers, such as appearance, skin colour, faith or food habits. Still others are downright hostile and reject attempts by new speakers to fit in.

Agents or Supplicants?

There is a tendency by commentators to speak on behalf of new speakers as if they are pliant supplicants in this process of recognition and empowerment. What evidence can we muster of new speakers being active agents in their own interests, constructing arguments, lobbying power brokers and formulating elements of policy? We have plenty of evidence of learner societies and associations throughout Europe, annual prizes being granted for the best speaker of language *x*, role models and actors who appear on television or within official promotional campaigns, sporting figures and rock stars used to appeal to young people. But we have very few examples of organised lobby groups persuading and cajoling those in authority to attend to their needs and interests qua new speakers.

It might be expected that migrant and refugee interest groups would be more active in this process than those who have gained an additional language through the statutory education system. Even so it would be of interest to know how the latter view their educational experiences and discern what factors triggered their transition to being active new speakers as opposed to episodic learners. It would also be of interest to discover how long-established speakers of a language might react to being characterised by others as a new speaker. If the reaction is consistently negative, might this support the abandoning of the term?

These are some of the characteristics and experiences of new speakers which will form the backdrop to the more focussed attention being paid to policy,

planning and official intervention strategies. Let us turn now to the structure of the volume and identify its key aims.

The Structure of the Volume

Chapter 2 offers a series of reflections on the key issues of the new speaker debate. It sets forth the opportunities and challenges for those who wish to develop the relevance of the new speaker phenomenon in selected disciplines, such as sociolinguistics and ethnography, together with observations on how evidence-based policy recommendations may be formulated. Policy is always the product and the servant of political will and there is a certain logic in the argument that says innovative policy is a reaction to, and reflection of, a modest degree of crisis management. In our investigation it is the migrant and refugee element of the new speaker continuum which is most urgent, but it is also the least developed area of explicit policy discourse to date.

Chapter 3 reports on the evidence gathering I undertook in Wales. By interviewing selected politicians and a range of senior civil servants charged with the formulation and implementation of language policy, I arrive at an evaluation of current thinking on the relevance of the new speaker phenomenon within official language policy. These enquiries are supplemented by interviews with civil society policy formulators, decision makers from national organisations and academic specialists who have studied the phenomenon. But the neat division between governmental and civil society policy formulators is misleading. Neither category is impervious to the ideas of the other, for in so many minority language communities there is a close relationship between them. In the most promising contexts this interaction is mutually stimulating, if not necessarily co-dependent, as together they fight for the survival of their threatened languages.

In Chapter 4 I repeat the exercise for Scotland which has a much lower number of Gaelic speakers and as a consequence the addition of new speakers to the total mix of interlocutors is far more significant. However, the Gaelic language figures far less prominently as an element of both Scottish identity and public investment. Accordingly, with far fewer agencies and actors involved it may be easier to discern the role which the new speaker concept plays in policy discourse and resultant interventions. One complicating factor is the lack of a shared perspective on which elements should be prioritised in Gaelic language promotion and policy. On the one hand there are proponents who argue that as the Gaelic communities are in crisis all efforts should be prioritised into stabilising and sustaining language transmission within these atrophying communities. Others acknowledge the perilous state of traditional communities but argue that support is needed wherever Gaelic is present and elements such as Gaelic medium education, the media and opportunities for

new speakers to flourish also deserve attention. Both perspectives are reflective of what may be called the beleaguered self and contain a fair number of non-cognitive emotional predispositions which colour the rational debate on what is to be done. Consequently tension, disagreement, anger, grief and recrimination can come to shape the various discourses surrounding language policy. In a large-scale language community such fears can be absorbed as part of the general cut and thrust and may not presage any lack of mutual respect and constructive dialogue. But in a small, marginal context such tensions can lead to institutional polarisation between contending agencies and render the central thrust of language promotion less effective.

In Chapter 5 I reflect on the Irish experience and report on the documentary and interview evidence gathered. By contrast to Scotland and Wales, Ireland should be more fertile ground for the promotion of new speaker interests. This is because Ireland is an independent state and as Irish is the first language according to the constitution it has been used within the education system for far longer than has Welsh or Gaelic. Moreover, the statutory education system features the teaching of Irish as a core subject which has created a social mass of 1,761,420 people – 39.8 per cent of the population – who can speak Irish according to the 2016 Census. The overwhelming majority of these would be learners and a significant proportion would be assumed to be new speakers. However, the 2016 Census also shows that, of these, only 73,803 – 4.2 per cent of the population – use Irish daily outside of the education system. This is down 3,382 since 2011.[22] Thus it will be an interesting proposition to see how the formal policy of language promotion and the actual usage of Irish conduce to the production and maintenance of new speakers within the system.

In Chapter 6 the same approach to evidence gathering is adopted in the context of the Spanish polity by focussing on two of the seventeen Autonomous Communities, namely the Basque Country and Navarre. It is here that the new speaker concept has been most readily welcomed and has entered into official discourse. Accordingly, we may expect to find examples of good practice which should be applicable in other jurisdictions. Detailed consideration of excellent initiatives is given to the Euskaraldia: 11 days in Euskera campaign in the Basque Autonomous Community and in the next chapter to the Voluntariat per la Llengua programme in Catalonia. Here civil society activists and local agencies were far more inclined to argue that the needs of new speakers should be an integral element of official language policy than were those charged with the formulation and implementation of such policies at the national level. We explore to what extent this official reticence is a result of ideological stances, caution as to the costs involved or a conviction that current policies already

[22] www.irishpost.com/news/new-figures-show-many-people-ireland-actually-speak-irish-daily-141399.

cater very well for the needs of new speakers, even if they are not described in those terms.

Chapter 7 investigates the reception of, and approach to, new speakers in Catalonia and Galicia. There is considerable evidence of a buy-in to the need to integrate new speakers and thus not only boost the profile of the respective language but also add to social cohesion in an increasingly multicultural and multilingual context.

Chapter 8 is concerned with the policy community and with making recommendations at international, state, regional and local levels. The first task is to refine the results of the study, the second is to determine a set of generic observations, the third is to present country-specific recommendations. Defining a recommendation and distinguishing it from mere wish fulfilment are by no means simple tasks and some recommendations available in the literature are so general that it is difficult to interpret their meaning with any degree of precision. That is why the recommendations should be realisable. Where the recommendation is unclear its implementation will often depend upon political goodwill and more often on political expedience so as to ascertain whether or not it fits into the broad parameters of language and educational policy. Its adoption also depends on who is required to finance the intervention and whether the powers that be can safely transfer the responsibility and costs to a partner agency, preferably without requiring long-term financial commitments. Such is the stuff of normal politics. Some local authorities will choose the safe option and say that the needs of new speakers are already incorporated within their comprehensive language-related provisions, even if we know that they are not. This is particularly the case for international migrants, refugees and what are sometimes called translational workers as local authorities will determine that their obligation is to provide instruction in each state's dominant language so as to enable the residents to function within the 'normal' parameters of the educational, health and social services. Additional instruction in a minority language may be considered a step too far, even if local regulations allow for this.

We know that for managers of public services there are two types of imperatives which they face when a fresh challenge is presented. First are the key performance indicators, usually measurable by tried and tested formulae, on which their careers and advancement may depend. Achieving these essential KPIs is a priority, and the current best example would be the attracting of more Black and Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) personnel in all sorts of positions in an organisation. Then there are the softer targets, which may be considered nice things to do, such as satisfying the interests of new speakers of language y: useful if it could be achieved, but not essential, and certainly not likely to damage the career of a middle manager if agreed targets were not met in the medium term. Accordingly, while the focus of the investigation is on the

reception and adoption of the new speaker concept as an element in policy formulation, the narrative also seeks to strengthen the interpretation by providing additional information on the various contexts within which the investigation was undertaken.

Chapter 9 offers an opportunity for reflection and conclusion. Where has our investigation led us and with what profit? Looking forwards, there is clearly much of relevance which remains to be resolved in a set of new speaker developments that are currently uncharted, fragmented and difficult to pin down.

What is remarkable in all the jurisdictions studied is the degree of variation that was found in the empirical fieldwork. The responses are highly variable from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. In reflecting on the answers given to the questions presented in the light of the evidence set forth here, a plea for further regular research suggests itself; not only to improve on the insufficiencies of this interpretation but also to allow for the passage of time within which it is assumed that greater attention will have been paid to the new speaker phenomenon by policymakers over the coming decade. In that sense this is a preliminary investigation to set the scene for more authoritative interpretations in the future.

What is not in doubt is that the human spirit continues to demonstrate its creativity and innovative approaches to social interaction. Charles Taylor (2016) has reminded us that language is at the heart of this generative process. It is far more than a tool for encoding and communicating information and symbols, as those in the rational empiricist tradition, such as Hobbes, Locke, Condillac and their followers, assert. Rather it is a deeply meaning-seeking enterprise, capable of shaping the thoughts and idioms it aims to explain and share. The articulation of meaning and the creative force of discourse are wholly integral to being human. Through language we shape our human experience and in turn are shaped by social interactions, which teaches us how to articulate language and thoughts in context, as a shared social enterprise. Thus by tracking both structural and sociolinguistic change over time we can gain additional insights into issues such as identity formation, group mobilisation, the vicissitudes of demographic transitions, economic interdependence and networking and the effects of government policies on social cohesion and fragmentation.

The substantive aim of this volume is to use the new speaker conceit as a means of exploring much wider and deeper issues faced by selected minority language communities. The focus will not always be exclusively on new speaker characteristics, needs, contributions and engagement, but it will always seek to relate the broader contextual discussion to the environment within which such needs can be fulfilled. The new speaker approach offers a different entrée into multilingualism, as it relies less on linguistic science

and more on the people themselves. This relatively early, incomplete and varied excursion into the field of new speaker studies means that the core normative appeal of the phenomenon, qua conceptual advance, retains its promise. Whether this promise is fulfilled or whether it is destined to reside in the charnel house of ambition and desire will be determined by events in the next generation. For the present we shall see below to what extent any of this promise has been transferred into the contemporary policy community at both governmental and civil society agency level.