

An Overview of the Soillse Research Agenda in the Isles

Conchúr Ó Giollagáin

Soillse
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean

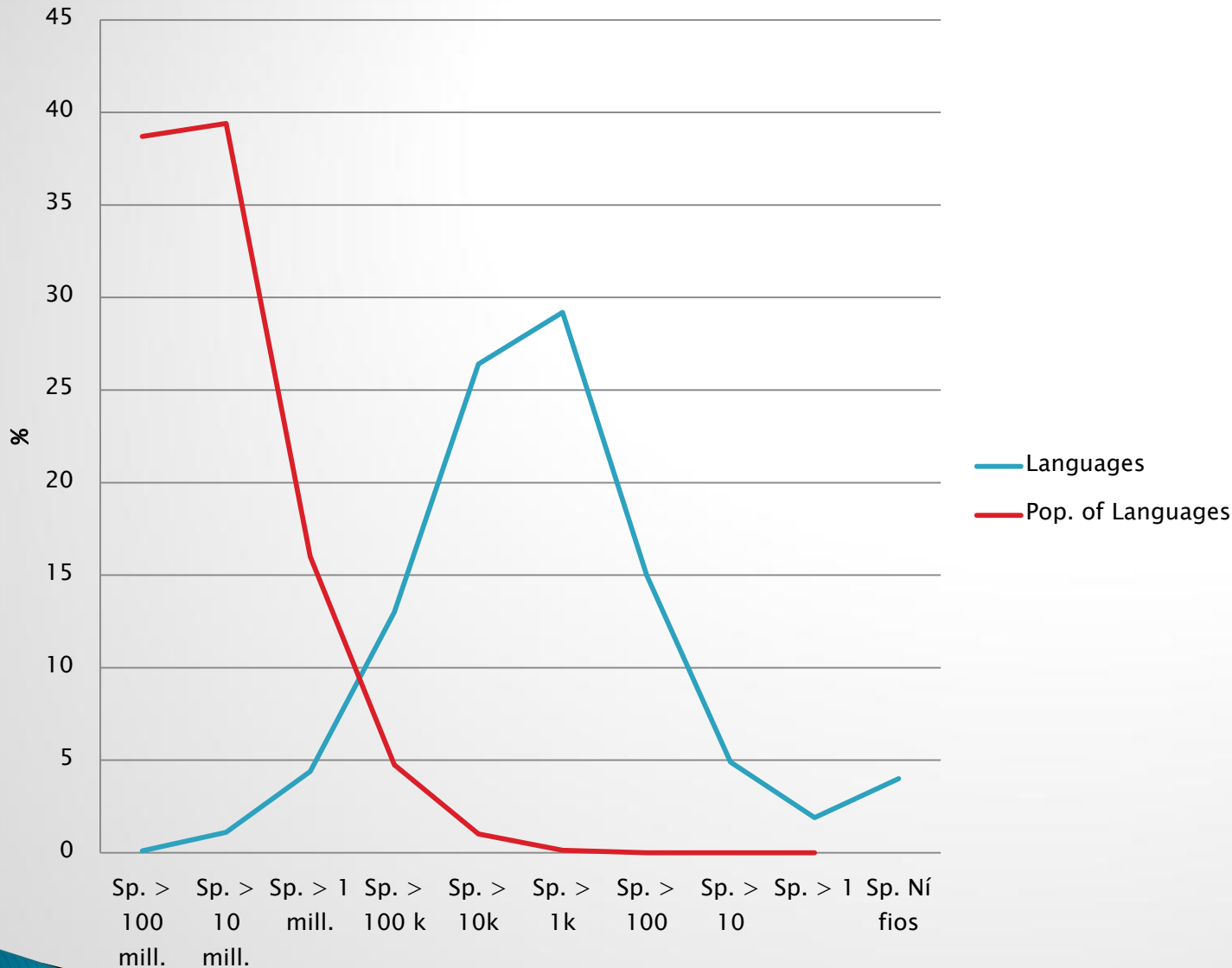
Realising the opportunity

- ▶ Developing a world class research initiative to address the chief challenge of socio-cultural viability of Gàidhlig
 - Viability of Gàidhlig as a socio-cultural identity: one location in a broader debate of sustainable diversity
 - Soillse: a dedicated research agency with multi-institutional links and ambitious backers
 - Fluid lines of communication between the research community > public bodies > minority language community
- ▶ **Realising the challenge:** the most intractable cultural issue of the 21st Century

Language Demography, Source: Ethnologue 2009.

Population	Lang- uage			Speakers		
	#	%	% <i>Cumulat.</i>	#	%	% <i>Cumulat.</i>
100,000,000 to 999,999,999	8	0.1	0.1%	2,308,548,848	38.73721	38.73721%
10,000,000 to 99,999,999	77	1.1	1.2%	2,346,900,757	39.38076	78.11797%
1,000,000 to 9,999,999	304	4.4	5.6%	951,916,458	15.97306	94.09103%
100,000 to 999,999	895	13.0	18.6%	283,116,716	4.75067	98.84170%
10,000 to 99,999	1,824	26.4	45.0%	60,780,797	1.01990	99.86160%
1,000 to 9,999	2,014	29.2	74.1%	7,773,810	0.13044	99.99204%
100 to 999	1,038	15.0	89.2%	461,250	0.00774	99.99978%
10 to 99	339	4.9	94.1%	12,560	0.00021	99.99999%
1 to 9	133	1.9	96.0%	521	0.00001	100.00000%
No data	277	4.0	100.0%			
<i>Totals</i>	6,909	100.0		5,959,511,717	100.00000	

Demographic and Language Relations



- 94% of the world's population speaks 6% of the world's languages (c. 300)
- 1% of the world's population accounts for 80% of the language diversity (c. 5600)

Aspirations for minority cultural diversity but ...

- ▶ Fragmented traditional communities
- ▶ Weak cohesion in other networks
- ▶ Gàidhlig scenario: Colliding with societal realities of 58,000 speaker base

Engaging with a productive process

- ▶ Depicting reality – gathering information
- ▶ Developing a diagnosis
- ▶ Indicating a prognosis of the condition
- ▶ Suggesting a prescription – language planning
- ▶ Encouraging institutional and communal buy-in – participation in productive outcomes

Central issues: Spheres of Research

- ▶ **Demography** – contraction of speaker community and the concomitant loss of social density in traditional geographic realms (Societal prevalence)
- ▶ **Non-optimal levels of acquisition** to sustain the language as a functional identity (L1 and L2 Linguistics)
- ▶ **Ambiguity** in language identity (Anthropology):
 - (a) a national minority language but a wide gap between passive interest in language identity and actual levels of affiliation
 - (b) a highly circumscribed minoritised language: contending with majority language functional primacy and an increasingly passive identity in the minority culture
- ▶ **Institutional support** (Language planning and policy): creative tension between
 - (a) corpus planning/language resource planning (planning for language: language-centred expertise) and
 - (b) planning interventions on behalf of speakers (societal planning: the language group in various social realms: socially rooted speakers and neo-adherents)

Building on previous research

- ▶ Wells, G. (2013) Perceptions of Gaelic Learning and Use in a Bilingual Island Community
- ▶ Wells, G. (2011) Gaelic Digital Literacies in a Bilingual Community, Language and Integration Migration to Gaelic-Speaking Areas in the Twenty-First Century, Cassie Smith-Christmas (2014)
- ▶ O'Hanlon, F. et al. (2012) Modailean Cànan ann am Foghlam Ro-sgoile, Bun-sgoile agus Àrd-sgoile Meadhain-Ghàidhlig.
- ▶ Armstrong, T. C. (2014) Naturalism and ideological work: How is family language policy renegotiated as both parents and children learn a threatened minority language? *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 17(5), 570–585.
- ▶ Landgraf, Sìleas is Alasdair MacMhaoirn (2011), 'A' cleachdadh na Gàidhlig, a' brosnachadh an spioraid', ann an Richard A. V. Cox is Timothy Currie Armstrong, deas., *A' Cleachdadh na Gàidhlig: Slatan-tomhais ann an Dìon Cànan sa Choimhearsnachd*, (pp. 157–166). Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, An t-Eilean Sgitheanach: Clò Ostaig.
- ▶ Mac an Tàilleir, I., Rothach, G. & Armstrong, T. C. (2010) *Barail agus Comas Cànan*. Inverness: Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- ▶ Munro, G., Mac an Tàilleir, I. & Armstrong, T. (2011) *Cor na Gàidhlig ann an Siabost; Barail agus Comas Cànan ann an Siabost/The State of Gaelic in Shawbost; Language Attitudes and Abilities in Shawbost*. Inverness: Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- ▶ MacKinnon, Kenneth (2006). The Western Isles Language Plan: Gaelic to English language shi1972–2001, in MacLeod, Wilson (ed) *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press
- ▶ Fujita, Emily (2010a). Ideologies and experiences of literacy in interactions Fujita, Emily (2010b). Ideology, affect, and socialization in language shift and revitalization: The experiences of adults learning Gaelic in the Western Isles of Scotland. *Language in Society* 39, 27–64.

Learning from other contexts and methodologies

- ▶ The condition of the Irish Gaeltacht
- ▶ Status bearing but fragile and endangered
- ▶ Language planning: more aspirational than societal



NUASHONRÚ AR AN STAIDÉAR CUIMSITHEACH TEANGEOLAÍOCH
AR ÚSÁID NA GAELIGE SA GHAELTACHT: 2006–2011



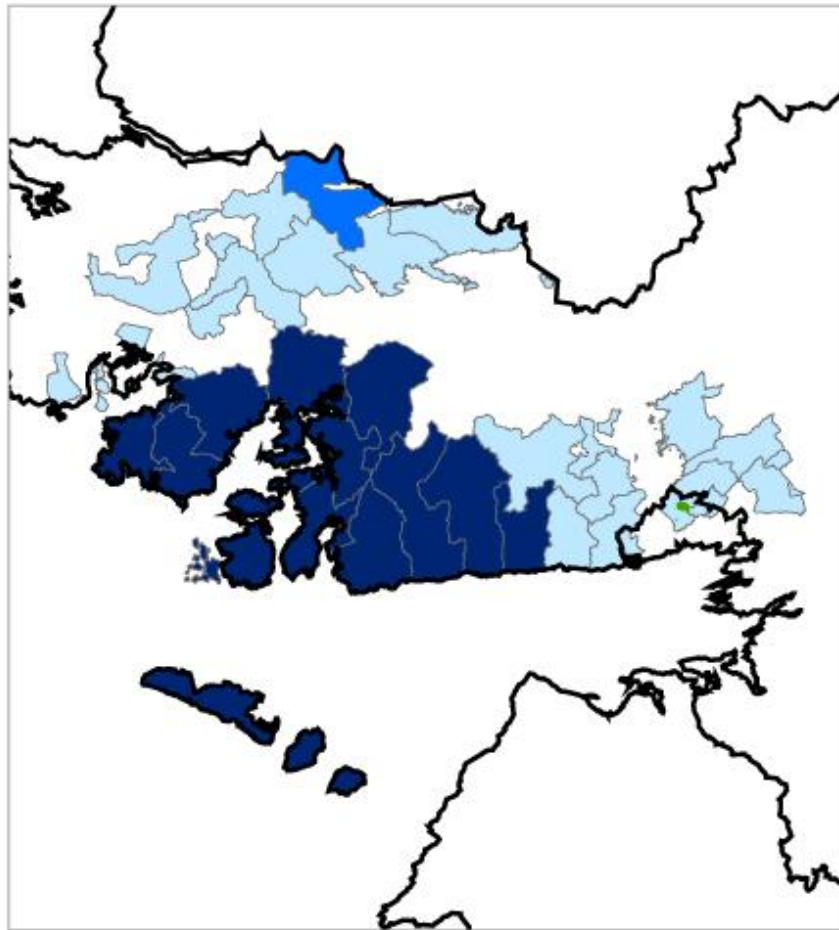
Conchúr Ó Giollagáin & Martin Charlton
2015

Minority speaker groups need to be able to protect the social density of active speakers

Ó Giollagáin and Charlton 2015

Update of Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the Gaeltacht: 2006-2011.
(New CLS 2015)

Catagóirí Gaeltachta: Gaillimh Galway 2011 Language Categories

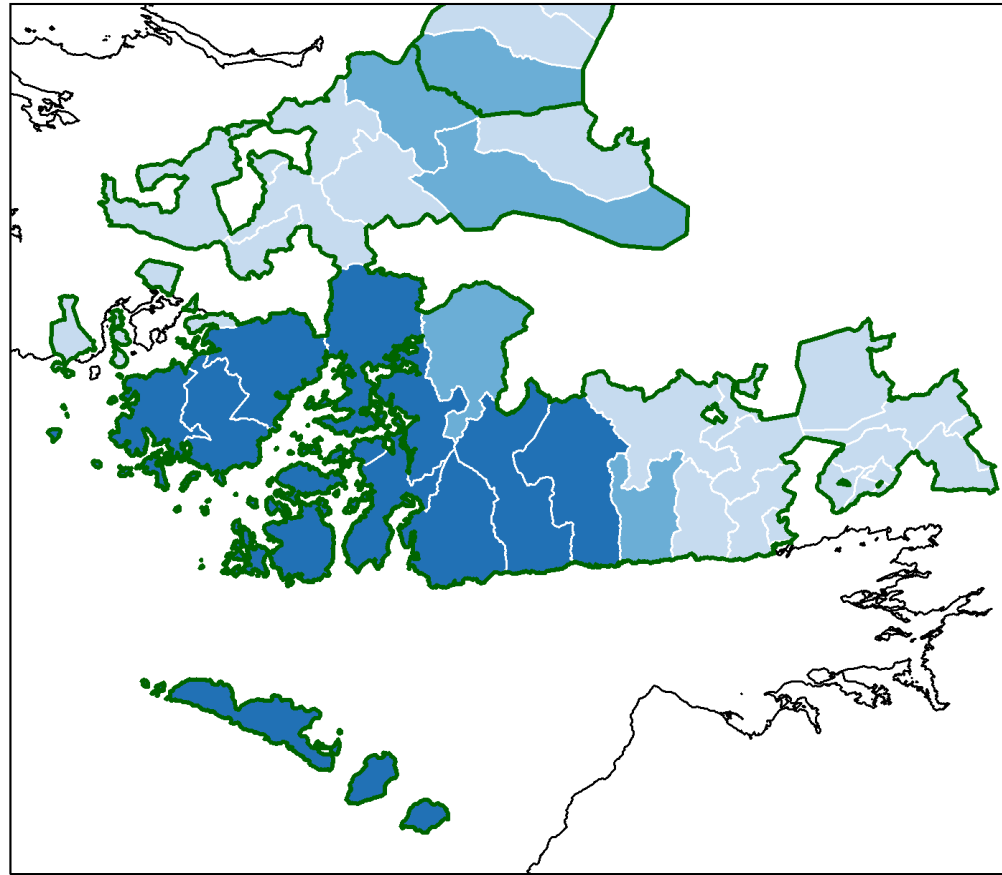


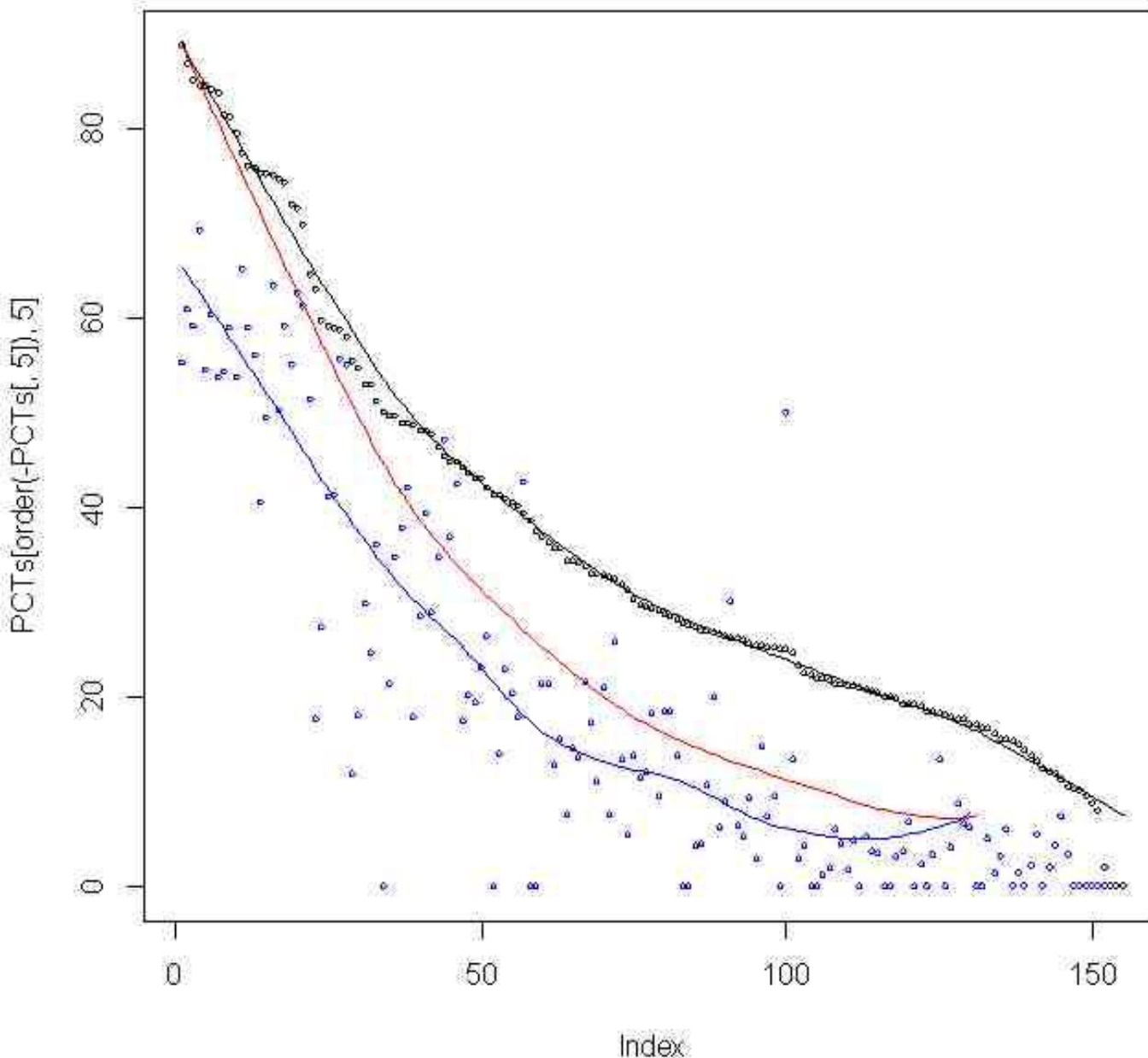
%

< 44.00 43.99 - 66.99 ≥ 67.00



1:900,000





New CLS 2015:
2011 Census
Language Data:
Vitality Index

● = % Ir. Sp.s in EDs
● = >18yr. Ir. Sp.s
● = <18yr. Ir. Sp.s
(outside educational
system)

Distribution of daily Irish
speakers' data across 155
Gaeltacht EDs.

An Chonair Chaoch

An Mionteangachas
sa Dátheangachas

Eag: Ciarán Lenoach,
Conchúr Ó Giollagáin
& Brian Ó Curnáin



Lenoach, C. agus Ó
Giollagáin, C., B. Ó
Curnáin. (2012).

*An Chonair Chaoch: an
Mionteangachas sa
Dátheangachas.*

Cois Fharraige:
Leabhar Breac.

*[The minority language
condition in
bilingualism]*

Iniúchadh ar an gCumas Dátheangach

An sealbhú teanga i measc ghluín óg na Gaeltachta

Analysis of Bilingual Competence

Language acquisition among young people in the Gaeltacht

Tamás Péterváry • Brian Ó Curnáin

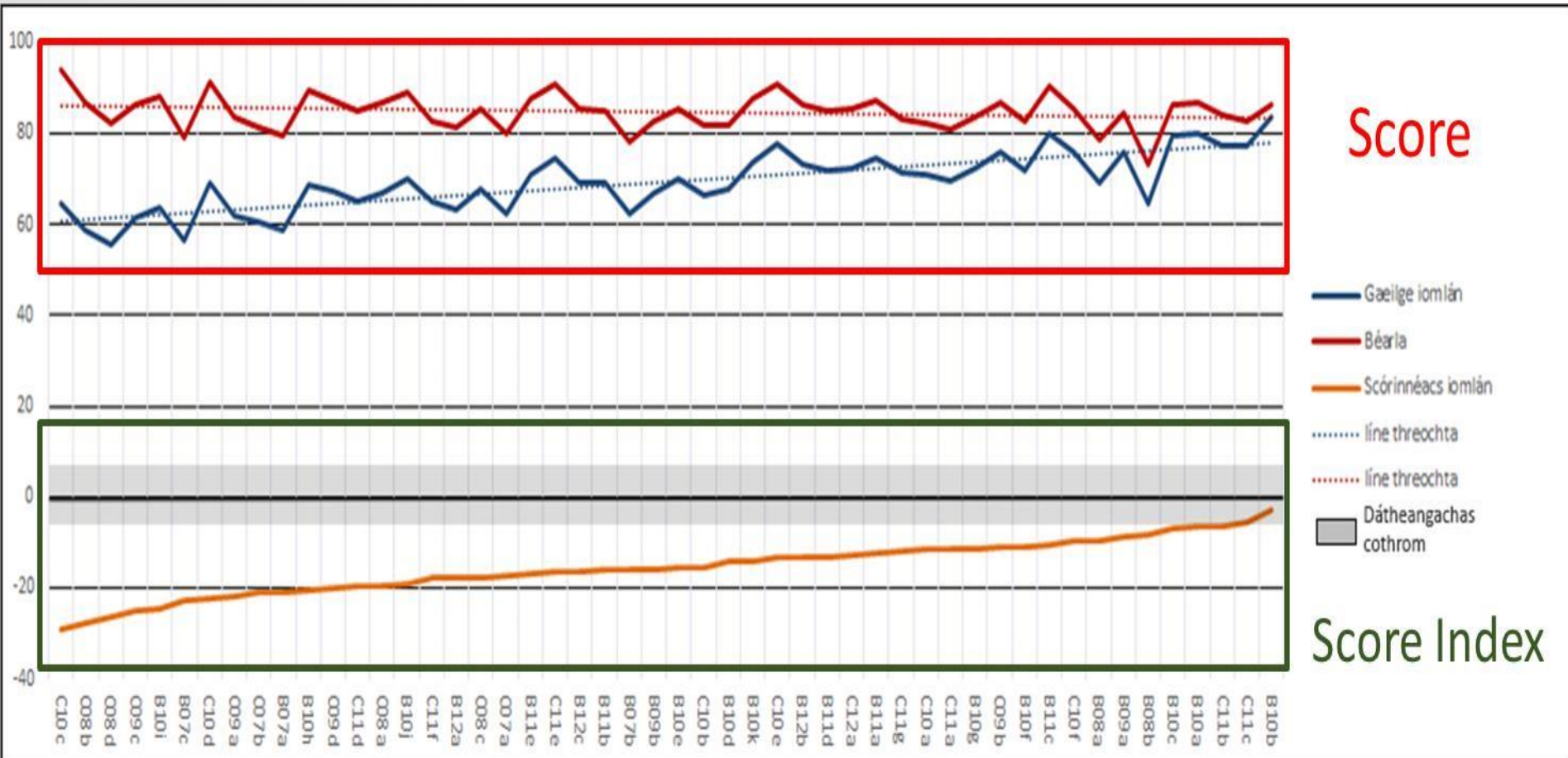
Conchúr Ó Giollagáin • Jerome Sheahan



Non-optimal attainment in minority language under the prevailing conditions of minority bilingual acquisition, i.e. unbalanced minority and uni-directional bilingualism.

ICD/ABC 2014

Score: Irish – English → Score Index



Developing research agenda to address these research spheres

- ▶ Streamline Soillse structures to facilitate development of projects
- ▶ Encourage projects dealing with interrelated themes across spheres of research – complexity of the minority language condition
- ▶ Engaging in a progressive manner with the minority language community in a dynamic exchange of insights arising from research outputs and community activities

Priorities

1. **Baseline data** of speaker typologies in native speaking communities (Project in the Isles)
2. Research into developing a **language planning model** which has the capacity to integrate the L1 and L2 experience of Gàidhlig (Research Strategy for Gàidhlig)
3. **Develop strategic ambition** for the revitalisation of Gàidhlig: strategic analysis regarding the coordination of efforts of the Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Scottish Funding Council, Universities, development agencies and other public bodies to support a research agenda for Gàidhlig in tandem with development agenda for a community of speakers throughout Scotland (Research Strategy for Gàidhlig)

Project in the Isles

- ▶ **Module 1:** Preparatory Module – Planning and Review phase and Establishing Statistical Base
- ▶ **Module 2:** Questionnaire-based survey administered in pre-schools to assess family language practice of infant age cohort
- ▶ **Module 3:** Demographic survey of the sociolinguistic dynamic in 4 indicative Gàidhlig-speaking communities
- ▶ **Module 4:** Questionnaire-based quantitative survey of the language attitudes, reported abilities and practices and family sociolinguistic background of teenagers in the 4 secondary schools in the Isles
- ▶ **Module 5:** Public and official consultation on language aspiration and policy concerns for the Isles
- ▶ **Module 6:** Integration of L1 and L2 language planning practices as a model for language initiatives in the Isles
- ▶ **Module 7:** The write-up, reporting phase

**Mòran taing!
Go raibh maith agaibh!**

