The adult learner in Gaelic language-in-education policy: Language revitalisation and the CEFR

Nicola Carty

European Journal of Language Policy, Volume 6, Issue 2, Autumn 2014,
pp. 195-217 (Article)

Published by Liverpool University Press

➔ For additional information about this article
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/565544>

The adult learner in Gaelic language-in-education policy

Language revitalisation and the CEFR

Nicola Carty

University of Glasgow
n.carty.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Abstract

In Scotland, as in the UK as a whole, multilingual education is becoming an important priority. An additional political priority in Scotland is the revitalisation of Scottish Gaelic after centuries of decline. At the intersection of these priority areas lies Gaelic language-in-education policy (LEP). However, the potential of Gaelic LEP to contribute to language revitalisation is not currently being fulfilled. This paper discusses some of the issues surrounding LEP in relation to adult learners of Gaelic. In this paper, I argue that findings from second language acquisition (SLA) research should play a more prominent role in LEP. This discussion is embedded in the context of Gaelic language revitalisation. Through bringing together these traditionally distinct areas of language studies, shortcomings in Gaelic LEP – particularly in terms of curriculum and methods and materials design – can be overcome.

Keywords: Language-in-education policy; language revitalisation; second language acquisition (SLA); Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR); Gaelic

1. Introduction¹

Scottish Gaelic (hereafter ‘Gaelic’) language revitalisation is high on the Scottish Government’s agenda. Gaelic language acquisition is considered to have a major role to play in this revitalisation effort. As I will discuss, however, current provision does not yet fully allow Gaelic learners to fulfil their role as

1. This research was supported by Soillse – the national network for the maintenance and revitalisation of the Gaelic language and culture. I am most grateful to the two anonymous reviewers and Dr Mark McConville for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article: any shortcomings are my own.

agents of language revitalisation. I argue in this paper that changes in policy surrounding Gaelic language acquisition could not only benefit Gaelic learners but could also have a positive effect on language revitalisation in general. I first present language revitalisation policy in Scotland. This is followed by an overview of Scottish language-in-education policy (LEP), and the challenges this poses to Gaelic learners. Finally, I propose a model for the development of a framework for Gaelic for Adults² teaching, learning and testing which could directly address these challenges. I argue for the framework to be modelled on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), and that it should take into account the formal- and socio-linguistic context of Gaelic. By doing this, I aim to show the important role second language acquisition (SLA) research can play in Gaelic language planning and policy.

2. Gaelic and language revitalisation

Since the eighteenth century, Scottish Gaelic has been in a state of serious decline. According to the latest available census results (2011), it is spoken by 1.08 per cent of the population of Scotland: this figure represents less of a decrease in speaker numbers than those reported in previous years and it is an encouraging development. The Scottish Government attributes this slowing of the decline in speaker numbers to official measures put in place under contemporary language policy in Scotland, a major aim of which is to revitalise Gaelic as a national language and reverse centuries of language shift from Gaelic to English (Scottish Government 2013).

2.1 *Gaelic language policy and planning*

Bòrd na Gàidhlig (The Gaelic Language Board) is the non-departmental public body charged with the responsibility for implementing the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act (2005), which was passed “with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language”. Bòrd na Gàidhlig fulfils this role primarily through the National Plan for Gaelic 2007–2012 (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2007), and the National Gaelic Language Plan 2012–2017 (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2012). These are official strategies designed to reverse language shift, by “stabilising and

2. The term ‘Gaelic for Adults’ was originally coined by McLeod, Pollock and MacCaluim (2010) but has not yet been adopted by the majority of policymakers or Gaelic education providers.

then ultimately increasing the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland” (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2007: 9).

There is an implicit nod in the national plans towards Strubell’s (1998) Catherine Wheel model, which sees reversing language shift as a self-perpetuating cyclical process of language acquisition and use (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Strubell’s Catherine Wheel

Note: Alphabetical ordering is employed here for the purposes of reference and is not meant to imply that (a) is the starting point.

Developed with reference to Catalan, the model proposes that intervention at any stage through the provision of minority language education, media and public services will set the Catherine Wheel in perpetual motion. The wheel can function in forward and reverse motion, and each stage may influence all other stages. However, as Strubell acknowledges (1998: 165), multiple and repeated interventions are crucial, to prevent progress being “counteracted by opposing trends or forces”, including sociological, economic and political factors that may favour the use of the dominant language.

Discussing Strubell’s Catherine Wheel with reference to Irish and Gaelic, Walsh and McLeod (2008) argue that in circumstances in which all users of the minority language are bilingual, the provision of goods and services in that language will not necessarily lead to their uptake. Similarly, Strubell (1998) acknowledges that products and services made available in Catalan usually arrive onto a market already saturated by Spanish language products and services, reducing the need to consume them in Catalan. Walsh and McLeod (2008) also highlight the importance of providing minority language users

with real choice in terms of language use. Citing the example of organisations offering only frontline services – e.g. answering the telephone – in Irish, they emphasise that despite appearances, options for using Irish may be limited, which will limit the functionality of the Catherine Wheel. In this respect, then, it is important to ensure that intervention by policymakers adequately addresses the sociological circumstances in which the minority language exists and manages policies accordingly (see below, section 4.4.3, for a discussion of this question in relation to Gaelic LEP).

In addition, Cooper's tripartite division of language planning into status planning, corpus planning and acquisition planning (1989) is clearly an influence on both national plans, which explicitly classify Gaelic language planning into four levels of activity: acquisition, usage, status and corpus. Acquisition focuses on both first and second language acquisition. Activities falling under the domain of usage aim to facilitate the use of Gaelic as a default mode of communication in private and public domains. Status activities aim to enhance the prestige, visibility and relevance of Gaelic. Corpus activities focus on the development of new terminology, dictionaries and Gaelic grammars, and on language standardisation.

Acquisition is presented as the most important element of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's plans, with Gaelic learners described as "vital for the future of Gaelic in Scotland" (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2012: 18). In what follows, I critically assess the extent to which Gaelic language policy addresses acquisition and suggest means of developing policy so as to enhance opportunities for adult learners of Gaelic.

3 Language-in-education policy

Acquisition planning outwith the home is implemented through Scottish LEP. LEP lies at the intersection between language policy and education policy, and consists of eight key areas:

- Access policy: who studies what languages, at what levels, and for how long;
- Resourcing policy: how to finance LEP;
- Curriculum policy: how and by whom curricula are developed;
- Methods and materials policy: what teaching methods and materials are prescribed and implemented;
- Personnel policy: how to manage teacher training;
- Teacher-led policy: the involvement of teachers in decisions about LEP;

- Community policy: the involvement of the community in decisions about LEP; and
- Evaluation policy: the criteria used to measure the impact of LEP (Baldauf Jr, Lee and Zhao 2008).

In assessing Gaelic LEP, this paper addresses intervention in the Catherine Wheel on either side of stage (b) (see Figure 1). Intervention in the Catherine Wheel would apply to all of the key LEP areas noted above. In the remainder of this paper, however, I focus only on policy changes that can affect curriculum and methods and materials policies through examining the Scottish Government's and Bòrd na Gàidhlig's approach to access policy for adult learners. This is not to suggest that the other areas identified are unimportant. Rather, I suggest that curriculum and methods and materials policies are the most relevant in terms of the model proposed in section 4. For discussion and analyses of other key areas, the reader is referred to McLeod, Pollock and MacCaluim 2010, McEwan-Fujita 2010 and 2012, Walsh and McLeod 2008, and Wells 2011.

3.1 *Gaelic in Scottish LEP*

In 2008 and 2013, the Scottish Qualifications Authority³ launched a number of curricula and National Qualifications in modern languages, including Gaelic for non-native speakers. It is encouraging that Gaelic has been included in these new qualifications; this suggests a recognition of Gaelic as a relevant contemporary language and it ensures minimum standards in curriculum policy. Learners are given the opportunity to develop their skills in language production and reception, through task-based activities such as email writing, and reviews of radio dramas. They are also encouraged to develop skills in body language and other discourse conventions that may differ from those in their first language(s).⁴

However, the National Qualifications are aimed at children and adults alike, despite evidence of the cognitive and social differences between age groups that affect language acquisition (cf. DeKeyser 2013 for a recent overview). In addition, there are problems with this 'one size fits all' approach to language

3. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is the non-departmental public body responsible for accrediting, developing and awarding educational qualifications. The three main groups of qualifications the SQA is responsible for are the National Qualifications (taken by secondary school and college students), Higher National Qualifications (taken by college students), and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (work-based qualifications). National Qualifications are available at seven levels, beginning with Stage 1 and advancing to Advanced Higher.

4. The interested reader can find further information about the features of these courses common to all languages at: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45669.html> [accessed 16 August 2014].

teaching in terms of (socio)linguistic considerations, in that the suggested learning activities at each level on the National Qualifications hierarchy do not account for the restrictions on domains of use for minority languages. For example, at National 4 on the National Qualifications hierarchy, one suggested learning activity is based around the use of the target language in a developing country in which it is spoken (Scottish Qualifications Authority 2014). This task is suggested for all modern languages, including Gaelic (Scottish Qualifications Authority 2013). Gaelic functions as a community language in only Scotland and Canada, and the inclusion of content of this kind would therefore be sociolinguistically inappropriate. Although the course support notes do not require the use of this learning task, a more suitable equivalent for Gaelic is not proposed. The importance of recognising sociolinguistic concerns has also been highlighted in the context of Irish (Siuán Ní Mhaonaigh, director of Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge, personal communication) and other European regional and minority languages (Lotti 2007). Content becomes more relevant at higher levels of the hierarchy. But with evidence that most learners do not progress beyond beginner levels of Gaelic proficiency (Comunn na Gàidhlig and Comunn Luchd Ionnsachaidh 1992; MacCaluim 2007, McLeod, Pollock and MacCaluim 2010), the failure to include relevant course content at lower units is worrying: learners may not have sufficient opportunity to use the language they are acquiring, which would be a major obstacle at all stages of the Catherine Wheel.

Furthermore, the “productive grammar grids” which outline the grammatical content that should be covered at each learning stage are identical for all languages. This may be especially problematic for Gaelic learners, given the widely held view that the inherent structural difficulty of the language is an impediment to learning (McLeod, Pollock and MacCaluim 2010). To address this concern, the productive grammar grids for Gaelic might be adapted to facilitate the acquisition of features of Gaelic that learners find particularly challenging (see below, section 4.3.2). In short, LEP could benefit from the adoption of new policies based on research into SLA and sociolinguistics.

3.2 *LEP targeted specifically at Gaelic (Gaelic LEP)*

Gaelic LEP straddles the boundaries between general LEP and Gaelic revitalisation policy. Bòrd na Gàidhlig has invested heavily in researching and promoting Gaelic learning (cf., e.g., Galloway 2010; McLeod, Pollock and MacCaluim 2010; O'Hanlon, McLeod and Paterson 2010). Funding and resources, however, have tended to be directed towards Gaelic in primary and secondary education (McLeod, Pollock and MacCaluim 2010), despite Bòrd na

Gàidhlig's stated intention of increasing the number of adult learners by 50 per cent to 3,000 by 2017 (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2012). Bòrd na Gàidhlig claims it will meet this target through: the extension of access to and participation in Gaelic language learning; the development of "good resources"; and the enhancement of the capacity of adult learning institutions to provide Gaelic tuition (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2012: 26). How or by whom these measures should be carried out is not specified. Furthermore, as I discuss in the section below, the solutions Bòrd na Gàidhlig have provided thus far have only partially resolved the issues identified by a number of Gaelic policy researchers. For this reason, I suggest below a means of fulfilling these policy aims.

3.2.1 Assessments of Gaelic LEP and its relationship to adult learners

MacCaluim's study (2007) is the most comprehensive study of the role of adult learners in reversing Gaelic language shift and his conclusion is cause for concern:

adult learners of Gaelic have a great potential to contribute to reversing language shift (but) this potential is not being fulfilled at present (MacCaluim 2007: 232).

This is argued to be the result of an adult Gaelic learning infrastructure which is "fragmented, patchy, uncoordinated, poorly promoted, inadequately funded and often lacking in professional rigour" (McLeod, Pollock and MacCaluim 2010: 54). The discussion of the state of Gaelic for Adults in Scotland in McLeod, Pollock and MacCaluim 2010 indicates major problems in a number of Gaelic LEP domains, including resourcing policy, curriculum policy, methods and materials policy, and personnel policy. These findings echo similar criticisms first made in the 1990s (Comunn na Gàidhlig and Comunn Luchd Ionnsachaidh 1992), on the basis of research carried out with Gaelic learners and teachers. Few of the recommendations made by teachers at that time were implemented, a fact which seems to contradict Bòrd na Gàidhlig's statements on the importance of adult learners of Gaelic.

Recent years have brought improvements in methods and materials policy in particular – such as the development of online and broadcast media learning resources, as well as textbooks and dictionaries for learners. There have also been two important developments in curriculum policy, in the form of Ùlpan and the Sgèilichean Sgilean Càinain ('language skills scales').

3.2.1.1 Ùlpan

Ùlpan is at the heart of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's adult Gaelic LEP. It is based on language teaching models employed in Israel and Wales ('Ùlpan' and 'Wlpan', respectively). The major benefits of the Ùlpan approach lie in personnel,

curriculum, and methods and materials policies: tutors must undergo training; the formal structure of the programme allows students to gauge their progress against a fixed scale; and all materials are developed and supplied by Deiseal, the private company behind Ùlpan's development.

Essentially, Ùlpan is an audiolingual approach to language teaching, in which speaking and listening are emphasised and drilling techniques are the main teaching method. The use of audiolingual methods, however, has been in decline since the 1960s. In part, this was a response to Chomskyan linguistic theories, but in addition, practitioners were beginning to find that students were not able to reproduce the skills acquired in the classroom in real-life contexts (Richards and Rogers 2001).

In Israel, Ulpan was developed such that it is more readily available to young, highly educated people who are dependent on the acquisition of Hebrew for work purposes (Rosenbaum 1983). This is almost the opposite of the key demographic of Gaelic learners (MacCaluim 2007), and there is no basis for assuming that the methods employed with the former will be effective with the latter. In Wales, where Wlpan classes have been running since the 1980s, the need to integrate it with other teaching methods and opportunities for language use has been stressed (Morris 2000) in a way that has not been addressed in Scotland. This is despite recommendations from Deiseal that students using their method be exposed to Gaelic through other means in addition to attending Ùlpan classes (Deiseal 2013). There is as yet no evidence that Ùlpan is effective as a standalone method in the Gaelic context. This situation is worrying indeed, in light of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's emphasis on Ùlpan, and suggests an imbalance between Gaelic LEP and empirical research findings.

3.2.1.2 *The Sgèilichean Sgilean Cànan*

Bòrd na Gàidhlig has recently supported the development of the Sgèilichean Sgilean Cànan ('language skills scales'): these are Gaelic proficiency scales designed for use by adult native speakers and by adult and child learners (Munro et al. 2012). The Sgèilichean Sgilean Cànan Luchd-ionnsachaidh Inbheach ('adult learners' language skills scale') is the first of its kind for adult learners and provides a much-needed treatment of how adult proficiency in Gaelic can be characterised.

This proficiency scale is not unproblematic, however. The authors take an unusual stance on the CEFR, claiming that it is far too detailed and complicated (Munro et al. 2012).⁵ This contradicts many other perspectives on

5. "Bhathar den bheachd gun robh sgèilean CEFR fada ro mhionaideach is ro thoinnte" (Munro et al. 2012: 8).

the CEFR (see discussion of the CEFR below; Alderson et al. 2006; Alderson 2007), and has produced a proficiency scale, which, while straightforward and clearly relevant to Gaelic, lacks detail. For example, at level B1, the authors advise that in terms of vocabulary, learners should have a firm grasp of synonyms, idioms and modern special vocabulary, but do not provide examples of what such vocabulary would actually entail.⁶ The scale has no formal weight, in that new courses are not required to be aligned to it, nor have courses been developed around its specifications. Finally, the content of the scale is based on the intuitions of one of the authors, an experienced Gaelic teacher: classroom expertise undoubtedly has a place in proficiency scale design, but scales without empirical bases have been criticised for lacking precision (Fulcher 1996; Fulcher 2004; Shohamy 1990), and recommendations for proficiency scales based on corpus data are increasing (e.g. Osborne 2011; Taylor and Barker 2008).

3.2.2 Summary and implications of issues in Gaelic LEP

It is clear, then, that there are issues in Gaelic LEP, particularly in terms of curriculum and methods and materials policy. In addition, adult learners of Gaelic have identified personal commitments, such as work or family life, as further barriers to their learning (McLeod, Pollock and MacCaluim 2010; Carty, forthcoming). Although these experiences may be shared by adult learners of other languages (Nunan and Benson 2005), they serve to emphasise the need for careful management of Gaelic LEP, so that learning can be facilitated even under challenging circumstances.

4 A framework to be used for the development of Gaelic LEP

As is indicated above in section 3.2.1, current teaching strategies and provisions for learners have to date not been as successful as they might be in increasing numbers of highly proficient adult learners. I have suggested that a Gaelic for Adults framework could help resolve some of the problems contributing to limited proficiency among adult learners. This could also benefit the revitalisation effort in general, in line with the predictions made by Strubell's Catherine Wheel (1998), and Fishman's theory of Reversing Language Shift

6. "Tagadh math de cho-fhacail, de ghnàthasan cainnte agus de bhriathrachas sònraichte an latha an-diugh" (Munro et al. 2012: 13).

(1991), which sees adult acquisition of a minority language as a major step in language revitalisation.

4.1 The case for a language learning framework

Other Celtic languages have seen the benefits of the establishment of formal language learning frameworks for adults. The Welsh for Adults programme was established in 2006, and included the development of a certification system for Welsh language learning based on the CEFR and Association of Language Testers in Europe framework. Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG; or European Certificate in Irish) was launched in 2005 and is also based on the CEFR. It has led to the development of specially designed teaching materials for the instruction of Irish and of a certificate in Teaching Irish to Adults, thus ensuring high quality in the field of Irish for adults. LEP issues in Wales and Ireland partly surround access, curriculum, methods and materials, and teacher-led and community policies. As identified above in sections 3.1 and 3.2, these policy issues also affect Gaelic, and their part resolution in Wales and Ireland through the introduction of language learning frameworks strengthens the case for the development of such a framework for Gaelic.

4.1.1 Welsh for Adults

The Welsh for Adults programme has been very successful in the teaching of Welsh to adult learners, in part due to the successful interaction of community groups, teachers and government in the development of high quality teaching materials and learning opportunities (Mac Giolla Chríost et al. 2012). The Welsh for Adults framework is a crucial part of the programme, as it ensures that those learning Welsh are placed in classes of a suitable level. Teaching and learning resources developed for use in the Welsh for Adults programme have enhanced consistency in classes provided at different institutions, supported progression through the different levels in the framework, and have been well received by teachers (Old Bell 3, 2011), addressing issues in curriculum, methods and materials, and teacher-led policies. Again, given the prevalence of these problems in the Gaelic context (see section 3 above), it is worth considering the Welsh model as a possibility for Gaelic. In addition, through a qualification scheme, Welsh learners are provided with the opportunity to gain official recognition for their language learning efforts. Those who pass Welsh language examinations are noted to have been encouraged by their success to continue learning, although the examinations are not compulsory (Old Bell 3, 2011). A similar measure might therefore be considered for Gaelic, given the

relatively low numbers of Gaelic learners who progress past beginner level (see above, section 3.1).

4.1.2 *Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge*

TEG has been in operation since 2005. Candidates may sit one of six exams, corresponding to levels A1 to C2 of the CEFR. Prior to the introduction of TEG, challenges facing adult learners of Irish included classes being too frequently aimed at beginners, or lower intermediate learners, and having no set syllabus or specific levels of achievement against which learners could mark and track their progress. As is discussed above in section 3.2.1, these challenges are shared by many learners of Gaelic, and their resolution in the Irish context provides a source of valuable lessons.

TEG also considers sociolinguistic variation, with instruction taking place in one of the three main Irish dialects. In pronunciation, learners are not expected to fully master any specific regional accent. However, they are encouraged to master the basic phonetic and prosodic features of Irish, including common diphthongs, the distinction between palatalised and velar consonants, and word stress. Death of regional dialects and dialect levelling have been identified as having potential negative consequences for the future of Gaelic (Lamb 2011). Moreover, some adult learners express preferences in the variety of Gaelic they would like to acquire (Carty, forthcoming). This approach to instruction in regional dialects could be employed in the Gaelic context to address these concerns and preferences.

TEG has so far experienced success, having been awarded the European Language Label in 2006 for its contribution to improving adult learning opportunities in Irish. The number of test takers at all levels has increased dramatically since the first TEG exams in 2005, as Table 1 shows:

Table 1. Test takers at different TEG levels, 2005–2012

Level/Year	2005 ^a	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
A1	14	57	80	132	144	142	149	133
A2	7	10	121	114	107	85	78	71
B1	n/a	21	34	115	144	184	99	59
B2	n/a	4	19	35	50	65	100	129
Total taking exams	21	92	254	396	445	476	426	392

Source: Data from Language Centre (2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d)

* In 2005, tests were only offered at levels A1 and A2.

Despite an overall decline in participant numbers from 2010, it is important to recognise that since then, the number of participants taking exams at level B2 has increased. This suggests a larger number of more proficient Irish speakers, although similar data from level C1 would be needed to confirm this hypothesis. In recognition of the limited progression of many learners of Gaelic (see above, section 3.1), such confirmation would be a very strong argument in favour of the development of a framework for Gaelic learning.

4.2 Linking the framework to the CEFR

A robust framework could centre on proficiency scales based on empirical observations around adult language acquisition. I discuss the development of such scales in the following sections. Such a framework could also be useful for curriculum developers, test developers, and those interested in an independent Gaelic language qualification. In the first instance, I propose that the framework be modelled on the CEFR.

The CEFR is available in 38 languages. Despite its widespread popularity, it is not flawless: Fulcher (2004), for instance, argues that the CEFR is overly political in nature, aiming at common European citizenship rather than the measurement of language skills. Hawkey and Barker (2004) note that there is little consideration paid to syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic abilities in the second language at higher levels. Furthermore, because of its purpose as a general frame of reference, descriptors for each of its six levels tend to use vague, poorly defined terms and language (Alderson, 2007; Carty 2012). It seems that for these reasons, the CEFR's authors stress that it should be used as a model, rather than a fixed framework (Council of Europe 2001). Similarly, Fulcher recommends taking the CEFR as a “heuristic that may help curriculum developers or test developers think about what they may eventually include in a framework” (Fulcher 2004: 260, citing email communication from Bernard Spolsky to LTEST-L, March 2004). It is this view of the CEFR as a guiding heuristic that is adopted here.

Moreover, the political nature of the CEFR (Fulcher 2004) could prove to be beneficial for Gaelic: if it is the case that the CEFR serves political and social agenda, then the status of Gaelic could benefit by being placed in the same social and political position – at least in the field of language education – as other European languages (Lotti 2007).

4.3 *Starting points for the development of a Gaelic proficiency scale*

The central part of the Gaelic for Adults framework would be proficiency scales modelled on those found in the CEFR. They will nonetheless include detail specific to Gaelic and the needs of Gaelic learners. Incorporating existing means of assessing Gaelic proficiency into the new framework would result in a collaborative enterprise based on a wealth of expertise. Two useful publicly available existing measures are found in the Sgèilichean Sgilean Càinain (Munro et al. 2012).

4.3.1 *An Sgèile Sgilean Càinain Luchd-ionnsachaidh (adult learners' language skills scale)*

The proficiency specifications in the existing Gaelic proficiency scale for adult learners (Munro et al. 2012) are deliberately broad, so as to allow for the framework's use by different individuals and for different purposes (Tim Armstrong, Soillse research fellow, University of the Highlands and Islands, personal communication). This implies that the scale can prepare the ground for the development of a more comprehensive, in-depth, empirically validated framework which can be used in curriculum and methods and materials policies. In addition, the fact that these specifications were built on the expert intuitions of one of the authors may lend a degree of insight that empirical research does not necessarily capture.

4.3.2 The Minority Language Skills Scale

Of further interest is the Minority Language Skills Scale used by Munro et al. (2012) as a means of assessing the minority language skills of bilingual speakers of a minority–majority language pair. This scale was developed for use by L1 minority language speakers, rather than L2 users per se, and ranges from minority language monolingualism (point 1), to majority language monolingualism (point 10), with varying degrees of preference towards each language in between.

This scale can potentially be adapted to the learner context. If we take the starting point for learners to be the same as those who are monolingual in the majority language, second language proficiency could be considered to increase as we move up the scale towards point 1. Of course, certain modifications would be required to make the scale appropriate for use by Gaelic learners. But given that there may be little or no difference between highly proficient L2 speakers and L1 speakers in productive language skills (e.g. Abrahamsson

and Hyldenstam 2009; Ioup et al. 1994; Marinova-Todd 2003; Hopp 2010), it is very likely that there is an overlap between the abilities of these two groups. Similarly, learners with lower proficiency could well prove to be as proficient as L1 speakers who are less comfortable in the minority language and who would therefore be placed at a lower point on the scale, although this is a question for further research.

In the next section, I discuss how these scales can be built upon using SLA and sociolinguistic research.

4.4 Key considerations in framework development

This paper argues that in order for LEP to be maximally effective, it should incorporate findings from SLA research and consider the sociolinguistic peculiarities of the languages to which it is being applied. SLA research can provide policymakers with empirical evidence on which to base policies, which will enhance their real-world applicability. The importance of incorporating well-founded empirical observations into language policymaking has been highlighted by Fishman (2006), Grenoble and Whaley (2006), and Williams (2013): although evidence-based policies carry no guarantee of success, they at least carry the weight of practical experience.

Considering the benefits well-designed frameworks have brought to minority language learning in other contexts (see above, section 4.1; and Lotti 2007), it would be useful for the Gaelic framework to:

- emphasise communicative and formal linguistic ability and thus relate directly to acquisition in the national plans for Gaelic;
- reflect formal linguistic reality, which relates to usage and acquisition in the national plans;
- recognise the sociolinguistic status of Gaelic as a minority language, which coincides with considerations of status and usage in the national plans; and
- recognise the unique circumstances and interests of adult learners of additional languages, which in part corresponds to national plan considerations of usage.

The fact that each of these points relates to the national plans for Gaelic also indicates how a language learning framework can have a positive impact on language revitalisation policy in general. I discuss each of these points in turn below, although it will become clear that they are interwoven.

4.4.1 *Emphasising communicative and formal linguistic ability*

Frameworks like the CEFR and Ùlpan are action-orientated in that they emphasise communication and language outcomes over knowledge of formal linguistic features. Communicative competence, however, has also been recognised as having an important relationship to formal knowledge of language (cf. McNamara 1990; de Jong and van Ginkel 1992; de Jong et al. 2012; Bartning, Martin and Vedder 2010; Canale and Swain 1980). There is also evidence that adults in classroom environments learn more effectively when there is a focus on structure in addition to communication (DeKeyser 2012; Ellis 2008). A carefully designed Gaelic for Adults framework will incorporate both formal and functional aspects of language, thus ensuring that learners benefit from key findings in SLA research on the cognitive and social processes behind language acquisition. Research currently being undertaken by the author explores how formal aspects of language such as syntactic complexity and accuracy can be aligned with functional aspects to ensure detailed, well-rounded descriptions of Gaelic proficiency at different levels. Similar research has already been carried out as part of the Second Language Acquisition and Testing in Europe network for other European languages (cf. Bartning, Martin and Vedder 2010).

4.4.2 *Reflecting formal linguistic reality*

Reflecting formal linguistic reality refers to a consideration of the formal grammatical and phonological makeup of Gaelic. By carrying out corpus-based research, those designing the Gaelic framework could ensure that what the Gaelic learners are expected to produce is indeed reflective of learner Gaelic. Without clear specifications as to what we can expect learners to achieve, proficiency scales can be of limited use to teachers and learners hoping to advance from one level to the next (Long, Gor and Jackson 2012). The approach taken to the development of the proposed framework could incorporate the data-driven approach advocated by Fulcher (1996), for example, and adopted in projects such as English Profile.⁷ The data-driven approach bases framework and proficiency scale construction on corpora of learner output (see also section 3.2.1.2 above).

As noted above in section 3.1, many Gaelic learners view the formal structure of Gaelic as an impediment to their learning (McLeod, Pollock and MacCaluim 2010); by including explicit reference to challenging structural features, a

7. The English Profile is a project developing a set of Reference Level Descriptions for English. Further information is available at: <http://www.englishprofile.org> (accessed 25 August 2014).

Gaelic for Adults framework could help learners overcome these impediments by serving as a basis for Gaelic curriculum and methods and materials policies. Features deemed to be particularly challenging could be ascertained through survey data and examination of developmental sequences in Gaelic SLA. Some features already found to be challenging for Gaelic learners are the non-verbal copula, the prepositional pronoun system, and the genitive case (Carty, unpublished data; see Lamb 2008 for a detailed grammatical description of Gaelic).

4.4.3 Recognising the sociolinguistic status of Gaelic as a minority language

A well-designed Gaelic for Adults framework might also incorporate tasks and language that are functional for Gaelic learners at all levels. Given the status of Gaelic as a minority language, there are restrictions on the domains in which it can be used (see above, section 2.1). Data collected on the purposes for which learners intend, and have the opportunity, to use Gaelic could have implications for curriculum and methods and materials policy. This intention-based approach could be supplemented with data that has been collected on Gaelic use in traditional heartland areas. One such study showed that residents tended more towards the use of Gaelic over English in some circumstances, e.g. at the bank, at social and leisure activity clubs, and at church (Munro, Taylor and Armstrong 2011). It would be helpful for learners to be exposed first to the kind of language that would be useful in these situations; the teaching of language which has a practical value is imperative if learners are to be encouraged to use Gaelic outwith the classroom.

4.4.4 Recognition of the circumstances and interests of adult learners

Aside from sociolinguistic considerations, it is important to bear in mind what opportunities the typical adult learner of a minority language in a non-immersion context will have to use the language and be exposed to it (Baker et al. 2011). Learners with commitments that may affect the amount of time they can spend on language learning could benefit from the incorporation into the framework of a “ramblers’ path” similar to that employed in Welsh for Adults centres: courses following the ramblers path are structured to consider those who are interested in developing their language skills, but cannot commit to regular, intensive instruction.

There is some evidence that adults tend to be more integratively than instrumentally oriented when it comes to Gaelic learning (Milligan, Chalmers and Danson 2011; Carty forthcoming; McLeod, O’Rourke and Dunmore 2014). But course syllabi under the umbrella of the framework may also be developed to

address other purposes for which people learn Gaelic. Some courses of this kind are already available, e.g. the Gaelic for Business course offered by Clì Gàidhlig,⁸ the Scottish Qualifications Authority's Modern Languages for Work Purposes course or the Gaelic Immersion for Teachers course at the University of Strathclyde. However, these courses are not linked to uniform standards and it is therefore difficult to relate or compare them to one another. Nevertheless, developing courses that match the aims and orientations of adult learners may improve their learning experiences and facilitate the learning process.

5 How can a framework affect language revitalisation?

Given that Gaelic LEP falls partly under the remit of Gaelic language policy, it is appropriate that there should be a symbiotic relationship between the two, in that successful developments in Gaelic LEP should impact positively on language revitalisation policy. As observed above, a well-developed Gaelic for Adults framework would be linked to the key priority areas identifiable in both National Plans for Gaelic.

In terms of acquisition, the benefits of a Gaelic for Adults framework are clear: a framework designed to improve the teaching and learning of the language will very likely have a positive effect on learning outcomes. Acquisition does not necessarily entail usage and appropriate measures should be put in place to create and maintain opportunities to use Gaelic (for similar discussions on the learning and use of Welsh and Irish, see Morris 2000; Ó Tuathaigh 2008; Cook 2010). Acquisition does, however, facilitate usage.

A Gaelic for Adults framework could also influence status planning by contributing to a positive image for Gaelic: an officially recognised framework could serve as the basis for Gaelic qualifications and could demonstrate to those with an interest in learning that course curricula and materials are of a recognised standard. Moreover, a higher number of more proficient learners could increase the visibility of the language, as predicted by the Catherine Wheel model.

In addition, a Gaelic for Adults framework could affect corpus planning: basing the framework on a corpus of learner language could also help to inform on language change taking place within the Gaelic L2 speech community. Research in this area has already shown the development of a new

8. Clì Gàidhlig is the Gaelic adult learners' organisation, which aims to: "promote the learning and national status of Gaelic; to disseminate information on Gaelic and Gaelic affairs"; and "to act as the voice of Gaelic learners and non-native speakers" (Clì Gàidhlig, 2012).

variety of “Glasgow Gaelic” among children attending a Gaelic-medium school in Glasgow (Nance 2013), and of differences in noun phrase structure between adult learners in Glasgow and L1 Gaelic speakers in South Uist (Carty and Cole 2012). More adult learner data collected for the development of a Gaelic for Adults framework could broaden the scope of similar research.

6 Conclusion

Gaelic LEP is identified as a key element of Gaelic language revitalisation policy. Nonetheless, as I have discussed, the major policy areas within language education could be better addressed in the Gaelic context. There is consensus that despite the availability of resources for adult learners, these are not of a sufficiently high standard.

The development of a general Gaelic for Adults framework based on the principles outlined above – an emphasis on communicative and formal linguistic ability, a reflection of linguistic reality, a recognition of Gaelic in its sociolinguistic context, and a recognition of the circumstances and interests of adult learners – would be a vital and major step in resolving these issues. By outlining linguistic development in an empirically measured way and incorporating considerations of the sociolinguistic situation in which Gaelic learners find themselves, the Gaelic for Adults framework can become a unifying basis for coordinated curriculum design, materials development, training in specific language skills, and self-assessment measures.

Finally, as I have discussed, a Gaelic for Adults framework could play a central role in Gaelic language policy: by increasing the probability of high language proficiency among adult learners, Strubell’s Catherine Wheel could be set alight for Gaelic. The Gaelic for Adults framework could thus allow adult learners of Gaelic to fulfil their potential as key agents in language revitalisation.

Works cited

- Abrahamsson, N. and Hyltenstam, K. (2009). 'Age of Onset and Nativelikeness in a Second Language: Listener Perception Versus Linguistic Scrutiny', *Language Learning*, 59.2, 249–306.
- Alderson, J. C. (2007). 'The CEFR and the Need for More Research', *The Modern Language Journal*, 91.4, 659–63.
- Alderson, J. C., Figueras, N., Nold, G., North, B., Takala, S. and Tardieu, C. (2006). 'Analysing Tests of Reading and Listening in Relation to the Common European Framework of Reference: The Experience of The Dutch CEFR Construct Project', *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 3: 3–30.
- Baker, C., Andrews, H., Gruffydd, I. and Lewis, G. (2011). 'Adult Language Learning: A Survey of Welsh for Adults in the Context of Language Planning', *Evaluation & Research in Education*, 24.1, 41–59.
- Baldauf Jr, R. B., Li, M. and Zhao, S. (2008). 'Language Acquisition Management Inside and Outside the School', in Spolsky, B. and Hult, F. M. (eds), *The Handbook of Educational Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 233–50.
- Bartning, I., Martin, M. and Vedder, I. (eds) (2010). *Communicative Proficiency and Linguistic Development: Intersections Between SLA and Language Testing Research*. Colchester: European Second Language Association (EUROSLA). Available at: <http://eurosla.org/monographs/EM01/EM01tot.pdf> [accessed 16 August 2014].
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig (2007). *National Plan for Gaelic*. Inverness: Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- (2012). *The National Gaelic Language Plan 2012–17*. Inverness: Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- Canale, M. and Swain, M. (1980). 'Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Testing', *Applied Linguistics*, 1.1: 1–47.
- Carty, N. (2012). 'The Development of Proficiency in Adult L2 Gaelic', in *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig* 7, Glasgow, 23 August.
- Carty, N. (forthcoming). 'Slighean gu fileantas: An Exploratory Study of the Experiences of Gaelic Learners, and a Characterisation of their Proficiency'. PhD thesis, University of Glasgow.
- Carty, N. and Cole, B. (2012). "'They don't speak proper Gaelic": A Comparison of Native Speaker and Learner Varieties of Scottish Gaelic', in *Sociolinguistics Symposium 19*, Freie Universität Berlin, 22 August.
- Clì Gàidhlig (2012). About Clì Gàidhlig. [Online.] Available at <http://www.cli.org.uk/about-us/> [accessed 16 August 2014].
- Comunn na Gàidhlig and Comunn Luchd Ionnsachaidh (1992). *Feumalachdan luchd-ionnsachaidh: Rannsachadh nàiseanta / Provision for Gaelic Learners: National Survey*. Stornoway: Comunn na Gàidhlig.
- Cook, V. (2010). 'Prolegomena to Second Language Learning', in Seedhouse, P., Walsh, S. and Jenks, C. (eds), *Conceptualising 'Learning' in Applied Linguistics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 6–22.
- Cooper, R. L. (1989). *Language Planning and Social Change*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Council of Europe (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available

- at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_en.pdf [accessed 4 April 2013].
- Deiseal (2013). 'Learning: How does Úlpan Work?/Time Commitment'. [Online.] Available at: <http://ulpan.co.uk/Home/Learning#3> [accessed 30 May 2013].
- de Jong, J. H. and van Ginkel, L. W. (1992). 'Dimensions in Oral Foreign Language Proficiency', in Verhoeven, L. and De Jong, J. H. (eds), *The Construct of Language Proficiency: Applications of Psychological Models to Language Assessment*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 187–205.
- de Jong, N. H., Steinel, M. P., Florijn, A. F., Schoonen, R. and Hulstijn, J. H. (2012). 'Facets of Speaking Proficiency', *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 34: 5–34.
- DeKeyser, R. (2012). 'The Facts from Educational and Psychological Research'. Lecture Presented at the Summer School in Bilingualism, Bangor University, July 2012.
- (2013). 'Age Effects in Second Language Learning: Stepping Stones Toward Better Understanding', *Language Learning*, 63(Supplement s1): 52–67.
- Ellis, R. (2008). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fishman, J. (1991). *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Fishman, J. A. (2006). *Do Not Leave Your Language Alone: The Hidden Status Agendas Within Corpus Planning in Language Policy*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Fulcher, G. (1996). 'Does Thick Description Lead to Smart Tests? A Data-Based Approach to Rating Scale Construction', *Language Testing*, 13.2: 208–238.
- (2004). 'Deluded by Artifices? The CEF and Harmonization', *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 1.4: 253–66.
- Galloway, J. (2010). 'Collection and Analysis of Education Statistics'. [Online.] Available at: <http://www.gaidhlig.org.uk/Downloads/Gaelic%20Education%20Data%202011-12.pdf> [accessed 9 February 2011].
- Grenoble, L. A. and Whaley, L. J. (2006). *Saving Languages: An Introduction to Language Revitalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hawkey, R. and Barker, F. (2004). 'Developing a Common Scale for the Assessment of Writing', *Assessing Writing*, 9: 122–59.
- Hopp, H. (2010). 'Ultimate Attainment in L2 Inflection: Performance Similarities Between Non-native and Native Speakers', *Lingua*, 120: 901–931.
- Ioup, G., Boustagui, E., El Tigi, M. and Moselle, M. (1994). 'Reexamining the Critical Period Hypothesis: A Case Study of Successful Adult SLA in a Naturalistic Environment', *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 16: 73–98.
- Lamb, W. (2008). *Scottish Gaelic Speech and Writing: Register Variation in an Endangered Language*. Belfast Studies in Language, Culture and Politics. Belfast: Cló Ollscoil na Banríona.
- (2011). 'Is There a Future for Regional Dialects in Scottish Gaelic?', in *Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland and Ulster Colloquium*, University of Aberdeen, 3 December 2011.
- Long, M. H., Gor, K. and Jackson, S. (2012). 'Linguistic Correlates of Second Language Proficiency', *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 34: 99–126.
- Lotti, B. (2007). *Investigation into the Use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in Regional and Minority Language Education*. Ljouwert,

- The Netherlands: Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning.
- MacCaluim, A. (2007). *Reversing Language Shift: The Social Identity and Role of Scottish Gaelic Learners*. Belfast: Clo Ollscoil na Banriona.
- Mac Giolla Chríost, D., Carlin, P., Davies, S., Fitzpatrick, T., Pyrs Jones, A., Heath-Davies, R., Marshall, J., Morris, S., Price, A., Vanderplank, R., Walter, C. and Wray, A. (2012). 'Welsh for Adults Teaching and Learning Approaches, Methodologies and Resources: A Comprehensive Research Study and Critical Review of the Way Forward'. Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online.] Available at: <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/130424-welsh-adults-teaching-learning-approaches-en.pdf> [accessed 15 January 2013].
- Marinova-Todd, S. H. (2003). 'Know Your Grammar: What the Knowledge of Syntax and Morphology in an L2 Reveals About the Critical Period for Second/ Foreign Language Acquisition', in Garcia Mayo, M. and Garcia-Lecumberri, M. (eds), *Age and the Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language: Theoretical Issues and Field Work*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 59–73.
- McEwan-Fujita, E. (2010). '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: 38.
- (2012). 'Sociolinguistic Mentors and Communities of Practice: A New Proposal for Community-Based Language Revitalization', in *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 7*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow.
- McLeod, W., O'Rourke, B. and Dunmore, S. (2014). "New Speakers" of Gaelic in Edinburgh and Glasgow'. [Online.] Available at: http://www.soillse.ac.uk/downloads/New%20Speakers%20Final%20Report_2_3.pdf [accessed 31 May 2014].
- McLeod, W., Pollock, I. and MacCaluim, A. (2010). *Adult Gaelic Learning in Scotland: Opportunities, Motivations and Challenges*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh.
- McNamara, T. (1990). 'Item Response Theory and the Validation of an ESP Test for Health Professionals', *Language Testing*, 7:1: 52–75.
- Milligan, L., Chalmers, D. and Danson, M. (2011). *Gaelic Language Development Strategy*. Glasgow: Glasgow City Council.
- Morris, S. (2000). 'Adult Education, Language Revival and Language Planning', in Williams, C. H. (ed.), *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, pp. 208–220.
- Munro, G., Armstrong, T. C., Mac an Tàilleir, I., Cormack, M. and McLeod, M. (2012). *Sgèilichean sgilean cànanain*. Sleat, Isle of Skye: Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.
- Munro, G., Taylor, I. and Armstrong, T. (2011). *The State of Gaelic in Shawbost: Language Attitudes and Abilities in Shawbost*. Inverness: Bòrd na Gàidhlig/ Isle of Skye: Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Available at: <http://www.gaidhlig.org.uk/Downloads/The%20state%20of%20Gaelic%20Shawbost.pdf> [accessed 16 August 2014].
- Nance, C. (2013). 'Phonetic Variation, Sound Change, and Identity in Scottish Gaelic'. PhD thesis, University of Glasgow.
- Nunan, D. and Benson, P. (2005). 'Conclusion', in Benson, P. and Nunan, D. (eds), *Learners' Stories: Difference and Diversity in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 150–56.

- O'Hanlon, F., McLeod, W. and Paterson, L. (2010). 'Gaelic-medium Education in Scotland: Choice and Attainment at the Primary and Early Secondary School Stages'. [Online: Edinburgh University School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures.] Available at: <http://www.gaidhlig.org.uk/Downloads/Rannsachadh/CR09-05%20GME%20Choice%20and%20Attainment%202010%20English.pdf> [accessed 15 January 2012].
- Old Bell 3 (2011). *Evaluation of the Welsh for Adults Programme*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
- Osborne, J. (2011). 'Oral Learner Corpora and the Assessment of Fluency in the Common European Framework', in Frankenberg-Garcia, A., Flowerdew, L. and Aston, G. (eds), *New Trends in Corpora and Language Learning*. London: Continuum, pp. 181–97.
- Ó Tuathaigh, G. (2008). 'The State and the Irish Language: An Historical Perspective', in Nic Pháidín, C. and Ó Cearnaigh, S. (eds), *A New View of the Irish Language*. Dublin: Cois Life, pp. 26–42.
- Richards, J. C. and Rogers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosenbaum, Y. (1983). 'Hebrew Adoption Among New Immigrants to Israel: The First Three Years', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 41: 115–30.
- Scottish Government, The (2013). 'Growing Up With Gaelic: 2011 Census Shows a Rise in the Number of Young Gaelic Speakers'. [Online news report.] Available at: <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/A-f%C3%A0s-le-G%C3%A0idhlig-48b.aspx> [accessed 15 June 2014].
- Scottish Qualifications Authority (2013). 'National 4 Gaelic (Learners) Course Support Notes'. [Online.] Available at: http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnit-SupportNotes_N4_Languages_GaelicLearners.pdf [accessed 30 June 2014].
- (2014). 'National 4 Modern Languages Course Support Notes'. [Online.] Available at: http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_N4_Languages_ModernLanguages.pdf [accessed 30 June 2014].
- Shohamy, E. (1990). 'Discourse Analysis in Language Testing', *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 11: 115–28.
- Strubell, M. (1998). 'Can Sociolinguistic Change be Planned?', in Proceedings of the 1st European Conference 'Private Foreign Language Education in Europe. Its Contribution to the Multilingual and Multicultural Aspect of the European Union', at Thessaloniki, November 1997. Thessaloniki, Greece: Palso (The Association of Foreign Language School Owners), pp. 23–31.
- Taylor, L. and Barker, F. (2008). 'Using Corpora for Language Assessment', in Shohamy, E. and Hornberger, N. H. (eds), *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*. 2nd ed. New York: Springer, pp. 241–56.
- Walsh, J. and McLeod, W. (2008). 'An Overcoat Wrapped Around an Invisible Man? Language Legislation and Language Revitalisation in Ireland and Scotland', *Language Policy*, 7: 21–46.
- Wells, G. (2011). 'Perceptions of Gaelic Learning and Use in a Bilingual Island Community: An Exploratory Study'. Soillse. [Online.] Available at: http://www.soillse.ac.uk/downloads/UistSoillse1_1.pdf [accessed 31 May 2014].
- Williams, C. H. (2013). *Minority Language Promotion, Protection and Regulation: The Mask of Piety*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Résumé

En Ecosse, comme au Royaume-Uni dans son ensemble, l'éducation multilingue devient une priorité importante. Une priorité politique supplémentaire en Ecosse est la revitalisation du gaélique écossais, après des siècles de déclin. A l'intersection de ces domaines prioritaires est la politique gaélique langue en éducation. Cependant, le potentiel de la politique linguistique dans l'éducation gaélique de contribuer à la revitalisation de la langue n'est pas actuellement en train de s'accomplir. Ce document examine certaines des questions liées à la politique de la langue dans l'éducation en relation avec les apprenants adultes de gaélique. Dans cet article, je soutiens que les résultats de la deuxième acquisition de langue (SLA) de recherche devraient jouer un rôle plus important dans la politique de la langue dans l'éducation. Cette discussion est intégrée dans le cadre de la revitalisation de la langue gaélique. En réunissant ces domaines traditionnellement distincts de l'étude des langues, des lacunes dans la politique gaélique langue dans l'éducation – notamment en termes de programme et les méthodes et la conception des matériaux – peuvent être surmontés.

Mots clés: Langue-à-politique de l'éducation ; revitalisation de la langue ; deuxième acquisition de langue (SLA) ; CECR ; Gaélique