Conference Briefing Report

The New Speakers Network's Final Whole Action Conference in Coimbra, Portugal,

14 – 16 September 2017

New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe: Policies and Practices

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1. Introduction

1.1. This report focuses on main aspects of a selection of presentations, panels and other events that took place during the New Speakers Network's Final Whole Action Conference from 14-16 September 2017. Set at the University of Coimbra in Portugal, which was founded in 1290 and in 2013 classified as a world heritage site by UNESCO, the final conference of **EU COST Action 1306 on New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe** gathered around a hundred participants from all over Europe and beyond at this historic and beautiful place. Centred around stakeholder interests, the aim of this conference was to bring together researchers, practitioners, policymakers and other stakeholders with the purpose of engaging in dialogue on sociolinguistic research and its relevance to social debates as well as applicability for policy agendas across Europe. With this high stakeholder focus, the purpose of the 14 thematic panel discussions was thus to create a forum for researchers and practitioners to meet, to engage in dialogue centred around issues of 'new speakerness', multilingualism and linguistic diversity, to share research and practice experiences, and to identify policy recommendations. To what extent these objectives were met varied from panel to panel. Some panels were more successful than others in making space for cross-sectoral dialogue, vaguely hinting at policy recommendations, whereas in others sole focus was on delivering a series of presentations and thus not making space for interaction between presenters and the audience. However, from an overall perspective, this conference served as an open platform that provided both stakeholders and researchers with opportunities to meet, learn from each other, and to share knowledge, experiences and best practice from a wide range of contexts. With a broad collaborative target group in mind, space was also given to a New Speakers Studio, theatre making and documentaries. Thus, through collaboration across academic fields, within and beyond academia, this conference endeavoured to open up to new avenues for research, emphasising the importance of stakeholder involvement and co-creation of knowledge.

1.2. Major points that came forth explicitly were for example that
- language learning for adults is often a very long, emotionally challenging and complex process
- new speakers need 'safe spaces' for learning minority or minoritised languages
- learning a minority or minoritized language is extra challenging
- multilingualism is a resource that could be utilized much more by individuals and society than is the case today
- sociolinguistics has much to contribute to social justice and policymaking
- ongoing engagement with various types of stakeholders is important for researchers and the application of their findings
- communicating research findings to non-academic audiences is of crucial importance

- promoting continuous dialogue between researchers, policymakers and practitioners in local communities, across regions and across borders is of essential importance to affect change and a major aim for The New Speakers Network.

1.3. In brief, this report summarises the main elements of keynote presentations and panel debates that took place during the whole action conference. Drawing on two keynotes, four thematic panels (No. 4, 1, 12 and 9), feedback from stakeholders in panel sessions, two documentaries and the final wrap-up session over the course of two and a half days, it focuses on accounts of the main issues raised during presentations and discussions. The report is written in a chronological order, based on thematic events in the order of occurrence during the three days in question.

Day 1, Thursday 14 September

2. **Keynote 1:** Colin H Williams, Cambridge University, Cardiff University: *Popinjays, Pragmatism and Policy: A New Speaker Triptych.*

2.1. The first keynote presentation was delivered by Dr Kathryn Jones, an academic and policymaker, who is head of research at IAITH, the Welsh Centre for Language Planning. The presentation entitled *"Popinjays, Pragmatism and Policy: A New Speaker Triptych"* had a clear stakeholder focus and its main message was indeed in line with the objectives of the conference. More explicitly than any other presentation at this conference, Professor Colin Williams called on researchers to engage and influence policy-makers in a consistent manner. In order to do that, researchers need sound evidence and convincing recommendations.

2.2. Kathryn Jones, the voice of the keynote speaker 'in absentia', gave an interesting and convincing presentation and interpretation based on Colin Williams' power point presentation. She started out by commenting on the title of the presentation. Why talk about 'popinjays'? And what is the meaning of a 'New Speaker Triptych'? First of all, a popinjay has the double meaning of a vain person and a parrot. These two meanings, metaphorically speaking, are interrelated. The point is not that academics are necessarily seen as being vain or parrot-like, but Williams' point is that just by focusing on research on New Speakers themselves, presenting results at academic conferences and talking about New Speakers with and amongst other academics only doesn't get us very far. It is all right to repeat findings and to refer to work done by other academics in a parrot-like way; but, in addition to presenting research, we (referring to researchers) also need to action our ideas and work by communicating beyond academia. The real challenge, it was argued, is to influence policymakers and to be politically savvy. Therefore Jones, on behalf of Williams, argued for a more pragmatic approach. In order to illustrate the essence of this proposed pragmatic approach, Williams had chosen

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colourful triptychs with religious icons. However, the triptychs chosen were not intended to have any religious significance.

2.3. The keynote called for a three-way dynamic as everyone has a role to play. Depicted and explained through a triptych, the illuminated middle window symbolized New Speakers. Although the New Speakers are highlighted, being the centre of much research, just focusing on them does not lead to any social change. By adding two more windows, the right one symbolizing policymakers and other relevant stakeholders and the left window symbolizing researchers, or the so-called popinjays in order to use Williams' symbolic terminology, we pave the way towards genuine opportunities for both outcomes and impact regarding programmes and policy initiatives which assist New Speakers. Thus, a major message is that researchers play important roles as 'papinjays' by repeating truisms found in data, but to gain impact researchers need to further enhance dialogue across the three dimensions depicted in the imagery. Added to this, researchers need solid evidence, need to analyse policy and talk with a focus. In conclusion, the key issue that was brought forth in this presentation is to affect real change for all who fall under the broad New Speaker category.

2.4. To sum up, below are some additional points and questions that were raised in Williams' keynote address:
- The 'New Speakers' concept is emergent and will take time to gain acceptance
- Is the 'New Speakers' concept more useful in minority language contexts than in relation to hegemonic language contexts?
- Minority/minoritized languages are often accessed through hegemonic languages
- Each New Speaker is an individual human being, a soul, and not just a number in statistics
- New Speakers need to be nurtured
- There is great potential for the collaborative culture that has been engendered within the COST New Speakers Network
- Much of the research engendered so far within the Network has universal relevance
- When engaging with non-academics, researchers need to focus on *how* to communicate their work, *how* they are talking about *what* they are doing

3. **Panel 4:** *Shaping a Language Support Infrastructure for New Speakers: Experimentations and Positions in an Irish Language "Incubation Space"*
Coordinator: Deirdre Ní Loingsigh, Director, Aonad na Gaeilge, University of Limerick

3.1. When introducing the Limerick Project, a project based on Participatory Action Research (PAC), Ní Loingsigh emphasised that participants in this particular panel had already collaborated prior to the Coimbra conference. Here she for example referred to a stakeholder event that she and her colleagues had organised in May 2017 in the form

of a public consultation and Think Tank. They had invited around twenty stakeholders representing academics, Irish language promoters, new speakers, sporting organisations, wellbeing staff and local businesses to discuss how to support language learning and create safe spaces for new speakers. In her introductory presentation, she drew on empirical data from this stakeholder event. Theoretically, she drew on the notions of 'communicative actions and space' (Habermas 1984, 1996) and 'participatory action research' (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005).

3.2. The aims of the Limerick project are:
1. to investigate the language support requirements of new speakers and adult learners of Irish in the local urban context;
2. to explore agendas, strategies and tools for a more vibrant public engagement and networking in relation to Irish language support and language planning;
3. to investigate the organisational structures and leadership required at local level in order to create a sustainable language support framework and boost language vitality;
4. and to reflect on the relationship between language advising initiatives and local language planning and policy.

3.3. In order to further demonstrate the aims and core values of this project, where *community* and *support* are the most important key words, Ní Loingsigh, like Williams in his keynote address, chose rich imagery. With regard to the panel headline in which the expression "Incubation Space" was used, a term borrowed from business, the presenter showed an image of a hen lying on eggs in an incubation space. Needless to say, like the hen needs to warm, protect and nurture her eggs before incubation, new speakers need support and to be nurtured on their language learning journey. To depict the role of researchers, Irish language teachers, promoters, speakers of Irish in the community, etc in supporting learners in their language learning trajectories, she used the image of a bridge to make her point. These actors play an important role in supporting new speakers in the process of managing the transition from being a learner to becoming a speaker, i.e. in assisting them to walk across the symbolic bridge. The 'bridge' furthermore serves as an important link between new speakers, community activists, policymakers and other stakeholders. Finally, the bridge may also be seen as a symbol of other languages that are used in connection with learning Irish (or other minoritized languages).

3.4. From symbolic imagery, Ní Loingsigh presented the format of the panel and key questions to be addressed. They welcomed a strong audience participation in an open forum format following the individual presentations. She also encouraged the audience to give comments, critiques and suggestions to feed into the Limerick project as well as looking for help to clarify possible implications for policy arising from the experimental approach of the project. The key questions that the panel highlighted were:
1. How best might we foster and benefit from stakeholder engagement in the shaping of a new language support infrastructure?

2. What can the theme of wellbeing offer as an agenda for new speakerness in Irish and what are the salient challenges?
3. What might meaningful community engagement for new speakerness look like in practice?

3.5. The next presenter in line to address some of these questions was Helena Ní Ghearáin, also from Aonad na Gaeilge at the University of Limerick. She focused mainly on the issue of minority language for the public good (Williams 2011), in this case promoting Irish as a public good, and on opportunities involved in bringing new themes such as wellbeing to discussions about new speakers. In her presentation, she for example drew on findings from neuro-science, particularly regarding cognitive benefits of bilingualism, and linked these findings to issues of emotions being key to well-being (Gaffney 2011), as well as emotions in relation to multilingualism (Pavlenko 2007; Dewaele 2017; Walsh and Puigdevall 2017). In attempting to provide some answers to the questions set for the panel, she for example argued for
- the need to spread the word regarding the positive impact of learning Irish for brain health and mental well-being
- creating new spaces for Irish
- engaging more young people ('Irish in the hot tub')
- Irish as a bridge between the speaker and his/her environment
- language revitalisation as a public interest (Irish being spoken nowhere else but in Ireland)
- bilingualism and linguistic diversity as a public good
- collaboration with community activists on influencing policymakers

3.6. Next on the agenda were presentations of personal stories by two practitioners. Séamus Ó Súilleabháin, teacher of Irish language classes for adults, slam poet and rap artist, and Ainle Ó Cairealláin, Director of ACLAÍ, a personal training facility in Cork. Like previous speakers, Ó Súilleabháin drew on imagery to stress his points, in his case the image of a boat which both captures the idea of a journey, of going somewhere, and of being an actual 'tool' to be able to go somewhere. Quoting one of his great sources of inspiration, an Irish poet and legend in Gaeltacht, he stated that "We live of what we get, but we blossom of what we give", referring to involvement with the Irish language community. In his work as a teacher, Ó Súilleabháin had gained insight in adult learners' reasons and motivations for learning Irish. For him personally, learning and speaking Irish was like a revolutionary force, something that empowered him and gave him a voice. He acknowledged the case that many children who go through Irish medium primary school do not become active speakers of Irish, that the Irish language situation is very complex, and that even though they don't speak the language, many people in Ireland identify themselves with the language. In terms of feeding into some of the set questions above, he gave accounts of various Irish language community initiatives, such as cultural events, film festivals and poetry slams, and advocated the necessity of

organising more of such events in order to empower speakers, to attract new speakers as well as nurture speakers of Irish. As an example of bringing creative energy into the topic of the panel session, he ended his presentation with a powerful rap performance of an Irish poem.

3.7. Ainle Ó Cairealláin's story was slightly different as he grew up in an Irish speaking family in Belfast, with family members being language activists. He attended an Irish medium secondary school that was established in the 1990s. When he went to this school in 1996, they were 60 pupils, whereas today about 600 pupils attend this school. However, the main focus in Ó Cairealláin's presentation was on the role of wellbeing. As the managing director of ACLAÍ, a health and performance business, he demonstrated how it is possible to promote Irish within businesses and as a public good by giving examples from his own business. At the ACLAÍ centre, the Irish language is visible in all communication, announcements, newsletter, webpage, staff speak the language among themselves and they use Irish at work with clients who wish to speak Irish. The presenter argued that this has impact on people's overall well-being and health. In addition to fitness, they organise social events such as meals where people have the opportunity to interact socially and use Irish.

3.8. The discussion that followed the presentations focused much on wellbeing and the role of emotions in becoming a new speaker. It was argued that language learning has impact on one's health. In contrast, it was also stated that minority language learners and speakers face many barriers on their language 'journey' and often experience anxiety. Therefore, the panel argued for more community collaboration, partnerships, a supportive environment and various types of events that foster use of the language. Wellbeing is not the sole answer to combating barriers, anxiety, etc, but wellbeing has potential to contribute as it has been brought in as a new avenue, amongst others, to becoming a new speaker.

3.9. In conclusion, this panel was one that succeeded in having relatively high participant involvement by engaging presenters and participants in a dialogue around bringing Irish into community development. The few stakeholders present also contributed to a large degree with good examples of practice in the community. With regard to feedback from stakeholders, only three handed in the evaluation form. About the most useful point being made during the session(Q2), the answers were as follows:
- Create open spaces to use minority languages creatively
- Emotions and language are connected to public health
- Put pressure on local government for support
- How to shift from learner to speaker

When asked about action points after this events (Q3), respondents listed the following:

- Organise a poetry event (and maybe some graffiti)
- More co-operation between minority groups with Irish

- Develop ideology initiatives
- More outreach: empower the community

Finally, when rating the statement that "The thematic panel workshop was useful" (Q4), two strongly agreed and the third disagreed. An additional comment (Q5) given was that "Decolonization is priority".

4. The New Speakers Studio
Deirdre MacKenna

4.1. From traditional presentations and discussions on various aspects of the new speaker theme, where the presenter and his/her spoken words play the most central role, entering "The New Speakers Studio" was an interesting and welcome alternative to more traditional forms of communicating the dynamics involved in becoming a new speaker of a language in the context of a multilingual Europe. The New Speakers Studio consists of a series of cultural 'tools' conceived and created by the artist, freelancer and creator of exhibitions, Deirdre MacKenna from Scotland. These 'tools' comprise photographs, posters, booklets and films. Focus in this session was on one of these tools, the first part of a film that MacKenna has produced in collaboration with cinematographer Gordon James. In her introduction to this film, MacKenna shared the background to the film and how the idea of the New Speakers Studio developed through dialogue with Bernadette O'Rourke, Chair of the New Speakers Network, with the purpose of finding ways that could bring academic research to the attention and use of people within arts and other related fields and contexts. Outcomes of this collaboration are the cultural tools containing stories from new speakers in Scotland, who share their experiences of learning and using another language than their mother-tongue.

4.2. In preparation for the film, the participants, who are all immigrants in Scotland, were asked to bring an object by their own choice which they associated with language and their experiences and opinions about being a new speaker of English. These objects were used as a substitute to showing real life images of the participants, but no explanation or interpretation was given, so presumably that would be up to the individual viewer to contemplate on. MacKenna's idea behind this was to invite the audience to focus on contents, i.e. what the new speakers were saying, rather than focusing on and being distracted by people's looks, gender, ethnicity, etc. When seeing the film, what struck me was that it was unusual in the sense that it neither contained music nor the voices of participants. Again, this was part of the plan to invite viewers to consider and reflect on participants' statements and the issues surrounding these statements rather than providing voices which may trigger categorisation, prejudice related to intonation, pronunciation and so on.

4.3. In short, the film consisted of a selection of written quotes in conjunction with visual images, trying to capture intangible aspects of new speakers' experiences in their everyday lives. Through the film, aspects of interviewees' narratives and language journeys have been brought to life and thus have the potential to serve as a valuable tool that may be used in different settings, within and outside of academia, with the purpose of engaging in dialogues on what it means to be a new speaker, trying to understand the issues involved, the challenges, pain, joy, dilemmas, etc. The nature of the film puts demands on the viewer as the utterances encourage both contemplation, reflection and interaction with others. Along with the other 'tools' mentioned, the film could be useful in many different situations and settings where the focus is language and migration, for example as part of awareness-making workshops, stakeholder events, local community events, seminars, study circles, and in school and other educational settings at different levels. Imagination is the only limit.

Day 2, Friday 15 September

5. Keynote 2: Cécile B. Vigouroux, Simon Fraser University
(Re)thinking Newspeakerism from a Sub-Saharan African Perspective

5.1. Working in the intersecting fields of migration and transnationalism, globalisation and colonialism, language and the economy, language and labour, Cécile Vigouroux was introduced as a distinguished scholar who challenges simplistic understandings of language vitality, socio-economic inequality and linguistic authority. Being well-acquainted with the social and linguistic tensions that are linked to 'newspeakerism', a concept originating from language dynamics in Europe, Vigouroux argued that these are concepts that don't have the same relevance in African contexts, even claiming that dichotomies between minorities and majorities don't apply in many African contexts. By problematising Euro-centric positionalities, she invited participants to re-think 'newspeakerism' from a Sub-Saharan perspective.

5.2. Vigouroux began her keynote presentation by underlining that she would bring different themes into the discussion that usually don't qualify as linguistics. As migration is one of the most politicized topics in the 21st century, she argued that it is impossible to work on language and migration without bringing anthropological, historical and sociological perspectives into this work. She drew attention to the case that, especially in Europe and north America, the discourse on migration as being a threat to national economies, causes of unemployment, a burden to social services and so on, has shaped the way most people and societies think about migration. This, in effect, has impacted strict immigration policies in many countries. As most work comprising this mindset comes from welfare societies, she argued for the need to re-think our categories of thought, e.g. the category of 'migrant' within the field of sociolinguistics, our talk of economies, views of what counts as work, issues of social class, language in relation to identity, migrants' language acquisition as well as the

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dynamics between dominant and lesser-used languages. A central question that she posed was: What role does the figure of the migrant have in sociolinguistics?

5.3. Vigouroux further stated that research into language and migration is over-represented in relation to South-to-North mobility and highly under-researched on a South-to-South scale. In fact, 80% of African migrants move within the African continent. Migration patterns between the North and the South don't differ that much, but due to extreme differences in contexts, economies and attitudes to multilingualism, researchers need to reassess their analytical categories, ideologies as well as assumptions about correlations between migrants' language competences, access to the formal economy, integration and social inclusion in their host country. Based on research she has undertaken for more than twenty years in South Africa, she called into question such assumptions and argued for shifting lenses of analysis. In addition, she threw light on a number of central issues that she invited participants to re-think. These for example comprised:
- The politics of hosting and guesting
- Migrants' role in and contributions to the 'informal' economy
- The literacy-based lens through which language acquisition is typically approached
- Our understanding of new speakers' learning of non-heritage languages in contexts of migration
- Correlations between the migrant's ability to speak the host country's language(s) and his/her likelihood to be integrated in the host society
- And approach to scholarship on migration and language more generally.

5.4. In conclusion, Vigouroux gave an informative, challenging and inspiring talk during which she argued that extending our understanding of language and migration from a Sub-Saharan perspective offers new insights, challenges set assumptions and broadens our understanding of migrants' diverse range of challenges and experiences.

6. Panel 1: *Ideologies, Self-Perception and Practices in New Speakers' Competence and Varieties*
Coordinator: Ane Ortega, "Begoñako Andra Mari" Irakasle Unibertsitate Eskola

6.1. Ane Ortega, researcher and teacher trainer from the Basque Country, introduced this panel session focusing on the types of competences new speakers acquire. The session was divided into two parts, the first part consisting of four presentations by academics from the Basque Country, Ireland and Brittany, followed in the second part by a round table discussion with education practitioners and language promoters from Ireland, Scotland and the Basque Country. Main focus in the presentations was on the following topics:
1. Perception and understanding of language competence
2. Language varieties that new speakers learn and means of learning
3. New speakers' self-perceptions of their own competence

4. Recommendations and issues to be raised for discussion

6.2. First in line was Ane Ortega, who gave an overview of the Basque context. Revitalization which started about 40 years ago has had the effect that the number of Basque speakers is on the increase, mainly acquired through early immersion schools and adult education. Today 36% of the total population speak Basque, of whom 42% are new speakers and 75% are under the age of 16. Here a new speaker is defined as a learner who has learned the language in other settings than through family transmission. Ortega underlined that in the "under 16 age group" new speakers have outnumbered traditional or native speakers. If this trend continues, it has been estimated that in 2036 90% of all 20 year-olds will be able to speak Basque at B.2 level or above and be highly literate in Basque. The general profile of new Basque speakers are bilinguals whose dominant language is Spanish, they have excellent comprehension skills in Basque, but may have some difficulties speaking and writing Basque.

6.3. In responding to the focus areas listed above, Ortega drew from a comprehensive study entitled "New Speakers of Basque: Experiences, Attitudes and Identities" undertaken from 2012-2015. Results from this project showed that competence at institutional level is defined according to levels in the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR). In order to teach in the Basque education system and to work in public administration, the advanced level of C.1 in Batua, standard Basque, is required. Competence, however, is understood in a much more complex way than defined in CEFR. Competence is seen as 'situated', always evaluated in relation to pragmatic needs as well as context based ideologies which for example comprise the ability to speak fluently and to be able to speak a vernacular variety. In assessing their own competence, the study showed that 53,3% were very satisfied and 22,3% were satisfied with their competence. The survey also showed that some respondents had negative self-perceptions as they focused on lack of native-like fluency. In terms of recommendations, Ortega drew attention to a number of areas where improvement is needed. These e.g. include teacher training, approach to teaching (pedagogy), teaching materials, 'safe' social spaces and encouraging ownership of the language.

6.4. From the promising prospects for the Basque language situation, the portrayal of the situation with the Celtic language Breton in Brittany was rather bleak. According to presenter Stefan Moal from the University of Roazhon, the number of Breton speakers is in decline, only about 3% of the population speak Breton, and the level of institutional support and recognition is very distant from the situations in the Basque Country and in Ireland respectively. The hegemonic and monolingual language policy of the French state has had severe consequences for Breton.

6.5. In his presentation on competence in Breton, Moal drew on findings from two recent studies. The first one was on primary school teachers' attitude towards Breton, and the

second one was on young Breton speaking parents' engagement with the language. Both studies are relevant to language education in Breton and for revitalisation stakeholders. As traditional intergenerational transmission of the language is rare, most speakers are new speakers. Native or 'near native' competence is highly valued, but new speakers face negative attitudes from traditional and passive speakers, who immediately switch to French when interacting with a learner. New speakers' perceptions of competence is mainly based on oral skills, but most from this group are virtually literate in Breton. The language is mainly acquired through immersion education, or partial immersion, and more recently through adult education. On the more positive note, Moal underlined the importance of an adult education programme that consists of an intensive 6-month language learning programme, a course that in many cases leads to good communicative competence in Breton. In terms of recommendations and issues for discussion, Moal made the following proposal:

- In schools and adult education alike, emphasis should be placed on how complementary, and of equal usefulness and dignity, the written standard and the vernacular geolects are, instead of opposing them. This has to start from teacher training
- Incentives on new speakers to interact with traditional speakers should not stay at incantation level. Policy makers have to allow – and invest in – practical opportunities for this to happen. Otherwise new speakers cannot be blamed
- Criticism over the legitimacy of new speakers' varieties should be done with great care, away from mere denigration, lest a new sense of shame should appear among these speakers, echoing that of traditional speakers in the past.

6.6. In his presentation on Irish, John Walsh, from the National University of Ireland in Galway, gave snapshots from a study based on semi-structured narrative interviews with 10 new speakers from urban areas who are all active promoters of Irish and employed in language promotion bodies. The age group is 35 and under. In providing some background to the Irish language situation, he emphasised that Irish is a mandatory subject in the education system, but only about 5% of the population speak Irish on a daily basis. Results from this sample showed that accent is seen as a main marker of difference between new speakers and native speakers. Not having a native speaker accent was seen by some as an obstacle to communicating with people in the Gaeltacht, but at the same time some respondents explicitly rejected being pushed towards one of the traditional dialects and called for more general acceptance in society of being a new speaker with less traditional accents. While imitating a Gaeltacht accent was seen as being inauthentic, most interviewees emphasised the importance of competence understood in terms of fluency, grammatical accuracy as well as extensive vocabulary. A small number of participants, who had less fluency, placed high value on communicative ability rather than linguistic correctness. In conclusion, Walsh pointed out that new speakers argued for recognition of speakers like themselves, questioned legitimacy, called for a middle ground, for an understanding of learners' productive

diversity, emphasised the ability to communicate widely and that the medium is the message, i.e. the type of Irish that is spoken.

6.7. The final presentation, also on Irish, was given by Colin Flynn from Dublin City University. He gave an overview of a recent study conducted by him and Noel O'Murchadha from University College in Dublin, a study that was based on 23 student teachers' attitudes towards and engagement with Irish and the impact this has on their classroom practices. Part of the study consisted of listening to three native speaker varieties of Irish and one new speaker variety. Needless to say, traditional Gaeltacht varieties were considered most authentic and correct. However, in terms of future trajectories, all varieties were considered important. Also, it was considered inappropriate and unrealistic for those with a post-traditional identity to imitate Gaeltacht speech. In the sample there was some recognition of new speakers varieties having a role, of being the variety most promoted in practice, and therefore development of structures to support non-Gaeltacht speech varieties was called for.

6.8. In the round table discussion that followed, Ane Ortega introduced the three stakeholders who were Blathnaid ni Ghreachain (CEO of Gaelscoileanna), Arrate Illaro (Basque language promotion, Euskaltzaleen Topagune) and Donalda McComb (Head Teacher, Gaelic School in Glasgow). They shared experiences from their different contexts and touched upon questions related to new speaker issues, competences, challenges on the ground as well as opportunities. The Irish participant expressed concern about the low level of competence in Irish that school leavers have after secondary education. She advised researcher to look for means to both empower learners to become speakers and to create tools for measuring competence. From the Basque Country, Arrate Illaro gave examples of initiatives such as establishing networks for volunteers who want more opportunities to practise speaking the language. In Scotland the situation is rather different as Gaelic is not a compulsory subject in schools. At the Gaelic school in Glasgow, parental support is of crucial importance. In primary education they have clear frameworks for assessing children's competences, but when entering secondary school, challenges become more apparent. These include the fact that they don't have Gaelic speakers for every subject and lack of materials as well. Another concern is that they don't know what happens to the students after they leave this Gaelic medium school. All three stakeholders called for research into motivations for learning Irish, Basque and Gaelic, to collaborate on better models for teacher training and to find ways of creating more understanding between native speakers and new speakers. Ane Ortega closed the discussion by stating that closer collaboration between researchers on these minority languages and practitioners is of crucial importance for the maintenance, competence development of new speakers and further revitalisation of these languages.

6.9. In the written feed-back given from six stakeholders, four strongly agreed that the panel workshop was useful (Q4) and 2 agreed. About the most important points made (Q2), the answers were as follows:

- The centrality of New Speakers for any project of language revitalisation
- The "new speaker" differences and similarities regarding policy and practice across the different countries and languages
- Accents and dialects of new speakers and their 'fit' and place
- To know the reality of Breton, Irish, Basque and Gaelic
- The issue of legitimacy of new speakers and subjectivity of competence

Asked to list one action point each that they will undertake after this event (Q3), they said:

- I will engage with the research on the comparative situation in Wales and most likely pursue this issue in my language planning work
- Rethink my strategy of revitalisation/preservation in the context of Sri Lanka
- Take the outputs into consideration in our own workshops
- Include discussions of "new learner" perceptions in my own context
- Learn more about Breton and Irish reality.

Two additional comments were given (Q5), which were:

- "Very good session"
- "The panel was very comprehensive and offered a wide range of expertise. However, there was a clear lack of debate and engagement with the audience, most likely because of lack of time".

7. Panel 12: *New speakers, new spaces, new value? New speakers and the promotion of minority languages as economic resources*
Coordinator: Sara Brennan, Heriot-Watt University

7.1. The focus in this panel was on the promotion and use of minority languages as economic resources for business, with a particular focus on the opportunities and challenges that these processes present for new speakers. By bringing together researchers, public-sector language advocates and private-sector entrepreneurs to share research findings, experiences and concrete examples from different minority language contexts, the aim was to bridge the academic and stakeholder perspectives brought forth through presentations and discussions.

7.2. After introducing the participants in the panel, Doctoral candidate Sara Brennan explained that the point of departure for the development of this panel was to be found in critical sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological research from the past two decades on the increasing integration of language into the contemporary globalised economy. What researchers have pointed out is that language has increasingly become

more central to economic activity under these political and economic dynamics. Brennan argued that these processes through which language has increasingly been integrated into the economy have contributed to generating new opportunities for minority languages. To illustrate this point she mentioned that in domains such as tourism, artisanal food and craft production, minority languages and dialects are often drawn on for their links to specific peoples and places, mainly due to their power to authenticate, differentiate and localise consumer goods, services, or enterprises. Drawing on her own research in Ireland, she gave examples of Irish being heavily used for branding purposes by businesses ranging from the local to the global, both with some knowledge of Irish or no competence in the language at all.

7.3. In line with the above points by Brennan, Professor Mike Danson from Heriot-Watt University pointed towards similar developments and trends in Scotland. In his presentation on usage of Gaelic as a social and economic resource, he focused on his experience in consulting with Scottish government bodies and gave examples of practices and case studies that were drawn from recent research on use and promotion of Gaelic across a number of sectors, including arts and culture. He for example pointed out that in the aftermath of films and television series like Game of Thrones and Outlander, tourism in Scotland has seen massive growth. This, Danson argued, creates positive roles and new opportunities for Gaelic. Here the economic and social value of Gaelic becomes an asset to communities and knowing Gaelic becomes a skill that is in high demand in certain parts of the labour market, for example in tourism. Tourists look for authenticity, and findings show that there are opportunities for more Gaelic on the labour market. To conclude, he provided evidence of Gaelic contributing greatly to the Scottish economy. Also, he called for the recognition of new speakers of Gaelic, of the fact that people are needed who know the Gaelic language, and that they are needed for the future economy and labour market in Scotland.

7.4. Focus in the next couple of presentations by representatives from two language advocacy bodies, and in the final one by a businssman from Wales, was on opportunities related to the commercial sphere regarding increased usage of Irish and Welsh respectively, new use of these languages, as well as motivations for learning minority languages and opportunities for new speakers. Eoghan MacCormaic, Business and Enterprise Language Development Officer from Glór na nGael, which is an organisation that promotes Irish in the community, in business and in the family, gave numerous actual examples of the way Irish was being branded as a commodity and he argued that there is a market, an economy, out there for Irish. In his work on promoting Irish, encouragement of using and including the language is given to all target groups, no matter the level of competence. Market surveys show that people are supportive of this trend, that they buy goods that are Irish, i.e. goods with Irish language on them. Along similar lines, the two presentations from Welsh stakeholders that came after James Costa's more academically oriented presentation, gave actual examples of language promotion and practices on the ground.

7.5. The two presentations on Welsh supplemented each other well. While Gethin Edwards, Senior Promotion Officer from the Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner, on the one hand gave a broad overview of promotional and facilitation activities initiated and run by his organisation, for example through targeting outreach work with businesses, charities, sport clubs, supermarkets, etc. regarding use of Welsh, Dylan Rowlands, owner of Dylandwad Gwin (Wine in Wales) and a restaurant in Northern Wales, on the other hand gave participants good insight in the importance of language work on the ground. In addition to telling his personal story, his motivation for learning Welsh and using Welsh in his daily work and with his family, Rowlands emphasised the importance of relating to local customers and contributing to making Welsh visible in his business activities and in the community at large. Living in an area where about 60% of his customers are local, he stated that in addition to having appeal to customers, it is also natural to focus on Welsh in this particular context. By using the term natural he referred to the history of the region, its language , identity and culture. Thus Rowlands' case demonstrated the types of achievements or impact that the Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner – and Glór na nGael in the Irish context – aim for in their work.

7.6. While language as an asset, incentive, opportunity and economic resource was highlighted in previous presentations, Dr James Costa, lecturer in sociolinguistics at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris took a totally different turn by questioning the value of language as a resource in economic terms. Drawing on recent research on the commercial use of the Shetlandic dialect spoken on the Shetland Islands today, he problematized present trends in dealing with the commercialization of language in academic terms. He argued that there is no doubt that language can be used as a commodity and can function as a source of authentication, but this view overlooks the political dimensions of language in minority language contexts. There has been a shift from language as a source of pride to language as a source of profit in the globalized new economy. Indeed an interesting and intellectually stimulating presentation containing critical perspectives, but as these issues raised by Costa were not debated in the panel, among the panellists or by including the audience, it is difficult to say to what extent it contributed to the proposed interaction with stakeholders.

7.7. To conclude, although encouraged, no stakeholder present filled out the evaluation form used for panel workshops, so it is difficult to say to what extent they found this panel useful. However, all presentations were informative, highlighting the increasing effort to frame minority languages as economic assets that can be utilised to promote economic growth and employment and thus contributed to the panel topic from a range of different perspectives. If pointing out one shortcoming, it is that the intended dialogue among presenters and workshop participants did not take places, that sole focus was on delivering presentations.

8. New Speakers in the city: *The Secret Language*
Pia Lane, University of Oslo, with Lightsource Productions

8.1. The day's final event was the launch of the documentary *The Secret Language,* introduced by Professor and co-producer Pia Lane. The documentary was about the situation of Kven, a Finnic minority language spoken in Northern Norway, a language that very few people knew anything about (hence the title). In her introduction to the film, Professor Lane stated that Kven did not receive recognition as a minority language in Norway until in 2005, after Norway had ratified the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. She drew attention to the destructive impact that the monolingual language policy of the Norwegian state had had on speakers of Kven, but also highlighted the renewed interest, influenced by neighbouring countries as well as the global wide focus on language revitalisation, that had made many Kven speakers wish to reclaim their language. A written standard variety of Kven has recently been developed for the about 2000 speakers of the language.

8.2. The statement that first figured on the documentary screen was: "If you take the mother tongue away from a people, then you take their confidence, creativity and identity and in the end you take their will to live". Powerful words that set the scene for capturing what the Kven people and other linguistic minorities have experienced due to monolingual language policies of the nation state. One of the first participants we met in the film was a young man who was a new speaker of Kven. His mother, who had Kven speaking parents, did not learn the language from her parents as they thought it was in her best interest to 'hide' this language. However, this young man, who considered Kven to be his identity, was determined to understand his heritage, the history of the language and its origin. He underlined that there is incredible loss when a language disappears. Focus was also on older, traditional speakers of Kven and their experiences, for example on how teachers had advised parents not to speak this language, even parents who did not speak Norwegian. One man expressed frustration about the widespread ignorance of Norwegians at present, who do not know anything about this language. This he demonstrated with an example of ignorant questions asked by a man who was head of culture and education in three municipalities. Added to this, one of the participants commented that ignorance about minority languages within the borders of the nationstate may be seen as a power strategy.

8.3. In sum, this strong and powerful documentary that called for reflective thinking touched upon many important issues regarding language and identity, language and power as well as language discrimination and inequality. A central issue that was highlighted through participants' personal stories and experiences was the impact it has on individuals when their language is not recognized as language. Pointing towards the future prospects of Kven, an elderly woman brought forth the remark that "it was about time that people woke up", concluding that "there is no shame in a language".

Day 3, Saturday 16 September

9. Panel 9: *New Speakers and language revitalization policies*
   Coordinator: Estiballiz Amorrortu (Vincent Climent)

9.1.   The focus in this panel was on policies and government actions. To discuss these issues there were three local government officials from Catalonia, the Basque Country and Fassa Valley in Italy, highlighting the cases of Catalan, Basque and Ladin. In her introduction to the panel session, moderator Esti Amorrortu, lecturer and researcher from the University of Deusto, Bilbao, emphasized current state of affairs where minority and minoritized language communities are experiencing new challenges with regard to language revitalization, ensuring knowledge and use of these languages. In addition to traditional historical tensions between the state language and the minority language, many minority language contexts must also add the increasing presence of English as a lingua franca in education (especially in higher education) as well as the increasing number of new languages present due to migration and mobility. This new paradigm has often been referred to as super diversity, which points at a complex and changing social and political context in which diversity has become a multidimensional and fluid empirical phenomenon. In preparation for this session, Amorrortu had asked the panel presenters to describe and discuss the following focus areas:
   - The current sociolinguistic situation and priority areas to attract new speakers
   - Specific initiatives/programmes to attract new speakers; new speakers' reactions, reception and evaluation of these programmes; and
   - How they as policy makers make use of research on new speakers, what areas need to be researched and what they see as future challenges.

9.2.   The first presenter was Estibaliz Alkorta, Head of Research in the Language Policy Department in the Basque Government. She started out by giving an overview of the three regions where Basque is spoken. In addition to the Basque Country, where about 85% of the ca. 1 million Basque speakers live, Basque is spoken in Navarre (8.8% of the total number of Basque speakers) and in three regions in the south of France (5.4% of the total of Basque speakers). She presented interesting figures comparing numbers of speakers in 1991 and in 2016. For example, more than half of the bilingual population back in 1991 was older than 35, whereas today more than half of all bilingual speakers are under the age of 35, of whom the vast majority are on the younger end of the scale. Through these figures Alkorta underlined that within the last twenty-five years, the number of native Basque speakers has decreased while the number of young new Basque speakers has continuously increased. The majority of the new speakers of Basque have Spanish or another language as their mother tongue. In order to include Basque in more official domains, a law was introduced in 1982 for the purpose of 'normalisation' and making Basque the official language of the autonomous region. Since then intensive investments have been made in Basque medium education, centres for learning Basque for different age groups as well as making Basque a requirement, an employability skill, in order to work in public

administrations. A specific initiative that Alkorta highlighted was targeted at youngsters aged 12-14. In order to promote more usage of Basque within this age group, they have established summer camps with a wide range of leisure activities where Basque is the main language used. Also, targeted revitalisation initiatives and developments have taken place within the media, radio programmes, television, etc., and the Basque government has supported and consulted research and introduced strategies for the promotion of Basque in a wide range of sectors. The main areas of attracting new speakers are within education and the world of work, including the private business sector.

9.3. Carles de Roselló, who is a sociolinguist, works for the Catalan government in the "Consortium for Language Normalization", the General Directorate for Language Policy. In his summary of the currant situation he pointed out that it is important to pay attention to the demographic context. He presented statistics taken from surveys undertaken in 2003, 2008 and 2013 respectively and pointed out factors that have changed within this period. Among the numerous factors he drew attention to, in the midst of a complex and challenging sociolinguistic context, were the following:
   - A major concern is use of Catalan on a daily basis (imbalance between Catalan and Spanish)
   - The population has increased, but the precentage of the total number of people who understand, speak and read Catalan is slightly decreasing
   - Knowledge of Catalan has substantially increased since the 1980s
   - While Catalan is the language that is mostly used by people born in Catalonia, Spanish is used consistently by all
   - Spanish is used more than Catalan throughout the autonomous region (asymmetrical power relations)
   - More than 50% of the inhabitants in Catalonia never use Catalan
   - Catalan speakers have more bilingual practices than monolingual ones
   - Most of the foreign population, immigrants, are within the most productive age groups, while the number of Catalan speakers of childbearing age is falling
   - Increasing use of Spanish when communicating with newcomers and in immigration processes

9.4. This picture is not complete, but highlights some challenges. Added to this picture is a cornerstone in Catalan language policy, which is the education system. The objectives of the school systems are that those finishing compulsory education have full competence in both Catalan and Spanish. Education is not the responsibility of the General Directorate for Language Policy, i.e. after the age of 18, but it is the most important area for attracting new speakers. In the General Directorate for Language Policy they have chosen to focus on three priority areas. These are social cohesion, the health sector and workplaces. While social cohesion is a fundamental value in Catalan society, advocating use of Catalan in workplaces, especially in the private sector, is a different matter. Here there is still a long way to go. In the health sector, focus is directed at attracting new speakers and finding bilingual solutions. This is for example done through organising awareness making workshops for staff where focus is on empathy, emphasising the importance of addressing patients in their language, be it Catalan or Spanish, and trying to make employees understand the sociolinguistic

situation in Catalonia. Other governmental initiatives that de Roselló mentioned were targeted language courses for professionals, introductory reception courses on Catalan language and society for immigrants, and general language courses on all levels. A main challenge regarding the latter is lack of continuity in attending these courses. Many take beginners courses, but don't proceed to a higher level. Finally, another initiative that he mentioned was a programme called "Volunteering for the language". This programme, which started in 2003, has been a success. It consists of ten meetings between Catalan speakers and learners where they in friendly and informal contexts practice speaking the language. These programmes are used in many companies, in religious congregations and even in prisons. In some cases these language learning partnerships continue after the programme finishes as people that initially were matched become friends.

9.5. The third speaker, Sabrina Rasom, a linguist, works in the administrative institution that coordinates the language policy projects in Fassa Valley, where she is responsible for the Unit of Language and Culture. In introducing her talk, she asked the audience to reset their brains in order to focus on very small numbers. The region of Fassa Valley used to be part of Austria until the end of World War I. When the Ladins of Ladinia became part of Italy, they were split into three regions. These are the provinces of Bolzano, Trento and Beluno. The Ladins of the latter have no language rights, but in the province of Trento where Fassa Valley is, which Rasom's presentation focuses on, the Ladins have many rights and they are safeguarded as a minority. In total there are about 30.000 Ladins in Italy, of whom approximately 10.000 live in Fassa Valley. To put these figures into perspective regarding massive increase in language contact, she mentioned that in 2016 for example more than 2 million tourists came to Fassa Valley. Communication with foreigners is thus an issue as this requires a high level of multilingualism. Ladins have the right to use their language in education, public administration and so forth, but in this drastically changing sociolinguistic landscape, people position themselves differently. There are both Ladins who fear that foreigners 'pollute' their language and others who don't seem to care much about the maintenance of their language.

9.6. In relating to what areas have been made a priority in order to attract new speakers, Sabrian Rasom pointed out that no attention as such has been given to opportunities regarding new speakers of Ladin. Therefore she argued that this needs to made a priority policy area for the future, that it is urgent to plan a good policy aiming at making Ladins aware of the fact that new speakers are fundamental for the future of Ladin. As there are many challenges to deal with, at present foreign workers and their families have become a priority area. They need to learn Ladin in order get a job. Other initiatives comprise the requirement of all children in Fassa Valley having to learn Ladin, Italian teachers teaching in Ladin schools need a certificate in the language in order to be employed as teachers, and many projects have been initiated that promote the use of Ladin in sports, the media, tourism and the economy at large. In conclusion she pointed out that there are many areas that need to be researched, for example immigrants' views on learning Ladin, new speakers and questions of identity, ICT as a tool for language learning, and dichotomies between puristic views on language and less pure forms of language production. Added to this, Rasom

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conluded that sharing of best practices for minority language policies are needed as well as concrete examples of success of new speakers' language policies.

9.7.   All three panel presenters emphasized the importance of making use of research and collaborating on addressing the numerous unanswered questions and challenges ahead. The Catalan presenter in particular had a long list of questions that he wanted researchers to address. To this the moderator pointed out that many of those questions have been addressed within the New Speakers' Network, but the challenge is to find ways to communicate findings to relevant stakeholders. To this a participant responded that a lot of qualitative data exists, but it appears that there is a clash in interests as experience shows that policymakers too often ignore qualitative data in favour of quantitative data. Therefore, she called for more collaboration between researchers and policymakers.

9.8.   In conclusion, the panel provided comprehensive statistical data and information on practice examples on challenges regarding language policy challenges and government actions in the three regions in questions. However, in contrast to expectations based on the description in the "Book of abstracts", in which it says "Rather than a traditional conference-like panel, the three speakers will engage in a dialogue on the challenges they currently face", this panel consisted of three rounds of presentations for each speaker, which involved no dialogue among presenters or with workshop participants - except for the important last minute comment from a researcher in the audience. However, judging from the feedback that stakeholders in this panel gave, the level of satisfaction with the session was quite high as five out of four strongly agreed and one agreed that the thematic panel was useful (Q4). All five stakeholder respondents work within language policy (Q1). About the most important points made (Q2), the answers were as follows:
- The need of making bridges between the academic and the governmental areas in order to improve society through establishing positive social policies
- The exchange of experiences
- Some specific programmes within the leisure area
- New speakers can make the difference in increasing the number of speakers of a minority language
- The importance of research in order to know the real situation of languages
- The importance of adapting language policies to the real situation of the language in order to apply effective policies
- The need of qualitative research

In response to Q4, listing action points that participants intend to undertake after the event, they highlighted the following:
- To strengthen the knowledge and practices of other governments
- To strengthen the inter-institutional relationships between different governments
- To introduce pairs of volunteers for the language
- To be in contact with researchers; and
- To compare points of view and worries.

Two added comments (Q5) stating that the session was interesting and that speakers and presentations were very good.

10. Wrapping Up and Closing Session

10.1. The closing session consisted of a short address by Professor Bernadette O'Rourke, Chair of the COST Action on New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe, followed by wrapping up comments from working group leaders, as well as thanks to conference organisers and all who have been part of the COST Action. In her concluding remarks, O'Rourke gave a short overview of the different phases and evolvement of the New Speakers Network throughout the four-year period from 2013 – 2017, pointing out that the second phase of the project was the most challenging one as it involved bringing people together from different strands who were not used to cooperating. In some cases the collaboration did not function, whereas in others it worked quite well with new ideas and innovative collaborations being initiated. In telling the story of the New Speakers Network, O'Rourke summarised it by using the image of journey on a roller coaster with ups and downs, with some people having left the network 'family' and others having joined later.

10.2. As the Action comprised different multilingual strands focusing on regional minorities, immigrants and transnational workers, many new avenues of research and cross-disciplinary collaboration were explored. For the Final Whole Action Conference it was decided that focus would be on four main themes that were linked to the scientific activities in the different working groups. These were Linguistic competence and varieties (Working Group 7), Subjectivities, trajectories and socialisation (Working Group 8), New speakers and language policies (Working Group 9), and New speakers, legitimacy and power (Working Group 10). Thus, the idea of the whole action conference was to showcase, to weave the different threads together that had been researched over the four-year period and to take findings and results forward to be discussed with stakeholders. There was a genuine wish to engage in dialogue with stakeholders. From different strands and perspectives, members of the New Speakers Network have presented numerous findings and drawn attention to areas that are highly relevant for policymakers in areas concerning integration, social cohesion and multilingualism in Europe. To what extent this initiative of focusing on stakeholder involvement succeeded is difficult to say at this stage, but voices have been brought into the conversation that usually don't communicate with sociolinguists.

10.3. Following O'Rourke's final address, she gave the floor to working group leaders, who all gave summaries of focus areas, essential findings, points discussed in panel sessions, observations as well as areas for policymakers to take into account. While

WG 7 for example mentioned barriers caused by obsessive focus on native-like competence of new speakers, members from WG8 focused on the importance of taking the emotional aspects of becoming a new speaker into account. Language learning is no straight forward task, so therefore learners and new speakers need both time and space spaces in their learning journeys. WG9 highlighted the role of language activists and advocates in minority language contexts, and WG10 drew attention to both commodification of language on the one hand and the importance of voice on the other, e.g. referring to migrants and refugees' voices.

10.4. In conclusion, Dr Joan Pujolar, vice chair of the Action, added that by focusing on the issue of stakeholders, this conference was quite innovative as it for many researchers meant "getting out of the box". He referred to this 'experiment' as a form of social intervention activity. A major question, he concluded, is how to make multilingualism a priority on the political agenda.