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Linguicide in the Digital Age:
Problems and Possible Solutions

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Abstract

Language is perhaps the most fundamental, elemental biological function of human beings. Language communicates emotions, thoughts, ideas, innovations, hardships, and most importantly, is an expression of culture. With languages disappearing at an accelerated rate today, this paper serves to provide insight into the health and status of seven endangered languages and the methods for their linguistic rejuvenation. The languages in question are Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Hopi, Navajo, Breton, and Occitan. I will provide comparative analysis of minority languages in the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and France as seen through each country's history, melting pot experiences, traditions, language protection laws, education system, in addition to the differing levels of diffusion via the Internet. For example, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Irish, and Navajo are taught on Duolingo, offering unique salience amongst endangered languages. A key point of analysis will be the strength of language protection laws in the United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, and France. The United States, United Kingdom, and France have very different approaches to protecting minority languages, which range from generally proactive in the United States and Ireland, somewhat lacking in the case of the United Kingdom, and virtually non-existent in France. Language is the most primordial expression of culture, where we came from and what we are. An understanding of that intersectionality and thereby the severe consequences of linguicide, lie at the crux of this study.

Keywords: Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Hopi, Navajo, Breton, Occitan, language accessibility, language protection law, language-medium education, linguicide

Introduction

What is language? That may seem like an unusual question. After all, we use language in almost every waking moment of our lives. We use our native language subconsciously, whereby we think, write, and speak with little effort. Ultimately, language is what makes us who we are. Language separates human beings from the evolutionary scum, reaffirming the apogee our species has reached after hundreds of millions of years of biological development. Other animals have intelligence comparable to humans and they may even be able to communicate with each other via sound, but no other animal species can produce true language. Syntax, grammar, pronunciation, morphology, phonology, all these elements are alien to the myriad organisms of Earth except humans. And yet the question remains: what is language?

At the most basic, primal level language is a tool by which we humans gained mastery over our native environment and effectively conquered the globe. But language is much more than a facet of evolution. In addition to language, humans hold unique faculty in being able to produce *culture*. The combination of beliefs, traditions, and naturally language, is a uniquely human institution. Language is key to culture; the two are inherently and irretrievably linked. Culture is expressed through language. Beliefs are passed down, traditions are practiced, all through language. Unfortunately, this also makes language a prime target for those who would seek to exterminate or forcibly assimilate cultures into a greater society.

There are numerous historical examples of language being targeted to eliminate cultural or ethnic groups. In Classical Europe, the expansion of the Roman civilization was driven largely by the absorption of cultures via linguicide. Millennia ago, the fledgling Roman Republic successfully conquered and established dominion over the Italian peninsula by conquering other Italic peoples and mandating Latin as the country's sole language. In Classical Europe, other

“sister languages” of Latin existed in the same way that Portuguese and Spanish are related, for example. Today, Latin is the last one of its sister languages standing, due entirely to the fact that the Roman Republic was able to exploit the role linguicide plays in cultural assimilation.

Centuries later, the Roman Republic supplanted native Celtic cultures across Europe by mandating the use of the Latin language in civil society. The civilization of the Romans was incredibly diverse and multi-cultural, but the republican and later imperial mandate of an ultimately Latin culture drove many uniquely non-Latin cultures and languages to extinction.

Of course, today the age of empire-building is long-gone, and the idea of the nation-state has made similar attempts at linguicide more difficult, but all the more notorious. After millennia of historical tendencies to exterminate languages, many countries are committed to preserving endangered or minority languages. Language protection laws are a historically recent development, as diversity (ethnic, religious, linguistic, or otherwise) is decreasingly viewed as a threat to national unity and the integrity of the state, and more so as a wellspring of ideas and potential development. By extension, language protection laws tend to be more focused in number and strength in countries with diverse populations. In former colonies of the New World with diverse populations, such as the United States, Canada, and Brazil, numerous laws function to protect the languages of indigenous or minority cultures. The importance of preserving language is recognized today more so than in any other point in human history, making these laws even more essential for the preservation of moribund languages.

Laws do not, however, “freeze” languages in time. While legal reforms that protect languages do protect cultures from linguistic discrimination, they cannot in and of themselves preserve a language like a museum exhibit. Language-use is fluid, changing with the socio-political climate of any country. To go the extra mile to ensure a language survives into the

future, education is of the utmost importance. Many endangered languages are threatened by small numbers of native speakers with a disproportionate number of these speakers being elders. Even with the strongest of anti-discrimination laws, the passage of time will inevitably run its course and languages without an expanding corpus of speakers will die out. Herein lies the value of education. Learning one's native language, whether it be in childhood or as an adult, guarantees the language's survival in one form or another. With successful education, languages can even "come back from the grave," so to speak. In 1974, the last speaker of the Manx Gaelic language died and the language was deemed extinct, yet individuals dedicated to preserving the language on the Isle of Mann revived the language.

With linguicide being an ever-looming threat with the onset of globalization, the driving force behind such inter-connectedness can ironically also serve as a motor of language protection. The Internet provides an archive and medium through which millions of people can engage with a language, whether it be in passing interest or dedicated desire to study and learn the language. The Internet provides a conduit that many historical languages have never known, nearly unlimited faculty to be disseminated across the world.

These are what I call the "big-three" factors in preserving and revitalizing endangered languages: language-protection laws, education, and the Internet. This study examines the health and status of seven endangered languages spoken throughout the world today through the lens of these forces and historical contextualization. Although there is a focus on the Internet's effect on endangered languages, this paper will, however, demonstrate that the Internet alone cannot save an endangered language. Forces driving the revitalizations of the seven languages employ these "big three" factors with varying degrees of success, which is in large part influenced by the historical linguicide each has experienced in their respective country. In the United States,

language protection laws are the strongest of the four countries examined by the paper, despite centuries of genocide against Native American population. Ireland, likewise, is naturally dedicated to preserving its native language of Irish, although the country is neglecting areas where Irish is traditionally spoken. In the United Kingdom, the British government is largely apathetic and unresponsive to the needs of its minority languages, completely devolving the role of language protection to its constituent countries, which has had very mixed success. In France, the government is a slave to the unyielding uniform culture established by the French Revolution, which has been extremely detrimental to the minority languages in the country. Of the seven languages examined in this paper, Welsh is the most successful in benefiting from the Internet, education, and language protection laws. Thus, Welsh will serve as a point of comparison for the other six languages.

The British Isles – Welsh

Welsh is a Brittonic Celtic language native to the constituent country of the United Kingdom, Wales. The Welsh language and people emerged as a distinct culture and language in the 6th century. As the Roman Empire began to collapse, one of the first territories from which it withdrew was Britain. Like much of the Western Roman Empire's former territory, the British Isles were invaded by successive waves of Germanic peoples: the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Frisians. The native population, the Britons, were either displaced by the Germanic invaders or were assimilated into the new dominant population in the British Isles. The Britons who were displaced consolidated their position in what would become Wales. From those Britons who refused to bow to the Anglo-Saxons, the Welsh people emerged. Independent Welsh dukedoms, fiefdoms, and unified kingdoms existed for hundreds of years until the Kingdom of England conquered Wales in 1282. Wales was fully incorporated into the expanding English realm in the mid-16th century.

As the first constituent country of the United Kingdom to have been absorbed into the antecedent Kingdom of England, one might expect Wales to have experienced the most linguistic and cultural suppression. Strangely, this does not seem to be the case. From its conquest in the 13th century until the 19th century, Welsh was the overwhelmingly predominant language in Wales. It was not until 1911 that the number of Welsh speakers dropped below 50% of the population of Wales for the first time.¹ This was largely due to English settlement and migration during the Industrial Revolution. Indeed, the Welsh proved to be steadfast for centuries in resisting the cultural imperialism of their English neighbors.

¹ W. Aitchison and H. Carter. "Language, Economy and Society." *The changing fortunes of the Welsh Language in the Twentieth Century*. (University of Wales Press, 2000).

However, this is not to say that the English were completely tolerant of the Welsh people's uniquely Celtic language. The 1536 Act of Union, which incorporated Wales into the Kingdom of England, forbade use of the Welsh language in Welsh courts of law. Furthermore, those found to speak Welsh were forbidden from holding public office. Thus began the decline of the Welsh language, although it was slowed by a revival of the language in the 18th century by the Methodist Church, which established religious schools with instruction in how to read the Bible and other texts in Welsh.² The medieval Kingdom of England likely did not pass the 1536 Act of Union with the express purpose of committing linguicide against the Welsh language, although it did contribute to its decline. However, as aforementioned, the decline of Welsh was cemented not by centuries of active suppression, but rather by the migration of English-speakers into Wales. This population that migrated to Wales was simply too large to assimilate into Welsh culture, and thus Welsh was overtaken by English as the dominant language of the country.³ Most of the English-speaking migrants to Wales settled in the southern area of the country, which is reflected in linguistic demographics today. Speakers of Welsh are more heavily concentrated in northern and western Wales, whereas English is the predominant language in eastern and southern Wales.⁴

Welsh – Language Protection Laws

Use of the Welsh language saw a significant decline in the 19th and 20th centuries due to the Industrial Revolution. For the first time in its history in 1911, Welsh had become a minority language. It was not until the late 20th century that revitalization efforts via legal reform were attempted. The Welsh Language Act of 1993 granted the Welsh language *de facto* status

² “Welsh.” Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Colin H Williams. “The Anglicisation of Wales” *English in Wales: Diversity, Conflict, and Change*, Multilingual Matters. (1990): 38–41.

alongside English in Wales, which afforded the language several privileges. Namely, the Language Act allowed Welsh speakers to use Welsh in court proceedings, obliged public organizations to provide their services using English *and* Welsh, and established the Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg (Welsh Language Board). The Bwrdd was responsible for promoting the use of the Welsh language and ensuring compliance of local governments with the Language Act.⁵ In 2011, the Welsh Language Act was replaced by much stronger legislation. The Welsh Language Measure of 2011 gives Welsh official language status in Wales. It is the only language to have *de jure* status in any administrative division of the United Kingdom, with English having *de facto* status as an official language. A language with *de facto* status means that the language spoken within a region is its “default” official language due to the number of speakers. For example, the United States has no official language at the federal level, but English is a *de facto* official language simply because it is the dominant language of the country. By contrast, a language with *de jure* status means that the language is legally recognized as an official language of a particular administrative or federal division.

The law provides for the office of a Comisiynydd y Gymraeg (Welsh Language Commissioner) responsible for ensuring compliance with the legislation and promoting the use of Welsh in work, government, and education, among other domains.⁶ The law outlines the following requirements:

- *De jure* status of the Welsh language in Wales
- Public and some private bodies must provide their services in Welsh
- The creation of a Welsh Language Commissioner who has the ability to enforce the provisions herein and to protect the right of Welsh citizens to use their native language
- The creation of a Welsh Language Tribunal to mediate between public and private bodies and the Welsh Language Commissioner

⁵ Welsh Language Act (Wales) of 1993

⁶ Welsh Language Measure (Wales) of 2011

- The creation of a Welsh Language Partnership Council to advise the Welsh government on its policies regarding the Welsh language.
- Allowance for an official investigation by the Welsh Language Commissioner if the rights afforded to Welsh-speakers are infringed upon.

The current Welsh Language Commissioner is Aled Roberts. His websites and social media pages exemplify the dual use of English/Welsh facilitated by the Welsh Language Measure. His personal website and the website of the Welsh government⁷ have a button to toggle webpage information between English.⁸ Welsh. Roberts' social media posts on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn are made in English and Welsh.⁹ The previous Welsh Language Commissioner, Meri Huws, worked to ameliorate Welsh use in the field of the British NHS, in particular in primary care services. Former Commissioner Huws recommended the expansion of the number of healthcare services provided in Welsh. Furthermore, Huws' proposed legislation allowed the creation of "bilingual signage, which will include the NHS logo, for display in pharmacy premises. Further promotional material, such as patient information and service provision leaflets, will be introduced to enhance the patient experience for people who have Welsh as a first language."¹⁰ As a result of Huws' proposals, healthcare providers (both public and private) are subject to numerous requirements to protect and ensure their services are accessible to speakers of Welsh. A hospital at Cardiff University demonstrates the willingness

⁷ Government of Wales. <https://gov.wales/>

⁸ "Welcome to the Welsh Language Commissioner's Home Page.," Welsh Language Commissioner <https://www.welshlanguagecommissioner.wales/index.php>.

⁹ Social media affiliate pages for the Welsh Language Commissioner, Aled Roberts.

¹⁰ "Written Statement - Welsh Government Response to My Language, My Health The Welsh Language Commissioner's Inquiry into the Welsh Language in Primary Care." <https://gov.wales/written-statement-welsh-government-response-my-language-my-health-welsh-language-commissioners>

from organizations to follow through on Welsh accessibility laws and mandates, as it provides information in both English and Welsh.¹¹

Welsh – The Internet and Education

Welsh has seen tremendous success in establishing itself as a language of the Internet. Numerous blogs are available solely in Welsh, government agencies and health services provide information on their website in Welsh, and language interfaces for computer models such as Windows 7, Microsoft Windows XP, Vista, Microsoft Office, LibreOffice, OpenOffice.org, Mozilla Firefox, and some varieties of Linux computers. Wikipedia is even available in Welsh. There are also numerous websites for news organizations available in Welsh, most notably “maes-e,” a popular discussion forum in Welsh only. Maes-e has proven to be an invaluable resource for the use of Welsh on the Internet. With thousands of registered users, maes-e¹² facilitates the online discussion of politics, art, music, and a variety of other topics¹³ through the medium of Welsh.¹⁴ Welsh is also available as a course on the language-learning app Duolingo. According to Duolingo, in 2020 the number of users learning Welsh rose 44% (presumably from the previous year). Welsh is the 9th most popular language in the UK on Duolingo with more than 1.5 million people learning it on the app. Welsh has become the fastest growing language in the United Kingdom. Welsh learners have proven to be dedicated as well. According to Duolingo’s UK Manager, Colin Watkins, learners of Welsh on the app rank third for most

¹¹ Cardiffuni, “Using Your Welsh in the Health Professions in Cardiff University (Welsh with English Subtitles),” (YouTube, August 5, 2014).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZH4NFCGoTjg>.

¹² Maes-e.

¹³ https://hedyn.net/index.php?title=Categori:Blog_Cymraeg

¹⁴ Rhodri ap Dyfrig, Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones, and George Jones. “Mercator Media Monographs.” *The Welsh Language in the Media*. (Mercator Media, 2006).

consistently maintaining a daily streak on the app. Welsh learners also rank third for “hardest working,” which the app measures by the average number of completed lessons.¹⁵

Education has played a key role in Welsh revitalization as well. Students in Wales are more frequently enrolled in Welsh-medium schools, meaning that their education is conducted solely through the Welsh language. Furthermore, fewer Welsh students are enrolling in bilingual English-Welsh schools.¹⁶ The combined effect of Welsh’s diffusion over the Internet and prominence in Welsh education cannot be overstated. Both the Welsh government and linguistic research have found that strong contributors to the revitalization of Welsh “include the availability of university-level and adult education; the struggle to achieve equal recognition and usage of Welsh in the public and institutional spheres; increases in Welsh publishing, broadcast and Web media and software,”¹⁷ and “significant development in bilingual and Welsh-medium education and the presence of the language throughout the public and private sectors have positively contributed to an increase in the number of Welsh speakers.”¹⁸

Welsh – Successful Revitalization

So how successful has the revitalization of Welsh been? In 1991, it was reported that 18.5% of the population of Wales could speak Welsh. In 2001, this number increased to 20.8%, and then increased again to 21.7% in 2004. The number of Welsh speakers slightly declined according to the 2011 Welsh Census, which found that 562,016 people in Wales (19% of the

¹⁵ Welsh Is Fastest Growing Language in UK, Says Duolingo.” (BBC News, December 17, 2020). <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-55348604>

¹⁶ Paul Brand. “Back to School, but Not an English One.” (ITV News, September 4, 2017). <https://www.itv.com/news/2017-09-04/back-to-school-but-not-an-english-one>

¹⁷ Jones RO and Williams CH. “The Sociolinguistic Context of Welsh.” *The Celtic Languages*, (U.K., Routledge 2010): 650-710.

¹⁸ Government of Wales survey on Welsh Language Use in Wales (2013-2015).

population) aged three and over could speak Welsh. In 2020, it was reported that this number rose to 883,600 people (29.1% of the population), while about 496,300 (16.3% of the population) reported that they speak Welsh daily.^{19 20}

It is more than evident that the number of Welsh speakers has been steadily increasing since the late 20th century, which was the beginning of concentrated legal efforts to protect the language. Welsh is a veritable gold standard for language revitalization. Commitment to strong legal protections has ensured that speakers of Welsh in Wales are not subject to linguistic suppression, nor are they punished for using their own native language. The dissemination over the Internet has ensured the presence of Wales is anything but ephemeral in the digital age, as online resources provide a forum for Welsh speakers to communicate in their own native language and granting theoretically millions, if not billions of people access to education for learning the language. Lastly, Welsh-medium education ensures that Welsh does not die with elderly speakers (an obstacle many endangered languages face), keeping the language alive through exposure at a young age. These three titanic forces of linguistic revitalization have all been employed by advocates of the Welsh language with great aplomb, securing a Welsh renaissance in the digital age, and uplifting it from its status as an endangered language.

The British Isles – Scottish Gaelic

Scottish Gaelic is a Goidelic Celtic language native to the constituent country of the United Kingdom, Scotland. The nomenclature of Scottish Gaelic is used to avoid confusion with other languages. The endonyms for Irish, Manx, and Scottish Gaelic all translate as “Gaelic.”

¹⁹ “Welsh Language Data from the Annual Population Survey: 2020.” Government of Wales.

²⁰ Emma White. “2011 Census: Key Statistics for Wales, March 2011.” 2011 Census - Office for National Statistics. Office for National Statistics, December 11, 2012.

Simply referring to the language as “Scottish” may cause confusion with Scotland’s other native language, Scots. Note that the use of “Gaelic” in this paper refers only to Scottish Gaelic. The origin of the language is unclear, although it shares a linguistic lineage with Irish and Manx as a Goidelic Celtic language. There are two predominant theories about the origins of the language; the first being that Scottish Gaelic was introduced to Scotland by settlers from Ireland who founded the medieval kingdom of Dál Riata in western Scotland.²¹ The second theory postulates that there was no conquest of the Scottish Highlands by early Irish settlers, rather Ireland and Scotland existed as a Goidelic sprachbund since the Iron Age via an ancient land bridge between Ireland and Scotland.²² Regardless of which theory, if either is correct, it is known that by the 8th century the ancestor of modern Scottish Gaelic had emerged in the Scottish Highlands and Outer Hebrides. Over the next two centuries, Scottish Gaelic expanded its reach throughout Scotland by conquest. In 1018, Scottish Gaelic had reached the pinnacle of its geographic and cultural reach after the conquests of the Picts and Lothians, two other Celtic tribes native to Scotland.²³ By the early 11th century, Scottish Gaelic speakers had encompassed much of modern-day Scotland.

The Golden Age of Scottish Gaelic was not to last. Between 1058 and 1093, the Kingdom of Scotland was ruled by Malcom III, who began the process of Anglicizing Scotland. Malcom III’s wife spoke no Scottish Gaelic and he gave his children Germanic Anglo-Saxon names rather than Celtic ones. During the reign of Malcom III many Anglo-Saxon bureaucrats and clergymen were brought to Scotland as well.²⁴ After Malcom’s death in 1093, the Scottish

²¹ Nora Kershaw Chadwick and Dyllon, Myles. *The Celtic Realms*. (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972).

²² Ewan Campbell. “Were the Scots Irish?.” *Antiquity* 75 (2001): 285–292

²³ Charles W. J. Withers. *Gaelic in Scotland, 1698–1981*. (John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1984).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Gaelic aristocracy rejected the legitimacy of his children and instead installed his brother, Donald III, on the Scottish throne. Donald's reign was short however, and the next three kings of Scotland were Malcom's Anglicized children. This was further exacerbated by the Norman conquest of England. The new Anglo-Norman nobility of the Kingdom of England established by William the Conqueror supplanted Gaelic placenames and practices throughout Scotland. Norman French became the language of the Scottish aristocracy. Large numbers of Old English speakers began migrating into Scotland as well.²⁵ The use of Scottish Gaelic quickly declined, and it became a "rural language," as it was only spoken in the remote northern and western Scottish Highlands by Gaelic clan chiefs, as well as the Outer Hebrides. Scottish citizens increasingly began referring to Scottish Gaelic as "Yrisch" or "Erse" meaning Irish, and their own language as *Scottis*.²⁶ During a series of Scottish-English conflicts in the late 13th and early 14th century known as the Scottish Wars of Independence, the Kingdom of Scotland used Scots rather than Scottish Gaelic to organize the war. Thus, the Scottish identity had been supplanted. In the centuries following the Norman conquests, Scottish nationalism and identity became associated with the Germanic language known as Scots (a sister language of English).²⁷ The population of Scotland was now divided "into two groups - Lowland Scots in the southern part of the country and Highland Scots in the north - that differ from one another ethnically, culturally, and linguistically [...] While Highland Scots are of Celtic (Gaelic) descent, Lowland Scots are descended from people of Germanic stock. During the seventh century C.E., settlers of Germanic tribes of Angles moved from Northumbria in present-day northern England and southeastern Scotland to the area around Edinburgh. Their descendants gradually occupied all of the

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Lowlands.”²⁸ Modern Scotland is a product of this dichotomy; the majority population of Scots being descended from Anglicized Germanic peoples from Northumbria. The Scottish Gaels had become a minority in their own country and their language suffered for it.

The decline of Scottish Gaelic in this era is largely the result of shifting population and linguistic demographics in an era of tumult for the British Isles. Intentional, targeted efforts to commit linguicide against Scottish Gaelic began in the 17th century. In 1609, King James I of England (James VI of Scotland) enacted the Statutes of Iona, requiring Scottish Gaelic clan chiefs to educate their children in English, Protestant schools. Expanding the use of English over Scottish Gaelic was perceived by James I as being vital to cementing his control over the region. Furthermore, use of Scottish Gaelic was associated with Catholics, which was deplorable in the firmly Anglican Protestant English state of the time.²⁹ Issues of language and religion were therefore intertwined.

Scottish Gaelic made a small comeback in 18th century education, as some teachers were permitted to use Scottish Gaelic translations of the Bible to aid in comprehension for those not acclimated to an English-medium education. Efforts to translate the Bible into Scottish Gaelic and disseminate the translation into Scottish education continued into the 19th century. These endeavors were surprisingly effective, resulting in a sudden surge of access to the language. An estimated 300,000 people gained basic literacy in Scottish Gaelic from this endeavor.³⁰ Their success was not universal, however. In 1829, the Gaelic School Society reported that Scottish parents were largely unconcerned with whether their children learned Scottish Gaelic in schools.

²⁸ Steven L. Danver. "Groups: Europe." *Native Peoples of the World: An Encyclopedia of Groups, Cultures and Contemporary Issues* (2014).

²⁹ T. M. Devine. *Clanship to Crofters' War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (Manchester University Press, 1994), 110-113.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 113-117.

Conversely, these parents reported being very concerned with their children learning English in school.³¹ As English became the mandated language of the British Empire's administration, the native language of the Scottish Gaels became increasingly less important to learn amongst their population. The societal benefits of learning English in a society dominated by the language outweighed the ostracization associated with speaking Scottish Gaelic.

The success of Scottish Gaelic in British education continued to decline in the 19th century. In 1872, the Scottish Parliament enacted the Education Act, providing universal education in Scotland. The law entirely ignored the status of Scottish Gaelic, although some concessions were made to accommodate the use of the language in education in 1918. Despite this, school programs supported by the act continued to favor English and Scots over Scottish Gaelic.³²

Scottish Gaelic – Language Protection Laws

Use of Scottish Gaelic has been steadily declining for centuries. According to the United Kingdom's 2011 census in Scotland, 57,375 people (1.1% of the Scottish population) aged over 3 years old reported being able to speak Scottish Gaelic, 1,275 fewer than in 2001. Fortunately, the decline of the language seems to be slowing.³³

Scottish Gaelic, unlike Welsh, is *not* recognized as an official *de jure* language in any constituent country of the United Kingdom. As such, Scottish Gaelic does not enjoy the same legal protections and language protection mandated by the British state. Scottish Gaelic is not

³¹ Donald W. Mackenzie. "The Worthy Translator: How the Scottish Gaels got the Scriptures in their own Tongue." *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*. (1990–92).

³² T. M. Devine. *Clanship to Crofters' War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (Manchester University Press, 1994), 111.

³³ "Census Shows Decline in Gaelic Speakers 'Slowed'," (BBC News, September 26, 2013). <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-24281487>

required to be used alongside English in Scotland. Organizations are not required to share, post, or otherwise distribute information in both English *and* Scottish Gaelic. By contrast, Welsh is required by law to be used alongside English in various healthcare services. Websites for the Welsh government and hospitals have a button to toggle information in Welsh and English. The Scottish government website has no such option, although some select pages on the website are available to be read in Scottish Gaelic. The website of the British National Health Service for the Scottish Highlands has language accessibility options as well.^{34 35}

In 2001, the British government ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The European treaty was proposed and promptly ratified by most European countries with the express purpose of protecting historical minority languages on the continent. Three languages in the U.K. are covered and thus protected by the treaty: Irish, Welsh, and Scottish Gaelic. Under Part III of the charter, the U.K. is required to promote and defend the language in the fields of education, criminal and civil justice, public administration, broadcasting and culture. However, the U.K. has not taken the same response in protecting Scottish Gaelic as it has with Welsh. Many of the attempts to promote the use of Scottish Gaelic have come from the regional Scottish government. In 2005, the Scottish Parliament passed the Gaelic Language Act of 2005. This law stands in stark contrast to its Welsh counterparts, the Welsh Language Measure of 2011 and the Welsh Language Act of 1993, as the Gaelic Language Act does *not* oblige or require Scottish authorities and organizations to use Scottish Gaelic in tandem with English, nor does it protect the rights of Scottish Gaelic speakers to use their own language. The language act did create a Gaelic Language Board, the Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which is similar to the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner. The language board's powers and aims are to:

³⁴ "Languages," Scottish Government.

³⁵ "NHS Choices," (National Health Service).

- increase the number of Scottish Gaelic speakers
- strengthen Scottish Gaelic in the public sphere
- promote the use of Scottish Gaelic
- develop the use of Scottish Gaelic in everyday life
- work with organizations interested in promoting Scottish Gaelic
- provide a strategy for Scottish Gaelic-medium education

In 2004, the Bòrd na Gàidhlig was given additional statutory powers after concerns were raised that the board's advice could simply be ignored. The Bòrd can now provide statutory guidance to local authorities providing Scottish Gaelic-medium education, advise public, private and voluntary bodies, and decide on how to develop Scottish Gaelic through organizations providing "language plans."

According to the Scottish government, the Bòrd na Gàidhlig advises ministers "on matters relating to Gaelic language, culture and education. The board is able to request that public bodies develop Gaelic Language Plans to set out how they will promote the use of Gaelic."³⁶ The Bòrd na Gàidhlig also supports Scottish Gaelic in the realm of education, as it has a duty to produce statutory guidance for education in a Scottish Gaelic medium. The Bòrd's support of Gaelic through education is aided by the Education Act of 2016, which "supports Gaelic through the following provisions: the parent of a child who hasn't yet started school may request that their local education authority assesses the need for GME in their area, and every education authority must promote the potential provision of GME and support any existing Gaelic education provision in the authority area."³⁷ The Scottish Government and Bòrd na Gàidhlig also support the language by funding organizations dedicated to Scottish Gaelic-medium education such as An Comunn Gàidhealach.

³⁶ "Languages," Scottish Government.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Since the passing of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act, the Scottish Government and Bòrd na Gàidhlig worked to create two Scottish Government Language Plans (2012-17 and 2016-21). Both plans include “proposals for the promotion of strategies for increasing the number of people able to speak Gaelic, encouraging its use and facilitating access to Gaelic language and culture.” The plans address the following^{38 39}:

- An increase in the acquisition and use of Gaelic by young people in the home and increased numbers of children entering Gaelic-medium early years education.
- An increase in the number of children enrolling in Gaelic-medium education, doubling the current annual intake to 800 by 2017. As of 2017, approximately 3,965 students were enrolled in Scottish Gaelic-medium schools.⁴⁰
- A yearly increase in the number of pupils engaged in Scottish Gaelic-medium education
- An expansion in the availability of Scottish Gaelic-medium subjects in secondary schools.
- An increase in the number of adults acquiring Gaelic from the current total of around 2,000 to 3,000 by 2017 and enhanced language skills among fluent Gaelic speakers.
- More opportunities for communities and networks of Gaelic speakers of all kinds to use Gaelic and increased use of the language in community activities and services.
- Expansion of the use of Gaelic in places of work and an increase in employment opportunities where Gaelic skills are required in order to enable service delivery in the language.
- Development of Gaelic arts and media as a means of promoting the language, attracting people to it and enhancing their commitment through opportunities to learn, use and develop Gaelic.
- An increased profile for Gaelic in the heritage and tourism sectors and increased use of Gaelic in the interpretation of Scotland’s history and culture.
- Co-ordination of the initiatives of parties active in Gaelic language corpus development to achieve enhanced strength, relevance, consistency, and visibility of the Gaelic language in Scotland.

³⁸ “Scottish Government Gaelic Language Plan 2012-2017,” Scottish Government.
<https://gaeliclanguageplansscotland.org.uk/files/plans/HistoricScotland-GLP-English.pdf>

³⁹ “Scottish Government Gaelic Language Plan 2016-2021,” Scottish Government.
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-gaelic-language-plan-2016-2021/pages/4/>

⁴⁰ Pupil Census, Supplementary data 2017, Spreadsheet (Table 1.13), Scottish Government.
<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2019/07/pupil-census-supplementary-tables/documents/pupil-census-2017-supplementary-tables/pupil-census-2017-supplementary-tables/govscot%3Adocument/pupil-census-supplementary-2017.xlsx>

There are important caveats to note with the Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Gaelic Language Act. In particular, the language act claims that its aim is to secure Scottish Gaelic as an official language of Scotland “commanding equal respect” with English. However, the extent to which Scottish Gaelic “commands equal respect” has no meaning in Scottish or English law and is purposefully nebulous. Such ambiguity was intentionally chosen to dissuade any notion that Scottish Gaelic has “equal validity or parity of esteem with English.”⁴¹ This of course is very inconsistent with the legal status of Welsh. The Bòrd na Gàidhlig itself has also been criticized recently for suspicious and inconsistent funding practices. In 2009, the Bòrd cut off funding for a successful Scottish Gaelic publication, *An Gàidheal Ùr*. According to a former editor for *An Gàidheal Ùr*, he had been “spending more time dealing with Bòrd na Gàidhlig in trying to access funding than producing the paper.”⁴² In 2015, one of the Scottish Gaelic scholars who helped create the Bòrd na Gàidhlig described the organization as having “lost its way.”⁴³ This comment was made after the chief executive of the Bòrd, Iain Campbell, quit and was replaced by a non-Scottish Gaelic speaking executive.⁴⁴

Scottish Gaelic – The Internet

Scottish Gaelic does not have as large an Internet presence as Welsh, but it has established itself online. The BBC launched a Scottish Gaelic channel in 2008, BBC ALBA, and in 2011 the channel was brought online to Freeview. The Scottish government provides BBC ALBA with £11.8 million (about \$14 million) annually. Interestingly, in 2016, an additional £1

⁴¹ Wilson McLeod. “Gaelic in contemporary Scotland: contradictions, challenges and strategies.” *University of Edinburgh Press*, 2006.

⁴² “Bord blamed for the demise of *An Gaidheal Ur*.” *Stornoway Gazette*.

⁴³ David Ross. “Key target is missed in bid to save Gaelic.” (The Herald, February 2012).

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13046593.key-target-missed-bid-save-gaelic/>

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

million (about \$1.13 million) was added to BBC ALBA's core funding after the national government of the United Kingdom withdrew funding for Scottish Gaelic broadcasting in Scotland.⁴⁵

In November 2019, Duolingo created an "open beta" course for Scottish Gaelic. A course in open beta means that lessons in the language are available to the public, but the course itself has not been finalized. The course officially "graduated" from its open beta status in December 2019. Tens of thousands of people signed up for the course. It was reported by the *Guardian* that 127,000 people (80% of which were reportedly from Scotland proper) signed up for the course.⁴⁶ Within five days of the course launching, 65,000 people became learners of Scottish Gaelic. 20,000 people had registered for the Duolingo course prior to its launch.⁴⁷ According to Colin Watkins, Duolingo's UK Manager, "To have more people learning on Duolingo in under a week than can speak the language or are currently learning elsewhere is amazing... it's [sic] testament to how easy, fun and effective learning on Duolingo can be."⁴⁸

Scottish Gaelic – Dire Straits

Scottish Gaelic has had a very tumultuous history. Over a thousand years ago, its progenitor was the dominant cultural and linguistic force in most of Scotland. Today, Scottish Gaelic struggles to gain strong advocates for its struggle in revitalization. Politically, this is due

⁴⁵ "Scottish Government Gaelic Language Plan 2016-2021," Scottish Government. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-gaelic-language-plan-2016-2021/pages/4/>

⁴⁶ "Duolingo Sparks Gaelic Boom as Young Scots Shrug off 'Cringe' Factor," (Guardian News and Media, January 2, 2020). <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/jan/02/duolingo-sparks-gaelic-boom-as-young-scots-shrug-off-kringe-factor>

⁴⁷ "Scottish Gaelic Course on Duolingo App Has 20,000 Signups Ahead of Launch," The Scotsman, November 28, 2019). <https://www.scotsman.com/news/uk-news/scottish-gaelic-course-duolingo-app-has-20000-signups-ahead-launch-1401212>

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

to half-measures passed by the Scottish Parliament, which are not as far-reaching as they could be in their protection of Scottish Gaelic. Blame also lies on the national government of the United Kingdom, which has failed and even sabotaged⁴⁹ its duty to protect the minority languages of the state under the European Charter for Regional Minority Languages.⁵⁰

Scottish Gaelic, unlike Welsh, is still in severe danger of disappearing,⁵¹ as should be evident from weaker attempts to revitalize and promote the language. Welsh revitalization demonstrates how education, law, and the Internet synergize to reverse the effects of a moribund language. Scottish Gaelic demonstrates how a language suffers when these forces do not work in tandem. British and Scottish law have largely failed to provide meaningful protection for the language, and Scottish Gaelic medium education is not as widespread as its Welsh counterpart. Less than 5,000 students in Scotland are enrolled in Scottish Gaelic-medium education⁵², whereas almost a quarter of the student population of Wales is engaged in Welsh-medium education.⁵³

Scottish Gaelic's saving grace against linguicide in the digital age has been the Internet. Duolingo and other online resources give the language some "staying power" as it provides a

⁴⁹ "Scottish Government Gaelic Language Plan 2016-2021," Scottish Government. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-gaelic-language-plan-2016-2021/pages/4/>

⁵⁰ Kirsteen Patterson. "Council of Europe says UK 'failing minority language pledges' on Gaelic," (The National, September 8, 2020). <https://www.thenational.scot/news/18706327.uk-failing-treaty-obligations-gaelic-scots-council-europe-says/>

⁵¹ "Scots Gaelic Could Die out within a Decade, Study Finds," (Guardian News and Media, July 2, 2020). <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jul/02/scots-gaelic-could-die-out-within-a-decade-study-finds>

⁵² Pupil Census, Supplementary data 2017, Spreadsheet (Table 1.13), Scottish Government. <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2019/07/pupil-census-supplementary-tables/documents/pupil-census-2017-supplementary-tables/pupil-census-2017-supplementary-tables/govscot%3Adocument/pupil-census-supplementary-2017.xlsx>

⁵³ Paul Brand. "Back to School, but Not an English One." (ITV News, September 4, 2017). <https://www.itv.com/news/2017-09-04/back-to-school-but-not-an-english-one>

gateway to learning the language for millions of people. This alone cannot save the language – Scottish Gaelic must receive meaningful support and protection in its native land.

The British Isles – Irish

Irish Gaelic, or simply Irish, is a Goidelic Celtic language native to the island of Ireland. It is spoken both in the Republic of Ireland and the constituent country of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland. The history of the Irish language extends back thousands of years. Early forms of Irish were first recorded in the 4th century CE. Old Irish adopted the Latin alphabet, as well as several Latin loanwords, in the 6th century due to an influx of Christian missionaries. By the 10th century, Irish was spoken by Celts in Ireland, Western Scotland, and the Isle of Man. It is from this stage of development in the Irish language, Middle Irish, that the three Goidelic Celtic languages emerged. Modern Irish developed from the Middle Irish spoken in Ireland. Scottish Gaelic emerged from the variety of Irish spoken in Scotland. Manx evolved from the Irish settlers on the Isle of Man. For over one thousand years, Irish was the dominant language of Ireland. Although the island never unified into one country, the Irish language was spoken by the myriad tribal fiefdoms scattered across medieval Ireland.

The catalyst for the decline of Irish, like Scottish Gaelic, was the Norman conquest of England. The new Anglo-Norman realm established a permanent foothold in Ireland, a large area in the eastern part of the island around Dublin. This area became known as the Pale, and it gradually fell under firm English control. Use of Irish in the new administration and everyday life was suppressed in favor of English. The Pale was an extremely well-fortified enclave of English control, effectively isolating it from the Irish Gaelic cultural and linguistic realm. Inside the Pale, Irish language and culture suffered under the iron fist of English rule. In 1366, the

Statutes of Kilkenny were passed by the government of the Pale to outlaw many cultural practices of the Irish people such as wearing traditionally Celtic clothing, intermarriage between Irish and Englishmen, and use of the Irish language. While the Pale was fully under the control of the English due to the Norman invasions, the same could not be said of the rest of the island. The Normans did invade other areas of Ireland outside of the Pale, but English control of these chiefdoms was tenuous at best. The Hiberno-Norman lords (descended from Irish and Norman nobles) who reigned over their Irish holdings outside the Pale were not able to supplant the native Irish culture. Scottish invasions, Irish rebellions, lack of English settlement, and the Black Death during this period coalesced to provide a high degree of autonomy for the Hiberno-Norman lords of Ireland. As a result, the Hiberno-Norman governments of Ireland largely adopted Irish customs, rather than following the Pale's example of replacing Irish culture and language with those of their English neighbors.

The English conquest and consolidation of Ireland in the 16th century was grueling and slow. English and Irish culture were fundamentally at odds with each other. Irish government largely still revolved around a decentralized form of tribal democracy, whereas the English government had grown increasingly centralized with a supreme monarch inherited via primogeniture. These differences were exacerbated by the Catholic-Anglican religious divide, and the obvious linguistic barrier. Rebellions by Irish peasants and noble lords were common during the 16th century.

Two long-term solutions to pacify and Anglicize Ireland were devised. The first was to encourage military occupation of particularly "uncooperative" parts of Ireland. Queens Mary I and Elizabeth I of England encouraged local lords to essentially establish martial law in their holdings in exchange for tax exemptions. The second solution had an even more profound

influence whose effects still plague Ireland today. In the late 16th century, Queen Elizabeth I encouraged “Plantations,” which were areas of Ireland chosen to be settled by English, Scottish, and Welsh subjects of England. The ultimate goal of these Plantations was evidently to send more English settlers into Irish areas than could be assimilated, thus “planting” English language and culture into these areas and replacing the Irish entirely. The Plantations were stalled in the late 16th century when Pope Pius V declared Elizabeth I to be a heretic for her attempts to colonize the Catholic Irish. In the wake of the queen being branded a heretic, the Irish rebelled against English rule in Desmond (with military support from the Papacy). The rebellion ended in 1583, but the consequences of both the Plantations and the Pope’s involvement remain today. Due to the Plantations, English culture, and language firmly dominated Ulster, which is Northern Ireland today. Due to the Pope’s interference in the Plantations, the English-Irish conflicts became inexorably associated with religion – the clash between Catholics and Anglican Protestants.⁵⁴

Irish continued its steady decline in the centuries following the Tudor conquests. By the 18th century, English had become the language of the Catholic middle-class of Ireland. The Catholic Church and public figures (especially those in government) made clear the importance of learning English in British society. Irish was increasingly seen as having less “value” than English. Public schools in Ireland in the 1700s were prohibited from teaching Irish, which was supported by many Irish parents.⁵⁵ This situation mirrors what occurred in Scotland as English overtook Scottish Gaelic in its homeland. Scottish Gaelic and Irish parents were more concerned with ensuring their children learned English, the sole *de jure* and *de facto* language of the British Empire than risk societal isolation from speaking their native language.

⁵⁴ Nicholas Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland* (Barnes & Noble Books, 1976), 113.

⁵⁵ Cormac Ó Gráda. “Cé Fada le Fán,” *Dublin Review of Books*, nº 34 (2013).

The health of the Irish language severely declined due to the Great Famine of the 19th century due to a loss in active speakers. Many Irish speakers were either killed by the potato famine or immigrated to the New World. Irish, much like Scottish Gaelic, had by now become a “rural language,”⁵⁶ largely supplanted by English in the northern and eastern parts of the country. As remains true today, the highest concentration of Irish speakers lies in the rural western reaches of the island.

An attempt to revive Irish language and culture began in the late 19th century with a literary movement known as the Gaelic Revival. The revival saw the creation of the *Conradh na Gaeilge* (Gaelic League in English) in 1893, a body which still exists today. The *Conradh* was the motor behind the Gaelic Revival, which encouraged the use of Irish as a literary language

Irish – Language Protection Laws

Daily users of Irish number about 73,000 (1.5%) of the population in the Republic of Ireland. The total number of persons aged 3 and over who reported having any degree of proficiency in Irish was 1,761,420 according to the 2016 census by the Republic of Ireland. According to estimates in 2018, 104,943 people (less than 10% of the population) in Northern Ireland claimed to be able to speak Irish.⁵⁷

According to the constitution of the Republic of Ireland, Irish is recognized as the national and first official language of the country. It is officially recognized as a minority language in Northern Ireland. Areas of Ireland where Irish is still commonly spoken are referred to as the *Gaeltacht*. It is important to note that the *Gaeltacht* is not an arbitrary designation for

⁵⁶ Nicholas M. Wolf. *An Irish-Speaking Island: State, Religion, Community, and the Linguistic Landscape in Ireland, 1770–1870*. (University of Wisconsin Press: 2014).

⁵⁷ “Irish.” *Ethnologue* 22 (2019).

this area; the region is given legal distinction from other areas of Ireland. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, ratified by the United Kingdom in 2001, also obligates the British government to protect the existence of the language and promote the use of Irish in the public sphere.⁵⁸

The Good Friday Agreement, signed by the United Kingdom after the Troubles (a period of violent conflict marked by civil unrest, mass protests, terrorist incidents, and segregation of Irish Catholics beginning in the late 1960s) officially recognized the Irish language (as well as Ulster Scots, a dialect of the Scots language native to Northern Ireland) as “part of the cultural wealth of Northern Ireland.”⁵⁹ The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 also created the Foras na Gaeilge (Irish Institute in English). This public body took over the responsibilities of its predecessor in Ireland: the Bord na Gaeilge (not to be confused with the Bòrd na Gàidhlig in Scotland), which was similarly responsible for the protection of the Irish language. The official website for the Foras is available to read in its entirety in both English and Irish via a toggle (similar to Welsh government websites). The Foras na Gaeilge’s responsibilities of promoting the Irish language pursuant to the agreement are as follows⁶⁰:

- Facilitating and encouraging the use of the Irish language
- Advising groups in the public and private sectors on issues that concern the employment of the Irish language
- Aiding and supporting bodies, research, and promotional campaigns committed to promoting the use of Irish
- Developing and disseminating Irish terminology and dictionaries for public use
- Supporting Irish-medium education

⁵⁸ European Charter for Minority Languages, *Application of the Charter In the United Kingdom* (3rd monitoring cycle).

⁵⁹ Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

⁶⁰ “Foras Na Gaeilge,” March 29, 2021. <https://www.forasnagaeilge.ie/>.

As aforementioned, Irish is an official language of the country according to its constitution. In the early 21st century, the Irish government passed a series of laws to further secure the use of the Irish language. In 2001, the Broadcasting Act required “programme material [...] to provide a comprehensive range of programmes, primarily in the Irish language, that reflect the cultural diversity of the whole island of Ireland and include programmes that entertain, inform and educate, provide coverage of sporting, religious and cultural activities and cater for the expectations of those of all age groups in the community whose preferred spoken language is Irish or who otherwise have an interest in Irish.”⁶¹ This has since been extended to online publications and broadcasting as well. For example, Tuairisc.ie has become a successful Irish-online news publication. The Raidió Teilifís Éireann, the Republic of Ireland’s national broadcasting company, routinely runs news and documentary shows in Irish (with English subtitles). The Broadcasting Act also obligates the Dáil Éireann, Ireland’s lower house in its legislature, to translate meeting recordings into Irish. In 2003, the Irish government passed the Official Languages Act, which expanded the rights of Irish-speakers in the public sphere. The languages act allows Irish speakers to use Irish in court proceedings. The Official Languages Act mandates that services provided by the Irish Republic must hold English and Irish to be equal in provision.⁶² In practice, state documents, forms, and reports must be available to be read in English *and* Irish, and Irish citizens should be able to conduct any and all business with the government in Irish if they so choose. However, the Official Languages Act does *not* apply to businesses and the private sector. Placenames according to the Official Languages Act form an important part of the law. Outside the Gaeltacht, English and Irish placenames are functionally the same under the law. Within the Gaeltacht, only the Irish name of a location has legal force

⁶¹ Broadcasting Act of 2001.

⁶² Official Languages Act of 2003.

and effect. Local ordinances within the Gaeltacht and even simplicities like street signs are often *only* provided in Irish. The Official Languages Act also created the office of the Coimisinéir Teanga (Language Commissioner) who is responsible to enforce the status of Irish as the country's "first official language," and English as the country's "second official language" under the constitution of the Republic of Ireland. In so doing, the commissioner develops plans for public bodies to ensure that they fulfill language accessibility requirements for both languages. The website for the Coimisinéir is available in English and Irish.⁶³

Irish – The Gaeltacht and Northern Ireland

It seems, however, that many of these ordinances have been unsuccessful in protecting the Irish language. The Gaeltacht has seen a steady decline in the use of the Irish language despite Irish law guaranteeing public use of the language. Parents of students attending Irish-medium schools in the Gaeltacht have reported that the Irish educational system does not do enough to support the use of Irish as a first or second language.⁶⁴ A 2005 study by An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (The Educational Council for Gaeltacht and Irish-Medium Schools) found that many schools in the Gaeltacht have been transitioning to English-medium education, while others were wavering in their commitment to Irish-medium education.⁶⁵ In 2002, an Irish government agency reported that the use of Irish in

⁶³ <https://www.coimisineir.ie/>

⁶⁴ John Walshe, "Number of Gaeltacht Schools Using Irish 'in Steep Decline'," (Independent.ie, May 8, 2007). <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/number-of-gaeltacht-schools-using-irish-in-steep-decline-25979924.html>

⁶⁵ "Coimisióen."

<https://web.archive.org/web/20131017090003/http://www.ahg.gov.ie/en/20YearStrategyfortheIrishLanguage/Publications/Report%20of%20Coimisi%C3%BA%20na%20Gaeltachta.pdf>

the Gaeltacht was quickly disappearing, in part due to emerging English-Irish bilingualism. The commission found that policies by the Irish Republic and volunteer groups were not effective in preserving the language. In 2012, the Coimisinéir Teanga criticized the government of the Republic of Ireland for failing to provide services accessible to Irish speakers throughout the country, not just in the Gaeltacht⁶⁶. According to the report, Irish was now extremely fragile and could disappear as a language of Gaeltacht communities, which was later confirmed in a 2015 report estimating that Irish will cease to exist as a community language of the Gaeltacht within 10 years.⁶⁷ Between 2011 and 2016, there was an approximately 11% decrease in the number of daily Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht.⁶⁸

Irish language fairs none the better in Northern Ireland. Perhaps the greatest contributor to the struggle for Irish recognition in Northern Ireland is the politicization of the language in the U.K. since the Troubles. Although it is recognized as a minority language in the region, the British government has essentially done nothing to protect the language. In 2006, the British and Irish governments, as well as the two major political parties in Northern Ireland, signed the St Andrews Agreement, wherein the U.K. promised to enact legislation to promote usage of the Irish language. The British government has yet to act on that promise. There is, however, proposed legislation in Northern Ireland, the Irish Language Act, which would grant Irish equal status to English, similar to the effect of the Welsh Language Act of 1993. While the status of the full legislation is still nebulous, some of its proposals were passed into law in January 2020. Sinn Féin, the Irish Nationalist Party in the U.K., is the strongest advocate of these issues, whereas the

⁶⁶ “Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2012 Annual Report.” An Coimisinéir Teanga. 2012.

⁶⁷ “Nuashonrú ar an Staidéar Cuimsitheach Teangeolaíoch ar Úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht: 2006–2011.” (Údarás na Gaeltachta: 2015).

⁶⁸ “Census 2016 Summary Results - Part 1 - CSO - Central Statistics Office,” CSO, October 4, 2018.

Democratic Unionist Party (the loyalist, Protestant party) opposes the proposed law. Aspects of the language act currently in effect are as follows^{69 70}:

- Grant official status to both the Irish language and Ulster Scots in Northern Ireland
- Establish the post of Irish Language Commissioner to “recognize, support, protect and enhance the development of the Irish language in Northern Ireland”
- Introduce reforms to standardize the Irish language
- Repeal a 1737 ban on the use of Irish in Northern Ireland's courts
- Allow members of the Northern Ireland Assembly to speak in Irish and establish a translation unit for language accessibility access

Irish – Differences in Education

Irish, while declining in the Gaeltacht, has experienced more successful revival in urban areas (in both the Republic and Northern Ireland). In cities like Dublin and Belfast, students are attending Irish-medium schools at higher rates than the rural Gaeltacht and are learning and applying Irish in higher education.⁷¹ These Irish students from an English-speaking background; are now often described as “nuachainteoirí” (new speakers). This growing population of Irish-speakers learned Irish at a young age as a second language and are known to use cultural events (i.e., folk festivals and Irish cultural holidays) to improve upon and practice their competencies in the language.⁷² Among these “nuachainteoirí,” a New Irish is developing. A comparison of traditional Irish spoken in the Gaeltacht and urban Irish shows a distinction between broad and

⁶⁹ “We Will Continue to Campaign until We Achieve Equality for the Irish Language!,” *Connemara Journal*, (2014).

⁷⁰ “UK | Northern Ireland | Irish Language Future Is Raised,” (BBC News, December 13, 2006). http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/6177321.stm

⁷¹ An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh. “Press Statement Census 2011 Results.” <https://web.archive.org/web/20160328211550/http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011profile9/Profile,9,What,we,Know,Press,Statement.pdf>

⁷² John Walsh; Bernadette O’Rourke; Hugh Rowland, *Research Report on New Speakers of Irish*. (October 2015).

slender consonants, typical to Gaeltacht Irish phonology and grammar, which is not common in urban Irish. Furthermore, many urban Irish-speakers do not adhere to fundamental grammatical, phonological, and morphological features of the language. Within a few decades, it is highly likely that urban Irish may develop into a distinct dialect or even discrete language, distinct from Gaeltacht Irish.⁷³ However, these differences have bred a sense of elitism. Gaeltacht Irish is over-represented in Irish media compared to its urban counterpart and is also widely viewed as the “proper” way of speaking Irish.⁷⁴

The difference in Irish revitalization between the Gaeltacht and Irish cities comes down to education. A growing number of schools in the Gaeltacht provide English-medium education because the boundaries of the Gaeltacht recognized by the Republic of Ireland no longer reflect the true extent of Irish speakers in these areas as the Gaeltacht shrinks. After operating on outdated information, the Irish government only recently created new policy to address Gaeltacht schools in 2016. This policy is geared toward students learning Irish as a first language, and in 2020 allowed English-medium schools to opt out of being considered “Gaeltacht schools.”⁷⁵ Conversely, the Irish government has been much more proactive in supporting Irish-medium education *outside* of the Gaeltacht. These state-sponsored schools have developed a strong reputation for effective community support and administrative infrastructure.⁷⁶ Between 1972

⁷³ Brian Ó Broin. “Schism fears for Gaeilgeoirí.” (The Irish Times, January 16, 2010). <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/schism-fears-for-gaeilgeoir%C3%AD-1.1269494>

⁷⁴ Méabh Ní Thuathaláin. “‘I’m gonna speak Irish the way that’s natural for me’ – craoltóir buartha faoi éilíteachas shaol na Gaeilge.” (Tuairisc.ie, July, 23 2019). <https://tuairisc.ie/im-gonna-speak-irish-the-way-thats-natural-for-me-craoltoir-buartha-faoi-eiliteachas-shaol-na-gaeilge/>

⁷⁵ “Government Launches Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022,” October 28, 2016. <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2016-Press-Releases/PR2016-10-28.html>

⁷⁶ “Gaelscoileanna – Irish Medium Education” (Gaelscoileanna.ie, February 22, 1999).

and 2019, the number of schools teaching Irish at the primary level increased from 11 to 180, in addition to 48 schools teaching Irish at the secondary-level (although 17 of these 48 are English-medium schools).⁷⁷ The number of Irish-medium primary schools outside the Gaeltacht outnumber the 127 found within the Gaeltacht. There are 29 secondary Irish-medium schools within the Gaeltacht as well. Of course, an Irish-language education is greatly bolstered in urban areas by institutions at the university or college level providing courses in Irish such as University Cork College, the National University of Ireland Galway, and the Honorable Society of King's Inns, all of which offer education in the Irish language funded by the government.⁷⁸

Irish – The Internet

In 2016, it was reported that 2.3 million people were using the Duolingo app to learn Irish, with 23% of these learners living in Ireland proper. “We are seeing a direct impact through the increased interest in our work in promoting the Irish language at home and abroad,” said Conradh na Gaeilge President, Cóilín Ó Cearbhaill. “The door to the Irish language opened by Duolingo makes learning Irish easier and more fun than ever before.”⁷⁹ In 2017, Irish President Michael D. Higgins referred to the protection and promotion of Irish as an “unfinished project.” He did, however, praise Duolingo’s teaching of the Irish language, referring to it as “an example of what can be achieved quickly,” and met in person with a small group of those who contributed

⁷⁷ “Scoileanna : Gaelscoileanna – Irish Medium Education.” (Gaelscoileanna.ie, 2015).

<http://www.gaelscoileanna.ie/en/about/statistics/>

⁷⁸ Anne Cahill, “Gaeilge to become a full working language of the European Union,” (Irish Examiner, March 9, 2016). <http://www.irishexaminer.com/ire-land/gaeilge-to-become-a-full-working-language-of-the-european-union-386308.html>

⁷⁹ “Over 2.3m People Using Language App to Learn Irish,” (RTÉ Lifestyle, November 25, 2016). <https://www.rte.ie/lifestyle/living/2016/1125/834370-duolingo-language-learning-app-irish/>

to the Duolingo project. Higgins thanked them for “putting their skills at the service of the Irish language,” and their significant contribution to “the State’s language strategists and to bodies such as Conradh na Gaeilge in terms of how to tap into this interest among both the Irish diaspora and those with Irish heritage with an interest in engaging with the language.”⁸⁰ Outside of Duolingo, the Foras na Gaeilge funds online Irish publications such as *Tuairisc.ie*.

Irish – The Future of the Language

Of the three languages examined so far for the British Isles, Irish falls somewhere in between Welsh and Scottish Gaelic in terms of successful revitalization. Welsh has seen great success because of its fortune in synergizing strong language protection laws, diffusion over the Internet, and Welsh-medium education. Conversely, Scottish Gaelic has been the least successful of the three. Scottish Gaelic has been unable to capture the success of Welsh, dispositively confirmed by Scotland’s failure to establish widespread Scottish Gaelic-medium schools and create meaningful legislation to protect the language. Even though, Scottish Gaelic has secured an Internet presence through Duolingo like Welsh and Irish, this simply is not enough.

Irish falls somewhere in between, although its revitalization efforts fall closer to Welsh success than Scottish Gaelic’s failures. The Republic of Ireland and Sinn Féin are both committed to encouraging the use of the Irish language through legislation, although these attempts have both been unsuccessful in some areas. In Northern Ireland, advocates of Irish are opposed by those who still associate Irish culture and language with the Troubles, and seek to maintain the Protestant English hegemony established by the Ulster Plantation. In the Republic

⁸⁰ Éanna Ó Caollaí, “Ar Fheabhas! President Praises Volunteer Duolingo Translators,” (The Irish Times, November 25, 2016).

of Ireland, legal protections for Irish have not been able to stop the decline of Irish in areas where it has been traditionally spoken. Both Irish and Scottish Gaelic were afflicted by transitional bilingualism. For instance, in a family undergoing this effect there would be a monolingual grandparent speaking Irish whose children would speak Irish *and* English, whose children in turn would *only* speak English. This transitional bilingualism greatly contributed to both languages' decline, evidenced by Scottish Gaelic and Irish parents historically being recorded as being more concerned with ensuring their children learn English rather than their own native language.^{81 82}

Furthermore, the schools of the Gaeltacht likewise have not been able to maintain a strong Irish-medium school system. As stated by the Irish Language Commissioner himself, the laws simply lack the wide-reaching strength needed to truly safeguard the Irish language and encourage its use. Similarly, Údarás na Gaeltachta⁸³ maintains that efforts to revive and maintain the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht will be unsuccessful without a massive overhaul in language policy in the region. Conversely, Irish has experienced a resurgence amongst younger, well-educated students outside the Gaeltacht. While Irish has maintained a strong presence on the Internet, through online publications and Duolingo, this is ultimately meaningless if the language cannot be protected in its native land.

Irish lies at a crossroads: will Irish completely disappear in the Gaeltacht, and give rise to a “New Irish” language born out of Irish cities? It is not too late for the Republic of Ireland to

⁸¹ Donald W. Mackenzie. “The Worthy Translator: How the Scottish Gaels got the Scriptures in their own Tongue.” *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*. (1990–92).

⁸² Cormac Ó Gráda. “Cé Fada le Fán” *Dublin Review of Books*, n° 34 (2013).

⁸³ “Coimisiún.”

<https://web.archive.org/web/20131017090003/http://www.ahg.gov.ie/en/20YearStrategyfortheIrishLanguage/Publications/Report%20of%20Coimisi%C3%BAAn%20na%20Gaeltachta.pdf>

stop Irish from completely disappearing in the Gaeltacht, but time is running out. Likewise, it is not too late for the government of Northern Ireland to secure the language in the U.K., but this depends greatly on the cessation of centuries-old English-Irish rivalries in the region. As of now, the future of the Irish language lies in younger, well-educated, and well-connected urbanites, not the traditional Irish-speaking region of the Gaeltacht.⁸⁴

The United States – Hopi

Hopi is an Uto-Aztecan language native to the southwestern United States. As the name of the language family implies, Hopi is a linguistic relative of the language spoken by the Aztecs encountered in the New World by the Spanish in the 16th century. Today, the language is spoken almost exclusively, if not entirely, by members of the Hopi Nation, whose reservation is in Arizona.

The history of the Hopi Nation prior to European contact is difficult to determine. Native American languages are historically unwritten. As such, native tribes of the Americas instead preserved their histories and cultural memories through oral tradition rather than maintaining a written record. The origins of the Hopi and their related Native American tribes in the region, the Pueblo peoples, can however be traced back to an ancient culture of Native Americans simply called Ancestral Puebloans. The Hopi refer to the Ancestral Puebloans as the *Hisatsinom*, meaning “ancient people.” The Navajo, a tribe with which the Hopi have a mutual long-lasting animosity, refer to the Ancestral Puebloans as *Anasazi*, meaning “ancient enemies.” *Anasazi* has become an alternative term for the Ancestral Puebloans amongst historians, although many

⁸⁴ James McCloskey. *Voices Silenced - Guthanna in Éag: Has Irish a Future - An Mairfidh an Ghaeilge Beo*. (Cois Life: 2001).

modern Pueblos believe this term to be derogatory.⁸⁵ The Ancestral Pueblos and their descendants are perhaps best known for the construction of residencies built into cliff sides and decorative pottery.⁸⁶ Both have become symbols many Americans recognize as cultural markers of the patrimony of the southwestern United States.

The Ancestral Pueblos thrived in the “Four Corners” region of North America (equivalent to the contemporary states of Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico) for hundreds of years. Their presence in the region dates from as early as 100 CE.⁸⁷ The point at which the Ancestral Pueblos splintered into their contemporary descendants, such as the Hopi, is not clear. Modern Puebloan tribes refute the notion that the Ancestral Pueblos simply disappeared or vanished. Rather, Puebloan nations claim that the Ancestral Pueblos migrated further south toward areas with more favorable sources of water and diverged into the modern Puebloan tribes at that point. Today, many Puebloan peoples claim descent from Ancestral Pueblos who settled in their homeland.⁸⁸

European contact with the Hopi people is surprisingly early in the Age of Exploration considering their relative geographic isolation in the southwestern deserts of the United States. The first recorded contact with the Hopi was in 1540. A Spanish conquistador by the name of Francisco Vásquez de Coronado first learned of the Hopi people while exploring the region.⁸⁹ The Spanish Empire’s contact with the Hopi was inconsistent and non-violent at this point. Throughout the 16th century, Spanish-Hopi contact consisted of short visits or stays in Hopi land

⁸⁵ Linda Cordell and Maxine McBrinn *Archaeology of the Southwest* 3 (2012): 18-19.

⁸⁶ Frank Waters and Fredericks Oswald White Bear, *Book of the Hopi: the First Revelation of the Hopi's Historical and Religious Worldview of Life* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1991), 190.

⁸⁷ “Ancestral Pueblo Culture,” Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.

⁸⁸ James W. Loewen. *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Markers and Monuments Get Wrong*. (New Press: 1999), 389-391.

⁸⁹ J.O Brew. “Hopi Prehistory and History to 1850.” *Southwest* 9, *Handbook of North American Indians*, (1979): 514.

whilst Spanish forces explored the region. The Spanish did not send many colonists or soldiers into the Hopi's ancestral land. The nature of Spanish-Hopi contact changed in the 17th century as Spain ramped up its efforts to proselytize the indigenous peoples of the Americas. In the 1620s, Spain sent several friars into Hopi land to establish missions and construct churches in Hopi territory.

With the arrival of the Spanish missionaries, the empire began to bolster its military presence in Hopi territory. The Hopi people were largely resistant to Catholic conversion; however, Spain did not limit its colonial ventures to religious conversion. The Spanish Empire sent soldiers into Hopi territory to enslave the tribe. Spanish abuses of native peoples in Latin America are well-known, and the Hopi were no exception to Spanish brutality. Spanish friars placed in Hopi settlements were known to brutalize and even murder Hopi tribespeople seemingly on a whim.⁹⁰ The abuses the Hopi and their Indian neighbors endured under Spanish rule had been building up for decades. In the 1670s, a coalition of Puebloan tribes approached the Hopi seeking their support in a revolt against the Spanish. The Hopi, themselves a Puebloan nation, agreed. In 1680, the Puebloans began the Pueblo Revolt. The united front of the Pueblo tribes drove out Spanish colonists and priests, and destroyed the buildings the colonizers and proselytizers had erected. The revolt was largely successful for the Hopi. Although the Spanish Empire and its successor, the Mexican Empire, would maintain control over the region, Catholic friars or missionaries never returned to the Hopi's land. Neither the Spanish nor Mexican Empires would be able to maintain a strong presence in the Hopi's ancestral home.⁹¹

⁹⁰ France V Scholes. *Troublous Times in New Mexico, 1659-1670*. (University of New Mexico Press, 1942), 62.

⁹¹ J.O Brew. "Hopi Prehistory and History to 1850." In Alonso Ortiz, vol. ed., *Southwest*, vol. 9, in William C. Sturtevant, gnl. ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, Smithsonian Institution, 1979: 523.

The Hopi were relatively isolated from the burgeoning colonies of the New World for hundreds of years thereafter. This changed in the 19th century after the Mexican-American War. American victory in the war greatly increased the size of the United States. The Republic gained a large swath of sparsely populated land around the Rocky Mountains previously controlled by the Mexican Empire, which included Hopi territory. The Hopi tribe's first encounters with Americans began in the late 1840s, as they encountered Mormon colonists and missionaries who attempted to convert the tribe.⁹² In 1850, 310 years after the tribe's first recorded encounter with the Spanish Empire, the Hopi had their first formal meeting with the United States government. The Hopi sought aid from the American military against their historic rival and neighboring tribe, the Navajo. The American government agreed to the Hopi's request and sent some soldiers to Hopi land to deal with the perceived threat of the Navajo. The influx of American soldiers into the region began the Long Walk of the Navajo, discussion of which is forthcoming. With the removal of their historical rival from their ancestral land, the Hopi enjoyed a brief period of peace and isolation.⁹³

The Hopi's isolation ended in the 1880s. In 1887, the United States sought to assimilate the Hopi tribe into Euro-American culture and society. The American government established the Keams Canyon Boarding School on Hopi land to begin the nefarious process of cultural erasure.⁹⁴ The Keams Canyon Boarding School was purposefully designed to completely erase Hopi culture from the minds of its students, and instead completely replace it with Euro-American culture. Hopi children were forced to forsake their original names and adopt English ones. They were similarly forced to give up the Hopi language and traditional clothing of the

⁹² Frederick J Dockstader. "Hopi Prehistory and History to 1850." *Southwest 9, Handbook of North American Indians*. (Smithsonian Institution, 1979): 524-532.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

tribe. Male Hopi students were forced to cut their hair, which was grown long as per Hopi tradition. Female Hopi students were taught domestic skills, while their male peers were taught skills in trades that required manual labor.⁹⁵ Before 1890, enrollment in the Keams Canyon Boarding School was relatively low, as many Hopi parents refused to send their children to the school in defiance of federal authorities. In 1890, federal soldiers were sent to the reservation, and threatened to arrest parents who did not enroll their children in the boarding school. Many children were thus forcibly brought to the school to boost enrollment.⁹⁶ The forced assimilation resulted in a fracture in the Hopi tribe, as some Hopi willingly submitted to American cultural hegemony, whereas others obviously opposed it.⁹⁷

The Hopi faced even more issues spawned from Euro-American contact unrelated to education, ironically due to the creation of their reservation. The Hopi reservation was created in 1882 by President Chester Arthur via executive order. The executive order placed the Hopi's reservation in their ancestral land, although it was entirely encircled by the much larger Navajo reservation. The fact that the Hopi reservation exists as an enclave within the Navajo reservation protected their land from Euro-American settlers, but also made them vulnerable to incursions by their historical rival.⁹⁸ The Navajo and Hopi clashed over disputed land along the borders of their reservation in the following years. The Hopi appealed to the U.S. Senate to solve the land dispute, which resulted in the passing of the Dawes Allotment Act. The act divided the disputed land to encourage Euro-American subsistence farming, and declared large parts of the area "surplus land," which was then made available to purchase by American citizens. The act was

⁹⁵ David Wallace Adams. "Schooling the Hopi: Federal Indian Policy Writ Small, 1887–1917," *The Pacific Historical Review & University of California Press* 48, n° 3 (1979): 335–356.

⁹⁶ Peter M Whitely. *Deliberate Acts* (University of Arizona Press, 1988) 14–86.

⁹⁷ Frederick J Dockstader. "Hopi Prehistory and History to 1850." *Southwest 9, Handbook of North American Indians*. (Smithsonian Institution, 1979): 524–532.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

disastrous for the Hopi. The new system of farming and organization established by the act ruined their ability to farm the land, as the sudden implementation of Euro-American farming methods was incompatible with the way in which the Hopi tribe had farmed their native land for centuries.

The Hopi gained newfound autonomy in the 20th century. In 1924, the American government granted U.S. citizenship to Native Americans under the Indian Citizenship Act. In 1934, the U.S. government passed the Indian Reorganization Act to grant more sovereignty to Native American tribes and reverse decades of forced cultural assimilation. In 1936, the Hopi elected a tribal government, drafted a constitution, and declared itself a self-governing tribe. The Hopi constitution provides for functioning legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government as well as rules for tribal membership.⁹⁹ Members of the Hopi Nation who wish run for a position in the Hopi government must have a high degree of proficiency in the language.¹⁰⁰

Hopi – Language Protection Laws

The United States stands apart from the United Kingdom and Ireland in that it provides stronger and more explicit protection of minority languages and cultures under national law. Hopi, like many other minority languages in the United States, is protected by federal law. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 expressly prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin. Title VI states “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or

⁹⁹ “Constitution of the Hopi Tribe,” National Tribal Justice Resource Center's Tribal Codes and Constitutions. (November 28, 2009).

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Indian Affairs, Constitution and By-Laws of the Hopi Tribe of Arizona. (1936).

activity receiving federal financial assistance.” This extends to providing accessibility to those with limited language proficiency (LEP). In 1974 the U.S. Supreme Court has held that under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, federal financial assistance recipients must provide non-English spoken language assistance (such as translated websites and documents) to limited English proficient (“LEP”) individuals who utilize the recipients’ federally subsidized services. These protections were expanded upon to ensure the suffrage of minority groups in the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act states that language assistance be provided if more than 10,000 citizens or 5% of a jurisdiction’s population are members of a linguistic minority group with LEP that prevents them from participating in the voting process. Hopi is no longer covered by the Voting Rights Act due to the low number of speakers relative to the population of the tribe in the state of Arizona. Executive order 13166 of 2000 (signed by President Bill Clinton) requires federal agencies to establish guidelines on providing meaningful access to LEP communities and individuals. It also requires recipients of organizations that receive funding from these federal agencies to clarify what steps will be taken to ensure language accessibility is adequately provided to LEP persons.

In 1990, the United States passed the Native American Languages Act, with the express purpose of undoing the decades of cultural and linguistic harm brought about by the Indian boarding schools. The law requires state and local governments with significant Native American populations to “recognize the right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies to use the Native American languages as a medium of instruction in all schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior; fully recognize the inherent right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies, States, territories, and possessions of the United States to take action on, and give official status to, their Native American languages for the purpose of

conducting their own business; support the granting of comparable proficiency achieved through course work in a Native American language the same academic credit as comparable proficiency achieved through course work in a foreign language, with recognition of such Native American language proficiency by institutions of higher education as fulfilling foreign language entrance or degree requirements; and encourage all institutions of elementary, secondary and higher education, where appropriate, to include Native American languages in the curriculum in the same manner as foreign languages and to grant proficiency in Native American languages the same full academic credit as proficiency in foreign languages.”¹⁰¹ In the following years, President H.W. Bush’s administration amended the law to increase funding for Native American language programs.

The Native American Languages Act has been extremely successful. Investigation by the United States Congress has found plentiful evidence that respect for a child’s first and native language has a positive correlation with academic performance and opportunities in education.¹⁰² Over \$50 million and hundreds of grants have been dedicated to help preserve Native American languages since the Native American Languages Act was passed.¹⁰³ The law was expanded upon in 2006 by President George Bush and beyond through state and federal law to provide further funding for Native American language instruction in public schools. There is no shortage of advocates for the resurgence of Native American languages in the United States.

Hopi – The Internet and Education

¹⁰¹ Native American Languages Act of 1990 § 104.

¹⁰² Gina Cantoni and Richard Littlebear. “Stabilizing Indigenous Languages.” *Center for Excellence in Education Monograph*. (Northern Arizona University, 2004).

¹⁰³ “Congressmen Introduce Native American Preservation Act.” *Native News Network*. <http://www.nativenewsnetwork.com/congressmen-introduce-native-american-preservation-act.html>

Efforts to revitalize the Hopi language have been concentrated largely in education. In recent years, Hopi language programs have been created on the tribe's reservation. One such program involves Hopi-medium education for young students, providing immersion in the native language. The website for the Hopi Tribal Government does not provide an accessibility option for the Hopi language.¹⁰⁴ In 2014, the non-profit organization Mesa Media was created to help revitalize the Hopi language. The organization's website sells reading and listening materials to aid in learning the Hopi language. The organization even offers a free online video game that teaches "a little bit of the Hopi language and some history and geography."¹⁰⁵ The website for Mesa Media is only available in English.¹⁰⁶ There is also a public radio station in the Hopi language, KUYI 88.1 FM. It is available to stream on iTunes.¹⁰⁷

Hopi – Insular Revitalization

The driving force behind the revitalization of Hopi is the insular ethos of the tribe. Hopi is spoken by approximately 6,780 people according to the 2010 census in Arizona. The 1990 census found 40 of the total number of Hopi speakers to be monolingual speakers, meaning that they only spoke Hopi. An obstacle that Hopi and other Native American languages face is that their ancestral language is primarily spoken by tribal elders. Younger members of Indian tribes tend to be less engaged with the Hopi language than their elder tribal members. A survey of the Hopi language in 1998 found that among 200 Hopi people, 100% of Hopi elders (>60 years old) were fluent in the Hopi language, fluency in adults aged 40-59 was 84%, fluency in young adults

¹⁰⁴ Tribal Government of the Hopi Nation. <https://www.hopi-nsn.gov/>

¹⁰⁵ Mesa Media. "Hopilavayi Game (Play Online)." <https://www.mesamedia.org/product/hopilavayi-game-play-online/>

¹⁰⁶ Mesa Media. "About Us." <https://www.mesamedia.org/about-us>

¹⁰⁷ KUYI 88.1 FM. <https://www.kuyi.net/Home>

aged 20-39 was 50%, and fluency in children aged 2-19 was 5%.¹⁰⁸ Neither Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, nor Irish face the obstacle of having a disproportionately large number of elderly speakers. If the proportion of elderly to younger speakers of a language is too large, the language risks dying with its older population.

Indeed, attempts to revitalize Hopi are almost entirely focused within the tribe itself, thus Hopi's is an "insular revitalization." Native American languages tend to be challenging for Euro-Americans and non-tribal members to learn. Furthermore, most Hopi words and phrases are linked to cultural activities, such as planting food crops,¹⁰⁹ requiring proper education in the language to be mixed with immersion in Hopi culture. Non-Hopi tribal members are excluded from this mix of cultural immersion and education, which is entirely focused on the Hopi reservation. Indeed, the Hopi nation, language, culture, and traditional religion are inexorably linked. Hopi language education is encouraged on the reservation by excluding Hopi tribal members who cannot speak the language from certain religious ceremonies.¹¹⁰

Ergo, Hopi is in a unique position. Firstly, Irish, Welsh, and even Scottish Gaelic have many times the number of speakers as Hopi. Irish, Welsh, and Scottish Gaelic are disadvantaged by the weaker language protection and accessibility laws of the United Kingdom, but Hopi is greatly disadvantaged by its relative geographic isolation. Irish, Welsh, and Scottish Gaelic also have the advantage of easily accessible dissemination and education access via the Internet, specifically Duolingo. Theoretically, billions of people have access to these languages, which is simply not true for Hopi. Hopi is not available on Duolingo or similar language-learning apps

¹⁰⁸ Mesa Media. "Status of Hopi Language."

https://web.archive.org/web/20151215225513/http://mesamedia.org/Status_of_Hopi_language.html

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.mesamedia.org/about-us>

¹¹⁰ Melissa Sevigny. "Teaching To Protect The Hopi Language." (NPR, August 17, 2019).

<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/17/751986794/teaching-to-protect-the-hopi-language>

online. Education of the language is strictly delegated to grassroots organizations and education within the tribe itself. Hopi's transmission via the Internet is also greatly hindered by some difficulty in accessing the Internet (great parts of the Hopi reservation are "dead zones"). Hopi simply does not have the weight of tens, or hundreds, of thousands of speakers behind it to establish itself as a language of the Internet. Perhaps in the future, if the revitalization-through-education model of the Hopi Nation and groups like Mesa Media are successful, augmented by the language accessibility policy of the United States, Hopi may yet overcome its endangered status.

The isolation and small numbers of the Hopi Nation and language are not the sole driving force behind its Internet presence (or lack thereof). Aside from the horrendous attempts at cultural suppression by the United States government in the 19th century, the Hopi Nation has also experienced similarly nefarious incidents of cultural appropriation. There are numerous examples of sacred Hopi traditions that were shamelessly profaned by Euro-Americans. One such example is Hopi *katsinam*. The *katsinam* are sacred representations of traditional Hopi spirits and deities, but many organizations (unrelated to the Hopi Nation) create replicas of the *katsinam* and exploit the Hopi iconography, artwork, and native religion for profit. Since the 1950s, a group of Boy Scouts in Colorado also began performing Hopi dances, claiming to defend their religious practices.¹¹¹ Of course, this was done without the consent of the Hopi. These cultural appropriation incidents, combined with their poor history with the United States, have made the Hopi very insular, understandably wary of outsiders (Euro-Americans or otherwise) engaging with their culture. Evidence of this isolationism is further supported by the

¹¹¹ Michael F. Brown, "The Spectrum of Cultural Appropriation: Recent Cases," (UPRIVER Home, February 5, 2016). <https://michaelfbrown.net/2016/01/16/the-spectrum-of-cultural-appropriation-recent-cases/>

fact that the Hopi Nation resisted efforts by the United States Department of Justice in 2002 to implement protections afforded to the Hopi language protection under the Voting Rights Act of 1965.¹¹² Even if the number of Hopi speakers surged into the tens of thousands, it is understandable that the Hopi would be hesitant to allow their language to be freely learned by non-tribal members on the Internet. Such isolationism, even in the face of possible linguicide, is an aspect of culture unique to the nations reviewed in this study.

The United States – Navajo

Navajo is a Southern Athabaskan language native to the southwestern United States. The Navajo language has the highest number of speakers of any Native American language north of the American-Mexican border. The language is primarily spoken in the Navajo reservation, located in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. The classification of their language family might seem unusual, since the region of Athabasca is in Alberta, Canada. However, the ancestors of the modern Navajo nation did in fact migrate to the American southwest from the Athabaskan region. As is true with Hopi history, pre-colonial Navajo history can be challenging to decipher due to the historically unwritten nature of the Navajo language. The Navajo are believed to have completed their migration from Athabasca to Arizona between the 15th and early 16th century.¹¹³ ¹¹⁴ During this period, the Navajo encountered and mingled with the native Puebloan tribes. The Navajo developed generally amiable relations with the Puebloans, trading with them frequently.

¹¹² Bruce Adelson, voting rights lawyer and Civil Rights expert, in discussion with the author. (June 2021).

¹¹³ R. J. Perry. "The Apachean Transition from the Subarctic to the Southwest." *The Plains Anthropologist* (1980): 279–296.

¹¹⁴ D. M. Brugge. "Navajo Prehistory and History to 1850." *Handbook of North American Indians* 10 (1984): 489–501.

The Navajo language even diverged slightly from its Northern Athabaskan linguistic cousins as it adopted some Puebloan words in the crucible of cross-cultural contact. Overtime however, the Navajo developed a rivalry with the Hopi people. The animosity between the Navajo and Hopi was fueled in part by the fact that the Navajo are linguistically and ethnically distinct from the Puebloan peoples, but also the inherently incompatible lifestyles prior to European contact and colonization. The Navajo generally maintained a nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyle, whereas the Hopi maintained a more sedentary lifestyle influenced by the permanent settlements constructed by the Ancestral Puebloans. Conflicts between sedentary and nomadic peoples are a common trend in Eurasian history as well (i.e. The Roman Empire vs Hunnic invaders, the Xiongnu Confederacy vs the Han Dynasty of China, the Kievan Rus' and Russian Empire vs Turkic hordes, etc.)

The Navajo Nation's first contact with European colonizers was recorded sometime in the 16th century. In the 17th century, Spanish explorers recorded the Navajo name for their homeland in the "Four Corners": Dinétah. Years later in the 1770s, the Spanish sent military expeditions against the Navajo to consolidate European control over the region. The Navajo and Hopi found common ground in their shared hatred of the Spanish colonizers (as the Hopi had fought against them in the Pueblo Revolt centuries earlier). Thus, the Navajo, Hopi, and neighboring tribes of the region continued a cycle of mutual trade with each other and defensive wars against the Spanish and their Mexican successors.¹¹⁵ The cycle was interrupted after the Mexican-American War when Dinétah was absorbed into the United States.

Just like the Hopi, and myriad other Native American tribes, the Navajo have a very poor history with the United States government. Navajo and American representatives met in the

¹¹⁵ J. Lee Correll. *Through White Men's Eyes: A Contribution to Navajo History*. (The Navajo Times Publishing Company, 1976), 2-4.

territory of New Mexico in 1846 to discuss how their two societies would interact. Navajo and American leaders agreed to a treaty that essentially boiled down to a mutual agreement to stay out of each other's way. Unsurprisingly, as Euro-American colonizers began spreading westward, this agreement was frequently violated by both the Navajo and American settlers arriving in New Mexico. Navajo raids on New Mexican settlements and vice versa were common in the 1840s and 1850s.¹¹⁶ In response, the American government began establishing a greater military presence in the area, stationing soldiers and militiamen in newly constructed forts in New Mexico. Boarding schools were established in the new Southwest territories, often accompanied by Christian missionaries, which forcibly acculturated Navajo children into Euro-American culture. The first students of these boarding schools and their children were stripped of their native culture, and forced to use English and acculturate into the Euro-American republic. Thus, the Navajo language suffered greatly.¹¹⁷

In the 1860s, the United States government took their attempt to stop Navajo-New Mexican clashes to a brutal extreme. A full-scale, scorched earth assault was launched on the Navajo Nation in the beginning of 1864. In the spring of 1864, the Long Walk of the Navajo began. The Navajo people were forced from their native land of Dinétah into a death march. After winning the Civil War the United States became determined to put an end to the hostilities. Union general Edward Canby wrote, "recent occurrences in the Navajo country have so demoralized and broken up [the Navajo] nation that there is now no choice between their absolute extermination or their removal and colonization at points so remote [...] as to isolate them entirely from the inhabitants of the Territory. Aside from all considerations of humanity the

¹¹⁶ Hampton Sides. *Blood and Thunder: An Epic of the American West*. Doubleday (2006).

¹¹⁷ "The Warrior Tradition," (Public Broadcasting Service, November 11, 2019).

extermination of such a people will be the work of the greatest difficulty.”¹¹⁸ Hundreds died on the death march toward their destination, Fort Sumner in New Mexico. After four years of brutal internment, the U.S. army allowed the Navajo to return to Dinétah. The United States government and tribal government of the Navajo Nation negotiated the establishment of the Navajo reservation in their homeland of Dinétah (originally 3.5 million acres, but the Navajo later expanded its size to 16 million acres), federal government funding of infrastructure, compulsory education for Navajo children, and monetary compensation.¹¹⁹ After being displaced by the Long Walk, the Navajo became one of the few tribes forced into migration by the United States that were later allowed to return to their ancestral homeland. In the same way that cultural appropriation and suppression has permanently affected the Hopi Nation, the Long Walk of the Navajo and the Navajo Nation’s own horrific experiences with the United States has become a permanent cultural memory of the Navajo people, entering its way into Navajo art and literature and creating distrust in the federal government of the United States.¹²⁰

The 19th and 20th centuries saw the number of speakers of virtually all Native American languages decline. Unfortunately, some Native American languages disappeared entirely, lost to the scum of history. The Navajo were able to offset part of this widespread decline, simply due to the Navajo being the largest Indian tribe in the United States.¹²¹ The beginning of a possible resurgence for the Navajo language began in the 20th century as the language gained newfound

¹¹⁸ Frank McNitt, *Navajo Wars: Military Campaigns, Slave Raids, and Reprisals* (University of New Mexico Press, 1990), 428-429.

¹¹⁹ “Treaty Between the United States of America and the Navajo Tribe of Indians.” 1868. <https://web.archive.org/web/20020311010532/http://reta.nmsu.edu/modules/longwalk/lesson/document/treaty.htm>

¹²⁰ Thomas J. Csordas. “Ritual Healing and the Politics of Identity in Contemporary Navajo Society.” *American Ethnologist* 26 (1999): 3–23

¹²¹ Bruce Johansen and Barry Ritzker. *Encyclopedia of American Indian History*. (ABC-CLIO, 2007).

scholarly attention. This was brought about in large part due to the Navajo code talkers during the Second World War. Up until the mid-20th century, the Navajo language was completely undocumented, making it an ideal language for the United States to use in coded transmissions, in addition to the fact that the Navajo language has extremely complex syntax and grammar that differ greatly from German and Japanese.¹²² However, the damage to the Navajo language had already been done.

Although its use in World War II shone a new light on the language in linguistic scholarship, its historical suppression in boarding schools and historically unwritten nature meant that few people were qualified to teach the language. In 1968, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Bilingual Education Act, which allocated funds for the education for LEP (limited English proficient) students. Many Native American tribes sought to use money provided by the program for their own bilingual schools, which included the Navajo. However, these bilingual programs were largely unsuccessful because of the lack of people qualified to teach the Navajo language.¹²³

Navajo – Language Protection Laws

As with the Hopi language, the Navajo Nation's native language is granted the same legal protections under federal law. Navajo-medium education also receives financial support pursuant to the Native American Languages Act of 1990. Unlike the Hopi, Navajo is protected by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 due to the larger number of speakers. According to a 2015 survey, there are about 170,000 native speakers in the United States. This makes Navajo the most widely

¹²² Paul V. Kroskrity and Margaret C. Field. *Native American Language Ideologies: Beliefs, Practices, and Struggles in Indian Country*. (University of Arizona Press, 2009), 93.

¹²³ Bruce Johansen and Barry Ritzker. *Encyclopedia of American Indian History*. (2007).

spoken Amerindian language in the United States and Canada.¹²⁴ The website for the Navajo Nation's tribal government does not provide an accessibility option for the Navajo language.¹²⁵

Navajo – Education

Protections for the Navajo nation through federal law are straight forward. The United States government protects the Navajo language against discrimination by law, and also mandates areas with high populations of Navajo speakers to provide materials for voting in the Navajo language. The base for Navajo revitalization is thus established by federal law by protecting against discrimination and providing incentives for the use of the language. However, the true success of Navajo revitalization has been scholarship and education.

Evidence of successful revitalization emerged in the 1980s. A 1980 survey found that 85% of Navajo first-graders were bilingual, whereas 62% (of any age) were bilingual speakers.¹²⁶ In 1984, the Navajo Nation government established comprehensive Navajo-language education available for students of all grade levels within the Navajo reservation. This endeavor was aided greatly by two Navajo scholars, Robert W. Young and William Morgan, who worked to document the Navajo language and create a comprehensive dictionary and orthography. Ironically, Navajo has become one of the most well documented Native American languages, which has greatly facilitated its continued survival. Young and Morgan continued their work in the 80s to coalesce their research into an extremely comprehensive archive: *The Navajo Language: A Grammar and Colloquial Dictionary*. Use of the language in education has been very successful. Diné College and Arizona State University both offer Navajo courses.

¹²⁴ "Navajo." *Ethnologue* 24 (2021).

¹²⁵ <https://www.navajo-nsn.gov/>

¹²⁶ Sharon Hargus, "Review: *Analytical Lexicon of Navajo* by Robert W. Young; William Morgan; Sally Midgette," *Anthropological Linguistics* 38, n° 2 (1996).

Combined, these courses are attended by hundreds of students per semester.¹²⁷ An annual reference publication for the world's languages, *Ethnologue*, still classifies Navajo as “in trouble,” but also reaffirms the strength of its revitalization in the past century, stating that the language is easily capable of true revitalization with more concentrated efforts, and if more Navajo parents teach the language to their children.¹²⁸ The Navajo Nation also sponsors Navajo-medium education within its borders. These schools teach kindergarten and first-grade students entirely in Navajo, while some English is incorporated into lessons starting in third grade.¹²⁹

Navajo – The Internet

Due to the large population of the Navajo Nation compared to other American Indian tribes, the Navajo language has been able to reap the benefits of an Internet presence. In 2013, the 1977 film *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* was dubbed in Navajo, becoming the first major motion picture to be translated into any Native American language.¹³⁰ In 2016, *Finding Nemo* was also translated into Navajo.¹³¹ The Navajo versions of both movies are available on Disney's streaming service Disney+, leaving open the possibility of Disney dubbing more of its movies in Navajo, and creating a new space on the Internet to engage with the Navajo language. Duolingo created a course for Navajo in 2018, although there is no source detailing the number of users learning Navajo on the app. This may be because Navajo is still in the “open beta

¹²⁷ Robert M. Young and Eloise Elinek. *Athabaskan Language Studies* (1996).

¹²⁸ “Navajo in the Language Cloud.” *Ethnologue*. <https://www.ethnologue.com/cloud/nav>

¹²⁹ “Our Mother Tongues: Navajo,” Our Mother Tongues | Navajo.

¹³⁰ Christine Trudeau. “Translated Into Navajo, 'Star Wars' Will Be.” (NPR, June 20, 2013). <https://www.npr.org/2013/06/20/193496493/translated-into-navajo-star-wars-will-be>

¹³¹ Vincent Schilling, “Navajo-Dubbed 'Finding Nemo' and 'Star Wars: A New Hope' Now on Disney+,” (Indian Country Today, February 13, 2021). <https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/navajo-dubbed-finding-nemo-and-star-wars-a-new-hope-now-on-disney>

phase,” of creating a language course on the app, and has not been released as a full course yet like Welsh, Irish, and Scottish Gaelic. The Navajo language received additional attention online in 2021 with the launch of the Mars Perseverance rover. NASA and the Navajo Nation collaborated to give several landmarks on the red planet names in the Navajo language.¹³² In 2021, Navajo truly became a language of the stars and space exploration, a privilege not many other languages can claim.

Navajo – Shí naashá

The Navajo Nation and language have had to overcome and, in many ways, reverse centuries of suppression and discrimination. The language itself has had to additionally overcome the obstacle of its historically unwritten status. Yet despite these grand hurdles, the language has not only survived but thrived much like Welsh and Irish. It is more than evident as to why these languages have a bright future in terms of their revitalization. Compared to its neighbor Hopi, the Navajo language has been more easily revitalized outside the immediate territory of its home nation due to the larger number of speakers and far less isolationist spirit of its nation. Compared to Scottish Gaelic, Navajo has no shortage of advocates for the protection of its language in its homeland. As with Hopi, the future of Navajo rests greatly on the success of language-medium education. With the presence of the language in mass media entertainment, language-learning apps, and civil society, the future of the Navajo language is certainly a bright spot in the landscape of Native American languages.

¹³² Chelsea Gohd, “NASA Honors Navajo Language on Mars with Perseverance Rover Rock Names,” (Space.com, March 15, 2021). <https://www.space.com/mars-navajo-language-perseverance-rover>

France – Breton

Breton is a Brittonic Celtic language native to the region of France named after the Bretons themselves, Brittany. The Breton language and people emerged in the wake of the Roman Empire's collapse. In the 5th century, the British Isles were beset by Germanic invaders from continental Europe. The largest of these tribal conglomerates emerged as the Anglo-Saxons, who conquered or assimilated many of the Celtic Britons native to England. The Britons who were not absorbed into the nascent Anglo-Saxon realm diverged into separate nations. The Welsh emerged from the Britons who remained independent in Wales, and likewise the Cornish emerged from the Britons living in Cornwall. However, not all Britons remained in the British Isles. To escape the Anglo-Saxon invaders, some Britons fled the British Isles entirely and settled in the Armorica Peninsula in modern-day France. The descendants of these Britons became the Bretons, and thereafter the name of Armorica became Brittany to reflect the new Breton settlers.

An independent Breton state existed for hundreds of years during the Middle Ages, beginning around the 9th century. The Kingdom of Brittany was a vassal state to Charlemagne's Frankish Empire, established by the Bretons shortly after arriving on continental Europe. Following the collapse of the Frankish realm, the Kingdom of Brittany became the Duchy of Brittany. The Breton state later co-existed with the successor to the Franks, the French kingdom. In the 11th century, the Bretons were able to experience some revanchism for the expulsion of their Briton ancestors from the British Isles when William the Conqueror invaded England. Of

the non-Norman French forces sent to invade England, Bretons made up the largest part. Many noble families in the new Anglo-Norman Kingdom of England were of Breton descent.¹³³

The duchy was peacefully absorbed into the Kingdom of France in 1532 under a personal union of the King of France and Duke of Brittany, meaning that after 1532 the King of France also held the title of Duke of Brittany. For hundreds of years, the Duchy of Brittany existed with an unusual degree of autonomy within the greater French kingdom. Brittany was allowed to maintain some uniquely Celtic legal traditions (ex. semi-Salic succession law rather than France's pure Salic succession law). Breton nobles' privileges were also protected through tax exemption and a self-governing Breton Parliament. Brittany was essentially a vassal under France, as it was under the Carolingian Empire, rather than being completely incorporated into France.

This changed with the final Bourbon monarch of France, Louis XVI. King Louis XVI dissolved the Breton Parliament, although he did continue to recognize some of the Breton nobles' unique privileges. These privileges were promptly eliminated after the French Revolution (1789), wherein the administrative division of the Duchy of Brittany was completely abolished in favor of the French system of "départements." Brittany is still divided into four departments today, but it was restored as an administrative region in 1941, although its land does not encompass all the territories of the antecedent Kingdom and Duchy of Brittany. About 20% of the land within the former Duchy of Brittany lies within the département of Loire-Atlantique.¹³⁴

¹³³ K.S.B. Keats-Rohan. "The Bretons and Normans of England 1066-1154: the Family, the Fief and the Feudal Monarchy." *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies* 36 (1991)

¹³⁴ Law of Decentralization, 1982.

Unsurprisingly, the Breton language took a great hit when the local autonomy its native region had enjoyed for almost 1,000 years was suddenly eliminated. For centuries, French monarchy under the Bourbon and Valois dynasties largely did not concern itself with non-French languages so long as French was used for business with the central government. Thus, the Breton peninsula was largely able to maintain its uniquely Celtic language and traditions. This changed with the onset of the French Revolution. The revolutionary government began to actively favor the use of French over regional minority languages in all levels of government and society. According to a law instituted by Napoleon Bonaparte, Bretons were legally forbidden from choosing Breton names for their children. Instead, the Breton *départements* were given pre-approved rosters of French names. These catalogues consisted of Catholic saints, historical French cultural icons, and revolutionary heroes. This law was only repealed in 1993. During the revolution, the French term *patois* emerged as a derogatory term for non-French language spoken in the country. The notoriously paranoid Committee of Public Safety believed reactionary, monarchist, or separatist forces in France favored minority languages like Breton to undermine the new Revolutionary Republic.¹³⁵ In 1794, French politician Bertrand Barère de Vieuzac said “federalism and superstition speak Breton.”¹³⁶ The suppression and subsequent decline of the Breton language had begun. French started to rapidly disseminate throughout Brittany and supplant the native Breton language.

The suppression of Breton continued even after the fall of the revolutionary government and Napoleon’s empire. The current (Fifth) French Republic attempted to stamp out all use of Breton in the 20th century, continuing the tradition of the French Revolution in mandating one,

¹³⁵ “Breton.” *Endangered Language Alliance* (2012).

¹³⁶ Lois Kuter. “Breton – An Endangered Language of Europe.” (*breizh.net*, May 2004).
<http://www.breizh.net/icdbl/saozg/endangered.htm#>

uncompromising French identity. Teachers in state schools were encouraged to humiliate Breton students if they used their own native language instead of French. A popular form of humiliation consisted of tying an iron ring around a Breton student's neck (*le symbole* in French) only permitting them to remove the ring if they informed their teacher if another student spoke Breton. For decades, the French educational system instilled a fear of the majority French culture in Breton students, as well as associating their own native culture and language with shame, humiliation, and self-loathing.¹³⁷

Today, Breton is spoken by an estimated 226,000 people in France. 210,000 of these speakers live in Brittany proper, while the remaining 16,000 live in the area around Paris (Île-de-France).¹³⁸

Breton – Language Protection Laws

So far, this paper has discussed the language protection laws of two countries: the United Kingdom and the United States. While the strength, success, and scope of these laws differ in either country, the fact that these laws are present at some level of government is undeniable. France's language protection laws are far easier to recount than those of the U.K. and the U.S. because they do not exist. The French Republic's policy on protecting minority language is non-existent. In fact, if policies applicable to minority languages exist, they are often detrimental to these languages. According to the French constitution itself, the native language of France is *solely* French. An amendment to the French constitution was added in July 2008, stating that *les langues régionales appartiennent au patrimoine de la France* (the regional languages belong to

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ "Enquête Socio-Linguistique : Qui Parle Les Langues De Bretagne Aujourd'hui ? · Région Bretagne," Région Bretagne.

the heritage of France). However, this token statement is completely meaningless, and has not impacted French policy regarding minority languages in any way. Advocates for the use of Breton language must fund and support Breton recognition themselves. Outside of education, this is even more limited. It is illegal for road signs to be solely in Breton, although bilingual signage is present in Brittany.¹³⁹ The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, whose ultimate goal is to ensure signatories provide legal protections for historical regional and minority languages, was signed by France in 1999 but was not ratified. There was an attempt to ratify the charter in 2015, but this was rejected by the French Senate.¹⁴⁰

In 1999, a public institution, the Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg (Public Office of the Breton Language) was created to aid in revitalization efforts. The Ofis stands apart from its counterparts in Wales, Ireland, and Scotland in that it virtually receives no aid or support from its respective central government. The Ofis is not a government body, but rather a public institution. The Ofis sponsors adult education courses in Breton and also gathers socio-linguistic data that it can use to advise organizations in Brittany to facilitate the expansion of the Breton language. The Ofis' website is available in French and Breton.¹⁴¹ In 2001, the Ofis created a new initiative to expand Breton's use in the public and private sectors: the *Ya d'ar brezhoneg* (Yes to Breton) campaign. The campaign takes the form of a charter produced by the Ofis to stimulate the use of Breton in civil society. By 2006, the charter had gained a signed agreement by 579 businesses, social services, and non-governmental organizations to support the use of Breton in their services.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Simon Hooper. "France a 'rogue state' on regional languages." (Al Jazeera, March 30, 2012). <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2012/3/30/france-a-rogue-state-on-regional-languages>

¹⁴⁰ "Le Sénat dit non à la Charte européenne des langues régionales" (franceinfo. October 27, 2015). https://www.francetvinfo.fr/societe/le-senat-dit-non-a-la-charte-europeenne-des-langues-regionales_1712811.html

¹⁴¹ <https://www.brezhoneg.bzh/>

¹⁴² Clíona Ní Ríordáin. *Language Issues: Ireland, France, Spain*. P.I.E. (Peter Lang, 2010).

Breton – The Internet and Education

Concentrated revival efforts for the Breton language began in 1925. A Breton literary journal, *Gwalarn*, was established with the goal of elevating Breton to the position of being an international language.¹⁴³ It was unsuccessful in that measure, although it did encourage the creation of uniquely Breton literature. *Gwalarn* was replaced by other periodicals, the most successful of which is *Al Liamm*, in 1946.¹⁴⁴ These periodicals have gained a relatively large body of readers. Regarding other print media, the titular French comic *Asterix* was translated into Breton (which is fitting, considering that Asterix’s village is actually in Brittany).

Breton’s revitalization efforts have been most successful in the realm of education. Diwan schools were established in 1977 to create a fully Breton-medium immersive education. These schools have been directly responsible for the growing-number of school-age Breton speakers, which is essential to Breton’s revitalization given that most Breton speakers are elderly. An increasing number of Breton children are enrolled in bilingual Breton-French education. This number rose by 33% to 14,709 students in bilingual schools between 2006 and 2012.¹⁴⁵

Breton’s Internet presence is more limited than its northern Celtic cousins, due in part to the fact that it is not available on Duolingo, although there are other online apps¹⁴⁶ that provide resources for learning the language. A web-series, *Ken Tulch*, is an online sitcom originally

¹⁴³ Francis Favereau, “Anthologie de la littérature bretonne au XXe siècle : 1919-1944,” “Tome 2 : Breiz Atao et les autres en littérature” (Skol Vreizh, 2003), 39.

¹⁴⁴ William Calin. *Minority Literatures and Modernism: Scots, Breton, and Occitan, 1920-1990*. (University of Toronto Press, 1990), 99-102.

¹⁴⁵ Fañch Broudic. *Parler breton au XXIe siècle : Le nouveau sondage de TMO Régions* (Emgleo Breiz, 2009).

¹⁴⁶ Eurolinguiste. <http://eurolinguiste.com/resources/breton/>

created in Breton. Some TV series have also been dubbed into Breton, such as *Columbo* and *Perry Manson*.¹⁴⁷

Breton – Stunted Revitalization

Efforts to revive Breton are best described as “stunted.” Welsh, Irish, and Navajo are easy to consider “successful” revitalizations since both have received the benefits of government actions, the Internet, and education to disseminate the use of the language with few setbacks. Hopi can be considered a more “insular” or “moderate” revitalization. Hopi too has not seen wide-sweeping national reforms, although it is protected by state and federal law. This is due in part to Native American tribes’ unique sovereign status in the United States, but also the reluctance of the Hopi to make their culture and language easily accessible to outsiders. Within the territory of the Hopi Nation, revitalization has been reasonably successful, but has not become nearly as widespread as Welsh, Irish, and Navajo. Revitalization efforts for Scottish Gaelic are veritably unsuccessful, as speakers of the language continue to decline without meaningful legal protections and cultural incentives to employ the language for everyday use.

Compared to the diverse array of linguistic reforms in this paper, Breton revitalization attempts are “stunted” by the French government. The total number of Breton speakers has been steadily declining, although exact numbers are difficult to determine as the French census does not collect statistics on ethnicity and only collected data on language once in the ‘90s. In 1914, it was estimated that approximately 1 million people in Brittany spoke Breton, which was approximately 90% of the Breton population (note: this estimate excludes the eastern region of

¹⁴⁷ Madeleine Adkins and Jenny L. Davis “The naïf, the sophisticate, and the party girl: Regional and gender stereotypes in Breton language web videos.” *Gender and Language* 6, n° 2 (2012): 291–308.

Brittany, whose native language is Gallo, not Breton). By 1945, the percentage of the Breton population that could speak Breton dropped to 75%.¹⁴⁸ Today, in all of Brittany, only an estimated 20% of Bretons speak the Breton language. Breton faces a similar problem as Hopi, in that the majority of speakers of these languages are elderly. 75% of the estimated 210,000 Breton speakers in Brittany are at least 65 years old.¹⁴⁹ At the beginning of the 20th century, about half of the population of Western Brittany only spoke Breton. In 1950, only 100,000 Bretons were monolingual speakers. There are likely no monolingual Breton speakers today.

While more Breton students are enrolled in bilingual Breton-French education, the fact that the language has declined so steeply in only about 100 years is concerning. What sets this modern day decline apart from that of Scottish Gaelic is the approach to revitalization by the Scottish and French governments. The Scottish government has only passed weak, evidently unsuccessful legislation, but the French government has not and likely will not pass *any* legislation to promote the use of Breton.

Thus, Breton revitalization is “stunted” by its own government. All revitalization efforts are conducted entirely by advocates of the language, like the Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg, those who work to translate English or French entertainment into Breton and create original Breton media. None of this is aided by the French government. On the contrary, French governmental policies on minority languages serve only to hurt them. The French Revolution was the single worst event for linguistic diversity in France. Since the revolution, French culture has become increasingly hegemonic and uncompromisingly homogenous, at least towards language-use. Just like France, the United Kingdom and United States have a historical past with cultural

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.breizh.net/icdbl/saozg/endangered.htm#>

¹⁴⁹ Fañch Broudic. *Qui parle breton aujourd'hui? Qui le parlera demain?* (Brest: Brud Nevez, 1999).

suppression, but, unlike France, these countries are willing to ameliorate the damage done in those dark times. It seems that the mantra born out of the French Revolution: liberty, equality, and fraternity is true only for those who speak French.

Breton's future in France is grim. It is fortunate enough to have a place on the Internet through online education resources and online entertainment, but this only does so much. Outside of education, the French government provides no incentive to engage with and employ the Breton language. Breton's future depends on French government and culture to mature from the revolutionary ethos in which it has been engulfed for centuries. French is a culture that views diversity, linguistic or otherwise, as a threat to national unity. If France does not outgrow its intransigent worldview, its minority languages are likely doomed.

France – Occitan

Occitan is a Romance language native to the historical region of Occitania, which encompasses much of southern France, part of Catalonia and northwest Italy, and Monaco. Like other Romance languages, Occitan is ultimately derived from the Latin language disseminated across the Mediterranean world by the Roman Empire. Due to the sheer size of the empire and the diversity of its citizens, Latin naturally did not remain a uniform language throughout Roman history. Varieties of Vulgar Latin (vernacular dialects of Latin spoken by common people rather than the landed aristocracy) developed in the empire's disparate provinces. The subsidiary dialects of Latin diverged even further after the empire's collapse. In Iberia, Gaul (now France), Italy, North Africa, and Dacia (now Romania), Latin evolved into new languages. The linguistic divergence from Latin was brought about both by the isolation of these areas from a "pan-Latin" authority like the Roman Empire and the influx of Germanic invaders. In the former Roman

provinces comprising Gaul, the ancestors of French and Occitan emerged. Shortly after Rome's fall, in the Early Middle Ages, French and Occitan diverged from each other because of the Germanic tribe that conquered Gaul: the Franks. The Franks seem to have originated along the River Rhine and migrated into Gaul as the Roman Empire collapsed. The Franks established myriad kingdoms in this time, all of which laid the foundation for the future French state. In northern Gaul, Frankish settlement was particularly heavy, and the Franks who settled there maintained a tradition of Latin-Frankish bilingualism for an unusually long time.¹⁵⁰ As such, the variety of Vulgar Latin spoken in the region, the ancestor of modern-day French, gained a heavy Germanic influence. Contemporary French vocabulary can trace some words to be of Germanic, Frankish origin. Likewise, the pronunciation of the French language is distinct from other Romance languages like Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. The phonology of the latter three languages more closely resembles the Latin spoken by the Romans, whereas French sounds much more distinctly Germanic. This too is a result of the Franks. Conversely, Frankish settlement in southern France was much sparser, and the Franks who settled in this region adopted the proto-Occitan variety of Latin rather than the bilingual tradition of their brethren settled in the north. After Frankish invasion, a north-south linguistic divide was established in Gaul that remains true in France today.

Occitan became a very prolific language in the Middle Ages. Occitan was spread throughout Europe by the extremely influential poems and artistic creations of the troubadours.¹⁵¹ The troubadours were composers, lyricists, and performers from Occitania whose musical creations most often addressed themes of chivalry and courtly love. Oftentimes, when

¹⁵⁰ Bernard Cerquiglini, "La naissance du français," *Presses Universitaires de France* 2 (1993): 53.

¹⁵¹ Linda M. Paterson, *Singing the Crusades: French and Occitan Lyric Responses to the Crusading Movements, 1137-1336* (D.S. Brewer, 2021).

thinking of Europe's historical languages, one thinks of French as the language of the nobility. However, for centuries, Occitan was the language of the cultural elite.¹⁵² Several important historical figures spoke Occitan as their native language, including Eleanor of Aquitaine and Richard I of England, also known as Richard the Lionheart.¹⁵³ The influence of the troubadours, and by extension Occitan, began to wane in the 14th century with the onset of the Black Death and subsequent end of the troubadour tradition.

The decline of Occitan as a language of the cultural elite of Europe further declined in the 16th century. In 1539, the Kingdom of France passed the Ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts, requiring the contemporaneous version of French be used in courts of law, whereas Latin was used prior. The intent of this ordinance was not to promote French as the sole national language of the state, but rather establish it as a language for use in legal administration. Naturally, this did have the unintended consequence of elevating the *langue d'oïl* native to the historic capital of France, Paris, to the default language of the state. The centralization of the French realm in the decades following the ordinance in an age of absolute monarchs further cemented the French language as the *de facto* language of France. This was evidently a major setback for the widespread use of Occitan, but the language only truly began to suffer after the French Revolution. It was in this era that French became the sole *de facto* and *de jure* language of the French state, and regional languages were (and likely still are) viewed as a threat to national unity.

Occitan – Language Protection Laws

¹⁵² Linda M. Paterson, *The World of the Troubadours: Medieval Occitan Society, C.1100-c. 1300* (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹⁵³ Charles Knight, *Penny Cyclopaedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* 25 (1843): 308.

As with Breton, there are no laws in France that apply to the protection and revitalization of Occitan. However, dialects of Occitan are spoken in Italy and Spain whose regional governments do afford legal protections to the language. Occitan is an official language of Spain's autonomous community of Catalonia. The Catalan Parliament ruled in September 2010 that Aranese Occitan (the dialect native to Catalonia) is to be officially preferred for business use in the Val d'Aran.¹⁵⁴ In Italy, Occitan is protected by the Linguistic Minorities Protection Law of 1999 (also known as Law 482). Law 482 recognizes several non-Italian minority languages and guarantees them protection. Piedmontese authorities provide financial assistance to authorities responsible for the promotion of Occitan.¹⁵⁵ It is truly ironic that Spain and Italy provide more protection for Occitan than its native country.

Occitan – Status of the Language

Occitan faces a unique obstacle in efforts to preserve the language: Occitan has no written standard. Dialects of Occitan have their own competing norms for spoken and written use, and efforts to create a standardized version of Occitan are greatly hindered by the fact that Occitan has no official status in France. The number of speakers of Occitan is thus rapidly declining. The cultural impetus behind this refusal to recognize or aid in Occitan's recovery (in addition to the uncompromising and blinding nationalism instilled into French culture by the revolution) could be due to an inherent duality between French and Occitan. What one considers the standard dialect of French, "High French," or Francien, is known as a *langue d'oïl*. The term *langue d'oïl* represents a spectrum of languages: Francien and its related dialects, native to

¹⁵⁴ http://www.parlament-cat.net/porteso/estatut/estatut_angles_100506.pdf

¹⁵⁵ Stefaan van der Jeught. "The Protection of Linguistic Minorities in Italy: A Clean Break with the Past." *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 15, n° 3 (2016): 57-81.

northern and central France. Conversely, Occitan is considered a *langue d'oc*. The *langues d'oc* consist of Occitan and its related dialects. Thus, there is an inexorable “us vs them” in the linguistic divide of France whose roots trace back to the Germanic Franks. The overwhelming use in everyday life of the chief *langue d'oïl*, French, results in little but cultural hegemony and perhaps a superiority complex over the subsidiary *langues d'oïl* and *langues d'oc*. These terms originate from the Old French and Occitan words for yes: *oïl* and *oc* respectively.

The 1999 French census found that about 610,000 of French citizens spoke Occitan (or its related dialects) as a first language, whereas about 1,060,000 French citizens had some exposure to the language.¹⁵⁶ This differs from recent research which suggests approximately 789,000 speak Occitan as a first language.¹⁵⁷ A 2005 survey estimated 68,000 speakers of Occitan in Italy.¹⁵⁸ A 2008 survey estimated 4,000 speakers in Spain, all of whom are in the Catalanian Val d'Aran.¹⁵⁹

Several bodies are responsible for the proliferation and promotion of Occitan. One is the Conselh Generau d'Aran, which oversees the use of Occitan in the Val d'Aran in Catalonia. In Southern France, a privately run group of schools known as Calandretas first appeared in 1979 to offer Occitan-medium education alongside French. As of 2016, there are 62 primary school Calandretas and three high schools, instructing 3,614 students across 18 French départements.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Erramun Bachoc. *La réintroduction de langue l'enquête linguistique dans le nouveau recensement. Historique de l'enquête linguistique dans le recensement de 1999.*

¹⁵⁷ Fabrice Bernissan “Combien l'occitan compte de locuteurs en 2012?” *Revue de Linguistique Romane*. 76 (2012): 467–512.

¹⁵⁸ Enrico Allasino, Consuelo Ferrier, Sergio Scamuzzi, and Tullio Telmon “Le Lingue del Piemonte” *IRES*. 113 (2005): 71

¹⁵⁹ Fabrice Bernissan “Combien l'occitan compte de locuteurs en 2012?” *Revue de Linguistique Romane*. 76 (2012): 467–512.

¹⁶⁰ “Effectifs.” Confederacion Calandreta.

Occitan – The Internet

Occitan is not available on Duolingo, but like Breton there are online resources for education in the language. Occitan's Internet presence is not very widespread, although there are certainly corners of the Internet accessible to speakers of the *langue d'oc*. The website of the Conselh Generau d'Aran is solely in Aranese Occitan.¹⁶¹ There also exists the Conselh de la Lengua Occitania, created in 1996, which has attempted to manage and develop a standard version of Occitan. The Lingüistica Occitana is another Occitanian organization. The Lingüistica Occitana is an online academic journal written in Occitan. The website and FaceBook page for the organization are both written in Occitan.¹⁶² The website for the Calandretas schools is available in both French and Occitan.¹⁶³ The creation of the French administrative region of Occitania (*Occitanie* in French) in 2016 is but a small reconciliation for decades of cultural suppression and linguicide. Without support from the French government, revitalization efforts for Occitan are on a much smaller scale. These efforts have primarily been focused on expanding its use in education, among families, and local businesses in southern France.¹⁶⁴

Occitan – Vergonha

There exists a term in Occitan: *vergonha*. The word literally translates to English as “shame.” It has come to refer to the effects of linguistic policy by the French government resulting in the linguicide of Occitan. Beginning with the French Revolution and the term *patois*, speakers of non-French languages were taught that their native tongue is inherently inferior to

¹⁶¹ Conselh Generau d'Aran. <https://www.conselharan.org>

¹⁶² Lingüistica Occitana. “Qui sèm?” http://linguistica-oc.com/?page_id=120

¹⁶³ <http://calandreta.org/oc/accuelh/>

¹⁶⁴ Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage. “Case Studies Occitan.” <https://folklife.si.edu/smile/occitan>

French. In the case of Occitan, speakers were taught that the *langue d'oc* is but a corruption of “true,” standard French.¹⁶⁵ In the cultural memory of Occitanians, *vergonha* is recognized as the self-loathing of one’s culture and language created by humiliation, exclusion, and discrimination organized by French politicians. Apparently, the term *vergonha* is somewhat controversial in French academia. Some believe that discrimination against speakers of Occitan and other regional minority languages never existed.¹⁶⁶ This self-loathing of one’s culture, *vergonha*, has unfortunately created in some Occitans the greatest opponents of their own native culture. After the Storming of the Bastille, a French politician from Occitania said this of his native region: “for a free people, the tongue must be one and the same for everyone [...] How much money have we not spent already for the translation of the laws of the first two national assemblies in the various dialects of France! As if it were our duty to maintain those barbaric jargons and those coarse lingos that can only serve fanatics and counter-revolutionaries now!”¹⁶⁷ Almost 200 years later, in 1972, the French President at the time Georges Pompidou, himself a native of Occitania, said “there is no room for regional languages in a France whose fate is to mark Europe with its seal.”¹⁶⁸ Occitan and Breton share this much in common despite the geographic and linguistic distance between them: the apathy of the French government toward protecting their language.

¹⁶⁵ Georges Labouysse in *Histoire de France: L'Imposture. Mensonges et manipulations de l'Histoire officielle* IEO Edicions: 90–92.

¹⁶⁶ Julius W. Friend, “The French Exception.” *Stateless Nations*, (2012).

¹⁶⁷ “L'aménagement linguistique dans le monde.” http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/Europe/france-2politik_francais.htm

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.eurominority.eu/documents/transferts/Audition%20-%202007%20discrimination%20linguistique-1.pdf>

Conclusion – Problems and Solutions

In the crucible of human history, hundreds or perhaps thousands of languages have gone extinct. This trend continues today as the nations of the world globalize, and only a few languages dominate others on the international stage. Of course, the extinction and endangerment of languages is not a foregone conclusion; that is to say, minority languages are not irretrievably doomed to fade away. Indeed, as this study demonstrates, the endangerment of the seven languages discussed here was brought about by historic catalysts. In the British Isles, the political and military power of the Anglo-Saxons and later the English led to the hegemonic rise of the English language and the suppression of its neighboring minority languages. English was used as a vehicle to secure English supremacy in the Isles. In the United States, similar events transpired. In the brutal period of the United States' Manifest Destiny, English was similarly used as a means to subjugate Native American tribes and assimilate them into the Union. In France, French was used to establish a single French identity, unwavering in its homogeneity. In all three countries, a dominant ethnic or cultural group used language as a means to establish superiority and snuff out non-conforming elements. However, it is important to note that in both the United States and the British Isles, religion was also used as a pretense for cultural and linguistic suppression. In Ireland and Scotland, the dominant Protestant English administration associated Scottish Gaelic and Irish with Catholicism, inexorably tying language-use to religious conflict. In

the United States, traditional totemist Native American traditions are deeply tied to their language, thus the Christian Euro-American population of the United States used these religious differences to further justify the systemic linguicide of Native American languages.

Understanding the history of endangered languages is the first step in undergoing revitalization. The second step, naturally, is how to bolster these moribund languages. But what makes the revitalization of a language successful? Of course, there is no model that could possibly apply to all languages. The endangered languages of the world and countries in which they find themselves are too diverse and different for a single method of revitalization to apply uniformly. However, there are markers or elements of successful revitalization that should be considered by advocates of moribund languages, namely language protection or accessibility laws, education, and the Internet. But what makes these so important?

Laws that protect languages, endangered or otherwise, encourage use of the language. These laws should, if successful, ensure that discrimination by public or private groups on the bases of language is illegal. This incentivizes someone to use their native language if there are legal assurances that they will not be punished for expressing their own culture. Language and culture are inexorably linked; if the use of a culture's language significantly declines, that culture will inevitably suffer from the loss of the medium through which its culture has been preserved for decades, if not centuries.

Education ensures that languages do not die with the inevitable aging of a nation's population. A problem faced by many endangered languages, especially those with a small corpus of speakers, is the disproportionate concentration of speakers amongst its elders. Of course, if 80% of a language's speakers are aged 70 and older, the language is at extreme risk of dying within a generation. Successful education programs ensure that this does not occur by

instructing children in bilingual or monolingual immersion education. At a young age, this is crucial, as languages are more easily learned and absorbed before adolescence. If parents are no longer invested in teaching their children their native language, that language inevitably risks dying out. The public and private spheres must harmonize. Indeed, schools and parents must work together in this endeavor to preserve languages through education. In Scotland, Ireland, France, and the United States educational systems were used to coerce families to abandon their native languages overtime, either forcefully at once in the case of Indian boarding schools and the French Revolution, or by transitional bilingualism in Scotland and Ireland. For endangered languages to survive, there must be extensive educational scaffolding in place, and by extension parents must be willing to recognize the importance of endangered language-medium education.

In the digital age, the Internet is no longer an oddity or technical marvel, but a facet of everyday life. Its usage is no longer optional but required to stay engaged with a globalized world. With the world's increasing interconnectedness, linguistic hegemony becomes a real threat. However, the potential of the Internet to nonetheless preserve languages should not be understated. The Internet holds nigh unlimited potential to provide an archive for an endangered language, spaces to engage with other speakers of the language, and resources for millions of people to learn the language.

In this study, seven languages in three countries have been examined in the contexts of their histories, salient linguistic legalities, education systems, and Internet presence. The languages that have been most successful in revitalization have consistently been able to take advantage of the “big three” factors. Welsh, Navajo, and Irish have experienced the most successful resurgences. All three have overcome histories of linguistic suppression, are protected by strong legislation, have devoted resources toward language-medium education, and are well-

established on the Internet in online entertainment and resources like Duolingo. Governments with a vested interest in protecting Welsh, Irish, and Navajo have passed meaningful legislation to protect the interests of these speakers and incentivize usage of the language in the public and private spheres. Likewise, Welsh, Irish, and Navajo have created strong programs that offer education in these languages for people of all ages. This ranges from language-medium education for children to access to courses in Welsh, Irish, and Navajo in places of higher education. Finally, Welsh, Irish, and Navajo have captured veritable digital lightning in a bottle through the Internet. Through Duolingo, but also through digital entertainment like video games and television shows, these three languages are easily disseminated to hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of linguistically inclined learners. The Welsh, Irish, and even Scottish governments have passed legislation and created government bodies with concrete steps to revitalize the native languages of their regions, although Scottish Gaelic has seen much more limited success by this measure.

Hopi's success has been mixed. Due to the tribe's historical isolationism, Hopi has actively avoided broadcasting its culture online and even resisted some federal legal protections, although there is Hopi-medium education in place within the nation's territory. It is unlikely that there will be a "Hopi Renaissance" whereby the language enters the mainstream and receives widespread attention from non-tribe members. It thus follows that the revitalization of the Hopi language depends on the willingness of its tribal members to uphold, maintain, and promote the Hopi language that is so inexorably linked to the culture and history of the tribe.

Scottish Gaelic, Breton, and Occitan are by far the least successful languages in terms of language revival. All three are not covered by meaningful legal protections, with the French government being the key offender in this category. Education programs exist for all three, but

none have been as widespread and successful as those of Welsh, Navajo, and Irish. Of the three, Scottish Gaelic has an advantage in terms of dissemination on the Internet through Duolingo, but this hardly makes up for it suffering from a deficit in legal defense and education. Scottish Gaelic-medium education is sorely lacking in Scotland, as the number of students numbers around 5,000 in a country (Scotland) of about six million. Likewise, the right of Scottish Gaels to use their native language is lacking in strength, despite efforts by the Scottish government. Scottish Gaelic has no legal status and private organizations in Scotland are not obliged to render services in the language.

In France, Breton and Occitan suffer greatly from the apathy of the French government toward minority languages. All organizations and advocates dedicated to the preservation and revitalization of these two languages must operate outside of the French government, which greatly limits the scope of their power. A private organization naturally does not have the wide-reaching authority of a country's government. Without the French government providing any protections, incentives, or even liberties to use Breton and Occitan, the members of nations to which these languages are native have little extrinsic motivation to use any language other than French. There are of course efforts to provide education in the language, both in traditional immersion schools and online, but a language is more than how one learns it. Since Bretons and Occitans are essentially being punished for speaking their own language, opportunities to use their native languages outside of perhaps rural, more isolated areas are scarce.

The solutions here are self-evident: the Scottish, British, and French governments *must* invest time, money, and energy into education systems and truly potent laws for these languages for them to have any chance at survival. There exists very little incentive in Scotland, Brittany, and Occitania to use the native languages therein, whereas incentives - both legal and cultural -

exist in Wales, Ireland, the Navajo Nation, and even the Hopi Nation to employ their native languages. This paper reveals that languages cannot survive on their own. To remain vital and universal in usage, there must be a significant covenant among governments, communities, and individuals. Indeed, people must want to save and use their native or indigenous languages. Lacking such a desire will effectively doom languages to extinction.

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