Why Learn Irish?

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Abstract

This thesis applies anthropological methodology to concepts of second language acquisition motivations in an attempt to better understand the question of, why students at Saint Mary's University choose to learn the Irish language? The learners who were interviewed can be placed into one of two groups, Roots or Hobbyist, based on what their core motivations are for learning Irish. The question is further complicated by the addition of questions of authenticity and identity among the learners. This was specifically significant in regard to those students who were learning because of a desire to connect with their ancestry (Roots). It was because of this, that I noticed that the learning of the Irish language was being used as a method through which, some learners, sought to authenticate their heritage identities. Also, in learners that are not learning due to any ancestral relation (Hobbyists) there were results that appeared to be very similar to ones drawn by other scholars such as Jonathan Giles (2016). Some of these motivations were an interest in Irish culture or an interest in a field that the learner believes is complemented by some knowledge of the Irish language.

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Go raibh míle maith agaibh a chairde.

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Introduction

Why learn Irish? This is the broad question that I want to answer: what are the motivations that have driven these six students to learn the Irish language at Saint Mary's University? This question is actually a very multilayered one that goes beyond just the reasons why people might choose to learn a language. This question taps into how people construct their identities, how language is used by individuals to show a marked affinity with a certain cultural group, in this case the Irish. To show this cultural affinity also means communicating this information authentically, and what it means to be an authentic member of the community with which an individual is trying to show affinity too.

However, not every person who is learning the Irish language is doing so to construct an identity or because of an explicit connection that they have to Ireland through their family history. These individuals will be labelled Hobbyists, on account of the fact that they do not base their motivations on identity, in contrast to those who do who will be labelled Roots learners. The differences between these two learner types are important to the question of what motivates people to learn Irish?

The two groups themselves are not totally disconnected from one another either, but they form rather two ends of a spectrum. This is because while they each may have different core motivations and reasons for learning the language, there are still similarities between the two groups that place them somewhere on a scale. Showing, that this interaction between people and language is fluid and not a straightforward or easily definable concept. This concept is furthermore, key to analyzing and answering the question, "Why learn Irish?" In examining this question, the focus is not only on the

things that set these individuals apart but also what makes them similar. In short, what common aspects of motivation can be seen that bring these two groups together?

In order to collect this information I conducted interviews with six students who were in one of the two sections of the Introduction to the Irish language class at Saint Mary's University. The interviews that I gave were semistructured, with consent being given orally by the interviewees. The interviews themselves were conducted outside of class time on Saint Mary's University Campus, at a coffee shop, for example. The semistructured nature of the interviews was important because it encouraged a casual environment that allowed me to obtain the best quality information that I could from the interviewees.

Some of the data that I was able to collect was about identity and authenticity, and how the concepts are constructed by these individuals. The construction of this authenticity was similar to how MacCannell (1973) discussed staged authenticity and tourism. In this work the concepts that were addressed were how tourists construct an authentic experience for themselves, "To share in the real life of the places visited, or at least see that life as it is really lived" (MacCannell 1973:594). This concept is not very different from the one that can be observed in language learners who want to use language to experience a more authentic version of their culture. With the learning of the language being a way enter into a back space of the culture that was previously unknown to them.

Though as I have mentioned, there was also a spectrum that I found to exist. Within this spectrum there were students who would fall into more of a heritage learner category, which I have called Roots learners, and those who do not, Hobbyists. It is also prudent to mention that the latter term, Hobbyists, I have borrowed from the work of

Jonathan Giles (2016). In this work he specifically focused on students of the Irish

language in Canada who did not claim to be learning it for reasons of their heritage, but

rather, for a love of the culture of Ireland.

The Irish Language

The Irish Language: Ogham to Famine

The Irish language is an Insular Celtic language, of the Goidelic branch (Q-Celtic), that is native to the island of Ireland. Today it is used by around 66,000 people on a daily basis with a further 1,700,000 people claiming some knowledge of the language, according to the 2011 Irish census. However, this was not always the case. In the past, the Irish language was spoken by the vast majority of the island's population, and had been that way for thousands of years (Ó Múrchu 1985). This is shown by the early records that exist in old Irish that are found written in the ancient Ogham alphabet, a monumental writing system that was created by the ancient Irish to represent their language. It was used in inscriptions on Ogham stones belonging to important individuals of the time. The specific uses are debated among scholars, but include such possibilities as grave markers, border or boundary markers for land division (O'Sullivan 2014). Perhaps one of the more controversial theories though, is that Ogham stones might have had an origin with the military (Mac Coitir 2012). Whatever the origin of this monumental script, it is the earliest evidence of the Irish language in written form.

What though caused the retreat of the Irish language and its subsequent replacement by the foreign English language? The short answer to this question is colonialism and various British language policies. The English first took control over parts of Ireland after an Irish nobleman asked for aid in a war from the Normans who had taken over England. This began the Norman-English influence in Ireland, that resulted in the displacement of the Irish language by the English language. This event, while it did not start the shift from Irish to English, started a trend that would eventually put English

before Irish in the minds of the people; a trend that would only grow until the formation of the Irish Free State in 1922 (Ó Ceallaigh and Ní Dhonnabháin 2015). That being said, there is certainly more to this immense language shift than simply "it is the fault of the British." Legislation against the Irish language on the part of the then English Government started relatively early in the history of England having control over parts of the island. The earliest legislation being the Statutes of Kilkenny in 1366, the statute put limits on how and where Irish could be used by people. It was created in part as a response to the Gaelicization of Norman lords who had been given land in Ireland, though was not successful in its goal (Doyle 2015: 11). This failure speaks to the historic strength that the Irish language once held in Ireland.

The pressure that English (eventually British) control over the island would put on Irish would become more pronounced after several key events in the history of the island. For example, the Plantation of Ulster in the 1500s by English and Scots planters in the after math of the Flight of the Earls, which was the aftermath of one of the various failed risings against the English Government in Ireland (Ó Néill 2005: 284). This would be one of the first larger pressures to be put on the Irish language as the new arrivals were, and to this day still are, staunchly British in their national identities, and actively would have avoided the use of Irish to some degree (Thompson McCoy 2000: 50). That is not to say that the planter landowners in Ireland had no knowledge of Irish, as it remained the language of the majority of the population of the Island well into the 1800s (Ó Néill 2005: 286).

By this time half of the island was still speaking Irish in a monolingual environment, and there were likely many others who were second language speakers or passive bilinguals (Ó Néill 2005: 286). While there had been a slow shift from Irish to

English for centuries, in the early 1800s it still held its ground, so to speak, in the western side of the Island. While in the east, around Dublin and what had once been called the Pale, it had begun a very strong shift towards English, due to varying factors such as access to education and better economic opportunities that were available to the Irish people through the English language (Ó Néill 2005:285). This would continue with emigration out of Ireland to the United States, and to a lesser extent Canada. For example, between the years of 1827 and 1835, 65,000 Irish immigrants arrived in what are now Canada's maritime provinces (Doyle 2015: 43). The language itself would be brought to these new lands, but would not be kept by the descendants of the Irish immigrants after a few generations. Unlike the French language that still survives in the Canadian east to this day. By the 1840s there were approximately 450,000 Irish people who had arrived in Canada who spoke the Irish language (Doyle 2015: 119).

The "doom" of the Irish language, though, came in the mid-19th century when a potato blight destroyed the majority of the crop in Ireland. In the first year of the famine the damage was not so intense, as some food had been kept in case of just such an occasion, but The Great Famine lasted for much of the 1850s and had an immense impact on the population of the island (Doyle 2015: 154 and Donnelly 2001). The potato was the staple food of the island, and the main source of calories. Its essential disappearance resulted in a severe decline of the population of Ireland, and Irish speakers. From the pre-Famine population of around 4 million Irish speakers to around 641,000 speakers post famine (Ó Néill 2005: 285). This devastation of the population was due to both the starvation of the populace, resulting in 1.5 million deaths, as well as mass emigration across the Atlantic to The United States and, again, Canada; the emigrants themselves numbered around 2 million (Doyle 2015: 154, Kallen 1994: 29).

The significance of this to the history of the Irish language is twofold. First, the areas most devastated by the famine were the poor areas on the western side of the island. These were also the main Gaeltacht areas, where Irish was still being used as the language in the community. The famine meant that these already disadvantaged people were left starving, and the areas where Irish was being spoken were severely depopulated during the years of the famine (Ó Néill 2005: 285). This would have broken communities and families into pieces. Given that community is so important in language retention and transmission (Fishman 1981, Ó Néill 2005: 288) this stress on the community alone would have put the Irish language in a precarious position. This stress and poverty changed how people perceived the Irish language, seeing it more as a burden because of the power of English, thus prompting parents to choose to raise their children with English, seeing it as a language of greater power and prestige than Irish.

This marks a change in how people viewed the Irish language. The way Irish was perceived by its own speakers is what, in this case, can be referred to as a linguistic ideology. As Irish was seen as having less and less prestige. It was this sociolinguistic change in ideology that really initiated the mass interruption of the intergenerational transmission of the Irish language, all but ensuring the shift from Irish to English (Fishman 1981: 122-123).

Change in these ideologies was because, in the aftermath of the famine, the Irish language became associated with poverty and being uneducated (Ó Néill 2005: 285). This only served to reaffirm the ideologies that had been forming over the prior fifty years. Those ideologies being that one could not become wealthy through Irish, and to speak Irish was something that would hurt a person's educational and economic prospects (Ó Néill 2005: 288). The Famine was a main cause of this, because of how it affected

people's perceptions of their own language, it was seen as a burden to have Irish. The ideology was furthered in part by the fact that in order to leave Ireland to go to America for example, a person needed to have English in order to prosper and build a better life for themselves and their families (Kallen 1994: 37).

The Irish Language: Post Famine to Early 21st Century

Before the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 there were already efforts to stem the language shift to English, and to salvage the language and culture of Ireland. One such organization with these intentions was *Conradh na Gaeilge*, founded in the late 1800s with the goal of spreading the use of the Irish language (Denvir 1995). Essentially, this was trying to slow the trend of the Irish language being abandoned for English that had reached a tipping point during the famine. Before the establishment of the Free State it was organizations like this that bore the brunt of the task of revitalization and maintenance. They were of course limited in funds and resources, as at the time they were essentially funded out-of-pocket by the members themselves (Denvir 1995).

After the formation of the Irish Free State, the Irish language was given official status and official government led restoration efforts were initiated. The most prominent of these initiatives was making Irish compulsory for all students in the State as a school subject (Corcoran 1925). However, in the beginning, and even up to the present, this policy was not implemented well. Arguably the biggest problem was that at the time of the establishment of the State, very few of the teachers actually had the capacity to teach the Irish language (Ó Ceallaigh and Ní Dhonnabháin 2015). This was because these teachers were mostly the same ones who had worked in the old British school system, an English-medium education system.

The policy of compulsory Irish would however go on to harm the Irish language overall, and not just because of the lack of experience and training that was given to teachers in the early years of the state. The implementation of Irish as a subject in school, as opposed to a means of learning, started to make students develop a resentment for the Irish language as a result of being forced to learn the language in classrooms (Kelly 2002: 22), reducing the likelihood of these children actually using the Irish that they had learned, and re-establishing some semblance of intergenerational transmission of the language in non-Gaeltacht areas in the east of Ireland. This was due in no small part to the resentment that these children had begun to have for the Irish language; resentment that would eventually manifest itself into something that would be much worse for the language (Kelly 2002:39).

The animosity felt towards the Irish Language would come to a head in the 1970s, when there was a rollback on the amount of Irish that was required to be taught in schools (Kelly 2002: 37). This would lead to a relative decline in the ability of students to use and communicate in Irish, though officially it still remained the official language of the Republic of Ireland (Devitt et al. 2016). This process would continue and had an understandably negative impact on the language itself, as this led to a decline in children's ability to use the language.

This trend would only start to reverse itself as Irish medium schools, *Gaelscoillonna*, began to become more widely used by Anglophone Irish parents as a means for their children to obtain a better education (O'Rourke 2011). The increase has been helped along by programs that are being experimented with to increase the amount of Irish that is being used in English medium schools, while at the same time trying to keep Irish from becoming a subject that children will grow to hate (Ní Chróinín et al.

2016). One of the ways that this has been done is by using Irish as a medium for the

instruction of physical education or music classes (Ní Chróinín et al. 2016).

Motivation, Authenticity and Identity

Motivational Self Theory

The motivational self theory developed by Zoltan Dorynai and Ema Ushioda (2007) is a theory of motivation from the field of psychology, though it will be used to examine data from an Anthropological perspective. What this means is that I will be using elements of this theory to examine the motivations of my interviewees from an anthropological perspective. Specifically, it is the idea of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that I am referring to.

To elaborate more on these concepts, intrinsic factors are within the learner, which is to say they are factors that are not affected by outside stimuli, these would be such things as a desire to learn the language out of personal interest, based on academic interests or a desire to connect to one's personal history (Dörnyei 2009: 30, O'Rourke and DePalma 2017). In contrast to this we have extrinsic motivational factors, which are external components of motivation. These are often opportunities that give the learner an opportunity for financial gain or other benefit. However, in a classroom these could also be the desire to succeed in the course, as well as having an adaptive and dynamic instructor who the students relate to and want to perform to the best of their abilities for (Kim 2013, Devitt et al. 2016).

To elaborate more on the Motivational self theory, it is based on the idea of a person having three different selves that each have an effect on how a person will learn. Having these three selves is a way in which different types of motivation have been organized by Dörynei (2009: 11). Some of those types of motivation that are being categorized are intrinsic, extrinsic and negative motivations. The goal of the theory is to

utilize this idea of future selves to examine the motivations of people learning second

languages, and what motivations result in the best acquisition of a target language by

learners (Dörnyei 2009: 11). Furthermore, the types of motivation are fairly rigidly

attached to the self that it is associated with.

The first of these selves is the ideal self: what the person ideally wants to see

themselves become, an ideal version of oneself that one aspires to be (Dörnyei 2009: 12).

This self is also made up of motivations that are intrinsic, because it is made up of

motivations that are more internalized. An example of intrinsic motivation might be to

learn a language because of cultural connections. Then there is the aspect of the ought

self, which is what a person believes others want them to become. So, unlike the ideal self

this is drawing more on the aforementioned extrinsic motivational factors (Dörnyei, 2009:

3-4). These two aspects of motivation are together built upon several points, the first of

which is a vivid future self image, followed by this future self seeming realistic to the

learner them self (Dörnyei, 2009: 18).

Having a harmony between the ideal and ought selves is also important for

motivation and language acquisition, according to this theory. This is so that a person's

motivations are balanced between intrinsic and extrinsic. Along with this balance, having

a plan and strategizing how they want to learn is important to be able to accomplish their

goals. This is because a learner needs to have a balance between what they want and what

others around them want to see them accomplish. While the learner is seeking this

balance it is also important for them avoiding negative influences from the third self, the

feared self, which is what a person fears to become.

This third aspect is the opposite of the previous two types of self, as the feared self works against the learner and is characterized by negative influences to the learner's motivation.

One of the main factors that Dörnyei (2009: 1-3) stated was very important to the development of positive self motivation was the idea of the desire to integrate oneself into a foreign language community, motivation via integration. This was seen as one of the best ways to acquire and motivate a learner to become fluent in their target language (Dörnyei 2009: 3). Furthermore, integration into a community was seen by (Dörnyei 2009: 4) as a essential piece of motivation for a learner to acquire a language.

While this model is quite detailed in how it talks about motivation, as it will be applied to an anthropological context I believe that it is prudent to take only the broader concepts of the theory into consideration while reporting my findings. This decision is a result of the nature of the data collection, and how other issues, like identity and authenticity, became relevant during the collection of data. However, this is not to take away from the usefulness of many aspects of the theory. Those aspects are the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. The different selves though I find to be categories that are too rigidly structured for what I have found in my data.

Also very important in this study and the application of this second language (L2) motivational theory is the idea of learners integrating themselves into the target community (Dörnyei, 2009: 1-3). This community would be, according to the theory, one that is foreign to them. A desire to integrate into this community then is seen as a benefit in terms of ideal self motivations. Something that has been found to be true in several different studies such as by O'Rourke and DePalma (2017), looking at students learning Galician in Northern Spain, or Brian King's work on Korean gay men learning English

(King 2008). In both of these studies integration into a target community was strongly associated to the acquisition of the target language among the participants.

Integration is not as clearly definable in my own investigations, because some of the interviewees already have a cultural connection to Ireland, meaning they already felt Irish, to some extent. What this means is that certain aspects of the theory will need to be examined in a slightly different context. As the L2 self theory tends to be organized in a way that applies more fully to those individuals who do not feel that they have a connection to the culture of the L2 that they are in the process of learning.

It is because of this that the idea of motivation via integration that is presented by Dörnyei (2009: 3-4) will need to be looked at in a different way, than is presented by him, in order to fit better into an anthropological interpretation of language motivation. This is because within the group of students that I interviewed, the desire to integrate themselves into the "foreign" culture was innate, but the culture itself was not viewed as being foreign. As, three of these individuals, to be introduced in the following chapter, expressed during interviews that they already felt a significant degree of connection to Irish culture, because of their family backgrounds.

This makes the importance of this type of motivation different for these learners. It is almost a reversal of the original concept, as they are looking to integrate the language into their own lives, rather than themselves into the language community. A person with a connection wants to use the language, and make it a part of their existing cultural life. At the same time those people who did not feel that they had a personal connection to the Irish language, or culture, did not show an expressed interest in integrating themselves into the linguistic community. By this I mean moving to live in the *Gaeltacht*. However, they might have an interest in the culture, such as those individuals who were interviewed

by Giles (2016). According to Dörnyei (2009: 3) this would be something that would impede the ability of a learner to fully acquire the target language. The situation of a minority language, like Irish, is different and slightly more complicated than how Dörnyei (2009: 3) approached the topic.

Certainly though, there is importance in having a desire to interact and engage with native speakers of a target language, as far as gaining fluency is concerned. However, with a minority language like Irish there are more people who identify culturally with Ireland, than speak the Irish language (Hickey and Stenson 2016). Therefore, the desire to integrate that has real importance to these individuals is the opposite of the integration that is talked about by Dörnyei, as they want to integrate the Irish language into their lives (Maguire 1991:49). That being said, this is only significant for those individuals who are learning the language out of a desire to reconnect with their roots and the cultural lives of their ancestors, be it a recent connection or one that is several hundred years old. It is because of the kind of integration that these learners seek that I believe that the claim made by Dörnyei's theory is made with an emphasis on those L2 learners of majority languages. Further to this most of the case studies that are provided by Dörnyei are about English language learners, therefore learners of a majority language.

This does not mean though that this theory is not applicable to minority languages, and it has indeed been utilized by scholars who have investigated the motivations of learners who are learning Irish as well as other minority languages (Flynn and Harris 2016, O'Rourke and DePalma 2017). However, it has been found in several instances, as I have stipulated, that the language learning of these individuals is awkward, in terms of integration into the community, as Flynn and Harris (2016) found when researching the

motivations of adult Irish language learners. Not being able to integrate into a community was found to be a strong hindrance to the motivation of his research participants while learning the language (Flynn and Harris 2016). At the same time though, the factors that were at play in the motivation of these individuals were ones that could be considered to be factors that involved them integrating the Irish language into their lives to some extent. They might accomplish this by learning it so that they can help their children with schoolwork, patriotism, and simply wanting to be able to speak the language better themselves (Flynn and Harris 2016).

This kind of motivation has been echoed in other studies focused on why people have chosen to learn Irish or another minority language that they have learned it because of reasons that would be termed intrinsic (Wright and McGory 2005). These studies, which are conducted out of Ireland predominantly, show consistently that the desire to learn Irish is driven by the desire of the learner to be able to incorporate the Irish language into a part of their life. Whether this is on a micro or macro scale differs, meaning that the individual learner wants to start speaking the language in their daily life or simply have the language to help their children at school or use at work (Flynn and Harris 2016). These basic motivational factors are also present in both the Republic of Ireland as well as Northern Ireland, though the amount of people learning for a particular reason does change, for example there are more people who might learn for the sake of nationalism in the North due to the politics of the area (Maguire 1991: 55-59, Wright and McGory 2005).

Authenticity and Identity

MacCannel (1973) asks why people seek out authentic experiences, and finds the reason to be that they are dissatisfied with their current circumstance and therefore seek out new experiences. MacCannel may be investigating authenticity as it relates to tourism, though in a broader sense he is talking about authentic experiences and how individuals construct and interpret these experiences. Therefore, this work can be used to look at authenticity beyond the realm of tourism, and into other areas of authenticity. This is the same for other aspects of authenticity that MacCannel raises, such as the ideas of front and back spaces, where the front space is perceived to be less authentic because of the fact that it is a more or less public space, whereas the back is a private area where people act more like their true selves and do not hide aspects of who they are (MacCannel 1973).

The concept of authenticity also translates quite seamlessly to language, where there are numerous ways in which both language, and language users are made authentic (Coupland, 2003). First, there is the idea of hegemonic language, this is the language, or speech style that is unmarked because of the prestige that it holds within the society, making it in a way invisible relative to a marked form of speech or language (Meek 2010: 109). Though, to be truly authentic, as Coupland put it, "A thing has to be original in some important social or cultural matrix" (Coupland 2003). This means that, in the context of this study, the fact that the Irish language is considered to be the "original language" of many of my informants' families, they tend to view it as an authentic expression of their identities.

This idea of a type of speech, or language, having to have a history to be considered authentic, is very important to how it is perceived by the general population,

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and for them to view it as being authentic (Atkinson 2016). This leads to the question of, can one be an authentic member of a community without speaking the historic language of the community of which they are a member? This question was examined by Joshua Fishman (1981) where he talked about whether someone can be an authentic X person if they only speak Yish. One thing that he said about this is that, "Some pro-RSLers accept [bilingualism] as a temporary strategy… longing for a completely monolingual Xish society" (Fishman 1981:84). This means that while it may be possible to have an identity as an X-person, there will be people who might call the authenticity of an X-person living through Yish into doubt. This conversation can lead to passionate discussions in regard to what constitutes an authentic speaker and an authentic language in Ireland. This discussion can go so far as to create an us-versus-them type divide between Irish and English Speakers in Ireland (Atkinson 2016).

The commodification of language is also something that can impact how authentic the language might be considered to be, such as how Kaska was seen as being more legitimate after it was given more status in the economy (Meek 2010: 110). As far as minority languages are concerned though this commodification can actually have a negative effect on the revitalization of the language overall (Meek, 2010: 113-114). This was found, by Meek among Kaska speakers, because while the language itself was given more prestige as it was commodified, it caused the speakers to either disavow their own ability to speak Kaska and use the language authentically, or cause them to not want to volunteer their time because of the language's commoditization. As they saw that their linguistic ability was worth something to other people and they did not feel like volunteering their time (Meek 2010: 113-114).

This kind of discourse can therefore also inform identity, and how one advertises their identity to the world around them. This is because language can very easily index a person's ethnicity or heritage, indexing how they identify themselves (Nakassis, 2015). This means that the languages that people choose to use can be an indication of who they are, or what they want to portray themselves as. An example of this is, Asian Americans who use aspects of African American Vernacular English to distance themselves from Whiteness (Bucholtz and Hall 2005).

The ability of language to function in this way, as a means to index one's identity is one reason why people may decide to learn another language. For example, they may think that their language does not give them adequate ability to represent themselves and who they are (King 2008). Though a lack of connection to the culture can also at times make learners feel as if they are acting in an inauthentic way (Giles 2016). This can lead to issues over authentic ownership of language, and who are the authentic users of any one language (O' Rourke 2011). In regard to Irish, it can often be found that it is those native speakers, often from the Gaeltacht areas, who will receive this status as "authentic" users of the language. This is in part due to a change in how Irish is spoken and used in urban settings versus rural ones. As urban Irish is often based on the standard language, or an anglicized language, that differs from the Gaeltacht, the latter being seen as a more authentic version of the language (Kabel 2000:137).

So where does this put Irish language learners, and language learners more broadly? For them the authenticity and importance of the language can come from the fact that they have incorporated it into their lives. Meaning that they are using it regularly in daily activities or in their homes (Maguire 1991), or because language is seen as being an important part of their culture (Pearson-Evans 2007: 45, Musk 2006: 159). One other

way that a learner might feel authentic in their learning, is if the language is used by the

individual in constructing an identity through the language, or using it to better or more

easily express part of their identity or culture (King 2008). The knowledge of culture too

is important in being seen as an authentic speaker, because having cultural knowledge

allows one to interact competently with native speakers (Norton-Peirce 1995).

Hobbyist Learners vs. Roots Learners

Introduction:

In conducting my research, I have uncovered two types of learners of Irish that can be distinguished by different motivations that have driven them to learn the Irish language. The different motivations have been classified as either intrinsic or extrinsic motivational factors. Those intrinsic factors were almost all based on how learners had a desire to connect with their ancestors or cultural heritage through language. It is for this reason that I decided to label them as Roots learners because of this.

Hobbyists on the other hand were learning Irish based on more extrinsic factors and a general interest in the language. Furthermore, the results of the interviews that I had with the interviewees who I would eventually label as Hobbyists were very similar to the motivations that were reported by Giles (2016) while he was investigating non-heritage learners of Irish in Ontario, that he labeled Hobbyists. The similarities were aspects such as short interview length, an interest in Irish culture or history. It is because of this that I decided to use Giles's terminology as I feel that I am dealing with a similar type of learner with my Hobbyists.

Furthermore, it is the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that prompted me to label the learners as either Roots or Hobbyist learners respectfully. This is because there is a noticeable difference in how the individuals that I interviewed talked about their motivations for learning Irish. The different intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation are serving to create a meaningful distinction between the two groups.

To say more of the categories themselves, Roots learners are usually motivated by their own personal family connections to Ireland or the Irish language. They also will

draw more on intrinsic motivational factors, in regard to why they decided to learn the Irish language. This is contrary to the typical Hobbyist learner who would be more apt to be motivated to learn Irish because of a related academic or personal interest that is related to the language. A Hobbyist learner will also have more connection to external motivational factors of language learning, such as future job prospects, as an example.

That being said, this is not a clear dichotomy of all learners of Irish, and not every learner would fall, or has fallen, into the perfect cookie cutter pattern of either a Roots or Hobbyist learner. There is indeed a spectrum that exists, where any one learner will fall somewhere on the spectrum between these two basic types. This means that just because someone appears to have a strong connection to the culture, does not mean that they will automatically be a Roots learner. This is because a learner will construct a narrative with this connection to form their intrinsic motivation. So in this way, a learner could have Irish ancestry, but if they do not see it as a reason to learn Irish they are not a Roots learner. Likewise, a learner does not have to be connected to Ireland recently to be a Roots learner; it all depends on how they view their own family history. The various motivations and lives of these individuals' have also influenced how and why they have each come to learn the Irish language. In this chapter I will be looking at the similarities and differences between these two types of learners.

Hobbyists:

It has been found by Giles (2016) that it can be difficult extracting ethnographic data from those individuals who have been identified as Hobbyist learners. This can make it marginally harder to obtain the right information from them during an interview. The basis for this can be due to several reasons, though primarily it is because they do not necessarily have what they see as a rational reason for learning the language, in their own

minds (Giles 2016). In fact, this type of learner can be quite aware of this and may even go so far as to question their own relevance to the investigation, which did happen in the conducting of my interviews, specifically with the interviewee, Ronald. This interviewee made the suggestion that he was perhaps not the best individual to interview because of the fact that he did not see himself as having a personal connection to the language. It is however interesting and worth investigating for this reason because of the, as Ronald put it, "Curiosity" he has for the Irish language.

This shows how the interviewees could at be aware of how they did not see themselves as having a legitimate reason to learn the language. They also could question how their extrinsic motivation might affect their importance to the study itself. This could therefore be a reason why, as Giles (2008) also found, this type of Hobbyist learner will give a much shorter average interview, that is more concise, in regard to the learner's individual motivations, when compared to a Roots learner.

Who was a Hobbyist was very obvious from the first few interviews, as those with more of a Hobbyist lean to their personal motivations of language learning tended to keep the conversation fixed on their interests that drove them to learn the language. Among my interviewees, some of the most common motivations among the Hobbyist learners were an interest in, what they saw as a related academic field, such as history. They, in turn, saw the learning of Irish as a means of expanding their knowledge of that subject area, because of the importance that they put on Irish as being a part of their other related interests. These related academic fields also included the general study of modern languages and theology. While it was not a key factor in my own research, music was also cited as being an important factor for those learners who fall into this category by

Giles (2008), as learners believe the culture of Ireland, and the Irish language, to be something special. This is a view that extends beyond heritage learners outside of Ireland, and is also held by students of Irish in Ireland (O'Rourke 2011).

A key part of this is that Hobbyists were interested in the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge. This relates to how, although these individuals did not have a personal connection to the Irish language itself, they still believed that it was worth knowing and should be kept from becoming a dead language. This ideology is shown through how they have talked about and intend to use the Irish language. These learners also had a much higher degree of extrinsic motivational factors at play influencing their decisions than their Roots learner counterparts (Giles 2016). This was most obvious in the motivations of one learner named Brandon, though he did possess some intrinsic motivational factors as well.

Unlike other learners that I interviewed, both Roots and Hobbyist, Brandon's motivations were unique in that he actually hopes to use Irish, to some degree, in his future career. Currently studying both Irish studies and religious studies he is hoping to eventually enter into the priesthood of the Anglican Church. He intends to apply lessons that he believes can be learned from the study of the Irish language, and of Irish history, to conflict resolution through the Anglican Church:

> Brandon: A lot of the Irish conflicts that happen between the Protestant and Catholic faiths we've always known about it and um most of my family was Anglican up until a certain point so there is always that Catholicism vs. Protestantism.
>
> Kieran: …I definitely understand the conflict to a point.
>
> Brandon: So, I want to try to use experience to help with my own faith ecumenically and apply those principles… (garbled)… of the conflict resolution to

> things that are happening around here with other minorities like the LGBTQ+, the homeless, Native Americans, that kind of thing.

Here Brandon ties together his desire to learn the Irish language with his Anglican faith, describing his desire to combine the study of the language to this important part of his life and apply it to issues of conflict resolution. Through this he also expresses the desire to use this present experience to help himself in the future experience that he hopes to have after joining the Anglican priesthood. Though regardless, he does show the desire to potentially use Irish in a future career, whether it is in the priesthood or not. Saying, "Well, I'd like to you know study it enough to be more fluent, and… you know there is always that goal of going and visiting Ireland, but I think if I were more fluent it might let me end up working in Ireland or something like that."

However, because the career that Brandon wants to eventually use the Irish language in is the priesthood, it is really walking the line between what one might consider to be an intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This is because while learning Irish for advancement or to be able to do one's job better, is most definitely an extrinsic factor of motivation (Kim 2013), there is more to it in this case, as here we have something that does not fall neatly into one category. I say that because Brandon specifically states that he wants to use the Irish language to explore and expand his faith, and thus is learning Irish for spiritual reasons. I would consider this to be more of an intrinsic motivation, due to the fact that it is an internally motivated decision to learn and is being used to build upon his personal religious faith (Dörnyei 2009: 30).

This still places his strongest motivations well within the realm of a Hobbyist learner, because although Brandon's faith is a very personal part of his life, it is not as far

as I could tell, directly related to him connecting to his family history or his ancestors. In spite of how his first contact with the language was through his Grandmother and this was important for him while learning the language. Here is a prime example of how there can be a spectrum of learners, as Brandon did identify the connection to his grandmother as being important. The family connection though seems to be less important to him as a learning motivation than his spirituality and future career.

So, is pertinent to remember, that just because an individual has a seemingly direct connection to Irish, or Gaelic more generally, it does not mean that they are automatically a Roots learner. This was the case for Brandon, though it was even more striking in Jordan, whose grandfather is a native speaker of Scottish Gaelic. While this is not a direct connection to the Irish language, Jordan had informed me that his ancestry was also strongly Irish. In spite of this, he was quite adamant that he was learning the language as more of a hobby, a search for knowledge in general, as opposed to searching for a connection to his ancestry. He found the language to be an interesting and "cool" area of study because of the fact that it is not very widely spoken:

> Kieran: So what motivated you then, was it the fact that you had the roots or was it the cool.
>
> Jordan: I think it was more the "wow" factor, you know?
>
> Kieran: Could you elaborate more on… the "wow" factor?
>
> Jordan: The wow factor? Well, I mean it's just cool to be able to say that you know part of a language that, like not many people know, you know? Anybody can say that they speak French, but can anybody say that they speak Irish? I don't think so…

Here, Jordan refers to the "wow factor" that he associates with learning the Irish language. His idea of Irish being a "cool" language definitely would seem to stem from

the "wow factor" that he describes in the above excerpt. Furthermore, in another line when he said, "I could take, like, Spanish anywhere it's like I'll take Irish it's pretty 'cool.'" He directly references Irish as something that is "cool" to study, although he is adamant that this interest and cool factor come from his academic interest in language learning. Jordan states multiple times that the fact that he has living relatives who speak Scottish Gaelic has had little to no effect on his desire to learn the language. The reason he gave for this was a generational gap that he felt between himself and his grandparents. Saying that he did not feel that this connection was as valid as other people's connections to the language, including my own. Jordan felt that other people were closer to the culture and therefore more valid in their motivations, in a way, than his own motivations were:

> I think that, I have a connection. But, I think that my connection is not as strong as say, yours because you have people who are directly [from Ireland], my grandparents are old, unfortunately, my great grandmother is old as well and I'm not as connected to them, than say as you are to your mother, or I don't know your relatives. I don't know, you know what I mean?

This conflict and insecurity that he feels, over the validity and authenticity of his heritage, seems to be one of the key reasons that Jordan seems to have categorized himself as someone who is learning the language as an academic interest. He seems to be unsure of how he should classify himself. Contrasting his own family connection to Ireland to my own, and looking for validation on the confusion that he feels about this lack of authenticity by implying that another person's connection to the culture and language could be objectively more authentic than his own connection.

As has been shown, he tends to shrug off the connection that he says that he has and seems to be more motivated by outside factors, like grades as many students are. He

also at one point says that this is due to the generational gap between himself and his older relatives, who have some knowledge of the language, and himself. Further stating that someone with a closer connection in time, he believes, might have a more real connection to the language. This is a perception that is different for everyone. For Example, two of the interviewees who I have labelled as Roots learners have a connection to Ireland, and the Irish language, that is much more displaced in time, upwards of 150 years in Canada. Meaning that a connection to the language is not something that is objective, but rather a subjective idea that is interpreted differently by everyone.

This is interesting as it shows how the perception of one learner about his motivations can vary quite widely from another's based on their ideologies. This is because while Jordan feels that he lacks a connection that is recent enough to really mean anything, as I have said, Roots learners can have connections that are more distant in time. Though in their minds this does not invalidate or make them feel that their motivations for learning are any less valid than someone else's. A Hobbyist then is not simply defined by not having a connection, but by ideologically not believing that any connection that they might have is authentic or reasonable enough of a justification for learning a language. Especially one, like Irish, that has such a small sphere of usefulness. The Hobbyist learner is therefore someone who looks for their motivations to be justified by outside forces.

Roots:

"We stole sheep," said Aoife. This kind of personal anecdote was a very common occurrence in an interview with a Roots learner. This particular excerpt comes from Aoife, a Roots learner, with ties to both Ireland and Scotland on either sides of her family

respectively. In fact as a child she recalled being able to speak some very basic phrases in Scottish Gaelic that she would use with various people. One person she mentioned was a teacher that she had in elementary school who she would sometimes speak to in Scottish Gaelic. This is a relatively important connection to her, as she now regrets not being able to say anything in Scottish Gaelic beyond very simple things such as *"is mise Aoife"* (My Name is Aoife). This also connects to her reasons for learning the Irish language now.

Referring back to "we stole sheep," this phrase relates to how Aoife was influenced by her grandparents, on both sides of her family but particularly her Grandmother with Irish heritage, while developing ideas of what her culture was. Being from Cape Breton, Gaelic cultural elements are not foreign to Aoife as she was exposed to them during her childhood, having lived very close to the Gaelic College in Cape Breton. The Gaelic College itself was established to promote and proliferate traditional Gaelic culture (Dembling 1999). This exposure made her aware of Gaelic languages from a young age, and also provided an early ideology of the importance of language to culture.

It was from her Irish side that Aoife found more motivation and passion, so to speak. This was entirely due to the pride that her Grandmother had in regard to her Irish heritage, and how she would constantly be talking about where the family had come from:

> Well, my one of my grandmother's is, like, really appreciates her Irish heritage more than the other… from the Scottish side. So, she's very into stuff, like, there's the Irish tartans and stuff like that that we have and we have all our last names… That she kinda, I don't know, it's weird she just it kinda made me want to learn it and be like hey look what I can do!

This quote makes it very clear where Aoife's influence and motivation to learn the Irish language comes from. Which is the pride that her grandmother has in the family's history.

This family history revolves around the above mentioned phrase, "We stole sheep." According to Aoife, this has to do with how the family left Ireland, or more properly were kicked out of Ireland. For whatever reason, one of Aoife's ancestors in Ireland had stolen a sheep from someone; the details of the theft were not provided. This ancestor was then given the option to either be executed, or to be exiled to North America with his family. Luckily for Aoife he chose the latter option, to be exiled.

Aoife herself finds this story to be rather amusing, yet also sees it as a reason for the pride that is felt by members of her family, in regard to their Irish roots. The part that Aoife finds to be amusing is simply the pride that her Grandmother has, comes from this ancestor who was, at least according to the courts of the time, a criminal for all intents and purposes. There was also some amusement found in the actual crime that was committed. As for someone living in Canada in the 21st century the idea of stealing sheep, to Aoife at least, is a rather foreign and entertaining concept to imagine. However, this story is also a core part of the narrative that has been used by Aoife in building her heritage identity as someone of Irish decent. Further to this, it was used by her grandmother to pass on her own pride to her grandchild.

Family history alone though was not the only reason why Aoife decided to learn Irish. Her motivations also stem from something as simple as her own name, which is an Irish one. The name being a source of motivation because people tend to ask her where her name comes from, and upon hearing that the name is an Irish one people sometimes have asked "do you speak it?" To which she has thus far had to say, "No." This has

actually made Aoife want to be able to answer in the affirmative when she receives this question. "'Is your name Gaelic?' and I'm like 'yeah,' and then they're like, 'Can you speak it?' So, it's kinda more, like, to be 'oh, yes actually I can'… It was more or less that and also it would be cool to learn a language that not a lot of people speak."

At the end of this quote we can also see that there is a general interest on the part of Aoife in learning a language that not a lot of people actually speak. Though it has manifested itself in Irish due to the connection that she feels to the language, via her grandmother. Personal relationships obviously are a very important part of how she has constructed parts of her identity. Also, this shows that different people will draw on different motivations, as Aoife found great inspiration from the relationship with her grandparents, being "their Irish Granddaughter… with red hair." Whereas the Hobbyist learner Jordan felt that there was a generational disconnect between himself and his own grandparents.

People are not the only things that can be core of a person's motivations, the core of the motivation can also be an object. An object like this would need to be something of importance to the learner in question, with a history attached to it. This is the case for Josie, who's family history is tied to the family Bible that has been in her family since they arrived in Canada around 200 years ago. Her family has lived on the same farm in rural Nova Scotia for almost all of this time, meaning that her family has a somewhat unique understanding of their history and where they came from. Also, unlike Aoife's family, they appear to have come to what is now Canada more or less through their own means and of their own will; not because they had perpetrated any kind of livestock related grand theft.

This heritage that Josie has had access to throughout her life, has been important to her since she was a young child. As she was always aware of her heritage, and actively recognizes this as a key reason as to why she has an interest in learning the Irish language. Josie expressed this interest very early on in her life in the form of a project that she completed in elementary school:

> So I had a heritage project for the 4th grade and my teacher did not expect it to be as in depth as it was. My family has been on the same farm for 200 years now …Yes so I had the old family bible so I did an ancestry, like a tree and then I just kinda kept finding, on my dad's side, they're all Irish and I was just more and more interested in that because my family is very conservative we have a lot of traditions that we follow. It was just, like, a nice thing to know because like obviously our ancestors came over and would have been farmers. We have records that are over 200 years old that tell us things like that, so it's just, I don't know for me and my mind have a natural progression, I guess it's kinda like me connecting with my ancestors.

This connection to Irish culture through her family history made Josie more and more interested in Ireland and Irish culture. This interest for her began to peak after she made a trip to Ireland after graduating from high school. She also talked about how hearing people speak in Irish, and seeing road signs in Irish, was a very intriguing experience for her. Especially since this was the first time she had actually experienced the language first hand. This was again something that pushed her towards wanting to learn the Irish Language, as it provided more context to the family history that she knew so well from the century's old Bible that holds the names of her ancestors.

In addition to the Family Bible there was one other aspect of her life that helped further motivate Josie's desire to learn the Irish language; this is her minor in University, Anthropology. From this discipline she learned how interconnected language and culture

can be, thus driving her to desire to learn the language of her heritage. Her answer to the following question makes this connection quite clear:

Kieran: So, what made you choose Irish over doing something like French…?

Josie: Because of my heritage.

The emphasis that she put on the connection between language and culture is something that clearly associates her with the outline of a Roots learner.

At this point, the fact that her heritage is why she is learning the language is a bit redundant. However, the key difference between her and Aoife is that Josie does not once reference any particular family member who made her feel especially proud of being of Irish descent. Nor did she mention any specific traditions or songs that have stayed in the family, which helped her motivations to develop. She does talk about how her family is musical, traditional, and general things of that nature, however not in regard to any specific traditions that might keep her tied to her Irish roots. The closest to this is the fact that her family goes to church every Sunday. Though this is of course true of many families who do not have any connection whatsoever to Ireland, and Josie herself did not claim outright that this is because of the family's Irish heritage.

This aspect of Josie's motivation is very unlike Aoife's, who was very specific about various cultural aspects and people, her grandmother, who made her, feel that the Irish language was an important thing to learn. Josie, however, was almost entirely motivated by this history contained within this Bible, and what that history meant to her. The object and the history that is associated with it takes the place of the family connections that had been so important for the development of Aoife's identity as a

person of Irish decent. This is not the same as the Hobbyist learner Jordan however, who felt a disconnect from his older relatives making him feel less personally connected to the culture and language. Indeed, it would appear that for Josie, people in her family were not as significant factor in how she views and plans to study the Irish language, as they were for Aoife.

For the final Roots learner that I identified, Siobhan, the main factor of her own motivation seemed to lay with her Irishness itself, as well as with fairytales. Siobhan is also unique from all of the other interviewees as she is actually a citizen of The Republic of Ireland through her Grandmother, who came to Canada as a young girl. This is clearly a very strong reason why she wanted to learn the language. As she goes on to talk about how important her connection with her grandmother is, and the Irish fairytales that her grandmother used to tell to her as a child. This was the beginning of her interest in her Irish background.

The close connection that she feels is shown very clearly in how she describes herself and her relationship to Ireland. The first noticeable difference between Siobhan and the other Roots learners is a more infrequent use of the word heritage to describe her experience and relationship with Irish culture. This is not to say that she is any more or less a person of Irish heritage, only that as her relationship is more recent and she has tangible connections to Ireland. Those tangible items are documents like citizenship papers, as opposed to a 200 year old Bible. Again, not to say that one warrants more inherent authenticity than the other, just that it is relevant to Siobhan's experience, and motivation, that she does have this close tie to Ireland.

For Siobhan learning the Irish language is just another way that she can connect to her culture. She has already done this in other ways based on the fact that her connection is much more recent in time, as mentioned above, she has become a dual citizen of Canada and Ireland. This is something that was very important to Siobhan, the fact that she is Irish and she saw learning Irish as a way through which she could further honour and explore her culture:

> I guess, like honouring, like appreciating, like it's such a huge part of any culture is, language. So, like, I had already taken history courses, so, I guess it only made sense to see what the language was all about. Yeah, like, I definitely appreciate my background, so, like, honouring or appreciating what my ancestors have given me.

These feelings that Siobhan has for Irish culture, and the language itself, come in large part from her Grandmother. Siobhan talked about how her grandmother would be the one who would tell the stories and fairytales that made her feel proud of where she comes from. This same enthusiasm and association with her culture was not however associated with her parents. She seemed to imply that they, in general, had much less interest in Ireland and Irish culture than she does herself. Like Josie, she also mentioned that studying anthropology is a reason why she sees an important connection between language and culture.

It was the importance of language to culture that Siobhan sees that ultimately drove her to decide to begin studying the Irish language. This was something she had always had the intent to do, but was initially disenchanted with in her first year because of a professor that she had in a first-year course. This was due to both his teaching style as well as this particular professor's attitude. However, this would not end up holding her

back from eventually beginning to learn Irish. The importance that learning the language had to her eventually overcame the negative feelings that she had built up during that class.

This decision to go back and study the Irish language was triggered in part by a trip that she took to Ireland. In planning and preparing for this trip it made her rethink the importance that learning Irish would have for her. Furthermore, while in Ireland the summer before she began the course. The exposure to how people talked about and used, or often did not use, the Irish language also provided a spur of inspiration to Siobhan to return to her original plans to study the language:

> I didn't speak to too many people in Belfast about what I was doing in school, once I'd gone to Galway there were a few more people who that could speak it and they were really impressed that I was doing it. They were like "wow that's so cool" like you live so far away, we don't take it seriously enough it's really great that you're doing that, umm, and then as I came into Dublin again it was like the outskirts of the west had more of a positive opinion, impressed that I'm doing it and wished that they had done more themselves. And then when I came into Dublin less people spoke it and that yeah that more um yeah it's still shocked that I was learning it, I was surprised that they knew so little when they take it in school like we take core French so umm.

 It was this positive experience, and the conversations that she had, that made Siobhan feel even more confidant that she had made the right decision. These same feelings were compounded by ones that she already had after talking to Irish friends of hers who she met in Florida, while completing a training camp there.

In spite of the vast difference in the time, Siobhan actually has very similar opinions about what it means to learn Irish as the other two Roots learners who have

connections that are more displaced in time. This is because like those other two learners, Siobhan is learning the language because of the importance that she sees between the Irish language and Irish culture. For her this is not just a way for her to expand upon her Identity as a naturalized Irish citizen, but also to connect to and honour her family. This is where the greatest similarity between all three of these learners is, in how they seek to utilize the Irish language as a means to better understand themselves and their culture, regardless of how recently they might be connected to Ireland itself.

How They Connect:

In spite of the sometimes great differences between the Hobbyist and Roots learners as groups, there is not actually a clear line that divides a person as one or the other. Like many groupings it is a spectrum. As all of those individuals that were interviewed exhibited aspects of both Hobbyist and Roots traits, though in differing amounts and in the importance of certain factors. For example, a family connection ranged from Ronald saying that his surname is Irish so that makes it "neat to learn for that reason," to someone like Josie who had a very distinct motivation that was grounded in connecting with her heritage. Yet, Josie also believed that it was her studious and academic nature that made her to want to learn and study Irish.

Further to this, there are learners who appeared to draw from both academic and non-heritage sources, as well as from their own ancestral background. The individual who exhibited the most intertwined motivations from both groups was Brandon. I did eventually decide that he was more of a Hobbyist, based on his desire to use the language in his future career and how he associated it so much with his pursuit of religious studies. Also, Brandon talked about how he first had exposure to a Gaelic language from his

grandmother, who would sing songs to him in Scottish Gaelic as a child. This definitely puts some amount of personal connection in his motivation to learn the language that cannot be disputed. There were also certain factors, like his future career as a minister, which appeared to be more important to him.

Brandon's interview demonstrated that the categories of Roots and Hobbyist learners are actually more of a spectrum than a binary. This is important to realize because when thinking about someone's motivation it has to be remembered that an individual's motivations are, in most cases, multifaceted. They will draw on different parts of their life and interests to further their goals and their motivations reflect that. For example, Josie's interest in her minor, Anthropology, helped spur her interest in culture and, more specifically, the study of the Irish language. These interests had more than likely already existed, due to the fact that she already had such a deep connection to her family's roots. For example, the 200 plus year old family Bible that was mentioned previously.

It is through similarities like these between Roots and Hobbyist learners that one can begin to see that they may actually be looking for something similar. What is meant by this is not that their motivations are the same in any sense of the word; these are decidedly unique to each of these individuals. What is meant by this is that both of these types of learners are, at the core of their motivations, looking to expand their knowledge. This is meant beyond the simple extent of the knowledge one gains inherently in the mere learning of a language, in the case of Roots learners at least.

Those who are Roots learners are looking to expand what they know, and can comprehend about the members of their family that have come before them. The concept

here is similar to how Meek describes the motivations of Kaska language revivalists in Canada's North (Meek 2010: 146-147). This is something that was expressed over and over again amongst these students; they wanted to feel closer to their ancestors and to a culture that they felt disconnected from. Therefore, they use the Irish language as a sort of tool to build and authenticate these feelings and desires. In short, they use it to learn about their past.

Those who were Hobbyists on the other hand, were in search of more of a traditionally academic expansion of their knowledge. Ronald, for one, felt that Irish had a great importance in history, which is one of his areas of interest. He found that the language tied in well with this interest and would be a way that he could expand what he knows about the subject. Even more so is Brandon, who fully intends to apply the skills that he gains to his future career in the Anglican priesthood. This search for knowledge is what is shared between both the Hobbyist and the Roots learners, however it is having this search for knowledge be separate from a desire to learn about, or connect with, one's past that sets these two groups of learners apart.

In The Classroom:

Aside from the broad motivations that made each of these learners decide that they wanted to learn the Irish language, there were several factors within the classroom that benefited, or were detrimental to the daily motivations of each of the students that I interviewed. This is important as it shaped their classroom level motivations as students in terms how invested they were in the day to day activities of language learning. It also influenced how the classroom, and individual students might have interacted with the instructor and each other. In short, if a class is misbehaving or acting out of turn, it can

have a negative effect on all of those students who are in the classroom and trying to learn. Likewise, a well behaved class can have a positive impact on how students learn. Therefore, talking about these experiences is an important part of looking at the learning motivations of these students.

These short term motivations affected the students more or less equally, regardless of how their learning motivations were oriented, as either Roots or Hobbyist learners. These motivations were those that could be found in the classroom. These influences were caused by various elements of the learning environment, such as the behaviour of other students, interest in the lesson at hand, and attentiveness to lectures. The type of work that was being assigned also acted on this. Also, very important to the daily motivations of these students was the instructor himself, how he conducted the classes and interacted with the students in the classroom.

The attitude of classmates was something that could ensure that a class period would either be very enjoyable, or very hard to get through. This was especially true for Siobhan and Aoife. They both talked about how in their class there was a group of fellow students who were consistently loud and disrespectful, to the point that it distracted them from their work. It was for the most part just these individuals who would talk over other students in the class and even the instructor at different times. This could make it difficult for them to concentrate in the class because of how the other students behaved.

This behaviour on the part of her classmates made Siobhan feel as if not everyone in the classroom really appreciated what they were learning on account of their behaviour. However, Siobhan went on to say that she understood that not everyone was "dying to learn Irish." Regardless, it was still frustrating for her to have people acting disrespectfully and taking away from what is being learned in the class; something that

was very important to her personally. The distractions from this were also something that made the learning process harder for her because it interrupted and slowed down the progression of the class. This happened several times and at a few points the instructor had to actually stop teaching because these individuals were being so disruptive.

The same problem was not prevalent in the other Irish class, according to the interviewees from that section. Josie described the classroom as follows:

> … It was a smaller classroom so we all kinda became friends and it was just really comfortable and relaxed… The classroom is completely laid back and everyone was really supportive, no one would try to get out the right answer if you didn't immediately get the right answer… Also I feel that because we were more relaxed we talked to each other more.

Josie was immediately conveying a sense of camaraderie and mutual appreciation that she felt was present in her own classroom. Something that was absent from Siobhan and Aoife's classroom. Also, in saying that everyone in the class really became friends, and that there was no interrupting or antagonistic feelings towards any of her classmates, shows that overall the environment was more relaxed. Josie further commented on this positive environment by comparing it to how she felt in some of her biology classes:

> Well in biology you're not against each other but there is tension because you have so much to do, like you do, our teachers they won't, they will give you an anatomy booklet and you need to know it but they will give it to you a few hours before the lab and just things like that are really stressful and truthfully, I do think that some people are competitive… Whereas Irish is, the classroom is, completely laid back and everyone was really supportive. No one would try to get out the right answer if you didn't immediately get the right answer, it was just more supportive.

These experiences set up two very different classroom environments. One that is quiet and consistently supportive, and another that can be quite the opposite; loud and disruptive. However, none of the learners from the less well behaved class had anything to say about this environment being one that, overall, inhibited them from learning the Irish language or getting a good grade in the class. Although, the account that Josie gives

above, about her own experience in her class seems to indicate that this would have been a better learning environment for students.

Obviously a positive working environment is something that is important for anyone while acquiring a new skill, whether it is a language or something else (Devitt et al. 2016). So, it is important to consider how the learning environment shaped the desires of these learners to continue to learn the language. All of these students expressed that they had a desire to, in some way, continue their study of the Irish language, whether that be through their own means, or to continue to take formal classes at Saint Mary's. This tells me that my interviewees were far more concerned with their own learning than with the other individuals in the classroom, especially those people who were disruptive.

It was those positive relationships that were able to be built by these students that were the most important to their motivation during the course of the class itself. This is reflected in the interviews where there is more emphasis given to those relationships that were positive to their overall learning experience. For example, Aoife, who although she told me about how the disruptive students were a problem, also told me about how she had made friends with Siobhan and the two of them had studied together and helped each other learn. Furthermore, that this made the experience of learning Irish altogether more enjoyable than it would have been had the friendship not developed.

To continue on the theme of positive relationships, the relationship that each one of these individuals had with the instructor of the class was a positive one. Overall each student found him to be helpful, enthusiastic and a genuinely good instructor who cared about what he was teaching. Ronald said for example, "My sister…said that the professor was really good, and he is really good, yeah she just said it was a good solid course."

Here Ronald is not just talking about his own good experience in the Irish language Classroom, but also his sister's, which was important in his own decision to learn Irish.

Overall, these positive and negative experiences have shaped the motivations and desires of each of these students going forward in their language learning. Whether they are Roots or Hobbyist learners these factors will have great influence on how they are able to learn, and importantly how they will influence others. The general positive experience that each student has had could result in more people becoming aware and interested in learning the Irish language. I feel reasonably confidant that this is something that can and does happen as it occurred with not just Ronald, but also Jordan.

These two learners, though they did have an interest in the language, were both encouraged to learn the language after exchanges with a family member and a friend respectively. This is something that happens, students recommend classes to other students, and it is these positive experiences that students will communicate to their peers. They will talk about how good the professor was, and how enjoyable the class was while encouraging others to take the course. Which is a reason that either a Roots or Hobbyist learner might make the choice to begin to learn Irish, or any subject for that matter in a university setting.

Conclusion:

Both Hobbyist and Roots learners have their own unique reasons for learning Irish, both as groups and as individuals. This can be seen very clearly in how diverse their motivations can be. Like Brandon who has the intention of using the language in his future career looking at how it can be applied to conflict resolution and his own

Spirituality. Or Jordan who was learning purely for the pursuit of knowledge because he felt disconnected from the family connection that he has.

Aside from these similarities though, there were also the various core motivations that were present in each of the Roots learners that set them apart from the Hobbyists. While similar, all of their core motivations stemmed from different areas of their lives. This included people, objects, and stories that were important to each of these individuals. The constant with these learners was that they all had a similar goal of getting in touch with, or reconnecting to their Irish heritage.

This does not take away from the similarities that do exist between these two groups of learners. These likenesses can be expressed in both how they are in search of knowledge and both have a desire to learn this language that is of minority status that so few people speak. These differences do have an important impact on how I look at these two groups of learners. The Roots and Hobbyist groupings show the wide array of reasons as to why students at Saint Mary's have decided to learn Irish.

Beyond this, there is the aspect of how the classroom can affect learning, whether it is because of classmates, content or the instructor. All of these aspects can affect the motivation of students regardless of whether they are a Roots or Hobbyist leaner. This is because if an instructor is good for example, it would be a positive thing for both a Roots or Hobbyist learner, regardless of what their motivations for learning the language might be independently.

Authenticity and Identity: As it Relates to Roots Learners

Introduction:

The ways that language can be used to strengthen Identity is not reserved to diasporic communities of immigrants and their descendants. It can also be observed among minority groups who use language to reinforce and build their identity, with language being used as the tool to accomplish this. Brian King (2008) showed how this can happen and his 2008 article looking at gay Korean men learning English. It was found by King that these men who were learning English were in part using it as a medium to express their identity as gay men, as several of his informants found it difficult to live life as a gay man in Korea through the medium of the Korean language (King 2008). They were in a way seeking to create a more authentic experience for themselves as gay men. The concept here is similar to how MacCannell (1973) talks about authenticity and tourism in the way that people construct authentic experiences.

Furthermore, this search for authenticity is also reflected in a desire to integrate into the community, but also make the language a part of their cultural life (King 2008: Dörnyei 2009). This is not dissimilar to how I propose identity and authenticity serve as key parts of the learning motivations of those Irish language learners at SMU, who have been identified as Roots learners.

King's argument in his article is that gay Korean men have an advantage over straight Korean men while learning English because of their identities as gay men. On account of how their identities as gay men gave them a way to easily enter into to the Gay community in America, where they can practice their English and improve their fluency (King 2008). However, there is something else that does come out of this article beyond

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King's initial argument. That other aspect is how these Korean men do not feel that they can live an authentic life through the medium of the Korean language. The reason that they feel this way is because of the strong pressures that are put on Korean men to find a wife and start a family. This pressure is to the point that it is not uncommon for Korean gays and lesbians to enter into contract marriages with one another to meet these obligations to their families while remaining with their homosexual partners (Cho 2009). These pressures had been a strong motivation to learn English for the men that King interviewed. They therefore are using English to live a more authentic life and be a more authentic gay person (King 2008).

The Roots learners that I interviewed already identify as individuals who have Irish heritage, and feel to some extent culturally or ethnically Irish. However, with the exception of Siobhan, they do not have the means of substantiating this claim of heritage. They were looking for something to validate the way that they felt and build upon the identity that they have. They approach this through language, and use the Irish language as a means of building an authentic identity as someone who is culturally Irish for themselves. They furthermore see Irish as the best way to express this desire for a more authentic identity, not dissimilar to how the Korean men above felt that learning and using English was a more authentic and real way of expressing their identity as gay men. Language is therefore a powerful tool in feeling authentic in one's identity, and this feeling is what truly makes Roots learners distinct from Hobbyists.

Why though do these students feel that the Irish language will help them form more authentic identities? Before approaching the ethnographic data on this, I would like to refer back to MacCannell (1973). In this publication he talks about how people in modernized western countries feel a lack of authenticity in their lives and for this reason

they seek out encounters with an exotic other, in the form of tourism. I believe that there is something not very different happening with these learners of the Irish language. I believe that they find themselves with an identity that they connect to and is important to them, yet at the same time they feel a lack of authenticity in actually expressing this identity as either Irish, or a person of Irish decent. They therefore use language in a similar way to which MacCannell (1973) describes why tourists choose to engage in tourism. The reason is, to build a more authentic self and experience in their lives. The building of a more authentic self is something that is present in the Roots learners that I interviewed.

Roots Learners and Authenticity:

Siobhan is the first interviewee who really gave me the idea of how language learners could be looking for aspects of authenticity within their lives. This is because with Siobhan it was clearer that she had a desire to have an authentic Irish identity, because she had other means to express this identity. For example, due to how recently her family had come from Ireland, Siobhan was eligible to apply to become a naturalized citizen of Ireland. This was able to be done through her Grandmother who had immigrated to Canada from Ireland. She was quite excited about obtaining this citizenship. Like the language, she felt that it was important for her to have, and to potentially pass on to any children that she may have in the future. Saying in regard to this, "I can pass on, like, the citizenship to them. So, why not have the language too? I think it's important to know your cultural practices."

The key wording in the above quote is the last sentence "I think it's important to know your cultural practices." This is, from context, an indirect form of the possessive pronoun "your." The intent is, that Siobhan believes that it is important in general for

people to be aware and have knowledge of the cultural practices of one's ancestors, this of course includes language. So, what is being said in the quote, to elaborate slightly, is that she believes that to be an authentic version of any member of a cultural group someone needs to have some knowledge of the practices and language that are traditional to that community. This is because she talks about how it would be important to her to not just pass on the language to any future children, but also to teach them the fairytales and stories that her grandmother had told to her during her own childhood.

This is Siobhan's attempt to build herself a more authentic identity as a person of Irish heritage and as an Irish woman in her own right, as she has gone to the extent of becoming a citizen. Thus her pursuit of learning, and having an obvious desire to use the language to some degree, is consistent with anthropological conceptions of "doing" identity (Bucholtz and Hall 2005) This is a concept that states that identity is something that individuals constantly maintain through actions that index the identity of the specific individual. In this case Siobhan is using the Irish Language as a distinct trait to index, and add to her Irish identity. The ability to more strongly index an identity that one is proud of is certainly a reason why a person such as Siobhan would want to learn Irish.

The search for authenticity among these Irish language learners is also quite apparent in Josie, who, as has been mentioned in a previous chapter, has a long family history that traces back to Ireland, and has been kept in the family Bible. For her, she seemed to be seeking authenticity for not just herself but for her entire family. By this I mean that she felt that she was, in a way the keeper of culture for her family. She felt this way because, as a more academically driven individual, she felt that it was her place to learn the language. She, similar to the other Roots learners, also felt that the language was a part of her history and something that had been lost, but that she wanted to regain and

bring back into her own cultural sphere. Saying, "I'm very much interested in it. I'm looking to go on exchange there and just, the more I learn about Irish culture the more I want to know."

It is from this outlook that the language provides a means to add more authenticity to Josie's life. She has such an interest and passion around her connection to the Irish language and Ireland in general. This connection is built in large part on her family and its traditional conservative structure. She also finds joy in engaging with the culture and learning more about Irish language and culture. Her family structure is also part of the reason that she has been steered towards learning the Irish. Josie described this as follows, "I am, the youngest daughter on the farm and my brother is farming. So I know that I will never be a farmer. So, I guess it's like a different way for me to continue to be an essential part of my family."

This seeking to continue to be an essential part of her family is part of the search for authenticity. She knows that her family has these connections to Ireland and to Irish Culture, and she is also slightly detached from the modern farm work that is happening on her family's farm. So, her choice to study Irish is part of her search for authenticity to her identity. This is because, in her words, "Learning more and more about my past is just something that kinda helps me to figure out just what's going on."

Figuring out where you fit in, so to speak, is a big part of identity building and authenticity. Due to how the lack of feeling like one is living an authentic life is one of the reasons why people may seek out a new way to engage with their world and their culture. So it was with the Korean Gay men who were learning English, and indeed used English to expand their identities as gay men (King 2008). So, language is a tool that can

easily be used to better index or authenticate an identity. Furthermore, it can be seen as a way of improving one's understanding of the culture that they identify with. Especially if the individual does not necessarily feel that they are a true member of the group, due to time that has passed or due to a lack of knowledge that they feel that they might have (Meek 2010:113-114). In Ireland itself this has even been seen to an extent where there is, a cultural divide that can occur between Irish and English speaking Irish people (Atkinson 2016).

The process of seeking to authenticate an Irish Identity through language can be seen in Aoife. Again as a Roots learner Aoife is looking to authenticate her identity through the use of the Irish language. Her original desire to learn the language came from her grandmother, and the passion that her grandmother had for her own Irish heritage. The relationship that she has with her grandmother was one reason why Aoife chose to learn Irish over Scottish Gaelic. Aoife said, for example, that her grandmother will go on forever about how beautiful Ireland is and how great it is. For Aoife this is where the importance of an Irish Identity comes from.

In learning the language, she also talked about a changing relationship between herself and her rugby coach, who is from Ireland and speaks Irish. Though they already had an existing relationship of player and coach, learning Irish provided her with insider knowledge that gave them a slightly different relationship than with the rest of the team. This is because sometimes this coach will yell at the team in Irish to sound intimidating, to get the teams attention or to pump them up. Though after beginning to learn Irish, Aoife soon caught on to the fact that the "Irish" in question was not always truly Irish, but frequently random strings of sounds. As Aoife described, here is how the exchange took place:

I'm like those aren't words, you're just making noises. Apparently he has been doing this for years to everyone, just making noises sometimes to, like, make them think that he is yelling, and I noticed it one day at practice. I was like I don't think those are words and he looked at me he was like… "shh!"

This quote shows how Irish can be a means of entrance into an established cultural community. Language has the ability to do this because language can allow two people who speak it to build and strengthen the relationship between them. This sentiment was also discussed by Siobhan, who talked about learning and speaking Irish as a way of uniting people. Language more generally can be seen as clear way of establishing one's identity and connection to a community (Meek 2010, 146-147).

The encounter and opinion expressed above is a clear example of what I am trying to show in this chapter. That being, how Irish is a way for people to create and preform an authentic identity. This is true in the minds of the learners who see it as a unifying and identifying characteristic that they can acquire. It is in this way learners are acquiring a skill to add to their identity. The process of learning then, is not simply a matter of wanting to connect with their ancestors and learn about their culture, though these are important motivational factors. Roots learners of Irish are trying to make the Irish language an important part of their lives (Maguire 1991: 49).

In this way the Roots learners are different from the example given at the beginning of this chapter with Korean gay men constructing Identity through the use of English. The fact is there is a desire, but not necessarily a commitment, on behalf of the Roots learners to become fluent in Irish and use it in their daily lives. For them the mere knowledge of Irish, to have a *cúpla focal* [1] appears to be enough for them to feel more

confident in their identities as people of Irish decent (Kabel McCoy 2000: 134). They were very content in knowing that they possessed knowledge that was relatively unique and also important to their cultural lives, and each individual felt very pleased with themselves for having learned the basics of the language. Which is not like the case of the Korean men, who felt that they needed to live in and use the English language regularly in order to properly construct and authenticate their identities as gay men (King 2008).

Language as a Marker of Authenticity:

The fact that this small amount of Irish can be used to index and represent identity in the form of the *cúpla focal,* is hardly unique to these learners that I have interviewed. The use of the *cúpla focal* is a shibboleth, an expression of their Identity, by this I mean to say that they intend to use this small piece of language to index who they are, and their heritage. In a way that will allow others to recognize them as being a part of the heritage community because of the type of speech that they have used (Nakassis 2015).

This usage of the language can also be seen in parts of Irish society and politics, as people will not infrequently use small pieces of the Irish language to communicate their cultural belonging and utilize the symbolic unifying nature of the language (Denvir 1995). Furthermore, the learners themselves were quite aware of how the language can provide a very meaningful connection between different people who can speak Irish. For example, this is what Siobhan had to say in regard to this topic:

> It was kind of cool to see that, and you know seeing the different dialects being spoken there. Like when I couldn't understand other people or umm I don't know it kind of, of unites people in a way, the connection of like oh I know this thing, and you know it too like it's kind of like… *Wantok*[2].

Siobhan's comparison here is interesting, as it shows how she interprets the language as being a strong uniting piece of culture for herself to use to amplify her connection to her roots. She sees the language as something that can help make connections and help her build relationships with people who also share knowledge of the Irish language. I can draw this conclusion from what she has said because of this comparison to *Wontok* systems in Papua New Guinea. These *Wontak* systems function to connect ethnic and linguistic communities in Papua New Guinea when individuals move to larger cities, where they might be separated from family and village ties, acting as a kind of support network (Schram 2015).

The reason why the language can be used like this by these learners is because of how language is actually used to construct identity and how it is seen as being authentic itself. For a language to be considered authentic it needs to meet certain criteria. These include such things as the language being naturally occurring, as opposed to constructed, or to be a language that is encoding a truthful statement (Coupland 2003). Coupland (2003) applies these criteria to examine what people see as authentic language, which he divides into six categories. I will only be looking at the last of these two categories as they deal with the themes of identity and authenticity.

Though, the most important of these six typologies for how these language learners are seeking to build authentic identities through the language is that an authentic form of speech will tie a speaker to a certain social group (Coupland 2003). It is this idea that a certain kind of speech is tied to a specific ethnic group that allows language to be used by individuals to preform an authentic identity. The fact that the group of Roots

learners does not show a full commitment to becoming fluent in the language might then keep them from becoming authentic speakers of the language. This is because they would lack some of the linguistic tools necessary to express themselves fully in the language, therefore not indexing themselves properly as authentic members of the cultural and linguistic community of Irish speakers (Bucholtz and Hall 2005).

I do not believe that this would take away from how learning the language adds to their own experience of feeling more authentic in their identity as people of Irish heritage. While seeking a more authentic version of one's culture is a key part of the Roots motivation, they are not necessarily trying to be an authentic speaker. The real goal of these learners is to become a more authentic version of a person of Irish decent. So, in this context, even superficial knowledge of the language would be enough for these learners to fulfill this goal. I say this because of their experiences with the language outside of the classroom that I have talked about thus far. These experiences have shown them that they can have authentic experiences through the medium of the Irish language, without needing to become fully fluent. Meaning that part of their goals had already been achieved after only having taken the introductory course and being able to feel that they had added something to their identities that is truly worthwhile, meaningful, and authentic.

Conclusion:

Authenticity then, is something that these individuals are searching for through the course of their language learning, and they were trying to express their identity through the language that they were learning. This is the key similarity between my research and that which was conducted by King (2008). Both the Korean men and the Roots learners

that I interviewed have used language as a means to construct identities that they feel are lacking in some sense through only their native language. The second language being a doorway into the world and an identity that they seek to become a part of through the language.

The difference though comes, when one begins to look at the amount of fluency in the language that is needed for the identity to start to feel more authentic to these different groups of learners. The learners of Irish that I interviewed merely needed their *cúlpa focal* before they started to feel like they were building an authentic identity with the use of the language, and indeed there is precedence for this feeling present in other contexts (Giles 2016). It was even expressed by interviewees that they felt more confidant and proud of their identity in knowing the small amount of Irish that they now have at their disposal.

This was contrary to what had happened with the Korean men that had been interviewed by King (2008), who felt the need to become more or less fluent in English, and in some cases have American boyfriends and live in America for a time (King 2008). This difference is because for the gay men, English was seen as being the only way to truly be their authentic selves, as they saw it as impossible to live an authentic life through their native language, Korean. Herein lays the difference, the Irish learners did not find anything inherently inauthentic or that English impeded in anyway their ability to be a person of Irish, or Gaelic more generally, heritage. It was merely seen as a way of amplifying authentic feelings that they had already built up through connections to both family members, traditions and history (ThompsonMcCoy 2000 :50).

Conclusion

> My grandfather, when he was starting business 50 years ago he, uh, he was doing business with this guy in Quebec and the guy wrote him a letter in French, and my grandfather didn't speak French and there wasn't Google translate or anything so he had to go out and get the thing translated write a letter get that translated, and send it back. But, he decided it wasn't worth doing business with this guy so he got his letter   translated into Gaelic, he knew someone in Cape Breton. So, I have a hunch they never, uh, translated that into French. – Ronald

This quote from Ronald is a humorous story about how he first became aware of Gaelic languages, Scottish Gaelic in this case. However, despite the fact that this quote does not deal with Irish exactly, it still deals with several themes that I have discussed in this paper thus far. Those being, authenticity, the perceived rarity of the language, and the language as it relates to people who do not feel that they are personally connected to the language.

As I have shown, both people who feel that they have a personal connection to the language and those who do not both have very real reasons to learn the language. This quote in a way shows how the motivations of Hobbyists are normal, and that Hobbyist learners are no less authentic in their motivations than Roots learners. This is because it talks about Ronald's Grandfather who used Scottish Gaelic in a business correspondence even though he was not a speaker of the language. As, interaction with, and the use of, any one language is not limited to a single cultural group. What this means for my findings is that the spectrum of Hobbyist to Roots learners is a very real motivational arch that connects these two groups together. Although they may have differences, that are very stark at times, they do have connections that will have an affect on their present and future motivations.

This expands to how the Roots learners in particular utilize the language to build their identities as authentic members of a heritage community. It is this desire to authenticate themselves through language that is the true distinguishing feature between these two groups. The desire to be able to have an identity that is more authentically "Irish" in the eyes of these Roots learners. This act of identity construction is also the key factor in the motivations of those Roots learners that I interviewed. Though whether the motivation is based on intrinsic or extrinsic factors all of these learners appear to have a similar drive to learn the language even if it may stem from a different source.

Notes

1. *Cúpla Focal* Term used to describe speaking a small amount of Irish, potentially the Irish learned in school, literally meaning "a couple of words."

2. *Wantok* is a phrase from *Tok Pisin,* a lingua franca in Papua New Guinea that is used to describe a community of people with the same linguistic and ethnic background, as well as the social obligations that this relationship carries (Schram 2015).

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