

*A Case Study Approach to the Language
Status, Motivation and Attitude in both an
Immersion and Non-Immersion Setting at
Primary Level in Ireland.*

A Thesis submitted to Mary Immaculate College
Limerick for the Degree of Master of Arts in
German Studies.

Name: Aisling Murphy

Date: 09/09/2016

Declaration of Originality

Department: German Studies

Degree: Master of Arts

Word Count: 46,608

Internal Examiner: Dr. Sabine Egger

External Examiner: Dr. Kristin Brogan

Name of Candidate: Aisling Murphy

Title of Thesis: A Case Study Approach to the Language Status, Motivation and Attitude in both an Immersion and Non- Immersion Setting at Primary Level Ireland.

Declaration: I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that it does not contain any work of any other individual. All sources that have been consulted have been identified and acknowledged in the appropriate way.

Signed: Aisling Murphy

Date: 9th of September 2016

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support of a number of people who helped me in the completion of this thesis.

In particular, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and a special thanks to my supervisors, Dr. Helmut Grugger and Dr. Seán Ó Cathalláin for their expertise, professional guidance, encouragement, patience and generosity at all times and without whom the project would not have come to completion. “*Ein großes Dankeschön*” and “*go raibh míle maith agaibh*” to you both!

This study would not have been achievable without the consent of the parents and co-operation of the pupils, and teachers who participated in this study. I would like to give a special thanks to all of the participants who helped me, to whom I will be eternally grateful.

I wish to acknowledge the support of Mary Immaculate College, especially the German Department, in all the help they gave me throughout this project. I would like to thank Dr. Sabine Egger especially for her help and guidance early on in this project and also Dr. Christiane Schönfeld (Head of Department).

Finally I would like to thank all my family and friends, to whom I am ever grateful for their patience, understanding and help along the way. I am especially thankful to both my parents, and I would like to dedicate this thesis to them.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
List of Tables.....	2
List of Abbreviations.....	3
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	4-8
1.1 Introduction.....	4
1.2 Background to the Study.....	4
1.2.1 Political Context: Multilingualism vs. Plurilingualism.....	4
1.2.2 European Context.....	5
1.3 Focus and Objectives.....	7
1.4 Conclusion.....	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review, Political Context and Implementation.....	9-33
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Literature Review.....	9
2.2.1 European Context.....	9
2.2.2 Irish Context.....	11
2.3 Political Context: Language Policy.....	14
2.3.1 Political Context in Europe.....	14
2.3.2 European Policy in Ireland.....	18
2.3.3 Specific Irish Examples.....	24
2.3.4 Introduction to the MLPSI.....	27
2.3.4.1 Phase 1: Pilot Project.....	27
2.3.4.2 Phase 2: Development of the MLPSI.....	28
2.3.4.3 Phase 3: MLPSI.....	29
2.3.4.4 Phase 4: Abolishment of the MLPSI.....	30
2.4 Conclusion.....	33
Chapter 3: Motivation in Language Learning.....	34-39
3.1 Introduction.....	34
3.2 Motivation Theories.....	35
3.2.1 Gardner’s Theory.....	36
3.2.2 Integrative Motive.....	37
3.2.3 Socio- Educational Model.....	38
3.3 Conclusion.....	39
Chapter 4: Methodology.....	40-55
4.1 Introduction.....	40
4.2 Theoretical Framework of the Study.....	40
4.2.1 Qualitative Inquiry.....	40
4.3 Case Study.....	42
4.3.1 Semi- Structured Interviews.....	43
4.3.2 Language Portraits.....	44
4.3.3 Focus Group Interviews.....	45
4.3.4 Limitations of this Research.....	48
4.4 Means of Analysis.....	49
4.4.1 Grounded Theory.....	49
4.4.1.1 Initial Coding.....	49

4.4.1.2 Focused Coding.....	50
4.5 Ethical Considerations.....	51
4.6. Reflexivity - The Researcher's Voice.....	52
4.7 Conclusion.....	55
Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Presentation.....	56-125
5.1: Introduction.....	56
Chapter 5.2: Teachers' Responses.....	57
5.2 Introduction.....	57
5.2.1 Project Participants.....	57
5.2.2 Language Status.....	58
5.2.2.1 National Context	59
5.2.2.2 The Status of Irish.....	62
5.2.2.3 The Status of Modern Languages.....	66
5.2.3 School Contexts.....	69
5.2.4 Attitude and Motivation.....	72
5.2.4.1 Teacher 1 (T1) German Language Teacher.....	72
5.2.4.2 School 1.....	74
5.2.4.3 School 2.....	77
5.2.5 Extrinsic Motivation.....	80
5.2.6 Summary/Findings.....	81
Chapter 5.3 Pupils' Responses.....	86
5.3 Method of Data Collection	86
5.3.1 Results and Discussion.....	87
5.3.2 Status of Language.....	88
5.3.3 Language Attitude towards Irish.....	91
5.3.3.1 School 1.....	91
5.3.3.2 School 2.....	93
5.3.4 Attitude towards Foreign Languages.....	97
5.3.5 Attitude towards the Learning Situation.....	103
5.3.5.1 School 1.....	103
5.3.5.2 School 2.....	106
5.3.6 Language Motivators.....	107
5.3.6.1 Ability to Communicate with Others.....	108
5.3.6.2 Academic Purposes.....	114
5.3.6.3 Sheer Enjoyment.....	116
5.3.7 Teaching Methodologies.....	117
5.4 Summary.....	120
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations.....	126-135
6.1 Introduction.....	126
6.2 Summary of Main Findings.....	127
6.3 Teaching Methodologies.....	133
6.4 Conclusions and Recommendations.....	134
6.5 Summary.....	137
Bibliography.....	139-144
Appendices.....	145-211

Abstract

This project is titled; *A Case Study Approach to the Language Status, Motivation and Attitude in both an Immersion and Non-immersion Setting at Primary Level Ireland*, and it sets out to explore and examine the status of language, the motivational factors and attitude towards language at primary level, focusing on foreign languages (in this case, French) and Irish. Second languages, mainly Irish and French are the major focus point in the schools in this study and how the schools continued to teach French after the abolishment of the MLPSI.

As these areas are so intertwined the three different aspects provide an overview of the language situation within these schools. Two schools were involved in this study, one English-medium school and the other an immersion setting, in the context of a Gaelscoil (Irish-medium school). Pupils and teachers from both settings were interviewed, and another former MLPSI teacher also took part in this study.

Table of Figures

Figure 1	The Growth of Irish-Medium Education.....	27
Figure 2	Reasons why Languages are Important.....	74
Figure 3	Language Portrait, Pupil 3, Interview 2, S1.....	92
Figure 4	Language Portrait, Pupil 2, Interview 1, S1.....	92
Figure 5	Language Portrait, Pupil 2, Interview 1, S2.....	94
Figure 6	Language Portrait, Pupil 1 Interview 1, S2.....	94
Figure 7	Language Portrait Interview 2, Pupil 1, S1.....	94
Figure 8	Language Portrait Interview 3, Pupil 1, S1.....	94
Figure 9	Language Portrait, Interview 1, Pupil 3, S2.....	95
Figure 10	Language Portrait, Interview 1 Pupil 5, S2.....	95
Figure 11	Language Portrait, Pupil 3, Interview 3, S1.....	100
Figure 12	Language Portrait, Pupil 3, Interview 3, S1.....	100

List of Abbreviations

B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
CEFR	<i>Common European Framework of Reference</i>
COE	<i>Council of Europe</i>
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES Science	<i>Department of Education and Skills; formerly Department of Education and Science</i>
ELL	Early Language Learning
ESLC	<i>European Survey on Language Competence</i>
ET	Education and Training
EU	<i>European Union</i>
FL	Foreign Language
FL2	Second FL
GT	German Teacher
OVFL	<i>One Voice for Languages</i>
ITE	Initial Teacher Training
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
ML	Modern Language
MLPSI	<i>Modern Languages in the Primary School Initiative</i>
MT	Mother Tongue
MT+2	MT+2 FLs
NAB	National Advisory Board
NCCA	<i>National Council for Curriculum and Assessment</i>
NUI	<i>National University of Ireland</i>
PPLI	<i>Post-Primary Languages Initiative</i>
RIA	<i>Royal Irish Academy</i>
S1, S2	School 1 and 2
T1-T4	Teacher 1-4
WB	Whiteboard

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to give a background context to this study. It will provide the reader with definitions of both multilingualism and plurilingualism, a brief summary of European language policy and studies compiled in Europe and how this relates to Ireland. It will also outline the focus area and objectives of this study, including the research questions, which were compiled during the investigation process.

1.2 Background to this study

1.2.1 Political Context: Multilingualism vs. Plurilingualism

“Multilingualism is a powerful fact of life around the world, a circumstance arising at the simplest level, from the need to communicate across speech communities” (Edwards, 1994:1).

Multilingualism refers to diversity within language in society which is connected to situations wherein multiple languages exist side-by-side within it, but are utilized separately within it.

Multilingualism denotes the presence of more than one “variety of language” in a geographical area, large or small, i.e. the mode of speaking of a social group, whether it is formally recognised as a language or not (European Commission, 2008).

“Multilingualism has become a political goal but also a political necessity in Europe” (Wolff, 2004: 3). Multilingualism refers to diversity within the language in a society which is connected to situations wherein multiple languages exist side-by-side within it, but are utilized separately within it. *Multilingualism* denotes the presence of more than one “variety of language” in a geographical area, large or small, i.e. the mode of speaking of a social group, whether it is formally recognised as a language or not (European Commission, 2008). In such an area individuals may also be monolingual, speaking only their own variety of language, and

others may be bilingual or plurilingual. Thus it is an indicator of language and cultural diversity, but not necessarily proficiency.

Plurilingualism is derived from the term bilingualism. “Pluri” can be understood as more than two. Plurilingualism is a concept developed in the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) of the Council of Europe to describe people who speak more than two languages. Plurilingualism refers to the repertoire of varieties of language which many individuals use; it includes the language variety referred to as mother tongue (MT) or first language (L1) and any number of other languages or varieties, consequently in some multilingual areas some individuals are monolingual and some are plurilingual. According to the *Council of Europe*, there is often a sense of “ordinary imbalance” implied when mentioning the term plurilingualism, this means that the language skills and use in the various languages vary significantly.

Plurilingual competence generally presents itself as unbalanced or uneven in one or more ways:

- *General proficiency may vary according to language.*
- *The profile of language ability may be different from one language to another (e.g. Excellent speaking ability in two languages but good writing ability in only one of them, and partly mastered written comprehension and limited oral ability in the third one.*

(Coste, Moore, and Zarate, 2009: 11)

1.2.2 European Context

The largest study done in Europe at this time was compiled by Eurydice (the information network on education in Europe), entitled *Foreign Language Teaching in Schools in Europe* (Eurydice, 2001), which looked at how many languages were taught in primary schools in 15 European countries. The data from this study provides vital information for language specialist across Europe; however, both Ireland and the UK did not take part in the study. The country who came out on top of the poll was Luxembourg, where 100% of primary school pupils learn

German as their FL, and 72% learn French as their FL2. In Norway, one foreign language is also compulsory, as 100% of students learn English as a foreign language (EFL).

In a multilingual area individuals may also be monolingual, speaking only their MT/L1 and others may be bilingual or plurilingual, thus it is an indicator of language and cultural diversity, and it does not necessarily denote proficiency. “Multilingualism refers here exclusively to the presence of several languages in a given space, independently of those who use them: for example, the fact that two languages are present in the same geographical area does not indicate whether inhabitants know both languages, or only one.” (European Commission: 2008: 17).

The EU’s policy has two main objectives; 1. to protect Europe's rich linguistic diversity, and 2. to promote language learning in Europe at all levels of the education system. The second part of the policy is promoting the learning of foreign languages and promoting the idea of plurilingualism, this will be further outlined in the next part of this chapter. Plurilingualism is derived from the term bilingualism. “Pluri” can however be understood as more than two. Plurilingualism is a concept developed in the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) of the *Council of Europe* (COE) to describe people who speak more than two languages.

Plurilingualism differs from multilingualism, which is the knowledge of a number of languages, or the coexistence of different languages in society. [...]the plurilingual approach emphasises the fact that an individual person’s experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples (whether learnt at school or college, or by direct experience), he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact. (CEFR, 2001:4)

Plurilingualism refers to the repertoire of varieties of language which one uses, it includes the language variety referred to as mother tongue (MT) or first language (L1) and any number of other languages or varieties, consequently in some multilingual areas some

individuals are monolingual and some are plurilingual. According to the COE (2011: 11) there is often a sense of “ordinary imbalance” implied when mentioning the term plurilingualism, this means that the language skills and use in the various languages vary significantly.

In terms of plurilingual competence, it usually presents itself as unbalanced or uneven in one or more ways. “General proficiency” and “the profile of language ability” may vary according to the different languages known and used by the learner (Coste, Moore and Zarate, 2009: 11). This also means that the key language competences (speaking, writing and listening skills) may also vary between the languages.

1.3 Focus and Objectives

The focus point of this study is looking at how languages are taught, viewed and valued in two school communities. These schools both kept on teaching a FL after the abolishment of the MLPSI. What is of particular interest is a study on language motivation and attitudes in an Irish context, as Ireland is a primarily English-speaking nation, due to English being the lingua-franca, and the participants’ mother tongue. What also provides a different context to other countries is the status of Irish in national language policy. Two schools will be explored in depth, and a case study approach will be used, and the two participant schools are one English-medium school (School 1) and a Gaelscoil/Irish-medium school (School 2). The schools in this project both teach French to fifth and sixth class pupils, and due to looking at how languages are promoted at primary school (PS) level, they made an ideal focus point for this research.

The research questions were developed through an ongoing process of this project and are as follows:

- How does Ireland compare to the rest of EU in terms of language provision?
- Since the abolishment of the MLPSI how has language provision at primary level changed?
- How is the teaching of both Irish and French carried out at the respective schools?
- What are the overall attitudes of the class teachers, pupils, and the wider school community towards languages in the school?

- Are the children intrinsically or /and extrinsically motivated to learn languages?
- Is the particular learning environment influential towards the attitude of the children in the two schools?

To achieve the aims of this study, i.e. answer the research questions above, the data will be collected mainly through interviews. The children will be interviewed in groups, and the teachers will be interviewed either individually or in pairs. A Grounded Theory approach will be utilised to manage and interpret the data. The participants consisted of a total of 39 pupils, from both the case study schools and four teachers, one of whom was a visiting teacher and was not affiliated to either of the schools in this study.

1.4 Conclusion

In this chapter a brief background to this subject area and an overview of this study was outlined. In particular, it looked at definitions of multilingualism and plurilingualism and how they relate to European policy and to this project. The current European language policy is relevant for this project, as Ireland committed to implementing the European policy on plurilingualism (ML+2), even though foreign languages are not a compulsory component at any level within the education system. The Government are currently trying to implement a framework for the teaching of languages at all levels.

Furthermore, a brief description of the study was outlined and aims and research questions within this study were summarised. The next chapter will look at the research in this area in greater detail, and the relevant literature in context of this study will be explored.

Chapter 2: Literature Review, Political Context and Implementation

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research previously carried out in this area and subsequently gives an overview of the European language policies and the framework, which provides the context for language learning in the education system. Previous studies in this area have been carried out at European and at a national level. Due to most of the current research carried out in his field being policy based, it is crucial that more research is conducted in this area. The political contexts, in both Europe and Ireland, form a major backdrop to this study. This is due to the policies in place in Europe and the lack of the implementation of these policies in Ireland, particularly at primary school level.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 European Context

The European Survey on Language Competence (ESLC) indicates that the association between students' perception of the usefulness of learning the tested languages and their language proficiency is positive (EURODICE, 2012). In the survey, students were asked to express their views on the utility of foreign languages for the following purposes: personal life, future education, and job prospects. The analysis of students' responses across Europe enabled for a comparison to be made between member states (EURODICE, 2012:103).

The profile of students' perception of the usefulness of foreign languages is rather similar across most European countries. The vast majority of students consider English to be useful for their future education and work, more than 80% for future work (except in France) and even more when it comes to getting a good job; showing that students value English for increasing career prospects. Conversely, English plays a less significant role in students' personal lives: only 50.4% of them claim that it is important for this purpose. Malta stands out

with around 82% of students who recognise the usefulness of English for personal life. This higher percentage is due to the status of English as the second official language of the country (EURODICE, 2012).

Belgium (German-speaking community), Luxembourg and Malta have the highest amounts of time allocated to languages in Europe, and this is due to the multilingual nature of their societies and education systems.

Research has been conducted in many countries in Europe, such as Germany (Krumm, 2011) and France (Hélot, 2003), looking at the language identities of language learners, so this is not an original concept and has not only been used with younger learners. Krumm looked specifically at the identity of migrants, and it provided the reader with very interesting findings on migrants in Germany. One such example was a Turkish respondent, who outlined her language identity. Turkish, being her MT, is what she associates with home life. She associates herself more with being Turkish than German, even though she grew up speaking German. She thinks in German but feels and loves in Turkish, so has a stronger sense of identity towards her own cultural roots (Krumm, 2011: 17). In relation to this study, there were also some pupils from different cultures interviewed and therefore is an interesting aspect to look at how their MT plays a key role in their language identity. Especially regarding Irish, as a heritage language, to what extent this has an influence on the children's views of the Irish language, in terms of attitude and motivation. In the Gaelscoil context, it is especially relevant due to the immersion context. Language is very often one of the key components of culture, which correspondents in various studies mention, (Krumm 2011). Also on the topic of Irish, in the Gaelscoil setting, language identity and culture are completely intertwined, and it is crucial to look at language in terms of both.

Language portraits work well with children, and they are a type of pedagogical tool, adapted from qualitative research to show language identity and attitude (Lawrence-Lightfoot

& Hoffman, 1997), so it is a relatively new research instrument. While it has been tested in various countries in Europe, no research on languages in Ireland has incorporated this exact type of data collection method to date.

Finally, as research shows, motivation is a key factor in successful learning, and high exposure to foreign languages facilitates the acquisition of language skills. Creating opportunities to improve student motivation and enable greater exposure to target languages can be challenging for some schools in some countries, but cross-border collaboration projects, as well as pupil and teacher exchanges, are certainly effective practices that could be further developed across Europe.

2.2.2 Irish Context

In Ireland, the *Green Paper* 1992 signalled the first significant change in the attitude of the Government to the European dimension in the Irish education system (DES, 1992).

“Introducing a European dimension into Irish education, means more than spreading a greater knowledge of European languages, vital though that is. It also involves a need to develop an awareness of the European heritage and values that we share in addition to our distinctive Irish identity and culture.”
(Department of Education and Science, 1992: 86).

This was a positive step, and it led to many discussions in the area and eventually to the implementation of the MLPSI. There has been some research in the area, but most research published in this area in Ireland is based on policy. Therefore it is important also to discuss this as part of the current research in the area, and this will be looked at in Chapter 2.2, *Political Context and Implementation*. In light of the study, the most relevant studies in the area have been carried out by Harris et al (2002; 2006; 2009a; 2009b).

There were two main critical phases of research conducted during the implementation of the different stages of the MLPSI. The first main evaluation of the Project was a two-year study (2000-2002), which was in-depth research and assessment of the pilot programme,

published by Harris & Conway in 2002, and it looked at similar aspects to this study. It involved detailed questionnaire data completed by teachers, parents and children and a specific study of 22 different classes. It provided a vast amount of crucial information. Among the topics covered in the report were: class organisation, support and in-service, teaching approaches and pupil's reactions, links to secondary level, contact with parents and parents' reaction, benefits of the Pilot projects to the school, teachers and pupils' reactions to the project, how successfully the aims were being promoted and a consideration of the possibility of extending the *Pilot Project* (Harris & Conway 2002: 24-119).

Language attitude and motivation featured to a great extent in this project and the findings in this study point to an area which has not been sufficiently researched after the abolishment of the MLPSI. When researching attitude and motivation, *The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery* (Gardner and Lambert 1972) was integrated into their surveys, and this was also taken into account in this study. On the other hand, this project is a qualitative one and is based on the data collected from interviews with teachers and also the interviews based on the language portraits compiled by the pupils, so there are also visual depictions of the individual children's language identities and attitude. What also is different in this study is that Irish is incorporated into it due to Irish being an L2¹ of all the children in this study. Overall the results of this study showed a slight variation of the attitude of teachers from different educational settings, for example in terms of if learning the ML was "favourable or otherwise". 100% of those interviewed from a school in a rural setting or disadvantaged area had no negative response to this question and had the highest percentage of favourable responses ranging from 96-100%. (Harris & Conway, 2002: 103) Overall there was a strong majority in favour, but the levels of unfavourable responses were higher in urban and non-disadvantaged schools. This is an interesting finding as DEIS and rural schools also often have fewer opportunities than some

¹ Irish is considered an L1 in the Gaelscoil school context, due to it being an immersion setting. In the case of this study, the children's L1 would not have been Irish or French.

of the bigger schools in urban settings, because of funding and also size. The study also noted that DEIS school teachers were more likely to adapt their teaching to the ML class, so this furthers the argument that teachers in schools in disadvantaged areas did have a more positive outlook to the learning of languages at primary level but also to the Pilot Project and MLPSI itself. (Harris & Conway, 2002: 77) Also one could argue that DEIS schools were in greater need of having access to ML classes due to the economic background of the children, and many parents unable to afford such classes. The study highlights many aspects needing improvement and also what impressed teachers about the Pilot Project. (Harris & Conway 2002: 107-110) Many of these suggestions were implemented with the introduction of the MLPSI, but not all were feasible, due to financial constraints.

Children were also tested on their language competence in the ML and the surveys provided an interesting data source, and this was done in the second year of this study. 84% of the children who responded to the questionnaire were glad that they were learning a modern language in primary school rather than waiting until secondary education.

“Results of language tests carried out on a representative sample of 22 classes indicated significant advancement in listening skills and initial competence in spoken language. Children in schools designated as disadvantaged also proved to be making significant progress. These children showed high levels of motivation and obtained levels of communicative competence on par with children in schools which were not designated as disadvantaged.” (NCCA, 2005: 22)

The second evaluation report, which was conducted in 2002- 2003 was concerned with the views of principals and class teachers whose classes are taught a ML by a visiting teacher. The second evaluation report was conducted by researchers at Trinity College Dublin but did not look at children’s own individual experiences with and attitudes towards languages. The views of the principals and teachers were for the main part positive as well.

In 2004 the MLPSI produced its own evaluation of the project titled; *Progress Report of the Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative 1998-2004*, which gave a brief review of its

Pilot Project phase, rationale, and the project aims. It set the Initiative as it is now known, firmly in a European context citing the Council of Europe's *White Paper on Education and Training* "Learning languages also has another important effect; experience shows when undertaken from a very early age, it is an important factor in doing well at school" (COE 1995:47 cited in DES 2005: 9). Early language learning has very positive learning outcomes and some of these benefits mentioned by the research participants will be explored in this study. There has also been a separate study on Irish, such as the one completed by Harris et al (2006) which looked at attitudes towards the Irish language amongst pupils and their language proficiency, but this was also survey-based, so most of the research in this area was mainly quantitative.

2.2.3 Conclusion

In summary, the studies mentioned above are the key ones in this field, but there have been other reports, publications and discussions on this topic in Ireland in the past two decades. There has been no research on foreign languages in primary schools of this kind since the abolishment of the MLPSI; hence there is a great need for research to be done in this area.

2.3 Political Context: Language Policy

2.3.1 Political Context in Europe

According to the European Commission (EC), Europe has 23 official languages. They are Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish.² The aim of the European Commission is to promote all of these languages, and it is vital for European citizens to be able to use more than one language.

The ability of all European citizens to understand and use a wide range of foreign languages (FLs) is central to the EU's effort to develop a more dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy to increase the number of available jobs and improve their quality and to ensure that European companies are able to compete advantageously in a global market. (European Commission, 2011: 7)

“Multilingualism policy is guided by the objectives set up by the European Council in Barcelona in 2002 to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from an early age” (European Commission, 2011, 4). The main policy used in the EU is *Multilingualism: An Asset for Europe and a Shared Commitment, 2008*³. This policy outlines the need for early language learning (ELL), a necessity for member countries to implement the strategy of mother tongue plus two languages (also known as trilingualism, having three languages), good language teaching practices, lifelong learning and the need for more languages to be taught and offered to pupils at second level. “In nearly half of the member states, students still do not have the opportunity to study two languages during compulsory schooling.” (COE, A, 2008: 10).

This policy has two main aims, one being political/cultural, and the other being economical. Politically, the EU seeks to preserve linguistic diversity among EU citizens. It is not just a

² http://www.europa.eu/abc/european_countries/languages/index_en.htm (accessed on 21/10/2015)

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0566:FIN:EN:PDF> (accessed on 12/06/2016)

political strategy but an essential human right, which every individual is entitled to. Linguistic diversity, therefore, is not only enshrined in *Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights*: "The Union respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity" but also "It shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced." (Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union 2008: 17).

The EC outlines priorities in this area which include:

- *Helping EU countries develop new educational tools to ensure that school-leavers have better language skills.*
- *Gathering data to monitor progress in language teaching and learning*
- *To encourage mastery of more than one language as a way of improving job prospects and enabling people to move around within the EU.*
- *Rewarding innovation in the language teaching and learning.* (European Commission, 2008)⁴

One way to implement this is not to have one common language, for there to be a need for plurilingual citizens. The EU is not just in favour of citizens learning the main European languages German, English, French and Spanish, but minority languages such as Slovak, Finnish, and Irish. They aspire to create a sense of community and promote linguistic diversity and preserve the cultural differences within Europe. The EC also ascertains that member states should be key decision makers in developing their own country's language policy. One of the key aims in the *Action Plan 2004-2006*⁵ and *2020 Strategic Framework*⁶ is to keep the individual state's own culture and traditions, which creates greater cultural awareness and acceptance and in doing so keeps the cultural uniqueness of all countries and sees a place for all languages within Europe. The EU views all languages as being important, as it aims to promote diversity among citizens, and if the EU members had a common language, this would go against Europe's main objectives. For instance, Irish is an official language of the EU

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/strategic-framework/index_en.htm (accessed on 15/06/2015)

⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:c11068> (accessed on 15/05/2015)

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm (accessed on 13/04/2015)

(however not one of the main working languages of the EU), even though very few people speak the language on a day to day basis.

Economically, the EU seeks to enhance the linguistic diversity of Europe, for prosperity. Employment opportunities for plurilingual citizen are enhanced, and this is required to position European countries on the global market. Due to the linguistic diversity of Europe itself, however, it also needs to promote plurilingualism so that EU countries can endorse their country and products and services to others within the EU. Generally, as English is known as the world's international language (*lingua franca*), English is seen as having greater importance than some of the other languages. Therefore it is the most widely promoted L2 within Europe. English is also the L1 in three of its member states, England, Malta, and Ireland. In many countries such as Germany, English is introduced to pupils at a very early age, and there are an increasing number of German-English bilingual primary schools and Kindergartens in cities such as Berlin.

The 2008 Council resolution on a European Strategy for Multilingualism endorses the policy of MT+2 (trilingualism), i.e. three languages and focuses in particular on lifelong learning competitiveness, mobility, and employability. This is a strategy the EU has put in place for all countries, which signed up to the agreement, but a great deal of the decision making, on how they will achieve this, is left up to the individual countries. "Member states are key decision makers" (COE, 2008a: 4). The policy does promote ELL but it does not give any guidelines regarding when countries should introduce the foreign language and what curriculum and assessment should be established is left up to the individual country. This is why the national teaching practices differ so greatly from country to country within the EU, but a second language usually English is introduced when children are in primary school.

ELL is a key aspect for the success of this policy, which the EU has recognised. The education and training (ET) 2020 strategic framework by the EU notes this 2020 Strategy

drives language learning as a priority concern in Europe and education policies. In 2009, the EC set up a group of national experts from 28 countries, which included Ireland.⁷

The team set up two sub-groups on the following themes: 1. “early teaching of a second/foreign language” and 2. “early teaching of the language of instruction and a second language to children with a minority or migrant background” (European Commission, 2011: 5).

As mentioned previously, Ireland has a proven record in ELL, concerning Irish, which is outlined in the next part, but more could also be done with regard to achieving the EU objectives.

2.3.2 European Policy in Ireland

Ireland has signed up to the European policy of mother tongue, MT+2, which is a starting point; nevertheless, the Irish government and policy implementers need to commit more to implementing this, as they do introduce foreign languages later to learners than their European counterparts. Ireland could improve its record of teaching foreign languages by teaching them at primary school and creating a policy for the same. Also, there is a restriction on the number of languages taught in Irish schools, French, German, and Spanish being the most common foreign languages taught at second level. Irish is included in the MT+2, and most pupils learn only one FL as well as Irish for their Leaving Cert. To what extent Ireland is implementing the European policy could be debatable, on the ground of whether Irish can be defined as a FL. To the majority of learners, it is their L2, and one could argue that all additional languages are learnt in a similar way, the only thing which differs is the curriculum and content taught, but

⁷ List of countries involved: Austria, Belgium (French community and Flanders), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, United Kingdom (England and Scotland), Norway, Turkey, Switzerland. (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:119:0002:0010:EN:PDF> accessed on 12/02/2015)

also how individual teachers carry out the classes. However in one sense Irish is the heritage language and Ireland's first official language, and it is a minority language within the Irish state. It is not essential to be able to communicate in Irish fluently, to be understood by others, as every person living in the Gaeltacht is bilingual can speak English. The motives for learning Irish are very different to learning a FL, which could include preserving the Irish heritage, maintaining a sense of *Irishness*, so there is an entirely different attitude towards why people learn Irish than other languages. Irish is a vital language nevertheless but for different reasons than FLs.

Europe's main reason for their goal of plurilingualism, other than the crucial issue of human rights, is employability and mobility for all EU citizens. Irish does not achieve this aim in the case of just Irish. There are jobs people need Irish for; however, there are not many job prospects directly for people, who are fluent Irish speakers. Some of these jobs include those in the education sector, government, civil service, translation, and media, but only within the Irish state itself. Irish, in this case, does not increase chances for mobility within Europe, but it does have a major role in maintaining the Irish cultural heritage and tradition. What it does achieve is it preserves the linguistic diversity of Ireland's cultural heritage. Irish has an official status as an EU language, which does portray that the EU is in favour of Irish being taught in the school system here, to preserve cultural the heritage, so in one sense Ireland is to some degree achieving this aspect of the policy.

According to Article 8 of the Irish Constitution, *Bunracht Na hÉireann 1937* makes the following affirmation:

1. "The Irish language as a national language is the first official language.
2. The English language is recognised as the second official language."

(Ó Laoire cited in Kaplan and Baldauf, 2008: 10).

However, this is slightly misleading as about 95% of the population speak English as their first language (L1), and the majority of the population would not speak Irish fluently. Irish is spoken in Gaeltacht areas and is taught at both primary and second level. Ireland has a long tradition of teaching languages; the Irish Government's first attempts at implementing a policy were part of a strategy to revive the Irish language between 1933 and 1960. "The overall result of this language strategy was an increase in the ratio of Irish speakers outside the Gaeltacht and a decrease in the number of indigenous Irish speakers" (Ó Laoire cited in Kaplan and Baldauf, 2008: 10).

In the Constitution, Irish is given an essential status for cultural reasons, and not much importance has been given to English and other languages. "There has never been an official language policy in the Irish state as regards the English language" (Ó Laoire cited in Kaplan and Baldauf, 2008: 11).

The strategy document set out by the *Royal Irish Academy* (RIA) has three main aims: 1. to provide an overview of the position of languages in education in Ireland today, 2. to outline the challenges facing Ireland in its development as a multilingual society, particularly in relation to education, and 3. to make recommendations, in relation to language education and more broadly, which seek to meet these challenges and enhance Ireland's position within an increasingly multilingual global economy (RIA, 2011: 1).

In summary, the RIA recommends that Ireland develop a strategy for languages for very sound economic and cultural reasons (RIA, 2011: 5). They additionally outline, that it is crucial for Ireland to develop a national strategy which addresses all aspects of language education. Even though the RIA recommended that the MLPSI be extended, the initiative was cut shortly after the release of this publication. This is important to promote Ireland within the EU market. Despite there being no national language policies for the teaching of FLs in Ireland, there is a curriculum and other guidelines available for the teaching. There is a

stipulation requirement at SL, but this has undergone change. “One of the biggest threats facing language education in Ireland is the gradual erosion of the NUI third-language matriculation requirement. The removal of the third-language requirement would have serious consequences for the sustainability of languages at all levels, a situation which would ultimately undermine Ireland’s status and competitiveness in global terms” (RIA, 2011: 7). This is an important issue to mention, as foreign languages are becoming less important at SL in Ireland, as there is less of a need to learn a FL.

In Ireland, the *National Council for Curriculum and Assessment* (NCCA) is responsible for establishing the curriculum at primary and second level. At primary level foreign languages are not compulsory, but there is also a draft curriculum available to teachers, compiled by the NCCA, available to assist teachers if they decide to teach a language. This consists of the aims of the programme, different topics and vocabulary to be covered and sample lesson plans, which could be adapted in the classroom.

Ireland has dramatically changed since the beginning of the 1990s, and its population is more diverse now. It is estimated that about 200 languages are used every day in Ireland. These include the indigenous languages of Irish, English, Irish and Sign Language (DES, 2014:4). Unless a specific framework and policies are put into practice in Ireland might make the same mistakes which other European countries made in the past. In Germany for example, many Turks came over to Germany in the 1970’s due to a shortage of workers. They worked as “Gastarbeiter” which leads us to believe that these migrant workers went over to Germany for a short period of time to work, yet this did not happen, and many of these migrant workers stayed and got jobs in Germany. Many second and third generation migrants are still living in Germany and are attending German schools and also are competing with Germans for employment in the marketplace. The German language policy failed to integrate these migrants (Crutchfield, 2008: 8). Such problems which arise from this type of marginalisation may be

political or economic, and these include immigrants feeling isolated and this could lead to violence and other social problems but also a lack of job prospects because the citizens' language competency is not sufficient to be able to carry out the work necessary. Ireland has had an increase in foreign nationals migrating here in the past few decades. According to the 2006 census, more than 10% of the population residing in Ireland are not Irish (CSO, 2007:10). Many of these foreign nationals came predominately from Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Latvia, and China. Ireland has not created a language policy to include these migrants into society.

In Ireland, there are many jobs available for plurilingual citizens and many companies cannot find native Irish workers to fill these positions. Many workers are coming in from abroad to fill these positions, even though these some of these foreign languages are offered at second and third level here. The RIA believes Ireland should strive for the status of a bilingual country, with a range of language resources which extend beyond the two native languages (Ó Dochartaigh & Broderick 2006: 1). The RIA (2011) also realizes that Ireland cannot afford to focus just on its two native languages.

Language promotion is a fundamental component in improving the uptake of languages. There are signs though that this is about to change and excellent examples of good practice in the promotion of languages are emerging. "As part of the Government's Action Plan for Jobs 2014, the DES has committed itself to develop and publish a foreign languages strategy mindful, not only of the Language Education Policy Profile (2008) but of other circumstances that have evolved, particularly in the last decade." (DES, 2014: 1). This includes the introduction of languages and intercultural education at preschool level, which has not been fully implemented yet, but it is progress nonetheless.⁸

⁸Eurydice, *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*, 2009, <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/eurydice/documents/098EN.pdf>. Referred to in Council of the European Union (2011), *European strategic framework for Education and Training (ET 2020) - Language learning at pre-primary school level : making it efficient and sustainable - A policy handbook*, p.7. (accessed on 23/11/2015)

The early years (0 to 6 years) are a crucial time in a child's language formation. This is the time when children are first learning about languages and how and when to use them. Opening children's minds to multilingualism and different cultures from an early age can be an enriching experience for children and result in a number of benefits. These include the enhancement of competences such as comprehension, expression, communication and problem-solving, thereby enabling children to interact successfully with peers and adults. (DES, 2014: 8)

At primary school level, in line with the provisions of the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy* (2011)⁹, the focus is on English and Irish as either first or second languages and on Maths and more time is being devoted to these core curricular areas. As mentioned previously it is unfeasible, due to time constraints and funding, to introduce a modern European language at primary level on a national level, so as already mentioned primary schools may offer an additional modern language outside of the normal school day or in the discretionary time.

At post-primary level, 70% of pupils learn a foreign language. (DES, 2014: 8) “While Irish and English are compulsory, no other language is compulsory at Junior Certificate level. At Leaving Certificate level, Irish is compulsory, but no other language is required, except in the case of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied” (RIA, 2011: 2). Nonetheless many pupils still study a language due to specific University requirements for many courses.¹⁰ The Junior Certificate has also undergone reform. “The implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle will open up new opportunities for teaching and learning other foreign languages” (DES, 2014: 9). It will allow for short courses in another language and funding has been provided for this by the *Post-Primary Language Initiative* (PPLI).¹¹

⁹ DES, Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020

¹⁰ Irish, English and a third language (foreign or Classical) are normally required for matriculation in the Universities which constitute the NUI.

¹¹ The Post-Primary Languages Initiative (PPLI), established in 2000 by the Department of Education and Skills to diversify the range of languages at second level, has highlighted significant challenges associated with the introduction of new languages to the education system. (DES, 2014: 9)

Concerning is the fact, that the changing cultural and linguistic environment in Ireland is taking place against a backdrop of a decrease in the uptake of languages at third level, and a decrease in the learning of languages to Leaving Cert level. (RIA, 2006: 2) The PPLI and *GRADireland* are striving to promote language and increase the uptake of students going on to study them. It is vital not only are they promoted at all levels of education but that some policy is put into place. The RIA suggests that a national advisory board (NAB) needs to be established to liaise with language professionals and other stakeholders. Such a board would be involved in policy development and planning; to oversee and initiate research done on languages and foster awareness of the economic benefits that plurilingualism brings (RIA, 2011). The RIA (2011) mention aspects which need to be improved at primary level for Ireland to achieve the aims set out by the Barcelona Agreement. These include: 1. an extension of the MLPSI, which was since abolished, and 2. for culture and languages of the school's immigrant community to be taught on an extra-curricular basis (RIA, 2011: 11). This is done in some schools already but needs to be extended to all schools. Other recommendations were made for post-primary, including compulsory foreign language education, third level and on a broader national level which are outlined in their languages strategy (RIA, 2011: 12-14).

Many countries have developed a comprehensive framework for promoting linguistic diversity, although, very few have well integrated and balanced policies. Ireland can study such policies and learn from the developments made by other countries; still, foreign languages are not a compulsory part of any stage of the education system.

2.3.3 Specific Irish Examples

There are specific challenges with how languages are taught in Ireland. Ireland is the only country in the EU apart from Scotland where learning a foreign language is not a compulsory subject. It is not seen as important as it in other EU countries, partly because English is the

lingua franca. Also concerning is that the government took funding from the MLPSI in 2012, which greatly intensifies the need to make further changes at primary level. Irish and English are the only languages taught at PS level, and foreign languages are introduced at secondary school. The *Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation* argues that “the main challenge for Ireland this to become a truly multilingual society, where the ability to learn and use two or more languages is taken for granted and fostered at every stage of the education system and through lifelong education” (COE & DES, 2005-2007: 51). One way to achieve this is to extend the MLPSI to more schools (all if possible) and younger classes. Teachers, parents and principals were positive about extending the project at the time, which makes it difficult to understand that the project was cut. According to Harris & O’ Leary (2009a: 14), 95.1% of principals and 88.7% of teachers were for extending the project. Due to a lack of funding, it was very difficult to implement. If modules in languages were offered more extensively to trainee teachers during their initial teacher education (ITE), there would have been less of a need for visiting teachers, and the cost of such an initiative would have been minimal, and the project could have been extended to more schools. However, there have not been that many extensive studies on the teaching of languages in Ireland to date, so there are not as many statistics available as there is for other countries in the EU.

Also the number of foreign nationals in schools impacts on how languages are viewed within schools. Most schools are multilingual in some way, however for schools to actually promote plurilingualism among pupils, the school needs to recognise diversity among the children and strive to promote plurilingualism by teaching languages and multicultural awareness.

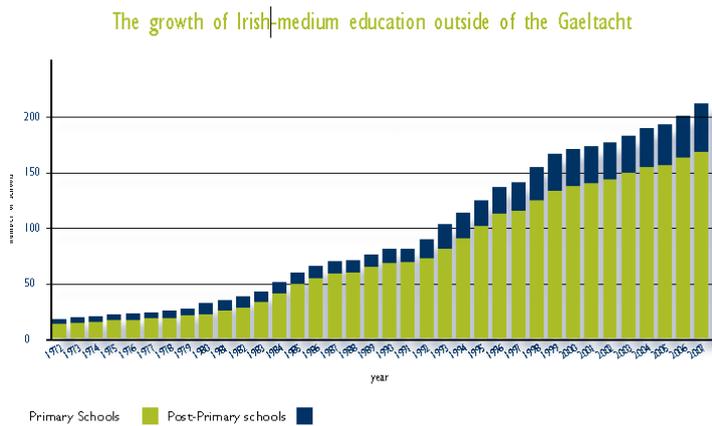
It could be argued that the Gaelscoil model of schooling could be seen as being more efficient in promoting language competency than its English medium counterparts, with good reason, as there is more time devoted to language in the school day. Genesse (1987) also points out that an immersion setting has many learning benefits, In the case of Gaelscoileanna, Irish is

introduced as the language of communication within the school; so more time is dedicated to learning a second language. Some of the documented advantages of immersion Gaelscoil education include: 1. *(that it is) easier to learn a third and fourth language*, 2. *bilingualism (the ability to speak two languages fluently)*, 3. *broader exposure to and appreciation of the value of various cultures (enculturation), deeper multi-culturalism, greater tolerance and less racism*, 4. *thinking benefits (creativity, sensitivity to communication)*, and 5. *security in identity*. (Gaelscoileanna Teo, 2009: 16)¹²

These advantages indicate that in Gaelscoileanna, pupils foster a more positive attitude to language learning than their English counterparts; this project does not set out to prove these benefits but consideration needs to be given to this point when data is being analysed, due to a Gaelscoil being one of the case studies in this project. Since 1972 there has been a significant amount of state funding going into Irish-medium education and an increase in the number of Gaelscoileanna being established, particularly at primary level. The organisation *Gaelscoileanna TEO* was founded in 1973 to assist in the creation of all-Irish schools and is state funded. Its primary aim is “to develop, facilitate and encourage Irish-medium education at the primary and post-primary level throughout the country”¹³ This is a positive step for the Irish language, but also for the overall education of the pupils, previously outlined in the benefits of Gaelscoil education.

¹²<http://www.gaelscoileanna.ie/> (accessed on 15/02/2016)

Figure 1: The Growth of Irish-Medium Education



(Gael scoileanna Teo, 2009: 4)

2.3.4 Introduction to MLPSI

The MLPSI was an initiative set up by the government to promote and teach languages at primary school level in Ireland. It began as a pilot project and then gradually more schools were afforded the opportunity to start the initiative, but due to financial constraints of the government and a fear of introducing another subject into an already overloaded curriculum by educators and policy specialists, it never became a compulsory competence of primary schooling. This initiative underwent various stages during the implementation of the project:

Phase 1: *Pilot Project for Modern Languages in the Primary School.*

Phase 2: Development of the *Modern Languages in the Primary School Curriculum 1999.*

Phase 3: *Modern Languages in the Primary School Initiative (MLPSI) 2001-2012.*

Phase 4: Abolishment of the MLPSI in June 2012.

2.3.4.1 Phase 1: *Pilot Project for Modern Languages in Primary Schools*

The *Pilot Project for Modern Languages in Primary Schools* was launched in 1998. In speaking about this project Michael “[...] this very exciting project, which will foster positive attitudes to language learning through the use of active learning approaches including drama, songs, and games and by promoting an awareness of being European among the pupils” (Micheál Martin, Minister for Education and Science cited in MLPSI: 2011). There was keen interest in the project, but initially, only 270 out of 1,300 applicant schools were selected, due

to resource restrictions (MLPSI, 2011: 5). The schools were chosen to represent the overall primary school profile in Ireland, so the schools involved in the pilot project were ranging from small rural schools to large urban schools, Gaelscoileanna both in the Gaeltacht and non-Gaeltacht areas, special schools, and DEIS¹⁴ schools. This gave all pupils regardless of their economic or educational background equal status in terms of opportunity to learn a foreign language, and this was the greatest achievement of the MLPSI. The pilot project was a success in the schools taking part. It was not the beginning of teaching modern languages at primary level in Ireland, as some schools offered this for a fee before the introduction of the project. The Pilot Project increased access to foreign language instruction and also due to the funding provided to schools many children, who before the project would not have had access to foreign language instruction, were now able to learn a foreign language.

2.3.4.2 Phase 2: Development of the *Modern Languages in the Primary School Curriculum* 1999

The pilot project changed its name in 2001 to the MLPSI. By then the MLPSI had devised a curriculum, which was to be used when carrying out ML instruction in the classroom.

The original aims of the MLPSI were:

- *To foster positive attitudes towards language learning.*
- *To ensure that greater numbers of children were able to access modern languages in primary level.*
- *To promote diversification in the languages taught at primary level.*
- *To establish links between primary and post-primary school in the area of modern language teaching. (MLPSI, 2012: 5).*

Fostering a positive attitude to language learning was the main aim set out by the NCCA. In an overloaded curriculum not very much time could be devoted to foreign language

¹⁴ Deis is the Irish word for opportunity. DEIS stand for *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools*. <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/DEIS-Delivering-Equality-of-Opportunity-in-Schools/> (accessed on 17/11/2015)

instruction, so less emphasis was given to the foreign languages than to curricular subjects. New aims were added after the pilot project, including to adopt a “cross-curricular approach to language teaching” and to create a “greater intercultural awareness” (MLPSI, 2008: 23)

2.3.4.3 Phase 3: MLPSI

The MLPSI was an initiative which aimed to introduce MLs to children in primary school, and it ran from 2002-2012. It involved the teaching of French, Spanish, German and Italian to children in fifth and sixth class in primary schools across the country. It essentially was an improved extension of the pilot project, as it was implemented in more schools. The new aims, which were mentioned above were adapted, the curriculum was fully implemented, and new resources were developed.

Having been initially set up by the *Department of Education and Science*, currently known as the *Department of Education and Skills* (DES), as a small pilot project in 1998, it grew substantially. By 2012, there were more than 500 schools involved in the initiative, which teach one of the languages mentioned above to fifth and sixth class pupils for 90 minutes per week.

The MLPSI was undoubtedly a step towards the EU aim of MT+2 for all citizens, but the MLPSI needed to be extended and implemented in more schools and also throughout the different classes in the primary school. In comparison to other countries in the EU, 90 minutes a week was very little time to be spending on language teaching per week, and many schools were not allocating the full 90 minutes to the ML (MLPSI, 2012). There also need to be more links between primary and secondary school level. Cutbacks were made regarding the MLPSI and the funding for this initiative has been taken away.

2.3.4.4 Phase 4: Abolishment of the MLPSI

In December 2011 the Irish Government announced that from June 2012 the budget for foreign language instruction would be taken away from the MLPSI. This led to the MLPSI announcing a total abolishment of the initiative, due to lack of funding. The cost of the initiative covered by the Government came to two million Euro per annum. This cost included the cost of travelling teachers which were subsidised by the initiative. No funding has been available since the abolishment to cover the cost of visiting teachers; therefore there is an increasing need for class teachers to have language training as part of their degree, so they can teach languages at no additional cost to school, in order for this initiative to be re-established in any form. The abolishment of the MLPSI in 2012 led to many schools losing their language teacher or for the school just to cancel the initiative. It is unclear, due to lack of figures, how many primary schools are currently teaching a foreign language, due to it being an individual undertaking by schools.

As it is there are not enough graduates who would be able and willing to teach a language to their class and there are many travelling language teachers. So in a sense if the European aims are to be achieved, there needs to be a reform in initial teacher training (ITE). A change has already happened to some extent, whereby the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree in Primary Teaching has changed from a three to a four year course, with an option of a semester abroad. There is also an option of studying a language and language pedagogy, but

even before the change students had the option of studying a language and also even to degree level. B.Ed. graduates with a degree in French or German Studies had a huge advantage over other graduates in obtaining jobs abroad, thus increasing their employability. Whether these reforms will eventually improve the situation is still unknown, but it is doubtful, as the language component is not a compulsory element of ITE and most trainee teachers do not opt to take these modules. Before the change to the new B.Ed. over 50% of students opted study a foreign language as part of their degree in Mary Immaculate College. All of these students studied at least two modules in either French or German Studies. About 15% of B.Ed. students who graduated in 2014 went on to obtain a full degree in either French or German Studies. For the first four year B.Ed. cohort, the number of students taking a foreign language component decreased to less than half of this. Many of these students only studied one module, and none of these students were able to study the FL to degree level. As well as a language competency change there has been a decline in uptake and this can be seen as a step back in terms of achieving the recommendations set out by the RIA in 2008. The B.Ed. degree is a programme of choice and therefore language modules are not compulsory. Students do not get a chance to study the language to degree level and this might impact on the placements they are able to apply for when going abroad, so further hinders graduates' chances of going abroad. A total of 13 students took the optional placement abroad in Mary Immaculate College last year, and none of these went to a French speaking country and some went to Austria, but these were not students who studied modules in German studies. In the MLPSI schools 1.5 hours a week was allocated to teaching the ML, which has either now been taken away or has been cut somewhat¹⁵; a lot of the time it is not the class teacher who teaches the language, and so sometimes the class teacher is unable to use the ML outside the language class and integrate it

¹⁵ Time allocated to the teaching of the language has been decreased somewhat in some cases and this was the case in both schools which are case studies in this project. One reason for this is if they have a visiting teacher, schools are unable to fund the full hour of language instruction but also due to curriculum overload schools find it difficult to allocate the time to the language as well.

with other subjects and therefore it is difficult to integrate the language into other areas of the curriculum.

On the other hand, schools, which are still offering a third language could be regarded as progress in achieving the EU's aim for promoting linguistic and cultural diversity. These schools are doing better in the teaching of foreign languages than schools not offering any foreign language instruction. It is a positive step towards the goal of European trilingualism for all citizens set out by the COE and this project will look at how two different schools carry it out. Since the abolishment of the MLPSI, schools have had to find the funding themselves for teaching the language, but also any supports¹⁶ that were there, are not currently available to schools. One could argue that the MLPSI was in itself not entirely successful at a national level, but it was a success within the schools it was taught in to some extent and it was a step towards implementing European policy. Less than a third of class teachers, who were implementing the MLPSI, gave the recommended time of 1.5 hours of language instruction or more per week, which means two thirds of schools were not achieving this target. This is according to the study carried out by Harris and Conway in 2002. No other external funding was sourced, but some schools continued the initiative and funded it internally, and two of these schools will be the focus point of this study.

The curriculum being followed in primary schools is generally more learner-centred and less exam-orientated than secondary level in Ireland, so looking at the primary level curriculum would show better potential in terms of implementing best practice for language learners. The level of fluency of Irish is also a concern, and this aspect does need looking at in the primary sector because after eight years learning a language, the pupils' language competency should be quite high. Pupils should have more than just basic Irish when starting secondary level.

¹⁶ Supports included training courses, online resources and funding. (MLPSI, 2012)

The MLPSI schools introduced children in 5th and 6th class to a ML, such as French/German/Spanish, however the time allocated to this was less than two hours a week. Due to the fact plurilingualism also encompasses intercultural awareness and positive attitudes, primary schools and especially immersion schools (Gaelscoileanna) in Ireland would definitely be seen as attempting to promote plurilingualism if they introduce a third language, due to teaching both Irish and another FL.

2.4 Conclusion

The studies mentioned in this chapter are of vital importance to this study, and this research will add to and complement the research already undertaken in this field. Given the current language situation in Ireland research also needed to be completed in this area. Much of the research is out of date; no longer are relevant and newer sources mainly in the field of policy development and implementation. Policy and how language instruction is carried out thus forms one vital competent in this study. The language context, including the language policies outlined above and so specifically the individual school context plays a vital role also in fostering positive attitudes and motivating learners, and the framework of this study, the two different language settings provide two individualistic case studies for investigation. In both of the case studies the specific status of language within these institutions will be examined. Key areas which will be looked at will be the schools' language policies, amount of time allocated to language and how the language instruction is carried out.

Chapter 3: Motivation in Language Learning

3.1 Introduction

According to the MLPSI Curriculum, attitudes and motivation play key roles in language acquisition and learning (NCCA, 2001: 5). In motivational psychology, “*motives*” stem from *human mental processes*, and in social psychology, motivation is looked at in a “broader social and intrapersonal context”, which is reflected by the learners' attitudes towards the situation (Dörnyei, 2001: 19).

In a general sense, motivation can be defined as the dynamically changing, cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out. (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998: 65)

The concept of motivation is used here to explain the extent to which and why learners invest their time, attention and effort in a variety of pursuits. It does not always remain constant and there are different driving forces behind it and motivation is looked at in a motivational psychological perspective. Motivation cannot be looked without looking attitudes. Attitude is “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour.” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1995:459) In order to be truly motivated to learn a language, a positive attitude towards the language and/or learning situation is essential. In terms of language attitude, this includes a positive outlook towards the language itself and the learning environment, but towards the language community. Ryan defines language attitudes as “any affective, cognitive or behavioural index of evaluative reactions toward language varieties of people”. (Ryan et al, 1982:7)¹⁷ Attitude is closely linked to language motivation in particular, so motivation will also be looked at in relation to this broader social and interpersonal context.

¹⁷ <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:518098/FULLTEXT01.pdf> (accessed on 13/01/2016)

3.2 Motivation Theories

Theorists believe that the mastery of a second language is not solely based on educational prospects, it is recognised as a “deeply social event that requires the incorporation of a wide range of elements of the second language culture” (Dörnyei, 2001a:46). This fundamental view has been the basis of many diverse theories and approaches in the field of motivation and second language learning and acquisition. The most widely researched motivation theory was proposed by Robert Gardner, who utilizes the link between motivation and orientation and how they merge to create a goal in the area of second language learning.

Beck (2004: 3) states that the term motivation is related to movement and is derived from the Latin verb “movere”, which means to move. Motivation is concerned with people’s movements and driving forces behind them. These actions could also be classified as behaviours. This sets out to clarify, why people engage in particular tasks, and explains why a person would be more motivated to do one task over another. For instance, in relation to language learning, the learner, choosing to speak the L2 over the L1, in situations where both languages are understood, or learners taking part in tasks, which they enjoy and are motivated by, rather than tasks they find unchallenging or boring. “Motivation is defined as the internal state that arouses directs and maintains behaviour” (Woolfolk, 2013: 430). Santrock also concurs with these definitions, that motivation is the process that *energises, directs* and *sustains* behaviour (2011: 438). According to Santrock, when learners are truly motivated, they react in a specific way and their actions become *energised, directed* and *sustained*.

Motivation can additionally be defined as a process that is the driving force behind goal-orientated behaviour. According to Gardner, motivation is a term referred to in second language teaching to explain achievement in language learning and it is, as mentioned previously, closely related to attitude. It is of vital importance in learning contexts, such as those in this case studies that learners have a positive attitude in order to be motivated to learn.

Motivation in the current context refers to the combination of efforts and desire to achieve the goal of learning the language, plus positive attitudes towards learning the language (Gardner, 1985: 10).

Within the context of motivation in language learning, how the language is taught is one factor in acquisition, attitude and achievement, yet, “it all depends on how the second language is taught is not sufficient because some students of languages develop high-level skills relatively easily while others following the same pedagogic procedures show little or no progress” (Gardner & Lambert, 1972: 1). In this study, how languages are taught, is of little or minor significance in the analysis of the data. Motivation is a very individualistic, personal concept and differs significantly among individuals, who are given the same opportunities. It is a difficult concept to define because it is such a multifaceted concept, and the wide range of attitudes and levels of motivation is common place in all classroom settings, such as those employed as cases studies in this study. There are many theories, which offer different perspectives on how to interpret this and this will be explained in this section of this chapter.

3.2.1 Gardner’s Theory

According to Gardner, two different types of orientation correspond with language motivation, *instrumental orientation* and *integrative orientation*. *Instrumental orientation*, also known as extrinsic motivation, is when the purpose of language learning reflects the “utilitarian value of linguistic achievement,” such as a promotion, for academic purposes [...] (Gardner and Lambert, 1972: 3). The learner sees the language as a means to an end. *Integrative orientation* (also known as intrinsic motivation) is based on a positive attitude and enjoyment towards language learning and a curiosity about learning more about the *cultural community*. (Gardner and Lambert, 1972: 3). It is seen as the “willingness to be like valued members of a language community” (Gardner and Lambert, 1972: 271). Gardner believes that this orientation is

fundamental in stimulating motivation, and it needs to be present within the learner when aiming towards a specific target. His theory has three distinct areas which include, *The Integrative Motive*, *The Socio-Educational Model*, and *The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery* (which is “still the only published standardised test in regard to L2 motivation”) (Dörnyei, 2001a: 49). The two principal components of this theory are *The Integrative Motive* and *Socio-Economic Model*, and these will be outlined below.

3.2.2 Integrative Motive

According to Dörnyei (2001a: 48), the *Integrative Motive* is the most sophisticated and researched aspect of Gardner’s motivation theory, which can be defined as a “motivation to learn a second language because of positive feelings toward the community that speaks the language” (Gardner, 1985: 82-83). MacIntyre states this motive is made up of three different components, 1. *Integrativeness* 2. *Attitudes towards the learning situation* and 3. *Motivation* (cited in Peter Robinson, 2002: 48). After a large-scale study in Hungary, Dörnyei and Clément (2001: 49) found integrativeness to be “the most powerful general component of the participants” generalised language-related affective disposition, determining language choice and the general level of effort the students intended to invest in the learning process’ (Dörnyei, 2001b: 51). The common misinterpretation of this theory is that it only consists of a mere contrast between integrative and instrumental motivation. “The two orientations function merely as motivational antecedents that help to arouse motivation and direct it towards a set of goals, either with a strong interpersonal quality (integrative) or a strong practical quality (instrumental)” (Dörnyei, 1998: 123).

The *Integrative Motive* is unquestionably not merely based on the integrative/instrumental motivation model, but these only exist regarding orientation (goal level) and are not key motivation components in themselves. Individual orientations may also

not just be integrative or instrumental, but a combination of both and in the context of this study. An expected outcome would be that both of these orientations will be present in the data of some individual participants, but there will be a broad range of motivation level and various factors will impact upon them. While looking at motivation in this manner, the *Socio-Education Model* also needs to be incorporated, to assure that an accurate outcome is achieved.

3.2.3 Socio-Educational Model

The socio-educational model proposes that there are four distinct aspects in acquiring a second language and are representative of individual differences in ability and motivation. These aspects include 1.*antecedent factors*, 2. *Individual differences* 3.*language acquisition context* and 4.*learning outcomes*. (Lovato, 2011: 2).

Gardner suggests that this model has the capability to “explain and account of phenomena which have been demonstrated” and “to provide suggestions for further investigations, to raise new questions, to promote further developments and open new horizons.” (1985: 166). In the context of this case study project into the language attitudes of pupils, it is vital to take the four elements of the *Socio-Educational Model* into consideration. In the context of this study the different educational contexts of both the individual cast studies is explicitly clear, and of vital importance to note, as the children in both schools are from different linguistic backgrounds and this is the most noticeable difference between the learning context of two schools. There will be, as in any study some individual differences, which also will be taken into consideration when interpreting the data.

3.3 Conclusion

In terms of language motivation, Dörnyei and Gardner portray the profound impact that 1. student attitudes, 2. society, and 3. classroom environment have on L2 motivation. There have been numerous theories created to understand the concept of motivation and its diverse forms. Regardless of whether the orientation is instrumental and integrative, or both, it is evident that motivation is crucial in second language achievement, and it determines one's success or failure. "If the students are motivated to learn the language, they will", regardless of how the language is taught (Gardner, 1985: 10). For this study, both the *Integrative Motive* and *Socio-Economical Model* will be used as means of interpreting the data. Motivation will be looked at regarding intrinsic and extrinsic motives and incorporating the three components of the *Integrative Motive*. This also cannot be considered in isolation but with incorporating the *Socio-Economical Model* to explain variations in the data.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods utilised to answer the research questions discussed in Chapter 1. The questions were formulated initially on the basis of the Literature Review, as well as, the researcher's own interest area. Previous training as a primary school teacher also contributed to the investigator's interest and knowledge of the phenomenon. It also endeavours to assure that appropriate data collection techniques and procedures were adhered to and that the research was undertaken using best practice, regarding how best to answer the research questions.

4.2 Theoretical Framework of the Study

4.2.1 Qualitative Inquiry

For this study, a qualitative means of enquiry will be employed, due to so few schools currently teaching a foreign language at primary school level. Each primary school teaching a foreign language has its own specific approach due to a lack of national policy and methodological framework. Therefore a qualitative approach, which goes into more in-depth findings of specific issues, rather than a statistical generalisation, is better suited to this area of research.

In such qualitative studies, the researcher needs to be an involved rather than detached and invokes a notion of *triangulation* in order to receive the information required. (Camilli, Green, and Elmore, 2006: 116 and Stake, 2010: 16). As outlined by Yin (2016: 19-20), there are three objectives for building the reliability and credibility of a qualitative study, such as a case study. The first one is *transparency*. It is important for the research process to be transparent; therefore all data should be kept safely and stored, being available for inspection at any stage of the research process, and for a length of time afterwards. "Methodic-ness [sic!]" is also important, as there needs to be a set of research structures followed, and allowances made

to unanticipated discoveries (Yin, 2015). Adherence to evidence is also vital, and this means, “regardless of the kind of data being collected, a study’s conclusions should be drawn from those data.” (Yin, 2015: 20).

Yin also outlines one of the key features of qualitative research is *representing* the *views* and *perspectives* of the participants (2009: 7). The key goal of this research is to achieve this. Due to the small numbers of schools, currently teaching modern languages at primary level, studies in this area will be case specific, as there is no overall Irish framework for teaching languages in place, every school is unique. Due to the schools researched being part of a wider community of unique cases, *intrinsic case studies* were the preferred and most functional method of data collection. (Stake, 1995:8) Quantitative studies have already taken place in the area of language teaching at primary level in Ireland. The findings were that the MLPSI had limitations, but it was successful in fostering positive attitudes of primary school children to language learning in the participating schools. (Harris and O’Leary, 2009a: 1-12). Qualitative means of inquiry give a more detailed account to analyse the situation in two specific schools, whereas quantitative studies have just given a brief overview of the situation on a broader scale. Qualitative research is interpretive, experiential, situational and personalistic (Stake, 2010: 15).

The research topic requires the participants to share their experiences, and when some participants provide similar feedback, a more accurate account of the current situation can be established. The embedded questions require many of the participants’ opinions and their observations throughout their work with children. A sufficient amount of quality data can be gathered by using various methods, if conducted correctly. The attitudes of pupils are the researcher’s main area of interest. Teachers’ views and depictions of the situation in Ireland, and the participating schools will add another dimension and act as a backdrop of information to take the children’s data to a new level.

4.3 Case Study

Case studies can be defined as empirical research, which “investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003: 13). Due to the lack of primary schools giving language instruction, a case study approach, therefore, is an ideal methodology, as each case is unique and each situation requires independent exploration. Hence case studies provide an accurate depiction of how a particular organisation carries out specific tasks; in this specific instance how the language teaching is conducted, and the attitudes of different members of the school communities, i.e. teachers and pupils.

Merriam (1998: 29) defines qualitative case studies as being “particularistic, descriptive and heuristic”. This particular case study is particularistic in the sense of each school undertaking the teaching of FLs is individual and unique and of equal importance and each school reveals a different aspect of the phenomenon. In the analysis of the data, the research aims to provide a descriptive account of the two settings and how the particular settings carry out the language instruction.

Yin’s (2009: 1) six key stages of a case study are all crucial. These steps are planning, designing, preparing, collecting, analysing and sharing/disseminating. These stages are all in themselves fundamental to contributing to a fruitful and data-rich case study. During the research, these steps will be completed in a linear fashion, yet the process needs to be iterative. A case study is an “iterative process in that it involves links between non-consecutive stages for the purpose of reflection and clarification” (Atkins and Wallis, 2012: 109).

4.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

“One of the most important sources of case study information is the interview” (Yin, 2009: 106). As the researcher is using qualitative research, conducting semi-structured interviews is deemed appropriate to collect the data to answer the research questions set out by the researcher. During the interviews, a large quantity of information can be gathered about a specific case and the individuals’ attitudes and views. In interviews for case study research, the conversations may be guided, but they cannot be too structured. Although the research is pursuing a line of inquiry, the actual questions are likely to be *fluid* rather than *rigid* (Yin, 2009: 106). This means the interviews will be open-ended and semi-structured, and questions will also be formulated during the interview based on the participants’ answers.

In total, three interviews were conducted with four teachers. Interviewing gains a quality of responses from the participants which is what the researcher needs to make an informed analysis (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009: 478). Semi-structured interviews also give the researcher the freedom to ask follow-up questions to receive even more information about their research topic. Also, using a dictaphone to conduct the interview, it allows both the interviewee and the interviewer, to focus fully on the conversation and give a substantial amount of information that is uninterrupted. Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to extend the interviewee’s answers and to clarify an informant’s responses through probing; it also permits the exploration of the informants’ opinions by comparing and contrasting different views (Camilli, Green, and Elmore, 2006: 364).

4.3.2 Language Portraits

Language portraits were used to form a basis for the interviews with the children, and they were incorporated into the interviews. Previous studies show that they can furnish the researcher with very rich data, in a child-centred way (Krumm and Jenkins, 2001: 8). “[Language Portraits] are basic plain, and if possible, abstract human outlines used to depict the components of a child’s linguistic makeup.” (Martin, 2012: 41). The portraits depict the language awareness of the children, as seen by the children themselves.

The children were given blank portraits to fill in, and were given the following instructions; to colour the portrait using different colours for each language and to think about why they choose each colour, amount and body part. They were given space to fill in their explanations for their portraits at the side. They were then free to complete the task as they wished, and giving them this freedom. There was a wide variety of different responses given by the pupils in the two schools.

This task, on the one side, gets the children thinking about their language identity in preparation for the interview, but also provides an age appropriate task for the L2 learners. Language portraits create visual representations of the children’s language identity, which provides a more valuable insight into the language attitudes of children than the interview alone, as some implicit attitudes and stereotypes the children have towards languages and the language community, and provoke further higher-order thinking. As with any task, some children involved themselves more in the activity than others, and some portraits could not be analysed, due to the children’s reason for filling in their language portrait being unexplained, nevertheless, most portraits provided the researcher with rich data, which was further explored in the interviews. When analysing these portraits, the researcher will not do so in isolation, but through using the interviews to confirm information extracted from the portrait.

4.3.3 Focus Group Interviews

Being aware of the current child protection legislation, but also the benefits of focus group interviewing children, the researcher decided that focus group interviews with the children would be conducted. Open, semi-structured focus group interviews have been carried out with over 50 pupils during the study, to learn more about their attitude and experience of language learning.

Focus group interviews are useful for discovering new information or consolidating old information; obtaining a number of different perspectives on the same topics in the participants own words and gaining information on participants' views, attitudes, beliefs, responses, or motivations on a topic.
(Buchanan & Bryman, 2009: 479)

As attitudes and motivation play a huge role in this study and in order to get an accurate account of the views of all the children in the selected settings, focus group interviews were the best approach to obtain the essential information, because more children could be questioned in a shorter period of time. This was beneficial to the participating schools, pupils, and researcher.

Another key objective was to have peer contact in the interviews, which made the data richer, as the children had discussions among themselves and not just with the researcher.

Group talk may, [...], be very natural and less stilted than individual interviews. A strength of this naturalness is that non-responses from one child do not curtail or stop the interview. Other children take over, so the flow is sustained. Group interviews may also be productive than individual interviews because when one child is speaking, other children have 'thinking time,' thus also encouraging greater reflexivity in responses" (Lewis, 1992: 417).

The interviews afforded the researcher an opportunity to confirm and gather new information, about language motivation and attitudes, as well as giving a broader insight into how languages are taught in the case study schools. "A key issue in using group interviews with children concerns the optimum number of interviewees in the group" (Lewis, 1992: 418). Lewis also suggests "a maximum of six or seven in group interviews; otherwise, the group is likely to fragment." (1992: 418). Bearing this in mind, the children were interviewed in groups of four to six. After consulting with the teachers, the children were interviewed in the groups, which

the teachers assigned, as they were very well acquainted with the children in their classes, and knew which pupils would work better together.

Conducting group interviews had a number of advantages over one-to-one interviews. The role of the interviewer versus the interviewee may be less stilted, than if individual interviews were conducted, as the interviews would be more like conversations, and unlike question and response interviews. Group interviews can help to discover consensus views easily and avoid repetition, and they give children a chance to discuss their opinion amongst their classmates, but this can also bring up unforeseen and unanticipated issues, such as the children going off task. They can also lead to responses that have greater range and depth. It was hoped that by interviewing the children with their peers, they would be less intimidated and feel more comfortable.

The resulting data would, hopefully, enrich the study by providing another level for adding to the data gathered through the language portraits. Pupils' voices are not only fundamental in furthering our own understanding of teaching and learning of languages (Ó Cathalláin, 2011: 121) but also the interviews are advantageous for the pupils themselves. In chapter two, it was outlined that attitude and motivation play key roles in language learning. Subsequently, it was imperative when investigating children's attitudes to language learning, in that they further conceptualise their own thoughts and ideas, thus furthering their own understanding.

Suitable physical settings are also vital to help make children comfortable during interviews (Lewis, 1992: 98). In School 1, the interviews were initially conducted in the staff room, which was not ideal, as the interviews had to be relocated to the after-school club room. Background noise was an issue in School 1, due to events taking place within the school. The school had the facilities, but due to unalterable circumstances, it was somewhat limiting. Despite a few small interruptions, the interviews ran very smoothly. In School 2, the interviews

took place in the old staff room. The room was quite small; however, this did not lead to any complications as there were six pupils maximum in the room. It turned out to be an advantage to some degree, with the sound quality of the recording being very clear.

The pupils were assured by the researcher that they did not have to participate at all stages of the research process, and they were made aware that they could withdraw from the interview at any time. No pupil withdrew from the interviews; on the contrary, they felt excited about the whole process. Before beginning each interview, the children were allowed an opportunity to speak into the dictaphone as a sound test, and it was replayed for them. They found listening back to their own voices amusing, and it helped put them at ease, and to see the interviews in a non-threatening manner, and in doing so their confidence and trust was increased.

The researcher was aware of the need to privilege Irish to some extent, when speaking with the children in School 2, due to it being an all-Irish school (Gaelscoil). All children should be given the opportunity to be able to express themselves freely. Subsequently, it is essential their language identities recognised and respected. Permission was granted by the school to interview the participants using English; the children were free to complete the language portraits beforehand in Irish or English, and the tasks were explained beforehand in Irish in order to respect the ethos of the school. The children were free to use Irish words when speaking. All pupils in both schools were given permission by their parents to be interviewed. In School 1, permission was however not sought to undertake the research through English, due to the status of English had within the school.

4.3.4 Limitations of this Research

As with any study, there are some limitations of this type of research. Qualitative research does not give an overall picture of what the situation is like at a broader level, such as a national level, but also has huge advantages, in terms of giving a more in-depth and detailed account of what is being researched.

As this research was on the “ground”, it also limited the researcher in terms of choice in settings, concerning logistics. Settings in Limerick and Cork were chosen, but schools further afield could not be studied.

It must, on the other hand, it must be acknowledged that conducting interviews is not without limitations and disadvantages. Interviews are generally more “intrusive” than other forms of “passive research”, such as observations, and some children may feel more “nervous” and intimidated when speaking with adults than with their peers (Bragg, 2007: 28). However, this is less prevalent in group interviews. It is possible, that the children feel under pressure to conform to the group when they respond to the interviewer, so this also needs to be acknowledged and taken into consideration. Sometimes some children were more vocal than the others, and this was difficult to manage or control amongst the groups.

Research with participants who are children has some minor limitations. The children’s data is subject to being a little more vague and difficult to interpret for the researcher at times. This was especially noteworthy for the language portraits which the children used, as many children did not finish their portrait, or their answers were sometimes so vague, that some of the data was not interpretable. On the whole, the benefits of the chosen method of data collection outweigh the limitations.

4.4 Means of Analysis

4.4.1 Grounded Theory

Once the data has been collected, it needs to be sorted, coded and summarized so that it can be analysed (Blaxter et. al. 2001: 201). As the type of methodology utilised is qualitative and is highly subjective, the researcher took the approach of coding the interviews and then categorised the codes, dividing the data into more manageable chunks, allowing for patterns and exceptions to develop and arise. To construct these codes, a “Grounded Theory” approach was applied to the data.

Grounded Theory Coding consists of at least two main phases: 1) An initial phase involving naming each word, line or sediment of data, followed by 2) a focused selective that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organise large amounts of data. (Charmaz, 2006: 46)

This theory is an inductive approach which “focuses on the process of generating theory rather than a particular theoretical content” (Patton, 2002: 125). Charmaz also concurs with this definition: “Grounded Theory ethnography gives priority to the studied phenomenon or process – rather than the setting itself.” (2006: 22). Rather than applying theories and concepts to the subject matter and setting out to demonstrate it, it moves from specific observations to broader generalizations and constructs. This approach was chosen to interpret the data from the “ground” up basing my research on the data received and not solely on literature surrounding this.

4.4.1.1 Initial Coding

The first major step in Grounded Theory analysis is “Initial Coding”. According to Glaser (1978: 52), during this first stage coding, four questions need to be addressed. These are what the study is about, what it suggests, from whose perspective and what theoretical category does this propose. “Initial coding should stick closely to the data” (Charmaz, 2006: 47). *Speed* and *spontaneity* aid the initial coding process and it is important to remain open during the coding

process. Initial coding may be *word for word*, *line by line* or *incident by incident* (Charmaz, 2006: 50-53). In the case of the study, a mixture of the above will be utilised.

The initial codes which occurred in this study included the following: *funding, Ireland vs. the EU, training, time devoted to language instruction, school situation, and policy* which in focused coding were all categorised together under the term *status*.

The advantages of careful coding are; “it helps you to refrain from imputing your motives... to your respondents and to your collected data” (Charmaz, 2006: 54) and it also forces the researcher to think about the data in a new light. Initial coding also helps and directs focused coding, so it is crucial for the accuracy of the data interpretation and analysis.

4.4.1.2 Focused Coding

This is the second major phase of coding. During focused coding, larger amounts of data are concentrated on. These codes are more *directed*, *selected* and *conceptual* than word-by-word, line-by-line and incident-by-incident coding (Glaser, 1978: 50). This type of coding requires the researcher to use the most significant and frequently recurring codes to sort through the larger amounts of data. “Focused coding requires decisions, about which initial codes make the most analytical sense to categorise your data incisively and completely” (Charmaz, 2006: 57). Some of the focused codes used included: language status, language attitude, extrinsic motivation/motivators. These themes gave overall topics and categorised the subthemes/initial codes together. Some of the initial codes were changed to fit into these sub-themes.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

“As regards research ethics, researchers must counterbalance their various social responsibilities” (Berg, 2004: 56). This is what Cohen and Manion define as the “costs/benefits ratio” (1994: 74&85). Such responsibilities include those to oneself, one’s discipline and vocation, to the attainment of knowledge, the society, and the research participants (Berg, 2004, 56). So as to ascertain, that the research is justifiable the situation should be considered “case by case” (Berg, 2004: 70).

This study involves human participants. Before the research was carried out with the participants, ethical approval was sought from the Mary Immaculate College Research Committee (MIREC), as this is standard practice in this institution. Once approval from MIREC was granted, the schools were contacted. Ethical issues such as negotiating access, gaining entry, seeking active, informed consent from participants (Berg, 2004: 145), and informing participants of the nature and purpose of this project, is vital in obtaining the research participants. This required a series of steps.

Due to current child legislation, schools require anyone who works with the children to be Garda vetted. Firstly the researcher sent out letters to schools, and a follow-up phone call was made to the schools. Permission was not so difficult to obtain, due to the researcher’s previous experience in the field and being previously Garda vetted, and the schools required this documentation upon visiting the school. Once permission was approved by the schools, informed consent of the participants was sought. “*Informed consent* means the knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar unfair inducement or manipulation” (2004, 56). As there are research participants in this study who are minors, consent was also sought by the parents. To gain informed consent, the participants and guardians were asked to read an information leaflet about the study and to fill in and sign an attached consent form.

The privacy of the participants was respected at all times and due to having names on the consent forms and audio files, these were stored securely in a locked cabinet, and computer files were password protected and encrypted. The participants were also reassured they could withdraw from the project at any stage. Measures, like the above, were put in place to ensure anonymity and to protect confidential information (Berg 2004: 59). Schools, parents, and participants were assured from the beginning of the study that such measures were in place.

“Ethical problems also emerge when presenting and analysing data because the data have been filtered through my theoretical position” (Ó Cathalláin, 2011: 146). Responsibility lies with the researcher to carry out all the necessary decisions about what data is collected, the methodology utilised and how the data is interpreted and presented. Some of the data was also excluded, but this was either because the piece was incapable of being coded, or was no longer relevant in light of the research questions.

4.6 Reflexivity: The Teachers’ Voice

Gall, Gall and Borg (1989: 400) outline several mistakes which researchers have made in the past in completing research in various areas. Lack of reflexivity and researchers’ selectivity and their biases in using sources are key areas where researchers have failed to utilise their research to the best of its potential. Reflexivity “refers to the way in which all accounts of social settings – descriptions, analyses, criticism, etc., and the social settings occasioning them are mutually interdependent” (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007: 25).

Reflexivity is an important aspect of the research process, and, to be a reflexive researcher the researcher has to be open regarding where decisions were made. “Reflexivity suggests that researchers should acknowledge and disclose their own selves in their research; they should hold themselves up to the light” (Cohen et al, 2007: 141). If researchers focus on what they want to say and how they want to say it, it often prevents the research figures from

speaking for itself, and the researcher needs to look at the data with an open mind to truly interpret the data accurately. “*Reflexivity* creates a dynamic process of interaction within and between ourselves and the participants, and the data that inform decisions, actions and interpretations at all stages of the research” (Etherington, 2004: 36).

Overall in relation to this project, the decisions made about what topic to research, what literature to discuss, which data collection techniques to utilise, how data was interpreted and analysed, to some degree reflect the researcher’s own interests and experience as an educator. As a researcher, one has to be transparent in one’s research on how and why various decisions in the research process were made and also be as open as possible in finding conflicting results and focusing on what participants have to say, rather than looking at the data with an end result in sight. Reflexivity is about basing one’s research on the individual participants, rather than the research being a means to an end and having an end and adjusting the results to comply with this.

“Highly reflexive researchers will be acutely aware of the ways in which their own interactions with participants, roles, bias and other matters, that might bias the research” (Cohen et al, 2007: 269). As the interview is a key feature in this research project, reflexivity is vital regarding communication with the participants and in interpreting the responses. It is easy for the interviews to become skewed through the use of questioning. Open-ended questions were asked to make the interviews more authentic, especially with the teachers. The children had to be prompted more. The teachers who participated were also invited to add any relevant additional information at the end of the interview. This also formed a clearer picture of what the opinions of the participants’ were rather than what the researcher wants to find out.

There is also a power relationship that exists between an adult and child in a one-to-one setting, but this is often diffused when the research is conducted in group settings. (James et. al., 1998). Group interviews were the chosen methodology when working with the children, as

previously stated in this chapter, group talk added more authenticity to the interviews as the children both interacted with the researcher and class peers, thus also reducing the issue of power relations. Occasionally prompting was used, but this is also taken into consideration when interpreting the data.

In the analysis of the data, *Grounded Theory* is used in order to achieve more reflexivity. Therefore reflexivity is considered by the researcher at all stages of the research process. Charmaz describes the nature of *Grounded Theory* and the reason to supplement it with a constructivist standpoint:

The grounded theorist's analysis tells a story about people, social processes, and situations. The researcher composes the story; it does not simply unfold before the eyes of an objective viewer. This story reflects the viewer as well as the viewed. (...) We can use [the critiques of grounded theory] to make our empirical research more reflexive and our completed studies more contextually situated. We can claim only to have interpreted a reality, as we understood both our own experience and our subjects' portrayals of theirs. (Charmaz, 2000: 522-523)

Consequently, the reader has been provided with details of the individual research settings. Ethical issues and power relations between the researcher and the participants have been considered, outlined and addressed. Such reflexivity adds validity and rigour to the research. (Etherington, 2004: 37)

4.7 Conclusion

The chapter has outlined the theoretical framework, which influenced the researcher's choice of methodology and data collection techniques being carried out for this project and these were explained in detail. Constraints in the methodologies used were noted and considered carefully before carrying out the research. The validity and reliability of the techniques used have been thoroughly measured and discussed. The aspect of confidentiality and data protection issues has been addressed in this chapter. Child protection guidelines, the school policies and the institutional ethical guidelines for research, MIREC were adhered to. Approaches to data

management, transcriptions, data analysis, in particular, case study and interview have been detailed. The aim of this chapter has been to provide a full justification of the contexts and processes used to carry out this research and this led to the research findings which are reported and analysed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Presentation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will look at and analyse the data collected during this study, and it will be broken down into two sub-chapters: *5.2 Teachers' Responses* and *5.3 Pupils' Responses*. It is based on interviews conducted with the teachers and the language portraits and the group interviews and looks at the status of language and the attitudes towards languages; especially French and Irish within the school contexts. The most important aspects being investigated are the language situation in the particular schools and the teachers' and pupils' attitudes towards the languages. As already mentioned in Chapter 4, the Grounded Theory approach was used to interpret and analyse this data.

Chapter 5.2 looks at four teachers' responses in the interview, three of whom were teaching in the two participating schools. One teacher, the German language teacher, was a specialist in her area and not affiliated to either of the schools in this study, and she was chosen to be interviewed due to her expertise in the area and also to give a view independent to those of the schools in this study. Chapter 5.3 examines the children's visual representations (language portraits) of their language identities and the children's responses in the interviews. Pupils in both schools were interviewed and through doing so, two different contexts were able to be investigated more extensively and accurately. For all the data collected, the Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz, 2006: 4) was used to organise the children's data. The language portraits were analysed and classified according to recurring patterns and the frequency of pattern occurrence. Adhering also to the steps of qualitative content analysis ('qualitative Inhaltsanalyse') as described by Mayring (1994, 159-172), the material was divided into more manageable parts by coding and recoding the data to categorise the data. When analysing these codes, "components of the integrative motive" "integrativeness", "attitudes towards the learning situation" and "motivation" will form a backdrop to the analysis (Dörnyei, 2001a: 46).

Chapter 5.2: Teacher Responses

5.2 Introduction

Before interpreting the teacher responses, the interviews were transcribed and then coded using the Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz, 2006: 46). Many different themes arose from coding the interviews. These codes included:

1. Language Status: (a) National Status (i) Ireland regarding the EU (ii) Status of Irish (iii) Other Modern Languages (b) School Context
2. Attitude and Motivation: (a) The teachers' and schools' attitude to languages and (b) The teachers' perception of the attitude and motivation of the children towards languages. Within these codes, there were many subthemes and topics, but this will be outlined in the discussion part of the analysis.

5.2.1 Project Participants

5.2.1.1 Teacher 1, German Teacher (T1, GT):

The first interviewee was an independent language specialist and visiting teacher during the initiative. She was not affiliated with either school in this study, but her contribution was valuable for this project. She provided an outside viewpoint and also due to being a specialist in this area is very knowledgeable in this field. However, her attitude to languages would not be a reflection of the overall attitude of teachers in Ireland. This will be taken into account when looking at the data, as her responses may be somewhat biased. When referring to interviewee one, Teacher 1 (T1, GT) will be used to identify this participant.

5.2.1.2 Teachers 2 and 3, School 1 (T2 & T3, S1):

Both teachers were class teachers in S1, the English-medium school, and these two teachers were interviewed together. The teachers did not teach French themselves, and unfortunately, the language teacher was unable to be interviewed at the time. The background of these teachers, and also the fact, that they did not teach the language themselves could have a role to play on their attitudes, and this will be looked at and taken into consideration when coding the data. When referring to the teachers in S1, Teacher 2 and Teacher 3, T2 and T3 will be used consistently to identify both teachers.

5.2.1.3 Teacher 4, School 2 (T4, S2)

Teacher 4 (T4) was a class teacher at S2, the Irish-medium school, and also taught fifth and sixth class French. She has undergone training to teach French and also had assistance in place from a native French speaker, and PhD student, who was doing research in the school as well. Due to being in a Gaelscoil setting, she has fluent Irish, and to what respect does this influence her attitude towards foreign languages and in particular to French will also be investigated and these points will be considering when interpreting the responses. When referring to this participant, Teacher 4 (T4, S2) will be consistently used.

5.2.2 Language Status

The status of language is an important aspect to take into consideration when looking at how languages are taught and at the attitudes towards them. In the interview responses, language status transpired as a strong recurrent theme amongst all the teacher interviewees. While discussing language status, the following most important themes emerged; *national context* and *school context*.

5.2.2.1 National Context

As mentioned in Chapter 2, it is vital to not only look at the Irish context in isolation but as part of a broader European perspective. An important aspect which arose in all the interviews is how Ireland compares to other countries in relation to language teaching and learning. Through asking this question information was gathered on the overall context of FL education in Ireland to promote discussion with the interviewees.

When outlining the current situation regarding how well Ireland was performing in relation to language teaching and learning, T1 mentioned that they were doing “fairly poorly, except for Gaelic” (T1). Irish is introduced at an early age when children start primary school at the age of five, but officially no other language is introduced at primary level, and this is falling short of achieving the aims of the *European Languages Strategy*, which was also previously outlined in Chapter 2. Many other European countries seem to be making better attempts in achieving the aims outlined.

In S1, both teachers were also of the opinion that language learners abroad appear to be more competent in speaking FLs than their Irish counterparts. “Definitely, the other EU countries seem to have a better grasp of learning a language than we would here” (T3, S1). It is specifically true when it comes to learning English, due to its status as the lingua franca. As outlined previously many European countries, such as Germany, France and Spain have made a foreign language compulsory at primary school level and often have a better grasp of the L2, than many pupils in Ireland.

With the introduction of the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy*¹⁸ (2011) at primary level, the focus has been on English and Irish as either first or second languages. They had partially introduced modern languages into some schools before this, but its abolishment

¹⁸ https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/lit_num_strategy_full.pdf (accessed on 14/06/2016)

came at a similar time to this news. In Ireland, there is no overall national language policy as regards foreign language teaching at any level of education. More could be done, as the DES are also striving to promote the early introduction of MLs, even at pre-school level, but yet foreign languages are not officially taught at primary level.¹⁹ The RIA (2011) also call for a more integrated approach to language teaching to be incorporated in primary schools, as it would allow sufficient time to teach a ML within the overloaded curriculum. There is a language curriculum for secondary education, but it is not a compulsory subject and is at no stage of schooling a mandatory component. Nevertheless, at second level, most pupils learn at least one foreign language, and this is either school policy, or a matriculation stipulation at Leaving Certificate level for many courses at third level, which most pupils are aware of, but this is slowly changing.

While Irish and English are taught to almost all students throughout the period of primary and post-primary education, the learning of other foreign languages are, at present, optional (except in the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme). In this, Ireland is almost unique in Europe.” (OVFL, 2014: 8)²⁰

The first participant was the only teacher to mention this, and it is a significant aspect to mention, as many colleges are or have changed the stipulation of a foreign language at Leaving Certificate level.

There is implicitly a way to keep MLs in the secondary school by having people do a modern language in order to get to university. The matriculation stipulation is important to keep languages in the curriculum. Moreover, a lot of principals are aware it is important these days[...] Universities have a lot of say in whom they can take on and so on by just saying we need to have at least one other language apart from Gaelic otherwise, they won't get in. (T1, GT)

¹⁹ RIA, 2011. *Irish Languages Strategy*. Royal Irish Academy National Committee for Modern Language, Literacy and Cultural Studies https://www.ria.ie/sites/default/files/national_languages_strategy_august_2011.pdf (accessed on 15/07/2016)

²⁰ *One Voice for Languages*, August 2014, *Framework for Consultation: A Foreign Languages in Education Strategy for Ireland*.

About 70% of students study another language up to Leaving Certificate level; this may be due to the National University of Ireland's third language requirement.²¹ It is important to keep this matriculation stipulation requirement in order to retain languages in schools, and even with this stipulation, the number of pupils learning languages is on the decline. (DES, 2014) It is worrying that some of the colleges are loosening the requirement now for some courses, mainly science based courses. NUI have put into place since September 2015, that Mathematics could be used instead of a third language for the Bachelor of Social Science Degree (UCD only), and some of the other courses such as Engineering, Computer Science, both Veterinary and General Nursing have the same stipulation.²² This move increases the likelihood that more pupils will opt out of learning a foreign language. A key point to take into consideration when looking at languages in Ireland is that English is a lingua franca and in Europe learning English and another language would be seen as a more vital component in their education. "I suppose [...] what we notice when we are abroad what we notice is you know other countries seem to have a better grasp of the English language as their foreign language" (T2, S1). Learning English is not just something done in schools; learners find it essential for travelling purposes and job prospects, hence are highly motivated to learn it and speak it. They also have more means of coming into contact with the language outside of school, due to the current music culture and also most of the films and popular television programmes being produced in America.

²¹ Irish, English and a third language (foreign or Classical) are normally required for matriculation in the Universities which constitute the NUI. "NUI Matriculation Regulations apply to all students seeking to enter the NUI institutions. UCD, UCC, NUIG and NUIM are constituent universities of NUI. NCAD, RCSI, IPA, Shannon College of Hotel Management and Milltown Institute are recognised colleges: (St Angela's College, Sligo is now a College of NUI, Galway.)

²² <http://www.nui.ie/college/entry-requirements-faqs.asp> [accessed on 01/11/15]

5.2.2.2 The Status of Irish

Ireland is officially a bilingual country. The status of Irish at primary school level is of great significance. Irish is a compulsory subject for the majority of pupils from the beginning of primary up to Leaving Certificate level. Irish is one of the lesser spoken languages. However, it is important for cultural reasons. “It is just part of the culture and heritage in Ireland” (Interview 1, GT). Due to its importance, a vast amount of time is devoted to teaching Irish at primary school level, as it is considered as one of the main core curricular areas. According to the INTO Document²³ on time allocation for subjects, “schools now spend 8 ½ hours (6 ½ hours for infants) on Irish and English roughly broken down as 5 hours (4 hours for infants) on L1 and 3 ½ hours (2 ½ hours for infants) on L2” (INTO, 2011:1). Due to more time being accorded to literacy and numeracy, this differs to the original guidelines set out by the NCCA Curriculum Guidelines. This is also reflected in the teacher’s responses when asked if sufficient time was devoted to Irish: “I think there is a huge amount of time given to teaching Irish definitely. As much time is given to teaching Irish, as there is to Maths or English” (T2, S1). There is a specific policy in regard to upholding the status of the Irish language (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). Also, learners often feel that learning the Irish strengthens their cultural identity, which is a similar integrative motive to those who learn their own MT. There is also the only official national language policy in Ireland, The Official Languages Act 2003²⁴, and it is exclusively for the promotion and protection of the Irish language. It includes the use of Irish on road signs, and also the 20 year target, which hopes to have 250,000 daily speakers of Irish by 2030 (2010) This was outlined in detail by the GT in this study, who was not connected with either of the participating schools.

²³ <http://www.into.ie/ROI/InformationforMedia/InformationforJournalists/TimeSpentonEachSubject.pdf> (accessed on 12/4/2016)

²⁴ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2003/act/32/enacted/en/>

Overall the only explicit written language policy is the Languages Act 2003 and that does not include modern languages, it includes Irish, Gaelic, [...] so it is quite exclusive in that way. At the time they prioritised that for obvious reasons, but in the long run, it would have made sense to include modern languages as well. (T1, GT)

The teaching of Irish has undergone difficulties in the past in Ireland and the last extensive study in the area highlighted that many pupils' oral competent in the language was not that high in light of students learning the language for 13 full school years. This would be in the case of "fluency of oral description" and "communication" for example. "Each of these two objectives was mastered by little less than a third of pupils (32.4%) in 2002, whereas they had been mastered by slightly more than half of pupils (50.3%) in 1985" (Harris, et al 2006, 75).

These statistics are worrying, and the teachers' responses in S1 also reflected that this problem is ongoing. The teachers in S1 were of the opinion that orally, the pupils do not have sufficient language competence in Irish; "Whereas here in Ireland children would when they finish school they do not speak it at all and even orally, I don't think they are able to have a conversation" (T2, S1).

It is uncertain what the cause for this is and at what level of education this is happening at, but many learners have a negative attitude towards the Irish language and beginning from an early age. "I think it is harder to find people who have a positive attitude towards, well particularly, the Irish language maybe more so than French" (T2, S1).

Research has shown that generally, people have a positive outlook towards the Irish language, but it is not spoken at high levels outside of the school/university setting. Thus, it would be harder to motivate learners to learn it and to practice speaking it. "It has to be noted, however, that while the attitudes towards the language among the general public are broadly positive, there is not yet a significant critical mass of the speakers to bring about a change in usage." (Darmody and Daly, 2015:24).

The teachers in S1 also doubted their language ability in Irish, and this would to some degree influence the pupils' attitudes and competence in the language, so even the educators would doubt their own language ability. "Competent, I would, I feel confident I suppose at a primary level, but there would be times definitely that I would maybe doubt say my own oral language ability or that it is something I could improve on or continue in" (T3, S1). The other teacher in the school also agreed with the other class teacher, as even though they both consider themselves to have a good standard of Irish for teaching at primary level, T2 stated that she would not be that confident speaking to a native speaker.

"[...] I would feel fairly competent but at times you know I would question myself and [...] you know I wouldn't feel I mean. Well, I myself wouldn't feel all that comfortable speaking to a native Irish speaker if I was in that position, so I suppose that says a lot" (T2, S1).

The last part of this quote is interesting to look at, as she mentioned the fact she was not confident speaking Irish fluently "says a lot". This highlighted one problem, which contributes to the standard of Irish at primary level, which is the teachers' competence in the language. Ideally to teach a language, one needs to be fluent, but this is often not the case with teachers at primary level. The language competency of teachers is a national concern in our education system. According to the DES "3% of the teachers had a poor level of spoken Irish, 20% had only a fair ability to speak Irish, 55% had a satisfactory standard and 22% had a high standard of Irish" (DES, 2007, 16). Since then, changes were made to teacher training, and it encompasses, more Gaeltacht placements. Mary Immaculate College, for example, requires student teachers to go on two different Gaeltacht placements in two different regions, this is also in place in St. Patrick's College, Dublin. This in turn, will help improve prospective teachers' language competence, which is a step in the right direction. However as the DES does not supplement it, it puts student teachers under further financial strain.

Ireland, in general, does not have a good record in language teaching, even when looking at Irish at primary level. There have been many challenges and to improve the standard

of Irish and to promote the Irish language further, there has been a rise of *Gaelscoileanna* (Irish-medium schools) in non-Gaeltacht areas in recent years. Pupils are immersed in the target language and all subjects excluding English are taught through Irish. *Gaelscoileanna* also allocate more time to the Irish, due to Irish being the L1 and therefore 5 ½ hours can be devoted entirely to Irish per week (INTO, 2011, 1). “I know in a *Gaelscoil* it is a bit different, you can accord more teaching time to Irish, so *Gaelscoils* are at an advantage” (T4, S2).

Looking at the time dedicated to Irish as a curricular subject does not give one the true picture of how much time is accorded to Irish within this school context. Irish is fostered as the language of communication within the school and children are immersed in the L2, as 90% of the teaching time is through the medium of Irish. This teacher also went on to state:

“[...] with regards to the teaching of Irish certainly you need to have a positive attitude. You need to be fluent in it really to be able to teach the language” (T4, S2).

To teach the curriculum through Irish and foster and promote the ethos within the school, the teacher would certainly need a good oral fluency and a positive attitude towards languages, especially towards Irish.

On the whole, all four teachers were in agreement that sufficient teaching time was devoted to the teaching of Irish and that Irish had a huge significance in the primary school curriculum. Regarding the teaching of Irish, there are also significant shortfalls and challenges. These challenges would be that it is harder to motivate learners to learn Irish; due to it being a language used more for education purposes and preserving the language, rather than actual language use. Learners are not motivated to speak Irish outside of school in general unless it is part of their family life. This is undoubted, because when learning Irish, one tends to be more motivated to learn Irish for cultural and identity reasons, rather than the instrumental value, due to Irish not being widely spoken as an L1 in Ireland.. “Learning a language for cultural reasons is not the same as learning a language for communicative purposes” (Kaplan, Baldauf and

Baldauf, 2008:260). Children, who attend Gaelscoileanna, would be more motivated to learn and speak Irish as they do not see Irish as a means to learn but a way of learning and also a part of their identity within this Irish-speaking community, which is their school. The fact that parents are sending their children to a Gaelscoil, they are a lot more likely to speak Irish with them, than parents sending their children to another type of school. As cited by Gardner, integrative orientation is fundamental in stimulating motivation, and therefore learning needs not to be just based at school.

5.2.2.3 The Status of Modern Languages

As previously discussed, there is no set language policy for the teaching of foreign languages in Ireland. In June 2012, the MLPSI was abolished, and this study was carried out to see how two particular school settings carried on teaching a ML (French) after the initiative was cut. Another specialist language teacher, outside these settings, was interviewed, for a more impartial response on the national situation in Ireland and on her attitude towards languages and the current language situation in Ireland.

As outlined before, Irish and English are core subjects and have a key status at primary level, but modern languages are optional and seen as an extra-curricular subject at primary school level. Some primary schools got involved with the MLPSI and received assistance and funding to teach a foreign language, which can either be taught after school or during the discretionary time.

[...] outside of English and Irish, schools don't have to do anything, unless it's a bonus really, if there is a staff member within the school, who volunteers to do it but I know a lot of schools had the visiting teachers, and they could pay them through the grant, and I think that now they are taking the funds from their own personal school funds and continuing to pay them if they find the time. (T4, S2)

When asked if foreign languages were considered vital in Ireland, all the teachers were in agreement that foreign language teaching was not seen as crucial in Ireland, particularly at primary level.

Any other kind of modern language has had [...] no [...] importance except for thanks to the MLPSI that was started ten years ago or so [...] they cancelled it last year [...] all the good that's been undone, it remains to be seen.” (T1, GT)

However, on a national level, the initiative was limited regarding what it could achieve and the schools involved in the MLPSI were unique in terms of what they were doing. In regard to the transition to secondary school from primary, it was also not ideal as the language competencies of the pupils who had learnt and had not learnt a ML at PS varied and this was not taken into account at second level, and learners learnt languages from scratch (MLPSI, 2012).

On the topic of modern language policies, Ireland does have implicit policies at secondary school level. Even though foreign languages are not a compulsory element at any stage of education, many universities and courses require that students have a language up to Leaving Certificate level, but as mentioned previously in this chapter, this has changed in recent years, and the requirements are loosening.²⁵

At primary level, there were guidelines for teachers and schools teaching foreign languages at primary level (fifth and sixth class) set out by the NCCA during the MLPSI.²⁶ This was no longer being officially implemented in any school after the MLPSI was discontinued. Teacher 4, S2 refers to the NCCA documents and how they informed the school's policy when asked about national policy.

There may be. I know that the MLPSI have various policies, and we drew up our own policy here. [...] that there was a pilot study done I think, they did originally when they wrote the 1999 curriculum have a book on ML teaching so

²⁵ <http://www.nui.ie/college/entry-requirements.asp> [accessed on 3/11/15]

²⁶ NCCA, 1999, *Pilot Project on Modern Languages in the Primary School: Draft Curriculum Guidelines*
NCCA, 2001, *Modern Languages in Primary Schools: Teacher Guidelines*

that is obviously there and I did refer to that when we were writing up the [...] policy. (T4, S2).

The teachers in S2 were uncertain how the language situation changed nationally:

T3: We obviously as a school decided, it is beneficial, and it is worth keeping on. [...] nationally, I don't know.

T2: I don't know nationally, I don't know how other schools are dealing with it. (T2&3, S1).

In both schools, the teachers recognise they are specific cases and that not all schools have a foreign language as an additional subject and in a way, they were accomplishing more as regards language instruction than most other primary schools. Rather than looking at which improvements could be made to foster the foreign language within the school, they mentioned the fact they were doing more than most schools.

[...] some schools don't have it at all. So I mean in some schools you would say no there isn't. They are not doing it at all, but here we do a limited amount, but you couldn't do anymore. (T3, S1)

5.2.3 School Contexts

There are two schools in this study, School 1 (S1), an English-medium school and School 2 (S2), an Irish-medium school (Gaelscoil). Because both cases are very different educational models, they are also quite different in relation to language policy and ethos. The schools also vary significantly in size, which is an additional factor in how languages are taught in the two school communities. They both kept on French in the aftermath of the MLPSI. Hence, the schools in this study are unique cases in their own right. They do not give the full picture of how the abolishment affected schools in Ireland, as in many schools the teaching of foreign languages was discontinued after the abolition of the MLPSI. There are no statistics available as to which schools kept on offering a foreign language, due to it being an individual endeavour by the school. Currently it is not funded by any national organisation, and it was apparent when looking for schools to participate in this study. Many schools, which previously had been part of the initiative, mentioned they no longer offer a ML in their school, since the

abolishment of the MLPSI, but this was mainly just in the Limerick and Cork areas, but it would suggest that other schools nationally were also affected.

5.2.3.1 School 1

S1 was a mainstream, large English-medium Catholic primary school with approximately 500 pupils and 25 teachers and was located in Limerick. The school also offered a wide variety of other extracurricular activities including a range of sport, music and drama activities. With an average class size of 30 pupils, there were approximately 120 students in fifth and sixth class learning French. Two sixth class teachers in S1 were interviewed together. French was taught by a visiting teacher, who was a native French speaker, yet the class was cancelled on the day the data was collected, and she was unable to be interviewed. The language classes were supplemented by the school and the parents cover the rest of the cost.

I know that in our school, we've made the decision to keep on and to supplement it. I think it is the board of management. (T2, S1)

Yes, the parents have been asked for the first time this year. (T3, S1)

Before the abolishment, the cost of the visiting teacher was covered by the MLPSI, but now schools in this situation have found a way, to cover the cost themselves. Many schools after the abolishment of the initiative decided not to carry the initiative on, due to cost restrictions and lack of support available. These supports included funding, such as covering the cost of a language teacher and a grant for buying classroom resources, as well as training and online support services (MLPSI, 2012: 24-26). In S1, the teachers were unsure in terms of supports, what changed within the school, as they did not teach French themselves. They did not seem to integrate the language into a part of the identity of the school but seemed just to see it as one of many of the addition extra-curricular activities they had on offer. The teachers were not so involved. Hence they had no overall school framework for teaching the language:

Teacher 3: We had an outsider coming in so [...] there wasn't really. I know that we were given some French books and things like that if we wanted to

include them in our libraries and things like that and posters to put up in our rooms. Just I suppose that the children are kind of seeing it on a regular basis. That was, that was it really.

Teacher 2: That was it; I suppose it would be different if we were teaching it ourselves... We would have had even maybe a policy or yeah. (S1)

5.2.3.2 School 2

Being a Gaelscoil, located in a non-Gaeltacht area, S2's main aim is immersion education in terms of teaching all subjects through the target language (Irish). The school was a four teacher school with approximately 100 pupils. This school was involved in the MLPSI since 2008. In S2, the abolishment of the MLPSI did not have the same impact on the teaching of French, as it did in S1 and more importantly at a national level (MLPSI, 2012). Nationally, all the funding was cut, and any school with a visiting teacher currently have to fund the teaching of a foreign language themselves, it is clear many have not opted to keep it on in light of both the cut in funding and the introduction of the new time allocation for literacy and numeracy. It has become increasingly difficult for schools to keep the FL on and often not feasible, for example in the case of a DEIS school or a smaller rural school, with small numbers. It was easier for schools, where the class teacher teaches the language, to still offer foreign language classes. Due to it currently being an individual endeavour by schools to teach a ML, there has been no research compiled to see how many schools are currently offering a ML.

S2 was left relatively unaffected after the abolishment compared to other schools, and the only change which occurred was that less time was devoted to the ML. This was partially due to time needed for numeracy and literacy: "People weren't directly affected to the extent

they were in other schools where it has been completely abolished” (T4, S2). The teacher considered the school to be doing well in light of the changes which occurred. The school had a staff member teaching French and the school had developed a clear policy on teaching French. “It’s basically just in writing the fact that we were involved in the MLPSI and that we are carrying on, the time that is accorded to it.” The major objectives of the policy were to foster a positive attitude towards the L2 and to increase language competence and cultural awareness. The policy looked at integrating a mix of cultural studies, such as traditional songs and holidays in France and language studies such as the alphabet, pronunciation and language games. The school policy on teaching French focused on the four key language competencies over the course of two years: 1. “Ag Éisteacht” (listening) 2. “Ag Labhairt” (speaking) 3. “Ag Léamh” (reading) and 4. “Ag Scríobh” (writing). It is very similar to the curriculum set out by the MLPSI, but revised and adapted to the school’s unique setting. In this school context fifth and sixth class are together for the language classes, so different topics were taught each year. “Fifth and sixth class are together so we change the topics every second year so that there would not be much repetition” (T4, S2).

Due to the abolishment of the MLPSI, time devoted to the ML was reduced, and the teacher sees this as totally insufficient for teaching the language. “regarding MLs no there isn’t (enough time devoted to them), as you saw today they only have half an hour. It is completely insufficient in a way; I know before the abolishment I had an hour, so there was more time given” (T4, S2).

5.2.4 Attitude and Motivation

5.2.4.1 Teacher 1 (T1), German Language Teacher

Like the T1, German Language Teacher was an expert in her field and doing research on language teaching at University level, her views on languages are adamant and in her words “biased”. Her attitude is extremely positive and she sees languages as important not just from a language acquisition point of view but to become open to new cultures and promote acceptance of diversity.

I am fairly biased in that regard. I think languages are fairly important for several reasons, not just for the actual learning of the language and speaking it. Just for like an early age if children are taught languages they learn different pronunciations, they learn about different cultures. They simply have a bit of a more open viewpoint on the world. (T1, GT)

To teach languages which incorporated cultural education, she taught the children songs and games to promote this aspect of learning.

I think it's good to [...] give the impression; we are not alone on this planet. There are other people, other cultures and just so by teaching a couple of songs or playing other games in another language, you can achieve that. (T1, GT)

In providing the children with an opportunity to use and learn the language in this way, it is promoting awareness of the culture in another country, as well as strengthening their language skills and giving the language specific functions, especially if the games and songs are authentic to that culture. When using songs, it is often not so important that the children understand it fully to enjoy it and for it to be a learning opportunity, as it can also be an opportunity to teach about culture. “Listening to traditional songs, learning songs and folk dances from the country, comparing customs and traditions and discussing festivals, feast days and holidays will all contribute to the child’s knowledge and understanding of the culture of others” (NCCA, 2001, 24). Games and songs are also well-known teaching tools, and it is a child/learner-centred approach to teaching and enjoyable for the learners to learn this way and a very positive outlook to teaching languages.

According to the NCCA, cognitive development is one of the benefits of language learning. “Language learning can make a contribution to the further development of the cognitive abilities of the child” (NCCA, 2001:10-11). Languages have learning benefits for the learner, in terms of cognitive function and brain development. “Generally, just for brain development, I think at that age, language learning is very important. So yeah, I’d be very pro-language overall.” (T1, GT)

This language teacher also believed that the overall attitudes of the school community were positive during the MLPSI, and she had not witnessed any negativity towards languages in her school setting. “Overall, the attitudes towards languages and language teaching [...] would be positive and I wouldn’t be able to say anything different” (T1, GT). This highlights the view that languages were valued within this school, but German was not kept on in the school after the abolishment due to funding. No further information was obtained, as this school was not relevant to this study, due to no longer offering a ML.

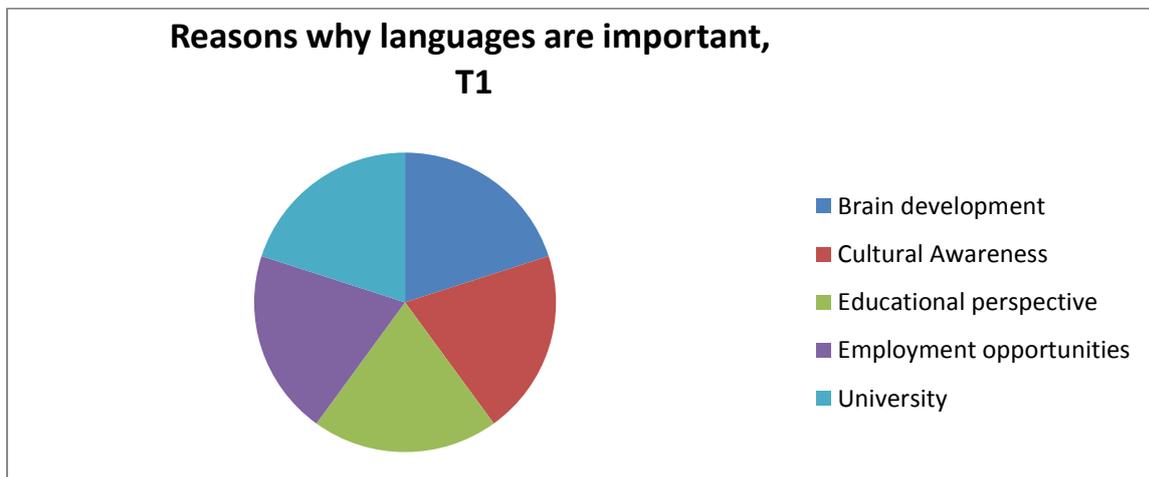
Regarding the MLPSI, T1 also has a very strong view on the abolishment of the initiative and the national situation with regard to language teaching and learning in Ireland. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the abolition of the Initiative occurred at a challenging time, due to numerous reports such as those compiled by the RIA, NCCA and OVFL stating there was a need to extend and promote languages at primary and to introduce languages at pre-school level. There is a huge demand for a plurilingual workforce, which Ireland cannot keep up with. In speaking about the abolishment of the MLPSI, T1 also mentions these issues:

It just kind of ruined all the good work they have done over the last ten years. I find it terrible, to be honest, because it’s now more so than ever that languages are in the background. People are aware they are needed for jobs and things like that. They can see there are a lot of jobs even here, ads on the radio about German Connects and this and that and the other and where does it actually start? [...] Language education should start at a primary school age, and it’s not happening now they cut the funding for it. [...] I know at the end of the day they are worried about different things as they say like numeracy and literacy, all very much connect to language learning. Literacy is connected to language learning in so many ways [...]. It makes no sense to disconnect one from the

other. [...] Overall I think languages are being ignored on the one hand, and on the other hand you know at higher level, at industrial level employers are crying out for people with languages. Whereas that bridge, the government pretty much dismantled it. You know it's just the last straw, to do that and it wasn't a good idea. I think if they ever want to re-introduce it, it's going to be a lot harder to now. But yeah, that is something they obviously didn't think about at the time, and they didn't have the money to fund it. (T1, GT)

Undoubtedly this teacher is extremely passionate about the teaching of languages at primary level and sees it as a huge advantage to learners and her approach to teaching is very child-centred and culture orientated. In summary here, are the main reasons she finds language learning important.

Figure 2



5.2.4.2 School 1

Overall, both teachers in S1 had an attitude of ambivalence towards foreign language learning. This ambivalence was highlighted in their responses. The teachers felt that their attitude towards language learning is positive. "I think my attitude would be, would be very high" (T3, S1). In response to being asked if there was enough time given to French, they responded as follows: "If you wanted the children to speak it fluently, probably not but I don't think that you could afford to give any more time within our own curriculum because you would be compromising some other core subjects. I don't think it will ever happen" (T3, S1).

They see language learning as important but yet are unsure how it could even be properly introduced into primary schools. At primary level, the curriculum is already very extensive, and many teachers find it difficult to allocate all the time necessary to the eleven subjects²⁷, which does not include Religious Education, so that brings the total to twelve. This is without having an additional subject to teach, so this response is a pretty realistic response, given the situation at primary level. Previous studies in this area also highlighted this difficulty of an overloaded curriculum (Harris & Conway, 2002, Harris and O' Leary, 2009a&b, & MLPSI, 2012).

“37% of teachers failed to achieve the time allocation specified by Project Management (1.5 hours tuition each week)[...] Staff members were much more likely (46%) to fail to provide the prescribed 1.5 hours than visiting teachers (20%). An overcrowded curriculum and timetabling problems were cited as the main reasons for this failure” (MLPSI, 2012, 43).

It is entirely understandable that the teachers saw an additional subject somewhat of an impingement on their own time with the class, as the curriculum is already overloaded, even though they said the MLPSI was beneficial. This pressure has only increased, due to the increase in the time given to literacy and numeracy (NCCA, 2011), and this was previously mentioned. This came at the same time the initiative was cut, and it was interconnected. There is a vast amount of empirical research which advocates that learning how to read and write in any language contributes to the development of an fundamental ‘common language proficiency’ in young learners, and that languages are inter-reliant and that literacy skills and learning strategies acquired in one language can be transferred to other languages (Ó Duibhir and Cummins, 2012:11).

The teachers in S1 believed language to benefit, but on the contrary believed it to be imposing on the time devoted to the other subjects in the curriculum. “While we know it is an

²⁷ http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Early_Childhood_and_Primary_Education/Primary-Education/Primary_School_Curriculum/ (accessed on 12/05/2015)

advantage to the children, I mean we are still trying to get all our time, as much time as we can on other subjects, so a mixed review really” (T2, S1).

T3, S1 also agreed and felt that an hour and a half was too much out of her own class time. “I would agree you know, I thought last year the hour and a half a huge, a huge amount of time to take away from our week, you know it was a huge draw from other subjects. This year I found it a lot easier because we only have one class a week. “It is definitely a lot more manageable” (T3, S1).

According to the teachers in S1, on a whole, the attitude to the MLPSI in S1 was a case of indifference or even somewhat negative. “Even some parents have questioned the value of it [...], especially with the amount of them not taking it on at secondary school, and [...] how much they are learning from it” (T3, S1).

Furthermore, on news of the abolishment, there were no strong negative reactions to it amongst the school community, according to those teachers interviewed for this study. T3 mentions the following: “Yes I don’t think that there was you know there wasn’t outrage over it.” T2 also agrees with this statement, and they both seemed happy to have more time with their classes. This suggested to the researcher that people within the school community showed indifference and even questioned how much of a benefit the entire initiative was. The value of the teachers in S1 of such an initiative could be considered by some as questionable, as there is a lack of coherency regarding a lack of a national framework for the teaching of languages. “People would have questioned maybe the value of it [and] the amount of time that was given to it” (T2, S1). What is interesting to look at in the children’s responses is if this has impacted upon their attitude towards languages in any way and if the attitudes amongst the children in the two schools vary significantly. The attitude of the learners would often be impacted by that of the teacher, school community and parents. The language teacher in S1 was not interviewed, and she would play a vital role in motivating the children in the language class, so this cannot

be taken fully into account, but can be looked at in terms of how the children perceive the teacher and the class itself.

On the other hand, the language was somewhat valued within the school, because the ML was being continued and supplemented by the school but they were unsure how the situation has changed nationally since 2012.

Teacher 3: *We obviously as a school decided, it is beneficial, and it's worth keeping on. [...] nationally I don't know.*

Teacher 2: *I don't know nationally, I don't know how other schools are dealing with it. (I1, S1)*

This was a very positive step and shows a somewhat positive outlook toward FLs in the school at some level, even if it was coming from the parents, principal or other community members. Although throughout the interviews the attitude towards French in the school seemed that of indifference, the members of the community also recognised the importance and value of early foreign language education and were promoting the language within the school.

5.2.4.3 School 2

Within this context, this school strives to promote fluency and a love for the Irish language. The teacher interviewed in S2 was a class teacher at the school for a different class level and was the language teacher for the fifth and sixth class also. Regarding attitudes to both foreign languages and Irish, they were extremely positive.

School leadership is of paramount importance when looking at the overall school ethos, including the aspect of language promotion. Principals have a vital role to play in the implementation of policies and programmes.

The principal is pivotal in creating a shared vision for the curriculum in the school and in providing dynamic and inspirational curriculum leadership. The process of curriculum development will allow the principal, together with the staff, to identify educational goals that are both relevant and realistic and that will reflect the needs, aptitudes and circumstances of the pupils, and the unique character of the school and its environment. (NCCA, 1999a:27)

The school principal in S2 had a very positive attitude and received further specialised education in the area of language teaching, which would contribute to her attitudes towards language learning. This, undeniably, has an enormous impact on how French is taught and perceived within the school. “[...] the principal is very supportive of it. She did a Masters herself in languages; in Irish and you know there is obviously positive attitude within the school towards it” (T4, S2).

According to the teacher, the pupils also had a positive attitude to language learning. “They do realise they need to speak the language to perfect them [languages], and they can see, you know, with their use of Irish from junior infants to sixth class, that they can see an obvious improvement there because they are totally immersed in it” (T4, S2).

Many people may argue that promoting Irish is being privileged in Ireland to the detriment of foreign languages. However, the Gaelscoil in question had a more positive outlook to foreign languages and research has shown that Gaelscoil education may also enhance the performance of pupils in acquiring other languages, as the learning of different languages is interconnected (Bild and Swain, 1989; Groseva, 1998; Valencia and Cenoz, 1992 cited in Nikolov, 2009, 8).

Being bilingual actually enhances the attitudes of learners to other languages. Nonetheless, it is vital importance within this research, not to over-generalise and to look at this a specific case. This Gaelscoil model reflects the overall curricular and cultural advantages of immersion education outlined by Baker, 2003 and adapted by Gaelscoileanna Teo.²⁸ This includes curriculum, communicative, cultural and cognitive advantages, which will be elaborated on in more detail in the pupils’ responses. One could also assume that in a Gaelscoil all the staff are somewhat specialised in the area of language teaching and immersion education. Hence it is not surprising that the staff members would have a positive attitude. The

²⁸ (<http://www.gaelscoileanna.ie/immersion-education/buntaisti-an-oideachais-datheangaigh/?lang=en> (accessed on 02/09/2014))

all-Irish school in this study took a whole school approach to the promotion of language and culture.

49.4% of class teachers felt that pupils' previous experience of learning Irish benefited their learning of the modern language. Virtually all class teachers in Irish-medium schools (92.5%) reported benefits of this nature. Benefits included:

Language awareness and skills transfer across languages (69.1%);

Pupils are more open to learning new languages (12.2%) (MLPSI, 2012: 44)

T4, like the teachers in S1, also feels that French was not seen as important, as other subjects within the school and of the curricular pressures faced by teachers at primary level and that it was perceived within the school as not being as important as other subjects and activities.

[...] I do sometimes think you know if a teacher is under pressure in trying to complete other areas of the curriculum, and there is such an emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and we had confirmation only last month, and they spent a lot and they had to spend a lot of time, because we were the choir for singing, and I do sometimes feel not so much guilty, but I just feel that I am impinging on her [teaching] time and on the fact that you know obviously given to fact that I had half an hour to teach French it's not considered. Well, the perception is that it is not as important as the other subjects. (T4, S2)

Even though it was not seen as important as other curricular areas, one can easily see the strong presence of the FL within the school. When the MLPSI was abolished, this school also had a strong reaction to it and wrote letters of objection to the former Minister for Education; "We actually wrote letters to Ruairi Quinn at the time" (T4, S2). She also spoke about it at great length and with a lot of passion, which makes it clear she has a very positive attitude. She was at an in-service day when she heard the news and her response was as follows:

So that was like earth shattering to hear especially for the French teachers who came from France who were being paid by the government through that scheme. They literally found out that morning that news filtered through and the coordinator like it was literally asked to him if there was a point to us being here because we won't get any more further funding, [...] The man himself who was giving the course was employed, you know through the MLPSI, and he was unsure as to where he stood. He didn't know if he was going to go back teaching after being on secondment by the MLPSI for nearly five or six years. So people walked out during that course day. We carried on but [...] people

were very down about it [...] the class themselves I explained it to them and we did write letter of protestation or whatever to Ruairí Quinn and they all signed off on it, and we wrote emails as a school ourselves just giving, trying to really merge dissatisfaction with the decision. So we were quite upset about it the fact that you know the hour was cut to half an hour now, and we are literally trying to squeeze it in while dancing is going on in another class so I can come in and do it. (T4, S2)

The teacher went into very specific detail of when she found out and her reaction to it clearly showed how upset and dissatisfied she was about it. She also pointed out, that others lost their jobs and that nationally it had a huge impact, even though her school was not as affected as S1 or other schools nationally. Not only as being seen as a vital element within the school, but parents were also viewed to have a positive outlook to language learning and according to the interviewee; it is something the parents are interested in as well. “It [the foreign language, French] is an important element within the school. I know on open night and that parents will ask [about French]” (T4, S2). This also was not surprising as many parents who send their children to Gaelscoileanna see the benefits of bilingualism and language learning in general (INTO, 2004).

5.2.5 Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation is also a key factor in promoting a positive attitude towards French within the schools teaching the language. The school community gains a sense of achievement through attaining acknowledgement from external sources for their efforts. One key extrinsic motivator was the blue flag for European citizenship, which S2 in this study was pursuing to acquire and within this French was a key component. “We (the school) are working towards a blue flag, which is a European, it promotes European citizenship so the French actually plays an important role in participating in that programme and we are still awaiting a reply as to regards to whether we will get in” (T4, S2).

It is clear that the approach taken by this school to promote a positive attitude towards language and culture was a whole school approach and seems to have been working quite well. This ethos also could be clearly seen by the researcher before any research in the setting was undertaken, due to French being showcased on the school's website and a language policy being clearly visible there. The website involved children being motivated to showcase their work and getting it recognised. The pupils then would have a sense of achievement and pride, especially if their work was recognised. The MLPSI ran various competitions, including one for best website and the school in this study, also entered and won this, giving them a great sense of achievement and pride of their time involved in the MLPSI.

[...] even in our case my school they ran a competition as regards the best website and best French section in the website and that was two years ago and we you know used that as a motivation to update really and renew our website constantly, and we did that year, and we won the most promising website that year. So that was a great boost for us so in that sense they were great cause they gave us I suppose [...]. Just they motivated us and helped us with a sense of achievement even they would issue certificates and the end of every year for the students in sixth class who are moving on and even that in itself, 'cause we would have a yearly presentation than at the end of the year, and that was just great for them" (T4).

The teachers in S1 did not mention extrinsic motivators; however, it will be investigated in the context of the pupils' responses and attitude in the next section of the chapter.

5.2.6 Summary/Findings

5.2.6.1 Overview

In summary, according to the teachers in this study, the teaching of languages could be improved and is not on par with countries in central Europe, although Irish is taught instead of a foreign language and is taught from an early age here. On a whole, foreign languages are seen to have little importance at primary level in Ireland. In both schools, Irish was considered to be

paramount and an enormous amount of time is devoted to Irish²⁹, especially in S2, due to Irish being their L1.

The teachers have mixed views on languages at primary level, but they all agree that languages are important. The German language teacher and the Gaelscoil teacher (Teacher 4) have more positive attitudes in general, but this is not so surprising given that they teach the languages and are language ambassadors for the school.

In S1, a visiting teacher was teaching French to fifth and sixth class pupils for 45 minutes per week. This teacher may not have had previous training as a primary teacher but is a native French speaker. In S2, there was a class teacher at the school who taught French for 30 minutes per week. There was a specific policy in place within the school for the provision of French.

5.2.6.2 The Irish Language

In general, the attitude towards Irish was positive among the teachers in this study. All of the teachers mentioned the amount of time being devoted to Irish in the curriculum and that being one of the core subjects; it has a prominent place within the *Primary School Curriculum* and in the *Languages Act 2003*.

The teachers in S2 and the German language teacher highlighted some interesting challenges and shortcomings of language education in Ireland; including that pupils “have come through maybe 16 years of schooling and wouldn’t be able to hold a conversation in Irish”. The focus is on the instrumental value of the language, not really the spoken language. However this has changed somewhat a secondary level with the introduction of the Junior Certificate oral exam and an increase in the points allocated for the oral exam for the Leaving

²⁹ L1 5 hours for 1st to sixth class and 4.5 hours for Infants
L2 3.5 hours for 1st to sixth class and 2 hours for infants (INTO, 2012)

Certificate oral exam.³⁰ One could question, for example, the “sráith pictiúirí” (picture sequences) in the oral exam and to what extent pupils learn off answers, rather than speaking spontaneously, as they are given the picture sequences before their exam.

Regarding primary school education, the curriculum is very much communication-based and child-centred in its approach. Having learnt Irish for eight years at primary level, one would expect the pupils’ language competence to be fairly good, and they should even at that stage be able to have a conversation on various topics, so the problem does not just begin at secondary school level.

The attitude of T1 (GT) towards Irish was also positive, but she believes that Ireland compares “fairly poorly” with Europe regarding foreign language teaching, “except for Gaelic and the only kind of emphasis that’s being put on any language in primary schools, I think is Gaelic” (T1). She also suggests as mentioned before that Irish is privileged over other languages and believes that a third language should be taught to pupils in primary school. Irish has been given an important status in education, but it does not necessarily hinder learners, but it actually can help them.

In S2, more time is accorded to Irish as a curricular subject, and Irish is used for about 90% of the teaching time and the teachers in S2 had a more positive outlook not just to Irish, but to languages in general. The teacher highlighted that being in an immersion school setting, aids learners: “they can see that it’s vital that they practice their language in order to perfect it” (T4). They can see their improvements and when learning another language will use what they learnt in Irish to learn a third language.

³⁰https://www.examinations.ie/schools/S_90_10_The_irish_Examination_in_the_Leaving_Certificate_for_2012_onwards.pdf (accessed on 13/06/2016)

5.2.6.3 Modern Languages

One main outcome in this study was that the Gaelscoil had a more positive outlook to the teaching and promotion of French than the English medium counterpart, and they accord more time to Irish than the English medium school. Many people argue, including T1 in this study, that Irish is privileged over other languages; however, this is necessarily the case. It is based more on funding than anything else, and if the modern language was integrated with the other curricular areas, there may be sufficient time there to teach it (MLPSI, 2012).

S2 in this case study proves that acquiring proficiency in more than one language and getting a good foundation in it, can be beneficial when learning and acquiring a third language. Through using a language, which is not their mother tongue as their L1 in this setting, it also helps to promote additional learning, as to giving the language vibrancy and purpose rather than seeing it is not just a subject to be learned, but as a means of learning new information. It gives the language meaning and purpose. As mentioned earlier in this chapter and in Chapter Two, there are many benefits of being bilingual; therefore a bilingual educational setting will pass these benefits on to their pupils. This also goes against the argument of Gaelscoileanna as being only accessible for the elite. Some people argue that this is the case, these arguments are often “anecdotal”, and it was previous research has proven this not to be the case, and this also was reflected in the Gaelscoil in this study (MasMoury, 2010).

This school community, on the other hand, took it upon itself to provide a teacher to teach French and see it as part of the school identity and have their language policy and framework suitable for their specific setting. French was also seen as a part of its identity. The English medium school saw French as an extra-curricular subject, an addition it is “separate” to what they do within their class, as they do not teach it. Irish is not promoted as much here as in S2, and attitudes towards foreign languages were not as strong there. Therefore putting more

emphasis on Irish, in the above school context, may promote and assist in the acquisition of a FL. However, there are other factors to consider in S2, such as the whole school approach, the support of the principal and having a staff member of the school teaching French. These factors would play a key role here, and in S1, due to a visiting teacher coming in to teach the modern language, it was seen more as an extra-curricular activity and something outside of what the class teachers' jobs entailed.

5.2.6.4 Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation as discussed above serves a vital role within S2's promotion of French. It adds a sense of achievement and purpose, and it gives the children recognition of their learning. The aspects which S2 used as extrinsic motivator, was updating the French page on their website, entered website competition, recognised the children's achievements by giving them out certificates in recognition of their work and progress and also working as a school community to obtain a blue flag for European citizenship. It is clear that these aspects, could have nothing but a positive effect on language promotion within the school and this will be taken into consideration when looking at the pupil's interviews in the next part of this chapter.

Chapter 5.3: Pupils' Responses

5.3 Method of Data Collection

Children from both schools in this study were asked to complete language portraits to gain an insight into their language identities (Martin, 2012: 13). In essence, identity is a unique and compound term, and it is the particular aspects and traits, which individuals have to make them distinctive. Identities can be described as a way of organising information about oneself, originate within social contexts and are products of individual experiences. (Clayton & Opatow, 2003: 59)

A major limitation in using pupils' visual depictions, in this case, language portraits, as a data resource is the subjective nature of its content as well as the overall image not giving a true representation. Bland considers the issue of "student voice" in image-based research noting that triangulating the data with participant discussion and/or written text is a necessary means of 'confirming the primary data obtained through visual methods' (Bland, 2012: 236). It is, therefore, necessary to ensure that any research which uses visual methods as a primary resource seeks an alternative form of data to support this. An investigation carried out by Coates and Coates (2006: 222) serves to reaffirm the fact that a second source of data is necessary for making sense of and analysing the visual sources children provide us with, as well as coming to an understanding of the child's creative and conceptual development. The latter is not of much relevance here given the task and age of the pupils, the participants in this study are all eleven or twelve years of age. In light of attaining a more unique and unambiguous form of data, the participants were asked in group interviews to explain the reasoning behind their portraits, and this is the main focus point of the analysis. The portrait not only acted as part of the data but also was helpful for the pupils as a warm-up task to get them to reflect and think about the topic. The interviews were recorded, notes were taken, and they were transcribed and later coded, as elaborated on in the next part of this sub-chapter.

5.3.1 Results and Discussion

After the language portraits had been compiled by the pupils, they were interviewed to gain further insight into the topic and to confirm information. Only half the students in the two sixth classes in S1 were interviewed, due to the numbers in the school and an equal amount of participants were chosen from both classes at random, but all of the pupils in S2 were interviewed. Once the data was collected, the interviews were transcribed, and the data was coded using the Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz, 2006: 4). The codes and themes were not chosen arbitrarily but according to the relevance and also the frequency with which they appeared in the data. While further patterns did re-emerge minimally, these were not frequent enough to require discussion or further explanation in this study. One major problem encountered, when coding the children's data, was that there were big chunks of the data which were could not be coded for varying reasons³¹.

The most noteworthy and frequently occurring codes/themes which emerged in the interviews and/or the language portraits were the following:

1. Status of Language
2. Language Attitude
3. Language Motivators/Language Motivation
4. Teaching Methodologies

³¹ Reasons included incomplete language portraits and explanations of the portraits which were inadequate.

5.3.2 Status of Language

Similar to the teacher interviews, status prevailed as a theme within the data during the coding process, but the theme was more indirectly spoken about and not dealt with as the main theme or as something of enormous importance, given the information gleaned from the teachers. Status of language in the respective schools is an important aspect to investigate when looking at language attitude amongst learners. The attitude of the children to languages is greatly impacted by their experience in education, the attitudes of their parents and teachers and their interests. All these aspects could not be looked at, so the parents and other school representatives were not interviewed, the teachers gave their view on the attitude of the parents and whole school towards languages, which was already referred to in the previous part of this chapter.

As already discussed, S1 had a visiting teacher coming in once a week to teach French to fifth and sixth class pupils. Pupils in S1 stated that some weeks they did not have the lesson. Some participants seemed not to take the class very seriously either and were disinterested in learning French. In the language portraits, what could be clearly seen in relation to status was that the amounts for each language coloured are often less for a language, which they use less frequently. Take the following description for example: “I put French in the pinky finger because my pinky finger is used very little” (Pupil 5, Interview 2, S1). Also in the interview, he added that he still knew how to use it. The picture was coloured primarily blue, a significant amount for Irish and a minute part coloured for French. To the researcher, this reflects the current situation within this school quite well. They had French once a week for 45 minutes, and the pupils also specified that sometimes the class was cancelled. It was unsurprising that several of the participants allocated greater amounts for the L1, English, and devoted less to the lesser known languages, and examples of this can be seen below.

In S2, a class teacher for another class within the school teaches French, and the school has a clear policy in place for the teaching of the foreign language. Posters could be seen in the different languages in the school and not just in the classroom and on their website they had a French page, where some of the pupils had showcased their work.

As already uncovered from the data analysed, in S2 language, especially the Irish language, had prestige amongst the school community. One of the teachers in the school taught French, and there was a specific policy in place for teaching the language within the school. They were twinned with a school and wrote to pen pals in the school in France, which gave the pupils an outlet to use their knowledge of the foreign language. They only received 30 minutes of language instruction in the foreign language per week, which was less than the participants in S1 received.

The pupils in S2 also speak about the language situation in Ireland regarding how it is comparable to Europe. Many believe it to be about the same, but many others believe it to be worse than Europe:

Interviewer: How do you think Ireland compares to other countries in Europe or around the world in teaching foreign languages? Do you think we are better than them or are they better than us?

Pupil 2: Actually I think we are very similar.

Pupil 6: I think we are on the same level.

Pupil 5: Like, because we saw in French that they are learning English, and we are learning French, and we are kind of connected (Interview 4, S2).

The pupils in Interview 4 believe that they are on the same level, simply because they are learning a foreign language. What is noteworthy here is that they did not make any reference to language competency and oral fluency, so this is a very simplistic way of viewing the language situation, but it also reflects that some of the children were not aware of the language situation in Europe, and this had been anticipated to some degree. What must be taken into consideration here is that the pupils in this school are not the norm and would have a

better than average language competency, consequently this setting may be comparable to other schools in the EU.

Some pupils went on to say in another interview that they perceived themselves a bit better than other schools, as they know three languages, which is in a sense accurate to some degree when looking at this school in comparison to other schools in Ireland. “We might be a bit better as most schools learn French and Irish and we know English already, so that is three languages” (Pupil 2, Interview 2, S1). Another pupil points out that this view is flawed and not entirely accurate and this lead to an interesting follow-up dialogue.

Pupil 6: I think we might be a bit worse, I mean not as good, because if you go to Italy or some place, they always speak English and they know how to speak it fluently, and we barely know how to speak French at the moment.

Pupil 5: And not everyone in Ireland knows how to speak Irish fluently.

Pupil 4: Yeah.

Pupil 3: And they should be taught.

Pupil 2: It is their native language, so it is kind of shocking.

Pupil 1: Whenever when you are in a restaurant, and there are foreign people there, they always know how to speak English when they are putting in orders and stuff.

Pupil 6: Yeah (Interview 2, S2).

The excerpt from Interview 2 is very detailed and points out a few of the key areas, where Ireland is lagging behind in language teaching and learning. They believe that oral competence in Irish is poor and that it should be taught, as it is “their native language”. It is interesting that pupil 2 using “their” not our, as it dissociates themselves from the problem and suggests they see it as a national problem but not something which directly applies to them. This also suggests language confidence and a positive language outlook, which is to be expected from a Gaelscoil setting. They believe everyone should learn Irish and be able to speak it to a high standard, and this is for cultural reasons. One pupil also said that foreigners could speak basic English which highlights the point that many Irish people cannot even hold a simple conversation in Irish. This is even after 13/14 years of education. This reflects the teachers’ responses as well and literature in the area of the status of Irish in Ireland.

5.3.3 Language Attitude towards Irish

One of the most frequently occurring themes within the data is language attitude, which includes the attitude towards the language and the language situation. Overall the attitudes in S1 were very mixed and on a whole not highly positive, and in contrast to this, S2 had a very positive attitude towards the language and language situation. All the children in S2, who completed languages portraits and were interviewed, had a highly positive attitude to language learning, both the foreign language, French and Irish and this can be seen from the findings below.

5.3.3.1 School 1

In S1 many of the participants had a less positive view of the Irish language. In total about a third of pupils in S2 said they disliked Irish. “Pupil 3: I don’t really like Irish” (Interview 2). Upon asking several pupils why they disliked a language, they either said it was difficult or boring. The following are a few responses, which depict this. Pupil 3 in Interview 1 found Irish a very unexciting language. This student’s lack of interest may be because he has no interest in the language, and thus having a strong negative attitude towards it.

Interviewer: Irish, ok. And why do you dislike it?

Pupil 3: I just find it a really dull and boring language” (Interview 1, S1).

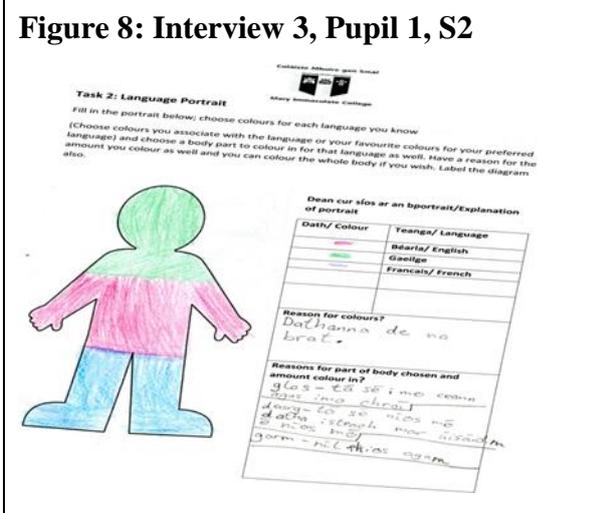
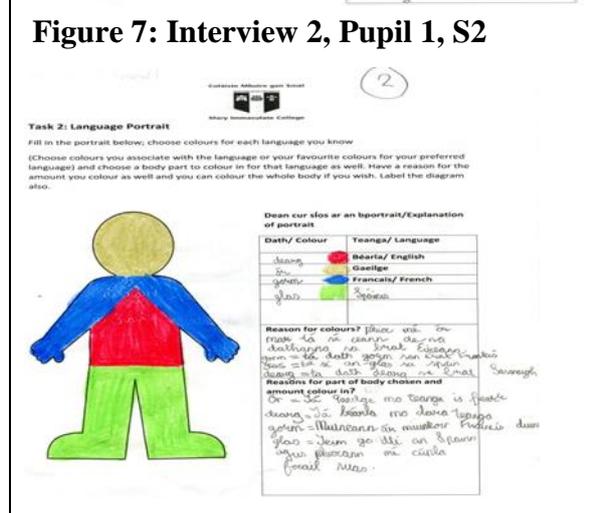
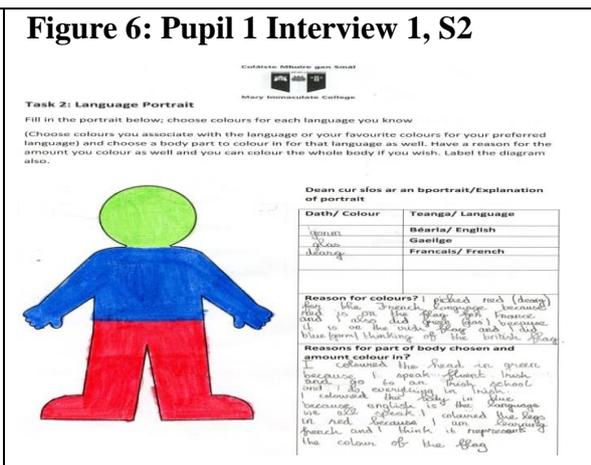
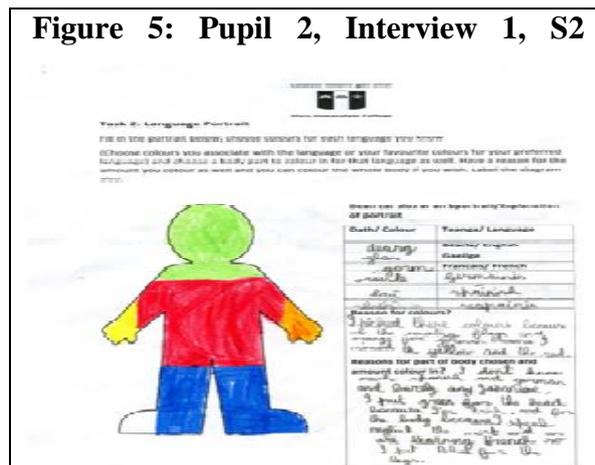
Not only did pupils find Irish boring, but it was also perceived as a difficult language by some of the pupils in S1. The following illustration and description depict this. “I put Irish in the chest, because it is like breathing, sometimes it gets hard” (Pupil 3, Interview 2). In the interview, this participant added that he had asthma, so this was the underlying reason why this pupil chose the chest for Irish, and it shows has a negative attitude towards learning Irish. He finds it difficult to learn and finds learning Irish to be a negative, unpleasant experience. (See Figure 3)

find someone with a positive attitude towards Irish than other languages. One can only hypothesise as to why Irish is seen in this way by the participants. One reason may be that it was seen as a language within the school but not something people use as a means of communication outside the education system, as it is not commonly spoken, and that it is a compulsory component at all stages of primary and secondary level, unless the pupils are exempt from the subject. There are also many other different factors which could have contributed here, such as their education and how the language is being taught to them and the teachers' and parents' attitudes. The attitude of the parents is not a focus point of this study but is noteworthy to point out as a possible influential factor.

5.3.3.2 School 2

The most notable response in the Gaelscoil was the very positive attitude to the Irish language and the strong sense of cultural identity linked to this. Most, if not all of the pupils in S2 showed a fondness towards Irish, but this is unsurprising giving the educational setting. This reflects the other research already discussed in the previous chapter. This fondness was spoken about openly or indirectly by 100% of the Gaelscoil participants. The children had a strong sense of cultural identity linked to the Irish language: "I had green for the head and shoulders to represent that [...] without the head, the body would not be working. Without Irish, (...) we would barely be, like, Irish citizens" (Pupil 2, Interview 1, S2). Irish identity "is aided by the heritage language and culture being celebrated in the classroom" (Baker, 2003: 100). The pupils in S2 show a stronger sense of language identity. They see a need to learn Irish and sees that it is of vital important to learn Irish, as, without it, we would not be proper "Irish citizens". As elaborated on previously, learning Irish is more about preserving cultural heritage, than a means of communication.

Anyone who speaks Irish can also speak English, and this may also be the reason that most of the children in S1 did not have such a positive outlook to learning Irish, as it is not seen as “useful” as other languages in terms of needing to speak it. The following are a few examples, depicting what was coloured in for different languages, and when looking at how Irish is represented, it reinforces the idea that the pupils do feel that Irish is crucial to them.



Pupil 1 (Interview 3, S2) stated that she coloured green for Irish and “tá sé i mo ceann agus i mo chroí.” (Translated as: “it is in my head and my heart.”) The reference to the heart especially is a signifier that her attitude is extremely positive, but it is not being suggested that placement of a language always suggests this. As with some of the portraits the placement was not of importance or the children had different reasons for their answers. In the portraits above Irish got placed in the most prominent position, all the participants chose the head for Irish and most

used the colour green. Pupil 1, interview 2 used gold “óir = Tá Gaeilge mo teanga is fearr.” It was this student’s favourite colour, but also a colour which would signify wealth and success and it is clear that this pupil also values Irish highly. It is evident here that the Irish language is seen as something to be treasured and is of vital importance. Pupil 1 in Interview 1 also stated the reason why he coloured in the head for Irish, and it is that he is fluent in speaking Irish, and this may be the underlying factor impacting on the responses here, as all pupils interviewed in the Gaelscoil were fluent in Irish.

The following are other examples of body parts of importance being used for the various languages, and it is apparent Irish was given a prominent place in all the portraits in S2. In Figure 9 and 10, the colours orange and blue respectively were used for Irish, so green was not used all the time and both pupils mentioned using their favourite colours to colour in the portrait.

Figure 9: Interview 1, Pupil 3, S2

Task 2: Language Portrait
Fill in the portrait below; choose colours for each language you know
(Choose colours you associate with the language or your favourite colours for your preferred language) and choose a body part to colour in for that language as well. Have a reason for the amount you colour as well and you can colour the whole body if you wish. Label the diagram also.

Dean cur síos ar an bportrait/Explanation of portrait

Dath/ Colour	Teanga/ Language
dearg	Béarla/ English
oráiste	Gaeilge
glas	Fraincis/ French
glas	Spáinnis

Reason for colours?
The reason for my colour is that it is my favourite colour.

Reasons for part of body chosen and amount colour in?
The reason for my body parts are that they are the most important.

Figure 10: Interview 1 Pupil 5, S2

Task 2: Language Portrait
Fill in the portrait below; choose colours for each language you know
(Choose colours you associate with the language or your favourite colours for your preferred language) and choose a body part to colour in for that language as well. Have a reason for the amount you colour as well and you can colour the whole body if you wish. Label the diagram also.

Dean cur síos ar an bportrait/Explanation of portrait

Dath/ Colour	Teanga/ Language
corcair	Béarla/ English
glas	Gaeilge
oráiste	Fraincis/ French
oráiste	Spáinnis

Reason for colours?
I picked these colours because they are going from my favourite to my least favourite colours to my best.

Reasons for part of body chosen and amount colour in?
I chose these body parts because I put my favourite colours in the more important parts of the body and my least favourite colours in the less important parts of the body.

The head and chest were used for English and Irish respectively in both the above portraits. In terms of the chest, it is noteworthy, that many Gaelscoil participants chose to colour this for Irish and for a positive reason, and one could interpret it as colouring in near the heart, due to fondness towards the language in this context. It confirms that the pupils in S2 do, in fact, have a positive attitude, many pupils coloured in the most important body parts to least important for

the various languages and Irish featured very high on this scale. One could argue that the head is the most important part of the body, and many chose this for English. This also confirms that they also view English as imperative and it is most of the children's L1 outside of school, so it is to be expected that pupils would represent it as such.

Overall, all the participants in S2 had a very positive attitude to the Irish language, and the examples discussed above confirm this statement. There are various factors, such as children's interests and ability which could have influenced the responses. The most plausible reasons for the positive outlook are as follows:

a. Gaelscoil education

Irish is used as the language of communication and instruction within the school. They have an outlet for using the language and are all bilingual speakers, which has many benefits when it comes to language acquisition. They did not see Irish as just a subject but an outlet for learning and communicating with their friends in school. This would foster a positive attitude towards the language and motivate the children to learn the language.

b. The Attitude of the Teachers, School Community and Parents

All the class teachers and staff in the Gaelscoil are bilingual and have a love for the Irish language so they would also pass on to the pupils. Given the importance of Irish within the school setting, it is clear that the pupils would also develop a positive association towards Irish. The principal has a Masters of Education in the area of language teaching and is very proactive about promoting languages (Irish and French) within the school.

The parents must also have a somewhat positive attitude to Irish, or they want their children to develop a positive attitude towards it and want them to be bilingual, given that they sent their children to a Gaelscoil. Other factors might play a role here, such as the location and

size of the school and its academic reputation. If the parents had a negative view of language learning, they would not send their children to a language school. Some of the children would be from a family background where the parents value education and may be from a more academic background, as this type of schooling attracts these kinds of pupils even though it is an inclusive setting (MasMoury, 2010).

5.3.4 The Attitude towards Foreign Languages

According to a previous more extensive questionnaire study conducted by Harris & Conway in 2012:

81% of pupils agreed, slightly or strongly, that 'learning another language, besides English, can be very enjoyable'; 73% agreed that they 'really enjoy learning French'. Most notably, the vast majority (84%) agreed with the statement 'I am glad that I began learning French in primary school rather than leaving it until later'. Only 7% disagree (MLPSI, 2012, 40).

Generally, in Harris' study the learners had a somewhat positive outlook to learning a foreign language and in this study it will look at the attitudes in two schools towards French, looking a learning situation and the language itself. Overall most children agreed somewhat that it was of some importance/benefit to learn languages, although some participants in S1 did not believe it applied to them or it just applied to getting a head start for secondary school in S1. In S2, most enjoyed learning a foreign language; however, in S1 the views were a mixed and somewhat ambivalent amongst the participants. There are a variety of factors which influenced these responses; the different educational settings, an English medium and an Irish medium school, the policy within the school itself and how the language was taught and the attitude of the school community, especially the children's parents, the teachers and management.

5.3.4.1 School 1

The attitude towards language amongst the pupils was similar to that of the teachers; it was rather ambivalent mainly, and most of the pupils did see languages as of some importance, but not overly so, and they had an attitude of indifference towards it. In contrast, some of the children had a strong negative attitude but others somewhat positive, and the children's individual experiences of learning languages did come into play as well. The children answered the following question: Are languages important? This issue got mixed responses and on the whole there was pretty much a 50/50 divide in the attitude here of the children.

“Pupil 2: Not, they are not so important, (...) because it's not like you are going to need languages all the time. You are only going to need one language for the country that you are living in for the rest of your life.

Pupil 3: Not really, if I knew I was moving to Spain in the next week or two maybe I'd learn Spanish, but I don't see other FLs as a big priority.

Pupil 4: (...) I think they are quite important (...) Because luckily enough we speak English and most countries, most people in other countries learn English anyway but if like we were speaking a different language we'd have to learn English so it's important to learn other languages, if you want to (...) talk to other people and stuff” (Interview 2 S1).

Pupil 2 (Interview 2) stated that languages are not necessary for everyday life in Ireland, as you do not need to use other languages and that they are only necessary if you were going to move to another country. This implies that the children believed it is only important if one lives in another country that one needs another language; however, there was no reference to needing languages for holidaying or living abroad or for work purposes here. This leads to the assumption that having English as an L1 has impacted on their attitude as they believe that for purposes other than living in the country language competency is not necessary and Pupil 3 agrees with what was said and reaffirms this position too. They saw languages as subjects in school and not inevitably essential unless one migrates. However, Pupil 4 had a different view and stated the Irish are lucky that everyone can speak English and that it is important to learn languages for communication purposes. The children in this particular interview had more negative views than many of the other participants, so one has to consider that Pupil 2's

negative views might have swayed some of the children. This is always something to consider in group interviews, that the participants' responses might have an influence on others.

The need to learn something often motivates learners to learn it. Native English speakers are at a huge disadvantage as regards foreign language learning, as it is not essential to be competent in other languages when travelling due to English being the lingua franca. Native English speakers for the most part can get by using English abroad. The learning of foreign languages in Ireland is not seen as vital for travel and job prospects, but it is a very much subject based in the education system, although languages do increase employability, many Irish still do not have the language competency needed for some jobs. Languages are learnt in school, but are not promoted as they are in other countries such as Germany and other countries within Europe, and the attitude of the teachers, parents and society, in general, this is then reflected by the children.

All the pupils' attitudes were not negative, and the responses in both the interviews and language portraits reflected this. In Interview 2, three out of the four interviewees mentioned they enjoyed learning languages but their language portraits were harder to interpret than S2's portraits, as often there was no reason given for some aspects.

Interviewer: And (...). Do you like learning languages?

Pupil 1: Yes

Interviewer: (...)and why did you colour in the hands orange?

Pupil 1: Because it was the first free space.

(...)

Interviewer: Ok. Do you like learning languages?

Pupil 2: Yeah, because if you were over somewhere, say on holidays, you would need to speak it to get places like if you got lost (...)

Interviewer: So you find learning languages is useful?

Pupil 2: Yeah it is.

Interviewer: And what does everyone else think, do you find languages useful?

Pupil 3: Yes.

Pupil 1: Yes

Pupil 4: Yes, they are useful, but it depends on what the language is (Interview 2, S1).

attitude. Pupil 3 then leads with why languages are important to her, she referred to holidays and speaking with relatives, and when questioned about this she explained that most of her relatives living abroad in Romania and France, and her parents were originally from these perspective countries.

Interviewer: *So do you find languages important or not so important or not so important?*

Pupil 4: *Yeah very important*

Interviewer: *In what way?*

Pupil 3: *In like holidays, pretty much*

Interviewer: *Going on holidays anything else?*

Pupil 3: *Well, relatives if they speak a different language [...], you can learn that language (Interview 4, S1)*

As well as the children's experience in school, the home has a huge impact on the language attitude of the children, and this is reflected by the above excerpt as well. Having relatives or friends who live abroad and who maybe do not have a high level of competency in English, gives the learner a reason to learn the other language. The children in this study, who went on holidays or had relatives abroad, had more positive language attitudes than some of the pupils who did not have contact with any foreign language. This may be because they have experienced the culture and have had a positive association with it and have a motive to learn the language.

5.3.4.2 School 2

The pupils in S2 have a very positive outlook towards foreign languages. The following excerpt from Interviews 2 and 4 outlines this and the similar view was upheld in all the interviews.

Pupil 2: *I like learning languages but at the same time it is always a bit of a challenge, and whenever I am learning languages I imagine the people, the native people of the country (...) I imagine how they hear English and Irish and other languages. (...)*

Pupil 4: *I find languages very important because if you didn't know languages from lots different countries (...) wouldn't, you would be sort of be isolated from the other countries.*

Pupil 5: *I think languages are very important because like you know (...) you couldn't communicate with anyone if you didn't have other languages so languages are important*" (Interview 2 S2).

Interviewer: *Ok, so do you like learning languages?*

Pupil 5: *Yeah.*

All: *Yeah.*

Pupil 4: *Most of the time.*

Pupil 3: *Because it is interesting.*

Pupil 2: *On Friday, we do French and the teacher plays games with us to help us, so it is fun.*

Pupil 3: *Plus, it is really interesting*" (Interview 4, S2).

The children all they cited that they enjoyed/liked learning languages, and they found them valuable. Pupil 2 also stated that it is a challenge but enjoyed learning languages all the same. This shows enthusiasm, willingness to learn and that the learner wants to learn the language. To further children's learning the teacher needs to challenge the ability of the children, and advance their knowledge. There were answers like "because it is interesting" replied by Pupil 3 (Interview 4), and he further emphasises this by adding "plus it is really interesting." The generally seemed to enjoy the class as a group and find it interesting and fun. They appeared to enjoy the games they played in class, but this will be further outlined later in this chapter. The following participant also had an extremely positive outlook to learning languages.

Yeah, I think they are extremely important because if (...) nobody knew each other's languages, it would be impossible to hold any type of diplomacy. I think languages are extremely important and just learning them is fun as well (Pupil 2, Interview 1, S2).

The child believed that languages are "extremely important" and they are enjoyable to learn as well. He also used the term "diplomacy" and how it is of utmost importance when it comes to language learning. As a researcher, I strongly agree with this viewpoint and was somewhat a twelve-year-old child knew what this term meant, and this could be because of the home situation and the parents. Languages, for example, are used a lot within the EU between member countries in the government when discussing political affairs. As Pupil 4 (Interview 2) declared also was that people

would be isolated from other countries; thus he is aware of the importance of diplomacy as well.

A few children did also state, maintaining international communication as a reason to learn languages, but this also will be touched on later in this chapter. As proven the pupils in the Gaelscoil had a very positive viewpoint on language learning, and they also seemed to understand how important and vital languages are. Another indicator of a positive attitude was that children were also aware of the need to learn languages at a young age as it is easier to pick up the younger you are. “Because your brain is like swatty, it soaks up information easier when you are younger” (Pupil 3, Interview 2, S2). As previously discussed, the Gaelscoil model of schooling also had a huge role to play in the results recorded in S2, as well as numerous other factors already outlined.

5.3.5 The Attitude towards the Learning Situation

5.3.5.1 School 1

The attitude towards the learning situation in S1 overall was quite poor. Some pupils also did not have a strong view on this. Therefore they did not give much detail, but the pupil who did speak most about it had more of a negative attitude towards the language situation. One pupil had an unyielding negative opinion towards the learning situation in Ireland and blames the government for having to learn languages.

Pupil 2: It is difficult. If like some people (...) don't want to learn a language but they have to, they are like forced to do it because of the government. They make children do all these languages that they don't actually want to do, and I think that it is not fair so people should not be like forced against language. (Interview 2, S1)

This pupil believed that French should not be compulsory and that the children, who do not want to learn languages, are forced to learn languages. He believed that learners should be

able to choose whether to learn them or not. Foreign languages are not compulsory at any stage of the education system in Ireland, but in this case all fifth and sixth class have to learn it. In many secondary schools, it is mandatory, so it could be used for matriculation purposes, as the German teacher (T1) in this study already pointed out. This child also said that they “mess”, so he does not take the class seriously at all, which was not surprising, given his negative attitude.

Interviewer: *And what type of things do you do in French class?*

Pupil 2: *We mess.*

Pupil 3: *We sometimes...*

Pupil 4: *Yeah. That's true; you mess all right*

Pupil 2: *No (pupil 4) does.*

Pupil 4: *No, I don't. (Interview 2, S1)*

It is evident here that some of the pupils do not take the lesson seriously, and this may also be influenced by the fact it is not seen as an important subject within the school itself. This attitude does not reflect all the children's attitudes, but as it was the strongest response shown by any of the children and led to interesting aspects being spoken about, and other pupils did also have an attitude of indifference or a negative attitude.

Also, another pupil alluded to the fact that they often do not listen to the teacher. As the pupil does not give a reason for this, one can only assume it is because the children are bored and are disinterested. “We sometimes listened to something and then sometimes people started talking, and they are not really listening, they are having their own conversation. So we are not really listening to the teacher” (Pupil 2, Interview 3, S1).

Other pupils were also not entirely satisfied with the learning situation. The pupil here commented on the chalk and talk approach to teaching language and that this is an inadequate way of learning and also that there is little advancement made. “Pupil 2: It's not very good progress. She/The teacher puts something on the board, but that is not learning them. (...) At least our teacher in Irish, she gives us them to learn, and we can't memorise every single word that is up on the board” (Interview 1, S1).

On the other hand, many children stated that the language class was fun and enjoyable, so this reflects a more positive outlook towards the particular language situation. One aspect which was discussed a lot was it was enjoyable when they play games and different activities.

*I love that when we do activities in different languages, like in French, we do Cocorico or Mia Mamma. It's on the computer Pupil 3, Interview 1, S1).
We do like games on the interactive whiteboard and stuff to help us learn.
(Pupil 3, Interview 2, S1)*

The children seemed to like the computer and game-based activities, when do they do take place. They also spoke about a fashion show which they were involved in, and most of them also really enjoyed this.

*Pupil 3: I thought it was really, really fun. (...)
Pupil 1: It was really funny on the catwalk.
Pupil 4: Yeah it was kind of fun and easy. (Interview 1, S1)
Pupil 4: It was fun.
Pupil 3: Learning it was really fun. (Interview 2, S1)*

Some pupils criticised the fashion show somewhat as the music was too loud and you could not hear the others talking. If this were the case, one would question how useful this activity was regarding a learning exercise.

*Pupil 2: (...). It was ok because people weren't really listening.
Pupil 3: Yeah, we could not hear the people that were talking.
Pupil 1: Yeah
Pupil 3: Everybody kept on talking, and the music was on.
Pupil 2: Was pretty bad (...)
Pupil 2: And it was pretty loud
Pupil 4: It was ok. (Interview 3, S1)*

Overall, most of the pupils in S1 did not have a positive attitude towards the learning situation. This was clearly visible in the responses shared by the participants in this setting. There are possible reasons for this, and it could be partially down to the learning situation, the school have no set policy in place, and the language is not integrated into the curriculum as the visiting teacher teaches French and it is seen as something separate to what the class teachers do. Some children brought up that they “mess” in class and that they did not make satisfactory

progress in class. On the other hand, some pupils stated that they enjoyed the class or enjoy it when they play games, and this was also outlined.

5.3.5.2 School 2

As previously cited, one of the pupils in S2 (Pupil 2, Interview 1) found it a real challenge to learn the language. Pupils will not experience a sense of achievement without some challenge involved. Also as pointed out they would not be learning to their full potential. Adams, Alexander, Drummond and Moyles make the following point:

It is the quality of the whole that must be continuously reviewed and evaluated. When children are demonstrably secure, happy, confident, even joyful, it is not necessarily an easy task to ask oneself whether they are, in fact, experiencing a challenging and worthwhile curriculum (2004: 27).

This is very accurate to all aspects of education that unless learners find the subject mentally stimulating, the learners are not learning to their full potential. It is the role of the teacher to tap into all the pupils' potentials and to create a learning environment, where all the children are challenged. In the case of the Gaelscoil setting in this study, the pupils had a positive outlook on the learning situation, as one could gather from the information already touched on in the previous section of this chapter. The teacher utilised games and often also competition as a teaching approach to make the class enjoyable for the children and to keep them motivated.

Usually, we do play games about the phrases we just learnt and that. A few weeks ago we did a game where we had to do actions and shout out a colour in French, and everyone had to copy, and everyone had to find the person starting it. (Pupil 2, Interview 4, S2)

It is clear that they enjoyed learning French in school, and that was visible, even in the language they used. For example, the word fun was recorded eleven times throughout the four interviews when speaking about French or language learning in general.

Pupil 4: *I find learning languages a lot of fun because (...) it's fun to translate all the words you can think of into new words and try to pronounce them.*

Pupil 5: *We do different games to help us learn things better. I think because the teacher thinks that we will learn it if we have more fun when we are learning new colours and words. (...)*

Pupil 4: *Eh we'd learn songs that would be, we learn one thing every week and (...) and we'd have a game for every time we learn something (Interview 2).*

They also discussed some minor things they did not like about the class sometimes. The following excerpt begins with an explanation of an activity the children do in class, which one child likes but another seems to find “boring”. Another thing they declared that they disliked writing down words off the board and also discussed the practicality of that; all of the pupils do not see the board properly. These are not significant issues, but worth noting that the children do have negative comments also about a specific aspect of the learning situation.

Pupil 5: *Like (...) when we throw a ball to someone, and we say a word. (...) Then they have to, like, answer. We ask a question in French, and they have to answer and then they throw it to another person.*

Pupil 2: *That is really boring.*

Pupil 1: *Sometimes there would be like tonnes of lines of words to write down, and we would be like.*

Pupil 2: *And our teacher writes it on, there are two whiteboards and one for each class, and she writes it on the whiteboard for fifth class. So half of sixth class have to go down to the fifth class table to just see what she is writing up.*

Pupil 3: *Yeah (Interview 1, S2).*

5.3.6 Language Motivators

Language motivators are crucial in terms of examining attitude and motivation. According to the pupils in this study, there are many reasons why languages are learnt; ability to communicate with others/holidays and travel (instrumental motivator), academic purposes (extrinsic motivator) and sheer enjoyment (intrinsic motivator). These reasons also correspond with the main motivators outlined by Dörnyei, which was already explored in Chapter 4 (Dörnyei, 2006: 43).

5.3.6.1 The Ability to Communicate with Others

This is the most important aim of language teaching and learning, and the children in both schools see it also as an important motivator in language acquisition, and it is an integrative motive. Languages open up boundaries and if one can speak a language it is easier to travel to that country. Languages are for communication, and it is unsurprising that travel and to converse with others when on holidays, came up in nearly all of the interviews. “Languages are very important because you have to speak them to communicate” (Pupil 5, Interview 2, S2). Ability to communicate with others is essential for job prospects and travelling. Learning a language to communicate with others opens up the opportunity to work and travel to different countries and also employment prospects within Ireland.

Even though the attitude of the pupils in S1 is far less positive than those in S2, the children in the English medium school also see it as an important reason to learn languages. They recognise, regardless if they like the language or not; it is necessary for communication purposes. The following excerpt from an interview in S1 also confirms this.

Pupil 2: Yeah, because if you were over somewhere, say on holidays, you would need to speak it to get places like if you got lost. You would be able to speak the language.

Interviewer: So you find learning languages is useful?

Pupil 2: Yeah it is.

Interviewer: And what does everyone else think do you find languages useful?

Pupil 3: Yes.

Pupil 1: Yes.

Pupil 4: Yes, they are useful, but it depends on what the language is.

(...) Like, I don't, particularly like Irish or French.

Pupil 3: Neither do I. (Interview 3, S1)

5.3.6.1.1 School 1

Within the context of communicating with others, travel featured as a key reason in S1. Here, all the children found languages advantageous for travel purposes and they discuss them. They also consider which languages are more useful in terms of where they want to travel to, so they look at the instrumental value of the language also. Irish comes up here as a language the children do not like and it suggests, they do not find a use for it outside of school and would maybe be more open to learning languages spoken in countries they want to travel to. The following question was asked: *Should everyone learn French?* The below are responses to this question:

Pupil 2: *No.*

Interviewer: *No?*

Pupil 1: *Yeah. (...), because, it's, it is like a skill that you kind of have to learn, because in secondary you will be doing a load of languages and stuff. It probably would; it would be better getting a head start and stuff.*

Interviewer: *Ok and do you think everyone. (Pause) Do you think, (...) learning a language prepares you for secondary school?*

Pupil 1: *Yeah*

Pupil 3: *I agree with (Pupil 1) I think it is important to know languages.*

Interviewer: *Ok and what about you?*

Pupil 4: *Yes.*

Interviewer: *Yes, and why?*

Pupil 4: *Because when you go into secondary, you won't know as much because you didn't get a head start in primary" (Interview 1, S1).*

Pupil 1: *Because you get (to) learn different words and how to speak, and it's like handy because if you ever go on holidays, you'll know some. You'll know how to speak it with the people in case they don't understand you.*

Pupil 3: *Like (name of pupil one) said, I find if you go on holidays it would be fun and also I love that when we do activities in different languages, like in French, we do Cocorico or Mia Mamma. It's on the computer.*

Pupil 4: *(...) it's good because (...) if you speak different languages you are able to communicate with people in different parts of the world." (Interview 1, S1)*

In Interview 4, the children had similar responses:

All: *Yeah.*

Pupil 3: *It's easier.*

Pupil 4: *If you go to a country and already know the language you would be able to be talking to everyone there in that language.*

Pupil 5: *You would be able to go around to different places more if you were able to speak it fluently.*

Pupil 6: *Even if it was just the basics it would be better (Interview 4, S1)*

Most of the children believe they are useful, but also acknowledge that some languages are more useful than others, as they want to learn languages which are beneficial to them, so they look at the instrumental value of them, how useful they would be to them.

Pupil 4: Yes, they are useful, but it depends on what the language is. (...)

Pupil 4: But like, it's good, you get really good at your languages if you start going over to maybe the countries, then you might be good at them. I am not going to learn like Fijian or something.

Pupil 2: Fijian?

Pupil 3: Why would you not want to go Fiji?

Pupil 4: I am never going to go to Fiji

Pupil 3: I am going to go to Fiji (Interview, S1).

Some of the children were motivated by the instrumental value of a language and would like to learn a language, which is more important to them rather than being open to all languages. This is a type of motivation which is often greater in learners who are less motivated, due to the language being seen as a means to an end, with a specific goal in sight (Dörnyei, Z.: 2006). Many other pupils also outlined that languages are useful when travelling, and some of the pupils also showed a great openness to culture, when speaking about this:

Well, it's kind of fun, because you get like, like learn different words and how to speak, and it's like handy because if you ever go on holidays, you'll know some. You'll know how to speak it with the people in case they don't understand you (Pupil 1, Interview 1, S1).

5.3.6.1.2 School 2

The pupils in S2 also not just stated the ability to communicate on holidays as being an important reason to learn languages, but also showed great openness to the new culture and getting to know different people. In S2 the following is an example. "I like all the different languages, because it's a way you can talk to other people that you couldn't talk to without other languages" (Pupil 2, Interview 2, S2). As already proven, the pupils in S2 all had a very positive attitude to language learning and when speaking about travel and speaking the language to foreigners this was reflected in their responses. They talked about wanting to

understand what people are saying and Pupil 3 below also stated that languages are useful for work purposes here in Ireland, which is another extrinsic motive, and not just when travelling:

Pupil 1: I find it interesting, because it is good to know languages, so if you go on holidays to different countries, you'll know how to speak them, because when I was younger I would go over there, and they would start talking to you and I was like, I don't know what you are talking about, so I like learning different languages as well.

Pupil 3: I find them very important as well as if you did not learn a language you would not be able to speak anything. But one language and that would not be really useful if you went abroad or if you were talking to foreigners or if you worked in a hotel and you had foreigners coming in all the time. (Interview 1, S2)

In S2, there seems to be more of a balanced view, in terms of language diversity. It was mentioned here, that if one works in the tourist industry here; one may need a language to speak with foreigners, whereas in S1 they declared that foreign nationals speak English over here, and they seemed to assume this as a general rule. What might have contributed to this opinion in S2 was that the class had contact with a French school and the children from both schools sent letters and cards to each other. This openness to new cultures which the pupils in S2 showed is an indicator of intrinsic motivation, as the language is not just useful for personal gain, but also a personal interest in the culture and way of life. However, on a more general level in the Gaelscoil, two of the aims of immersion education are to create openness to new cultures and to foster the Irish culture and love for language, and this would also have some role to play on the language attitudes of the children. (Gaelscoileanna Teo)³² As previously outlined all the participants in S2 have positive attitudes towards languages and showed great fondness for the Irish language, and this was depicted in the portrait data and the interviews. In summary, many pupils exclaimed that Irish was their favourite language and also chose an important body part when representing it on their portraits, such as heart or head. They also chose their favourite colour for Irish more often, rather than sticking with the flag colours like

³² <http://www.gaelscoileanna.ie/immersion-education/buntaisti-an-oideachais-datheangaigh/?lang=en> (accessed 02/06/2016)

in S1, so the love of the language was more visible here than in S1, although many still chose the colour green for Irish.

When asked if languages were important, 100% of the respondents in S2 had a positive reply and the main reason they declared was for communication purposes rather than academic reasons. Pupil 5, in the following excerpt, went on to comment on making friends from other countries, and this reflected this pupil's openness to learning about new cultures.

Interviewer: *Do you like learning languages?*

Pupil 2: (...), *I like learning languages because it is kind of new and I like learning new things and if you ever would like to travel you would be able to know the languages.*

Pupil 5: *If you ever went to France and you knew French, you would be able to speak to the local people in French and stuff.*

Pupil 1: *I think it is very important to know different languages so that you can communicate with other countries.*

Pupil 4: *I like to learn new languages, as when I get old, enough I can go places and visit other countries and speak their language.*

Pupil 3: *Yeah.*

Interviewer: *Ok and do you find languages important?*

Pupil 1: *Yeah.*

Pupil 2: *I just find it important as if you decide to go to Spain and decide to live there for a year or so, you would be able to ask for directions from people instead of just not knowing Spanish and trying to find your way around in English would be really had.*

Pupil 6: *I think it is important to know languages, so that like if you go abroad you can actually talk to people and not be able to understand what they are speaking about.*

Interviewer: *Anything else?*

Pupil 5: *I think it is really important that you learn new languages because it is good and it will help you in lots of ways. If you went on holidays, you could make new friends from that country (Interview 3, S2).*

In all the other interviews, this topic also arose and when speaking about travelling they did: "I just want to be able to speak other languages so I can go to other countries" (Pupil 4, Interview 4, S2). Other pupils gave similar responses, and the following is another example; "I think it is important to learn languages, different languages because if you go to that country and stay there for a couple of years, you are going to have a little bit of say French to speak it to other people" (Pupil 2, Interview 2, S2).

It was also a very prevalent theme in Interview 1. Pupil 3 speaks here about getting to speak to people; one could not speak to if one did not have the language; it is a way of getting to know new people and make friends. “I like all the different languages because it is a way you can talk to other people that you couldn’t talk to without other languages” (Pupil 3, Interview 1, S1). Both Pupil 5 and 1 associate foreign languages with being useful to communicate with others when on holidays. Pupil 1 also mentioned that it is “only fair” to learn a language, as others learn English, and if one travels abroad it is important to use it, and this also implicitly suggests an openness to culture and linguistic diversity. When travelling, people should try to respect the culture by speaking the language of the respective country.

*Pupil 5: I like learning new languages because (...) it’s fun to learn them and (...) and you can go, you can understand more people when you go on holidays and go to research around. You can understand their own language.
(...)*

Pupil 1: Yes I find them important, because other people in the world have to learn our language, so I think it is fair that we have to learn their language as well because if you need to go to a different country, you will know how to speak that language and yeah languages are important. (Interview 1, S1)

The pupils in S2 were highly motivated, and many reasons as to why languages are important were discussed by the students, both explicitly and implicitly. Many of the participants in this school said that they would like to travel abroad and are open to learning about new cultures; this reflects the overall aims of Gaelscoil education, which was previously discussed. This highlighted the good practice happening in this school and how the members of the school community are working together to achieve the best of their potential. The following is an excerpt from Interview 3 reinforces that the pupils had an extremely positive attitude towards language learning.

Pupil 2: (...), I like learning languages because it is kinda new and I like learning new things and if you ever would like to travel you would be able to know the languages.

Pupil 5: If you ever went to France and you knew French, you would be able to speak to the local people in French and stuff.

Pupil 1: *I think it is very important to know different languages so that you can communicate with other countries.*

Pupil 4: *I like to learn new languages, as when I get old, enough I can go places and visit other countries and speak their language.*

Pupil 3: *Yeah.* (Interview 3, S2).

Furthermore, one child declared that languages are useful for meeting new people and making new friends from different countries, which further proves that. “I think it is really important that you learn new languages because it is good and it will help you in lots of ways. If you went on holidays, you could make new friends from that country” (Pupil 5, Interview 3, S2). Making friends from other cultures is a strong intrinsic motive and shows great openness to other cultures.

5.3.6.2 Academic Purposes

Learning a language for academic reasons is an extrinsic motive for learners, due to learners seeing a learning outcome in sight and when that is achieved the goal is fulfilled. In terms of academic reasons, learning a language was the most common reason mentioned by the pupils in both schools, and it was also one of the main objectives set out by the MLPSI. “It (referring to the introduction of foreign languages) has also been one less worry for my pupils when facing the daunting task of beginning secondary school” (Mary Moore in MLPSI, 2011, 6). One of the key objectives of the MLPSI was to make the transition between primary and secondary level smoother by giving the children a head start and creating a positive attitude towards learning further languages at second level. “Because when you go into secondary you won’t know as much because you didn’t get a head start in primary” (Pupil 1, I1 S1).

The pupils in S2 stated it would be easier to learn a language at secondary school because of this head start and also suggested that it is simpler to learn languages when you are

younger because the brain is more susceptible and open to learning and acquiring knowledge.

“Pupil 2: Yeah, because it would be a lot easier in secondary school and college.

Pupil 3: Because your brain is like swatty, it soaks up information easier when you are younger” (Interview 2, S2). These are important points made by Pupils 2 and 3; children are known for being natural language learners.

They learn their native language with apparent ease, and by the time they are six years old they have a level of fluency which is for the main part errorless, which is the envy of older non-native speakers (Anderson-Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004:1). This natural ability is said to decrease with age. This natural competency for acquiring languages deteriorates with age, and it becomes more difficult but not impossible to learn languages by adulthood. The following is also an example and a reflection of the overall view of the pupils in S1.

Pupil 1: Because, it is like a skill that you kind of have to learn, because in secondary you will be doing a load of languages and stuff. It probably would; it would be better getting a head start and stuff. (S1 interview 1)

Pupil 3: I agree with (pupil 1) I think it is important to know languages.

(...)

Pupil 4: Because when you go into secondary you won't know as much because you didn't get a head start in primary (S1, Interview 1).

When asked about if they would feel more or less confident learning a language at SL the participants in S1 were of mixed opinions, even though many gave a “head start” in learning French as a reason why they learn French.

Pupil 1: I think you get more confident in secondary you know, know more than you expect when you get in there, and people will be like oh my gosh like she is an expert at French or whatever. I'd be like that's because I was learning it at primary school.

(...)

Pupil 3: I'd be less confident in secondary because here well if you get something wrong there is not that many people do you know to mess around with you (S1, Interview 1).

On the other hand, most of the pupils in S2 also expressed that they would feel it would be easier learning a language at secondary level when they spoke about learning languages at primary level.

Pupil 2: Because it would be a lot easier in secondary school and college.

Pupil 5: If you started in primary school, if you take an interest you would be learning more and more as you grow older (Interview 2, S2).

5.3.6.3 Sheer Enjoyment

Learning for the sheer enjoyment of the activity is a key intrinsic motivator and shows the pupil is motivated to learn him/herself because it is a passion/interest of theirs. Most of the children in S2 mentioned that they like to learn languages or they learn them because they are “fun”. Below is a sample of some of the responses in S2:

Pupil 4: I find learning languages a lot of fun (...) it's fun to translate all the words you can think of into new words and try to pronounce them.

Pupil 5: I like learning new languages because (...) it's fun to learn them and (...) you can go, you can understand more people when you go on holidays and go to research around. You can understand their (...) language.” (Interview 1, S2).

Pupil 5: I like learning different languages because not everyone learns different languages and it's so it's a chance for us to be different and it's good fun. (...)

Pupil 3: I like the idea of learning a few languages because it is really fun to see, to compare like the languages, see the differences and similarities between the languages and everything.

Pupil 4: I like learning different languages because sometimes you can learn the songs like some songs and some [...], you can [...] it's just kind of a fun thing. (Interview 2, S2)

Pupil 3: Because it is interesting.

Pupil 2: On Friday, we do French and the teacher plays games with us to help us, so it is fun.

Pupil 3: Plus, it is really interesting. (Interview 3, S2)

This is a key indicator of intrinsic motivation. Here some of the learners also mention that the teacher motivates them through the use of learner-centred teaching methodologies, such as songs and games. If a learner is intrinsically motivated to learn languages, he/she is more likely to further his or her knowledge, practise it more and progress further in acquiring the language, and also increases the likelihood the children will continue one and acquire other languages. If a learner is not intrinsically motivated, the language is seen as a means to an end, and once the necessary knowledge is acquired then the goal is achieved. Intrinsically motivated learners are

always open to learning more, even if the knowledge they acquire is not required (Dörnyei, 2006). Some of the children in S1 also felt learning languages was fun but not to the same extent as those in S2.

Kind of fun, because you are learning new words. (Pupil 1, Interview 1, S1).

Like (name of pupil one) said emm; I find if you go on holidays it would be fun and also I love that when we do activities in different languages, like in French, we do Cocorico or Mia Mamma. It's on the computer. I think it is Mia Mamma. (Pupil 3, Interview 1, S1).

This shows the pupils were somewhat intrinsically motivated, when they enjoy learning the language, however, but the motivation would be far greater amongst the pupils in S2 as they do not show the same enthusiasm for learning French. This would be for various factors already mentioned. It would be down to the individual learning environment, the pupils' own interests and abilities and influences at home. It is understandable given the contexts of the school that the Gaelscoil pupils would be more motivated and have a more positive attitude to learning the language.

5.3.7 Teaching Methodologies

Of all the teaching methodologies mentioned, games are one of the children's favourite teaching strategies. Games add a sense of enjoyment, competition, and it is a useful outlet for practising and consolidating new vocabulary due to the repetition of words and phrases. The language teachers in both schools used games to teach languages, and it was something the pupils in this study found enjoyable. In S2 the teacher utilises games as her main teaching strategy and uses different games to consolidate vocabulary. This, in turn, enhances the pupils' motivation as it makes language learning a positive experience.

Pupil 5: We do different games to help us learn things better. I think because the teacher thinks that we will learn it if we have more fun when we are learning new colours and words.

Pupil 4: Eh we'd learn songs that would be, we learn one thing every week and (...) and we'd have a game for every time we learn something." (Interview 1, S2)

Games are advantageous as a teaching tool as the children have fun and often forget they are learning, and it enhances the learning experience for the child when the instruction is learner centred. The teacher in S1 also made use of games but to a lesser extent. The children in all the interviews mentioned *Cocorico*, which consolidates the vocabulary for asking and answering questions.

Pupil 1: (...) Cocorico in French because what we do is (...) one person is on, and they have to walk outside the door, and our teacher, our French teacher (name) has to pick someone. And then when we say entrée then they have to come in, and they have (...) five goes to figure out who Cocorico was, and they have to go around saying "Comment tu t'appelle?" What is your name? And you have to say Je m'appelle (name) and if you are not and if they find you, and they say Je m'appelle Cocorico and they win then (Interview 1, S1).

One particular aspect that the pupils in S1 were dissatisfied about was that words were written up on the board, and they were uncertain what to do with them and were not given them to learn for homework. The participants believe that the teacher should do something differently.

Pupil 2: It's not very good progress. She/The teacher puts something on the board, but that is not learning them. That is just putting them up on the board. (...) At least our teacher in Irish, she gives us them to learn, and we cannot memorise every single word that is up on the board. (Interview 1, S1)

Also reflecting the attitude of the children but also how the children see the teacher and how it is taught, they stated the following.

Interviewer: And what type of things do you do in French class?

Pupil 2: We mess.

Pupil 3: We sometimes...

Pupil 4: Yeah. That's true you mess all right. (Interview 2, S1)

It shows that the children have a lack of interest and also do not like what is being done.

Also, another factor here is that a visiting teacher comes in, and it is seen as different to the other subjects they are learner rather than an integrated part of their education, as seen in S2. Another aspect with could contribute to this attitude is that French class is conducted through the FL, due to the French teacher being a native speaker of French.

Pupil 4: *The fact the French teacher always talks in French. And if we ask what does it mean she says it out.*

Interviewer: *Okay*

Pupil 4: *She does not talk in English (Interview 2, S1)*

This is a way of learning which the pupils in S1 are not very experienced with given it is an English medium school, and due to the amount of time devoted to the FL. Teaching a language through the L2 is what is considered best practise. It does not work in all cases, and learners also have to be motivated, to achieve the recommended goals. It requires more work on the learners' part to understand rather than to be given translations. Given also that it is once a week for less than an hour, it is also tough for learners to attain new information, due to the lack of time devoted to it.

In S2, games and songs are used a lot in class and it seems to be working very well as all the children in S2 have a very positive outlook to language learning.

Pupil 2: *On Friday we do French, and the teacher plays games with us to help us, so it is fun.*

Pupil 3: *Plus, it is really interesting.*

Pupil 4: *I just want to be able to speak other languages so I can go to other countries.*

Interviewer: *What types of activities do you do in class?*

Pupil 5: *Usually we do play games about the phrases we just learnt and that. A few weeks ago we did a game where we had to do actions and shout out a colour in French, and everyone had to copy, and everyone had to find the person starting it.*

Interviewer: *Ok, anything else?*

Pupil 2: *In French the teacher will call out a word and there would be a race to see who could draw it first on the whiteboard, and sometimes you would not know so you have to keep guessing and then the person who draws it first stays on and the loser will have to sit down. (Interview 4, S2)*

In all the interviews they speak about games, but this is just an example, and it reflects what the other groups also talked about. A variety of games are used and statements such as “the teacher plays games with us, to help us” proves that the children are often forgetting they are learning and see it as a fun activity. (Pupil 2, Interview 4). (See appendices for further examples within the interviews.) The teacher uses child-centred age appropriate tasks. (Pupil 2,

Interview 4) This can be seen throughout all the interviews and the children seem to enjoy the class.

5.4 Summary

The schools in this study are both very different settings and the results in both settings varied considerably. The pupils in S1 (the English-medium school) on a whole had a poor attitude towards languages, whereas in S2 (the Irish-medium school/Gaelscoil), the pupils had a very positive outlook, but there were different factors which had an impact on this. The results will be summarised below.

5.4.1 Status of Language

5.4.1.1 School 1

In S1, there was not much data solely relating to status in the pupil interviews, because often when talking about status, other themes also arose, which were of more importance, such as attitude. In summary, the pupils in S1 believed that English was the most important language and then Irish because so much time is devoted to learning Irish in school. Most of the pupils did not like Irish and had a negative attitude towards it. French is also noted, as well as some other languages the children have learnt outside school. Not much time was devoted to French and a visiting teacher, who was a native speaker, came to teach it, and the children mentioned that sometimes that the foreign language class was cancelled or that “good progress” (Pupil 2, I1, S2) was not made, like with their Irish classes. Having a language class once a week is problematic regarding progress, and it does not reflect fully on the teacher. As no classes were observed and that the language teacher was not available to be interviewed, there is insufficient data in this study to outline the reasons, for lack of progress. One can only assume that with 45 minutes a week, it is challenging to make sufficient progress in any case, especially when the

learners are not that motivated to learn the language in the first place. The class teachers did not see the language as that important either and were happy the MLPSI was cut and mentioned that the parents were not “outraged” either. Both class teachers also stated that French is not their area and is something separate to what they do in their class.

5.4.1.2 School 2

In S2, there was more data collected on the status of language than in S1. Irish was seen be of vital importance, as it was a Gaelscoil setting. There was a sense of pride associated with knowing how to speak the Irish language amongst pupils. In regard to French, it was also seen as very important but still not as imperative as the curricular subjects. There was more of a whole school approach to the teaching of French, and that led to the pupils having a very positive attitude towards the French language.

When speaking about how Ireland compares to Europe in regard to language learning, there were mixed views; many believed that they were about the same as they are learning a foreign language and in France, they are learning English. Others mentioned the issue that many Irish people could not speak Irish fluently, and they believe that people should be able to speak it as it is their native language, so culturally is it of immense significance to know and understand it.

In regard to French, the children mentioned that more time could be devoted to it, as the classes were very short. The pupils only had 30 minutes of French language instruction per week, and this was insufficient if a high competence in the FL and the European objectives were to be achieved. The amount of time given to French had decreased since the abolishment and the school then created their own policy on French in their school. In response to the abolishment of the MLPSI, the staff and pupils wrote letters of objection to the Minister for Education and Skills. French was seen as an important part of the identity of this school, regarding the projects and initiatives, it was involved in.

5.4.2 Attitude towards the language and the learning situation

5.4.2.1 School 1

In S1, the English-medium school, the attitude towards the Irish language as mainly negative and there was an attitude of ambivalence towards the foreign language, and this is partially due to the language situation within the school. This was clearly evident in the data collected. Many pupils did not like learning the languages, but on the whole, they agree that languages should be learnt. The most common reasons they give for learning a foreign language were for travel and secondary school. The pupils mentioned more extrinsic motives to learn languages, than intrinsic ones, for example academic reasons or for working abroad. Many mentioned intrinsic motives like holiday abroad, but many also commented on the instrumental value of languages, that some were more useful than others and it “depends on what the language is” (Pupil 4, I3, S1). The pupils with the strongest views in S1 were among those with negative attitudes towards languages and for the main part the outlook of the pupils in S1 were not extremely positive. The attitudes of the entire school, teachers and pupils are ambivalent, and this can be seen in the data, which were collected and interpreted.

5.4.2.2 School 2

The pupils in S2 had a very strong positive attitude towards both the language and the language situation, and this included both Irish and French. The participants believed that it was of vital importance to learn Irish and to be able to speak the language. They also enjoyed learning French and for the main part had only positive things to say about the language. They mentioned they enjoyed the class, and that they would prefer if it was longer and that the teacher helps them and makes it fun as she uses games.

The two most important factors influencing the positive attitudes in S2 are Gaelscoil education and the influential attitudes of others around them, the teachers, principal and parents. Although the parents were not interviewed, it is clear that their attitude towards their children learning Irish is a positive one as they sent them to a Gaelscoil. The teacher mentioned that the principal was very supportive towards the initiative of teaching French at this school, and that she has a Masters in the area of language teaching, so is a help to her. The school has set up their own policy for teaching French and they seemed both well informed and highly motivated in carrying out the FL instruction. This would also have a huge impact on the attitude of the children, as it would be influenced by the ethos of the school. The situation in this school does not reflect the language situation in Ireland, as it is quite a unique setting.

5.4.3 Language Motivators

The pupils in both schools mentioned many motives to learn languages, the most common being the instrumental value of languages for travel and also academic reasons, a head start for secondary level.

Communicating with others was the most spoken about aspect, and this arose in all of the interviews in some way. In S1, they mentioned that is “handy” (Pupil 1, I1, S1) for when you go travelling, but some pupils also stated it depends on which language it is, as some are useful than others, so they valued different language on how useful it is to them. One pupil also mentioned asking for directions if lost as a reason to know how to speak the language. In S2, travel was also a key point of discussion, but more of the pupils mentioned getting to know people, making friends, but also for working here in Ireland the hospitality and tourism sector, for example in a hotel. S2 also had contact with a French school, and the children had pen pals, so they had some direct contact with pupils their own age from France. Some pupils also mentioned that it is only fair to speak the foreign language of the country, as tourists speak

English when travelling abroad. Most of the aspects raised in relation to travel and communicating with others were not related to the instrumental use, but to getting to know the culture, making friends and a sense of language equality, thus this meant that there was a vast amount of pupils in S2, who were intrinsically motivated to learn languages. This showed a strong openness to new cultures, which was there to a much lesser extent in S1.

The other main motivator mentioned were academic reasons, to get a head start for secondary school and some of the participants commented on this, but still many of the participants mentioned they were not more confident or well prepared for learning a FL at secondary school. The teachers had also added that many of the pupils would be going on to learn Spanish and not French in secondary school, but some of the pupils seemed more open to learning Spanish. They may have not have been motivated to learn French, if they felt that they were not going to continue learning it at secondary. They may not have been more confident learning a language at secondary for this reason as well. Most pupils mentioned that they did not enjoy learning either French or Irish or both. For the students who did not enjoy learning Irish, having a negative experience learning their first L2 would also have had some impact upon this. The attitude of the whole school community towards languages also would have had an impact here and as discussed previously, the attitude was not very positive throughout the school.

In S2, some of the pupils brought up secondary school as a reason for learning a FL at primary level, but it was not the most significant reason discussed for learning a FL. They stated that they would feel more confident and well prepared for learning a foreign language at secondary. With the information gathered from the teacher, it was found out that most of the pupils would go on to the Gaelscoil secondary school, where only French is offered, so the pupils would be utilising what they have learnt at primary, this would have had some impact here. All the pupils had a very positive attitude towards Irish and were bilingual, so having a

positive experience acquiring a second language would also have had an impact here. Also, given that the whole school community had a positive outlook towards languages, it some degree it impacted upon the pupils, and they were, in turn, more motivated to learn languages.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this qualitative study was to examine the status of language, language attitude and motivation in two different primary school settings offering a ML and to interpret and analyse these findings through the use of the Grounded Theory approach. The research process was guided by the theoretical approach presented in Chapter 2 and this was applied in a unique way in this research. The methods of data collection used and the research questions chosen for this study provided a unique approach, and thus opened up new insights into the subject matter. Language portraits have been used in European research to document children's language identities language and attitude, but had yet to be used in Ireland. The project looked at the language situation in two different primary school settings and both the school communities, specifically the teachers' and children's attitudes towards languages and the pupils' motivation to learn languages. In this chapter, the main findings of Chapter 5.2 and 5.3 will be readdressed and summarised. The two schools in this study are very different educational settings, with a very different ethos. They are examples of the two main types of language education offered in Ireland: English- and Irish-medium schools. The first type of schooling is by far the most common.

6.2 Summary of Main Findings

6.2.1 Status of Language

In terms of the status of Irish and FLs in Ireland, and more specifically within the individual schools, there were many aspects raised, both in relation to the national and school context. Some of the most important topics raised were 1. how Ireland compared to the rest of the EU, and 2. the status of languages; Irish and FLs, both (a) in Ireland and (b) within the individual school contexts.

1. Ireland versus the EU

Research Question 1: *How does Ireland compare to the rest of EU in terms of language provision?*

On the topic of the Irish education system, all the four teachers interviewed were of the opinion that Ireland was performing quite poorly regarding language teaching when compared to Europe, and this reflects the issues addressed in the literature review. Other literature and research in the area confirms that Ireland does have a poor record in relation to language teaching, both Irish and FLs in a European context (Harris & O' Leary, 2009b, Ó Dochartaigh & Broderick 2006, RIA, 2011).

T1 lost her job as a language teacher for her school and mentioned many schools were in the same position. She mentioned it remains to be seen which benefits of the effort undertaken during the MLPSI to achieve the aims of the EU policy (MT+2) will last or will be undone. According to her Ireland has performed “fairly poorly” in terms of meeting the EU objectives. She also stated that there was no policy for FLs in Ireland and that at secondary level that there were also issues. What was interesting to note, was she mentioned that Ireland is privileging Irish to the detriment of other languages. However, this study shows that the Gaelscoil setting was performing better in all aspects of promoting and teaching French and

Irish. Being bilingual can aid learners in learning other languages and this one of the many benefits of bilingual education, mentioned by Gaelscoileanna Teo.

When asked to compare Ireland to Europe, all the teachers and many of the pupil participants stated that Ireland is lagging behind compared to other countries. It is, undeniably, a crucial issue to readdress how languages are taught in Ireland and the lack of a national policy, as Ireland signed up to the European policy on multilingualism in 2008 and is not making as much progress as many of the other European states.

(a) The Irish Language

Irish has a special place in the constitution and there is a policy to promote and protect the Irish language in Ireland. Irish also has a strong presence in the education system and in recent times there has been the growth of *gaelscolaíocht*, i.e. schooling in a Gaelscoil setting and a theme which emerged in the interviews both with teachers and to a lesser extent in the pupil interviews was the poor competency in Irish on a national level.

A significant amount of time is devoted to Irish and all the teachers agreed that this was the case. T1 mentioned that Irish is being privileged over FLs, especially at PL. Ireland does not have any FL policy, or a policy on the English language. All teachers agreed that there was enough time accorded to Irish at primary level in Ireland but the teachers also mentioned some national challenges and shortcomings.

Many learners are left unable to hold a conversation in Irish after learning it in school. The teachers in S1 stated that they would not feel confident talking to a native speaker of Irish; however this was not a problem for T4 in the Gaelscoil as she is a fluent speaker.

(b) The Foreign Language

Foreign languages are not a compulsory area at any level of education system. Most learners learn Irish at secondary school level, but there has been little emphasis on foreign languages at primary school level at a national level. The MLPSI worked to promote languages at PS level from 1998- 2012, but since the abolishment, offering a foreign language at PS level, has very much been an individual school endeavour. It is difficult to ascertain how many schools are actually offering a FL, as statistics were unavailable.

Research Question 2: *Since the abolishment of the MLPSI how has language provision at primary level changed?*

Since the abolishment of the MLPSI, Ireland has taken a step backwards regarding language provision at primary level. Fewer schools are offering a foreign language; this is due to the lack of both financial and training support to schools. Some schools do still offer a foreign language, but some schools no longer offer a language. The teachers in S1 were not that aware of how the cut had an affect nationally but did mention that the funding has been discontinued. There is no longer funding in the form of paying for a visiting teacher, or a grant for resources. The other teachers both had a very strong reaction to the abolishment of the MLPSI and were more aware of how the situation had changed nationally. This was not surprising, as due to being more interested in the area, they were better informed. Other schools, which have an outside teacher coming in, may not have the funding now and do not want to put parents under extra financial strain. This would definitely be the case in DEIS schools, as they would find it even harder to keep on providing a language as they have to self-finance this. This, in turn, puts children from a less advantaged background at a significant disadvantage at school, whereas the MLPSI made it easier for all schools, regardless of the setting, to offer a ML. It is up to the individual school setting to teach a ML, and there is now undoubtedly less of an incentive to schools to provide a ML. The MLPSI offered awards and

recognition, and since the initiative has been abolished, as MLs are seen by the government as less of a priority at PS level, compared to literacy and numeracy and other subjects within the curriculum (DES, 2014).

2. School Contexts

Research Question 3: *How is the teaching of both Irish and French carried out at the respective schools?*

(a) School 1

In terms of FL provision, S1 had a visiting teacher come in to teach the class French and S2 had someone from within the school teaching French. Since the abolishment, S1 has to pay privately for the French lessons and this was funded by the board of management and parents. This did not apply in S2 as a class teacher teaches French but some language time was cut. Both of the schools have had to cut the time allocated to French because of more time being allocated to literacy and numeracy in the curriculum and this reflects the national situation in relation to curriculum overload (DES, 2014 & NCCA, 2011).

(b) School 2

There was a huge contrast between the status of language in both schools, as they are both very different settings. In regard to Irish, both schools were following the national curriculum, but School 2 had more time allocated to Irish (one hour extra, plus instruction time for other subjects), due to it being an immersion setting. The experiences of the teachers do also reflect the findings in other studies and research in the area (RIA, 2011, Harris & Conway, 2002 & Harris & O'Leary 2009a & b). Therefore the schools in this study are relevant exemplars and do to some degree give insight into the language situation in Ireland, and specifically, how two schools are trying to implement a ML programme.

The pupils in S2 had a better competency in Irish than the pupils in S1. When conducting the research, some of the pupils completed the language portrait task in Irish, as they were told they had a choice. This particular aspect showed that, it was what they were confident in and used to doing and that the language had pride of place in this setting. In S2, the principal and teachers wrote up their FL policy, catered to the specific needs of their school setting, which was an important aspect.

This was very different to the approach in S1, whereby a visiting language teacher came in and taught the class once a week, and the teachers believed as it is not their area of expertise; it had nothing to do with them. It was seen as a separate entity and not a part of what the teachers do, but just an extra-curricular activity, rather than a part of the school's identity. The teaching of a ML does not seem to be working as well as in S2. It was visible that the pupils in both schools were to some extent influenced by the attitudes of their teachers and the whole school community.

6.2.2 Language Attitude

Research Questions 4 and 5: *Are the children intrinsically or /and extrinsically motivated to learn languages and is the particular learning environment influential towards the attitude of the children in the two schools?*

In School 1, the English-medium school, the pupils lacked the intrinsic motivation to learn the language and many also have a negative attitude to languages, both Irish and French. They did not see languages to be of vital importance, and many did not enjoy learning them, but also saw that languages are somewhat significant and that they do need to learn them. They were more motivated by the extrinsic motivators, like academic reasons. Others mentioned other languages that they do want to learn such as Spanish. This opinion was reflected amongst the

teachers who also have an attitude of ambivalence; however, the attitudes of the teachers were a little more positive.

School 2, the Gaelscoil in this study, is very pro-language, and there was no negativity towards foreign language learning. They were extremely highly motivated in regard to learning languages. Travel, learning about other cultures and making friends was a huge theme that prevailed and they also saw the instrumental value of language learning, for academic reasons or for job prospects. Many pupils simply enjoyed learning languages. As mentioned earlier, this could partially be because it is an immersion setting. Gaelscoil education in this context helped foster a positive attitude towards Irish and foreign languages, including tolerance and openness to other cultures. A positive outlook to FLs and openness to different cultures are both objectives set out by the *European Commission* as well in their 2008 publication, but also their most recent policy document, the *2020 Strategy* and the *Barcelona Agreement*. One key component, which the learning of Irish does not achieve in terms of EU policy, is mobility of members. Many of the learning benefits associated with Gaelscoil education could be visibly seen in the data collected from both the teacher and pupils at this school. It is also imperative to mention that the attitudes of the school community and how they are promoting the language themselves seems to have influenced the children's perceptions of languages. In this case the particular learning environment is very much influential.

It is also of utmost importance to mention, that it is not just the Gaelscoil model of education which comes into play here when looking at the attitudes and motivation of the children in School 2, but more so the specific educational setting itself. In this particular setting, the principal had a very positive attitude towards language learning and was a specialist in the area of language teaching in the area. The class teacher had a very positive outlook as well. As outlined previously the individual school community and their ethos has a huge impact on the attitude of the pupils. S2 is a specific example, where this whole school approach

is working for the teaching of the ML and the whole school had a sense of pride in the language and this somewhat influenced the learners.

As regards Irish, the responses of the participants at School 1 reflected some of the common problem areas in language teaching in Ireland, which were highlighted by other research in the area and this was already examined in Chapter 2 (Harris & Conway, 2002 & Harris & O' Leary 2009a & b). These problem areas include a poor attitude to learning Irish and insufficient language competence in Irish. This problem prevailed among the pupils in S1, as many pupils mentioned how difficult and boring Irish was, and the fact they did not like learning it. The attitude towards other foreign language was mixed but slightly more positive on a whole. In terms of whether the learning environment had an influence here, the teachers also had an ambiguous view toward a FL at primary level and even mentioned they were happy the MLPSI was cut, so languages are seen as not as important as the subjects on the curriculum, in their opinion. The children do not have as much exposure to Irish and this could also be a factor here. What is interesting to note in S1, is that the pupils with relatives abroad or those that mentioned having travelled abroad, were more positive towards languages and more open to different cultures. This confirms that pupils' home and school environments can play a huge role in how they learn languages and how positive they are towards them.

6.3 Teaching Methodologies

In order to motivate the learners, the lesson needs to be learner-centred, so the teacher has to make the lessons interesting and fun for the pupils. All the teachers in this study mentioned this and the fact that the language lessons were child-centred and involved the use of games and different activities to make the learning experience more enjoyable.

The teaching methodologies used in both the settings were game based to some extent and the pupils seemed to enjoy some of the games played during the lesson, such as *Cocorico*,

Mia Mamma or *Guess Who*. In S1 there was also some aspects of the language instruction which needed to be improved upon, the pupils in S1 mentioned was that the pitch of the lesson was too high and some also mentioned that they found the lesson boring, but this could be because they found it difficult to understand the teacher when speaking the L2, as they commented on this aspect as well. The pupils in S2 had a positive towards both the language and the learning situation. They also enjoyed the game-based approach to the lessons, but stated that they do not enjoy the traditional talk and chalk way of learning and also some pupils found it difficult to see the whiteboard, but otherwise had a very positive experience of language learning.

6.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

The result of this study provides the reader with an overview into the way languages are taught in Ireland in two different settings. S2 was an excellent example of good practice, in terms of fostering a positive attitude towards languages and the language community. The learners are intrinsically motivated whereas in S1 they were mixed reviews. Nevertheless, it is unquestionable that learning a modern language, as well as Irish, at primary level is beneficial to the learner, In S1, many pupils felt more confident starting secondary school or mentioned MLs are useful and that children should learn them at an early age, even though they may have mentioned they did not particularly like French or Irish.

Participants believed that the rest of Europe is performing much better than Ireland in this regard, and this also backs up previous research in this area. The following is one of the recommendations made by the RIA: “It is crucial that Ireland develops a national strategy for languages which will address all aspects of education and the development of language skills, both native and foreign, in Ireland” (Ó Dochartaigh & Broderick, 2006: 9). A coherent national languages policy by the DES is immediately required for both social and economic reasons, if

the EU objectives of MT+2, set out by the *Barcelona Agreement* (2002) were to be met (DES, 2014 & RIA, 2011). The answers of the participants highlighted some particular shortcomings in the area.

Reform does need to take place from primary level right up to third level if Ireland is to achieve the aims set out in the White Paper (1995) and also the European policy on plurilingualism (DES, 2014; RIA, 2011 & 2006). These findings showed a considerable variation on how languages, both Irish and French, were taught in both schools. They implemented foreign language instruction, which made them better than many that do not offer any form of language instruction. Thus, there is a need for an overall framework and a national programme to be put in place, however, this would be very challenging and expensive to achieve.³³ This was also recommended by the RIA (2011).

A sufficient amount time of time has always been devoted to Irish, as it is one of the core subjects and the change to subject allocation did not impact upon the time devoted to Irish (INTO, 2011). Nationally, the change allocated to literacy and numeracy, which came into effect in 2011 also, had a role to play in the abolishment of the MLPSI, as there is more pressure on teachers to find more time for English and Maths in an already overloaded curriculum (DES, 2015 & 2014 & NCCA, 2011). The Irish Government had decided to cut the initiative in order to be able to accord more time to English and Maths in the Primary School Curriculum. Both T1 and T4 mentioned how language learning is all “*interconnected*”. The following quote by T4 outlines the pressure facing primary school teachers in terms of implementing the curriculum at the moment.

It's all this literacy and numeracy strategy. It's about hitting those targets; it's about writing up the development plans for literacy for numeracy, [...]. More time has been accorded to those subjects so it has had a direct impact on other languages and ironic in a way because [...] it is all interconnected. Language learning is all interconnected. (T4)

³³ <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1096464.pdf> (accessed on 13/7/2016)

The initiative was abolished, even though there are many learning benefits to ELL and the teacher suggested that one way for hitting the target for literacy would be to learn a foreign language. In light of the changes in time allocation to literacy and numeracy, both schools in this study also cut time allocated to the ML, and nationally, most schools still offering a ML had to cut the time spent on MLs or offer it outside of school hours. There is no time available in the week to allow for this, which was reflected in the results from the participant teachers, that they found it difficult to allocate the time to the teaching of the FL. At present, it is very difficult to find the time to offer an extra subject and this was also the case in the case study schools. This, as well as the lack of funding and support available does not make it attractive for schools to offer a ML. DEIS and smaller schools would find it more difficult to fund modern language classes.

The main achievement of the MLPSI in its time was that it gave children a chance to learn a ML, regardless of background. Before this it had always been an individual endeavour and was offered more in schools in middle-class areas, and this is now the case again, unless a class teacher within the school can teach the language. In terms of the European *2020 Strategy* for education objectives, equality of access to education is one objective, and in this regard, Ireland is not achieving this in relation to access to MLs at primary level. This study proves that it is feasible to still offer a ML, and highlights some good practice into how to do it. Most of the children in this study enjoyed the games-based approach to the lesson, however some the pupils in S1 did not enjoy the lessons to the same extent as the pupils in S2. The approach where a class teacher teaches the language, and that the school devise their own policy would be an ideal approach, but not always feasible and requires both motivation and commitment on behalf of the schools and the teachers involved.

This study looked particularly at how two specific schools settings carried out language instruction (both Irish and French) and emphasised how two different approaches and models

of schooling had completely different outcomes in terms of results. It looked at the advantages of immersion schooling, more specifically in this context a Gaelscoil setting. Motivation was far higher in S2 towards learning both Irish and French, but this was unsurprising and reflected other research done in the area and the benefits outlined by Gaelscoileanna Teo. (Harris & Conway, 2002, Harris & O' Leary 2009a & b & Harris et al, 2006)

6.5 Summary

This research project looked at the status of languages (both Irish and a ML) and motivation and attitude towards foreign languages in two different school settings and provided very insightful findings into how the schools were implementing a ML programme but also highlighted some key aspects of how languages are taught and viewed at a national level. In light of all the recent discussions in this area by Irish policy makers and language specialists; the RIA *Irish Languages Strategy* (2011) and the *Foreign Languages in Education Strategy for Ireland* by the DES (2015 & 2014), and the extra focus on the teaching and learning of English and Maths in the *National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy* published by the DES in 2011 and current European language policy, there was a need for research to be completed in this area to further highlight the benefits of language learning, more specifically immersion education and early language learning (ELL). This study shows some good practice at primary school level and also discusses improvements, which need to be made to language teaching in Ireland.

The pupils' attitudes in both schools were similar to that of the teachers within the school setting; this was one crucial influential factor in the results, as the learning situation has a huge impact on attitudes. Overall, the results in S1 showed an attitude of ambivalence and a slightly negative view among many of the pupils. Most pupils did not have a very positive view towards both Irish and the FL. In general, the pupils were not highly intrinsically motivated.

As already outlined, S2 had a very different approach to the teaching of both Irish and the ML to S2 and the responses of participant in S2 varied considerably from those in S1. S2 implemented their own policy, incorporated it into their school identity and had their own language teacher and this worked very well and the pupils both responded well to it and were highly motivated to learn the FL and were more open to different cultures. One major advantage the pupils in S2 had was being bilingual and all had a positive association learning a L2 through of being fully immersed in it.

Overall, this study gives an insight into two different schools and their approach to language teaching and the attitude of the teachers and learners towards individual languages, and further highlights some of the challenges these schools have, in terms of time allocation and motivating pupils. It additionally promotes the need for a national framework for languages to be implemented in order to give all pupils at PL the opportunity to learn a ML/FL and to promote plurilingualism.

Bibliography

- An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta (2007). *An Ghaeilge sa Bhunscoil*. Baile Átha Cliath: An t-Aonad Tacaíochta um Mheastóireacht agus Taighde.
- Anderson-Curtain, H. & Dahlberg, C.A. (2004) *Languages and Children, Making the Match: Foreign Language Instruction for an Early Start Grades K-8*. (3rd Edition), Boston: Pearson Education.
- Atkins, L. & Wallace, S. (2012). *Qualitative Research in Education*. Chichester: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Baker, C. (2003). *Education as a Site of Language Contact*. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics. Vol 23. (95-112).
- Beck, R.C. (2004). *Motivation Theories and Principles*. The University of California: Pearson Education.
- Berg, B.L. (2004). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 5th Edition. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Bland, D.C. (2012). *Analysing Children's Drawings: Applied Imagination*. International Journal of Research and Method in Education. Vol.35: No.3, (235-242).
- Blaxter, L. et al (2001). *How to Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Bragg, S. (2007). *Consulting Young People: A Review of the Literature: A Report for Creative Partnerships*. London: Arts Council England.
- Buchanan, D. & Bryman, A. (2009). *The SAGE Handbook of Organisational Research Methodologies*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Camilli, G., Elmore, P. & Green, J. (2006). *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Education Research*. Washington DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Charmaz, K., (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Coates, E. & Coates, A. (2006). *Young Children Talking and Drawing*. International Journal of Early Years Education. Vol. 14: No. 3, (221–241).
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. 7th Edition. London: Routledge.
- Crutchfield, A. (2007). *Language Minority Education Policy: Turkish Immigrant Pupils in Germany*. Retrieved from <http://www.2.hawaii.edu/~cmhiggin/Crutchfield20Paper201.doc> (accessed on 21/07/2015).
- Darmody, M. & Daly, T. (2015). *Attitudes towards the Irish Language on the Island of Ireland*. Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). *The L2 Motivational Self System*. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds). *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self*, (pp. 9-42). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

- Dörnyei Z. (2001a). *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. Essex: Pearson Education.
- Dörnyei Z. (2001b). *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (1998). *Motivation in Second and Foreign Language Learning*. Survey article. *Language Teaching*. (117-135).
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ottó, I. (1998). *Motivation in Action: A Process Model of L2 Motivation*. London: *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics*. Vol.4: (43-69).
- Eagly A. & Chaiken, S. (1995). *The Psychology of Attitudes*. Vol. 12: No. 5. (459–466), University of North Florida: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Edwards, J. (1994). *Multilingualism*. London: Penguin Books.
- Eurydice (2009). *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*. Retrieved from: <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/eurydice/documents/098EN.pdf> (accessed on 24/05/2015).
- Etherington, K. (2004). *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher: Using Our Selves in Research*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Gaelscoileanna Teo (2011). *The Advantages of Bilingual Education*. Unpublished. <http://www.gaelscoileanna.ie/immersion-education/buntaisti-an-oideachais-datheangaigh/?lang=en> (accessed on 02/06/2016).
- Gall, J.P., Gall, M.D. & Borg, W. R. (1989). *Educational Research: An Introduction*. 5th Edition. New York: Longman.
- Gardner, Robert C. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning the Role of Attitudes and Motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Gardner, R.C. & Lambert, W.E. (1972). *Motivational Variables in Second Language Acquisition*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Glaser, B. (1978). *Theoretical Sensitivity*. Mill Valley, CA: The Sociology Press.
- Genesee, F. (1987). *Learning through Two Languages: Studies of Immersion and Bilingual Education*. Cambridge, MA: Newbury House.
- Harris, J., & Conway, M. (2002). *Modern Languages in Irish Primary Schools: An Evaluation of the National, Pilot Project*. Dublin: Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann/ Linguistics Institute of Ireland.
- Harris, J., Forde, P., Archer, P., Nic Fhearaile, S. & O’Gorman, M. (2006). *Irish in Primary School: Long-term National Trends in Achievement*. Dublin: Department of Education and Science.
- Harris, J., & O’Leary, D. (2009a). *Modern Languages in Irish Primary Schools: Views and Practices of Principals and Class Teachers*. Report submitted to the Department of Education and Science. Dublin: Department of Education and Skills.

- Harris J. & O’Leary, D. (2009b). *A Third Language at Primary Level in Ireland: An Independent Evaluation of the Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative*. Dublin: Modern Languages in the Primary School Initiative.
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing Qualitative Research in Educational Settings*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Helot, C., & Ó Laoire, M. (2011). *Language Policy for the Multilingual Classroom, Pedagogy of the Possible*. Bristol; Buffalo: Multilingual Matters.
- Irish National Teachers’ Organisation (2004). *Language in the Primary School*. Dublin: Author.
- Irish National Teachers’ Organisation (1991). *Foreign Language Teaching in Primary School. Issues and Research*, Dublin: Author.
- James, A., Jenks, C. & Prout, A. (1998). *Theorizing Childhood*. Cambridge: Policy Press.
- Kaplan, R. Baldauf R. & Baldauf, Jr. (2008). *Language Planning and Policy in Europe, Vol. 3: The Baltic States, Ireland and Italy*. Bristol. Multilingual Matters.
- Kirsch, C. (2008). *Teaching Foreign Languages in the Primary School*. London: Continuum International Publication.
- Krumm, H.J. (2011). *Multilingualism ad Subjectivity: “Language Portraits” by Multilingual Children*, in Zarate, G.K., Lévy D. & Kramsch, C., *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism*. Paris: Éditions des Archives Comtemporaines (101-104).
- Krumm, H.J. & Jenkins E.M. (eds.) (2001). *Kinder und Ihre Sprachen- Lebendige Mehrsprachigkeit*. Wien: Eviva.
- Lawrence-Lightfoot S. & Hoffman J. (1997). *The Art and Science of Portraiture* Columbia University: Jossey-Bass.
- Lewis, A. (1992). *Group Child Interviews as a Research Tool*. British Educational Research Journal, Vol.18: No.4, (413-421).
- Lovato, Carolina (2011). *Motivation in Second Language Acquisition - Gardner’s Socio-Educational Model*. Retrieved from: <http://www.unimep.br/phpg/mostracademica/anais/9mostra/4/443.pdf> (accessed on 20/10/2015).
- Martin, B. (2012). *Coloured Language: Identity Perception of Children in Bilingual Programmes*. Language Awareness. Vol. 21: No.1-2, (33-56). Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254330592_Coloured_language_Identity_perception_of_children_in_bilingual_programmes (accessed on 04/05/2015).
- Mas-Moury, V. (n.d.). *Parents’ Attitudes to the Gaelscoil as a School for the Élite*, Gaelscoileanna Teo. Unpublished. Retrieved from: http://www.gaelscoileanna.ie/assets/Introduction_Parents-attitude-to-gaelscoileanna-as-schools-for-the-elite.pdf (accessed on 06/04/2016)

- Mayring, P. (1994). *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse*. In A. Böhm, A. Mengel & T. Muhr (ed.), *Texte verstehen: Konzepte, Methoden, Werkzeuge* (159-176). Konstanz: Universitätsverlag.
- McCallum, B., Hargreaves, E. & Gipps, C. (2000). *Learning: The Pupil's Voice*. Cambridge Journal of Education, Vol. 30: No.2, (275-289) Retrieved from: https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/.../Student_Voice_further_reading.pdf (accessed on 07/10/2016).
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Moyles, J., Adams, S. & Musgrove, A. (2002). *SPEEL: Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning*. London: DES, Research Report No. 363.
- Nikolov, M (2009). *Early Learning of Modern Foreign Languages: Processes and Outcomes*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Ó Cathalláin, S. (2011). *Early Literacy in All Irish Immersion School: A Micro Ethnographic case study of story book reading events in Irish and English*, University of Sterling. Ph.D. Thesis: Author.
- Ó Dochartaigh, P. & Broderick, M. (2006). *Language Policy and Language Planning in Ireland: A report from the Royal Irish Academy Committee for Modern Languages, Literary and Cultural Studies*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.
- Ó Duibhir, P. & Cummins, J. (2012). *Towards an Integrated Language Curriculum in Early Childhood and Primary Education: 3-12 Years*. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.
- Oppenheim, A. N. (1992). *Question Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement (New Edition)*. London: Pinter.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluative Methods*. (3rd Edition), Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Robinson, P. (2002). *Learning Conditions, Aptitude, Complexes and SLA: A Framework for Research and Pedagogy*. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Individual Differences and Instructed Language Learning* (pp. 113–33). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ryan, E. & Giles, H. (Eds). (1982). *Attitudes towards Language Variation: Social and Applied Contexts*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Santrock, J. (2011). *Educational Psychology*. (5th Edition) Boston, MA; London: McGraw-Hill.
- Singleton, D. & Lengyel, Z. (1995). *The Age Factor in Second Language Acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Stake, R. (2010). *Qualitative Research: Studying How Things Work*. New York: Guildford Press.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Wolff, D (2004). *Content and Language Integrated Learning: An Evaluation of the German Approach*. Research Paper. University of Wuppertal: Author.

Woolfolk, A. (2013). *Educational Psychology: Active Learning Edition*. (12th edition), New York: Pearson Education.

Yin, R. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. (4th edition). Applied Social Research Series. Vol. 5: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Yin, R. (2016). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*, (2nd edition), New York: The Guilford Press.

Policy Documents

Coste, D., Moore, D., & Zarate, G. (2009). *Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence: Studies towards a Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning and Teaching, Assessment*. The Council of Europe: Language Policy Division.

Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning and Teaching Assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Council of Europe (2006). *Plurilingual Education in Europe*. Strasbourg: Language Policy Division. Retrieved from <http://www.coe.int/lang> (accessed on 23/04/2015).

Department of Education and Skills (2015). *Foreign Languages in Education Strategy for Ireland*. Dublin: Unpublished. Retrieved from <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Foreign-Languages-Strategy/> (accessed on 13/08/2016)

Department of Education and Skills (2014). *Framework for Consultation on a Foreign Languages in Education Strategy for Ireland*. Unpublished. Retrieved from: <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Foreign-Languages-Strategy/Foreign-Languages-Presentation-Karen-Ruddock.pdf> (accessed on 13/08/2016)

Department of Education and Skills (2011). *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020*. Dublin: Author.

Department of Education and Science. (1992). *Government of Ireland, Education for a Changing World: Green Paper on Education*. Dublin: The Government Stationary Office.

European Commission (2011). *Action Plan on Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity*. Brussels: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:c11068> (accessed on 20/11/2015).

European Commission (2008). *Multilingualism: An Asset for Europe and a Shared Commitment*. Brussels: Author. Retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0566:FIN:EN:PDF> (accessed on 12/06/2016).

MLPSI (2012). *Final Report on the Modern Languages in Primary School Initiative, 1998-2012*. Dublin: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.mlpsi.pdst.ie/> (accessed on 13/06/2014).

Modern Languages in the Primary School Initiative (2004) *Progress Report of the Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative 1998-2004*. Dublin. Author.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (2015) *Primary School Curriculum: Foreign Languages in Education Strategy Languages: Curriculum and Assessment*. Unpublished Retrieved from: <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Foreign-Languages-Strategy/Languages-Curriculum-and-Assessment.pdf> (accessed on 06/07/2016)

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2010). *The Irish Examination in the Leaving Certificate for 2012 onwards (Higher Level, Ordinary Level and Foundation Level) S.90/10*. Retrieved from: https://www.examinations.ie/schools/S_90_10_The_irish_Examination_in_the_Leaving_Certificate_for_2012_onwards.pdf (accessed on 13/06/2016).

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2005). *Report on the Feasibility of Modern Languages in the Primary School Curriculum*. Dublin: Author.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2001). *Modern Languages in Primary Schools: Teacher Guidelines*. Dublin: Author.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (1999a). *National Primary School Curriculum*. Dublin: Author.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (1999b). *Pilot Project on Modern Languages in the Primary School: Draft Curriculum Guidelines*, Dublin: Author.

RIA, 2011. *Irish Languages Strategy*. Royal Irish Academy National Committee for Modern Language, Literacy and Cultural Studies. Retrieved from:

https://www.ria.ie/sites/default/files/national_languages_strategy_august_2011.pdf (accessed on 15/07/2016).

One Voice for Languages (2014). *Framework for Consultation: A Foreign Languages in Education Strategy for Ireland*. Dublin: Author.

Appendices

Consent Forms

1: Parental Consent form

Permission Slip

I have read the content of the information booklet and understand what this project is about and what is involved for the participants.

Please tick the appropriate box:

I am happy for my child to participate in this study.	
I am not happy for my child to participate in this study.	

Name of child(ren): _____

Print Name(s): _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

2. Teachers' Consent form

Consent form for Teacher Participants

- I have read the information booklet and understand what is involved in this study.
- I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason and without consequence.
- I am aware that my results will be kept confidential.
- I have read this form completely, and am happy for both myself and my class (if applicable) to take part in the study on languages at primary school.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

3. Pupils' Consent form

Consent Form for Pupil Participants

- I have read the information booklet and all the tasks have been explained to me.
- I am happy to participate in this research project, which involves a colouring in task and answering questions about the topic of languages.
- I know that, I do not have to do any of the activities or answer certain question if I do not want to, and I know that if I feel like stopping this will be okay.
- I understand this is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers and by doing the activity I am helping with a research project.

Signed _____

Date: _____

INFORMATION BOOKLETS



COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SMÁL
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH
MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

Information Booklet (Parents, Teachers and Principals)

What is the project about?

According to the Barcelona Agreement, Council of Europe in 2002, all EU citizens should develop communicative competence in their L1 and in two FLs. This research project looks at how Irish language policy has influenced Irish primary schools with regard to this aim. To what extent are these schools multilingual communities, in which children are encouraged to acquire skills in several languages, including German as a FL, to become plurilingual³⁴ citizens? My main focus is on primary schools which participated in the Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative (MLPSI) between 1998 and 2012. In this study, I will analyse how the abolishment of the MLPSI has impacted both on teachers and pupils, in terms of their attitudes to language awareness and the concept of plurilingualism, using four different primary school settings as case studies. In doing so, their attitudes and feedback will provide an insight into how language policy is being implemented at a local level.

Who is undertaking it?

My name is Aisling Murphy and I am a Postgraduate student attending Mary Immaculate College, presently completing an MA by Research in the Department of Department of German Studies under the supervision of Helmut Grugger and Seán Ó Cathailláin. The current study will form part of my thesis.

Why is it being undertaken?

The objective of the study is to revisit research on the MLPSI and also to look at how schools have been affected by the abolishment of the initiative and to what extent are they fulfilling the Barcelona objective goals. In the process of this language attitudes and language competence will be looked at.

What are the benefits of this research?

It is hoped that the data gathered from participants will (a) enhance our understanding of the important of early language learning, (b) give us an insight in to the current language situation in Ireland and (c) look at good practice in the field of early language learning.

Exactly what is involved for the participant (time, location, etc.)

Participants A: PUPILS: This study involves me completing two tasks with 6th class pupils, who have learnt German. This will be in the form identifying words, completing a language portrait³⁵ and focus group interviews (in groups of four), will then be carried out with children in which they discuss their attitudes towards languages.

Participants B: CLASS TEACHERS: This study will involve me interviewing you on a few different areas related to language attitudes and awareness. A list of topics will be given to you beforehand, in order for you to think about some of the questions. This interview will take the style of a narrative interview.

Participants C: LANGUAGE TEACHERS: Language teachers will be interviewed using a narrative

³⁴ Plurilingualism: means an individual can speak/or knows three or more languages. Multilingualism is a term usually to describe a society or a group in which the languages are used.

³⁵ A Language Portrait is a simple outline of a person, which the children colour in to represent their language competences

style on the topic of teaching languages and interviewees will be asked about their experiences of and attitudes to teaching languages.

LOCATION and TIME: When carrying out research I will come out to the school and organise times which suit your school, the class teacher and their class. My pilot study will begin hopefully at the end of January, and my main case studies will then begin in February or early March.

Right to withdraw

Your anonymity is assured throughout this project and you are free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason.

How will the information be used /disseminated?

The data from this case study will be made anonymous, and a sample of the answers, given by children will be included and a transcript of all the interviews will be included in my thesis. Only I will have access to the originals along with my supervisors and examiners for the duration of the project.

How will confidentiality be kept?

All information gathered will remain confidential and will not be released to any third party. The school will also not be named. A random ID will be generated for each participant and it is this rather than the participant's name which will be held with their data to maintain their anonymity. Also any data which is being electronically stored, will be pin protected and encrypted. Any hard copies will be kept in a locked safe.

What will happen to the data after research has been completed?

In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule all participant data will be stored for the duration of the project plus three years at which time it will be destroyed.

Contact details:

If at any time you have any queries/issues with regard to this study my contact details are as follows:

Name: Aisling Murphy

Email: Aisling.Murphy@mic.ul.ie

Phone Number: 0860560757

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact:

MIREC Administrator

Mary Immaculate College

South Circular Road

Limerick

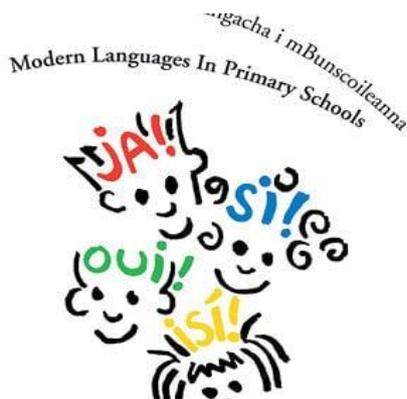
061-204515

mirec@mic.ul.ie

Information Booklet for Pupil Participants

Project: How are languages taught at Primary school in Ireland?

Researcher: Aisling Murphy



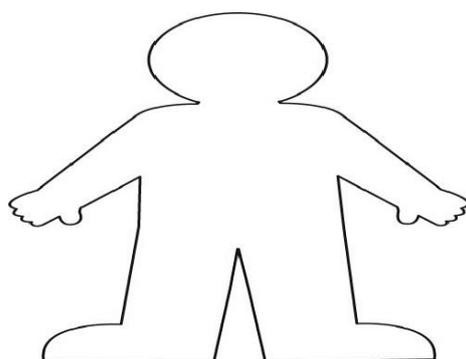
What is this project about?

I am doing a project in Mary Immaculate College on how languages are taught in primary schools in Ireland. I would like to learn about your experience learning languages and how you feel about language learning.



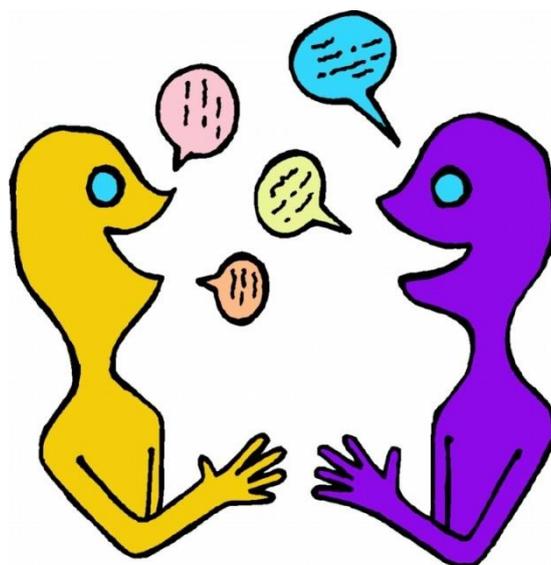
What will you be asked to do?

Firstly you will be asked a few questions about languages. You will get a language portrait, which you will be asked to colour in, and you will be asked to write a few sentences to explain your portrait. This task is to show me, which languages you know and your attitude towards them. I will explain this in greater detail when you get to the task.



Language portrait

Then I will interview you in groups of four to six. During the interviews, I will use a voice recording device to record what you are all saying, so I will be able to listen back to transcribe the interview. These recordings will not be listened to by anyone except me and the people helping me with this project.



Confidentiality

The name of the school, its location or your individual names will not be mentioned in the research project, so no one will know who you are. All audio files, consent forms and notes will be kept safe.

Further Questions/Concerns

If you have any worries, concerns or further questions about this project before or while you take part in this research, come and talk to me, your teacher or a parent.



Teachers’ Responses

Interview 1

Interview with a German Language Teacher and Specialist T1

Interviewer: How in your opinion does Ireland compare to other EU countries in regard to early language learning?

Teacher 1: Fairly poorly, except for Gaelic and the only kind of emphasis that's being put on any language in primary schools, I think is Gaelic or yeah, because, it's just part of the culture and heritage in Ireland and any other kind of modern language has been in primary school has had nearly no, kind of, importance except for thanks the MLPSI that was started for the last kind of 10 years or so, a bit less than that, they have kind of achieved that by doing that. However they cancelled it last year so you know all the good that's been done, hmm it remains to be seen how much of it will kind of stay.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 1: In terms of the attitudes of the students and so on.

Interviewer? And [...] how do you feel that the teacher's attitude to languages and their language competence has an impact on like language learners?

Teacher 1: [...] well I can only go by kind of, the one school I was in and I wasn't there for very long. I was only there for the two terms until the end of the last school term last year

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Teacher 1: Up until about June 2012. And I think they were fairly positive in general; I think the whole idea of teaching kids a language there was nobody, where that I would say weren't for that. I think overall that kind of, it's more pervasive, simply because everyone has to speak it, as part of their, kind of, teaching education. [...] not very many of them have a second language kind of to a fluent level themselves so they can't say, after the languages initiative was cancelled the obvious option would have been to kind of get some of the teachers to take on a language classes but because they don't necessarily speak it, any themselves, it is very hard to keep that going. There was only one other teacher in the school who spoke French to a level she felt comfortable to teach it. Overall so the attitudes towards languages and language teaching it would be positive, and I wouldn't be able to say anything different.

Interviewer: Ok and so how would you rate your own language competence and attitudes to language learning?

Teacher 1: I am fairly biased in that regard. I think languages are fairly important for several reasons, not just for the actual the learning of the language and speaking it. Just for like an early age if children are taught languages they learn different pronunciations, they learn about different cultures. They simply have a bit of a more open viewpoint on the world. I think it's good to kind of give the impression; we are not alone on this planet. There are other people, other cultures and just so by teaching a couple of songs or playing other games in another language, you can achieve that. And generally, just for brain development, I think at that age, language learning is very important. So yeah, I'd be very pro-language overall.

Interviewer: Ok and what is your understanding of the term plurilingualism and what to what extent the MLPSI has achieved this goal?

Teacher 1: My understanding of plurilingualism is simply someone that is aware of the existence of several languages in the world and [...] maybe can maybe speak two or three. There are very few people, who can speak loads and loads. But you know, I think it is simply being conscious of other people on this planet and that they speak other languages and have different ways of viewing the world.

Interviewer: Yeah. And to what extent do you think the MLPSI achieved that?

Teacher 1: I think, in a lot of ways they achieved that simply because you are teaching children about holidays in different countries and how they celebrate them and kind of different ways of,

[...] I don't know different ways of playing games, you know different ways of writing or describing things. You know so it kind of straight away gives a kind of broad view of how people all over the world do and say things.

Interviewer: Ok and what were the main benefits and challenges of the initiative in your opinion?

Teacher 1: The main benefits I think simply like educational. As in like I had at some stage simply a child asked me: "*So not everyone in Germany speaks English?*" And I was like "*No.*" And that was after a couple of months of teaching them German, so you know. Or simple things like comparisons, like you can teach comparisons, big, bigger the biggest and all that kind of thing. And you can teach them that way or you can teach them about [...] what the biggest mountain, what's the longest river and things like that and they learn about Geography of the country and not just Germany but Austria and Switzerland, of their own country even in their own language. Like, I think overall, the main benefit just to educate children about different places in the world. The pitfalls are there was no kind of overall approach, kind of in across schools. It was a choice. In my opinion, it should have been obligatory for schools across Ireland really, for primary schools across Ireland. That one other language, modern language apart from Gaelic should be taught in schools because otherwise what would happen, is that at secondary school level there are some children who have done a second language and others that haven't and [...] it gets complicated for the teachers and for the children that have already learnt a ML and they get bored so that's a pitfall. I think on another level that some of the teachers that did the foreign languages were not necessarily not a teacher for the class level, so as a part-timer coming you do not necessarily know the way the school does things. A bit of bureaucracy around that and [...] I think sometimes in a way it would have been good in the long term, I think the ideal situation should be a primary school education level say in Mary I for example, teachers should have to choose a language and be educated in teaching it to basic level, a couple of, I don't know, songs, and stuff like that. Not even as an extra class but as part of language class, like Gaelic or any kind of class.

Interviewer: And what did the typical foreign language lesson entail? So for you?

Teacher 1: [...]. The typical language class, [...] I typically would have started off with a couple of games even for yeah. Sometimes a game or song to revise things we did in the last class or even to settle, to get children settled. I think after that you kind of just introduce new vocabulary, by use of flash cards or something like that or even just ask them if they know any words about this particular topic. [...] then often you just use simple drills like introducing a new word put it on the board and get them to repeat it and then you can do silly things like saying it really fast and they find that amusing. You know I think the main thing is a playful manner in which you introduce new vocabulary or sometimes you have to do grammar as well and things like that, and you just do in a way they don't see it as anything difficult or that they have to go home and learn it off by heart, over and over you know. Just games and songs and things like that.

Interviewer: And what supports were in place for the language teacher and the class teacher in the school that you were in during the MLPSI?

Teacher 1: [...]. Well for languages in general, I think for Gaelic there was a lot of kind of material that they had there and people among each other kind of swapped ideas. For the MLs, it was very much a separate thing to that. My main contact would have been the principal and vice principal cause a lot of them have gone to like educational training and seminars and they picked up things about the MLPSI there, and [...] would kind of share the material with me then. I think for the main part though I was fairly independent. I don't think there were many times I was kind of offered support, or I would have been told oh this is how you should do certain things. Sometimes the class teacher would have ideas as well, about what works, and what doesn't, but yeah.

Interviewer: Was there any other supports outside the school, any other supports then from the organisers of the initiative or?

Teacher 1: [...], I went to their website a couple of times for kind of to check resources and I found kind of that they were a little incomplete for German. There was not that much material there. A little bit, from the principal. She had like a CD from that particular organisation now, but yeah on the websites sometimes you could find things but for the most part, [...] I wouldn't have felt there was a phone number to ring.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 1: Or anything like that there was not any immediate contact person for it.

Interviewer: And did they offer you training or anything before hand?

Teacher 1: [...] at the beginning I think there was some kind of letter offering a kind of training session for it. I think it was the *Goethe Institut* who was sponsoring it or something like that. But [...] because of my own commitments, I kind of chose not to go to that and that was up in Dublin as well so I didn't go to that. I have taught children before as well, so I was aware of the material they had, and I was aware of the teaching side of things so, yeah.

Interviewer: And in your viewpoint how do you feel things changed since the abolishment of the initiative?

Teacher 1: It just kind of ruined all the good work they have done over the last ten years really. I find it terrible, to be honest. [...], 'because it's now more so than ever that languages are in the background. People are aware they are needed for jobs and things like that. They can see there are a lot of jobs even here, ads on the radio about *German Connects* and this and that and the other and where does it actually start, education should start, language education should start at a primary school age and it's not happening now they cut the funding for it. I mean I know at the end of the day they are worried about different things as they say like numeracy and literacy, all very much connect to language learning. Literacy is connected to language learning in so many ways, you know. It makes no sense to disconnect one from the other. [...] and yeah, overall I think languages are being ignored on the one hand, and on the other hand you know at higher level, at industrial level employers are crying out for people with languages. Whereas that bridge, the government pretty much dismantled it. You know it's just the last straw, to do that and it wasn't a good idea. I think if they ever want to re-introduce it, it's going to be a lot harder to now. But yeah, that is something they obviously didn't think about at the time, and they didn't have the money to fund it.

Interviewer: Ok and what national language policy or policies are there for the teaching of modern languages in Ireland?

Teacher 1: Well the main, there isn't any particular policy for the MLPS, for modern languages full stop, explicit one. There is no actual written that everyone should speak this amount of languages at that age or anything like that. There is implicitly a way to keep MLs in the secondary school by having people do [...] modern language in order to get into University. That matriculation stipulation is important to keep languages in the curriculum. And a lot of school principals are aware it is important these days. Overall the only explicit written policy is the Languages Act 2003 and that does not include modern languages; it includes Irish, Gaelic so [...] it's quite exclusive in that way. At the time probably they prioritised that for obvious reasons but in the long run, it would have made sense to include modern languages as well. [...] yeah overall I think there are some implicit policies, Universities have a lot of say in whom they can take on and so on by just saying we need to have at least one other language apart from Gaelic otherwise they won't get in, and that's the end of it. There is already kind of yeah loosening these regulations simply by looking at where there is still money in the industry, where are the jobs, Science, how can we get more science students? By lowering the matriculation stipulations and how they would do that. Easiest forget about the languages, is one of the things they can drop, and nobody cares about. Unless you actually have to go abroad or want to get a job here where you have to be bilingual or trilingual, you know.

Interviewer: And was there a language policy in the school, where you were? Like was there any

policy that you could follow?

Teacher 1: [...], not really no. I think overall [...], Gaelic was quite important, [...] as in you know the children would have known a couple of phrases that would be used every day, and the teachers were adamant about using them. [...], I think you know apart from English and Gaelic there was no kind of guideline or anything. Like that. I don't there was any bit particular emphasis on any other language. No, not that I can remember anyway.

Interviewer: Ok. Is there anything else you want to add?

Teacher 1: I could give you a big long list now. No, I think overall from my own experience it did a lot of good, the initiative that while I was teaching on it, if you get children at that age when they are still not disgruntled or in their teenage phase about learning they get easily excitable about learning a new language. I think that is when that is when you need to engage their attention and their will to learn you know to get them be enthusiastic about things because that is when it carries over to the next level and next level. Same when I look at my own research the main reasons why people took on German at university level is that they did it in secondary school. So if you logically think about it maybe it makes sense to get them to do a least one languages at primary school as they are more likely to take it on in secondary school and take it seriously and enjoy it and then later on in life they may not like have a negative attitude towards languages in general. It might not seem like such an exclusive thing, you know so I think overall they kind of really should have really thought about the damage that is being done by dismantling that initiative altogether. I think really if they are going to try to save money, maybe way to do it would have been trying to train the current teachers in another language that the school chooses, you know and then you could a part-timer come in and who could teach them a couple of phrases which they could then teach the children along with you know just being more sustainable than just cutting it altogether. Anything but cutting it would have been great!

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 1: All right.

Interviewer: Thanks very much.

Teacher 1: No problem.

Interview 2

Interview with Teachers in S1

Interviewer: How in your opinion does Ireland compare to other EU countries in regard to early language learning?

Teacher 2: [...], I suppose [...] what we notice when we are abroad what we notice is you know other countries seem to have a better grasp of the English language as their foreign language. Whereas here in Ireland children would when they finish school they do not speak it at all, and even orally, I don't think they are able to have a conversation.

Teacher 3: Yeah.

Teacher 2: Anyway regardless so I mean my experience would be that from being in Germany, for example, is that teenagers, even young children they are able to communicate with me in English, and that's their foreign language, so it seems to be working maybe better.

Teacher 3: Yeah. Definitely, the other EU countries seem to have a better grasp of learning language than we would here. It's definitely lacking, to think the children have come through maybe 16 years of education and wouldn't be able to hold a conversation in Irish.

Teacher 2: Yeah.

Question 2: Ok. And do you feel that sufficient time is given to the teaching of languages in Ireland.

Teacher 3: Yes I think there is, there is a huge amount of time given to teaching, to teaching Irish definitely. As much time given to teaching Irish as there is to teaching Maths or English

Teacher 2: Maths and English yeah. I don't think you could give anymore.

Teacher 3: No

Teacher 2: You know. Yeah.

Interviewer: And to other languages then, do you think there is enough time given to French in the classroom?

Teacher 3: If you wanted the children to speak it fluently, probably not but I don't think that you could afford to give any more time within our own curriculum because you would be compromising some other core subject. I don't think it will ever happen.

Teacher 2: But also some schools don't have it at all. So I mean in some schools you would say no there isn't. They are not doing it at all, but here we do a limited amount, but you couldn't do anymore.

Teacher 3: No you couldn't.

Teacher 2: You couldn't. I mean, we have an hour, no.

Both T1 and T2: 45 minutes a week.

Teacher 2: It was an hour and half last year, and that was really a lot out of the curriculum.

Teacher 3: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok [...] how do you feel the teacher's attitude to languages and language competence is important and has an impact on languages learners. Do you find it important or not so important?

Teacher 3: That the teacher has the language?

Interviewer: Yeah and their own attitude and their language competence

Teacher 3: Absolutely yeah, absolutely if you love something the children are going to pick up on it, and they are going to be as enthusiastic about it as you are.

Teacher 2: Yeah.

Teacher 3: Or if you have a very negative attitude towards a subject or towards a language then, of course, they are going to pick up on it.

Teacher 2: It's the same as any subject.

Teacher 3: Yes.

Teacher 2: Language would be the same particularly if you have a negative attitude towards any subject but yeah but I suppose languages I think it is harder to find people who have a positive attitude towards well particularly the Irish language maybe more so than French.

Teacher 3: Yes.

Both Than other languages.

Teacher 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok and how would you rate your own language competence and your attitude towards language learning?

Teacher 3: I think my attitude would be, would be very high. Competence I would, I feel confident I suppose at a primary level, but there would be times definitely that I would maybe doubt say my own oral language ability or that it is something I could improve on or continue in professional development

Teacher 2: Yeah I would feel again I would feel very strongly that Irish be you know the amount of time given to it, is maintained and that we do put a lot of focus in because it's, from a cultural side of it and [...] but again like, like I would feel fairly competent but at times you know I would question myself and [...] you know I wouldn't feel I mean. Well, I myself wouldn't feel all that comfortable speaking to a native Irish speaker if I was in that position, so I suppose that says a lot.

Interviewer: Ok and in your opinion what were the main benefits and challenges of the MLPSI?

Teacher 3: [...] the benefits are that they were being exposed to the language earlier and that it was very much I suppose, the methodologies were very much fun orientated. Fun based so the children were picking up the language but it wasn't. The focus was mainly on oral language not on grammar and not on writing, so that would have been one benefit.

Teacher 2: Yeah absolutely I suppose the challenges of it are that it's not in every school and then when you know they go to secondary school they are basically, they have to start all over again.

Teacher 3: Yeah .

Teacher 2: Because other children are coming in starting from scratch.

Interviewer: Yeah. Uh huh.

Teacher 2: Also they are up against other languages, I mean I know for a fact here, for example, my class last year, the majority of my class even though they had learnt French for two years were not going to do French in secondary school which I could not believe. They were going to do Spanish. So I suppose. They are coming up. There are so many languages to choose from but I suppose German French and Spanish so how do you decide which one to have in a primary school and then you know that the children even keep that up. It doesn't make sense for them to do two years of a language and then leave it.

Teacher 3: Yeah.

Teacher 2: If they are not going to keep it up.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Ok having seen lessons being taught, what does the typical FL lesson entail?

Teacher 2: It seems to be a lot of umm games and learning [...] you know child-centred learning [...], fun. I suppose getting children involved, very active learning and you know using [...] you know interactive methods and so on. Yeah it's very enjoyable.

Teacher 3: Yeah they do, they really enjoy it.

Interviewer: Ok and what supports were in place for the class teacher in the school during the MLPSI? Was there anything.

Teacher 3: In the teaching of French no as none of.

Teacher 2: We don't teach it.

Teacher 3: We had an outsider coming in so [...] there wasn't really. I know that we were given some French books and things like that if we wanted to include them in our libraries and things

like that and posters to put up in our rooms. Just I suppose that the children are kind of seeing it on a regular basis. That was, that was it really.

Teacher 2: That was it, I suppose it would be different if we were teaching it ourselves.

Teacher 3: Yes.

Teacher 2: We would have had even maybe a policy.

Teacher 3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok so how did the school community react to the news of the abolishment of the initiative? So what happened after that.

Teacher 2: Well I suppose in a way, I mean you kind of are getting your time back for your classroom as well, so I suppose mixed reviews really.

Teacher 3: Yes.

Teacher 2: While we know it is of benefit to the children I mean we are still trying to get all our time as much time as we can.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Teacher 2: As much time as we can on other subjects so a mixed, a mixed review really.

Teacher 3: Yes, I don't think that there was you know there wasn't outrage over it.

Teacher 2: No.

Teacher 3: [...] people would have questioned maybe the value of it [...] the amount of time that was given to it

Teacher 2: Yeah.

Teacher 3: And if it was taking away from other subjects yeah.

Teacher 2: Uh huh.

Question 9: [...] and what was your own view on the abolishment?

Teacher 2: Well having sixth class and having such a busy year I think I was glad to have time back, to be honest, Yeah.

Teacher 3: I would agree you know I definitely thought last year the hour and half a huge, a huge amount of time to take away from our week, you know it was a huge draw from other subjects. This year I found it a lot easier because we only had one class a week. It's definitely a lot more manageable.

Teacher 2: Yeah.

Teacher 3: But I do think that, a lot of, even some of the parents have questioned the value of it.

Teacher 2: Yes.

Teacher 3: Particularly with the amount of them taking it on in secondary school and [...] how much they are learning from it.

Interviewer:: Ok and in your viewpoint how do you feel the language situation has changed nationally since the abolishment?

Teacher 2: I don't know if it has. I know in our school, we've made the decision to keep on and to supplement it. I think it's the board of management that are supplementing it

Teacher 3: Yes. parents have been asked for the first time this year.

Teacher 2: Yes parents have been asked to pay.

Teacher 3: To pay something. We obviously as a school decided, it is beneficial, and it's worth keeping on. [...] nationally I don't know.

Teacher 2: I don't know nationally, I don't know how other schools are dealing with it.

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 2: Yeah. I suppose it depends on budgets.

Interviewer: And do you know of any national policies which are there for the teaching of modern languages in Ireland?

Interviewer: Ok and [...] are there any policies for the teaching of Irish?

Teacher 2: Yes. We have we have very specific policies for Irish and English but not for any foreign languages in the school.

Teacher 3: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok and the last question is answered, so do you have anything to add or anything on the topic?

Teacher 2: [...] I think it's just, It needs to be like the whole situation needs to be looked at because some schools are doing it, some schools are not [...] it's not, it needs to be across the board if it is to improve the teaching of languages you know like maybe, they should start at a younger age and then more people would be inclined to keep it up and then it increases the standard in secondary school, say you have to have done it in third, fourth, fifth and sixth and then you are increasing the standards the whole way up.

Teacher 3: That's true, yeah.

Teacher 2: But having to go back into first year and start all over again doesn't really make sense. Why would you do it in PS?

Teacher 3: Yes I mean there is definitely beneficial for tuning their ears and for getting them used to speak the language and for recognising patterns in verbs and grammar and for having a positive attitude towards it because they do learn it in a real fun way. The children really, really do enjoy it, and that's part of promoting FLs as well. But I think with parents as well there seems to be this attitude as well that languages are more beneficial, and that seems to change from year to year. When we were younger French was seen as the subject that you should learn, but now it just seems to be Spanish.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Teacher 3: So I don't know where that shift has come from but.

(interruption in recording)

Teacher 3: The more in tune you become with more vocabulary and [...] remember vocabulary. No, it definitely it never, I could have gone into Irish straight after a French lesson. It never impacted on it or the vocabulary.

Interview 3

Interview with Language teacher School 2

Interviewer: How in your opinion does Ireland compare to other EU countries in regard to early language learning?

Teacher 4: [...], well I suppose with the abolishment of the MLPSI, it's not comparing very well. Up till last year visiting teachers would get paid through a government grant and that and there were resources made available, and there was [...] in-service days that I could attend and they were a great help in terms of promoting you know the teaching of the language and giving me ideas and that. So that was abolished was it 2 years ago or last year and since then it's actually been said I think at the last in service day I attended it was said that they were not even aware themselves if inspectors of the Department of Education would ratify the teaching of modern languages in schools since they abolished that. [...] so, in my opinion, it does not compare at all favourably because I know there are other schools in Europe and then, it's a given that they'd be teaching French and German and English. [...] outside of English and Irish schools don't have to anything unless it's a bonus really, if there is a staff member within the school who volunteers to do it, but I know a lot of schools had the visiting teachers and they could pay them through the grant, and I think that now they are taking them funds from their own personal school funds and continuing to pay them if they find the time. But yeah it compares quite poorly I think.

Interviewer: Ok and do you feel that there is sufficient time given to the teaching of languages and literacy in Irish schools?

Teacher 4: Is this English, Irish and other languages.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: Certainly in terms of English and Irish, certainly I think so. I know in a Gaelscoil it is a bit different you can accord even more [...] teaching time to Irish so Gaelscoils are at an advantage as we have an increased time for Irish and that ties in with the English as well because language learning is interconnected in a way. In terms of MLs no there isn't as you saw today they have only half an hour. It's completely sufficient in a way I know before the abolishment I had an hour , so there was a lot more time given. But overall in terms of [...] the time that is given to literacy it's complete sufficient but modern languages completely insufficient I think.

Interviewer: Ok and how do you feel that the teachers' language, teachers' attitude to languages and language competence has an impact on learners.

Teacher 4: [...], I think the teacher has to a positive attitude. [...] you know it depends on the languages as well you are referring to. English it is relatively easy enough to teach in a sense as the children are coming in, and then they are able to speak it and generally speaking it's quite good in terms of the parents are very helpful at home, and they will do their reading and that, so it's quite easy to catch on in that sense. [...] with regards to the teaching of Irish certainly, you need to have a positive attitude. You need to be fluent in it really to be able to teach the language. You probably saw today with the French, and thankfully I have a PHD student in with me, and she helps out with the spelling and the phrases, but I am aware that you know my competence in French isn't very sufficient and or proficient, and that has an impact on the teaching then. So I can see the difference in my own teaching of Irish or English as compared to my French it isn't total immersion in French when it should be like giving instructions in French but I am giving them in Irish. [...] so that doesn't really assist the pupils. But because I am able to give the instructions obviously fluently in Irish, it helps in the Irish class and the same with English really. Eh so the attitude is very important, I think.

Interviewer: And do you think the fact that that you are in a Gaelscoil, so using immersion education that it has an impact on how they pick up other languages?

Teacher 4: [...], definitely yeah. Cause they do realise immediately that they need to speak

languages in order to [...] perfect them [languages] and they can see that you know with their use of Irish from Junior Infants to sixth class, that they can see there is an obvious improvement there because they are totally immersed in it and they are constantly listening so it is evident to them because we are in a Gaelscoil they can see that it's vital that they practice their language in order to perfect it. [...] yeah is that okay.

Interviewer: Yeah that's perfect. And what is your understanding of the term plurilingualism?

Teacher 4: I suppose if you have several languages if you are able to speak several languages. [...], that's plurilingualism yeah.

Interviewer: And to what extent did the MLPSI promote this?

Teacher 4: Very much so, as I was saying in my first answer. [...] they just facilitated it greatly so much. Even their website I think. Their website is still up and running but it's just not being updated and that. [...] even in our case my school they ran a competition as regards the best website and best French section in the website and that was two years ago and we you know used that as a motivation to really update and renew our website constantly, and we did that year, and we won the most promising website that year. So that was a great boost for us so in that sense they were great cause they gave us I suppose [...]. Just they motivated us and helped us with a sense of achievement even they would issue certificates and the end of every year for the students in sixth class who are moving on and even that in itself, 'cause we would have a yearly presentation than at the end of the year, and that was just great for them.

Interviewer: And [...], and in your opinion what were the main benefits and challenges of the initiative?

Teacher 4: [...], teaching French in PS the benefits and challenges or is it the MLPSI?

Interviewer: the MLPSI

Teacher 4: [...] the benefits are obvious just in terms of the pupil learning and that they are being introduced to a third language. [...] most of our students would be going into (name of secondary school), whose in the Gaelcholáiste and the only say FL they do there is French. So they are getting a good head start. [...] there is an obvious learning benefit there. They are being introduced to that. [...] I don't see any disadvantages really. [...] I do think sometimes you know if a teacher is under pressure in trying to complete other areas of the curriculum, and there is such an emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and we had confirmation only last month and they spent a lot and they had to spend a lot of time, because we were the choir for singing, and I do sometimes feel not so much guilty, but I just feel that I am impinging on her time and on the fact that you know obviously given to fact that I had half an hour to teach French it's not considered. Well, the perception is that it is not as important as the other subjects.

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher 4: Because there is only half an hour and the government abolished that initiative. So it's obviously not thought of too highly because of that, but I do feel sometimes I might be impinging on the class curriculum and time. [...] to the detriment of other subjects I the class teachers mind if you get me.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: Because I am not the class teacher I kind of come in for a half an hour on a Friday, but I would be a class teacher within in the school. So especially around confirmation time they were very busy I just felt maybe I personally obviously didn't feel it, I felt maybe the class teacher a bit reluctant to give me over half an hour to French when she could be practising the songs or whatever.

Interviewer: Ok. And what themes and strategies do you typically used in a FL lesson?

Teacher 4: [...] I tried to especially, I try a lot of games, [...] a lot of [...] I have this book, and it is primarily about the use of games in language learning, and you'd always try to get pair work or group work. [...] they'd use maybe props or visual aids because I think that helps a lot. You saw today just in terms of the hair and the eyes.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: Having pictures, just for them to refer to that. I didn't have a lot of time for that. But [...] I remember one lesson last year worked very well. We were teaching clothes, and I put out some clothes, and they were, I'd say in French put on the green skirt so then they'd have to think of the colour.

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher 4: And the clothes, so the use of props and visual aids is very effective I think. And just the main especially when they have so little time, I want to enjoy the class and have a positive attitude towards it. So I try to do as little as possible on the chalk and talk and just get them up and get them speaking.

Interviewer: Yeah and what supports were in place in the school during the MLPSI?

Teacher 4: [...] in the school itself well we did meet with the representative, and she came in and introduced everything to us, and the principal is very supportive of it. She did a Master's herself in Languages, in Irish and you know there is obviously positive attitude within the school towards it. We are working towards a [...] a blue flag which is a European, it promotes European citizenship so the French actually played an important part role in [...] participating in that programme and we are still awaiting a reply as to regards to whether we'll get in, but [...] the French was important for that. [...] so it is an important element within the school I know on open night and that that parents will ask.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: You know what extracurricular things are going on in French is an asset to us, and I think the other thing teachers and the principal certainly gives that impression as well.

Interviewer: Ok and how did the school react to the news of the abolishment of the initiative?

Teacher 4: We actually wrote letters to Ruairi Quinn at the time eh yeah because a lot of the emails were coming through. Myself, when I found out was actually attending an in-service day.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: So that was like earth shattering to hear especially for the French teachers who came from France who were being paid by the government through that scheme. They literally found out that morning that news filtered through and the coordinator like it was literally asked to him if there was a point to us being here because we won't get any more further funding and there is the chance that the whole scheme, well it will be abolished, so what we were doing was drama that day and people actually left at like half nine because we arrived at 9:00am, and we had this big talk around it and we were discussing if it was going head, because we were in limbo at the time there was nothing official . It was the day after the budget, and he just said they'd be no more money allocated so we weren't 100%. The man himself who was giving the course was employed, you know through the MLPSI, and he was unsure as to where he stood. He didn't know if he was going to go back teaching after being on secondment by the MLPSI for nearly five or six years. So people walked out during that course day. We carried on, but the atmosphere was obviously, people were very down about it [...] the class themselves I explained it to them, and we did write letter of protestation or whatever to Ruairi Quinn, and they all signed off on it and we wrote emails as a school ourselves just giving, trying to really merge dissatisfaction with the decision. So we were quite upset about it the fact that you know the hour was cut to half an hour now, and we are literally trying to squeeze it in while dancing is going on in another class so I can come in and do it. So it's all a bit.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: You know it's not as good. Kind of.

Interviewer: And how did the parents of the class react?

Teacher 4: Yeah they were again I suppose surprised. Not many came up to voice their dissatisfaction or whatever but I know I brought it up myself, [...] with them and yeah they were disappointed. They were also you see we weren't directly affected in the sense we didn't have a

French teacher coming in from outside getting paid through this, this government grant.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: And I was doing it, I wasn't getting payment in that regard so there was I say an assumption that it would carry on regardless. I was willing to go on regardless. So they, people weren't directly affected to the extent they were in other schools where it has been completely abolished. But yeah, definitely disappointment. And just I suppose complete incomprehension as to why it was done because you know language learning is so important and it's an asset particularly you know in the global world languages are so important so yeah they couldn't understand. We were all a bit flabbergasted.

Interviewer: And how do you feel the language situation nationally has changed since the abolishment?

Teacher 4: [...] obviously priorities have changed; It's all this literacy and numeracy strategy. It's about hitting those targets; it's about writing up the development plans for literacy for numeracy, and it's about you know. More time has been accorded to those subjects so it has had a direct impact on other languages and ironic in a way because it's all it should you know it is all interconnected. Language learning is all interconnected.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: I know that research was done, and I know that students, who were introduced more languages at a young age you know are more positive minded and just are I suppose a very I suppose better skills in terms of language learning later on in life as regards, English and Irish and other languages. So it's all interconnected, and it was disappointing that people presumed that French or Spanish or German are an entity in themselves they are not you know they feed off the literacy skills that we are learning in English and Irish as well. So time wise it had a very negative impact.

Interviewer: Are there any national policies there for the teaching of MLs in primary schools?

Teacher 4: There may be. I know that MLPSI have various policies, and we drew up our own policy here. [...] that there was a pilot study done I think, they did originally when they wrote the 1999 curriculum have a book on ML teaching so that's obviously there, and I did refer to that when we were writing up the [...] policy. So that's there also although it was never obviously given out to students. When I was in college anyway, I never received it. It was only when we started doing French here that I became aware of it, and that am we looked into that to inform our own policy here. I am not aware of anything outside that if they are.

Interviewer: What does your own policy entail, so your own school policy on languages?

Teacher 4: Yeah it's, we have there I can show it to you. It's basically just, just in writing the fact that we were involved in the MLPSI and that we are carrying it on, the time that's accorded to it, it was changed twice year as regards the subjects would have been done, so updated for example 5th and 6th class be together so am we change the topics every two years so that there would not be too much repetition. Obviously, they do the basics first but am within that plan there would have been written up different topic there may have been in Year one and Year two. So there wouldn't be too much repetition. [...] also in terms of integration with other language projects I do E-Twinning within the school. We are twinned with a French school so am within the plan that would have been mentioned. [...] the fact that, what else is in the plan [...] yeah the time allocated and topics covered and the integration with other policies. [...] I suppose the strategies that would be in use.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Teacher 4: And the books and the resources I have as well, as there are a fair amount of resources as well at the time when we started up we got a €300 grant, so we did use that fully.

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher 4: And am that's essentially it. I can give you a copy before you go.

Interviewer: Ok thank you, Have you anything else to add?

Teacher 4: [...] no I just think language learning is very important, and I know the children here

enjoy it, and they will be doing it in secondary school as well so it is an asset to them for them to be doing it in primary school.

Interviewer: Ok thank you very much.

Teacher 4: Ok.

School 1
Pupils’
Interviews
and
Portraits

Interview 1 Language Portraits

Pupil 1

Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it:

Ciao = you welcome
 grazie = thank you
 arrivederci = goodbye
 Bonjour = hello
 French

Costo c'è = what does it mean?
 Ciao ciao = hello Irish
 Hi = hi Chinese

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)

Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
English	Blue
Italian	Red
Irish	Green
French	Orange

Description/ Explanation:
 I like speaking Italian because I love there aren't and I have to know a bit of it because I go to Italy every year.

Pupil 2

Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it:

Bonjour Hello
 Ciao Ciao
 Hello Hello
 Hi Hi
 Hi Hi
 Hi Hi

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)

Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
English	Blue
French	Orange
Irish	Orange

Description/ Explanation:
 I like French + Irish
 I love English

Pupil 3

Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it:

Ciao - Bonjour - Hello
 Ciao - Bonjour - Hello
 Ciao - Bonjour - Hello
 Ciao - Bonjour - Hello

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)

Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
Italian	Blue
French	Red
Irish	Yellow

Description/ Explanation:
 I choose these because they are good at saying Hello and at saying Bonjour and they are good at saying Hello and at saying Bonjour.

Pupil 4

Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it:

Bonjour - Hello
 Bonjour - Hello
 Bonjour - Hello
 Bonjour - Hello

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)

Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
English	Blue
Irish	Orange
French	Pink

Description/ Explanation:
 I choose it to be my favourite to be my least favourite

Interview 1: School 1

Interviewer: Ok so, [...], you completed the language portraits, so I was just wondering, [...], if you could explain your language portraits to the group. Could you start?

Pupil 1: I, my languages I picked English, Italian, Irish and French. [...], I speak Italian because I go, I like, I love the way the accent is, and I go to Italy every year so I have to know a bit of it

Interviewer: Very good. Where in Italy do you go to?

Pupil 1: All difference types of places each year and this year near Pompeii.

Interviewer: Ok very good, and what was I going to say. So, what about, why did you [...], colour in so much for English for example?

Pupil 1: Because it is my fluent language and I speak it all the time.

Interviewer: Ok, and what about Irish? Why did you colour that part of the body in? So you coloured in near where your heart is.

Pupil 1: I don't really know.

Interviewer: You don't know, ok. So it's quite apt you did it that way. Your nationality?

Pupil 1: I don't know.

Interviewer: Ok, so. How do you find languages generally?

Pupil 1: Kind of fun. 'Cause you are learning new words and how to speak different languages and how to communicate with different people all the time.

Interviewer: Ok. Excellent. What about you? I notice in your language portrait and explanation you say you hate French and Irish. Could you explain that?

Pupil 2: 'because they are too hard.

Interviewer: Why are they difficult for you?

Pupil 2: 'cause (pause) the words get mixed up.

Interviewer: The words get mixed up ok. What do you find most difficult?

Pupil 2: I don't understand which is which.

Interviewer: [...] Can you tell me a little bit about your language portrait? (To pupil 3)

Pupil 3: I chose the languages, English, which the colour is orange, French, which the colour is aqua, German, and the colour, is purple, Irish the colour is green and Spanish, which is the colour is blue.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 3: I did order the ones I coloured in the most to be my favourite and the ones with the least I wouldn't/don't like that much.

Interviewer: So your least favourite then is?

Pupil 3: Irish!

Interviewer: Irish, ok. And why do you dislike it?

Pupil 3: I just find it a really dull and boring language.

Interviewer: You obviously like French then?

Pupil 3: I think it is fun, learning it.

Interviewer: And why did you colour in the hands for French?

Pupil 3: Oh, I thought it looked cool.

Interviewer: Ok, you thought it looked cool. Ok, and is there any reason you coloured in Spanish, you coloured in the feet, the legs?

Pupil 3: Anytime I think of Spanish I always think of the, like a Spanish dance.

Interviewer: Ok so you think of Spanish dancing. Can you think of any name of any Spanish dance?

Pupil 3: [...] No. I just know every time I see a film, they dance.

Interviewer: Ok they dance Can you think, can anyone think of any Spanish dances?

Pupil 1: Samba.

Interviewer: Samba [...], and what else?

Pupil 1: I don't know.

Pupil 2: The clippity clap one. (voice muffled)

Pupil 3: The Macarenas (meaning maracas)

Pupil 2: Yeah, those yokes.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Ok, and could you explain yours, there?

Pupil 4: Italian is blue, Chinese is red, Ireland is green, and England is white.

Interviewer: Ok and why did you pick them colours?

Pupil 4: [...], I know a few people from Italy, and I am able to speak Chinese a bit, I am from Ireland and England is our native language.

Interviewer: And white, I notice there is no white on you on your diagram. So does that not mean you do not know much of it or what does it mean?

Pupil 4: We speak too much English

Interviewer: Ok so it is that you speak too much English so you didn't want to put it on the diagram. Ok. [...]. And how do you find languages generally? Do you like them or dislike them?

Pupil 4: I like them some are easy, and some are hard.

Interviewer: Ok so which ones are easy, do you think?

Pupil 4: English and Irish

Interviewer: English and Irish why? Why do you think they are easy?

Pupil 4: English because we speak it naturally every day. And Irish, we have to speak it because we are from Ireland.

Interviewer: And why then you find the other languages difficult or do you find them ok?

Pupil 4: They are hard enough.

Interviewer: And why would you find them hard?

Pupil 4: Because some of the words are really hard to pronounce.

Interviewer: And generally all of ye, what do you like most about learning FLs? You said you didn't like them, so is there anything you like. (Pause) No nothing? You are shaking your head. (Pupil 2)

Pupil 2: It's not very good progress. She/The teacher puts something on the board, but that is not learning them. That's just putting them up on the board. At least our teacher in Irish, she gives us them to learn, and we can't memorise every single word that is up on the board.

Interviewer: Ok. [...], and what do you like about learning foreign languages?

Pupil 1: Well, it's kind of fun, because you get like, like learn different words and how to speak, and it's like handy because if you ever go on holidays, you'll know some. You'll know how to speak it with the people in case they don't understand you.

Interviewer: Ok. And what do you find (name of pupil 3)?

Pupil 3: Like (name of pupil one) said emm; I find if you go on holidays it would be fun and also I love that when we do activities in different languages, like in French, we do *Cocorico* or *Mia Mamma*. It's on the computer. I think it is *Mia Mamma*.

Interviewer: And what about you then?

Pupil 4: [...] it's good because if you speak different languages, you are able to communicate with people in different parts of the world.

Interviewer: And the most difficult thing? I think some of ye actually told me about that. But [...], so what would find difficult? So you didn't say anything about that.

Pupil 1: Well [...]. It's probably the new words, like the big words that you can't really understand. They are really hard to pronounce. Like Tongue twisters.

Interviewer: Ok tongue twisters. Anything else?

Pupil 3: [...] I find it difficult trying to understand the words, remembering them. Like emm, eh if our teacher gave us a new word, I wouldn't, and they told us the meaning of it, I wouldn't really understand until emm like a few days later to remember it off by heart.

Interviewer: [...] huh, Ok. And anything else? How would you find things like pronunciation?

Pupil 3: Hard.

Interviewer: Pronunciation's difficult in what languages?

Pupil 3: Irish sometimes, and French.

Pupils 2 and 3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Irish and French. And can you, and in your opinion should everyone FLs in primary school? Everyone learns Irish but that's not really a FL, it's a (pause)

All pupils: It's a native language.

Interviewer: It's your native language yeah, not maybe your mother tongue, so it's not your first language, but it is your second language normally. So [...] yeah, [...] should everyone learn FLs, like French? (Pause.) So?

Pupil 2: No

Interviewer: No?

Pupil 1: Yeah.

Interviewer Why?

Pupil 1: Because, it's, it is like a skill that you kind of have to learn, 'cause in secondary you will be doing a load of languages and stuff. It probably would; it would be better getting a head start and stuff.

Interviewer: Ok and do you think everyone. (pause) Do you think, [...] learning a language prepares you for secondary school?

Pupil 1: Yeah.

Pupil 3: I agree with (pupil 1) I think it is important to know languages.

Interviewer: Ok and what about you.

Pupil 4: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes, and why?

Pupil 4: Because when you go into secondary you won't know as much because you didn't get a head start in primary

Interviewer: Ok, excellent and can you think of anything that is the same in different languages? So anything that maybe can help you learn foreign languages?

Pupil 1: [...], well In Irish sometimes the words are the same in English. Sometimes like.

Interviewer: Could you give an example?

Pupil 3: Well sicín is kind of the same as chicken.

Interviewer: Yeah, Sicín emm huh. And what about French? Is there any

Pupil 1: No there is like spunóg.

Interviewer: Spunóg.

Pupil 3: (thinking) French?

Pause

Interviewer: If you can't think of anything it doesn't really

Pupil 3: Cóta you would think of coat.

Interviewer: Cóta is coat, uh huh.

Pupil 2: Banana.

Interviewer: Banana, ok. What about, [...], things like phrases and stuff. Is there anything that could help you when learning other languages?

Pupil 3: [...], pictures.

Interviewer: Uh huh. (Pause) Ok, and have you noticed anything that is very different? So can you think of any words that are totally different?

Pupil 3: In French you have, [...], fe-fe-female and emm male, like feminine and masculine.

Pupil 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: So they have genders, masculine words and feminine words.

Pupil 3: yes.

Interviewer: Can you think of any masculine word or feminine word in French?

Pupil 3: Emm. Pause. I had one a minute ago and was just about to say it.

Interviewer: Can anyone help?

Pupil 2: [...]

Interviewer: No?

Pupil 2: It's hard to think of it.

Pause

Interviewer: If you can't think of it, it doesn't matter its fine. (pause) Ok, anything else that might be very different? (pause) So you said you had difficulty with pronunciation.

Pupil 3 Yes

Interviewer: So would that be different?

Pupil 1 and 3: Yes.

Interviewer: And anything else?

Pupil 2: [...]

Pause

Interviewer: [...], what about how would you conjugate a verb in French?

Pupil 3: Pardon

Interviewer: how would you conjugate a verb in French? Pause Is it different or the same?

Pupil 1: It's kind of different really.

Interviewer: Ok, so that is another difference, I suppose with verbs and all that. Ok very good. Do you think learning Irish made it [...] it easier to learn French, or more difficult? What do you think?

Pupil 3: [...]

Pupil 2: Kind of easier because there are some words in Irish that are, which sound actual French so. And once you get a head start learning one language it would make it a lot easier to learn a second one.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 3: [...]

Interviewer: Any other opinions on that?

Pupil 3: Kind of. Like (name of Pupil 1) said it kind of does, but sometimes you might confuse the word up if they are similar.

Interviewer: Ok. And do you feel more or less confident learning a FL now in secondary school?

Pupil 2: Less confident

Interviewer: Less confident, and why?

Pupil 2: Cause I wouldn't really learn French that well. And I think that, [...], because I don't know that language, I mightn't do that well learning my language that I get there.

Interviewer: And what about you?

Pupil 1: I think you get more confident in secondary you know, know more than you expect when you get in there, and people will be like oh my gosh like she's an expert at French or whatever. I'd be like that's because I was learning it at primary school.

Interviewer: Ok and what about the two of ye?

Pupil 3: [...], the question is if you find more confidence at secondary or primary, yeah?

Interviewer: Yeah, would you, would you be more or less confident now learning a language at secondary school level having learnt a language?

Pupil 3: I'd be less confident in secondary because here well if you get something wrong there is not that many people do you know to mess around with you.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 3: But let's just say you said something wrong and everyone started laughing it's only like in your class. All the people you knew since years and then in secondary then it's like one

person hears something it goes around the whole time, and they would be messing with you.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 4: I'd feel more confident.

Interviewer: Ok and what types of things do you learn in French class? So, I heard last week ye did a fashion show.

Pupil 1: We like, we emm, before we walked down the catwalk we were like, we were in groups and one person would call out the clothes that we were wearing off a sheet that we had to take down. and so like we were fluent in like how to say our clothes and stuff in there.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 1: And we learnt French about say our name.

Pupil 3: And how to describe people.

Pupil 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok so you had to describe when they were walking down the catwalk. Was it?

Pupil 1: Yeah, we'd be like, emm, *Combinaison* is a onesie, I think because that was what I was wearing.

Interviewer: Ok and what were you wearing?

Pupil 2: Just a top and pants.

Interviewer: Yeah. And did you enjoy it? Did you enjoy the fashion show?

Pupil 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok. And how did ye find it?

Pupil 3: I thought it was really, really fun.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 1: It was really funny on the catwalk

Pupil 4: Yeah it was kind of fun and easy.

Interviewer: Ok and what would be your favourite activity that you did in class?

Pupil 1: [...] *Cocorico* in French 'cause what we do is one person gets the eh, one person is on and they have to walk outside the door, and our teacher, our French teacher (name) has to pick someone. And then when we say *entrée* then they have to come in, and they have three goes to figure out who Coco-

Pupil 3: five.

Pupil 2: five, yeah.

Pupil 1: five goes to figure out who *Cocorico* was, and they have to go around saying *Comment tu t'appelle?* What is your name? And you have to say *Je m'appelle* (name) and if you are not and if they find you, and they say *Je m'appelle Cocorico* and they win then.

Interviewer: Ok and any other ideas? Does anyone have any other activities that were-?

Pupil 2: In Irish she, [...], it's like on her board she puts a blind our something over the words and mixes them all up and we have to guess where she put them and pictures there's like a word on top of it, and she puts the grey stuff over, like it's on the page, the interactive whiteboard and she covers the writing, and we have to guess what it is. So we then know what it is.

Interviewer: Ok, that's great.

Pupil 1: I like the activity in, when we are reading our novel *Goodnight Mr Tom*, [...]

Interviewer: Ok, excellent.

Pupil 1: And am when we find out a couple of hard words in our novel she makes us take out our vocab copies and get out our dictionaries, and we have to write it in and put it as a verb, a noun or an adjective, and so we have a full copy of them.

Interviewer: Ok excellent and have there been any changes this year to learning French than last year for example?

Pupil 2: It's a day less.

Interviewer: It's a day less.

Pupil 2: We used to have it for two days but.

Pupil 1: And it's funner (more fun) this time I think,

Pupil 3: Yeah, like with the fashion show.

[...]

Interview: Ok thank you very much

Interview 2 School Language Portraits

Pupil 1

Task one
Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it.

你好 (Hello) 香港 (Hong Kong)
 Hello (Hi) 蓝色 (Blue)
 Bonjour (Hello) bleu (Blue) dia duit (Hello)

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)
Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
Chinese	green
English	blue
French	yellow
Irish	red

Description/ Explanation:
The green is my favorite language if you are mean to someone I will speak Chinese I love to speak English.

Pupil 2

Task one
Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it.

你好 (Hello), Bonjour (Hello), Bonjour (Hello)
 Chinese English French Irish

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)
Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
Chinese	red
French	blue
English	yellow

Description/ Explanation:
I like to speak the Chinese language.

Pupil 3

Task one
Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it.

bonjour = hello ore is an im dom = ore is my
 no nigh na = hello hold = hello
 dia duit = hello
 salon = bye

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)
Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
French	blue
Irish	red
English	yellow

Description/ Explanation:
English is my favorite I'm forced to do French

Pupil 4

Task one
Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it.

French Bonjour Conu lo b'pelle
 Irish Dia duit is mise bonaf

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)
Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
English	yellow
Irish	red

Description/ Explanation:
I put French in the body finger because my little finger is a bit different.
I put Irish on my chest because it's like a heart sometimes it gets really hard.

Pupil 5

ask one

Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it:

don (one), grabzi (thank you), ~~...~~
veilmon (clothes), Bon (correct), Oui (yes)

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)

Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
English	red
Irish	green
French	yellow
	red, white, blue

Description/ Explanation:
I used red because it is the most of it because in the English flag because I speak English and I learned some of it in the Irish flag because I speak Irish in school. I used green because it is small but in the French flag because we learn a small bit of French in school.

Interview 2: School 1

Interviewer: Ok, so [...] could you start off and tell me a little bit about how you did your language portrait. Could you explain it to me?

Pupil 1: [...] I used red and language

Interviewer: [...] huh. For example, you have Chinese, English French and Irish there so could you explain why you did it that way?

Pupil 1: Because I want to

Interviewer: Ok, so, for example, why did you colour Chinese? Why did you have so much of it Chinese?

Pupil 1: Because I learnt Chinese for a lot of years.

Interviewer: Is that your native language?

Pupil 1: Yeah

Interviewer: Uh huh. English seems to be big as well. So why is that? Why do you have so much of it?

Pupil 1: Because I learn English in here.

Uh huh ok what about French and Irish? Why did you colour the?

Pupil 1: [...], I learn French at school so I coloured French

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Pupil 1: and sometimes my class say Irish, and I learn it

Interviewer: Ok, so do you like languages or do you not like languages?

Pupil 1: I like languages.

Interviewer: You like languages, ok.

[...]

Interviewer: What did you do? Could you explain how you coloured your language portrait?

Pupil 2: I coloured a lot of blue for English as I learn English and I was born in here, so I learnt English. And I have a little bit of Green for Irish.

Interviewer: And why did you colour Irish green. ?

Pupil 2: Whenever in my class they are speaking Irish I pick up some of the words.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 2: And I have some brown for French, which I am forced to do and I don't want to.

Interviewer: Ok. So you don't like French?

Pupil 2: No, which is pathetic!

Pupil 3: I'd love to see the look on (French teacher's) face when you say that (name of pupil 2)

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 2: And I know a little bit of Spanish

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 2: Which is my foreign country?

Interviewer: Foreign -. Yeah ok. And what about you?

Pupil 3: Well, I coloured the majority of my picture blue because blue is my native language, and I'm fluent in it.

Pupil: 2: He likes pink.

Interviewer: So is blue you favourite colour as well?

Pupil 3: [...]m I don't really have a favourite colour but it one of my most liked colours.

Pupil 2: Pink.

Pupil 3: I kind of did Irish in red because I kind of see, I don't really like Irish.

Interviewer: Uh huh, ok.

Pupil 3: And I put it on my chest because it's like breathing because I have asthma. Sometimes it's hard to breathe.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 3: Like Irish is really hard. And I put French in my pinkies because I don't use my pinkies a lot.

Interviewers: Ok.

Pupil 3: But I still know how to use the language.

Interviewer: Ok, so you still know how to use it but don't use it an awful lot. Thank you. Could you explain yours?

Pupil 4: I coloured the top half in the English flag. Because I use English the most.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Pupil4: I coloured [...]m maybe three-quarters of the half of it in the Irish flag because I learn a lot of Irish in school

Interviewer: InOk

Pupil 4: I coloured the feet in the French flag because I learn French as well.

Interviewer: Ok and so which language is most important to you?

Pupil 4: [...]m Irish probably

Interviewer: Irish, ok. Excellent and do you like learning languages?

Pupil 4: [...]m, yeah

Interviewer: And what's your favourite language?

Pupil 4: Probably English just 'cause it's easy to speak

Interviewer: Uh huh, ok

Pupil 5: I coloured most because I learn Chinese.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Pupil 5: In China and I colour French blue and a little bit of Irish in green and French in red. Because, they are, they are flag colours.

Interviewer: Ok, excellent and do you like learning languages?

Pupil 5: Yeah.

Interviewer: And what do you like most about learning languages?

Pupil 5: Chinese.

Interviewer: What do you like most about learning languages? Not your favourite language but what do you most like about learning languages like why do you like learning languages.

Pupil 5: Because, I don't know them (language) and I want to learn them (language).

Interviewer: Uh huh. What about you, what do you like learning most?

Pupil 4: Emm, I don't know Chinese.

Interviewer: What do you like learning most about languages? So why do you like learning languages?

Pupil 1: Because you know the one, you could know four or something.

Interviewer: Ok so why do you languages important? (Do you find them important or not so important?)

Pupil 2: Not, they are not so important (Ore)

Interviewer: Why?

Pupil 2: Because it's not like you are going to need languages all the time. You are only going to need one language for the country that you are living in for the rest of your life.

Interviewer: Ok thanks. Do you find languages important?

Pupil 3: Not really, if I knew I was moving to Spain in the next week or two maybe I'd learn Spanish, but I don't see other FLs as a big priority

Ok, and what do you think?

Pupil 4: Emm, I think they are quite important.

Pupil 2: No they are not.

Pupil 4: Because luckily enough we speak English and most countries, most people in other countries learn English anyway but if like we were speaking a different language we'd have to learn English so it's important to learn other languages if you want to [...] talk to other people and stuff.

Interviewer: Ok, so, do you think everyone should learn foreign languages in primary school?

Pupil 4: Yes

Pupil 2: Say no, say no.

Interviewer: Yes? (to pupil 4)

Pupil 1 and 4: Yes

Pupil 2: No.

Interviewer: 1 no and 4 yeses or 2 no's?

Pupil 1: Say yes.

Pupil 3: Yes I guess.

Ok so, so 1 no and 4 yeses.

Pupil 4: Sinful, all right.

Interviewer: Ok, and what's the most difficult about learning languages? You said you don't find the important or you don't really like the

Pupil 2: It's difficult. If like some people don't like don't want to learn a language, but they have to, they are like forced to do it because of the Government. They make children do all these languages that they don't actually want to do, and I think that it is not fair so people should not be like forced against language.

Interviewer: Ok. What do you find difficult? So, the rest of you, do you find anything difficult?

Pupil 3: The verbs in Irish.

[...]

Pupil 4: Emm, it's really hard to pay attention, it's like your mind kind of shuts off. 'cause you think they are speaking gibberish.

Laughing

Pupil 1: It's hard to say sometimes.

Interviewer: Uh huh, so is it pronunciation of a different word or?

Pupil 1: Eh.

Interviewer: If it's hard to say, do you mean pronunciation there?

Pupil 1: Yeah

Interviewer: So how would you pronounce something yeah? Ok

Pupil 2: In French instead of making a different language I wish you could just say the word in English but with a French accent.

(Laughing)

Pupil 1: That's what he does in French class.

Interviewer: Ok, ok can you think of anything that is the same in different languages? Anything that has helped you like learning Irish and English has that helped you?

Pupil 1: Yeah.

Pupil 2: Nooooo!

Interviewer: Or Chinese, whatever your foreign language is. What do you think?

Pupil4: The only connection I have made in a language is between French and Irish. Because summer in French is *été* and in Irish *te* means hot.

Pupil 3: Mine is Latin and French, I learnt Latin

Pupil 4: Do you?

Pupil 3: No.

(laugh)

Interviewer: Anything else?

Pupil 1: No!

Interviewer: No. Ok. Have you noticed anything that's very different? You are not mentioning many similarities so any differences?

Pupil 4: In what?

Interviewer: Between French and English and Irish or Chinese

Maybe if you were a business person and you had to go to all of those countries most of the time, then you wouldn't see a difference

Interviewer: Do you see any differences between the languages what about words that are different

Pupil 3: Yeah, like in French if you are reading a word off a page you might expect it to sound differently, but it is actually completely different.

Pupil 2: In Latin, they have different alphabet compared to English

Interviewer: What about in Chinese? What's different in that? I think it's very different

P5: Yeah. (Laugh)

Interviewer: Even the way you write it, is that different?

Pupil 1: Yeah.

P5: Yes.

Interviewer: And how do you write Chinese?

Pupil 1: you have to (*pause*) emm.

Interviewer: Is it more symbols or letters? Or what do ye use?

P5: Chinese got a thousand and million words, and you have to learn the language.

Pupil 3: I thought it took like three years to learn Chinese.

P5: Well it kind of depends.

Pupil 3: Or seven.

Interviewer: Ok excellent, so are you more or less confident now learning languages at secondary school level.

Pupil 1: No.

Pupil 2 and 5: Yeah.

Interviewer: Not confident.

Pupil 2: I don't want to do it.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 3: No.

Pupil 4: I feel more confident it just means can have.

Interviewer: Could you speak a bit louder, please?

Pupil 4: It's easier to learn one language if you already learnt another one.

Interviewer: Ok. What do you think?

Pupil 3: Emm, I am not sure really

Interviewer: Ok, you are not sure. And what about, any other ideas?

Pupil 2: Well learning languages in secondary school would be better than learning languages at primary school, like if you were in sixth year, you could go like to Spain- Spain like for your class trip, look at all the people and talk to the people.

Interviewer: Ok excellent. And what type of things do you do in French class?

Pupil 2: We mess.

Pupil 3: We sometimes...

Pupil 4: Yeah That's true you mess all right

Pupil 2: No (pupil 4) does.

Pupil 3: No, I don't

(Laughing)

Interviewer: Ok, other than messing now, what do you do?

Pupil 3: We do like games on the interactive whiteboard and stuff to help us learn.

Pupil 2: We talk words in English while using a French accent.

Interviewer: Ok, and what else do you...?

Pupil 3: No, you do (pupil 2).

Pupil 2: No I don't, everybody does that.

Interviewer: Ok and what do you do? What type of other activities do you do? Could you tell me about for example, did you do a fashion show?

All: Yeah/Yes.

Pupil 2: And it was sexy.

(Laughing)

Interviewer: Last week was it? What was that like?

Pupil 4: It was fun.

Pupil 1: We got to learn

Pupil 4: Cause we just jumped around the place.

Pupil 2: You had to say what you were wearing in French, with an accent.

Pupil 3: Learning it was really fun

Interviewer: And any other activities that you liked? And what about things you did not like in class?

Pupil 1: Emm, no.

Interviewer: And what about things you didn't like in class?

Pupil 4: In French class?

Interviewer: Yeah

Pupil 4: The fact the French teacher always talks in French. And if we ask what does it mean she says figure it out.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 4: She doesn't talk in English.

Interviewer: Ok and has there been any changes this year?

Pupil 4: We had a fashion show.

P5: No

Pupil 3: We have to pay for it.

(laughing)

Pupil 1: It's the exact same. So do you still have the same amount of class time and everything?

All: Yeah

Pupil 2: No, not all the time, sometimes she has to cancel

Pupil 4: Oh no last, last year we got two days a week now it's only one. And some, some, some weeks we don't even get it, 'cause I think we're, we get it less than we actually do. Like more weeks they'll actually cancel more

Pupil 3: Often

Pupil 4: Yeah, it's more often to be cancelled.

Pupil 2: We still have to pay money for it.

Pupil 3: Ah come on lads it's like 25 Euro.

Interviewer: Ok. And do you think everyone should FLS?

Pupil 2: No.

Pupil 4: Yeah

Pupil 3: No.

Pupil 1 and 4: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok thanks very much.

Interview 3: School 1

Interviewer: So [...], (name of pupil one) can you tell me about your language portrait? So?

Pupil 1: I did mostly blue because I know a lot of English.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Pupil 1: I did red because I know Irish, and I did orange because I know French.

Interviewer: And [...]. Do you like learning languages?

Pupil 1: Yes

Interviewer: Uh huh, and why I'd you colour in the hands orange.

Pupil 1: Because it was the first free space.

(Laughing)

Interviewer: Ok. So there was no other reason that you picked a particular body part or?

Pupil 1: No

Interviewer: Ok there was no reason for it. Fine, I was just asking and why did you choose the colours?

Pupil 1: I just did. I just like choose those colours.

Interviewer: Ok, ok. (Name Pupil 2)

Pupil 2: I picked blue, wait, I picked. I didn't write it out. But I picked green because I know English, I picked blue because I do French, and I picked red because I do because I know a small bit of Chinese. I picked black because I (laughing)

Interviewer: You picked black because you what?

Pupil 2: I just picked it.

Interviewer: Why did you choose the colours do you know or was it just randomly?

Pupil 2: Yeah. Random.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you like learning languages?

Pupil 2: Yeah, because if you were over somewhere, say, on holidays, you would need to speak it to get places like if you got lost. You would be able to speak the language.

Interviewer: So you find learning languages is useful?

Pupil 2: Yeah it is.

Interviewer: And what does everyone else think do you find languages useful?

Pupil 3: Yes

Pupil 1: Yes

Pupil 4: Yes, they are useful, but it depends on what the language is.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Pupil 4: Like, I don't particularly like Irish or French.

Pupil 3: Neither do I.

Pupil 4: But like, it's good, you get really good at your languages if you start going over to maybe the countries, then you might be good at the. I am not going to learn like Fijian or something.

Pupil 2: Fijian?

Pupil 3: Why would you not want to go Fiji?

Pupil 4: I am never going to go to Fiji.

Pupil 3: I am going to go to Fiji.

Interviewer: [...], could you explain yours?

Pupil 4: I have the most blue because I speak English the most. I did the least brown and yellow because I don't know very much German or Italian. I know a bit of French and a bit of Spanish and I speak a bit of Irish as well.

Interviewer: Ok, do you like learning languages as well?

Pupil 4: Yeah but it depends on what the language is

Interviewer: Ok So what languages do you like?

Pupil 4: [...] I LIKE Spanish, English. [...] Italian I guess is ok. Portuguese. There are a couple

of languages. I don't know much Portuguese.

Interviewer: And I see you picked black for Irish, why did you do that?

Pupil 4: Actually I picked black for French

Interviewer: Oh sorry, for French.

Pupil 4: Sorry about my handwriting.

Interviewer: No that's ok. So for French why did you do that?

Pupil 4: [...] I don't know, really there's no real reason for picking any of the colours.

Interviewer: Ok. And you picked green for Irish was there any particular reason why you picked green for Irish?

Pupil 4: Well, I kind of think like Ireland green.

Pupil 1: Yeah, that's what I thought as well.

Pupil 2: I didn't do that.

Interviewer: Ok and what did you do (pupil 3)?

Pupil 3: I picked blue for English, red for Spanish, black for French, light blue for Italian, purple for Chinese, pink for Japanese, and brown for Irish, black for German and green for Portuguese

Interviewer: Why did you pick those colours? Was there any reason for any of the colours?

Pupil 3: No, they were the only ones I had in my pencil case.

Laughing

Interviewer: Ok. Why did you choose black for example for German?

Pupil 3: Black for French

Interviewer: Or black for French?

Pupil 2: Same as me.

Pupil 3: Oh wait, oh God, I did black for French and German

Laughing

Pupil 2: Oh God.

Pupil 4: Consider it half and half

Pupil 3: Ok so that's a mixture of French and German

Interviewer: And why did you choose pink for Japanese?

Pupil 3: I have no clue, I did it randomly

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 4: I think you spelt Japanese wrong as well.

Interviewer: That's ok, it doesn't matter. It's fine

Pupil 4: Is that a "z"?

Pupil 3: yes.

Pupil 4: It's an "s".

Pupil 3: Oh.

Interviewer: Ok. Ok, what do you find most difficult about learning languages?

Pupil 3: Starting off.

Pupil 1: Starting off

Interviewer: Starting off.

Pupil 1: Yeah.

Pupil 2: No. I wouldn't say so it gets easy at the start and in the middle it gets harder. It does.

Pupil 3: I think it does,

Pupil 4: Yeah if you have to talk a certain language to somebody, and you don't know it very well it's quite hard.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Ok so do you think there are anything that is the same in different languages, any similarities between English and French?

Pupil 3: English and German, it's kind of the same. English is *hello*, and German is *hallo*.

Pupil 1: *Hallo*.

Pupil 1: *Hallo*.

Interviewer: Excellent, anything else that is the same?

Pupil 2: Spanish

Pupil 4: Spanish is kind of like Portuguese in a sense.

Pupil 2: Yeah.

Pupil 3: Yeah.

Pupil 3: Some French words are the same as English as well.

Interviewer: Could you give an example or do you have any examples?

Pupil 3: No.

Pupil 4: There is, isn't there like blouse and there's like blouse.

Pupil 1: Yeah, t-shirt.

Pupil 2: Yeah, t-shirt.

Interviewer: Excellent, ok. And what have, have you noticed any difference between French and English or Irish? Pause. Any differences?

(Laughing)

Interviewer: Ok if you say a word in French?

Pupil 4: Everyone, everyone like foreign people seem to say English is like hardest language to learn.

Pupil 3: Yeah, but we don't think that at all.

Pupil 4: Irish people think it is like French or Spanish or German.

Pupil 1: It's pretty hard to learn, I think.

Interviewer: It's pretty hard to learn you think, ok. What about if you saw a word would you, for example, sound it out the same? Would you actually read it the same way in English as in French or Irish for example? So if the word was written down

Pupil 3: Yeah!

Pupil 2: Maybe, yeah.

Interviewer: Ok so would you pronounce it the same, if the exact same thing was written in English and French would you pronounce it the same?

Pupil 3: No.

Pupil 4: No. Probably not.

Interviewer: Yeah, so pronunciation is different. Is there anything else that is different? Is there anything that comes before nouns?

Pupil 1: Well...

Interviewer: If you are saying the dog, for example.

Pupil 4: Is it that in French that if you want to say a blue shirt, the shirt comes first and then the blue comes after it?

Pupil 3: Yeah. It does that sometimes, yeah.

Pupil 1: The colour comes after the word.

Interviewer: Yeah. So the word order is different, yeah.

Pupil 2: Like un rouge séjour. Or something.

[...]

Pupil 4: I think it is to do with your gender.

Interviewer: Yeah, the gender of the noun. Do we have genders in English?

Pupil 4: Yes!

Pupil 2: Yes!

Interviewer: Mhh, but does every word have a gender? Like, for example, if I said.

Pupil 3: No.

Pupil 4: No

Interviewer: The dog would I have to say?

Pupil 2: No, girl or boy no.

Interviewer: Ok so that's different as well. Excellent. And do you think Irish made it easier or more difficult?

Pupil 4: Irish?

Interviewer: to learn French? Pause So learning Irish does it help or does it not help?

Pupil 3: Doesn't really help.

Pupil 1: Not really.

Pupil 3: It's kind of different.

Pupil 4: I am like, I don't know.

Interviewer: And do you feel more or less confident now about learning new languages in secondary school, or what do you think?

Pupil 3 and 4: More confident!

Pupil 1: Yeah!

Interviewer: Why, why would you be more confident now?

Pupil 4: Because I know some words. Then people didn't give me a bit of help. I got a few words. Well (name of pupil 2) told me the German for hello and you (speaking to pupil 1) told her and someone else told me Portuguese, thank you in Portuguese. And someone told me ciao was hello is Italian.

Pupil 3: That was me, that was me you're welcome.

Pupil 4: So, I learnt a few of the, so I know a bit more.

Interviewer: Ok, excellent. So can you tell me about a few activities you did in French class?

Pupil 4: The one we did in the yard, and you say, the teacher said a letter, and you all started on a line, like a race and she called out a random letter and if you had the letter in your first name or in your second name.

Pupil 3: You could move forwards.

Pupil 4: you could take a step forward and the first one to the end wins.

Pupil 1: No. There was one about where you stand out, and you have to, what's it called?

Pupil 3 and 4: Oh, *Cocorico*.

Pupil 1: *Cocorico, Cocorico*.

Pupil 4: Oh yeah.

Pupil 1: We had this game where you stand outside.

Pupil 3: No you don't.

Pupil 1: Yeah ok whatever.

Pupil 3: So someone goes outside the door; the French teacher picks someone in the classroom to be (pause).

Pupil 1: *Cocorico*.

Pupil 3: *Cocorico* and then the person comes in, and the person doesn't know, and then the person goes around and says *Comment tu t'appelle?* And then if, and then you have 5 guesses and if they say *Je m'appelle* their name, then that means they are not. And if they say *Je m'appelle Cocorico* then you win.

Ok, excellent. So ye enjoyed that?

Pupil 3: Yeah.

Pupil 1: Yeah it was good.

So could you tell me a bit about the fashion show you did last week?

Pupil 4: Oh!

(Laughing and muttering)

Pupil 1: Oh.

Pupil 4: I think like oh.

Pupil 3: Oh he wore, he wore a onesie.

Pupil 2: Yeah

Interviewer: Do you know the word for that in French?

Pupil 4: Combinaison or something.

(Laughing)

Pupil 2: Combinaison.

Pupil 4: Combinaison.

Pupil 1: Yeah. We had it all written down, but I think I threw it out.

Pupil 2: Oh yeah. That was kind of. It was ok because people weren't really listening.

Pupil 3: Yeah, we could not hear the people that were talking.

Pupil 1: Yeah!

Pupil 3: Everybody kept on talking, and the music was

Pupil 2: Was pretty bad!

Pupil 3: up too loud.

Pupil 2: And it was pretty loud.

Pupil 4: It was ok.

Interviewer: And you thought it was ok only?

Pupil 1, 2 and 4: Yeah! (in unison)

Pupil 4: I thought it was good

Pupil 3: Oh yeah.

Pupil 2: Oh yeah.

(Laughing)

Interviewer: Did other people watch in it in the school or who was there?

Pupil 2: Yeah.

Pupil 3: Yeah. The fifth class.

Pupil 1: The other sixth class

Pupil 4: Like what we did last year was watch the fifth class, we were not really listening to what they were saying just watching, watching what they were doing, so.

Pupil 2: Yeah,

Interviewer: Were you wearing nice clothes as well?

Pupil 3: You could wear anything you wanted.

Pupil 4: Yeah.

Pupil 2: Yeah

Pupil 3: A nappy.

(Laughing)

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 3: Doesn't (muffled with noise), make a difference.

Interviewer: That was great, so what was your least favourite activity you did in class

Pupil 3: Is it like in French?

Pupil 2: [...], [...]. (pause) We sometimes listened to something and then sometimes people started talking, and they are not really listening, they are having their own conversation. So we are not really listening to the teacher.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 1: That was you (name of pupil 2).

(Laughing)

Pupil 2: No. Oh yeah, that's me. And he was drinking a bottle and his lid like this.

Pupil 1: Yeah.

(Laughing)

Interviewer: Ok, and just to finish it off have been any changes this year? Do you find it is different this year to last year, so?

Pupil 2: It's harder

Pupil 4: Yeah

Pupil 3: We know more words

Pupil 1: Last year we had, the first day we were learning what we knew, and then we kind of we would go back to it; we forget everything

Pupil 4: We are kind of expected to know that we don't know so.

(Laughing)

Interviewer: So there is a lot more expected of you this year?

Pupil 4: Yeah!

Interviewer: Ok. And how often do you do French now?

Pupil 4: Once a week.

Pupil 3: Once a week.

Pupil 4: We were supposed to have it today, but she didn't come.

(Muttering)

Pupil 3: She just wasn't there.

Interviewer: Ok and [...] is the amount of time you do it for different this year from last year?

Pupil 2: No

Pupil 4: Not really, no

Pupil 3: It is, as last year we had two days a week.

Pupil 1: Yeah

Pupil 4: Oh yeah we had Tuesdays and Thursdays didn't we.

Pupil 3: This year we only have one day.

Pupil 1: Like sometimes when she is doing it we don't have a clue what she is saying at all.

Pupil 4: Yeah like on the first day she was, she was like. She was like walked into the room and started speaking a load of French and everything, and we were like what the?

Pupil 1: What the?

Pupil 2: And only like two people were kind of really talking to her. We were like

Interviewer: And what kind of things do you learn about, what kind of themes?

All: Clothes, clothes.

Pupil 3: The weather.

Pupil 1: Cars.

Pupil 3: Colours.

Pupil 2: Numbers.

Pupil 4: Vehicles, forms of transport.

Pupil 1: Shops.

Pupil 2: Yeah!

Pupil 3: Tonnes on shops.

(Muttering, unclear voices)

Interviewer: Ok so I think I will finish up now, so thanks very much.

Pupil 4: Ok.

Portraits from Interview 4, School 1

Pupil 1

Task one
Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it:

Hello = English / Hola / Hello / Spanish / Japali / Japanese / French
~~Hi~~ / Shall / Germany

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)
Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
English	blue
Spanish	purple
Irish	orange
German / German	yellow
nothing	white

Description/ Explanation:
 I speak a little bit of Spanish
 I love Irish in Ireland / English
 learning Irish in school

Pupil 2

Task one
Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it:

Xo soy contenta = Spanish = I am happy
 im plache dulce = Romanian = I like sweets
 amarillo, naranja, azul = Spanish = yellow, orange, blue

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)
Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
Romanian	blue
Irish	green
Spanish	red / pink
English	orange
French	yellow

Description/ Explanation:

Pupil 3

Task one
Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it:

teachai = Irish / Mairéad = Irish
 Banjavur = Irish / Ge: ois =
 teach = French / Se: no = Japanese

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)
Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
French	orange
English	blue
Irish	green

Description/ Explanation:
 Green = English and
 Spanish English via me
 and Green is my fav
 colour

Pupil 4

Task one
Write down 5-10 words you know in different languages (try to give examples from different languages rather than using the same one) and write the meaning and language beside it:

hola (Irish, Hello) / Chru (Hello/Goodbye, Gaelic) / Qui (French, yes)
 gracias (Spanish, Thanks) / 你好 (Hello, Chinese)

Language Portrait (an outline which is coloured in to show your language profile)
Using a different colour for each different language you know (please also include languages you don't know very well, but know some words in), colour in the template below. Please label what language each colour is. (The diagram should indicate the languages you like, the languages you use most often...) Be inventive and think about why you are colouring it in, in this way and you can use the whole outline rather than focus on one body part too.

Language	Colour
Irish / English	blue
Spanish	orange
French	yellow

Description/ Explanation:
 English is my native
 language.
 Irish because I learn it in
 school
 French - because I learn it in
 school

Interview 4

Interviewer: [...], can I discuss the language portraits with you so? First of all, could you tell me a bit of why you did that the way you did?

Pupil 1: [...]

Interviewer: So just describe what you did

Pupil 1: I coloured in a person

Interviewer: Yeah

Pupil 1: I coloured most of it blue

Interviewer: Uh

Pupil 1: and that represents English.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 1: Because English is my native language.

Interviewer: Uh huh, anything else? What other colours did you use?

Pupil 1: Orange and Yellow

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Pupil 1: Yellow, I coloured the toes because I don't know a lot of French.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 1: And for Irish, I coloured most of the foot because we learn Irish in school.

Interviewer: Ok and why the toes, so is there any other reason other than that it is a small amount? So would you use the toes?

Pupil 1: Because it's the corner

Interviewer: Ok. Ok and any other reasons, no?

Pupil 1: No

Interviewer: So do you use it a lot?

Pupil 1: French?

Interviewer: Yeah

Pupil 1: Not at all.

Interviewer: Ok. So what about yours?

Pupil 2: [...]. I did mostly green because that's what I speak around the house and stuff. And I speak Irish in school and French.

Interviewer: And were there any reasons for your colour choices?

Pupil 2: Green is my favourite colour.

Interviewer: And, what about the other colours?

Pupil 2: No not really.

Laughing and muttering

Interviewer: Ok. And what about yours (name of pupil 3)?

Pupil 3 I coloured most of the body pink for English and [...] most of the arm blue for Romanian, I speak Romanian and a bit of French a bit of yellow and a bit of Spanish 'cause I did Spanish.

Interviewer: Were there any reasons for any of your colour choices?

Pupil 3 [...] no.

Interviewer: No. Ok, why for example did you colour in Irish that colour.

Pupil 3 Green, well Ireland's main colour is green, so.

Interviewer: Do you have any favourite colour or do you use them in any particular way on the portrait?

Pupil 3 No, not really no.

Interviewer: Ok. Why did you divide them out that way? Why did you colour the feet?

Pupil 3 I don't know, it was free. I don't really know.

Interviewer: You don't really know why you did it?

Pupil 3 Yeah, just wanted the amount, yeah.

Interviewer: So you just divided them out by amount

Pupil 3: Yeah!

Interviewer: rather than any particular way. Ok. What about yours?

Pupil 4: I had mostly blue because it is English. I coloured it; the colour is blue, and it's English.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 4: I did a bit of orange because we are learning it in class

Interviewer: What language French or Irish?

Pupil 4: No Irish.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 4: And I did a small bit of French as well just along there. It's yellow

Interviewer: Ok is there any reasons you did it that way?

Pupil 4: No not really no.

Interviewer: So you just divided them out as well.

Pupil 4: Yeah

Interviewer: Ok. So how do you feel about learning languages? So generally how do you feel?

Pupil 1: I enjoy it.

Interviewer: You enjoy languages, why?

Pupil 1: It's learning how other people speak

Interviewer: Uh huh and what's the most important about learning languages?

Pupil 1: You can go to that country; you can speak that language with other people.

Interviewer: And what does everyone else think?

Pupil3: I don't mind

Pupil 4: It's something different like than normal, English or whatever.

So do you find languages important or not so important or not so important?

Pupil 4: Yeah very important

Interviewer: In what way?

Pupil 3: In like holidays pretty much

Interviewer: Going on holidays anything else?

Pupil 3: Well, relatives if they speak a different language from you, you can learn that language.

Interviewer: Ok. Does anyone have any relatives living in different countries?

Pupil 3: I have. (pause) All of mine, except maybe for my mom and dad.

Interviewer: Ok so what countries do they live in?

Pupil 3: Romania and France

Would you be able to speak French and Romanian?

Pupil 3: Romanian Yes but French no.

Interviewer: Ok excellent. Anyone else? Ok, so what is the most difficult thing about learning a FL?

Pupil 2: Emm

Pupil 4: Emm

Pupil 1: Learning the words and pronunciation

Interviewer: Ok the pronunciation and the words

Pupil 4: That one word has like two meanings of it.

Interviewer: Anything else? (pause) Ok. And do you think everyone should learn FL at PS?

Pupil 2: [...] yeah

Interviewer: Should everyone learn French or German or Spanish?

(Children nodding in agreement)

[...]

Interviewer: Do you think, can you think of any similarities between different languages, so between Irish and French or maybe French and English?

Pupil 2: I know a lot of things come from Latin.

Interviewer: Ok so lots of words come from Latin yeah. So, some of the words coming from Latin in French are similar to the ones coming from Latin in English. Anything else?

(pause)

Interviewer: No? Ok. [...] and what about differences? Are there any differences (pause) between English and French?

Pupil 2: A lot

Interviewer: Can you give an example?

Pupil 2: Pronunciation

Interviewer: Pronunciation, yeah. We already spoke about that, yeah. That's a big difference.

Pupil 3: Just the different language.

Interviewer: What about for example if I was saying the dog in French, how would you say that?

Pupil 1: I know it in Irish but not French.

Interviewer: Or even, what is a word you know? Would you have it on its own or does something come before it for example?

Pupil 4: Like *le* or something

Interviewer: Would it be?

Pupil 2: Oh.

Pupil 1: Oh French words, lots of them are feminine or masculine, I don't know masculine Ok excellent, and do we have that in English?

Pupil 2: No only if we are talking about children or people and not things

Interviewer: If you are talking about people or animals they might have a gender then, yeah, but other than that. So if you were saying the girl, obviously that's feminine

Pupil 2: And the table is neutral.

(Laughing)

Interviewer: Yeah. So everything else does not have a gender. So there is no, gender does not have [...] a place really in English as much as it does in French. Excellent! Ok. Do you think learning Irish has made it easier to learn French, or not?

Pupil 2: Nooo!

Interviewer: No?

Pupil 4: No.

Pupil 1: No, not really,

Pupil 3: Yeah (in agreement)

Pupil 4: It's confusing

Interviewer: So it's confuses you, why?

Pupil 4: I don't know.

Background noise.

(pause and muttering)

Pupil 4: I get confused with the new words.

Interviewer: So you get confused between the two languages anything else?

Pupil 4: No

Interviewer: Ok. [...] what type of things you learn in French class? What topics do you do?

Pupil 1: We did colours once.

Interviewer: Ok excellent

Pupil 2: Pupil Clothes and stuff

Yeah. Ok, excellent. Can you tell me some of the things you learn in French class?

Pupil 2: Colours, Clothes.

Pupil 1: Pastimes

Interviewer: Excellent. Anything else? (Pause) ok. And what type of activities did you do?

Pupil 2: Colouring and cutting out.

(laughing)

Pupil 2: Colouring.

Interviewer: Colouring, anything else?

Pupil 3: Last year we played that little bingo game or something, remember?

Interviewer: Bingo yeah,

Pupil 4: We had cards and everything.

Interviewer: Anything else?

Pupil 1: We just usually play this game at the end of the class called *Cocorico*. *Cocorico*. [...] Someone goes out of the class, and you pick someone, and the person comes back in and asks them what's their name is and if they get it they say *Cocorico*

Interviewer: Ok excellent and did you do any, what did you do for example last week? Did you do a fashion show or something?

Pupil 1: Oh yeah!

Pupil 2: We did, yeah.

Pupil 4: That was a couple of weeks ago

Interviewer: A couple of weeks ago ok. And did ye enjoy that or how did ye find it?

Pupil 2: Tiring

Interviewer: Tiring?

Pupil 2: Yes.

Pupil 3: We were running around.

Laughing

Interviewer: Ok. Anything else did ye learn new words with it?

Pupil 2: Maillot. Maillot, it means jersey

[...]

Interviewer: Anything else?

Pupil 4: It is just when a person comes up; walks up you had to describe what they are wearing.

Interviewer: Ok. And what was your favourite activity you did in French class?

Pupil 2: Guess who

Pupil 1: Guess who

Interviewer: And what about you?

Pupil 4: Yeah, the *Guess Who* game I think. I do it kind of on the interactive whiteboard.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 3: They would put up names, and we had to who they were.

Interviewer: Anything else? (pause) Ok.

Pupil 4: Nothing really else.

Interviewer: And my last question is have there been any changes since, since last year for example?

Pupil 3: About how much?

Interviewer: About the language class or how often you have it.

Pupil 3: How much we know about the language and about France as well.

Interviewer: And do you learn French often?

Pupil 3: Once a week.

Pupil 1: Once a week for forty minutes.

Pupil 2: Last year we had it twice a week, though.

Interviewer: Ok. And anything else, do you prefer class this year or last year or do you think one class is enough? How do you feel about it?

[...] Pause.

Interviewer: Any ideas, do you find, do you find that one class is enough, or would you have forgotten everything for the next class?

Pupil 4: I forget quite a lot (pause). I am not good at French

Other children are nodding.

Pupil 1: Same.

Pupil 3: Same

Pupil 2: Yeah.

Pupil 3: I think that two classes would be plenty.

Pupil 1: Yeah, then we would remember.

Interviewer: Ok and do you think everyone should learn FLs at PS?

Pupil 4: All classes or?

Interviewer: No maybe the senior classes. Should it be in every school, for example?

(Pause)

Pupil 2: Yes

Why?

Pupil 4: Besides all Irish schools, 'cause it's learning French in Irish.

Pupil 1: That's really hard.

Interviewer: Why should it be, do you think?

Pupil 4: It just would be complicated learning French in Irish.

Pupil 3: Yeah, because most people speak English.

Pupil 2: Like cause you don't know Irish you don't know, how to understand

Interviewer: And what do you think, should everyone learn it?

Pupil 1: Yes, because you get more intelligent by every. It's a new thing you learn.

Interviewer: Ok. Excellent, thanks very much, the interview is over.

School 2:

Pupils'

Responses

Portraits for Interview 1 School 2

Pupil 2, Interview 1 School 2

Task 2: Language Portrait

Fill in the portrait below; choose colours for each language you know

(Choose colours you associate with the language or your favourite colours for your preferred language) and choose a body part to colour in for that language as well. Have a reason for the amount you colour as well and you can colour the whole body if you wish. Label the diagram also.

Dean cur síos ar an bportrait/Explanation of portrait

Dath/ Colour	Teanga/ Language
Green	Irish Gaelic
Red	English
Blue	French

Reasons for colours? I picked green because it is mostly on the Irish flag and I picked red because it is mostly on the English flag and I picked blue because it is mostly on the French flag.

Reasons for part of body chosen and amount colour in? I did it on the legs because we are learning it now and it represents the French flag.

Pupil 1 Interview 1, School 2

Task 2: Language Portrait

Fill in the portrait below; choose colours for each language you know

(Choose colours you associate with the language or your favourite colours for your preferred language) and choose a body part to colour in for that language as well. Have a reason for the amount you colour as well and you can colour the whole body if you wish. Label the diagram also.

Dean cur síos ar an bportrait/Explanation of portrait

Dath/ Colour	Teanga/ Language
Green	Béarla/ English
Blue	Gaeilge
Red	Francais/ French

Reason for colours? I picked red (mostly) for the French language because I did go to the flag for France and I also did (green) because it is on the Irish flag and I did blue from thinking of the British flag.

Reasons for part of body chosen and amount colour in? I coloured the head in green because I speak fluent Irish and I go to an Irish school and I do everything in Irish. I coloured the body in blue because English is the language we all speak. I coloured the legs in red because I am learning French and I think it represents the colour of the flag.

Interview 1 Gaelscoil

Interviewer: So, can you explain your language portrait?

Pupil 1: Oh just why I picked those colours.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Pupil 1: Will I say what I wrote down?

Interviewer: [...] just say it off the top of your head; you don't need to read everything.

Pupil 1: [...] well I picked blue for English because [...] because I was thinking of the British flag, as I was doing it and I used the hands and the body as it is the most common language. Everyone speaks it, in like Ireland. I picked green for Irish because it's mostly on the Irish flag and then it is the language that we all speak in the school, and I know it the most.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 1: And I picked red for French because it is mostly on the French flag. That's why.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 1: There were my reasons for colours. I did it on the legs because we are learning it now and it represents the French flag.

Interviewer: Ok and why did you colour so much of it red, so why did you colour that amount of the body red?

(Pause)

Interviewer: Was there any reason you coloured it? There is a big amount, so you coloured more red than green for example.

(Pause)

Pupil 1: [...] I don't know why I coloured those amounts.

Interviewer: [...] so what about yours.

Pupil 2: I had green for the head and shoulders to represent that without the head the body wouldn't be working. Without Irish like we would barely be like Irish citizens.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 2: I did red for English because of the English flag. There is more red in it than anything else. And [...] I did most of the body red because it's the language I speak the most. [...] and for French I did blue because [...] I think blue is the colour that stands out the most

on the French flag, and I didn't do much of it, I did the legs as well because [...] we don't know much French, and we are just learning it in school. And [...] I also did German; I did orange for German, yellow for Spanish and white for Japanese. [...], we don't really know any of those languages much, but they are languages you know, I know a couple of phrases in so I just put them on anyway.

Interviewer: Ok. And, what about yours?

Pupil 3: I put red for the head because it is your native language, and we speak it the most, so just. I picked orange as it is one of my favourite colours. I put it in the middle next to the heart because it is one of my favourite colours.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 3: [...], I picked yellow for French, and I put it on the two arms. You use them, and you will always have them.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 3: And I picked green for Spanish. I am not that good at it, but I know a couple of phrases.

Interviewer: Ok. And did you mention why you coloured it? What is that? For what language is that?

Pupil 3: English.

Interviewer: English ok. And why did you do that?

Pupil 3: Because I talk it the most and I put it on the head as it's the top.

Interviewer: Ok and what about yours?

Pupil 4: I picked blue for English because it is on the flag and I picked green for Irish because it is because of the shamrock and for French I picked purple, just because it is the colour that comes to mind and for German I picked red because red is on the German flag and for Russian I picked [...] light blue because it is the colour that comes to mind as well.

Interviewer: How do you know Russian?

Pupil 4: I learnt a bit of it from my dad, he knows a bit of Russian as well.

Interviewer: Ok and [...] what about yours?

Pupil 5: [...] I picked purple for [...] English and I put it on the head because, [...] your brain is there and [...] if you didn't have your brain, you wouldn't, like you know be able to live. I picked blue for, for Irish, because we speak it all the time in school, and I put it next to the heart, and I picked red for French because we are learning it now in school and I put it on the arms.

Interviewer: Is there a reason put it on the arms?

Pupil 5: [...] no

Interviewer: No. ok.

Pupil 5: And [...] I picked orange for Spanish because I don't know a lot of phrases but I know, when we went to Spain we would pick up the phrases and [...] and I picked yellow for Japanese and eh put in on the legs as I do not know a lot of Japanese, but I know a few phrases.

Interviewer: Ok. [...] and how do you find learning languages?

Pupil 1: I find it interesting, because it is good to know languages, so if you go on holidays to different countries, you'll know how to speak them. 'cause when I was younger I would go over there, and they would start talking to you, and I was like, eh I don't know what you are talking about, so I like learning different languages as well.

Interviewer: Ok and what about you?

Pupil 2: Ehh, I like learning languages but at the same time it is always a bit of a challenge and [...] whenever I am learning languages I imagine the people, the native people of the country I am learning the language of. I imagine how they, I imagine how they hear English and Irish and other languages

Interviewer: Ok and what about you?

Pupil 3: I like all the different languages because it's a way you can talk to other people that you couldn't talk to without other languages.

Interviewer: Uh huh ok.

Pupil 4: Yeah, I find learning, sorry. I find learning languages a lot of fun because like you kind of it's fun to translate all the words you can think of into new words and try to pronounce them.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 5: I like learning new languages because [...] it's fun to learn them and [...] and you can go, you can understand more people when you go on holidays and go to research around. You can understand their own language.

Interviewer: Ok, and do you find languages important?

Pupil 1: Eh yes I find them important cause other people in the world have to learn our language, so I think it is fair that we have to learn their language as well cause if you need to go to a different country, you will know how to speak that language and yeah languages are important.

Pupil 2: Yeah, I think they are extremely important because if [...] nobody knew each other's languages, it would be impossible to hold any type of diplomacy. I think languages are extremely important and just learning them is fun as well.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 3: I think languages are very important because it is the way you communicate with people and it's (pause)

Pupil 4: I find languages very important because if you didn't know languages from lots, different countries wouldn't, you would be sort of isolated from the other countries.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 5: I think languages are very important because like you know [...] you couldn't communicate with anyone if you didn't have other languages so languages are important

Interviewer: Ok and [...] you learn French in school so what do ye do in class? So what type of activities do you do?

Pupil 1: We, we usually [...] if we are learning colours or food or something like that we usually like play games, so if we are playing games we'd [...] like we kind of get used to the words and it would come into our heads. We know what word it is?

Interviewer: Ok, [...] anyone else?

Pupil 2: I agree with what (pupil 1) said but [...] occasionally usually we always [...] take down the words and we just as she said we use the words in games but [...] sometimes we have songs for them as well.

Interviewer: Anything else that you do? (*Pause*) So, what is your favourite activity in class so? Your favourite, so anything so over this side. Any games or anything that stands out

Pupil 5: Like [...] when we throw a ball to someone, and we say a word.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Pupil 5: Then they have to, like, answer. We ask a question in French, and they have to answer and then they throw it to another person.

Interviewer: Ok. Anything else? (pause) So what is your least favourite activity? Is there anything ye don't like doing?

Pupil 3: Just kind of taking down the notes from the whiteboard.

Pupil 4: Yeah

Pupil 2: That's really boring.

Pupil 1: Sometimes there would be like tonnes of lines of words to write down, and we would be like

Pupil 2: And our teacher writes it on, there are two whiteboards and one for each class, and

she writes it on the whiteboard for 5th class. So half of sixth class have to go down to the fifth class table to just see what she is writing up

Pupil 3: Yeah

Interviewer: Ok and [...] are there any differences between the languages you know. Like what stands out, that's really different?

Pupil 1: Just the way they're pronounced is different to the way we pronounce things, and [...] the way they spell things is different to what we spell and (pause)

Pupil 3: They can all different letters and things and when you are learning a language they can be difficult to understand at first.

Interviewer: Ok anything else

Pupil 5: I think it's very [...], like [...] that all languages came from Latin, and they are all kind of the same in a different way.

Pupil 2: Ah but that is only the European ones, some of the ones in the other places don't come from Latin at all.

Pupil 5: Yeah

Interviewer: Ok are there any similarities between the languages you know?

Pupil 1: Some of the words we have been learning are the same as the ones in English or Irish like camogie is the sport that I play, and that is the same in French as it is in English

Pupil 2: That's because they don't have camogie there

Pupil 1: I know. (Laughing) oh yeah.

Pupil 5: Some of the words in French and Spanish are particularly similar, and you could get mixed up. In France they say Oui for yes but in Spain they say Sí

Interviewer: Ok anything else?

Pupil 1: Football is like foot, so it is kind of, a bit of, kind of the same.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Pupil 1: Football is like foot so yeah.

Interviewer: Does learning Irish help you to learn other languages? Does it help you to learn French?

Pupil 2: [...] not really.

Pupil 1: I don't think so.

Pupil 2: Because a lot of [...] a lot of words in Irish are [...] very similar to their English counterparts.

Pupil 3: Yeah.

Pupil 4: Yeah.

Pupil 5: But I think Irish is completely different to French and stuff

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 2: Because I don't think Irish evolved from Latin. I think it was a different language

Pupil 3: it evolved from Gaelic.

Pupil 2: Yeah I think from the Celts

Pupil 4: the Celts yeah.

Pupil 5: yeah.

Pupil 4: Gaelic is older than Latin, so it's different.

Pupil 5: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok and do you think everyone in Primary school should have the opportunity to learn a FL?

Pupil 3: Yeah.

Pupil 1: Yeah, I think so because all of the other schools around the world, they learn English when they are in primary school.

Pupil 4: So we should have to learn their language

Pupil 2: Yeah they learn English at a very young age.

Pupil 1: Yeah. Cause English is the most common language in the world and everyone learns that in primary.

Interviewer: Ok and how do you think Ireland compares, so you mentioned other countries there? So how do you think it compared to other countries with FL learning? (Pause) So how would it compare in FL learning?

Pupil 2: It would probably hard to learn any other languages if we started learning French at that age and started learning Irish now. French would be obviously a lot easier than Irish.

Pupil 1: Yeah because we have only started French like...

Pupil 2: Last year.

Pupil 1: In fifth class, so we are only getting the hang of it at the moment so.

Interviewer: Ok and has there been any changes this year to your French class?

Pupil 5: Not really because we are doing it with fifth class this year,

Pupil 3: And we only have it once,

Pupil 5: so she had to start at the start again,

Pupil 1: It's mainly revision.

Pupil 2: Yeah.

[...]

Interviewer: And does anyone else have any other opinion on that.

Pupil 4: It is kind of helpful as well as it reminds you of the words.

Pupil 1: Yeah because you'd forget them over the summer.

Pupil 3: Yeah,

Pupil 2: I certainly did.

Pupil 5: Yeah, same here.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you feel more or less confident now learning a second language/foreign language at secondary school?

Pupil 5: More confident.

Pupil 3: Yeah.

Interviewer: More confident, why?

Pupil 1: Yeah.

Pupil 5: Because we have done it in primary school and when you do it in first year, it is kind of the

Pupil 2: It won't be so new to us.

Pupil 3: Yeah.

Pupil 1: Yeah.

Pupil 4: It won't be strange.

Pupil 5: Yeah.

Pupil 1: And so if we start it, if we start it only in first year it'd be harder. We would have no idea what is going on, so it's good that we started it in primary school. So that we get some words before we go into first year.

Interviewer: Ok, I think that is all I need thank you very much.

Portraits for Interview 2, School 2

Interview 2, Pupil 1, S2

Coláiste Mhuire gan Smál
Mary Immaculate College

Task 2: Language Portrait

Fill in the portrait below; choose colours for each language you know
(Choose colours you associate with the language or your favourite colours for your preferred language) and choose a body part to colour in for that language as well. Have a reason for the amount you colour as well and you can colour the whole body if you wish. Label the diagram also.

Dean cur síos ar an bportrait/Explanation of portrait

Dath/ Colour	Teanga/ Language
dearg	Béarla/ English
gorm	Gaeilge
glas	Francais/ French
glaon	Spainis

Reason for colours? *Thug mé or mara ta na ceann de na dathanna na b'eat Eiseann. gorm = tá dath gorm san kist b'eat. Glas = tá na an glas na b'eat. dearg = tá dath dearg na b'eat. Searraigh.*

Reasons for part of body chosen and amount colour in?
Or = tá teanga na teanga is fada dearg = tá b'eat na dearg teanga gorm = thug mé an m'earraí Francis d'at. glas = Jean go dtí an b'earraí agus thug mé na cúlta f'eat na b'eat.

Interview 2

Interviewer: So first of all, could you describe what you did to the rest of the group?

Pupil 1: I put the [...], I put gold on top of the head for Irish, because [...] it's one of the colours in the Irish flag

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 1: I put blue for the arms because it's [...] for France because it's one of the colours of the French flag

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Pupil 1: I put red on the stomach for English because [...] it's another colour on the English flag and I put green on the legs for Spain because it's green in Spain.

Interviewer: Ok and [...] was there any reason for the choice of the different body parts? So like you chose the head for Irish and maybe, you chose the arms for French, the stomach for English and the legs for Spanish, so why did you do that?

Pupil 1: I used the head for the Irish because I know more Irish than the other languages and it's like the Ireland language and blue on the arms because it is my second language that I learnt and

Interviewer: What about English?

Pupil 1: English oh yeah, red was English. [...] Blue was because we learn French in school and green because I go to Spain and I learn a few words every year and the likes.

Interviewer: And what about yours?

Pupil 2: [...] I just put blue because there is blue in the Irish flag, oh no there's not. I don't, I just I put blue because I liked the colour blue. I put red in the hands because I like that colour too. I put blue in France because I remember that colour in French. And I didn't put any much reason into why I chose the body parts because I just put them in different places.

Interviewer: Ok so did you choose any reasons for the amount of the picture you coloured in?

Pupil 2: [...]

Interviewer: Or was it just the colours?

Pupil 2: It was just the colours

Pupil 3: I chose red for English because I put it around the stomach area because English is a really important language to know.

Pupil 3: Because a lot of people speak it. I chose yellow for Irish, and I put it around the head area because the head is really important and the hands and the legs. Yellow is a really bright colour, and Irish is a really bright bubbly language.

Interviewer: Ok and I see you coloured different body parts. You coloured one foot yellow as well. Why did you do that?

Pupil 3: [...]

Interviewer: So you coloured the hand the head and one of the feet.

Pupil 3: Eh well, I kind of ran out of space at the bottom so. I put blue on the leg and [...] because blue is a colour on the French flag, and the sky is very blue in France. I put green on just a little bit of the body because I don't speak a lot of Spanish and the grass is very green in Spain.

Interviewer: Ok [...] what about yours?

Pupil 4: I put red on the head for English because I speak English more, I speak English the most and then I put blue on the body [...] for Irish because I am Irish and then I put green on the legs because [...] just the green is really, I don't really know why I put it there. I used red because it is my favourite colour and blue is my second favourite colour and green I don't like it that much.

Interviewer: Ok. And what about yours, you don't need to read everything you have written down or anything but just what you did and why you did it.

Pupil 5: I coloured the head white for English because English is one of the important languages in the world and the head is the most important body part. I did the feet white for Spanish because [...] because that is the colour on the flag and they are very good footballers they use their feet.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 5: I did the chest blue for France because I have always wanted to go to France, and I keep it at heart. I keep it close. I did the hands green for Irish because green is the colour associated with Ireland and [...] a lot of Irish people play instruments, and they use their hands a lot.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 5: And I did yellow for Germany on the stomach and wasn't sure why

Interviewer: Ok excellent. How do you find learning languages? So do you like learning languages?

Pupil 5 Yes

Pupil 1 Yes

Interviewer: So why?

Pupil 5: I like learning different languages because not everyone learns different languages and it's so it's a chance for us to be different and it's good fun.

Interviewer: Anything else, does anyone disagree? Not everyone is saying something? Does everyone agree or do some people disagree?

Pupil 2: I think it is important to learn languages, different languages because if you go to that country and stay there for a couple of years, you are going to have a little bit of say French to speak it to other people

Interviewer: Anything else?

Pupil 3: I like the idea of learning a few languages because it is really fun to see, to compare like the languages, see the differences and similarities between the languages and everything.

Pupil 4: I like learning different languages because sometimes you can learn the songs like some songs and some [...], you can [...] it's just kind of a fun thing

Pupil 1: I am the same, if you are going to a country you know like sometimes, you would say in Spain you know how to say thank you. Like *Gracias* and stuff

Interviewer: And how important are languages to you?

Pupil 5: Languages are very important because you have to speak them to communicate.

Interviewer: Ok any other ideas on that? Do you find them important or not so important?

Pupil 2: I think the quite important because like Louis said you have to communicate

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 3: I find the very important as well as if you did not learn language you would not be able to speak anything but one language and that would not really useful if you went abroad or if you were talking to foreigners or if you worked in a hotel and you had foreigners coming in all the time.

Interviewer: Ok. Anything else? Ok. So what activities do you do in class when learning French?

Pupil 5: We do different games to help us learn things better. I think because the teacher thinks that we will learn it if we have more fun when we are learning new colours and words.

Pupil 2 and Pupil 4: Eh

Pupil 2: Sorry

Pupil 4: Eh we'd learn songs that would be, we learn one thing every week and [...] and we'd have a game for every time we learn something.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 2: We learn lots of songs. We do a song about the classroom, and we would have to name out, say. She points at something, and we'd just have to name it out. If she pointed out the bin, you would have to say the word for it. Most weeks she does the game where you have to go up to the white board, and she whispers something, and you have to draw it on the wb and whoever gets it first wins.

Interviewer: Ok and have you any favourite activities or activities ye don't like doing in class?

Pupil 4: To do with languages?

Interviewer: Yeah. Could be something you do in Irish and you would say that would be good if we did it in French class or it could be something in French?

Pupil 4: I don't really like writing essays in Irish and French, but we didn't do French ones yet. It wouldn't be easy.

Pupil 2: We never do kind of reading in French, it would be good if we did reading in French. Then you are not just speaking French you know.

Interviewer: Anything else?

Pupil 3: [...] well [...] sometimes it is better when you don't do the same activities in every topic. Say now you were learning Irish, English and French, you can't exactly play games to learn English

Pupil 5: I think it would be better if the French classes were longer as we only get half an hour a day. And we are also doing it with fifth class, so sometimes we do things we already learnt last year so it would be better if we had different classes.

Interviewer: So anything else, [...]?

Pupil 1: We play this game in Irish called *fiche ceist* and it's like helping you, sort of learning like.

Pupil 3: Grammar

Pupil 1: Grammar, Irish grammar, like an bhfuil, I don't know.

Interviewer: So learning how to phrase different questions?

Pupil 2: Yeah the proper way instead of using the wrong kind of words and wrong phrasing.

Interviewer: Ok and have you noticed any differences between the languages you know?

Pupil 5: It's hard to tell as we are learning French with one year, so that's new to us. We

learnt Irish when we were five so.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 1: But I think it's been easier learning French because we are older.

Pupil 5: [...] I think it was easier learning English because I mean not English.

Pupil 2: Irish, because we were younger.

Pupil 3: Yeah because we were learning it longer.

Pupil4: Yeah a good couple of years.

Pupil 1: We've been learning it a long time.

Interviewer: So is there any difference between like, is there anything say French that is not in English? Or anything like that?

Pupil 5: There is. Blue in French is similar to [...] English [...].

Pupil 2: And rouge like for red.

Pupil 1: And orange.

Pupil4: Like orange, orange, and in Irish it is oráiste, and that's the same thing as well.

Interviewer: And what about nouns and stuff in French? Do they have anything [...] that is maybe not in English?

Pupil 3: I find sometimes like the way of speaking, like direct translation they don't use it from French to English. It's like phrased way differently. It's the same with Irish if you were kind of change directly it would be backwards.

Pupil 5: Yeah and [...] like if you were to say [...] I am nine years old in English, I would say I have nine years of French.

Interviewer: Ok

That would be the difference; [...] I would say.

Interviewer: Ok and do you think everyone should learn languages at PS or what do you think?

Pupil 2: Yeah

Pupil 1: Yeah

Pupil 2: Because it would be a lot easier in secondary school and college.

Pupil 3: Because your brain is like swatty, it soaks up information easier when you are younger.

Pupil 5: If you started in primary school, if you take an interest you would be learning more and more as you grow older.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 2: If you go abroad or if others go abroad to live in Ireland, you will have to have a conversation with them, and it is good to know then, little bits of every language.

Interviewer: Ok

But I think it would be ok to learn it in like secondary school too; you are still young at that age.

Interviewer: And how do you think Ireland compares to other countries in language teaching and learning? Do you think we are better at languages here or maybe not as good as places in Europe, like France or Germany?

Pupil 2: We might be a bit better, as most schools learn French and Irish, and we know English already, so that's three languages.

6: I think we might be a bit worse, I mean not as good, because if you go to Italy, or some place they always speak English and they know how to speak it fluently and we barely know how to speak French at the moment.

Pupil 5: And not everyone in Ireland knows how to speak Irish fluently.

Pupil 4: Yeah.

Pupil 3: And they should be taught.

Pupil 2: It's their native language, so it is kind of shocking.

Pupil 1: Whenever when you are in a restaurant, and there are foreign people there, they always know how to speak English when they are putting in orders and stuff.

Pupil 6: Yeah.

Interviewer: I have one final question; do you feel more or less confident now learning a foreign language at secondary level having done French before?

3: More confident

2: More Confident

3: A way more confident

Pupil 5: It would be easier for you.

6: We would have a couple of phrases

4: Because some schools don't learn French at primary school, and they will just go into secondary school. Like, they'd find it way harder.

Pupil 5: French isn't easy.

6: I think that I would be a bit more confident, but I would still be happy to revise all the stuff again so I can get it in my head.

Portraits for School 2: Interview 3

Pupil 1

Coláiste Mhuirne gan Smál
Mary Immaculate College

Task 2: Language Portrait

Fill in the portrait below; choose colours for each language you know

(Choose colours you associate with the language or your favourite colours for your preferred language) and choose a body part to colour in for that language as well. Have a reason for the amount you colour as well and you can colour the whole body if you wish. Label the diagram also.

Dean cur síos ar an bportrait/Explanation of portrait

Dath/ Colour	Teanga/ Language
pink	Béarla/ English
green	Gaeilge
yellow	Francais/ French
purple	Spáinnis

Reason for colours?
I chose different colors because I love them. Green is my favorite color. I chose pink for the legs because I like it.

Reasons for part of body chosen and amount colour in?
The amounts represent how much I speak the language. I don't really have a reason for the part of body chosen. I just decided to colour them.

Pupil 2

Coláiste Mhuirne gan Smál
Mary Immaculate College

Task 2: Language Portrait

Fill in the portrait below; choose colours for each language you know

(Choose colours you associate with the language or your favourite colours for your preferred language) and choose a body part to colour in for that language as well. Have a reason for the amount you colour as well and you can colour the whole body if you wish. Label the diagram also.

Dean cur síos ar an bportrait/Explanation of portrait

Dath/ Colour	Teanga/ Language
blue	Béarla/ English
yellow	Gaeilge
red	Francais/ French
green	Spáinnis

Reason for colours?
An Dath a d'fuaráid mé goim, is é sin, is é an dath is m'fháil. D'fuaráid mé glas, is é sin, is é an dath is m'fháil. D'fuaráid mé buí, is é sin, is é an dath is m'fháil. D'fuaráid mé dearg, is é sin, is é an dath is m'fháil. D'fuaráid mé uibhe, is é sin, is é an dath is m'fháil. D'fuaráid mé uibhe, is é sin, is é an dath is m'fháil.

Reasons for part of body chosen and amount colour in?
D'fuaráid mé goim is m'fháil, an dath a d'fuaráid mé goim, is é sin, is é an dath is m'fháil. D'fuaráid mé glas, is é sin, is é an dath is m'fháil. D'fuaráid mé buí, is é sin, is é an dath is m'fháil. D'fuaráid mé dearg, is é sin, is é an dath is m'fháil. D'fuaráid mé uibhe, is é sin, is é an dath is m'fháil. D'fuaráid mé uibhe, is é sin, is é an dath is m'fháil.

Pupil 3

Coláiste Mhuirne gan Smál
Mary Immaculate College

Task 2: Language Portrait

Fill in the portrait below; choose colours for each language you know

(Choose colours you associate with the language or your favourite colours for your preferred language) and choose a body part to colour in for that language as well. Have a reason for the amount you colour as well and you can colour the whole body if you wish. Label the diagram also.

Dean cur síos ar an bportrait/Explanation of portrait

Dath/ Colour	Teanga/ Language
blue	Béarla/ English
green	Gaeilge
blue	Francais/ French

Reason for colours?
The reason for the blue is because it's my favorite color. I chose green for the arm because it's my favorite color. I chose blue for the rest of the body because it's my favorite color.

Reasons for part of body chosen and amount colour in?
The reason for the part of body chosen and amount colour in is because I like the color blue. I chose green for the arm because it's my favorite color. I chose blue for the rest of the body because it's my favorite color.

Pupil 4

Coláiste Mhuirne gan Smál
Mary Immaculate College

Task 2: Language Portrait

Fill in the portrait below; choose colours for each language you know

(Choose colours you associate with the language or your favourite colours for your preferred language) and choose a body part to colour in for that language as well. Have a reason for the amount you colour as well and you can colour the whole body if you wish. Label the diagram also.

Dean cur síos ar an bportrait/Explanation of portrait

Dath/ Colour	Teanga/ Language
blue	Béarla/ English
green	Gaeilge
blue	Francais/ French
yellow	Spáinnis/ Spanish
blue	German

Reason for colours?
The reason I put blue for English because I love the color blue. I put green for Gaeilge because green is my favorite color. I put blue for French because I like the color blue. I put yellow for Spanish because I like the color yellow. I put blue for German because I like the color blue.

Reasons for part of body chosen and amount colour in?
I put blue for English because I love the color blue. I put green for Gaeilge because green is my favorite color. I put blue for French because I like the color blue. I put yellow for Spanish because I like the color yellow. I put blue for German because I like the color blue.

Pupil 5

Mary Immaculate College

Task 2: Language Portrait

Fill in the portrait below; choose colours for each language you know

(Choose colours you associate with the language or your favourite colours for your preferred language) and choose a body part to colour in for that language as well. Have a reason for the amount you colour as well and you can colour the whole body if you wish. Label the diagram also.



Dean cur síos ar an bportrait/Explanation of portrait

Dath/ Colour	Teanga/ Language
dearg	Béarla/ English
glas	Gaeilge
achra	Francais/ French

Reason for colours? The reason for the dearg/red for English is because it is the language I use most and I like it. I used green for Irish because it is in the flag and blue for French because it is in the flag.

Reasons for part of body chosen and amount colour in? I chose the most red at the top because English is my best language and I use it at the top of the language. I chose the middle for Irish because it is my next language I put French at the bottom because it is my bottom language and I am only starting this language.

Pupil 6

Mary Immaculate College

Task 2: Language Portrait

Fill in the portrait below; choose colours for each language you know

(Choose colours you associate with the language or your favourite colours for your preferred language) and choose a body part to colour in for that language as well. Have a reason for the amount you colour as well and you can colour the whole body if you wish. Label the diagram also.



Dean cur síos ar an bportrait/Explanation of portrait

Dath/ Colour	Teanga/ Language
dearg	Béarla/ English
glas	Gaeilge
achra	Francais/ French

Reason for colours? Dathanna de na brat.

Reasons for part of body chosen and amount colour in? glas - tá sé i mo ceann dearg - tá sé i mo chraic achra - tá sé i mo níos mó gorm - tá sé i mo níos mó.

Interview 3 Gaelscoil

Interviewer: So you have your language portraits in front of you. Could you describe briefly how you completed them?

Pupil 1: For the head and down by the heart I did green and that was for Irish as I feel I am Irish, and it is in my head and my heart.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 1: I coloured in English a little bit more because I can use it at home and I use it more than other languages. For French I coloured in a little bit less because I do not really use it that much.

Interviewer: And was there any reason for your colours?

Pupil 1: [...], I used the colours of the flags

Interviewer: Ok, yeah

Pupil 2: I did blue for English, by the head and by the heart and I coloured that in more than Irish as I use it outside of school with my friends, so I feel like I have it all the time. I put green by the stomach for Irish as I do a lot in school and then I did red for Spanish because my brother is studying Spanish and I talk to him a lot in Spanish.

Interviewer: Ok, and were there any reasons for your colour choices?

Pupil 2: I picked blue because I like the colour; blue and green is a part of the flag and red is part of the Spanish flag.

Interviewer: And were there any reasons for the part of the body chosen?

Pupil 2: I coloured blue by the heart and head as I like using it all the time and Irish down by the stomach because I talk it a lot.

Pupil 3: I used green for English as I feel it is the flag of Irish. I used dark green for Irish as it is my favourite colour. I used light blue for French because it feels like I am at home in there and I only used it a little bit.

Interviewer: What's your favourite language then?

Pupil 3: French

Interviewer: Ok so French would be your favourite ok. What about you then?

Pupil 4: I did up to the waist for English as it is the language I use the most and it's the best

language I am at. I did green for Irish as it is my second languages and I usually talk Irish in school. I did blue at the bottom for French as it is my third language and I do not know that much as we only started it this year

Pupil 5: I did red for English, and I did it on the head and on the legs to about the ankles because it is the one I use the most when I am talking to my family and friends. I did green for the chest and stomach because I have been speaking it since I was little, and I quite like it. I did purple for German, and I don't speak it that much so I did around the ankles to the feet. For French, I did blue, and I did the arms and the shoulders and then for yellow I did Spanish, and I only did from around the wrists as I do not speak it that much.

Interviewer: What about yours?

Pupil 6: I did the head and the arms all in blue and I use blue the most, and blue is English and then I did half the stomach Spanish, and that's yellow because it is part of the flag. I did red for French as that is part of the flag as well and I did a small bit of those as I do not use those as much.

Interviewer: Ok.

Pupil 6: I did green for the legs because I use those more, I use the green more.

Interviewer: Ok and were there any reasons for your colour choices?

Pupil 6: I used blue because it is part of the flag. I used yellow as it is usually very nice and sunny in Spain. I used red because it is part of the flag as well. I used green as it is associated with Ireland.

Interviewer: Do you like learning languages?

Pupil 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: And why?

Pupil 2: [...], I like learning languages because it is kinda new and I like learning new things and if you ever would like to travel you would be able to know the languages.

Pupil 5: If you ever went to France and you knew French, you would be able to speak to the local people in French and stuff

Pupil 1: I think it is very important to know different languages so that you can communicate with other countries.

Pupil 4: I like to learn new languages, as when I get old, enough I can go places and visit other countries and speak their language.

Pupil 3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok and do you find languages important?

Pupil 1: Yeah.

Pupil 2: I just find it important as if you decide to go to Spain and decide to live there for a year or so, you would be able to ask for directions off people instead of just not knowing Spanish and trying to find your way around in English would be really had.

Pupil 6: I think it is important to know languages, so that like if you go abroad you can actually talk to people and not be able to understand what they are speaking about.

Interviewer: Anything else?

Pupil 5: I think it is really important that you learn new languages because it is good and it will help you in lots of ways. If you went on holidays, you could make new friends from that country.

Pupil 4: And could you tell me something about the activities you do in class, for example even today what were you doing in class?

Pupil 6: We were speaking in French and in Irish, and we did English.

Interviewer: In French class so?

Pupil 1 In French class we were learning how to say I have brown hair, and I have blue eyes and stuff as well.

Interviewer: And did you receive things in the post, can you tell me a bit about that?

Pupil 2: We have pen pals in France, and we talk to them through cards and stuff, and we talk to them about what their hobbies are and at Easter what do they do. They have a carnival there, and they have all different stuff there then we do in Ireland, and they tell us all about that and then we tell them about our lives.

Pupil 1: We talk to them in English, and they talk to us in French.

Interviewer: Ok and how often do they write to you?

Pupil 5: About every month or so. As soon as they get them, they try to write back as soon as they can.

Pupil 3: Usually we write to them when we have an event going on over here.

Interviewer: Ok and are there any differences between Irish and French or English?

Pupil 6: [...], there would probably be a lot of similarities between French and English rather than there would be with Irish and French.

Interviewer: Ok, anything else? Any differences?

Pupil 1: Yeah, kind of the way they pronounce letters and stuff.

Pupil 4: Yeah. They have like fadas and stuff as well on their letter, and we were learning inside there that they use y and h as vowels over in France.

Pupil 3: They write differently to us, they use cursive

Interviewer: Ok. Would you feel more or less confident now learning a foreign language at secondary school?

Pupil 1: I'd feel more confident as I have learnt half the stuff in primary school and I would be going into secondary school knowing like knowing the other half of the stuff

Pupil 6: I'd feel very confident going into secondary school learning now languages because we have already started on the basic things in primary school

Pupil 4: I would feel very confident learning languages, French at secondary school. The French we are doing here is fun, and it is a task to do, but it is fun.

Pupil 3: I'd feel more confident now than I would if I did not learn French, yeah.

Interviewer: Should everyone learn languages at primary school?

All: Yeah.

Interviewer: Why?

Pupil 5: It's kind of hard to explain, it's just, and it's would much easier in secondary school when you know the basics, than learning right from the start.

Pupil 4: I think it's good, as once you go into secondary school, it seems a lot harder though it is better to have started it at primary school.

Pupil 1: You would most likely not learn much of the basics in secondary school: you would be learning more of the advanced stuff in secondary school.

Interviewer: Ok anything else? *Pupils shake their heads.*

Interviewer: Ok thank you very much

Interview 4 Gaelscoil

Interviewer: Can you describe your language portraits to the rest of the group?

Pupil 1: Eh, is it what we have written?

Interviewer: Yeah but off the top of your head, what did you do? What colours did you use and why?

Pupil 1: I coloured in green for the head and neck, red for the body and blue for the hands, legs and feet.

Interviewer: Ok so, for which languages and why did you choose those colours

Pupil 1: I chose green for English, red for Irish and blue for French

Interviewer: Was there any reason you picked those colours?

Pupil 1: No not really

Interviewer: And what about the body parts was there any reason for that?

Pupil 1: I just coloured in the most because I just like doing most of the work usually.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 1: So I just chose them

Interviewer: Ok and anything else about it?

Pupil 1: No

Interviewer: What about you?

Pupil 2: I coloured in red for Béarla, green for Gaeilge and I coloured in blue for French, and I coloured in yellow for Spanish

Interviewer: And why did you choose those colours?

Pupil 2: Well cause green is the start of the Irish flag and Gaeilge, Irish, so I basically do not know why I choose red for English. It was the first colour that popped into my mind

Interviewer: And what about yellow then

Pupil 2: Yellow is on the Spanish flag and blue is on the French flag.

Interviewer: And what about you?

Pupil 3: I split them into three, and the biggest part is blue, and it is for English and the second biggest is green for Irish and then third biggest is orange for French.

Interviewer: Ok and why did you choose those colours

Pupil 3: When I think of English that is the colour which comes to mind. When I think of Irish, there is green on the Irish flag. My friend was using the red marker so I had to use orange for French

Laughing

Pupil 4: [...] for English I picked blue because it is the first colour that popped into my mind when I think about English. For Irish I got green, and that is what I think of when I hear the word, Irish. For French, I picked red as I was using orange for Japanese. For Japanese, I picked orange and for Chinese I picked yellow.

Interviewer: And why did you choose those colours for Japanese and Chinese?

Pupil 4: Because for Chinese the colours and red and yellow and sometimes like mostly red and yellow. And for Japanese, I just thought of orange.

Interviewer: Ok and why did you choose those body parts and/or those amounts

Pupil 4: I chose [...], for the top I picked English, you'd use English, you speak English more than you would the other language and then I would put green as we are going to the Gaelscoil and then I'd pick red for French as we are also learning that. I picked a small amount than for the orange because I just know a few phrases in Japanese and for yellow I picked it, as I know a few phrases

Interviewer: What about yours?

Pupil 5: I used yellow for the English. I used purple for the Irish. I used green for the French, and I used red for the Spanish. The reason I used yellow for English is you know the way there are a lot of countries who speak English, so I wanted to live there, people would understand me

(...). I used purple for Irish as it is my favourite colour and my favourite language is Irish. I used blue for French and the same reason for Irish, I like blue, and I want to speak French to go around the world, and the reason I used red for Spain is it is on the flag. And I used a small amount for Spanish as I only have a few phrases. I used half the head for the French because we do it in school, so I kind of know a little bit.

Interviewer: Ok

Pupil 5: I did like most of it English and the other half Irish.

Interviewer: Ok. And what about yours?

Pupil 6: I did red for English because I didn't know what else to pick. For the iris hi picked green, it is what some people think of Ireland when you think colour. I coloured blue for French as it is on the flag and for Spanish, I did yellow, as it is also on the flag.

Interviewer: Ok, and were there any reasons or the parts of the body used?

Pupil 6: Kind of, I [coloured] English from the knees up down to the wrist and just beneath the neck because I speak a lot of English and I love English. For Spanish I just did the hands as I do not know much Spanish at all. For green, I did not do too much green, but I choose an important part, which was the head. [...] For French I did from the knees down.

Interviewer: Ok, so do you like learning languages?

Pupil 5: Yeah

All: Yeah

Pupil 4: Most of the time

Pupil 3: Because it is interesting

Pupil 2: On Friday, we do French and the teacher plays games with us to help us, so it is fun.

Pupil 3: Plus, it is really interesting.

Pupil 4: I just want to be able to speak other languages so I can go to other countries.

Interviewer: What types of activities do you do in class?

Pupil 5: Usually we do play games about the phrases we just learnt and that. A few weeks ago we did a game where we had to do actions and shout out a colour in French, and everyone had to copy, and everyone had to find the person starting it.

Interviewer: Ok, anything else

Pupil 2: In French, the teacher will call out a word, and there would be a race to see who could draw it first on the whiteboard, and sometimes you would not know so you have to keep guessing, and then the person who draws it first stays on, and the loser will have to sit down.

[...]

Interviewer: Anything else?

Pupil 3: Before we start every Friday the teacher asks us, "Ca Va?" and we have to answer it back and she asks us the weather and the date, the month and the day and that sort of stuff. We have a calendar, and we have to put it up.

Interviewer: Is there any differences between French, English, Irish and other languages?

Pupil 2: There is, there is a lot of spelling differences

Pupil 4: And the grammar and stuff like that.

Pupil 5: It is a bit different yeah

Pupil 3: In French green is F-E-R-T, and you do not pronounce the t at all so it is really confusing

Anything else? Ok, what about similarities then?

Pupil 2: Like today we were learning about hair colours, blonde and blonde.

Pupil 5: There are both spelt the same way but pronounced differently.

Pupil 6: English and French, some of the words, are very alike.

Interviewer: Ok, has learning Irish helped you to learn French?

All: Yeah

Pupil 5: It is much easier to pick up the words learning one

Pupil 6: We started learning at like 4 or 5 so it was easier to adjust.

Interviewer: Ok. Should everyone have an opportunity to learn foreign languages at primary school?

All: Yeah

Pupil 3: It's easier

Pupil 4: If you go to a country and already know the language you would be able to be talking to everyone there in that language.

Pupil 5: You would be able to go around to different places more if you were able to speak it fluently.

Pupil 6: Even if it was just the basics it would be better.

Interviewer: How do you think Ireland compares to other countries in Europe or around the world in teaching foreign languages? Do you think we are better than them or are they better than us?

Pupil 2: Actually I think we are very similar.

Pupil 6: I think we are on the same level.

Pupil 5 Like, because we saw in French that they are learning English, and we are learning French, and we are kind of connected.

Pupil 4: We send postcards to our French pen pals in French and

Pupil 3: they reply in English.

All: Yeah

Interviewer: And what do you think?

Pupil 2: They are the same as well I agree. But they write to us again in French as well so we learn words off them, and the teacher will help us pronounce them.

Pupil 6: It helps us to read and understand and what way to sound the words out.

Interviewer: Ok and how confident do you feel now having learnt French about learning a foreign language at secondary school?

Pupil 3: I feel pretty confident; my brother is still learning French in secondary school.

Pupil 2: I think when we are learning French in secondary school we will have a head start, and it won't be as hard.

Pupil 3: Yeah, it will definitely help.

Pupil 5: It will definitely help, but we won't know everything

Pupil 6: I say Irish will help as well.

Pupil 4: It will be easier to understand, we will pick up words.

Interviewer: Ok, thank you very much.