



Provided by the author(s) and University of Galway in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite the published version when available.

Title	'Do Sheans': Children's agency in integrating Scottish Gaelic and Irish into 'Happy Families'
Author(s)	Smith-Christmas, Cassie
Publication Date	2023-03-16
Publication Information	Smith-Christmas, Cassie. (2023). 'Do Sheans': Children's agency in integrating Scottish Gaelic and Irish into 'Happy Families'. In Aengus Ó Fionnagáin & Gordon Ó Riain (Eds.), Léann na Sionainne. Baile Átha Cliath: Cló Léann na Gaeilge.
Publisher	Cló Léann na Gaeilge
Link to publisher's version	https://clo.ie/en/leabhair/leann-na-sionainne
Item record	http://hdl.handle.net/10379/18057

Downloaded 2024-04-29T04:59:56Z

Some rights reserved. For more information, please see the item record link above.



CASSIE SMITH-CHRISTMAS

‘*Do sheans*’: Children’s Agency in Integrating Scottish Gaelic and Irish into ‘Happy Families’

In recent years, the sociolinguistic sub-field known as ‘Family Language Policy’ (FLP; see King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry, 2008) has shed light on the various interrelated factors which lead to successful intergenerational transmission of a minority language in some cases and not others (Lanza 1997; De Houwer, 2007; Curdt-Christiansen 2009; Mishina-Mori, 2011; Kirsch, 2012; Ó hÍfearnáin, 2013; Smith-Christmas, 2016; Bezçioğlu-Göktoğa & Yagmur 2018, to name just a few examples). Many of these factors relate to what can be conceptualised as ‘family-internal’ realities, such as for example, how much of the minority language that caregivers speak *to* and *around* the child, and how caregivers respond to the child’s use of the majority language (e.g. do they forbid it, or do they allow the child to continue speaking the majority language, for instance). Research has also examined the wider sociocultural factors which mediate these family-internal language policies and practices, such as the interface between the family and the child’s other main socialising agent: the school (e.g. Schwartz, Moin, and Klayle, 2013; Armstrong, 2014).

Recently, a growing body of research within FLP has centred on looking at the *child’s* agentive role in shaping language use within the family. In FLP, much of this stems initially from Gafaranga’s (2011) work on Rwandans in Belgium, where the children’s preference for French in response to their caregivers’ use of Kinyarwanda was inducing community-wide language shift towards French. Other FLP work has further demonstrated the various and creative ways in which the child may resist the linguistic parameters of the caregivers’ FLPs (e.g. Fogle, 2012; Kopeliovich, 2013). They have also shown that in addition to resisting the caregivers’ use of the minority language, the child can also enact their agency through their *own* active use of the minority language and by enforcing language norms that encourage use of the minority language (e.g. Said and Zhu, 2017; Palviainen and Boyd, 2013). As van Mensel (2018) demonstrates, children may draw on multiple and creative linguistic resources to achieve various interactional tasks, and they also may also subvert traditional caregiver-child power relations through their greater linguistic competence in a particular language. In van Mensel’s work for example the child, who speaks both her parents’ native languages, exploits the fact that the father only has rudimentary skills in the mother’s native language. This kind of power subversion is also seen on work on child language brokering, as in contexts of migration, the child often has greater access to the majority language than the caregivers (e.g. Antonini, 2012; Gallo, 2016; Revis, 2016).

Defining ‘agency’ and how it is enacted in daily practice has remained a point of debate within social sciences and indeed, has been discussed in depth by some of its most prominent theorists (e.g. Giddens, 1979; Bourdieu, 1997). As this paper focuses specifically on child agency, and within this, child agency in terms of language, I will draw from developmental psychology and second language socialisation in highlighting the most pertinent facets of ‘agency’ as they relate to the analysis in this chapter. One facet of agency is the concept of *choice* as mediated by different factors, encapsulated in developmental psychologist Kuczynski’s (2002, 9) definition of agency as ‘individuals as actors with the ability to make sense of the environment, initiate change, and make choices.’ The other is the importance of *power*, alluded to in the previous mention of children subverting the normal caregiver-child relations through their linguistic competence. As work especially in the field of second socialisation has shown (see chapters in Deters, Ping, Gao Miller, & Vitanova, 2015), power within an interaction is often co-constructed and re-negotiated (see also Al Zidjaly, 2009). In other words, although a particular relationship such as teacher-student or parent-child implies a hierarchical power asymmetry, this has scope to change over the course of the interaction.

The chapter will focus on children in two families—one in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland and one in the Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht—playing the card game ‘Happy Families’ in its exploration of FLP and child agency. It will show how in both cases, the children enact their agency by actively integrating the minority language—Scottish Gaelic and Irish, respectively—into the card game. The chapter will show how in the Scottish case, this integration of Gaelic into the game goes against the children’s intersibling norm of using English together, and is a way in which they subvert the power relationship between them and their father, who has limited skills in Gaelic. In the Irish case, the chapter will discuss how the fact the game instructions and the cards are written in English goes against the children’s intersibling norm of Irish together, and how they enact their agency in actively adapting components of the game to fit their established language norms and preferences. The chapter will look at these two specific interactions within the scope of language practices within the children’s local areas and how these appear to intersect with the children’s individual acts of agency.

Background

This article is based on a larger FLP study supported by an Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship entitled ‘The Challenges of Minority Language Maintenance: Family Language Policy in Scotland and Ireland’ (GOIPD/2016/644). Overall, six families were involved in the study, three of whom live in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland and three of whom live in the Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht. The families were chosen based on the criteria that they were making a concerted effort to use either Scottish Gaelic or Irish with their children and that at least one of the children were under the age of seven. The methodology focused primarily on valorising the children’s voices, and thus, employed making spontaneous audio recordings of the children engaged in different activities. In two of the families—located in Steòrnabhagh in the Outer Hebrides and Dún Chaoin in the Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht—the children are relatively the same age and both engaged in the game ‘Happy Families.’ Another similarity between these families is that in both families, the parents are ‘new’ speakers of the minority language (see Smith-Christmas, Ó Murchadha, Hornsby, and Moriarty, 2018), albeit with very

different trajectories of 'new speakerhood' (see O' Rourke, Pujolar, and Ramallo, 2015). In the Dún Chaoin family, both parents were raised in Dublin and were socialised in English in the home. The parents met at university studying Irish and moved to Dún Chaoin in order to be in the Gaeltacht. As Irish was the language established between the two parents prior to having a family, it followed that they raised their five children (the youngest three of whom participated in this study) through Irish. In the Steòrnabhagh family, the mother (originally from Glasgow) is a heritage speaker of Scottish Gaelic (see Armstrong, 2013), meaning that while she was not socialised in the language as a child, her father (from the Isle of Skye) is a speaker of the language. She learned Scottish Gaelic to fluency as an adult, and upon the family's move from Switzerland (where she and her husband were working at the time) to Steòrnabhagh, the mother made a concerted effort to make Gaelic the language of the home and especially to rear her youngest child through Gaelic. Her husband is originally from Limerick, Ireland, and approximates what Carty (2018) terms a 'potential new speaker' in that although in some cases he lacks fluency in the language, he is steadily building his ability to use the language in a variety of situations.

In terms of the immediate areas where the families are located, Steòrnabhagh is the main centre for civic and commercial life in the Outer Hebrides, with 43.5% of the population of 6,200 having the ability to speak Gaelic (National Records of Scotland, 2013). Community use of the language, however, is very low: Birnie for instance (2018) finds that interlocutors use Gaelic in less than 10% of their encounters with each other in the public arena, a finding that is echoed in the earlier 2005 WILPP report (pp. 23-24), which discusses how even though speakers may know that they *can* use Gaelic in a particular public space or with a particular speaker, little than half actually do so. In contrast to Steòrnabhagh, Dún Chaoin has a high percentage of Irish speakers, with 79% of the population (144 in total) able to speak Irish and 102 reporting that they are daily speakers of the language (An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh, 2016). The greater strength of Irish in Dún Chaoin than Gaelic in Steòrnabhagh cannot be simply attributed to Steòrnabhagh's urban nature versus the fact that Dún Chaoin is located approximately 15.5 kilometres from Corca Dhuibhne's main centre of civic and commercial life, An Daingean. Rather, I argue that this strength can be attributed to an interrelated web of social and historical factors as they have played out over space and time. There is not scope in this chapter to enumerate on all of these, so instead I will highlight the most pertinent ones as they relate to the aims of this particular chapter. The first is attributed to the statutory status afforded to Gaeltachtaí particularly in terms of Irish immersion education at primary level. Related to this, the second factor is the work of Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne and their multifaceted approach to language development, in particular, their efforts targeted at families and children, such as the home support programme Tús Maith, described in depth in Ó hÍfearnáin (2013). Support in the home domain is complemented by additional language support in the school, which targets mainly children who are not being socialised with the language in the home. With these supports in

place, all children are given full access to the language, even if some of them may choose to use English as their preferred language. Thus, there is the potential for Irish to function as the peer group language, and from my ethnographic observations of the area, in many cases it does indeed function as the language the children use with each other.

In contrast, none of these support structures exist in Scotland. Although the Outer Hebrides are considered the ‘Gaelic-speaking heartlands,’ this designation is purely perceptual and does not entail the statutory status afforded to Gaeltachtaí in Ireland. Although there are various Gaelic development initiatives which seek to support children’s use of the language, there is nothing equal to the scope and breadth of Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne, and there is certainly not a dedicated in-home support programme such as Tús Maith. As well, Gaelic is not theoretically able to function as a peer group language in the way that Irish can, as not all pupils are given access to the language. In the Outer Hebrides, the immersive model of Gaelic education—‘Gaelic Medium Education’ (‘GME’)—exists only as ‘units’ within wider English-speaking schools. Enrolment in GME is based on parental choice and generally is low compared to English-medium education. For example, in Stockdale, Munro and MacGregor’s (2003) study of parental choice and GME, they found that Laxdale Primary in Steòrnabhagh had only 14% of pupils enrolled in GME, compared to 86% of pupils enrolled in English-medium education. This is despite 51% of Laxdale parents reporting some ability in Gaelic, with 19% of these parents classifying themselves as ‘fluent or native’ speakers of the language. Neither is language transmission occurring in the home, as evidenced in Munro, Taylor, and Armstrong’s (2011, 4) case study of Siabost, in which they conclude that ‘intergenerational transmission has all but ended’, even in this rural heartland area. In summary, the reality in Scotland is that even if children *do* speak Gaelic, use of the language is potentially limited in their peer group as well as wider community in general.

Methodological and Analytical Framework

As mentioned earlier, the data in which this chapter is situated was obtained through participant observation, where I interacted with the children and audio-recorded our naturally-occurring conversations. Sometimes the children’s caregivers, such as parents and grandparents, took part in the interaction, while at other times I interacted with the children on my own. One key aspect of these interactions was that while I spoke Scottish Gaelic proficiently, my Irish was limited at the time I met the families. This in turn seemed to create a different dynamic with the Scottish and Irish children, respectively: for the Scottish children, I appeared to occupy a sort of ‘teacher-friend’ role in their homes, while for the Irish children, my lack of proficiency in Irish seemed to mean that I took on the role of ‘big kid’. Irish was the *de facto* language of communication between the Irish children and me as a researcher, and they did not switch to English even in cases where I clearly did not understand what they were saying. It was clear even after the first visits with each of the Irish families that Irish was strongly the family language, both in terms of the language

that the children used with their parents as well as their siblings. After spending more time with the families, and in Corca Dhuibhne in general through a subsequent project with the Smithsonian's 'Sustaining Minority Languages in Europe' initiative, it was clear that Irish also functions largely as these children's peer group language. In contrast, the Scottish children's use of Gaelic was more variable. In the each of the Scottish families in the study, the mother was a Gaelic speaker, but the father's proficiencies ranged from barely a few words to the 'potential new speaker' status of the father in the Steòrnabhagh family. Although some of the children did speak Gaelic to their mothers and other caregivers such as grandparents, for the most part, English seemed to function as the intersibling language as well as their preferred language. There was of course some variability: the older sibling in the family in the most remote location (Scalpay), appeared to prefer Gaelic and would sometimes correct her younger sister's tendency to use English. As mentioned earlier, English functions as the peer group language, an observation that was also abundantly clear to me while living in Steòrnabhagh for two years.

I initially chose to look at the card game because in navigating through the data (30+ hours of recordings), it appeared an interactional, child-centred means to demonstrate the observation discussed earlier that Irish is stronger in Corca Dhuibhne than Gaelic is in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland, and that this reality filters down to the children's use of the language in their everyday conversations. At first glance, the interactions of the Irish and Scottish children playing 'Happy Families' appeared to mirror each other: while the Irish children use Irish for the game and had to integrate some English into the interaction due to the fact that the instructions and cards were written in English, the Scottish children used English as the language of the interaction but integrated some Gaelic into the game. After applying a Conversational Analytic lens (see Auer, 1984)—which centres on the importance of individual conversational turns and how they shape the ongoing communicative action—I realised that the interactions were more multifaceted than they appeared at first glance. I then began to centre on the concept of 'child agency' in navigating these various complexities, and loosely following a Nexus Analysis framework (see Scollon and Scollon, 2007), I looked at how various code choices within the individual speakers' turns may relate to wider discourses and sociocultural realities in each of the two areas.

'Happy Families' is a card game very similar to 'Go Fish' in that the objective is to collect four of a particular card. A set of four therefore comprises a 'family.' In both interactions, the children's communication while playing 'Happy Families' consisted of five main conversational tasks: explaining how to play the game; soliciting and establishing help for the youngest player; playing the game; clarifying certain facets of the game; and disagreements arising from the game, including for example accusing certain players (in this case, the father in the Steòrnabhagh family) of cheating. For the sake of space, this paper will focus primarily on how players explained the game and then the actual playing of the game; however, as these micro-categories of conversational tasks are not monolithic, the chapter will also touch on the interplay of other conversational tasks into these two endeavours. As will be explained in greater depth in the analysis, in both cases, the cards caused some trouble for the youngest player especially, who for the most part had more literacy experience with the minority language than the majority language. The chapter will show how the children's integration of the minority language in each case relates to their agency: in the Scottish case, this mostly ties into the children's manipulation of Gaelic as the

'polite' code, and in particular, their greater ability to do this than their father, who is also participating in the game. In the Irish case, the children's agency is enacted through their efforts to play the game through Irish despite the intrusive nature of the cards, which are written in English, and their subtle linguistic adaptations of the games to conform to their norm of Irish as the intersibling language.

The Steòrnabhagh Family: The Manipulation of Gaelic as the 'Polite Code'

In the Scottish family, we are playing the 'Monster' version of the game, where the objective is to collect four of a particular type of monster (hence the strange monster names, such as 'grinnieroo,' seen later), which then comprises a family. In the excerpt below here we see the opening of the game, where Billy (aged 9 at the time of the recording) and Pàdraig (aged 7 at the time of the recording) explain to me how to play the game:

Excerpt 1

- 1 Billy you get seven cards each=
2 Cassie =okay
3 Billy yeah ah is sort of- and there's sorry cards- [...] we have a sorry card (? you can use them up)=
4 Pàdraig =this is a sorry card
5 Billy yeah it's- you can't play with it anymore

Here, Billy takes on the role of 'expert' in explaining to me how to play the game, and Pàdraig also lends his expertise in demonstrating to me what a 'sorry card' is. Thus, both children take up an agentive role towards me as an adult in positioning me as the novice *vis-à-vis* their requisite knowledge of how to play the game. This is achieved through English, which as described before, is generally the language that the two siblings use together. However, shortly after beginning to play the game, Billy uses some Gaelic in clarifying which card he would like:

Excerpt 2

- 1 Billy Cassie please may I have a grinnieroo?
2 Cassie grinnieroo::
3 Billy *am fear leis 7 points*
the one with

This is the first instance in which Gaelic has been used within the frame of the game thus far. I see this initial instance as a way in which the children orient to me as a type of 'teacher-friend' and in having this type of status, the children use the 'polite' code with me. They, after all, know that Gaelic is the language that I prefer to use with them and is the language that I always use with their mother. As described in my other work (Smith-Christmas, 2016; 2017), the fact that Gaelic is used in the GME classroom, but is *not* used in other aspects of community life, imbues Gaelic with a sense of authority, which in turn translates to young speakers sometimes invoking Gaelic as the 'polite' code. This particular use of the 'polite code' with me

in this instance could be analysed as Billy trying to compensate for the previous inversion of adult-child power relations embedded in the previous game explanation, where I was positioned as the ‘novice.’ In other words, in taking the role of ‘expert’ towards me, he might feel that he overstepped the mark, so to speak, and therefore re-negotiates the *status quo* of adult-child power relations.

This sense of politeness is also evident in in Billy’s first turn, in which he uses a modal (‘may’) along with the word ‘please.’ Pádraig echoes this sense of politeness in his own bid for a card, as seen in next excerpt:

Excerpt 3

- | | | |
|---|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Pádraig | Cassie, can I please- please can I have a humongosaurus |
| 2 | Cassie | <i>chan eil humungosaurus agamsa, tha mi duilich</i>
I don't have a humungosaurus, I'm sorry |

As can be seen here, the language for the asking and refusing of the cards is in English. As we continue with the game, however, Billy begins to re-negotiate this norm:

Excerpt 4

- | | | |
|---|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Cassie | yeah so em Billy <i>a bheil thumbsuckarilla agad</i>
do you have a thumbsuckarilla |
| 2 | Billy | <i>chan eil</i>
no |

Again, what we see here is Billy’s use of Gaelic, this time in response to my use of Gaelic in the previous turn. This too could be a facet of the ‘teacher-friend’ role that I seemed to take *vis-à-vis* the Scottish children; however, what is interesting in this context is that although Billy did in fact use Gaelic (which is argued to operate, at some level, as the ‘polite’ code), his answer, although not rude by any means, is not the polite answer that I used earlier in saying ‘*tha mi duilich*’ (‘I am sorry’) in responding negatively to card requests. I therefore see Billy’s response in this particular excerpt somewhat differently to his response in Excerpt 2, in which Gaelic indexed a means of politeness: here I see his use of Gaelic more as a means of establishing the parameters for playing the game. He is following my lead (which is of course indexical of adult-child power relations), but he is doing so on *his* terms. In other words, although at one level he may be orienting to a sense of Gaelic as the polite code, he is also enacting his agency both as a speaker of the language as well as his agency as an equal co-participant in the game.

In the next excerpt, Pádraig further works in establishing Gaelic as the language to ask for and refuse cards:

Excerpt 5

- | | | |
|---|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Billy | now keep them in your pile now you want to ask Cassie for something, Paz? |
| 2 | Glen | <i>Twirlaburpa aig Cassie?</i>
Cassie has Twirlaburpa? |
| 3 | Pádraig | <i>am faod mi faighinn Twirlaburpa?</i> |

Here, there is initially some confusion over which card Billy is requesting, as the fact that his Scottish tapped 'r' sounds like 'd' appears to lead Glen to mistake it for the word 'squirrel.' Once it is established that Glen and Pádraig's team does *not* have 'Squiddle,' Glen uses the form that Billy has used in Excerpt 4: *chan eil* (no). Billy however corrects Glen's use, saying that he has to say '*tha mi duilich*' in indicating that he does not have that particular card. This is the polite form that I have used in refusing the cards; parallel to Pádraig's use of the polite form after his father's linguistically-skeletal form in the previous excerpt, it appears that Billy is further establishing the linguistic parameters for the game (exactly what to say in asking/refusing), and is doing so in a way that underscores his own linguistic competence *vis-à-vis* his father. '*Chan eil*' after all would be the correct form in response to the question '*A bheil X agad?*', not '*Am faod mi X fhaighinn*' (which would be '*Chan fhaod*'). By insisting that Glen use '*tha mi duilich*,' Billy shows his linguistic competence in that '*tha mi duilich*' would be a grammatically correct form to follow '*Am faod*.' The fact that '*tha mi duilich*' is the form that I, the 'teacher-friend,' used earlier, underscores its legitimacy in terms of politeness norms, thereby further highlighting Billy's advanced linguistic competence *vis-à-vis* his father.

The analysis of the card game in the Steòrnabhagh family demonstrates the agentive nature of children's language choice in FLP and how this agency in turn relates to wider sociocultural realities. Here, Billy and Pádraig collaboratively construct Gaelic as the language for specific actions within the game. Although their use of Gaelic appears at first to manifest in response to my own use of Gaelic and the perceived need to use the 'polite' code with me as a 'teacher-friend' figure, the two boys demonstrate their agency, through their ability to use various polite forms and in insisting on establishing these polite forms for specific actions within the game (e.g. '*tha mi duilich*'). This in turn subverts the traditional parent-child power imbalance between them and their father, as it allows them to demonstrate not only their linguistic competence in terms of complex structures, but also their understanding of appropriate sociocultural norms. In enacting this agency, Gaelic becomes the language for us to accomplish the main objectives of the monster version of the 'Happy Families' game.

The Dún Chaoin Family: Adapting the game to their language norms

Like the boys in the Steòrnabhagh family, the children in the Dún Chaoin family Aoife, (aged 12 at the time of the recording), Cathal (aged 10 at the time of the recording), and Áine (aged 6 at the time of the recording), also exercise their agency in the linguistic choices in playing the game. However, unlike the Steòrnabhagh interaction, in the Dún Chaoin interaction, none of children assume an 'expert' role in explaining the game; rather, Aoife and Cathal discuss how they think the game is played with reference to other games they know. When they are unable to definitively decide on how to play the game, they resort to referring to the directions, which are written in English:

Excerpt 7

- 1 Aoife *An ndéireann tú- an mbíonn cártaí agat agus ansan déireann tú=*
do you say- you have the cards and then you say-
- 2 Cathal *=ach an bhfuil sé saghas costúil le S::nap, eh not Snap*
but is it a bit like Snap
ach cuireann tú cártaí síos agus piocann tú ceann suas, go dtí go
but you put the cards down and you pick one up
mbíonn an chlann iomlán agat
until you have the entire family
- 3 Cassie Yeah::
- 4 Cathal *Tá sé saghas an °Where's Wally cluiche (.)*
It's a bit like the where's Wally game
piocann tú suas é so caithfidh tú
you pick up so you have to
- 5 Aoife *Cheapas go mbíonn sé ar fad agat ansan*
I thought that you had all of them here-
deireann tú le- le duine éigin, Cathal 'an bhfuil like Mr. um like [[?]]
you say, you say to someone 'Cathal do [you have]'
- 6 Cathal *=[oh cheapas go mbíonn sí] [[tá fios agaibh cheapas go bpiocann tú*
I thought it was- you know I thought you pick
ceann suas, go gcuireann tú ceann síos]
one up, you put one down
- 7 Áine *[[Agus an ceann eile]*
and the other one
- 8 Cassie *So an bhfuil sibh ag iarraidh imir sin?*
do you want to play that?
- 9 Cathal Yeah
- 10 Aoife Yeah
- 11 Cassie Yeah ok
- 12 Aoife *An ndéireann sé ar na instructions*
Does it say on the
- 13 Cassie *Yeah, tá, tá..cà bheil² 4.0) so sin na instructions*
it does it does [where is] these are the
- 14 Aoife **Collect as many families sets of 4 cards if possible, shuffle the deck, deal all the cards equally to each player, yeah**
- 15 Cathal Ahh
- 16 Aoife *So bíonn like ...*
it's
- 17 Cathal *Agus ansan déanam tú swapping*
And then you're

² I am using the Scottish Gaelic form here.

- 18 Cassie Yeah
- 19 Aoife **Game played, player to the left of the dealer begins** (.) so (.)
tusa,
 you
**u::m asking any other player if they have a s-specific card
 in their hand,** yeah (.) *sin an rud a bhíos tú ag rá*
 that's what you are saying
- 20 Cathal Yeah, Áine so, [[*bíonn* ?]
 it's
- 21 Aoife [[**The asking player must have at least one of his kind of
 card in his own hand**]

This interaction looks very different from the Steòrnabagh interaction. Here, the children talk to each other exclusively in the minority language—the language firmly established as their family and intersibling language—whereas in the Steòrnabagh family the children generally used the majority language with each other. Because the instructions for a massed produced game such as this one are written in English, however, the children must shift from their habitual preferred code of Irish to English. They then code-switch back to Irish in their metapragmatic commentaries, such as in Turn 19, where Aoife uses Irish in emphasising ‘*tusa*’ to specify Cathal as the player to the left of the dealer, and then ‘*sin an rud a bhíos tú ag rá*’ (‘that’s what you are saying’) in referring back to Cathal’s earlier utterance. Thus, we see that although the fact that the instructions are in English disrupts the norm of the children’s use of Irish with each other, they are still able to enact their agency in steering the conversation back to Irish.

This adaptation of the game to fit their language norms is further seen in the next two excerpts. In addition, these excerpts also show the children’s linguistic adaptations serve the very important function of facilitating equal participation in the game. Parallel to the Steòrnabagh interaction where the monster names were problematic, especially for the youngest player, here too the children encounter some difficulty with what is written on the cards. The following excerpt demonstrates how they collaboratively overcome these difficulties:

Excerpt 8

- 1 Aoife *Áine, an bhfuil, wait, conas a chuireann tú na ceisteanna?*
 [do [you have] how do you ask the ques-
 tions
- 2 Cathal Just
- 3 Aoife Like, *cé mhéad*, like *an bhfuil* master, son, daughter
 how many is
- 4 Cathal No Master *is ea an buachaill*, mister *is ea an fear*
 Master is the boy, Mister is the husband
- 5 Aoife No, *tá* son, daughter, wife *agus...*
 [there] is and
- 6 Cathal *Deireann sé ag an mbun* anyway,
 It says at the bottom
 like *do*, like *do*
 your your

Commented [A1]: Does this mean ‘do [you have]’? Or ‘is’?

Commented [SC2R1]: I think this is the former, as she starts asking if the other player has a particular card

Commented [GÓR3]: Font for translation

- 7 Aoife Yeah, *tá* son, daughter, wife *agus* husband
[there]is and
- 8 Cathal Husband, *sin an méid carachtar*.
that's all the characters
- 9 Aoife Ok Áine, *an bhfuil an farmers son agat?*
do you have the farmer's son?
- 10 Cathal *Abair an dath, abair an dath*.
say the colour, say the colour
- 11 Aoife *Tá sé donn*
It is brown.

Here, the children work out what is meant by what is written on each of the cards—for example, what is meant by the term ‘Master’ and how this fits into their objective to collect entire ‘families.’ ‘Master’ to refer to a young boy after all is a relatively archaic term (as well as equivalent to ‘sir’ used in Irish in schools, which clearly would not be appropriate for the ‘boy’) but Cathal and Aoife work together in collaboratively understanding how each of the ‘characters’ as Cathal says (Turn 8) work into the family schema: son, daughter, wife and husband, as Aoife states in Turn 7. In collaboratively constructing this schema, the children use the Irish language referents ‘*fear*’ ‘*bean*’ ‘*cailín*’ and ‘*buachaill*.’ Despite this schema for understanding, however, in Turn 9, Aoife asks Áine for the ‘farmer’s son.’ Cathal perceives that this may be problematic for Áine and advocates supplementing the asking task by specifying the colour of the card in asking for a particular card.

This excerpt demonstrates therefore how the children are creatively employing their heteroglossia to counteract the hegemony of English language world—in this case, the fact that a mass-produced game is in English. They are collaboratively adapting the game so that it can be played by all players present and in doing so, they first make sense of the cards so that they fit into an understandable schema (thus avoiding the archaism of terms such as ‘Master’). They also adapt the game to make use of a colour-coding system of the cards in order to ensure inclusivity. In the next excerpt, we see the integration of *their* referents for the ‘characters’ (‘*fear*’ ‘*bean*’ ‘*cailín*’ and ‘*buachaill*’) into the game:

- Excerpt 9
- 1 Áine *Cassie, an bhfuil an pirate buachaill agat?*
do you have the boy pirate?
- 2 Cassie *Tá*
I do
- 3 Áine *Cassie, an bhfuil an pirate cailín agat?*
do you have the girl pirate?
- 4 Aoife *bean, cailín nó bean?*
wife, girl or wife?
- 5 Cassie *bean*

12

Commented [GÓR4]: + equivalent used in Irish in schools for ‘Sir’ (possibly part of reason for explaining)

Commented [SC5R4]: Thanks for that insight- hopefully I have explained it satisfactorily?

6 Aoife wife
Taispeán dom
 show me

7 Cassie *bean*
 wife

8 Aoife Yeah *bean*
 wife

9 Áine Yes! Yes! Yes!

10 Aoife *An sin an pirate?*
 That's the pirate?

11 Cathal Pirate's wife! Oh *cheap go raibh sin an boy*
 thought that was the boy

(10)

12 Cathal Áine, *do sheans*
 your turn

13 Aoife Áine, *cuir ceist...*
 ask

14 Cathal Oh stop

15 Áine *Aoife, an bhfuil aon chartaí agat?*
 do you have any cards?
Aoife an bhfuil bean ghlas agat?
 Do you have the green wife?

16 Aoife No, *tusa*
 you

17 Cassie *Mise, Cathal an bhfuil an cócaire agat?*
 Me, Cathal do you have the chef?

18 Cathal *An chef?*
 The chef?

Commented [GÓR6]: Is this Irish (with italicization) or English?

Commented [SC7R6]: Is the word not used like that in both languages? I'm happy to go with whatever conventions or what you think is best.

In this excerpt, we see Áine making use of the adaptations her older siblings have made previously: she uses the Irish terms in asking for the cards instead of what is necessarily written on the card, and she also asks for cards in terms of the colour, hence asking for '*bean ghlas*' ('green wife') in Turn 15. Linguistically-speaking, in asking for the 'pirate *buachail*' and the 'pirate *cailín*' in Turns 1 and 3, it appears that she is treating the designations of '*buachail*' or '*cailín*' as an adjective to modify the word 'pirate' (and thus it is not a case of linguistic transfer from English). This example therefore shows how Áine exercises her linguistic skills in participating in the game, although various realities of the game—such as the fact that the cards are written in English using some unfamiliar terms—have initially posed challenges to her participation.

One aspect of these three excerpts as a whole is that even though it is clear that the children integrate the use of Irish into the game primarily as a means to facilitate playing the game, this does not mean that they necessarily orient to purist (i.e. monolingual Irish) language norms. In this excerpt, for instance, we see Cathal using the word 'boy' and 'pirate's wife' in Turn 11. He also uses the term 'Chef' in Turn 11 in

answer to my asking for the 'c6caire.3' It is also clear from all three excerpts in this chapter that the children make frequent use of English language discourse markers and other pragmatic markers (e.g. 'like' 'wait'). Rather than seeing this use of English lexical items in a negative light, I see the children's metapragmatic markers first and foremost as a way in which the children creatively draw on their multiple linguistic resources in playing a game together. Further, from my observations of language use in Corca Dhuibhne, adults frequently employ English language discourse markers into their Irish language speech, so it is hard to necessarily classify these pragmatic markers as 'English language' per se; instead they seem to be simply part of Irish language speech the way that other contact features may be subsumed into a speech variety, and in fact evidence the *strength* of the language rather than a weakening due to contact. (More detail on this is beyond the scope of this paper, but see for example, Auer, 1995; O' Malley-Madec, 2007; Smith-Christmas, 2016).

As can be seen here, the children enact their agency and persevere against the interference of English imposed upon them by the fact that the directions to the game and the names of the characters are written in English. Like the Ste6rnabhaigh children, the D6n Chaoin children creatively draw on their linguistic resources in establishing their own norms for the game (in this case, adapting the character names and specifying the colour of the card), which in turn not only aligns with their norms of Irish as their intersubling language, but also enables them to include the youngest player in the game.

Conclusion

The juxtaposition of these two interactions illuminates how the children in both families enact their agency through the specific moves to integrate the use of the minority language into the game. In the Ste6rnabhaigh family, there was a complex multilayered relationship between agency, power dynamics, and language. At the same time the use of Gaelic could be seen as an indication of deference towards me as the 'teacher-friend' figure, the way in which this code was used, as well the boys' concerted efforts in establishing Gaelic as the language of asking for/refusing cards in the game, point to their agentive use of the language. Further, the way they used this code to subvert the power relationship between them and their father further underscores the agentive nature of Gaelic in the card game. Thus, ironically, the code that, for the most part, is associated with the very non-agentive environment of the school is in fact manipulated so that Gaelic is the way in which the Ste6rnabhaigh boys most clearly enact their agency. In contrast, for the D6n Chaoin children, Irish is the language that they habitually use to communicate to each other, to their friends, and to other community members. As well, Irish is not imbued with the sense of authority that Gaelic is for the Ste6rnabhaigh boys, and indeed, Irish is the children's preferred language. The analysis of the excerpts showed how the children adapted the game so that it aligned with their preferred language norms and how this in turn allowed them to include the youngest player in the game. The analysis emphasised however that the children's integration of Irish into the game in no way

3 It could be that he interprets 'c6caire' as 'cook' and wants to clarify that it is indeed the 'chef' I am asking for, not the 'cook.'

Commented [G6R8]: in answer

Commented [SC10R9]: Invert + in n. 3 insert 'that' before 'he

Commented [SC10R9]: Sorry, I am confused what you want me to do here, but please do what you see fit.

Commented [G6R11]: in which

oriented to a sense of purism, or indeed, to power dynamics, i.e. that they *should* speak Irish because their family had established a pro-Irish FLP, or due to the presence of an outsider, such as me as the researcher. Rather, Irish is the language they use together and they creatively adapted the game so that they could all play together in their preferred language. This chapter has therefore shed light on different ways in which multilingual children enact their agency *through* the minority language, and how this in turn relates to other sociocultural realities in their local environment. As children are often seen as key players in perpetuating language shift (Gafaranga, 2011; Kroskrity, 2009), more work in this vein could be important in highlighting their role in language *maintenance* as opposed to shift.

Commented [GÓR12]: Sic

National University of Ireland, Galway

Transcription Conventions Used

:	Elongated Sound
-	Cut-off
<u>word</u>	Emphasis
=	Latching speech
[[]]	Overlapping Speech
(.) or ,	Micropause (less than two-tenths of a second)
(?)	Uncertainty in Transcript

Bibliography

- Al Zidjaly, N. (2009). Agency as an interactive achievement. *Language in Society*, 38, 177 – 200.
- An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh/ Central Statistics Office. 2016. Small Area Population Statistics. Available: <https://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2016reports/census2016smallareapopulationstatistics/>.
- Antonini, R. (2016). Caught in the middle: child language brokering as a form of unrecognised language service. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 37(7), 710–725.
- Armstrong, T. C. (2013). “Why Won’t You Speak to Me in Gaelic?” Authenticity, Integration, and the Heritage Language Learning Project. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 12(5), 340–356.
- Armstrong, T. C. (2014). Naturalism and ideological work: How is family language policy renegotiated as both parents and children learn a threatened minority language? *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 17(5), 570–585.
- Auer, P. (1984) *Bilingual Conversation*. Amsterdam: Johns Benjamins.
- Birmie, I. (2018). Gaelic language in public domains. In M. McLeod & C. Smith-Christmas (Eds.), *Gaelic in Contemporary Scotland: The Sociolinguistics of*

- an *Endangered Language* (pp. 128–140). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Bezçioğlu-Göktoġa & Yagmur, K. (2018). Home language policy of second-generation Turkish families in the Netherlands. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 39(1), 44–59.
- Bourdieu, P. (1997). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carty, N. (2018). New speakers, potential new speakers, and their experiences and abilities in Scottish Gaelic. In C. Smith-Christmas, N. Ó Murchadha, M. Hornsby, & M. Moriarty (Eds.), *New Speakers of Minority Language: Ideologies and Practices* (pp. 253–270). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Curd-Christiansen, X. L. (2009). Invisible and visible language planning: ideological factors in the family language policy of Chinese immigrant families in Quebec. *Language Policy*, 8(4), 351–375.
- De Houwer, A. (2007). Parental language input patterns and children's bilingual use. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 28, 411–424.
- Deters, P., Gao, X., Miller, E. R., & Vitanova, G. (2015). *Theorizing and Analyzing Agency in Second Language Learning: Interdisciplinary Approaches*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Fogle, Lyn. W. 2012. *Second language socialization and learner agency*. Adoptive family talk. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Gafaranga, J. (2011). Transition space medium repair: Language shift talked into being. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(1), 118–135.
- Gallo, S. (2017). *Mi Padre: Mexican Immigrant Fathers and Their Children's Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Giddens, A. 1979. *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- King, K., Fogle, L. and Logan-Terry, A. (2008). Family Language Policy. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 2(5), 907–922.
- Kirsch, C. (2012). Ideologies, struggles and contradictions: an account of mothers raising their children bilingually in Luxembourgish and English in Great Britain. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 15(1), 95–112.
- Kopeliovich, S. (2013). Happylingual: A family project for enhancing and balancing multilingual development. In M. Schwartz & A. Verschik (Ed.), *Successful Family Language Policy* (pp. 249–276). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Kroskrity, P. 2009. Narrative reproductions: Ideologies of storytelling, authoritative words, and generic regimentation in the village of Tewa. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 19(1), 40–56.
- Kuczynski, L. (2002). Beyond Bidirectionality: Bilateral Conceptual Frameworks for Studying Dynamics in Parent-child Relations. In L. Kuczynski (Ed.), *Handbook of Dynamics in Parent-Child Relations* (pp. 3–24). London: Sage Publications.
- Lanza, E. (1997). *Language mixing in infant bilingualism: a sociolinguistic perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mishina-Mori, S. (2011). A longitudinal analysis of language choice in bilingual children: The role of parental input and interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43, 3122–3138.

Commented [GÓR13]: Sic?

Commented [SC14R13]: Sorry, don't know what you want me to change here, but please change as you see fit

Commented [GÓR15]: Comma before volume number not found elsewhere

- Munro, G., Taylor, I., & Armstrong, T. (2011). *The State of Gaelic in Shawbost*. Teangue, Isle of Skye. Retrieved from [http://www.gaidhlig.org.uk/The state of Gaelic in Shawbost.pdf](http://www.gaidhlig.org.uk/The%20state%20of%20Gaelic%20in%20Shawbost.pdf)
- National Records of Scotland (NROS). 2013. *Statistical Bulletin- Release 2A*.
- Ó hÍfearnáin, T. (2013). Family language policy, first language Irish speaker attitudes and community-based response to language shift. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 34(4), 348–365.
- O' Rourke, B., Pujolar, J., & Ramallo, F. (2015). New speakers of minority languages: the challenging opportunity – Foreword. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, (231), 1–20.
- Palviainen, Á., & Boyd, S. (2013). Unity in Discourse, Diversity in Practice: The One Person One Language Policy in Bilingual Families. In M. Schwartz & A. Verschik (Eds.), *Successful Family Language Policy: Parents, Children and Educators in Interaction* (pp. 223–248). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Revis, M. (2016). A Bourdieusian perspective on child agency in family language policy. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 22(2), 177–191.
- Said, Fatma, & Zhu, Hua. (2019). “No, no Maama! Say ‘Shaahir ya Ouledee Shaahir’!” Children’s agency in language use and socialisation. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 23(3), 771-385.
- Schwartz, M., Moin, V., & Klayle, M. (2013). Parents’ Choice of a Bilingual Hebrew-Arabic Kindergarten for the Children. In M. Schwartz & A. Verschik (Eds.), *Successful Family Language Policy: Parents, Children and Educators in Interaction* (pp. 53–82). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (2007). Nexus analysis: Refocusing ethnography on action. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 11(5), 608–625.
- Smith-Christmas, C. (2016). *Family language policy: Maintaining an endangered language in the home*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Smith-Christmas, C., Ó Murchadha, N. P., Hornsby, M., & Moriarty, M. (2018). *New speakers of minority languages: Linguistic ideologies and practices*. *New Speakers of Minority Languages: Linguistic Ideologies and Practices*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Stockdale, A., MacGregor, B., & Munro, G. (2003). *Migration, Gaelic-medium education and Language Use*. Teangue, Isle of Skye.
- Van Mensel, L. (2018). ‘Quiere koffie?’ The multilingual familylect of transcultural families. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 15(3), 233–248.
- Western Isles Language Plan Project*. (2005). Stornoway. Retrieved from <http://www.linguae-celticae.org/dateien/planaire1.pdf>