

**Gaelic Medium Primary Education in Scotland as the Forefront of a Cultural
Renaissance: The Interrelation between Language Revitalisation and National Identity.**

Rachel Campbell

Introduction

Scotland as a nation is continuously engaged in a protracted effort to gain cultural recognition and legitimation in the context of the United Kingdom. Scottish people navigate a paradoxical identity wherein they belong to the United Kingdom, yet simultaneously strive to differentiate themselves as a distinct nation. Scotland distinguishes itself as a nation by fortifying the notion of Scottish identity, particularly its Gaelic identity. This linguistic and cultural identity is associated with the portrayal of Scottish uniqueness and connoted with a sense of patriotism. Gaelic identity tends to be regionally specific with the vast majority of Gaelic-speakers (Gaels) residing and originating from the Highlands and Islands region in the North of Scotland. However, a renaissance movement in the Gaelic world is causing the dispersal of the Gaelic language, and by extension, this subset of national identity. With the initiation of a revival, Gaelic is increasingly culturally valued and the associated way of life which was once denigrated is now romanticised. Subsequently, Gaelic language and culture are rising in popularity. This paper uses a conceptual framework of Edelman's (1988) notion of the condensation symbol. I argue that Gaelic is considered representative of a particular imagining of national identity, compressed and essentialised under the cultural marker of Gaelic. Gaelic has historically been suppressed throughout a draconian mission towards achieving national homogenisation and gentrification. This paper discusses language revitalisation efforts in a context where the language has been historically marginalised. I use the theoretical framework of Taylor's (1995) politics of recognition. Negative language ideologies have undermined the transmission of this heritage language due to the influential nature of the politics of recognition on identity formation. I argue that the repression and censorship of Gaelic has had a profoundly negative impact on language and cultural transmission, in addition to degrading Gaelic-speakers' perceptions of self. Language revitalisation has the capacity to recover negative stereotypes through true recognition of Gaelic identity. The language and culture which was

once viewed through a lens of prejudice is navigating a reimagining wherein it has the opportunity to reclaim its importance in Scottish national identity.

Positionality

This inquiry is informed by my own positionality as a descendant of Gaels. I have both matrilineal and patrilineal connections to Gaelic language and culture, and these traditions remain greatly valued in my family. My maternal Grandmother and my paternal Grandfather are of Highland and Island heritage, and were brought up in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland in crofting and Gaelic-speaking families. Gaelic was the first language of my grandparents; it was the main mode of communication in island communities since English was only learnt and spoken when a child enrolled in school. Crofting is a type of small-scale farming specific to the Highlands and Islands which characterises the Gaelic ‘way of life’. My forebears lived lives of subsistence, unpretentious and wholesome, which were deemed inferior and simplistic in the past. Today, Gaelic culture has garnered cultural capital and is romanticised as quintessentially Scottish and idealistic. As a relation of Gaelic-speakers, I have seen first-hand the evolution, and dilution, of Gaelic from my grandparent’s generation to my own generation. Neither of my grandparents taught Gaelic to their own children as intergenerational transmission of the language was not valued prior to revitalisation efforts. Gaelic culture was stigmatised in the past and speakers tried to distance themselves from this heritage rather than solidify their rootedness in it. Today, my Grandmother speaks Gaelic to her daughters and grandchildren because she has rediscovered her love for her language and culture. My Mother learnt Gaelic through years of attending language classes, and my younger sister received a Gaelic education so is also a fluent speaker. My Father has carried on the tradition of crofting and I play traditional Gaelic music. We live in the Highlands and feel a true affinity with the Islands where we have older relatives. Gaelic language and culture in our family has survived

the damaging effects of stigmatisation, but, it survived through institutionalisation and formalisation rather than being transmitted naturally through everyday social life.

I endeavour to be conscious of my positionality while researching this inquiry. I am intimately connected to Gaelic culture and feel passionately about the subject, therefore I must acknowledge my unavoidable biases. People perceive the world from a specific location, and that positionality forms their perspective, therefore knowledge always partial (Rose, 1997:308). Knowledge is inseparable from the situated context of the knower and it is one's ontology which acts as the core of experience (Yanow, 2014:10). The researcher must be aware of limited location and accept that knowledge is situated rather than assuming the transcendence of knowledge (Haraway, 1988:583). The notion of the 'god trick' describes an instance where the researcher intellectually removes themselves from the social realm, thus perceiving themselves as authoritative (ibid:582). A researcher egotistically governed by the 'god trick' perceives themselves as having the sovereign right to cast objective judgements on the world and produce knowledge untied to any formation-factors (Haraway, 1988:582). 'Good' research is sensitive to the ways in which power relations, value systems, and politics shape facts instead of looking to find universal truths and all-encompassing knowledges (England, 2006:287). I therefore will exercise reflexivity, 'the self-conscious, analytical scrutiny of one's self as a researcher' to examine the context and effect of myself as a researcher on knowledge construction (ibid:289). Recognition of positionality and acknowledgment of reflexivity are crucial in considering the context of knowledges and these form the story of how knowledge is situated. Taking my positionality into account, the purpose of this research paper is to examine the relation between Gaelic language learning and national identity. For background and content focus and analysis, I review the current literature.

The History of Gaelic in Scotland: Repression to Revitalisation

Conceptualisations of Gaelic have varied temporally in accordance with popular linguistic and cultural connotations and stereotypes. The Gaelic language was once widely spoken throughout Scotland, but has been in major decline since the 18th century (Carty, 2014:196). Gaelic has struggled to survive under the oppressive conditions of military repression, persistent material deprivation, forced emigration during the Highland Clearances, and an immense cultural pressure to change from Gaelic to English language use (McLeod, 2001:2). After the victory of the English Army against the Jacobite Rebellion at the Battle of Culloden in 1746, the suppression of Gaelic was institutionalised. The gathering of clans and use of the Gaelic language were outlawed, and this dismantling of Scotland's system of social organisation and communication was detrimental to Gaelic kinship. During the Highland Clearances, Scottish people were forcibly evicted from their land to make room for sheep which were considered a valuable commodity (Smith-Christmas & Armstrong 2014:314). Masses of Highland and Island peoples were burned out of their homes and sent overseas to assimilate into foreign culture. This violent clearance of ancestral lands is commonly reflected upon as a capitalist genocide which was impossible for Gaelic culture to recover from. The Gaelic-speakers who did survive were associated with poverty and underdevelopment which further lowered the prestige of the language (Smith-Christmas & Armstrong, 2014:314). Until the 1930s, children were physically punished for speaking Gaelic in school as it was so condemned as prohibitive to Anglophone progress and sophistication (ibid:314).

Today, Gaelic has become culturally valued and has gained political purchase. In 2005, the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act recognised Gaelic as an official language of Scotland for the first time (Smith-Christmas & Armstrong, 2014:314). This policy change marked a political shift in the prioritisation of Gaelic preservation and revitalisation and catalysed efforts to

reverse language shift in Scotland. Language shift is the sociolinguistic phenomenon in which one language becomes increasingly lesser used in the place of the use of another language (Dombrowski, 2014:261). Gaelic is in a tentative position wherein it is still a minority language, but education can play a vital role in combatting language shift in a process of reversal and revival (ibid:261).

The Highlands and Islands

The Gael population today is heavily concentrated in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland (McLeod, 2001:2). The Outer Hebrides constitute the heartland of the language with 66% of the island population speaking Gaelic in 1991 (ibid:2). Gàilhealtachd is the territory whose Gaelic language and culture has claim to founding status in Scotland (Bechhofer & McCrone, 2014:115). There is an aboriginal quality to Gaels since they constitute the earliest populations of Scotland (ibid:115). Today, over 80% of the population in some of the rural districts of the Outer Hebrides speak Gaelic (McLeod, 2014:4). Still, even in areas where Gaelic remains a community language it is endangered (McLeod, 2001:3). Native Gaelic-speakers are often considered ‘the very last of a kind, teetering on the brink of extinction’ (Kohn, 2002:146). The Highlands and Islands region has become linked to this imperilled identity involving Gaelic language, traditions and culture. Nonetheless, the Gaelic heartland is in a relatively strong position compared to the rest of Scotland. In 2011, the national average of Gaelic-speakers in Scotland was 1.125% (www.gov.scot). In the Highlands, less than 15% of the population are Gaelic-speakers and in the Islands over 50% of the population are Gaelic-speakers (www.gov.scot). Given the disparity in language survival between the heartland and the rest of the nation, it is clear why Gaelic is ideologically associated with the Highlands and Islands.

Gaelic Medium Primary Education

Scotland's public school system was established in 1872, but Gaelic was excluded entirely from the education sector (McLeod, 2014:7). Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) was introduced in 1986 which enabled Gaelic to be academically appreciated which was a novel phenomenon (ibid:7). GMPE has grown gradually since its introduction. In 1986, there were 2 GMPE primary schools teaching 24 pupils, while in 2014 there were 59 GMPE primary schools teaching 2,818 pupils (O'Hanlon, 2017:49). GMPE involves an immersive educational experience in which children are taught solely in Gaelic from Primary 1 to Primary 3, after which English is gradually introduced but Gaelic remains the predominant language of learning (www.gaidhlig.scot). Bòrd na Gàidhlig's guidance on GMPE attributes agency to parents who can request an assessment for GMPE provision for their pre-school age children over a more mainstream English Medium Primary Education (EMPE). Local education authorities are obligated to fully assess the need for GMPE and are inclined to provide it unless it is unreasonable to do so (www.gaighlig.scot). If there are five pupils in the same pre-school year group within an area whose parents wish them to be educated in GMPE, the local authority must investigate the feasibility of facilitating this (O'Hanlon & Paterson, 2017:50). This policy for parental choice enables requests for GMPE provision to be negotiated between parents and local authorities where demand exists.

In the 2014-15 school year, GMPE was provided in 14 of the 32 Local Authority areas in Scotland, with 13 further local authorities having established cross-boundary arrangements with neighbouring authorities (ibid:49). There are two main reasons why parents tend to choose GMPE for their children. Firstly, they perceive GMPE to be a good quality educational route (O'Hanlon & Paterson, 2017:50). Bilingual education has associated linguistic and cognitive outcomes which parents deem desirable for their children so they choose GMPE from a purely academic achievement standpoint. Secondly, parents approach GMPE from a linguistic and

cultural heritage perspective. Parents rely on GMPE to continue a tradition of Gaelic at either a family, community, or national level (ibid:50). Whichever their reasons for choosing GMPE, parents who request provision of a Gaelic education value Gaelic and it is becoming increasingly popular for parents to do so.

Education plays an important role in reversing language shift (Dombrowski, 2014:261). Gaelic learners are agents of revitalisation whose role is vital in securing the fate of the language (Carty, 2014:198). Remarkably, 43% of adult learners have at least one Gaelic-speaking relative (Smith-Christmas & Armstrong, 2014:313). These people are heritage learners who have Gaelic in their blood and possess the autonomy to reintroduce Gaelic to their lineage. Heritage learners negotiate and normalise language norms within the family to re-establish Gaelic within their genealogy (ibid:313). There are many heritage learners since native Gaelic speakers commonly failed to pass the language on to their children in the past because of the stigma associated with Gaelic (Macdonald, 2013:2). The historical suppression of Gaelic has resulted in an internalisation of negative connotations and stigmatisation of stereotypes. Language ideologies can undermine transmission of traditional linguistic practices by minority language speakers (Dunmore, 2017:726). Language ideologies are sets of beliefs about language shared by members of a community. These ideologies are socially reproduced and naturalised and can determine the direction of language changes by either motivating or militating against language loss (ibid:730). Therefore, Gaelic transmission has suffered due to negative language ideologies but GMPE can work to mitigate the trajectory of decline.

Conceptual Framework

My conceptual framework is based on the notion of condensation symbols informed by people's social and cultural capitals. Gaelic identifies people as Gaels and this labelling affirms

a sense of togetherness in a shared community (Macdonald, 1997:194). As it rises in popularity, Gaelic becomes a condensation symbol for an authentic Scottish identity. A condensation symbol is defined as either a problem or political goal which cultivates and increases interest in an issue by appealing to an ideological mentality (Edelman, 1988:22). Condensation symbols are emblematic of particular moral concerns and create allied groups of people who feel that the condensation symbol is representative of their shared values (ibid:22). Gaelic has become associated with a type of cultural capital as it is increasingly valued in society. Cultural capital involves cultural goods and personal dispositions (Bourdieu, 2001:47). Social capital encompasses social networks and personal title. An individual's movement in social space is determined by the capital they have as this ultimately influences their mobility (ibid:47). Historically, Gaelic had little associated cultural capital as it was relentlessly invalidated in public discourse. The lack of cultural capital meant that the social networks associated with Gaelic were poorly perceived so Gaelic-speakers had little social capital either. Today, Gaelic revitalisation efforts have resulted in a transformation of how Gaelic is conceptualised. Therefore, while Gaelic speakers were historically a marginalised group who were actively oppressed, today their linguistic ability and associated culture merits them cultural and social capital revival.

Gaels are both an ethnolinguistic group and a category of identity (Dunmore, 2017:735). As Gaelic gains cultural value, this identity becomes increasingly popular and desirable. In popular discourse there are two dominant imaginations of Gaelic identity. Firstly, a prevailing attitude towards Gaelic as a romantic relic of the past is exemplified in 'Gaelic Granny Syndrome' (McLeod, 2001:10). In this phenomenon, people vicariously link themselves to Gaelic tradition through a familial Gaelic speaker (ibid:10). In this discourse, Gaelic is portrayed as nostalgic and whimsically equated to an aspirational identity strongly connected to the past. Macdonald

discusses the romanticising of Gaelic communities and the idealising of Gaelic culture (Macdonald, 1997:247).

Gaelic culture is imagined as a place of traditional community. Its geographical marginality, empty spaces, lack of urbanisation, the Gaelic language, Highland hospitality, crofting, the apparent relatedness and closeness of the inhabitants, and the alleged slowness of everyday existence are all taken as evidence of a way of life which modernisation has largely passed by. (Macdonald, 1997:2)

Conversely, Gaelic culture is also aggressively denigrated through ethnolinguistic theorising (McLeod, 2001:11). This narrative understands Gaelic as a dying language and considers revitalisation efforts to be hopeless and wasteful (ibid:11). Locals to the Highlands and Islands region are perceived through a binary; either as romantic heroes or backward barbarians (Jedrej & Nuttal, 1995:119). Thus, Gaelic speakers are faced with being exoticised or vilified (Nadel-Klein, 2003:10). These two perceptions of Gaelic identity are divergent. However, although Gaelic is conceptualised in a contradictory manner, there is a common understanding that Gaelic language carries an intangible traditional culture which is at risk of being lost. Gaelic is sentimentalised and associated with the rhetoric of an 'authentic' Gaelic lifestyle.

Gaelic can be conceptualised as a public good where it is perceived to embody a traditional and valuable identity. The preservation of historically and culturally significant languages is a salient political issue (Chhim & Bélanger, 2017:929). While Gaelic may not be a widely used means of communication in Scotland, it does serve a symbolic identity function. Therefore, heritage languages can be understood as public goods since even people who do not have any speaking ability in the language nonetheless have opinions about its status (ibid:930). Gaelic is an identity-based public good which non-speakers can support the promotion of and be proud to be linked to. Language as a public good is non-excludable and non-rivalrous (Chhim & Bélanger, 2017:931). Non-excludability entails the ability for everyone to benefit from the language. Non-rivalry suggests that using a language for identity purposes does not reduce

the availability of that language to others who might rely on the language for communication purposes (ibid:931). However, conceptualisations of language as a public good can be problematic where it results in few people learning the language so that the communicative status of the language deteriorates. Thus, the chain of intergenerational transmission breaks (Chhim & Bélanger, 2017:931). Scotland is at risk of essentialising Gaelic into an identity and neglecting to protect its communicative function. The emphasis is often on the distinctiveness of Gaelic culture, rather than on language learning and acquisition.

While it may subtract from a focus on language transmission, the unequivocal association between Gaelic identity and language is crucial to revitalisation efforts. For Gaelic to redeem political purchase, it must exemplify how it is different and why it is worthy of protection. Theories of difference conclude that identity is entirely dependent on the relation to difference from others (Grossman, 1996:6). Theories of otherness conclude that difference is a historically produced economy imposed in structures of power. Otherness entails that difference is an effect of power, and while the existence of the 'other' is acknowledged, difference is not seen as fundamentally constitutive (ibid:6). Historically, Gaelic has been 'othered' in a negative sense. Ironically, to ensure its survival, Gaelic must 'other' itself in a positive sense. Identity associated in any way with difference implies that identity is also linked to sameness. Hall argues that identification is constructed as a result of the recognition of some common origin or shared characteristic with another person, group, or ideal (Hall, 1996:2). Resonating with another body leads to the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on the basis of commonality. Identification is a process which is always in flux and never completed (ibid:3).

It is not determined in the sense that it can always be 'won' or 'lost', sustained or abandoned. Though not without its determinate conditions of existence, including the material and symbolic resources required to sustain it, identification is in the end conditional, lodged in contingency. Once secured, it

does not obliterate difference. The total merging it suggests is, in fact, a fantasy of incorporation. (Hall, 1996:3)

As a process, identification operates against difference by marking symbolic boundaries and requiring the existence of a constitutive outside of an identity to consolidate the inside of an identity (Hall, 1996:3). Identities are never unified, rather, they are fragmented and subject to historicising. They are constructed within discourse, not outside, so emerge within modalities of power (Hall, 1996:4). Hall argues that contrary to the form in which they are invoked, identities are forged through difference, and therefore, are produced in opposition to the 'other'. Every identity has excess at its margins and its innate unity is derived from internal homogeneity in contention with the outside (ibid:4). I relate Hall's concept of identification with Gaels' temporally fluid affiliation with their cultural heritage. Gaelic-speakers have always been understood in terms of their difference, whether negatively or positively. In the past, Gaels were 'othered' and considered a problem, whereas today Gaels are 'othered' and deemed an asset. Their difference has been reconceptualised in a positive light.

Theoretical Framework

I argue that the decline in Gaelic transmission stems from the external negative connotations projected onto Gaels over a prolonged period of time. I employ the theoretical framework of the politics of recognition to illustrate how extraneous opinions influence self-perception. Taylor (1995) argues that identity is shaped by either due recognition or absence of recognition. Humans are fundamentally dialogical in nature so are reliant on interactions to fulfil the self (Taylor, 1995:230). Identity is dependent on recognition at both an intimate and social level. People's identities must be validated by their significant others and those whom they encounter in open dialogue in everyday life (ibid:232). Nonrecognition and misrecognition can be harmful to a person and how they perceive themselves and accordingly act (Taylor, 1995:225). The lack of proper recognition can be oppressive as it imprisons a person in false, distorted, or

reduced mode of being which infers a lack of external respect thus inflicting self-hatred (ibid:225). Proper and fair recognition is essential to an individual or group's personal development and thus should not be simply treated as a courtesy (Taylor, 1995:226). The understanding of recognition as implicated with identity formation has given way to a new concept of individual identity; the idea of being true to oneself and one's own authentic way of being (ibid:227). A new sense of inwardness has been nurtured in which people seek to connect with themselves in a deep way to achieve a full state of being. Moral importance is awarded to maintaining contact with one's inner nature rather than succumbing to the pressures of outward conformity. These goals of self-realisation can be applied both to the individual person and culture-bearing people (ibid:229). Diverse cultural groups seek affirmation and support for their identities through the politics of recognition (Lyshaug, 2004:300). Language constitutes a framework of evaluative categories that make meaningful choice possible (ibid:310). Where community members commonly identify with a language, they sustain this communication mode and preserve this cultural indicator. To maintain an identity, people depend on external approval. Identities can be misinterpreted, intentionally or unintentionally, and these false projections are internalised in a battle over self (Lyshaug, 2004:312). While systemic misrecognition can warp a person's sense of self, true recognition can work to offset this negative process.

Fostering the strength and vibrancy of cultures that have been systematically misrecognised or denigrated can help to secure the self-esteem of their members. (Lyshaug, 2004:312)

Taylor contends that humans are enriched through mutually transforming encounters between people, who at the surface, are perceived to be different (Lyshaug, 2004:315). Encounters of this nature are complementary and nurture self-completion (ibid:315). Thus, I argue that changing patterns of recognition of Gaelic have influenced how Gaelic-speakers perceive themselves, their language, culture, and ethnolinguistic identity.

There are two veins of the politics of recognition; the politics of equal dignity and the politics of difference. The politics of equal dignity assumes a universalism approach in recognising the equal dignity that all humans have in common (Cooke, 1997:259). Therefore, all humans are worthy of respect since the basis for respect is universal human potential. For example, human's positionality as rational agents who are capable of directing their own lives autonomously (ibid:259). The politics of difference also takes a universalist stance by perceiving all humans as having their own unique identity. The politics of difference focuses on individual and group's distinctiveness and the universal human potential for defining one's own identity (Cooke, 1997:259). Beyond this, the politics of difference attributes equal value to what humans have made of this potential to be recognised (ibid:260).

With the politics of equal dignity, what is established is meant to be universally the same, an identical basket of rights and immunities; with the politics of difference, what we are asked to recognise is the unique identity of this individual or group, its distinctiveness from everyone else. The idea is that it is precisely this distinctiveness that has been ignored, glossed over, assimilated to a dominant or major identity. And this assimilation is the cardinal sin against the ideal of authenticity. (Taylor, 1995:233)

The politics of difference is associated with the ideal of authenticity, meaning the original way of being human which each person individually must be true to (Cooke, 1997:260). On the other hand, the politics of equal dignity is defined by the underlying philosophical assumption that human dignity lies in autonomy, meaning the ability of a person to decide for themselves their view of the good life (ibid:260). The good life is defined as comprising of either emotional satisfaction or authentic happiness. In both definitions, the individual is privileged in choosing the nature of their good life (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008:569). Taylor argues that the politics of equal dignity can come into conflict with the politics of difference (Cooke, 1997:260). The politics of equal dignity advocates for non-discrimination based on a blindness towards difference, whereas the politics of difference campaigns for non-discrimination based on distinctions as the basis for differential treatment (Taylor, 1995:234).

The reproach the second makes to the first is that it negates identity by forcing people into a homogenous mould that is untrue to them. The reproach the first makes to the second is just that it violates the principle of non-discrimination. This would be bad enough if the mould itself were neutral – nobody's mould in particular. But the complaint generally goes further. The claim is that the supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles is in fact a reflection of one hegemonic culture. As it turns out, then, only the minority or suppressed suppressed cultures are being forced to take alien form. (Taylor, 1995:236)

Taylor's view of these modes of politics of recognition as conflicting rests on two assumptions.

He assumes that the politics of equal dignity requires treating people in a difference-blind manner, and assumes that the politics of difference demands recognition of a unique identity which nullifies the claim that all people are worthy of equal respect (Cooke, 1997:260). Since the politics of difference is concerned with disparities rather than similarities, recognition is interpreted through the ideal of authenticity which Taylor argues invalidates the politics of equal dignity's argument that all humans have the potential agency to choose their interpretation of the good life (ibid:260). I agree with Cooke (1997) that Taylor's contention that the politics of equal dignity exists in discordance with the politics of difference rests too vicariously on these assumptions. I argue that people can be deemed worthy of equal respect while simultaneously acknowledging their differences and uniqueness. The two veins of the politics of recognition are not mutually exclusive. Historically, Gaels have not been considered worthy of equal respect, nor have they been valued for their authenticity. Rather, in the past society has tried to assimilate Gaels into broader national culture in a manner which disregards both their equal dignity and difference.

The politics of difference is inextricably linked to authenticity. Taylor argues that authenticity is defined by a receptivity to difference both internal and external to the self (Lyshaug, 2004:301). Human existence is temporal, thus Taylor contends that no action can make sense if it is abstracted from the broader sequence of events to whose life-flow it contributes (ibid:304). Identity requires people to slot their actions into an ongoing and comprehensive life

narrative which amounts to a sense of unity. Lyshaug critiques Taylor's account of identity by arguing that it over-emphasises the need for unity and cohesiveness over the life course (Lyshaug, 2004:305). Construction of life as a whole unit makes people less likely to challenge their current narrative identity, and so a movement towards unity can stifle character growth and make it more difficult to accept change in other people when they stray from their anticipated life narrative. Lyshaug argues that Taylor does not address the need to prevent a person's adherence to unity from becoming rigid, and this renders inner plurality vulnerable to disenfranchisement (ibid:305). I argue that a Gaels perception of self varies over their life span dependent on contemporary public discourse about Gaelic at different points in time. My Grandmother might have felt shameful about her Gaelic heritage in the past because she was socialised into a world where Gaelic was not valued and was actively suppressed. Today, in the context of a Gaelic renaissance, she can see that the same Gaelic which was once disparaged is now largely respected and admired. My Grandmother's Gaelic identity has not remained static over time. Instead, it has ebbed and flowed in accordance with popular discourse which influences external and internal conceptualisations of Gaelic and Gaels.

In GMPE, due recognition can be given by teachers who critically approach the cultural politics of education. Saltman (2018) contrasts a critical approach to the cultural politics of education with conservative and liberal perspectives. Criticalists question Western tradition instead of reproducing it and have social transformative aims (Saltman, 2018:1). On the other hand, conservative and liberal approaches have social accommodationist aims wherein they value the transmission of culture. Saltman argues that teachers are cultural workers who have a role of responsibility since they partake in public meaning-making (ibid:4). Teachers can respond to pre-existing public discourse by either affirming or contesting it. They therefore actively 'make' meaning rather than simply deliver knowledge to students (Saltman, 2018:4). This

exemplifies how crucial the role of teachers within GMPE is since they are at the forefront of remaking modern Gaelic identity. GMPE teachers can practice due recognition of their students and endeavour to transmit a positive Gaelic identity which students can be proud to adopt.

Methodological Considerations

I have used qualitative methods in this library-based research paper. Qualitative research is founded on the values of being inductive, interpretivist, constructionist, and naturalistic. The inductive disposition of qualitative research entails the researcher beginning with research and subsequently developing theories and concepts from their research findings (Bryman, Bell & Teevan, 2012:133). This research is interpretivist in that it strives to perceive the social world through other individual's interpretations of it, and constructionist in that it understands social life to be an outcome of interactions between individuals rather than a fixed structure to which one conforms (ibid:133). It is also important to consider ontology and epistemology in qualitative research philosophy as these values drive all research decisions (Daniel & Harland, 2017:20). Ontology is the study of being, it is the system of belief and interpretation of what constitutes knowledge (ibid:21). Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge and the procedures utilised to come to know something (Daniel & Harland, 2017:20). In my position as a researcher, I assumed an epistemological standpoint in which I attempted to decipher what constitutes the ontological beliefs of Gaels and Gaelic learners.

I have used a literature review method in my library-based qualitative research. When exploring the existing literature on a topic, the researcher must identify relevant concepts and theories, determine any significant controversies or inconsistencies, and formulate their own research agenda informed by the existing literature (Bryman, Bell & Teevan, 2012:327). The

researcher can relate different articles and pinpoint apparent strengths or deficiencies in the articles' arguments, methodologies and theoretical approaches (ibid:328). Investigating what other scholars have written about a topic enables the researcher to be well informed when they approach their inquiry and a good grasp of the literature can reveal knowledge gaps (Bryman, Bell & Teevan, 2012:363). The literature reviewed in this paper informed my arguments and compelled me to relate articles about Gaelic with conceptual and theoretical frameworks such as Edelman's (1988) condensation symbol, Hall's (1996) identification, and Taylor's (1995) politics of recognition. While the articles I sourced about Gaelic were highly informative, they did not link cultural and linguistic decline and revitalisation with any of the aforementioned conceptual or theoretical frames.

Conclusions

In conclusion, Gaelic language and tradition have historically been under the pressure of erasure. Subsequently, Gaelic-speakers have felt obliged to invisibilise their differences to blend with a homogenising nation. As the cultural capital associated with Gaelic has been revived, rhetoric surrounding this identity has been renewed. The bearers of this rich culture who were once persecuted, are now increasingly romanticised as empowered to continue a culture on the brink of extinction. The differences and otherness which make Gaelic identity unique are highlighted in an attempt to raise the profile of the language and culture. GMPE is vital in introducing people to Gaelic and igniting the reversal of language shift in Scotland. I have argued that Gaelic becomes a condensation symbol for a particular Scottish identity as the language is essentialised as an indicator for Gaelic culture and ways of living. The politics of recognition illustrates how perceptions of this identity over time are caricatured and internalised, and subsequently, intergenerational transmission of Gaelic being adversely impacted. The negative impacts on Gaelic transmission and the consequent impairment of

Gaelic identity are only just beginning to mend through the rejuvenation of identity initiated through revitalisation. GMPE is integral to the reimagining of Gaelic. Teachers are in the exceptional position wherein they constitute the frontlines of a cultural renaissance, thus they possess the agency to re-envision what Gaelic is in Scottish public discourse.

Bibliography

BECHHOFFER, F. & MCCRONE, D (2014) What Makes a Gael? Identity, Language and Ancestry in the Scottish Gàidhealtachd. *Global Studies in Culture and Power*. Vol 21 (2), pp113-133.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig. *Adult Gaelic Learning in Scotland: Opportunities, Motivations and Challenges* [online]. Available from: <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CR09-04-GfA-Gaelic-for-Adults-2010-English.pdf> (Accessed on: 14/11/2019).

Bòrd na Gàidhlig. *Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education* [online]. Available from: <http://www.gaidhlig.scot/bord/education/statutory-guidance/> (Accessed on: 23/09/2019).

BOURDIEU, P (2001) The Forms of Capital. IN: HALSEY, A.H. et al (Ed(s)) *Education: Culture, Economy, Society*, Oxford: OU Press. pp46-58.

BRYMAN, A., BELL, E., & TEEVAN, J.J (2012) *Social Research Methods* (3rd Canadian ed), Ontario: Oxford University Press.

CARTY, N (2014) The Adult Learner in Gaelic Language-in-Education Policy: Language Revitalisation and the CEFR. *European Journal of Language Policy*. Vol 6 (2), pp195–217.

CHHIM, C. & BÉLANGER, É (2017) Language as a Public Good and National Identity: Scotland's Competing Heritage Languages. *Nations and Nationalism*. Vol 23 (4), pp929-951.

CHRISTOPHER, J.C. & HICKINBOTTOM, S (2008) Positive Psychology, Ethnocentrism, and the Disguised Ideology of Individualism. *Theory & Psychology*. Vol 18 (5), pp 563-589.

COOKE, M (1997) Authenticity and Autonomy: Taylor, Habermas, and the Politics of Recognition. *Political Theory*. Vol 25 (2), pp258-288.

DANIEL, B.K. & HARLAND, T (2017) Ontology and Epistemology. IN: *Higher Education Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide to the Research Process*, New York: Routledge. pp19-36.

DOMBROWSKI, L. M (2014) Additional Language Education and Language Development Goals: The Example of Gaelic (Learners) Education in Highland Council, Scotland. *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol 40 (2), pp261-279.

DUNMORE, S. S (2017) Immersion Education Outcomes and the Gaelic Community: Identities and Language Ideologies Among Gaelic Medium-Education Adults in Scotland. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. Vol 38 (8), pp726-741.

EDELMAN, M (1988) The Construction and Uses of Social Problems. IN: *Constructing the Political Spectacle*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp12-36.

ENGLAND, K (2006) Producing Feminist Geographies: Theory, Methodologies and Research Strategies. IN: AITKIN, S. & VALENTINE, G. (Ed(s)) *Approaches to Human Geography*, London: Sage. pp 286-297.

HALL, S. & DU GAY, P (1996) *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

HARAWAY, D (1988) The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*. Vol 14 (3), pp575-599.

JEDREJ, M.C. & NUTTAL, M (1995) Incomers and Locals: Metaphors and Reality in the Repopulation of Rural Scotland. *Scottish Affairs*. Vol 10 (1), pp112-126.

KOHN, T (2002) Becoming an Islander Through Action in the Scottish Hebrides. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. Vol 8 (1), pp143-158.

LYSHAUG, B (2004) Authenticity and the Politics of Identity: A Critique of Charles Taylor's Politics of Recognition. *Contemporary Political Theory*. Vol 3 (3), pp300-320.

MACDONALD, S (1997) *Reimagining Culture: Histories, Identities and the Gaelic Renaissance*, Oxford: Berg.

MCLEOD, W (2001) Gaelic in the New Scotland: Politics, Rhetoric and Public Discourse. *Journal of Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*. Vol 1 (1), pp1-33.

MCLEOD, W (2014) Gaelic in Contemporary Scotland: Challenges, Strategies and Contradictions. *Europa Ethnica*. Vol 71 (2), pp3-12.

NADEL-KLEIN, J (2003) *Fishing for Heritage: Modernity and Loss Along the Scottish Coast*, London: Berg.

O'HANLON, F. & PATERSON, L (2017) Factors Influencing the Likelihood of Choice of Gaelic-Medium Primary Education in Scotland: Results from a National Public Survey. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*. Vol 30 (1), pp48-75.

ROSE, G (1997) Situating Knowledges: Reflexivities, Positionality and Other Tactics. *Progress in Human Geography*. Vol 21 (3), pp 305-320.

SALTMAN, K (2018). The Cultural Politics of Education. IN: *The Politics of Education: A Critical Introduction*, New York: Routledge. pp1-11.

Scottish Government. *Scottish Government Language Plan 2016-2021* [online]. Available from: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-gaelic-language-plan-2016-2021/pages/4/> (Accessed on: 17/02/2020).

SMITH-CHRISTMAS, C. & ARMSTRONG, T.C (2014) Complementary Reversing Language Shift Strategies in Education: The Importance of Adult Heritage Learners of Threatened Minority Languages. *Current Issues in Language Planning*. Vol 15(3), pp312–326.

TAYLOR, C (1995) Politics of Recognition. IN: *Philosophical Arguments*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. pp225-256.

YANOW, D (2014) Thinking Interpretively. IN: YANOW, D. & SCHWARTZ-SHEA, P. (Ed(s)) *Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences*, New York: Routledge. pp5-26.