



Teacher's Perspectives on the Representation of Children with Special Educational Needs in Irish-Medium Contexts

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Declaration

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Abstract

This research study explores teacher's perspectives on the level of representation of children with special educational needs (SEN) in Irish-medium schools. In recent years, there has been a significant rise in demand for Irish-medium education. (Gaeloideachas, 2020). An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) reported that there were 50,000+ children and young people enrolled in Irish-medium education in 2010. According to Gaeloideachas.ie (2020), the percentage of pupils attending Gaelscoileanna in the Republic of Ireland reached a record level in the academic year 2018/2019. In the context of these statistics, the researcher posed the following question: if there are 50,000+ children being educated through the medium of Irish, what is the level of representation of children with SEN within this figure? This research study investigates, through the eyes of primary Irish-medium teachers, the level to which children with SEN are represented in Gaelscoileanna. Are they under-represented, equally represented, or over-represented? Additionally, this study questions what the level of representation means for the pupils, the teachers, the school, and the parents of children with SEN.

A qualitative approach was taken for this research in which eight primary Irish-medium teachers were interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured and were conducted through the language of instruction in the school, Gaeilge. This approach allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding and insight into the experiences and perspectives of teachers regarding the level of representation of children with SEN in an Irish-medium school.

The need for research in this area grows as the demand for Irish-medium education increases, respectively. In reviewing the relevant literature pertinent to this area, the researcher found that there were some contrasting viewpoints in relation to the suitability of Irish-medium

education for children with SEN. These contrasting viewpoints stand as rationale for the researcher to conduct further research in this area. The researcher believes that these contrasting viewpoints play a fundamental role in the influence on the current level of representation of children with SEN in Gaelscoileanna. The findings in Chapter Four echo the contrasting viewpoints discussed in review of literature as many of the participants held similar views. These findings have helped the researcher gain an insight into the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This dissertation will investigate the perspectives of Irish-medium teachers on the level of representation of children with special educational needs (SEN) in Irish-medium schools.

This investigation seeks to ascertain Irish-medium teacher's attitudes on the general level of representation of children with SEN in Gaelscoileanna: are they under-represented, equally represented, or over-represented? What does the level of representation mean for the teachers, the pupils, the school, and the parents of children with SEN?

In recent years, there has been a rise in demand for Gaelscoileanna and Scoileanna Lán-Ghaeilge. (Gaeloideachas, 2020). Currently, there are 50,000+ children and young people enrolled in Irish-medium education in Ireland. (COGG, 2010). Evidence suggests that approximately 20% of children will experience learning difficulties at some point during their time in school. (COGG, 2010). The researcher poses a question based on the statistics provided by COGG (2010): if there are 50,000+ children who are enrolled in Irish-medium education, what is the percentage or level of representation of children with SEN within this figure? This research study aims to delve deeper into this area and explore Irish-medium teachers' perspectives on the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools. The need for research in this area is growing as the demand for Irish-medium education grows, respectively. Teachers, parents, and professional support services have called for a deeper understanding, for greater information, and for stronger guidelines of instruction for special educational needs and bilingualism, immersion. Educators and parents have called for an increase in other essential provisions such as assessment and resources. (COGG, 2010).

Through this study, the researcher hopes to open the conversation about SEN in Irish-medium education. The researcher believes that the most effective way to gain an insight into this area

is through the eyes of those who are within the environment everyday: Irish-medium teachers. Through this lens, this study hopes to answer important questions, such as:

- What is the general level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools? Are there reasons for this?
- Are Irish-medium schools the most suitable medium of education for children with SEN?
- What are the changes that can be made/interventions that can be taken to ensure a meaningful education for children with SEN in Irish-medium schools?
- Is there anything that Irish-medium schools can do to entice a larger cohort of children with SEN?

Description of Chapters

Chapter one of this study outlines the research question, the context of this study and the rationale for this study.

Chapter two of this study reviews the relevant literature in this field and reflects on the rationale for this study once again.

Chapter three outlines the methodology which was used in data collection. The researcher outlines the reasons for choosing the method of data collection and discusses the various considerations of this study.

Chapter four of this study presents the findings of this study and analyses the findings in detail.

Chapter five concludes the study. This chapter will summarise the findings outlined in chapter four and suggest recommendations for this area and future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review will provide insights into a wide range of studies, arguments, and opinions on the education of children with special educational needs in Irish-Medium immersion contexts. Through this, the literature review aims to show a variety of perspectives on the general representation of children with Special Educational Needs in immersion education on a national level and it will include perspectives from European and Canadian contexts. The researcher has organised the review of the literature into three sections. In the first two sections, the Irish educational context and immersion education are briefly discussed as the researcher suggests that they are necessary to lay the foundations of this review. The researcher wishes, through the first two sections, to explore what informs our perspectives and understanding of the representation of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Irish-medium contexts. The third section will discuss the prevalence and representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium contexts. It is hoped that this discussion might bring greater clarity to the precise level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools and teachers' perspectives on this matter.

Irish Educational Context

Primary Irish-medium education outside of Gaeltacht areas is a sector which has experienced significant expansion in Ireland, with figures of Scoileanna Lán-Ghaeilge outside of these regions increasing by over 900% between 1977 and 2007. (Gaelscoileanna Teo, 2007). According to Gaeloideachas.ie (2020), the number of pupils receiving primary education through Irish in the Republic of Ireland has reached a record level in the academic year 2018/2019. There has been a steady rise in the percentage of primary school children who are being taught through Irish from 6.4 per cent in 2000 to 8.1 per cent in 2018/2019. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provide statistics which show that approximately one in twelve primary school children are attending Irish-medium schools. (as cited from

Gaeloideachas.ie, 2020). Statistics demonstrate that in 2020, there are 150 Irish-medium schools located in the Republic of Ireland in which 37,838 primary school students are enrolled. (Gaeloideachas.ie, 2020). As previously noted, this means that there are approximately 50,000+ children attending Irish-medium schools in Ireland, including preschools, primary and post-primary schools in the Gaeltacht, and Gaelscoileanna in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. (COGG, 2010). In terms of special educational needs across the country, there are two categories in which they can be divided: within Gaeltacht areas, and Gaelscoileanna in the Republic of Ireland.

Three levels of special educational needs were identified in Gaeltacht areas and Irish-Medium education in the Republic of Ireland: Mild General Learning Disability, Specific Learning Difficulty, and Borderline General Learning Disability. (Mac Donnacha, 2005; Nic Gabhann, 2008. As cited from COGG, 2010)

The Education Act of 1998 (Government of Ireland) supports the provision of education for everyone, including students with special educational needs. This act also seeks to assist the development of bilingualism in Ireland. Ní Chinnéide poses a viewpoint that suggests that there may be some conflict between total-immersion education and the fulfillment of potential for children with special needs. Ní Chinnéide questions whether these two objectives can work together and whether the development of a bilingual society can hinder the development of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). There are many contrasting viewpoints on this topic which presents the need for further research in this area.

Immersion Education

Immersion education, according to Ní Chinnéide (2015), is one aspect of the ‘bilingual’ education continuum, whereby the learner is immersed into the target language and taught through it. Barrett et al. (2020) describe immersion education as education through which the

medium of instruction is the student's second language. Immersion education originated in Montreal, Canada, and European countries such as Spain, Finland, Scotland, Ireland, Switzerland have adopted a similar approach. (Barrett et al., 2020; Ní Chiaruáin, 2009). Jim Cummins is a highly influential figure in the context of immersion education. Cummins (2000) states that bilingual languages and literacies are interdependent, and therefore, the learning of two languages is positively beneficial for learners. (as cited from Ní Chinnéide, 2015., p164). According to Cummins, the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) describes the bilingual construct in the brain. (Cummins, 1980., as cited from Barrett, 2016). Through the model of common underlying proficiency, it is suggested that learning and cognitive skills can be transferred from language to language. Simply, when children develop literacy skills in Irish, for example, they are not solely learning to read and write in that particular language. Instead, they are developing a common underlying proficiency that gives them the ability to transfer the learned literacy skills and strategies to other languages. (Cummins, 1980., Ní Chinnéide, 2015). Consistent outcomes from international reviews on immersion education display positive results regarding language transference, second language learning, and increased curricular attainments. (De Courcy, 2002; Johnstone 2002; as cited from Barrett et al., 2020). According to Cummins (1998), there have been consistent findings to report that early immersion programs used across Canada have provided pupils with fluency and literacy in French, with no evident affect on their English academic skills. Similarly, Rhys and Thomas (2013) found that bilingual education in Wales did not have a negative effect on L1 English speakers' English skills. In fact, they reported that L1 English bilinguals performed equally as well as their monolingual peers regarding English literacy skills.

In the context of Ireland, Gaelscoileanna oversee the provision of immersion education, known as Tumoideachas. As previously discussed, Irish-medium education, which adopts immersion education, has grown significantly in recent years and is available from preschool

through to second level. (Ó Muirheartaigh & Hickey, 2008., as cited from Ní Chiaruáin, 2009). According to Shiel et al. (2011), the term *immersion education* is an appropriate term – rather than bilingual - for the both types of schools (Scoileanna Gaeltachta agus Scoileanna Lán-Ghaeilge nó Gaelscoileanna). Shiel et al. believe that this term is more appropriate due to the decline in native Irish speakers and the increase in English as the majority language in traditional native-speaking areas such as Gaeltacht regions. (Barrett et al., 2020).

International research on immersion education for students with SEN highlights the cognitive, social, and cultural benefits which can be attained. (Cummins, 2000., as cited from Ní Chinnéide, 2015). Contrastingly, there are studies which highlight those who disagree with the suitability of the education of children with SEN in Irish-medium contexts. (Andrews, 2019). The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS, 2007) believe that each child has varying needs that require consideration when choosing the form of education for children with SEN. (As cited from Andrews, 2019). However, NEPS (2007) reported that it should not be assumed that children with SEN would benefit more from English-medium education. (Andrews, 2019) (Cummins (2001) maintain that immersion education is a route which is not best suited for all children, but that neither are monolingual programmes. (Barrett, 2016). Baker (2001) cites examples of parents of ‘bilingual’ children with learning difficulties being advised by professionals to educate their children in a monolingual system. (Ní Chinnéide, 2015). Furthermore, Ní Bhaoill and Ó Duibhir (2004) cite examples of parents of children with reading difficulties who have been advised to withdraw their children from Irish-medium immersion education systems. (Ní Chinnéide, 2015).

Conversely, in her 2016 study, Barrett reported that sixty percent of the respondents believed that students with SEN should not transfer to English-medium education. However, the other forty percent believed that the need to transfer would depend on the specific needs of the pupil with some respondents making specific reference to children with language difficulties.

These respondents perceived a need to transfer to English-medium education due to arising challenges from language difficulties such as: children failing to express themselves and to acquire vocabulary. (Barrett, 2016) Cummins (2000) contends that those who believe that students with SEN should be withdrawn from immersion education believe in a Separate Underlying Proficiency as opposed to Cummins' suggestion of a CUP. (Ní Chinnéide, 2015). Whereas Barrett's (2016) study also found that Irish-medium schools were thought by 92.2% of the respondents to benefit pupils with SEN. Respondents perceived that immersion education was not a 'hindrance' to pupils and that there were benefits such as helping pupils to attain proficiency in Irish which would be advantageous in the progression to post-primary education. (Barrett, 2016., p.20). It is evident that there are many differing viewpoints on this topic. These contrasting viewpoints stand as rationale for the researcher to conduct further research on the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools.

The term Specific Learning Difficulty (SLD) is an umbrella term which comprises a number of difficulties, including reading difficulties related to dyslexia. According to Barrett et al., SLDs are likely to be found as the most common types of SEN in mainstream schools, including immersion education contexts. (Barrett et al., 2020). Researchers contend that if adequately supported, children with dyslexia are not at a disadvantage in immersion contexts. (Cummins, 1984; Peer & Reid, 2000; as cited from Ní Chinnéide, 2015). This stands as another viewpoint in favour of children with SEN being educated in Irish-Medium schools. It can be supposed that the provision of adequate support can be applied to most contexts of children with SEN in order to ensure they are not at a disadvantage. Researchers argue that we must eliminate the 'push-off' culture in immersion education in which children who are diagnosed with various needs and difficulties are encouraged to attend English-medium education. (Baker & Hornberger, 2001., as cited from Ní Chinnéide, 2015). Many researchers, some of whom believe immersion education and provision for SEN children to

be mutually exclusive, believe that this has serious consequences for such students and for society. (Baker & Hornberger, 2001). These consequences regarding the levels of inclusion and exclusion in our society are sensitive and topical issues. It is evident from the review of literature on this topic that there are many differing views among researchers, educators, and parents. In sum, there is substantial research and arguments made for and against the suitability of immersion education for children with SEN. These contrasting arguments provide the researcher with the rationale to explore the relative level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-Medium contexts.

Prevalence and Representation of Children with SEN in Immersion Education

Many parents are motivated to send their child to an Irish-Medium school to learn through Irish rather than English. Some parents report motivations such as a personal appreciation for the Irish language, the emphasis on the community which surrounds Gaelscoileanna ('muintearas'), and other cultural reasons. Nic Aindriú et al. (2020) say that in some instances, parents are aware that their child has a diagnosis of SEN before they chose to send their child to immersion education. In other instances, the child is diagnosed with SEN whilst attending the school. In some countries, parents may have no option but to send their child to a school where they will be immersed in a new language as their home or native language is not the language of instruction in the school. (Jegathessan, 2011; Kay-Raining Bird et al., 2012; Kremer-Sadlik, 2005., as cited from Nic Aindriú et al., 2020). Researchers report that parents of children with SEN are often advised not to educate their children through immersion education and have been recommended that only the majority language of the community should be used with their child. (Kremer-Sadlik, 2005; Yu, 2013, 2016., as cited from Nic Aindriú et al., 2020). Nic Aindriú et al. (2020) report that this advice is given by educational professionals that are of the opinion that immersion education through the child's second language can confuse a child with difficulties with language and/or communication,

burden them further, and hinder their rate of development of language. It is argued that such negative opinions have caused anxiety and fear among parents of children with SEN regarding the suitability of immersion education. (Nic Aindriú et al., 2020).

In the Republic of Ireland, there are two known studies which used quantitative research to ascertain the prevalence of SEN in immersion schools - Barrett, 2016; Nic Gabhann, 2008. (Andrews, 2019; Nic Aindriú et al., 2020). In her study completed by 63 (47.7%) Irish-medium primary schools, Nic Gabhann (2008) found an overall prevalence rate of 7.9% for children with low-incidence SEN. Andrews (2019) and Nic Aindriú et al. (2020) report that Barrett's (2016) study failed to provide an overall prevalence rate of SEN for comparison. Ní Chinnéide (2009) established the sole study in this area in the context of Northern Ireland. (Andrews, 2019). By use of a quantitative research, Ní Chinnéide found that 17% of children in primary immersion schools in Northern Ireland were recorded as having SEN. Nic Aindriú et al. (2020) present a comparison of the SEN prevalence rates in Irish-Medium schools and all primary schools in the Republic of Ireland. The results of their study are in support of the studies of Nic Gabhann (2008) and Ní Chinnéide (2009). In their comparison of SEN prevalence rates, Nic Aindriú et al. (2020) note that, overall, there is a lower rate of children with SEN attending Irish-Medium schools compared to English-Medium schools. Andrews' (2019) study suggests the opposite; that there has been an increase in the overall prevalence of children with SEN attending Irish-Medium schools. Again, such contrasting views and results provide a motive for the researcher to explore the topic of representation of children with SEN in Gaelscoileanna further.

Andrews' (2019) study presents an interesting report on the number of pupils with SEN who have transferred from Irish-Medium schools. In the study, schools were asked how many pupils with SEN, if any, had transferred from Irish-Medium education between 2014 and 2017 and it was found that 121 pupils had transferred. The results showed that 24.13% of the

schools had pupils transfer to other Irish-Medium mainstream schools, and 75.86% of the schools reported transference of pupils to English-Medium mainstream schools. The remainder of schools reported that pupils had transferred to English-Medium special schools or a special class within an English-Medium school. Andrews (2019) reported that no schools had pupils who transferred to a special class in an Irish-Medium school. The figures in Andrews' study support similar results found by Ní Thuairisig and Ó Duibhir in 2016. (Andrews, 2019). Schools in these studies were asked what the primary reasons for these pupil transfers were. The main reasons reported by the schools included parent anxiety or worry for the child, the child struggling with learning through Irish, and recommendations from professionals such as: educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, and occupational therapists. Further responses reported transference based on advice from the school principal or class teacher, the school being unable to meet the needs of the child, and lack of understanding of parents on SEN and Irish-Medium education. (Andrews, 2019). What do the results of Andrews' (2019) study mean for the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-Medium schools?

Conclusion

This literature review has found many differing opinions on children with SEN attending Irish-Medium schools. These differing opinions have covered a wide variety of bases, such as the suitability of education through the medium of Irish for children with SEN, its advantages and disadvantages, the theory of CUP verse SUP, and so on. Studies such as Andrews' (2019), Nic Aindriú's (2020), and Barrett (2016) found contrasts in the beliefs of parents, professionals, and educators on whether children with SEN should remain in Irish-Medium schools or be withdrawn, whereas Ní Chinnéide (2015) and Cummins (2000) highlight the benefits of immersion education for children with SEN. This literature review has examined the findings of studies on the prevalence of children with SEN in Irish-Medium education

compared to English-Medium education (Andrews, 2019; Nic Gabhann, 2008; Ní Chinnéide, 2009; Nic Aindriú, 2020). Again, these findings were varied. Nic Aindriú (2020) reporting lower rates of children with SEN attending Irish-Medium schools in comparison to English-Medium schools, whereas Andrews (2019) reported an overall increase. The rationale for this research is reinforced by the varying opinions and beliefs discovered in the literature review across the board. It is unclear whether children with SEN are under-represented, equally represented, or overrepresented in Irish-Medium education alongside their fellow peers. Further research is needed for this topic. The researcher hopes to discover the current perspectives of teachers on the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-Medium contexts in 2021.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research design for this study which aims to investigate teacher's perspectives on the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-Medium schools. This chapter discusses the ethical considerations and positionality of the study. This chapter will outline how the data was gathered, analysed, and stored. It was decided to take a qualitative approach to this study. This approach allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding and insight into the experiences and perspectives of teacher's regarding the level of representation of children with SEN in an Irish-Medium school. The suitability of this methodological approach is discussed in this chapter.

Research Design

According to Stake (2010), qualitative research is the most suitable approach to research when the aim of the study is to discuss a phenomenon through reliance on one's experience in a given situation. Stake believes that qualitative research is interpretive, experience based, situational and personalistic. (2010) Through this, qualitative research works to understand individual perceptions and points of view. Therefore, the researcher believes this method is the most appropriate choice.

This research will take place through the method of structured interviews. Dawson (2009) describes qualitative research as one which explores attitudes, behaviour, and experiences through methods such as interviews. Qualitative research, according to Dawson, "*attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants. As it is attitudes, behaviour and experiences which are important, fewer people take part in the research, but the contact with these people tends to last a lot longer.*" (2009., p.14). To this effect, it was decided that interviews would gather rich, insightful data to support this research study.

This study will take a phenomenological approach. Denscombe (2010) describes phenomenology as an approach which focuses on how life is experienced. As noted by Todres and Holloway (2006), through the use of a phenomenological approach, this will allow the participants to be understood from inside their subjective experiences. (As cited from Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015). Phenomenological approaches try to provide a description of how things are experienced, first-hand, by those involved. Cohen, Mannion, and Morrison view phenomenology, in its broadest sense, as “*a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value; and one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality.*” (2007., p.22). This research study aims to explore the first-hand experiences, and perspectives of Irish-Medium teachers of the level of representation of children with SEN attending Irish-Medium schools.

Data Collection

Structured interviews were conducted for this study. According to Kvale (1996: 14), an interview is an “*interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data.*” (As cited from Cohen, et al., 2007). The interview is a remarkable tool for data collection as it allows participants to express their views and interpretations of the world in which they live, from their own point of view. The direct interaction within interviews gives this method its advantages and disadvantages as a research tool. (Borg, 1963., as cited from Cohen, et al., 2007). The main advantage, for example, is that interviews allow for greater depth and insight than other methods of data collection. Additionally, King, Harrocks, & Brooks (2018) recognise that interviews are useful in dealing with complicated topics, particularly research topics that are based on perspectives, experiences, and emotion. However, Cohen, Mannion, & Morrison (2007) note that the

researcher must be aware of the few pitfalls of using interviews. Interviews take greater time to conduct and they may be inconvenient for respondents.

The interviews consisted of eight questions and lasted no longer than 30 minutes. The researcher uncovered several general themes while conducting review of literature for this study. The interview questions have been composed in accordance with these themes. These questions aimed to respond to and expand on the themes which emerged during the literature review process. The researcher hoped, that by using mostly open-ended questions, this would allow for topics to be explored openly and freely. The interviews were carried out via the online platform, Zoom. Face to face interviews with the participants in a school setting were initially planned. However, due to the global pandemic COVID-19 and restrictions that were in place at the time of study, face to face interviews were not possible.

There were some advantages and disadvantages to conducting interviews online. One of the primary challenges in conducting data collection through the method of interviews is getting participants to agree to take part in the first instance, along with organising a suitable time and place. However, the growth in technology usage and its level of accessibility in recent years means that majority of people have access to a laptop, phone, or tablet to participate in a call, and furthermore, it is easier for one to organise an interview at a time which suits both parties. The researcher considered the possible disadvantages of collecting data by virtual interview. The following points were considered: the dependency on a strong internet connection, the potential lack of visual cues to encourage the interviewee to elaborate on or clarify their responses, the faster pace and detachedness of virtual interviews potential to result in short answers, and the possibility of participants becoming distracted by their surroundings at home. (Glogowska, Young, and Lockyer, 2010).

These considerations were noted prior to conducting the interviews and the researcher sought to implement simple strategies to hinder such issues arising. For example, sufficient time was given to the participant to answer each question thoughtfully. The researcher endeavoured to monitor the pace of the interviews and allow space between each question where the participant could add to or clarify their responses. Time was given at the end of each interview for the participant to add any final contributions. Throughout the interviews, the researcher checked that their microphone was working effectively, their internet connection was strong, and that they were speaking clearly to avoid any misunderstandings.

Pilot Study and Participation

A pilot study was carried prior to the commencement of the interviews. The interview questions were composed, considered, and amended. The researcher held a trial interview with a person not involved in the research sample to allow for practice with the use of the online platform and recording. The researcher wished to be completely comfortable with the sound quality and signal strength in the setting in which the interviews would be carried out. The pilot study was found to be extremely useful to the researcher in preparation for data collection.

The researcher contacted the school principal to ask for permission to invite the teachers to participate in this research study. The researcher composed a cover letter for the consent form briefly explaining the research question and aim of the study in informal language. This cover letter and the consent form set out the requirements and rights of the participants. This was passed on to the staff of the school as an invitation to participate in the study. The invitation was open to class teachers and Special Education Teachers in the school. The teachers were asked to read and complete the consent form prior to the interview and the interviews were arranged via email.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method which allows the researcher to identify, analyse, and report patterns or themes within the data. The researcher used the following six phase guide as a framework, as seen in figure 1:

Figure 1:

Phase 1	Familiarizing yourself with the data	Transcribing and reading the data.
Phase 2	Generating initial codes	Begin coding the data set systematically. Relate the data to each new code.
Phase 3	Searching for themes	Collate the codes into potential themes and gather data for each emerging theme.
Phase 4	Reviewing themes	Consider and review the themes. Create a thematic map for analysis.
Phase 5	Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme.
Phase 6	Producing the report	Produce a discussion of analysis, select appropriate quotes, relate back to the research question.

(Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Positionality

It is important to note that aspects of this research study are influenced by the positionality of the researcher. The rationale for this study arose from the researcher's personal interest in the Irish language and Gaeloideachas, and personal motivation to discover more about the topic of SEN in Irish-Medium contexts. The researcher has built a rapport with the staff of the school through working with them on a temporary basis as a student teacher. This stood as a welcome advantage for the researcher in her ability to gather a research sample. However, the researcher was mindful of her new role in the eyes of the staff and was careful to avoid any bias. As McGinn stated, "*whether close or distant, the relationship with the researcher affects what participants say.*" (2012., p.769). The researcher assured the participants of their anonymity in anticipation of some caution and level of disclosure in the interviews. The researcher wishes to allow the findings to speak for themselves and give voice to the teachers who volunteered to share their experiences.

Limitations

The researcher acknowledges the following limitations to this study. There were eight respondents who participated in this study within one school, in one county. This limited sample size is recognised as this small-scale of data may not necessarily reflect the perspectives of all Irish-Medium teachers. If more participants could have been interviewed, the data collection would have provided a deeper insight into teacher's perspectives of the level of representation of children with SEN in Gaelscoileanna. However, the researcher is confident that the findings of this study will represent the experiences and perspectives of those teachers who took part in the research adequately and appropriately. The disadvantages of conducting interviews via the online platform, Zoom, were previously highlighted. The positionality of the researcher could challenge the objectivity of the process, unless managed

with due care and attention. However, the researcher was careful to ensure that this bias did not hinder the interviewees in any way, through strategic planning and reflection.

Ethical Considerations

Social research necessitates the obtainment of consent and cooperation of the people who are to assist in the research. Informed consent advocates for the participant's right to freedom and self-determination. Thus, informed consent protects and respects the rights of the participant as they have the right to withdraw or refuse to take part. (Cohen, et al., 2007). This research study has been approved under the ethical guidelines of Marino Institute of Education in 2020. This research study used informed consent when organising a research sample. An informed consent form, highlighting the voluntary nature of participation and the rights of the participant, was completed by each participant prior to interview. The interviewees provided informed consent for the audio of the interview to be recorded electronically. This audio will not leave the possession of the researcher. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher alone and will not be submitted to the written findings of this research or any third party. Throughout the recording and transcription process, each participant was labelled with a pseudonym to protect their anonymity. The pseudonyms for each participant are as follows: P1, P2, P3, and so on. Neither the school nor the teachers will be identified by name in this research study.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the researcher's rationale for the chosen research design and methodology. The researcher described her rationale for the chosen research methodology and showed its suitability and appropriateness for this research study. The researcher has outlined the data collection procedure from securing a research sample, to providing the participants with informed consent, to the organising of and conducting of online interviews.

The positionality of the researcher has been thoroughly considered and noted in this chapter. The limitations of this study are few, yet worthy of recognition. The following chapter will discuss the findings of this study.

Chapter Four: Presentation of Findings and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings which have emerged from the interviews which sought to capture teachers' perspectives of the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools. The findings of this research will be presented under the following three themes: The Decision of Parents, Beliefs of Teachers, and Strategies and Practice. These themes will incorporate their own sub-themes. The researcher aims, through the analysis and discussion of the findings, to make a conclusion about the level to which children with SEN are represented in Irish-medium schools and propose a reason for this based on the findings. This chapter will examine the findings in relation to the relevant literature presented in chapter two, alongside some critical thought as to *why* teachers hold certain perspectives and beliefs.

Decision of Parents

The researcher believes that to begin to analyse teachers' perspectives of the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools, it is important to bring this topic back to its starting point. The attendance or non-attendance of such children is ultimately decided by the parents. The researcher proposes that decision of parents to send, or not to send, their children to Irish-medium schools are most likely informed by some of the following:

- A more sentimental, or less critical view of Gaeloideachas vis-a-vis children with additional needs.
- An underlying, prevailing 'understanding' or view in society about the suitability of such schools for children with some special needs.
- The influence of professional advice.

- Proximity and access.
- Continuity within the family.

What Informs Parents' Decisions

As discovered from the review of literature and the collection of data, it is evident that the decisions of parents are mostly informed by one or more of the above elements.

It seems that many parents wish to send their children to Irish-medium schools because of the sentimental view they hold towards the Irish language. Often from an Irish-speaking and/or Irish-language schooling background, it appears that some parents wish to carry on this legacy for their family and educate their children through Irish. The strong community within Irish-medium schools is an additional factor which entices parents to choose to send their child there. Additionally, continuity within families often plays a key role in parents decision making. i.e., families with more than one child who wish to send all siblings to the same school.

Access and proximity are a strong factor in the decision of parents as to which school they send their child to. For some, the most accessible and logical option may be to send their child to the local Gaelscoil. This may mean that the parents do not practice Irish at home and sometimes this may make education through Irish challenging for some children, particularly those with SEN. Within the interviews, teachers noted that the absence of Irish at home can present problems for children with SEN. This idea will be discussed further at a later stage.

It emerged from the interviews that many teachers believed that there is an underlying 'understanding' in society that Irish-medium schools are not the most suitable medium of

education for children with SEN. It is suggested by the researcher that this understanding has an influence on the decision of parents, particularly when the parents are aware that their child has a Special Education Need from the outset. When asked if they thought there was an understanding that children with SEN are in the best setting in an English-medium school, teachers noted the following:

(P3) Ceapaim sin an tuiscint atá ann agus an radharc atá ag daoine agus go bpointe, aontaím leo. Sin an cultúr atá ann, sin an tuiscint. Sin an tuiscint atá ann gur scoileanna Béarla an áit is fearr dóibh agus b'fhéidir é, ach ceapaim gur sin mar gheall ar na scoileanna iad féin, na scoileanna aonair, agus ní mar gheall ar Gaelscoileanna go ginearálta nach áit maith iad do dhaltaí le Riachtanais Speisialta.

(P4) Ceapann daoine “cén fáth go bhfuil an páiste sin ag freastal ar Gaelscoil?” agus uaireanta, bhuel, bíonn an ceart acu, ach den chuid is mó sé an áit is fearr don pháiste ná an áit ina bhfuil siad sona sásta. Agus, foghlaimeoidh siad. Cinnte, tá ‘tuiscint’ ann ach, feicimid anois, tá cúpla páiste anseo le riachtanas orthu agus tá siad sona sásta agus tá ag éirí go han-mhaith leo anseo. Beidh deacrachtaí ag páistí in áit éigin, tabhair seans dóibh an tairbhe a bhaint as an dhátheangachas.

(P5) Tá. Fiú, i scoileanna Gaeilge tá múinteoirí ann agus pléimid é. Tá argóint ann. “An bhfuil dúshlán sa bhreis i gceist?” Braitheann sé ar an scoil, go hiomlán, tá scoileanna le O.S [tacaíocht Oideachas Speisialta] ana-mhaith, agus tá scoileanna atá níos fearr fós.

This understanding challenges NEPS (2007) belief that it should not be assumed that children with SEN would benefit more from English-medium education. (Andrews, 2019).

Another potential significant influence on the decision of parents is the advice that is often given by professional psychologists and others in the field about the suitability of Irish-medium education for a child presenting a Special Educational Need.

Having listed the proposed elements which may inform the decision of parents to send, or not to send, their child to a Gaelscoil, it may be helpful in terms of our analysis to note that these

parents are divided into two cohorts. These cohorts come from the research of Nic Aindriú et al. (2020) as discussed in the review of literature. Firstly, there are parents who are making the decision to send, or not to send, their child to an all-Irish school who are not yet aware of their child's potential additional need(s). Secondly, there are parents who are aware of their child's Special Educational Need(s), possibly from birth. The researcher believes that the two cohorts may have different effects on the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools. Firstly, there is the cohort of parents who are aware of their child's Special Educational Need and make an informed decision to send their child to an Irish-medium school. This cohort may affect the level of representation in a positive way, by sending their child to an Irish-medium school – therefore, increasing the level of representation of children with SEN. However, this cohort of parents can decide the opposite, causing a negative effect on the level of representation. The second cohort of parents - who are not yet aware of their child's additional need(s) – may decide to send their child to an Irish-medium school and upon diagnosis or receipt of professional advice, may decide to withdraw their child. (This is in line with Barrett's study, (2016) and Cummins (2000) theory of SUP). This, therefore, can reduce the level of representation.

Beliefs of Teachers

This theme aims to analyse the findings of the interviews on teachers' beliefs and perspectives of children with SEN attending Gaelscoileanna. This theme will discuss how the present level attendance, in the eyes of the teachers, affects the extent to which adequate support can be provided for these children, in turn influencing the level of representation. When asked about whether they believed, in relation to the Department of Education policies

on Gaeloideachas, if there is sufficient space allocated to the particular needs of children with SEN in Gaelscoileanna, there were some contrasting views among the teachers. P4 stated:

Ceapaim go bhfuil an t-ádh linn anseo tá go leor am [support hours allocated] ag na páistí le riachtanais orthu, ceapaim níos mó ná mar a bheadh i scoil Béarla agus tá i bhfad níos mó achmhainní againn anseo, ó thaobh múinteoirí OS [SET teachers] agus CRSanna [SNAs] is gach rud.

P4 clarified that, in their opinion, this was the case in all Gaelscoileanna.

Contrastingly, P1 and P2 felt that the opposite was true:

(P1) Tá muidne taobh thiar de scoileanna Béarla ó thaobh ar bheith ar eolas faoi conas is féidir le cabhrú le duine faoi leith agus na hacmhainní a bheith ar fáil dúinn.

(P2) Níl a dhóthain spás ar fáil do pháistí atá ag lorg cabhrach nó atá chun a bheith ag úsáid seirbhísí O.S. Ón méid atá feicthe agamsa, an fhadhb atá ann is dócha ná, fiú má tá daoine ag rá go bhfuil spásanna ann, ach de ghnáth má tá páistí ag lorg seirbhísí O.S, leanann siad i dtreo an Bhéarla. Agus b'fhéidir nach mothaíonn siad chomh-muiníneach as na seirbhísí i nGaelscoileanna agus dá bharr sin, níl an méid úsáid ann. I mo thuairim, dá mbeadh níos mó ann, bheadh muid ag úsáid iad.

It was clear from the interviews that the majority of the teachers in this piece of research held the same view as P1 and P2 about the lack time and space given to children with SEN. From the findings, the researcher sees that there seems to be an overall issue with the lack of human and physical resources available to them to assist children with SEN. Looking at P2's statement particularly, the researcher proposes that there is a domino effect in question here: if there were higher numbers of children with SEN attending Gaelscoileanna, the 'supply and demand' of resources would increase. Therefore, the more they are used and improved upon, the confidence of teachers and parents within the system would increase. As a result, this might potentially see an increase in the percentage of parents choosing to send and/or keep their child in an Irish-medium school, therefore causing an increase in the level of

representation. Achieving critical mass of pupils with SEN in Gaelscoileanna would appear to be an important indicator for success.

Dátheangachas

Despite the teachers' beliefs that there is an overall lack of resources and support made available to them to assist children with SEN, all interviewees were of the opinion that children with SEN attending Gaelscoileanna can obtain the well-established advantages of 'dátheangachas' (cognitive functioning, problem-solving abilities, and the capacity to learn additional languages). This view praises Cummins (1980) theory of CUP and similar theories presented by De Courcy (2002) and Johnstone (2002). (As cited from Barrett et al., 2020). However, not all teachers agreed that this was an easy or fulfilling task for children with SEN.

Throughout the data collection, most of the teachers challenged this underlying 'understanding' in society as discussed previously. An example of this is P5: when asked whether such advantages are accessible to children with SEN, P5 portrayed the situation in a different light – not as challenge for the child, but a benefit.

(P5) Tá, agus ní hiad sin na buntáiste uile. Tá níos mó daoine dátheangacha sa tír ná leis an t-aon teanga amháin. Dá bhrí sin, is dócha go bhfuil níos mó daoine le Riachtanais Speisialta/Riachtanais Breise atá dátheangach nó atá ag plé le dhá theanga ar rann laethúil, agus b'fhéidir gur sórt meon sa chuid seo den tír gur gcreidimid gur dúshlán sa bhreis atá muid ag cur ar an bpáiste, seachas buntáiste sa bhreis atá ag an bpáiste sin.

However, although P6 believed that such children can obtain the advantages of immersion education, they stated that this applies to children with SEN who do not have language difficulties. P6 explained that when a problem with language arises, the school often suggests that the parent enrol their child in an English-medium school. This coincides with the point discussed earlier by the researcher about the first cohort of parents and reflects the level of

representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools and contributes to the prevailing ‘view’ that Gaelscoileanna are not really suitable for children with special needs.

(P6) Tá. Mar ní bhaineann sé le teanga. Má bhaineann, agus an tuairim a bhíonn againne sa scoil ná, má tá an teanga ag cur i bád oideachas an pháiste, b’fhéidir go molfaimid scoil lán-Bhéarla. Ach muna í an teanga atá ag cur i bád ar an pháiste, ní dhéanfaidh sé aon difir díofa scileanna a fhoghlaim trí Bhéarla nó trí Ghaeilge.

Although this mirrors the level of representation of children of the first cohort of parents (i.e., those who sent their children to an Irish-medium school prior to a diagnosis of their child’s additional educational need(s)), it seems that P6 believes that this suggestion to withdraw the child from the Gaelscoil is made in the best interest of the child. The researcher suggests that P6, along with all teachers and all parents, wishes for each and every child to be able to reach their full potential. However, this may not always be possible for children with language difficulties. This is where a crucial decision must be made – can this child realise their full potential in learning through two languages when language learning is a challenge to them?

Strategies and Practice

This section aims to discuss the findings which relate to the teachers’ perspectives on the strategies and practice that are and/or can be put in place to support children with SEN who are attending Gaelscoileanna. This theme will be divided into two sections:

- strategies and practices of teachers, and
- what interventions teachers believe that parents can take.

Strategies and Practices of Teachers

When asked if there are particular steps that individual teachers can take to support children with SEN, a recurring theme emerged. Many of the interviewees noted that, in the case of

SEN in Irish-medium schools, teachers are required to learn ‘on their feet’. Many teachers reported their frustration of having to translate resources from English to Irish. However, the response that stood out the most was that majority of the teachers felt a general ‘uncertainty’ towards the best practice to implement to support children with SEN. P1 noted that this uncertainty reinforced their opinion that children with SEN (assuming a higher level of SEN) should attend a school that has ‘better experience’ with it.

(P1) Tá na múinteoirí atá anseo ana-mhaith, déanann siad a ndícheall. Ach níl an taithí acu, níl an stair acu gur féidir leo a rá, “níor oibrigh sé seo, ach ó mo thaithí oibreoidh X, Y, nó Z.”

The researcher proposes that P1 believes this is the case as a result of a low level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools. This low level has led to teachers lacking experience in this field, leaving them feeling under-confident and at a loss.

The researcher thinks that this feeling of uncertainty among teachers and staff of Irish-medium schools may make its way into the community, feeding the underlying understanding that Irish-medium schools are not the most suitable medium of education for children with SEN, therefore, reflecting a further drop in the level of attendance of such children.

Despite this view, many teachers provided suggestions for the things that *can* be done. P4 noted their opinion on the importance of giving the child opportunities to socialise with other children within the class. Additionally, P4 praised the positive effects of ability-grouping for maths and reading tasks for children with additional needs such as dyslexia and dyscalculia. P6 said that they overcame their dependency on professional psychologists for advice and information by enrolling themselves in various courses. The researcher was surprised by this participants’ positivity and enthusiasm towards taking extra courses and training.

(P6) Foghlaimíonn tú achan uile rud ó Google. Agus cúrsaí. Rinne mé an oiread sin cúrsaí ar pháiste le hard-riachtanais. Agus, tá sé iontach suimiúil agus is múinteoireacht iomlán difriúil é.

This raised some interesting questions for the researcher. If all Irish-medium teachers felt the same motivation and enthusiasm towards self-training, would that change the general outlook of teaching children with SEN in Gaelscoileanna? Would this affect the level of representation positively, as a result?

Strategies and Practices of Parents

The teachers were asked what interventions they thought parents could undertake to support their child with SEN as they go through education through the medium of Irish. Firstly, a majority of the teachers reported the importance of a collaborative relationship between the parents and the school and class teacher. Responses included recognising that there is a difficulty or a need there, keeping a strong communicative link between the home and the classroom, and giving the teacher and the school space to try new methods of support.

Some of the teachers noted the level of stress that the parents can often be under. P6 is an example of this:

(P6) I gcónaí le páistí le hard-riachtanais, tá an tuismitheoir faoi strus. Agus, tá sé dian. Tá sé dian ar an tuismitheoir, tá sé dian ar an phaiste, is ar an clann, go hiomlán.

Are the parents of children with SEN under such a level of pressure that they consider moving their child to an English-medium school to reduce their own high stress levels? This led the researcher to consider that this may be a cause for many cases of withdrawal of children with SEN from Irish-medium schools. This idea is highlighted in Andrews' study for the reasons for pupil withdrawal. (2019). This may also be a reason for lack of enrolment in the first instance, due to the parent's belief of Irish-medium education being an added stress factor.

Secondly, many of the interviewees expressed their view on the importance of Irish at home in scaffolding children with SEN attending Irish-medium schools. P5 noted the fundamental impact of giving a 'context' to the Irish language at home. P4 responded similarly, in saying that by parents speaking Irish to their child at home, not only does it expose them to further practice and improvement, but it provides the child with an understanding that the language is important and is not just for the purpose of school. The researcher thinks that these teachers have emphasised the importance of using Irish at home as they believe that to come from a background which does where Irish is not spoken would place the child at a further disadvantage. Contrastingly, P1 stated their belief that children with certain types of SEN (such as Autism and Down Syndrome) may be at a significant disadvantage in their attendance of Irish-medium schools. P1 suggested that schools, which can focus on the particular needs of the child rather than focusing on Irish and Gaeloideachas, are better suited to these children.

The researcher believes that P1 thinks this way because as the student-teacher ratio in special schools is better, children with particular kinds of SEN can learn key life skills that are going to benefit them later on in life. Additionally, the researcher suggests that P1 feels as though this is a better solution for children in this situation as the key skills that will be required of these children are going to be required and used through the medium of English.

Discussion

Having analysed and discussed the views of teachers towards the various strategies, interventions, and practices that can be implemented to support children with SEN within the home and the classroom, the researcher would like to explore what these findings mean for

the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium contexts. A majority of the participants stated their belief that learning through Irish is of no hindrance to *most* children with SEN. However, most of the teachers noted that in some cases of severe SEN, and particularly when there is a language difficulty, that Irish-medium schools are not the most appropriate place for these children. Additionally, as some of the teachers pointed out that given the percentage of children with SEN attending Gaelscoileanna is often so low, this creates further issues in providing adequate support for the children who *are* attending Gaelscoileanna. (i.e., low levels of resources, lack of experience to draw upon, and the domino effect, as discussed earlier). It is clear to the researcher that most of the participants believed that as the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools is low (due to a number of factors), that this makes it even more challenging to support those who are represented, causing the wheel to turn again. This, perhaps, only serves to reinforce contentions that may have little basis in science or in veracity.

If one accepts the premise that Irish-medium schools might be in a better position to offer a suitable and meaningful education to children with SEN by having a higher level of representation of such children, it would appear that the Irish-medium schools should consider actively encouraging greater numbers of SEN pupils. This, however, could be a difficult policy position for Irish-medium schools to adopt. Throughout the data collection process, it emerged that there was a reluctance on the part of schools to proactively seek to recruit children a higher cohort of children with SEN to Irish-medium schools. There are reasons put forward by schools for adopting this position. The researcher would suggest that this is something that needs to be explored separately by Irish-medium school management, in collaboration with the Department of Education.

As argued previously, the decision as to where children with SEN are educated fundamentally lies with parents as their human right. Within the context of this human right, it seems to the researcher that other issues need to be considered and weighed more seriously. For example, both parent and teacher confidence are key components in encouraging a higher representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter will conclude the research study through a summary of the findings of chapter four and presentation of recommendations for this issue and future research in this field.

Through the use of a qualitative approach, this research study sought to explore Irish-medium teachers' perspectives on the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium contexts. This study questioned the general level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools, and asked the following questions:

- are they under-represented,
- equally represented,
- or over-represented?

This research study sought to find possible reasons for this level of representation as a result.

Summary of Findings

To summarise the findings of this research, it is important to recall the aim of this research study. The researcher stated that she wished to give some insight, through the eyes of Irish-medium teachers, into the level to which children with SEN are represented in Irish-medium schools and propose a reason(s) for this based on the findings. That being said, in chapter four, the researcher suggested that it was important to note that parents play a key role in this field. The researcher acknowledges that parents are the fundamental decision-makers in where they choose to send their child to school. The suggestions made about what informs parents' decision to choose to/not to send their child to a Gaelscoil were in line with the research conducted by Andrews in 2019. The teachers who participated in this research study stated similar views those presented in Andrews' study. They are as follows:

There is a prevailing understanding in society that Irish-medium schools are not the most suitable medium of education for most children with SEN. The findings of this study suggest that there is a belief that this ‘understanding’ influences parents’ decision, especially if their child’s additional need(s) is identified. The researcher suggested that this underlying understanding potentially may cause a reduction in the level of children with SEN attending Irish-medium schools.

Furthermore, as discussed in the literature review, there is research to suggest that the advice of psychologists, and other professionals about the suitability of Irish-medium schools can influence parents’ decision on a) whether to send their child to a Gaelscoil b) if their child is in a Gaelscoil, whether they should be transferred to an English-medium school. (Nic Aindriú et al., 2020., Andrews, 2019). The findings of these studies collate with those of this research.

Majority of teachers who participated in this research study said that they felt there was an overall lack of resources available to assist children with SEN in Irish-medium schools. This led the researcher to suggest that there is a domino effect in play here: the low level of attendance of children with SEN presents a ‘critical mass’ issue regarding resources (both human and physical). The lack of resources effects teachers’ confidence in teaching children with SEN. This lack of confidence may be echoed within the community, therefore, creating a reduction in the level of representation of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools. This domino effect led the researcher to suggest that obtaining critical mass of children with SEN in Irish-medium schools is key.

Recommendations

The researcher has considered the points discussed above and thought about the possible steps that could be undertaken by schools and class teachers in Irish-medium contexts to increase the level of representation of children with SEN in these schools. Based on the findings, it seems to the researcher that obtaining critical mass of children with SEN in Irish-medium contexts is the primary step in alleviating some of the issues raised, i.e.

- Higher percentage of children with SEN attending Irish-medium school: More experience in teaching children with SEN = boost in teacher confidence.
- Higher demand for SEN resources (human and physical resources): potential increase in supply of resources = boost in teacher confidence.
- Higher level confidence levels among teachers = boost in parent confidence.
- Boost in parent confidence = potential increase in level of children with SEN attending/remaining in Irish-medium education.

The question to be considered now is: how are Irish-medium schools going to obtain this critical mass? Based on the findings, the researcher would suggest that Irish-medium schools need to actively encourage parents to enrol their child with SEN in their schools. Albeit, by creating a new policy which allows the schools to openly state on their website or school newsletter that their school can cater for the needs of all children and that children with SEN are welcome there.

Furthermore, the researcher suggests that the continued professional development (CPD) of Irish-medium teachers (if not all primary teachers) be highly encouraged and supported within schools. The researcher suggests that a conversation about funding from the Department of Education to support CPD is one worth having. A greater allocation to SEN training during teacher training is something which may be worth considering.

Conclusion

From the findings of this research sample, it is evident to the researcher that children with SEN are under-represented in Irish-medium schools. This research has shown us that this under-representation causes challenges for those with SEN who are attending Gaelscoileanna. However, as outlined above, there are several clear and concrete steps which could be taken to improve this situation.

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Appendix A

25/02/21

A Mhúinteoir,

Is mise Sarah Nic Gearailt agus is mac léinn mé sa dara bhliain ag déanamh an Máistreacht Ghairmiúil san Oideachas i Marino. Táim ag scríobh chugat chun iarraidh ort cúnamh a thabhairt dom le mo thráchtas a dhéanann imscrúdú ar 'Peirspictíochtaí an Mhúinteora ar Leibhéal Ionadaíocht Daltaí le Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachas i Scoileanna Lán-Ghaeilge.' Tá sé mar aidhm ag an staidéar taighde ná breathnú ar thuairimí agus ar peirspictíochtaí múinteoirí ar leibhéal ginearálta ionadaíochta daltaí le Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachas i nGaelscoileanna. Tá sé mar aidhm ag an taighde ná fháil amach an bhfuil ionadaíocht chothrom, tearc ionadaíocht, nó ró-ionadaíocht ar dhaltaí le Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachas i nGaelscoileanna i gcomparáid leis an leibhéal daltaí i scoileanna Lán-Bhéarla, agus na cúiseanna bhaineann le seo.

Déanfar an taighde trí agallaimh. Tabharfar na hagallaimh ar bhonn leath-struchtúrtha. Ba mhaith liom ceisteanna a chur ort maidir le do thaithí daltaí a bhfuil Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachas orthu a mhúineadh i gcomhthéacs meán-Ghaeilge. Ba chóir go mairfeadh an t-agallamh idir 20-30 nóiméad. Maidir leis na srianta reatha Covid-19, déanfar na hagallamh ar Zoom. Déanfaidh an taighdeoir an t-agallamh a thaifeadadh agus a thras-scríobh i ndiaidh. Tá sé seo chun críche bailiú sonraí a theastaíonn don thaighde. Beidh an fhaisnéis atá bailithe stóráilte ar ríomhaire faoi chosaint pasfhocal, i suíomh slán. Coinneofar gach rannpháirtí gan ainm. Níl aon oibleagáid ort páirt a ghlacadh sa taighde seo agus/nó gach ceist san agallamh a fhreagairt.

Tá súil agam go mbeidh tú sásta páirt a ghlacadh mar tá do chuid freagraí tábhachtach agus luachmhar don thaighde seo. Fanfaidh do rannpháirtíocht faoi rún daingean. Ní bheidh d'ainm ceangailte le haon sonraí a sholáthraíonn tú. Tá fáilte romhat do rannpháirtíocht sa taighde seo a tharraingt siar am ar bith, más mian leat. Tá na rioscaí a bhaineann le rannpháirtíocht sa staidéar íseal. Nuair a bheidh an staidéar críochnaithe, scriosfar na sonraí ar bhonn an sceidil a leagtar amach i sceideal coinneála sonraí na hInstitiúide. Más mian leat tuilleadh faisnéise a fháil maidir le cá fhad a choinneofar na sonraí, ná bíodh aon leisce ort teagmháil a dhéanamh liom go díreach. Níl aon rioscaí ná buntáistí díreacha ag baint le bheith rannpháirteach san agallamh cognaíoch. Iarrfar ort foirmeacha (thíos) a shíniú ag léiriú comhaontú chun páirt a ghlacadh sa staidéar.

Go raibh maith agat as do chuid ama a thógáil chun an litir seo a léamh. Tá an taighde seo á mhaoirsiú ag Tomás Ó Dúlaing.

Bhreithnigh coiste eitice Marino an staidéar seo ó pheirspictíocht eiticiúil. Má tá aon cheist nó imní ort faoi fhormheas eiticiúil nó faoi sheoladh an staidéir seo, déan teagmháil le do thoil le MERC@mie.ie

Is mise, le meas,

Sarah Nic Gearailt

Appendix B

Foirm Thoilithe

Teideal: Peirspictíochtaí an Mhúinteora ar Leibhéal Ionadaíocht Daltaí le Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachas i Scoileanna Lán-Ghaeilge

Cuspóir an Taighde: Is é cuspóir an taighde seo peirspictíochtaí múinteoirí ar leibhéal ionadaíocht daltaí le Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachas i Scoileanna Lán-Ghaeilge a fháil agus na cúiseanna le sin a scrúdú.

Riachtanas Rannpháirtíochta sa Taighde: Iarrfar ar rannpháirtithe an staidéir seo páirt a ghlacadh in agallaimh ar bhonn duine le duine (trí Zoom).

Rannpháirtíocht Dheonach: Tá baint dheonach leis an taighde seo agus tá sé de cheart ag rannpháirtithe tarraingt siar ag am ar bith.

Rúndacht: Fanfaidh gach faisnéis a bhaileofar sa staidéar seo faoi rún agus gan ainm. Ní thabharfar faisnéis do thríú páirtithe ar bith. Fuair an staidéar seo cead eiticiúil ó Institiúid Oideachais Marino.

Rannpháirtí - Líon isteach an méid seo a leanas le do thoil:

An dtuigeann tú an fhaisnéis a cuireadh ar fáil duit? Tá / Níl

An raibh deis agat ceisteanna a chur faoin staidéar seo? Tá / Níl

An bhfuair tú freagraí sásúla ar do chuid ceisteanna? Tá / Níl

An bhfuil tú sásta páirt a ghlacadh sa taighde seo? Tá / Níl

An dtoilíonn tú le sonraí a úsáid agus a thaifeadadh chun na gcríoch taighde a luaitear thuas? Tá / Níl

Leigh mé agus thuig mé an fhaisnéis san fhoirm seo. D'fhreagair an taighdeoir mo chuid ceisteanna agus tá cóip den fhoirm seo agam. Tá / Níl

Síniú an Rannpháirtí:

Dáta:

Síniú an Taighdeora:

Dáta:

Appendix C

1. Maidir le beartais an rialtais / an Roinn Oideachas ar Gaeloideachas, an síleann tú go ndéantar dóthain spáis tugtha ar riachtanais áirithe daltaí i nGaelcoileanna le riachtanais speisialta nó riachtanais breise?
2. I do thaithí féin, an bhfuil daltaí le riachtanais speisialta oideachais ó chúlraí nach labhraíonn Gaeilge faoi mhíbhuntáiste mar gheall ar a bhfreastal ar scoileanna Meán-Ghaeilge?
3. An gcreideann tú go bhfuil na buntáistí seanbhunaithe a bhaineann le dátheangachas [feidhmiú cogaíochas, fadhbréiteach agus foghlaim teangacha breise] ar fáil do dhaltaí le riachtanais speisialta a fhreastalaíonn ar Gaelscoileanna?
4. An bhfuil athruithe curaclaim ann a d'fhéadfaí a scrúdú?
5. An bhfuil bearta ar leith ann a d'fhéadfadh Gaelscoileanna a dhéanamh chun chohórt níos mó de dhaltaí le riachtanais speisialta a mhealladh?
6. An bhfuil céimeanna ar leith ann ar féidir le múinteoirí aonair a dhéanamh?
7. Cad iad na hidirghabhálacha a d'fhéadfadh tuismitheoirí a dhéanamh?
8. An síleann tú go bhfuil tuiscint ann go bhfuil páistí le riachtanais speisialta sa suíomh is fearr i scoileanna Béarla?
9. Cén fáth go bhfuil líon na daltaí le riachtanais speisialta i bhfad níos airde i scoileanna Béarla, mheas tú?
10. An bhfuil mí-eolas ag tuismitheoirí maidir le páistí le riachtanais speisialta a chur ina nGaelscoil áitiúil nó an bhfuil cúiseanna eile leis an tearc-ionadaíocht choibhneasta?
11. Mheas tú, an bhfuil Gaelscoileanna agus An Foras Pátrúnachta gníomhach go leor chun dúshlán a thabhairt do thuairimí/bhraisintí maidir le Gaeloideachas agus daltaí le riachtanais speisialta?