

ARTICLE

Language ideologies in a minority context: An experimental study of teachers' responses to variation in Irish

Noel Ó Murchadha¹  | Lauren Kavanagh²

¹ Trinity College Dublin, University of Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

² Educational Research Centre, Dublin, Ireland

Correspondence

Noel Ó Murchadha, Trinity College Dublin, University of Dublin, College Green, Dublin 2, Ireland.

Email: noel.omurchadha@tcd.ie

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Abstract

Ideologies on linguistic variation among teachers of the Irish language are the focus of this article. Participants completed an experiment in which they responded to speech samples representing traditional dialectal varieties in the Irish-speaking communities (the Gaeltacht) and a sample representing the Irish of new speakers outside the Gaeltacht (the post-Gaeltacht). When participants directly rate the speech varieties, the traditional Gaeltacht samples are rated significantly more positively than the post-Gaeltacht sample. However, the post-Gaeltacht new speaker variety is on top for standardness. When participants rate the speakers' characteristics, a more levelled, destandardised value system is also evident. The results are related to the official regimentation of Irish today, where authority is increasingly nebulous and negotiable. The results illustrate how teacher ideologies can develop in late modernity, whether in a minority context, in a context where authority is based on authenticity and a dialect ideology is established, or where language transmission occurs largely through education and substantial numbers of new speakers use the language.

KEYWORDS

Irish, language attitudes, language ideology, language regimentation, late modernity

Achoimre

Idé-eolaíochtaí múinteoirí Gaeilge ar an éagsúlacht teanga is ábhar don alt seo. Ghlac rannpháirtithe páirt i dtástáil inar éist siad le míreanna fuaime le canúintí traidisiúnta Gaeltachta agus mír eile le nuachainteoir ón iar-Ghaeltacht. Nuair a dhein na rannpháirtithe measúnú ar na canúintí féin, dheineadar measúnú níos dearfaí ar na canúintí traidisiúnta Gaeltachta i gcomparáid leis an urlabhra iar-Ghaeltachta agus bhí an difríocht sin suntasach ó thaobh staitistice de. Ach, is í urlabhra an nuachainteora iar-Ghaeltachta a bhí in uachtar ó thaobh chaighdeánacht na hurlabhra de agus, nuair a d'fhreagair na rannpháirtithe do thréithe pearsantachta na gainteoirí, tá córas luachála leibhéalaithe le feiscint. Mínítear na torthaí i gcomhthéacs réimeas teanga na Gaeilge sa lá inniu agus i gcomhthéacs dhinimici na Gaeilge mar mhionteanga i gcomhthéacs na nua-aoiseachta déanaí agus an domhandaithe.

1 | INTRODUCTION

This article takes a language ideologies perspective on responses to linguistic variation among teachers of Irish. Ideologies are defined as ‘thoroughly naturalised sets of beliefs about language intersubjectivity held by members of speech communities’ (Milroy, 2004, p. 162). Teachers’ ideologies are considered in the context of regimes of language. Studies of regimes of language bring together language and politics and explore how discourses on language are (re)produced, circulated and managed (Kroskrity, 2000). Regimes regulate, organise and attribute value to some linguistic practices, while excluding alternatives or declaring them out of bounds (Irvine, 2019, p. 68) so that some language practices command authority, whereas others are deemed inadequate (Gal, 2006). The article commences with a consideration of research on ideologies on language variation, before exploring teachers’ relationship to established ideologies. An overview is then provided of patterns of variation in modern spoken Irish, before discussing language regimentation and established ideologies. A study of teachers’ ideologies on variation in Irish is then presented in which a type of destandardising ideology is evident. It is argued that this is related to the ambiguity around language authority in the regimentation of Irish as a minority language in late modernity, to reliance on the education system for language transmission and to the relatively significant numbers of new speakers who acquire and use Irish.

2 | IDEOLOGIES ON LINGUISTIC VARIATION

Research on ideologies on variation provides a window into the regimes operating in specific sociolinguistic contexts. Such work indicates, for instance, that although a strong unitary standard language ideology operates in some settings (e.g. English, French, Danish), pluralist models (in which a range

of practices are valued) are present elsewhere (e.g. Corsican, Irish, Norwegian). Dominant ideologies, whether unitary or pluralist, involve language users converging on the perceived correctness and authority of certain linguistic practices and the social meanings attached to ways of using language (Milroy, 2001). Dominant ideologies on variation develop as a consequence of historical, political, economic, social, cultural and linguistic dynamics (Milroy & Milroy, 1999). As such, although ideologies may be robust and sustained for long periods, they may be subject to renegotiation as dynamics shift (Coupland & Kristiansen, 2011). Linguistic ideologies are maintained partly by societal institutions through regimentation, with schools typically playing a prominent role. Teachers are therefore important agents and their ideologies on variation merit attention.

3 | TEACHER IDEOLOGIES

Teachers are centrally placed to shape language practices and ideologies and can be influential sociolinguistic actors. Much research suggests that teachers in different contexts function as advocates of established ideologies, often recognising, subscribing to and promoting the prestige status of ‘native’ versus ‘non-native’ varieties (He & Li, 2009) or gatekeeping elite discourses on ‘standard’ language (Kristiansen, 2003). Thus, they can perpetuate the status quo. Nevertheless, a complex picture emerges in the literature. For example, teachers are shown to appreciate the identity value of so-called non-native speech (Jenkins, 2005), recognise the grammaticality of ‘non-standard’ varieties and question the prestige status of ‘standard’ practices (Blake & Cutler, 2003). Alternatively, it is also observed that teachers can display persistently ambivalent and sometimes contradictory ideologies on language and that they continuously negotiate language ideological dilemmas (Jaspers, 2020). Such dilemmas are observed in research on ideologies on variation within named languages, including in research with new speaker teachers of Irish (Ó Murchadha & Flynn, 2018a). This is discussed further below, following a brief overview of linguistic variation in modern spoken Irish.

4 | VARIATION IN IRISH

Following an historical language shift from Irish to English, Irish remains a community language in just a small number of areas. These are in the Gaeltacht, areas identified by the state as Irish-speaking and designated for specific language planning. Irish speakers in these areas tend to be bilingual in Irish and English. There are three main traditional regional dialects in Irish – Ulster in the north, Connacht in the west and Munster in the south, with dialectal variation found across most areas of language.

In addition to regional variation, the Irish of younger speakers in the Gaeltacht is changing rapidly (e.g. Ó Curnáin, 2007; Ó Domagáin, 2009). This is occurring alongside relatively weak patterns of intergenerational transmission. Levelling is occurring, with traditional dialectal features becoming less marked. The Irish of younger Gaeltacht speakers is often fused with English. Speakers recruit their entire linguistic repertoire when conversing in Irish so that ‘English words’ are by now a typical feature in everyday discourse in Irish (Darcy, 2014). The influence of English is further evident in phonology and syntax. Phonological distinctions between Irish and English and between distinct sounds in traditional Irish are becoming less salient as many younger speakers no longer acquire some traditional features (Péterváry et al., 2014). Similarly, traditional word order in Irish is being displaced in some cases under the influence of English (Ó Curnáin, 2007). Additionally, traditional Irish applies a series of initial and end mutations under different grammatical conditions. Among younger speakers, however, these can be absent, or inconsistently applied (McGuigan, 2016).

The term 'post-Gaeltacht' refers here to areas in Ireland that used to be Irish speaking but where shift to English is complete, breaking the link to the traditional Irish once spoken in those areas. Following more than a century of institutionalisation, with Irish as a subject and available as a medium of instruction at all levels of education, noteworthy numbers of people in the post-Gaeltacht habitually and fluently use Irish. Although historically speakers in the post-Gaeltacht may have modelled their Irish on Gaeltacht norms, with some speakers still doing so, it is now commonly believed, and reported (Maguire, 1991; Ó Duibhir, 2018), that many post-Gaeltacht new speakers operate independently of Gaeltacht norms. Like Gaeltacht youth speech, speakers mesh features from Irish and English and semantic transference from English is described. Although some speakers may model their Irish on standard written conventions, there is no official spoken standard. In terms of phonology, it has been proposed for children in Irish-medium education in Belfast (Maguire, 1991), for example, that their phonological repertoire in English is the substratum on which the Irish system is built. Although not all post-Gaeltacht users of Irish are post-traditional in their phonology, for many speakers outside the Gaeltacht some traditional features of Irish phonology are not evident, with distinctions between sounds in Irish and in Irish English, and between different sounds in Irish, not present. The emerging linguistic practices described above are set against an ideological backdrop where traditional Gaeltacht speech is valorised.

5 | IDEOLOGIES AND LANGUAGE REGIMENTATION

A legitimating ideology of authenticity is described for Irish (Ó Murchadha, 2016), as in many other minority languages (see Lane et al., 2018). This ideology emphasises the importance of sounding natural and authentic (Woolard, 2016). Where authority in language is based on perceived authenticity, the marked nuances of linguistic practices are celebrated because they are seen as indexes of specific times, places or ways of being. This stands in contrast to classic unitary models of authority in language, where the value of 'standard' practices are typically located in their perceived anonymity and in the fact that they are perceived as a voice from nowhere that can belong to everyone (Woolard, 2016). In Irish, a thoroughgoing pluralist, dialect ideology was established at the end of the 19th century. As a result, authority is traditionally based on perceived authenticity and the traditional Gaeltacht dialects of Ulster, Connacht and Munster are overtly valorised. The Gaeltacht is seen as the traditional source of the Irish language and Gaeltacht speech is considered natural and authentic because it is seen to belong to a time and place where Irish was unaffected by modernity, urbanity and the advance of English.

This ideology has been subject to regimentation by the Irish state since its foundation. The state draws on ideologies of authenticity (ideologies that valorise traditional speech because of its perceived rootedness and naturalness) to maintain the ideal of the Gaeltacht as the wellspring of traditional linguistic practices and as a model and resource for users of Irish (O'Rourke & Brennan, 2019). This is evident in state policy in the Gaeltacht that has historically targeted language maintenance and monolingualism in Irish, sometimes contrary to the wishes of speakers in the Gaeltacht who desire bilingualism in Irish and English (Ó hIfearnáin, 2010). It is also seen in attempts in the early decades of the state to base the written standard on the traditional Gaeltacht dialects. It is furthermore seen in the Irish language rule at Gaeltacht summer colleges, which are regulated and partly funded by the state. Here, it is posited that the Irish language rule is not only a pedagogical strategy to immerse students in Irish, but that it also serves to maintain the perception of the Gaeltacht as a monolingual enclave of authentic linguistic practices (Petit Cahill, 2020).

The dominant ideology in Irish is therefore historically a pluralist model that embraces the wide variation in the traditional dialects. However, as the work of the late Alexandra Jaffe reminds us (e.g. Jaffe, 2019), pluralist models are also regimes of language and they regiment and rank ways of speaking, writing and being. In Irish, the post-traditional variation that characterises the speech of younger Gaeltacht speakers and, perhaps especially, of post-Gaeltacht new speakers of Irish, are not so favourably received (Ó Murchadha & Flynn, 2018b). Although such practices may be communicatively functional and identificationally meaningful, they are overtly denigrated (Ó Murchadha, 2013). The speech of Gaeltacht youngsters is sometimes seen as an incompletely acquired traditional variety, with speakers assumed to fall short of an agreed goal. This view has support among some researchers (e.g. Ó Curnáin, 2007; Péterváry et al., 2014). Similarly, post-Gaeltacht speech is considered a performance deviation from traditional competence, the result of paying insufficient attention to traditional norms, or a failed effort to acquire a traditional variety (Ó Murchadha & Flynn, 2018b). Additionally, post-Gaeltacht speech is perceived as a synthetic variety related to schooling and the written standard, and as the variety of (upper)middle class *élites* – traits far removed from the perceived authenticity of traditional norms.

Nevertheless, recently, there is evidence of a change in ideologies on Irish and the way the language is regimented. Although the Gaeltacht is still treated as the authentic source of traditional language, the Gaeltacht Act of 2012 (that provides the legislative framework for language planning in the Gaeltacht) makes provisions for the establishment by the state of Irish-speaking networks outside the Gaeltacht. Where communities show commitment to and action on the status and use of Irish, they may gain recognition under the Act as an Irish-language network (Government of Ireland, 2012). This is in line with trends in the age of late modernity to designate responsibility for language policy to communities or individuals. Although such areas would not be in the Gaeltacht itself, this provision represents a potential disruption to the ideology of Gaeltacht authenticity (O'Rourke & Walsh, 2015). It arguably speaks to a shift in the perception of the Gaeltacht as the only true locus of the Irish language.

Recent developments in the standardisation of Irish similarly illustrate this trend. Work on the standard written variety prior to first publication in 1958 was carried out centrally by the translation division of the houses of parliament. The authors state that decisions on the standard were based, in large part, on the guiding principles of selecting forms that had currency and that were most widespread in the Gaeltacht. The primacy of the Gaeltacht is evident elsewhere in the introduction to the 1958 standard also, where the authors refer to the perceived authenticity and authority of Gaeltacht speech. It is further evident in the fact that selected native speakers from all Gaeltacht areas were consulted when compiling the standard. Despite its stated roots in the Gaeltacht, the 1958 standard is mostly a unitary variety, with a little allowance made for variation in some areas. It is therefore not the same as any of the traditional Gaeltacht varieties. There is a widespread perception that it was never in line with Gaeltacht speech and it is argued (Moal et al., 2018) that it may delegitimise Gaeltacht practices. In the past decade or so, official efforts have been made to revise the standard, and three different revisions have appeared.

The first appeared in 2011 and was compiled by a government-convened committee. The translation division did not participate in this process despite being invited to do so. Ultimately, this revision was never officially endorsed or published (see Ó Murchadha, 2016). Nevertheless, the process speaks to broader trends on authority in the Irish language. The 2011 review included a consultation phase with the public and, ultimately, it outlined four different norms for writing – one each for Ulster, Connaught and Munster and a centralised norm for writing in official domains. Interestingly, the review also included some recent, post-traditional linguistic features in the standard for writing.

In 2012, another revised and officially endorsed version of the standard was prepared by the translation division and published by the houses of parliament. Although this 2012 revision did not take a pluricentric approach like the 2011 version, nor did it include a consultation phase, it did allow for

some variation and choice within the standard. Most recently, the current version of the standard for writing was published by the translation division in 2017. While there is still some choice afforded in the 2017 standard, it is a unitary variety and it rows back on choices available in the 2012 version. This, the authors explain in the introduction, is a response to submissions from the public that sought more uniformity and certainty in the standard.

The fact that both the unimplemented 2011 standard and the current 2017 standard included public consultations as part of the process is interesting. It is a subtle concession that authority in Irish today is subjective and is open to debate and opinion, rather than being fixed and based on the authority and authenticity of traditional Gaeltacht speech. It also sees the standard variety as a commodity (one of the hallmarks of language in late modernity) that is developed and refined in response to consumer demand. That the unimplemented 2011 revision included a centralised standard for official writing alongside regional standards suggests that there can be an alternative form of authority in Irish that is not fully aligned with the Gaeltacht. Despite the fact that the 1958 standard had been considered to be a distinct variety of the language that may unsettle the authority of Gaeltacht norms, the 2011 authors recognised the legitimacy of a centralised standard for official writing that was not directly in line with any Gaeltacht variety. That the 2011 standard also incorporated some modern innovations in spoken Irish suggests again that traditional Gaeltacht speech is not considered the only form of authority in Irish.

The same can be said of the 2017 standard. Rowing back on the level of choice available in the standard, in response to public demand, represents a doubling down on the authority of an official, unitary standard written variety that stands alongside, or that displaces, the authority of the traditional Gaeltacht dialects. This sense is compounded in the translation division's commitment to reviewing the standard every 3 years. This commitment signals that authority in Irish will be negotiable and that the long-accepted authority of traditional Gaeltacht speech is not guaranteed. This is again evident in the area of lexicography.

Year 2020 was an important year in Irish language corpus planning as it saw the publication of the *Concise English–Irish Dictionary*. This is the print version of the *New English–Irish Dictionary* (NEID) that has been available online since 2013 (www.focloir.ie). Following descriptivist approaches in modern lexicography, the NEID states that it provides as authentic a representation as possible of the norms of the modern spoken language (Ó Mianáin, 2020, p. 1). It is stated in the dictionary that 'there cannot be just one kind of Irish, but varieties of the language which are favoured by different users, for different purposes' (Ó Mianáin, 2020, p. 1).

There are two results from this approach that are germane here. First, it means that included in the dictionary are everyday words and phrases that are recently borrowed from English or that are markedly influenced by English idioms (Ó Mianáin, 2020, p. 1). The dictionary thus describes many post-traditional words and phrases in Irish. Second, the descriptive approach taken means that there are a small number of instances where the NEID diverges from the current 2017 revision of the standard written variety.

In addition, the online version of the dictionary includes audio recordings as a guide for pronunciation. Where these are included, they are provided in each of the regional dialects of Ulster, Connacht and Munster, suggesting a certain adherence to traditional ideologies on variation in Irish. However, this approach means that we get, for example, Munster dialectal pronunciations for words that are not traditionally found in that region. Some purists have also pointed out that some of the audio samples diverge from traditional Gaeltacht norms in terms of pronunciation. Already, the NEID is considered a major source of authority in Irish. As the descriptive approach that it takes provides space for post-traditional linguistic practices, it represents a further unsettling of traditional ideologies on variation.

Another potential disruption to that ideology is seen in aspects of Irish language curriculum frameworks. A recent analysis of language standards for Irish as they are described in curriculum documents from pre-school to university (Ó Murchadha, 2020) shows that although the standard written variety and the traditional Gaeltacht dialects are to the fore as targets, there is also some, albeit limited, allowance for individuals to decide on and develop their own language standards. This is another example of the individualisation of aspects of language policy, a late-modern policy trend discussed above in relation to provisions in the Gaeltacht Act. This can be contrasted with a traditional approach in which individuals are encouraged to strictly adhere to established dialectal norms.

The Irish language broadcast media also play a role in the regimentation of Irish. In line with the prevailing regime of language that privileges traditional Gaeltacht speech, traditional Gaeltacht dialects have a significant presence in the broadcast media. However, the post-Gaeltacht new speaker variety also has a notable presence. In some cases, it is argued that featuring post-Gaeltacht new speakers is part of an audience design strategy (Moal et al., 2018). It has been contended that vernacular speech practices may hold considerable value for the broadcast media in general in the era of late modernity (Coupland & Kristiansen, 2011). In that sense, where Irish language broadcast media outlets recognise that much of their potential audience is not from the Gaeltacht or may have limited proficiency in Irish, featuring post-Gaeltacht new speakers can be a strategy to appeal to a wider public (Moal et al., 2018; Ó hIfearnáin, 2008). This potentially allows a larger audience to see themselves and their variety of Irish represented. It is also an important aspect of the regimentation of Irish today. These strategies may or may not prove successful in attracting listeners/viewers, but they have a knock-on effect with respect to the types of Irish that are represented in the broadcast media. Just like the regimentation of Irish in other arenas already discussed, the packaging of varieties of Irish in the broadcast media likely feeds into ideologies on variation and may contribute to the values associated with different ways of using Irish.

Recent developments in the domains discussed above point to an ongoing tug of war on linguistic authority in Irish. Although the authority of the Gaeltacht may have been accepted in large part in previous generations, it now seems that authority is contested and torn between the traditional Gaeltacht dialects, the centralised and institutionalised standard written variety and the post-traditional linguistic forms that are emerging today in the spoken language of the Gaeltacht and the post-Gaeltacht.

The established ideology of authenticity also stands in contrast to the innovative, post-traditional forms of the language proliferating among younger Gaeltacht speakers and of post-Gaeltacht new speakers, as described in Section 4. Furthermore, in contrast to the overt stigmatisation of innovative practices, research reveals that the speech of younger Gaeltacht speakers and especially post-Gaeltacht speakers can also be positively regarded. In research with Gaeltacht teenagers (Ó Murchadha, 2013), traditional Gaeltacht norms are overtly valorised, but post-Gaeltacht speech is upgraded in the covert phase of a speaker evaluation experiment using measures similar to those described below for the present study. Previous qualitative work with new speaker teachers of Irish (Ó Murchadha & Flynn, 2018b) shows that they are not necessarily strict adherents to established ideologies either. Although traditional Gaeltacht norms are valorised and identified as targets for language excellence, teacher participants emphasise the parallel legitimacy of post-Gaeltacht practices and consider them as icons of place and of new speaker identities. The ways that traditional and post-Gaeltacht new speaker practices are regarded by Irish teachers is the focus of the remaining sections. Based on previous research, we might expect traditional Gaeltacht varieties to be overtly valorised, especially participants' local varieties. In responses where the object of the evaluation is less salient, however, we might expect post-traditional varieties of Irish to be upgraded relative to their position in openly offered responses.

6 | METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

As stated, this paper takes a language ideologies perspective on responses to variation. Although many researchers work within a language attitudes framework, language attitudes and ideologies are seen here not as discrete approaches, but as part of a related enterprise. Although language attitudes refer to evaluating an entity favourably or unfavourably (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998; Sarnoff, 1970), language ideologies research recognises that responses to variation are layered and involve more than just the evaluative. Ideologies research positions responses to variation within the context of wider social processes and regimes of language. Following Garrett (2010), language attitudes research offers one set of tools to investigate language ideologies. Some of the foundational concepts in this paper come from the language attitudes tradition, including the attention paid to participant awareness and the focus on attitudinal dimensions.

In addition to investigating direct responses to variation, indirect, experimental methods using language samples are often employed in this tradition, such as the matched guise (MGT) and the verbal guise techniques (VGT). Here, participants rate *speakers* across a range of dimensions as well as, or instead of, openly rating the *speech varieties*. In addition, some researchers (e.g. Grondelaers & Speelman, 2013; Kristiansen, 2003, 2009; Pharao & Kristiansen, 2019) emphasise the importance of concealing the purpose of the research as they aim to sidestep dominant discourses. Differentiated results are returned when participants directly and openly respond to stimuli versus when participants are not consciously aware of the object of investigation (Campbell-Kibler, 2013; Pharao & Kristiansen, 2019). The literature furthermore shows that responses to variation tend to occur along a small number of dimensions. Responses have been shown to diverge along status and solidarity dimensions. On the other hand, in a classic review of methods, Zahn and Hopper (1985) note that judgements are made across three dimensions: superiority, attractiveness and dynamism. When investigating ideologies on linguistic variation, it is fruitful to elicit responses offered under different conditions and across different response dimensions. Building on a previous interview-based study with pre-service teachers of Irish, the present study employed an experimental design in which teachers rated speech varieties and speaker characteristics during two different phases and potentially along different dimensions.

7 | DATA GENERATION

Data were generated using an online experiment on the Limesurvey platform. Participants completed this in their own time. In an adaptation of Kristiansen (2009), the design involved listening to speech samples and responding quickly to statements using 7-point response scales. Four audio samples of men's voices were included.¹ Original recordings were made of the speakers describing the same picture. The picture was broadly described in similar terms and the samples were matched for pitch (fundamental frequency in the range of 110–120 Hz), rate of speech (45–51 words) and length (15 seconds). The experiment took around 20 minutes to complete. The use of a second sample per variety and the use of fillers were ruled out as extending participation time beyond 20 min may have resulted in participant attrition.

The speakers were selected to represent the traditional Gaeltacht varieties of Ulster, Connacht and Munster, and the post-Gaeltacht new speaker variety. Alignment with descriptions of these varieties in the literature was checked by three Irish-language linguists. As the speakers were asked to describe a

¹ In Irish: Tá an duine seo: Díograiseach – Leamh; Iontaofa – Neamhiontaofa; Eachtrúil – Cúthaileach; Suimiúil – Leadránach; Muinfeach – Neamhchinnte; Éirimiúil – Dúr; Deas – Déisteanach; Faiseanta – Neamhfhaiseanta.

drawing, with no instructions relating to speech, an array of features was produced that distinguished the samples from one another. The samples were piloted with four Irish-speaking non-linguists, confirming that the recordings were good representations of the varieties.

To control for sequence effects, two orders were used. The experiment featured two phases. In the first phase, labelled here as the speaker phase, the samples were presented, and participants were asked to listen to each sample once and to quickly respond to eight items while/after hearing each sample. Using 7-point response scales, participants were asked to evaluate the personality traits of the speakers. Eight items (in Irish) were included: [This person is] conscientious–uninspired; trustworthy–untrustworthy; adventurous–shy; interesting–boring; self-assured–insecure; intelligent–stupid; nice–repulsive; and fashionable–unfashionable.² The adjective pairs were adapted from Kristiansen (2009) and included pairs potentially related to different attitudinal dimensions. Pilot studies for previous research (Ó Murchadha, 2013) and for the present study confirmed that the adjective pairs were in line with how participants might describe an individual's personality. Participants were not informed about the purpose of the experiment.

The same samples were presented a second time, referred to here as the speech phase. In contrast to the first phase, participants were specifically asked to assess the different speech varieties. Participants were presented with statements on [This person has] good, authoritative, accurate, correct and standard Irish and were asked to indicate their (dis)agreement on 7-point Likert items.³

A question arises about participants' awareness of the nature of the study. The second (speech) phase of the experiment required participants to directly rate speech and these data can clearly be categorised as direct and overt. The data from the first (speaker) phase are indirect in that, rather than rating the varieties, participants rated the speakers. Although the purpose of the experiment was not described until after the first phase, participants may have intuited that it was about language. A post-test was not included to establish this. Using an array of linguistic features to signal where the participants were from ensured that participants responded to 'natural' speech. On the other hand, the nature of the samples potentially provides a clue about the study's aims. In addition, in a minority language context like Irish, 'the language question' is a live one and can be highly salient. In this sense, the medium itself carries a message for participants: conducting a study through Irish may be a signal that the language question is under investigation.

The approach to the experiment may have succeeded in eliciting responses where participants were totally unaware of the nature of the study. Even where participants may have deduced that the experiment was about variation in Irish, the data from the speaker phase of the study provide a perspective on variation that was elicited under different experimental conditions to the speech phase. At the very least, indirect responses were elicited where the participants had not been primed to think about language variation before taking part in the experiment. Taken together, the speaker and the speech phases of the experiment provide a broad window into the language ideologies of the teacher participants.

8 | PARTICIPANTS AND RECRUITMENT

The study targeted participants who teach Irish, at primary and post-primary levels, in higher education or in private or adult education. Recruitment was carried out using the snowballing technique (in person, via email and phone), with recruited participants suggesting other potential participants. Par-

² In Irish: Tá Gaeilge *mhaith/chruinn/údarásach/cheart/chaighdeánach* ag an duine seo.

³ Ideally, male and female samples would be included for all varieties. However, this would have made for a long experiment and may have led to participant attrition. Importantly, the varieties were all represented by speakers of the same sex.

ticipants took part on an anonymous, voluntary basis with no incentives offered. Overall, there were 152 participants.

9 | ANALYSIS

As an initial step, principal component analyses were performed to explore the underlying structure, if any, of the eight items administered in the first phase of the experiment. Decisions on the number of factors to retain were made on the basis of eigenvalues. Using the common rule of thumb, a factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1 was retained. For each of the four speech samples, all eight items loaded onto one common factor (explaining 56%–58% of the variance, depending on the sample in question). This means that the established attitudinal dimensions found in previous research and discussed above were not present in the data, as discussed further below.

Data were then analysed with a series of Friedman tests (the non-parametric equivalent of the repeated measures ANOVA) to determine whether there were significant differences in the ratings of different samples on each of the measures. These tests were conducted separately for the four subgroups of respondents: Munster participants, Connacht participants, Ulster participants and post-Gaeltacht participants. Post hoc analyses were conducted using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test for pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni correction applied. All analyses were undertaken using SPSS version 26.

10 | RESULTS

Table 1 summarises the results from the speech phase (the second phase during data collection), with sample ratings relative to each other illustrated in the mean ranks.⁴ A distinction is evident in results for good, authoritative, accurate and correct Irish on the one hand and standard Irish on the other. Within each of the four respondent groups, there were statistically significant differences in ratings for ‘good Irish’. Among Munster and post-Gaeltacht new speaker respondents, the post-Gaeltacht new speaker variety was rated as significantly less good than all Gaeltacht varieties. It is rated significantly less good than the most positively rated Gaeltacht variety among Connacht and Ulster respondents. There were also significant differences in the ratings by Munster, Connacht and post-Gaeltacht new speaker respondents on the measures of authoritativeness, accuracy and correctness. In these instances, the new speaker variety was rated significantly less positively, either than all the Gaeltacht varieties or than just the single most positively rated Gaeltacht variety. In a display of local loyalty familiar in experimental research, Gaeltacht participants mostly rated the varieties from their own regions most positively or in second place. Among the post-Gaeltacht participants, on the other hand, it was the Connacht and Munster varieties that came out on top. There were no significant differences in Ulster respondents’ ratings for authoritativeness, accuracy or correctness. However, the small number of respondents from Ulster ($n = 10$) should be borne in mind when interpreting those results.

In contrast, the post-Gaeltacht new speaker variety came out on top for standardness. Participants from all backgrounds apart from Ulster regarded the post-Gaeltacht new speaker variety as most standard. Munster participants rated it significantly more standard than all the Gaeltacht varieties. Connacht participants rated it as significantly more standard than the Gaeltacht variety considered least standard among that group (Ulster). Among Ulster and post-Gaeltacht participants, the post-Gaeltacht new speaker variety was rated significantly more positively than both Connacht and Ulster speech.

⁴ Differences in mean ranks are only statistically significant when indicated in the tables.

TABLE 1 Responses on overt measures

Munster Gaeltacht participants		Connacht Gaeltacht participants		Ulster Gaeltacht participants		Post-Gaeltacht participants	
Good							
Munster speech	2.08	Connacht speech	2.14	Ulster speech	1.9	Connacht speech	2.19
Connacht speech	2.27	Munster speech	2.31 ⁺	Connacht speech	2.3 ⁺	Munster speech	2.27
Ulster speech	2.31	Ulster speech	2.31 ⁺	Munster speech	2.7 ⁺	Ulster speech	2.36
P-G speech	3.34	P-G speech	3.21 ⁺	P-G speech	3.1 ⁺	P-G speech	3.17
$\chi^2(3) = 34.41, p < 0.001, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 19.34, p < 0.001, n = 21$		$\chi^2(3) = 10.0, p = 0.019, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 74.48, p < 0.001, n = 88$	
Authoritative							
Munster speech	2.14	Ulster speech	2.21	Connacht speech	2.05	Connacht speech	2.06
Connacht speech	2.25	Munster speech	2.31 ⁺	Ulster speech	2.25	Munster speech	2.27
Ulster speech	2.31	Connacht speech	2.33 ⁺	Munster speech	2.65	Ulster speech	2.27
P-G speech	3.30	P-G speech	3.14 ⁺	P-G speech	3.05	P-G speech	3.40
$\chi^2(3) = 22.73, p < 0.001, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 12.5, p = 0.006, n = 21$		$\chi^2(3) = 5.53, p = 0.137, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 90.73, p < 0.001, n = 88$	
Accurate							
Munster speech	2.16	Connacht speech	2.26	Ulster speech	1.90	Munster speech	2.26
Connacht speech	2.31	Munster speech	2.38 ⁺	P-G speech	2.60	Connacht speech	2.33
Ulster speech	2.34	Ulster speech	2.38 ⁺	Connacht speech	2.65	Ulster speech	2.37
P-G speech	3.19	P-G speech	2.98 ⁺	Munster speech	2.85	P-G speech	3.05
$\chi^2(3) = 22.45, p < 0.001, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 9.38, p = 0.025, n = 21$		$\chi^2(3) = 5.42, p = 0.143, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 45.05, p < 0.001, n = 88$	

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Munster Gaeltacht participants		Connacht Gaeltacht participants		Ulster Gaeltacht participants		Post-Gaeltacht participants	
Correct							
Munster speech	2.19	Munster speech	2.05	Ulster speech	1.95	Munster speech	2.18
Ulster speech	2.28 ⁺	Connacht speech	2.29	Munster speech	2.45	Connacht speech	2.31
Connacht speech	2.47 ⁺	Ulster speech	2.43 ⁺	Connacht speech	2.75	Ulster speech	2.36
P-G speech	3.06 ⁺	P-G speech	3.24 ⁺	P-G speech	2.85	P-G speech	3.15
$\chi^2(3) = 13.94, p = 0.003, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 20.37, p < 0.001, n = 21$		$\chi^2(3) = 5.16, p = 0.161, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 56.54, p < 0.001, n = 88$	
Standard							
P-G speech	1.56	P-G speech	1.93	Munster speech	1.90	P-G speech	2.07
Munster speech	2.84 ⁺	Connacht speech	2.45 ⁺	P-G speech	2.00 ⁺	Munster speech	2.30 ⁺
Connacht speech	2.80 ⁺	Munster speech	2.57 ⁺	Connacht speech	3.05 ⁺	Connacht speech	2.64 ⁺
Ulster speech	3.16 ⁺	Ulster speech	3.05 ⁺	Ulster speech	3.05 ⁺	Ulster speech	2.93
$\chi^2(3) = 35.20, p < 0.001, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 13.10, p = 0.004, n = 21$		$\chi^2(3) = 8.10, p = 0.044, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 36.81, p < 0.001, n = 88$	

Note: Lower values for mean ranks indicate higher ‘goodness’, authority, accuracy, correctness or ‘standardness’. Mean ranks in a homogenous subset do not differ significantly from one another. Homogenous subsets are identified with blue shading, + and **bold font** (and are only indicated where the null hypothesis of no differences was rejected). For example, in the case of the ratings for ‘standardness’ by the post-Gaeltacht participants (row 5, column 4), there is no difference between the Post-Gaeltacht and Munster speech (blue shading), between the Munster and Connacht speech (*) or between the Connacht or Ulster speech (**bold font**). This means the only significant difference is between the Post-Gaeltacht and the Ulster samples, with the Post-Gaeltacht speech ranked as significantly more standard than the Ulster speech.

This result is not unexpected and can be understood against the background of the written standard for Irish. Although respondents' ratings in the speech phase align with traditional ideologies, results from the speaker phase provide a different perspective.

These results are displayed in Tables 2 and 3. The mean ranks indicate the extent to which the samples are differentiated in the social values associated with them. In line with research in this tradition, responses to the *speakers* are taken here as a proxy for responses to the *varieties*. Tables 2 and 3 illustrate that there are relatively few significant differences between ratings of the Gaeltacht and the post-Gaeltacht varieties. There were no significant differences in the ratings of the speakers for 'trustworthiness', 'interestingness' or 'adventurousness' within any of the Gaeltacht groups. The post-Gaeltacht variety was not rated significantly lower than all Gaeltacht varieties on any item by any of the respondent groups.

Statistically significant differences between specific Gaeltacht varieties and the post-Gaeltacht new speaker variety were observed in a number of instances. These mostly involved instances where the Connacht variety was rated significantly more positively than the post-Gaeltacht variety. This occurred for conscientious–uninspired among Munster and Connacht participants, for nice–repulsive among Connacht and post-Gaeltacht participants, for interesting–dull among post-Gaeltacht participants and for intelligent–stupid among Munster and Connacht participants. The Connacht and Ulster varieties were rated significantly more positively than the post-Gaeltacht variety for trustworthy–untrustworthy by post-Gaeltacht respondents. The difference between the Ulster and the post-Gaeltacht varieties was statistically significant among Ulster participants for nice–repulsive. The post-Gaeltacht new speaker variety was significantly more positively rated than the Connacht variety for intelligent–stupid among post-Gaeltacht participants and more positively than the Ulster variety on the fashionable–unfashionable item among Munster participants. Although these differences are notable, they are relatively few compared to the number of differences in the speech phase of the experiment. They do not speak to a systematic and significant differentiation between Gaeltacht and post-Gaeltacht speech.

As noted above, research on perceptions of variation often finds differences in the evaluation of varieties along different attitudinal dimensions. Following previous research that reveals attitudinal dimensionality that has subsequently been labelled in terms of status, solidarity, attractiveness, superiority and dynamism traits, the present study was concerned with whether there were differences along such dimensions. Although there are a number of instances where one Gaeltacht variety is rated significantly more positively than post-Gaeltacht speech, all items in the speaker phase of the experiment loaded onto one common factor. Therefore, the established attitudinal dimensions present in studies elsewhere (e.g. Fabricius, 2005; Grondelaers & Speelman, 2013; Grondelaers & Van Gent, 2019; Hoare, 2001; Kristiansen, 2009) are not present in the current study. Nevertheless, participants' responses on items referring to the characteristics of the speakers paint a markedly different picture to the results from the speech phase of the experiment.

11 | DISCUSSION

The significantly more positive ratings of the Gaeltacht varieties compared to the post-Gaeltacht variety in the speech phase confirm the pluralist, dialect ideology in Irish and are in line with the traditional regimentation of Irish in society and by the state since its foundation. This is the case despite the emerging changes in ideologies on variation in Irish and in the regimentation of the language described above. Gaeltacht varieties, especially those that are local to the participants, are valorised and rated most positively on measures of good, authoritative, accurate and correct Irish. In contrast, the post-

TABLE 2 Responses to the speaker phase

Munster Gaeltacht participants		Connacht Gaeltacht participants		Ulster Gaeltacht participants		Post-Gaeltacht participants	
Conscientious–Uninspired							
Connacht speaker	1.98	Connacht speaker	1.95	Ulster speaker	2.15	Connacht speaker	2.21
Munster speaker	2.55 ⁺	Ulster speaker	2.19 ⁺	P-G speaker	2.45	Ulster speaker	2.51 ⁺
Ulster speaker	2.65 ⁺	Munster speaker	2.90 ⁺	Connacht speaker	2.50	P-G speaker	2.60 ⁺
P-G speaker	2.81 ⁺	P-G speaker	2.95 ⁺	Munster speaker	2.90	Munster speaker	2.69 ⁺
$\chi^2(3) = 9.08, p = 0.028, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 12.41, p = 0.006, n = 21$		$\chi^2(3) = 1.97, p = 0.580, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 9.65, p = 0.022, n = 88$	
Trustworthy–Untrustworthy							
Connacht speaker	2.28	Munster speaker	2.26	Ulster speaker	2.05	Connacht speaker	2.32
Ulster speaker	2.50	Connacht speaker	2.26	Munster speaker	2.55	Ulster speaker	2.35
P-G speaker	2.59	Ulster speaker	2.60	Connacht speaker	2.55	Munster speaker	2.52 ⁺
Munster speaker	2.62	P-G speaker	2.88	P-G speaker	2.85	P-G speaker	2.82 ⁺
$\chi^2(3) = 1.91, p = 0.592, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 4.88, p = 0.181, n = 21$		$\chi^2(3) = 2.91, p = 0.405, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 13.63, p = 0.003, n = 88$	
Nice–Repulsive							
Connacht speaker	2.30	Connacht speaker	2.00	Ulster speaker	1.90	Connacht speaker	2.12
Ulster speaker	2.34	Ulster speaker	2.36 ⁺	Connacht speaker	2.20 ⁺	Ulster speaker	2.55 ⁺
Munster speaker	2.50	Munster speaker	2.79 ⁺	Munster speaker	2.90 ⁺	Munster speaker	2.56 ⁺
P-G speaker	2.86	P-G speaker	2.86 ⁺	P-G speaker	3.00 ⁺	P-G speaker	2.77 ⁺
$\chi^2(3) = 5.81, p = 0.121, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 9.20, p = 0.027, n = 21$		$\chi^2(3) = 7.94, p = 0.047, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 18.56, p < 0.001, n = 88$	
Interesting–Dull							
Connacht speaker	2.14	Connacht speaker	2.19	Ulster speaker	2.15	Connacht speaker	2.10
P-G speaker	2.47	Ulster speaker	2.26	Connacht speaker	2.25	Munster speaker	2.54 ⁺
Munster speaker	2.59	P-G speaker	2.69	Munster speaker	2.65	Ulster speaker	2.68 ⁺
Ulster speaker	2.80	Munster speaker	2.86	P-G speaker	2.95	P-G speaker	2.69 ⁺
$\chi^2(3) = 5.05, p = 0.168, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 4.65, p = 0.199, n = 21$		$\chi^2(3) = 3.57, p = 0.312, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 18.56, p < 0.001, n = 88$	

(Continues)

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Munster Gaeltacht participants		Connacht Gaeltacht participants		Ulster Gaeltacht participants		Post-Gaeltacht participants	
Intelligent–Stupid							
Connacht speaker	2.20	Connacht speaker	1.88	Ulster speaker	1.90	P-G speaker	2.17
Munster speaker	2.38 ⁺	Ulster speaker	2.33 ⁺	Connacht speaker	2.35	Ulster speaker	2.47 ⁺
Ulster speaker	2.44 ⁺	Munster speaker	2.81 ⁺	Munster speaker	2.80	Munster speaker	2.56 ⁺
P-G speaker	2.98 ⁺	P-G speaker	2.98 ⁺	P-G speaker	2.95	Connacht speaker	2.80 ⁺
$\chi^2(3) = 8.95, p = 0.030, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 13.48, p = 0.004, n = 21$		$\chi^2(3) = 5.00, p = 0.172, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 16.47, p < 0.001, n = 88$	
Self-assured–Insecure							
Ulster speaker	2.11	Connacht speaker	2.21	P-G speaker	2.25	Connacht speaker	2.18
Munster speaker	2.34 ⁺	Ulster speaker	2.52	Ulster speaker	2.40	P-G speaker	2.55 ⁺
P-G speaker	2.50 ⁺	P-G speaker	2.60	Connacht speaker	2.45	Munster speaker	2.62 ⁺
Connacht speaker	3.05 ⁺	Munster speaker	2.67	Munster speaker	2.90	Ulster speaker	2.65 ⁺
$\chi^2(3) = 12.66, p = 0.005, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 2.22, p = 0.528, n = 21$		$\chi^2(3) = 1.99, p = 0.575, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 9.98, p = 0.019, n = 88$	
Adventurous–Shy							
Connacht speaker	2.34	Ulster speaker	2.19	P-G speaker	2.05	Connacht speaker	2.31
P-G speaker	2.44	Connacht speaker	2.24	Ulster speaker	2.35	P-G speaker	2.37
Munster speaker	2.44	P-G speaker	2.67	Munster speaker	2.75	Ulster speaker	2.61
Ulster speaker	2.78	Munster speaker	2.90	Connacht speaker	2.85	Munster speaker	2.71
$\chi^2(3) = 2.77, p = 0.429, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 5.23, p = 0.155, n = 21$		$\chi^2(3) = 2.96, p = 0.397, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 90.73, p = 0.052, n = 88$	
Fashionable–Unfashionable							
P-G speaker	1.95	Connacht speaker	2.24	Ulster speaker	2.30	Connacht speaker	2.24
Connacht speaker	2.30 ⁺	P-G speaker	2.50	P-G speaker	2.40	P-G speaker	2.40 ⁺
Munster speaker	2.73 ⁺	Munster speaker	2.62	Connacht speaker	2.40	Munster speaker	2.61 ⁺
Ulster speaker	3.02 ⁺	Ulster speaker	2.64	Munster speaker	2.90	Ulster speaker	2.74 ⁺
$\chi^2(3) = 18.22, p < 0.001, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 2.12, p = 0.549, n = 32$		$\chi^2(3) = 1.78, p = 0.618, n = 10$		$\chi^2(3) = 12.99, p = 0.005, n = 88$	

Note: Lower values for mean ranks indicate higher conscientiousness, trustworthiness, niceness, and interestingness. Mean ranks in a homogenous subset do not differ significantly from one another. Homogenous subsets are identified with blue shading and ⁺ (and are only indicated where the null hypothesis of no differences was rejected). For example, in the case of the ratings for ‘interesting–dull’ by the post-Gaeltacht participants (row 4, column 4), there is no difference between the Connacht, Munster and Ulster speakers (blue shading), or between the Munster, Ulster and Post-Gaeltacht speakers (⁺). This means the only significant difference is between the Connacht and the Post-Gaeltacht speakers, with the Connacht speaker ranked as significantly more interesting than the Post-Gaeltacht speaker.

TABLE 3 Responses to the speaker phase

Munster Gaeltacht participants	Connacht Gaeltacht participants	Ulster Gaeltacht participants	Post-Gaeltacht participants
Intelligent–Stupid			
Connacht speaker	2.20	Connacht speaker	1.88
Munster speaker	2.38 ⁺	Ulster speaker	1.90
Ulster speaker	2.44 ⁺	Connacht speaker	2.35
P-G speaker	2.98 ⁺	Munster speaker	2.80
$\chi^2(3) = 8.95, p = 0.030, n = 32$	P-G speaker	P-G speaker	2.95
	$\chi^2(3) = 13.48, p = 0.004, n = 21$	$\chi^2(3) = 5.00, p = 0.172, n = 10$	$\chi^2(3) = 16.47, p < 0.001, n = 88$
Self-assured–Insecure			
Ulster speaker	2.11	Connacht speaker	2.21
Munster speaker	2.34 ⁺	Ulster speaker	2.25
P-G speaker	2.50 ⁺	Connacht speaker	2.40
Connacht speaker	3.05 ⁺	Munster speaker	2.45
$\chi^2(3) = 12.66, p = 0.005, n = 32$	$\chi^2(3) = 2.22, p = 0.528, n = 21$	$\chi^2(3) = 1.99, p = 0.575, n = 10$	$\chi^2(3) = 9.98, p = 0.019, n = 88$
Adventurous–Shy			
Connacht speaker	2.34	P-G speaker	2.05
P-G speaker	2.44	Ulster speaker	2.35
Munster speaker	2.44	Munster speaker	2.75
Ulster speaker	2.78	Connacht speaker	2.85
$\chi^2(3) = 2.77, p = 0.429, n = 32$	$\chi^2(3) = 5.23, p = 0.155, n = 21$	$\chi^2(3) = 2.96, p = 0.397, n = 10$	$\chi^2(3) = 90.73, p = 0.052, n = 88$
Fashionable–Unfashionable			
P-G speaker	1.95	Connacht speaker	2.24
Connacht speaker	2.30 ⁺	P-G speaker	2.40
Munster speaker	2.73 ⁺	Connacht speaker	2.40
Ulster speaker	3.02 ⁺	Munster speaker	2.90
$\chi^2(3) = 18.22, p < 0.001, n = 32$	$\chi^2(3) = 2.12, p = 0.549, n = 32$	$\chi^2(3) = 1.78, p = 0.618, n = 10$	$\chi^2(3) = 12.99, p = 0.005, n = 88$

Note: Lower values for mean ranks indicate higher intelligence, self-assuredness, ‘adventurousness’, and ‘fashionableness’. Mean ranks in a homogenous subset do not differ significantly from one another. Homogenous subsets are identified with blue shading and ⁺ (and are only indicated where the null hypothesis of no differences was rejected). For example, in the case of the ratings for ‘fashionable–unfashionable’ by the post-Gaeltacht participants (row 4, column 4), there is no difference between the Connacht, Post-Gaeltacht and Munster speakers (blue shading), or between the Post-Gaeltacht, Munster and Ulster speakers (⁺). This means the only significant difference is between the Connacht and the Ulster speakers, with the Connacht speaker ranked as significantly more interesting than the Ulster speaker.

Gaeltacht new speaker variety is statistically least positively regarded on these measures. Participants' responses here reflect traditionally dominant discourses and ideologies on best language in Irish.

This echoes findings in previous experimental research with Gaeltacht teenagers (Ó Murchadha, 2013) where 'overt' responses were very much in line with established ideologies. Other, research on regard for variation in Irish also speaks to the enduring prestige of traditional Gaeltacht speech, notwithstanding that participants sometimes also argue for an alternative authority or legitimacy for post-traditional speech practices (e.g. Flynn, 2020; Ó Duibhir, 2018; O'Rourke & Walsh, 2020). The result is also similar to findings from a qualitative study with new speaker teachers of Irish in which participants recognise the high prestige status of traditional Gaeltacht speech and identify it, albeit in a qualified way, as the ultimate target for language excellence (Ó Murchadha & Flynn, 2018b).

Experimental research in other minority contexts similarly shows that established prestige practices are valorised in responses relating to the perceived correctness of speech varieties. Perceived 'standard' and 'regional L1 varieties' of Welsh, for example, are preferred to 'L2 varieties' of the language (Robert, 2009). In the Basque context, speech samples displaying a perceived contact-induced feature (differential object marking) are less positively received than those that do not display that feature (Rodríguez-Ordóñez, 2020). Similarly, 'overt' experimental research in majority contexts shows that local loyalty is, expectedly, found among Danish (Kristiansen, 2009) and German (Svenstrup, 2013) participants and that deeply conservative standard language ideologies emerge among U.K. participants (Bishop et al., 2005).

Responses for standardness can be understood in the context of the standardisation of modern Irish. As discussed above, the standard is considered a synthetic variety associated with officialdom and education. Likewise, post-Gaeltacht new speaker speech is often associated with education. There is an assumption that post-Gaeltacht new speakers all acquire their Irish through education and that their speech is based on the standard (Ó Murchadha & Flynn, 2018b). The association of standardness with the post-Gaeltacht variety is thus unsurprising. On the one hand, it paints this variety as synthetic and denies it authenticity and authority. At the same time, however, associations of the post-Gaeltacht new speaker variety with the standard and, by extension, with education, also suggest a certain cachet for this type of Irish. We return to this point further on in the article.

The discrepancy between responses in the speech and speaker phases of the experiment echoes common findings in previous studies, including research in Belgium (Grondelaers & Speelman, 2013), Denmark (Kristiansen, 2009; Maegaard et al., 2013), Germany (Svenstrup, 2013) and the United Kingdom (McKenzie, 2015). Existing studies such as these frequently show that responses to variation diverge from established ideologies when the object of investigation is less salient to participants. Although the robustness of traditional ideologies on variation in Irish is such that a clear distinction between Gaeltacht and post-Gaeltacht speech emerges in the speech phase of the experiment, when the teacher participants respond to the samples by rating the speakers, another, more levelled value system emerges.

Due to a lack of historical studies of ideologies on variation in Irish, it is not possible to say whether the more levelled system in the speaker phase of the experiment is a recent phenomenon. However, this seems likely to be the case. It does not seem plausible that ideologies on variation in Irish would remain completely intact in the face of significant sociolinguistic changes in recent decades. These include macro-level changes associated with late modernity and globalisation, changes in the dynamics of minority languages, changes in speaker demographics in Irish and changes in the ways that the Irish language is regimented today.

Language ideological change is described among the suite of sociolinguistic changes that are emerging in various contexts under the conditions of late modernity and globalisation (Coupland, 2014; Coupland & Kristiansen, 2011). Various authors describe processes of vernacularisation, destandard-

isation and demotisation. Vernacularisation involves the spread of local, former non-prestige varieties into spheres that were previously reserved for a narrow range of 'standard' practices (Bell, 2011). Destandardisation involves value levelling: established standard ideologies become weakened and a wider range of language varieties become acceptable (Coupland & Kristiansen, 2011) resulting in a more democratised (Fairclough, 1992) framework. Alternatively, in demotisation, the established ideological architecture remains intact, but varieties not previously regarded as 'best language' are elevated to that position. That is to say, the belief remains that there is, and should be, a 'best language' variety, but the idea of what that variety is, or what it sounds like, changes (Coupland & Kristiansen, 2011). The more balanced value system in the speaker phase of the experiment above is consistent with a form of destandardisation, with the result that more varieties are positively evaluated on these measures. This has been described elsewhere for Irish also (Ó Murchadha, 2013). The social ecology of late modernity and globalisation often sees social actors challenge established linguistic orders (Coupland, 2014), including in minority contexts (Gal, 2018), and language varieties are increasingly valued because they are perceived to have currency in the prevailing linguistic market (Heller & Duchêne, 2012). On the evidence above, the Irish context bears this out.

Destandardisation in Irish takes its own particular form. It is not the case that a classic standard ideology is being displaced by a destandardised framework. Rather, the existing pluralist dialect ideology in which the traditional dialects were valorised, but where the standard written variety also had a high status in written domains, seems to be embracing wider variation. This phenomenon is arguably facilitated by the existing dialect ideology. Such pluralist models of variation do regiment and rank ways of speaking, writing and being (Jaffe, 2019), declaring some varieties out of bounds (in the sense of Irvine, 2019). Nevertheless, the pluralist ideology on variation in Irish, along with the parallel authority of the standard written variety, means that users of the language are primed to be broadly accepting of a range of norms, and not just one centralised norm. This may well clear the path for the emergence of the type of further destandardised framework that we see in the speaker phase of the experiment.

This can further be related to questions of authority as they are played out in many minority language contexts today. Authority in minority settings is often fluid and contested. In the Basque context, Urla et al. (2018) describe that although the standard variety holds prestige, its status does not delegitimise the vernacular varieties of the language. Writing about the presence of complex language ideological regimes in minority settings in a general sense, Costa et al. (2018, p. 28) point out that minority language standards are particularly 'subject to negotiation, debate, contestation and appropriation' with the result that minority language actors often embrace pluralism and ambiguity in language.

Regarding embracing ambiguity, the teacher profile of the participants in the present study is an important consideration when interpreting the results above. Teachers are language norm authorities, and some studies show them to be conservative in their adherence to established ideologies (e.g. Kristiansen, 2003). In contrast, other studies, including with teachers of Irish, show teachers to attribute value and legitimacy to a range of practices, including practices that are typically stigmatised (Ó Murchadha & Flynn, 2018a). This has been attributed to the fact that teachers deal with a wide range of language proficiencies and varieties in the course of their work in such a way that they may in turn become broadly accepting of a range of language practices (Ó Murchadha & Flynn, 2018a).

When the results above and from previous research with teachers of Irish are set within the context of the regimentation of Irish today, it is clear to see that teachers navigate a dynamic and changeable ideological landscape. It is a landscape in which traditional Gaeltacht varieties have historically dominated, but where standard and post-Gaeltacht practices have an increasing presence and a certain claim to legitimacy. In that respect, teachers face continuing dilemmas when it comes to the question of the prestige and value of language varieties in Irish with multiple possible norms available. As Jaspers (2020) argues, teachers can display chronic ambivalence on questions of language. The results from

this study and from a previous study with new speaker teachers speak to an ambivalence among teachers of Irish when it comes to their ideologies on variation.

This ambivalence finds expression in the results above in the fact that although Gaeltacht varieties come out on top in the speech phase, the post-Gaeltacht variety ‘catches up’ in the speaker phase and comes out on top for standardness. It is furthermore evident in the addendum to the prestige of traditional Gaeltacht speech in qualitative research with new speaker teachers, where participants argue for the identity functions, place associations and even the parallel legitimacy and authority of post-Gaeltacht speech (Ó Murchadha & Flynn, 2018b). This ambivalence on norms in Irish can be attributed in part to the profile of the participants as teachers and to the methods used (with divergence frequently documented in experimental studies where participants are more vs. less aware of the object of investigation). However, it is also a function of the demographics of the language and the ambiguity around language norms that characterises the regimentation of Irish today.

As noted, the link between the post-Gaeltacht new speaker variety and standardness revealed in the present study can be seen as a stamp of approval. Following over a hundred years of the institutionalisation of Irish, particularly in education, linking the spoken varieties that have emerged from revival efforts to the standard, to education and to literacy may lend them a certain legitimacy and acceptability. In the complex modern sociolinguistic context of Irish, it seems likely that perceived authenticity may not be the only criterion for linguistic authority. In the Breton context, Jones (1998) reports that standard Breton is considered better than traditional dialectal varieties and more worthwhile in the modern world. Somewhat similarly, in Galicia, although standard Galician is related to urbanity and sophistication and circumscribed to an elite group, traditional dialectal speech is associated with rurality and backwardness (Loureiro-Rodriguez et al., 2012). Post-Gaeltacht speech is not openly considered better than its Gaeltacht counterparts: even in the speaker phase of the experiment above, it is just on a par with the Gaeltacht varieties. In contrast to Breton and Galician, traditional dialectal speech in Irish has historically had a high prestige status and quite a lot of overt institutional recognition. In that regard, the results presented above are more similar to findings from ethnographic work in the Basque setting where perceived standard practices do not displace traditional practices but rather sit alongside them (Urla et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, there is a common perception of post-Gaeltacht new speakers of Irish as an *élite* group (see Ó Murchadha & Flynn, 2018a; Watson & Nic Ghiolla Phádraig 2011). Associations of standardness and the common framing of the use of Irish by new speakers and of Irish-medium education as *élite* pursuits likely contribute to the social values attached to new speaker practices. It may well be that the perceived standardness and discourses on the socio-economic status of post-Gaeltacht users of Irish play a role in putting the new speaker variety on a par with its Gaeltacht counterparts in responses to variation in the speaker phase of the experiment.

Furthermore, recent qualitative research with new speaker teachers of Irish (Ó Murchadha & Flynn, 2018b) suggests that post-Gaeltacht new speaker practices serve important identity functions, including place identity meanings. Post-Gaeltacht new speaker practices may be developing their own authenticity, adding another strand to the language ideological tapestry in the process. These indexical links complicate the language ideological regime for Irish. Ideologies on variation in Irish are further complicated by speaker demographics and related discourses on language vitality.

Although the Gaeltacht is where traditional communities of Irish speakers are still found to varying extents, the contemporary demographics of Irish are such that, overall, it is reported that there are more than twice the number of daily speakers of Irish located outside the Gaeltacht as in the Gaeltacht itself. Irish is under significant pressure as a community language in the Gaeltacht. Both academic and public discourses on language vitality are attuned to the reality that intergenerational transmission in the Gaeltacht has been disrupted. There is also a public awareness that the variety of Irish practised in

the Gaeltacht is changing. Due to the minoritised status of Irish, a latent appreciation may exist for any variety that contributes to continuing vitality, and in this case, for the post-Gaeltacht variety (despite the reservations expressed).

Furthermore, however, discussions of language transmission and change in the Gaeltacht are frequently framed within a discourse of language death. In contrast, language revival efforts in the post-Gaeltacht, especially Irish-medium education, are, despite the challenges associated with them, seen by many as an important source of vitality. Language vitality in the Gaeltacht and in the post-Gaeltacht is complex. However, the perceived potential of the post-Gaeltacht to contribute to language vitality, compared to discourses of language death in the Gaeltacht, may also contribute to post-Gaeltacht new speakers being positively regarded in a general sense and being positively regarded in responses to variation in the speaker phase above.

Emerging trends in the regimentation of the Irish language by the state today are sketched earlier in this article. This includes a discussion of the provision to establish Irish language networks beyond the Gaeltacht and of vacillation in efforts to revise the standard written variety. It is argued that such developments represent a challenge to the idea that traditional Gaeltacht language practices are the only source of authority and legitimacy in Irish. As described earlier, questions regarding authority in Irish similarly emerge from the regimentation of the language in other spheres, including in lexicography, education, and in the broadcast media, where a certain appreciation for a range of language practices is evident. When the results from this study are considered within the wider context of ideologies on variation and the regimentation of Irish, we see that the results from the speaker phase, and those relating to standardness, are very much in keeping with a broader trend that sees a range of language practices having some acceptance and legitimacy. Although traditional Gaeltacht speech retains its overt high prestige status, a range of practices are becoming legitimated. This trend is a key feature of the dynamics of the Irish language today.

12 | CONCLUSION

The results presented in this article illustrate the complex language ideological landscape of Irish today. The upgrading of post-Gaeltacht speech on standardness and in the speaker phase of the experiment speaks to the alignment of the teacher participants with the destandardising language ideological framework for the language that has been described previously. The article also shows how this result coincides with, and arguably relates to, the significant shift in the way that the Irish state and its various agencies regiment the Irish language today. That is, aspects of official language policy provide evidence of destandardisation and ambiguity in language authority in that realm also. Official language policy thus, to a notable extent, sanctions destandardisation and ambiguity in terms of authority in Irish. The results from this study and changes in the official regimentation of Irish are both a response to the late modern sociolinguistic circumstances of Irish.

This article demonstrates the importance of measuring ideologies on linguistic variation using a range of instruments at various levels of awareness. Although the value of post-Gaeltacht speech, as revealed in responses for standardness and in the speaker phase, is not revealed in direct evaluations of speech varieties, with the passage of time, it may well be that the value of post-Gaeltacht speech finds more overt expression. This is already revealed in qualitative research with new speaker teachers of Irish (Ó Murchadha & Flynn, 2018a, 2018b). Further research is required to establish how teachers' responses to variation in the experimental context translate to their professional practice in schools and to establish how teachers negotiate the ambiguity that is a feature of official Irish language policy.

In addition to its contribution to our understanding of language authority in Irish, the article provides an example of how teachers' language ideologies can develop (i) in a European minority language context, (ii) in situations where linguistic authority is historically based on perceived authenticity, (iii) in contexts where pluralist, dialect language ideologies are present, (iv) in settings where ambiguity with respect to language authority is a feature of official language policy; (v) in contexts where there is significant reliance on formal education for language transmission and (vi) in scenarios where significant numbers of new speakers acquire and habitually use a language.

Each of these points has applicability beyond Irish. In particular, the upgrading of post-Gaeltacht new speakers in the speaker phase of the experiment may find parallels in future research in other contexts that share characteristics with Irish. Although Irish is similar to other minority languages in Europe and elsewhere, there are also features that are common to 'larger' languages. The Norwegian context, for example, shares with the Irish context a dialect ideology in which local varieties are valorised. Although points (v) and (vi) are fundamental aspects of many minority languages experiences worldwide, the parallels with major global languages are also worthy of attention. Despite obvious differences in terms of speaker numbers, geographical spread and associated power and capital, large numbers of users of major global languages acquire their proficiency through education, at least initially. New speakers of English, for example, are estimated to vastly outnumber so-called native speakers (Crystal, 2003). The results above can contribute to our understanding of how language, language ideologies and language regimentation are shaped by changes in social conditions and how changes in social conditions are negotiated through language. These questions are central to the sociolinguistic enterprise and minority languages like Irish can provide significant and unique insights into these questions.

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ORCID

Noel Ó Murchadha  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2130-6282>

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