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Sociolinguistic vitality of Manx after extreme language shift: authenticity without traditional native speakers

Abstract: This article draws on sociolinguistic fieldwork among speakers of one of Europe's smallest indigenous language communities, a speaker group which persists after the loss of all of its "traditional speakers" within living memory. The extreme language shift experienced by Manx has not led to loss of the language as a spoken and literary medium due to the efforts of significant numbers of language activists and enthusiasts over several generations, from before the loss of the traditional language community to the present. Their actions have resulted in significant linguistic institutionalisation and a rapidly expanding number of speakers of various abilities, some of whom form a new "speaker community". It discusses the constructions of linguistic authenticity and alternative models for the revival speaker, showing how core groups of speakers have been bestowed with authenticity by the wider non-speaker population, for whom linguists' interest in language endangerment and language death are not primary concerns. The article shows how speakers appropriate and are accorded forms of authority and legitimacy in the absence of traditional native speakers.

Keywords: authenticity, native speaker, language revitalization and regeneration, Manx Gaelic, Monegasque

1 Introduction: sociolinguistic vitality after *extreme language shift*

In this article I use the term *extreme language shift* (ELS) to refer to the process by which communities underwent a language shift from their historical native

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language to a new dominant one with the loss of what linguists and socio-linguists have traditionally described as their "last native speakers", but where the language has nevertheless never ceased to be spoken and transmitted to new speakers without any break in that continuity of language practice. In this discussion I focus in particular on Manx Gaelic, one of Europe's smallest language speaker communities.

Whereas all speakers of these ELS languages could be regarded as learners, most very fluent speakers identify themselves as core groups of highly proficient "speakers", surrounded by larger groups of language "learners" of different levels. The article will use empirical data from quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews collected between 2003 and 2012 to discuss the highly proficient speakers' understanding of what it means to be a "speaker" of the "authentic" language and how they define themselves, and others, as belonging to this category. It will discuss in particular the issue of the constructed boundaries of such speech communities, and how these can be related to the complex practices, ideologies and attitudes of "speakers" to "new-speakers" that have been observed in minoritised language communities that retain traditional native speakers and which also have large numbers of learners such as Breton, Irish and Scottish Gaelic. The sociolinguistic dynamics of ELS languages, where all speakers are more obviously somewhere on the "new speaker" scale, show how speakers are in a relationship with a collective construction of legitimacy with regard to their target language variety and how they also construct an imagined community of authentic speakers, which in turn becomes a reality in the minds of new learners and of wider society.

2 Manx after extreme language shift

Manx is a Gaelic language spoken in the Isle of Man. It is distinct from, but closely related to Irish and Scottish Gaelic. The country is a British Crown Dependency, a quasi-independent polity in the Irish Sea which is not part of the United Kingdom but which has had a complex social, economic and political relationship with that dominant neighbour state for several centuries. The United Kingdom is currently ultimately responsible for the Isle of Man on the international stage, and so it was the United Kingdom that signed the European Charter for Minority or Regional Languages at the request of the Government of the Isle of Man, and it entered into force on 23 April 2003.

Manx was the first language of a majority of the population in the first half of the 19th century but had undergone major popular shift towards English by the end of that century, being left to certain peripheral communities and isolated

speakers in the early part of the twentieth. Many observers have declared the Manx language dead, after a century of being moribund. Nettle and Romaine (2000: 48), for example, equate the loss of the last reputed native speaker of Manx in 1974 with the loss of the variety itself and state, "that was the end of the Manx language". Similar views have been expressed in regard to other European languages that underwent shift in the same period. Monegasque, for example, is a Ligurian language which is part of the Romance linguistic palate of the coastal region between Nice and Genoa, that was the home language of that micropolity's population in the early nineteenth century, but which had been largely displaced a hundred years later. In his 1940s study of Monegasque, Arveiller (1967) frequently comments on how the language had been almost entirely displaced and corrupted by sociolinguistic contact with neighbouring varieties and French. Yet to paraphrase Mark Twain's widely cited 1897 witticism about rumours of his own demise, reports of the death of Manx, Monegasque, and several other of Europe's least spoken languages, have been greatly exaggerated. The extreme language shift experienced in some of Europe's smallest polities and peripheral regions has not led to the loss of the languages as spoken and literary mediums due to the efforts of significant numbers of language activists and enthusiasts over several generations, working before the loss of the traditional language community right through to the present. These actions have resulted in significant linguistic institutionalisation in many places, including a strong presence in schooling and an expanding number of adult speakers of various abilities, some of whom may see themselves as forming part of a "speaker community" while others simply believe themselves to have a certain level of linguistic competence.

The very high degree of linguistic competence and fluency achieved by these new speakers has been accompanied by an extension of ELS languages' range of usages from the traditional rural domains of the traditional speaker community into areas such as education, politics, economics, music and the arts. This reflects the ways that speakers of other minoritised languages such as Irish or Basque have undertaken corpus planning over the last century to adapt their languages to cope linguistically with domains from which they had been excluded through the processes of marginalisation and language shift, taking them beyond the domains of family, and small-scale farming and fishing, but in the ELS languages this has been done largely without the process of educating young traditional speakers to undertake that work. In the Manx case, speakers have also tentatively re-established a newly expanded home domain, growing a new children's linguistic culture by raising their own children with Manx.

While there has always been some symbolic use of Manx by the Isle of Man's government, such as translating the heads of all new laws into Manx for

proclamation, since the 1980s the government has increasingly used the language widely in road signage, on public buildings and stationary, initiatives which have also been taken up by the private sector. It has been part of a national branding campaign, *Seyrsnys dy vishaghey – Freedom to Flourish*, promoting the language as a distinguishing factor to attract investment and tourism in a globalised world. Manx is available, to some degree, as a subject in all schools and as a medium of instruction in pre-school, primary and to a limited extent at secondary education level. Although not as overtly developed by national institutions as Manx, a similar pattern has been established in other ELS situations. The popular view of Monegasque as a stigmatised variety banned in schools has been modified by language planning over a similar period and it is now a compulsory school subject, enjoying the support of the Monegasque authorities and population, though it has not joined French as an official language. Similar initiatives have been undertaken by other polities and regions in promoting the language of their perceived cultural heritage, but what distinguishes Manx, Monegasque and other ELS languages from re-constructed and revived languages is the perception among both speakers and non-speakers in the wider community that an organic link has been maintained with the traditional language and that there has been no break in transmission, which implies the existence of an authentic target variety. Although there are disagreements, there is a group assumption about what the language sounds like, how its grammar works, what its vocabulary might be, and also what it looks like in a written form. In contrast, revived Cornish for example, a Celtic language related to Breton and Welsh, also enjoys a certain vitality as a spoken language but was reconstructed after at least a century's gap between the demise of the last speakers and the revival movement, leading to disputes about the authenticity of competing varieties or versions of the language and their associated speakers and proponents (Sayers 2012). From the perspective of speakers and potential speakers of ELS varieties, their languages can be seen as what Spolsky (2003) terms "revitalization" by activists through home language acquisition and through educational policy which is also accompanied by "regeneration" in activities in wider society, sometimes only of a symbolic or profiling nature. Taken together, as discussed in more detail below, these are not popularly constructed as the "revival" of a lost language and attendant culture but as its protection, linguistic development and social expansion. This raises important questions about how groups of speakers, learners and non-speakers construct these shared views on linguistic authenticity and models of "good speech" in the absence of a traditional speech community that would doubtless have provided its own value judgements.

Learners and contemporary speakers of some European ELS languages have a considerable range of linguistic resources at their disposition which are not

available to speakers of many of the world's endangered languages. There are many edited and published recordings of traditional Manx speakers that were made in the middle of the 20th century (Marstander [1929–1933] from the Celtic Studies Department at the University of Oslo; the Irish Folklore Commission recordings [1947], now edited and available in book and CD format [Manx National Heritage 2003]; many recordings by the Manx language enthusiasts held in the Manx Museum), and some current speakers learnt Manx from the last traditional speakers and are seen by younger new speakers a living repository. There are a number of important written texts, some extensive, that date from the time when Manx was widely spoken in the island. The whole Bible was translated into Manx in the 18th century by a team of clergymen for the use of Manx speakers, many of the lower classes being functionally monolingual at the time. There is a corpus of *carvals*, songs composed mainly in the 18th and 19th centuries to be sung on Christmas Eve, along with a small body of secular traditional song, and recordings and transcriptions of legends and tales. There are dictionaries and grammars of the historical and contemporary language. Perhaps the most important body of Manx writing that is now available is, however, the work of writers who have written literary and other texts over the last half century as the number of literate speakers has increased (Carswell 2010). Although not all possessing such extensive historical linguistic resources, other ELS languages have also experienced an explosion of literary activity, meaning that much of the available corpus has been written by non-traditional speakers. Monegasque, for example, has become a significant literary medium since its codification with the publication of *A legenda de Santa Devota* by Louis Notari in 1927.

The use of neighbouring related varieties has also been a resource for these languages. As it is a Gaelic language, fluent Manx speakers have been able to draw on the common core shared with Irish and Scottish Gaelic to adapt elements of vocabulary, idiom and practices from those languages when they have felt it beneficial, while maintaining the Manx character of the resultant borrowing. Monegasque's developers have similarly been able to model new vocabulary and idiom on available calques from neighbouring varieties of the same linguistic family, such as the other Ligurian varieties of the French and Italian Riviera and from Standard Italian. Such practices are widespread in corpus planning for displaced languages, but in ELS cases practitioners tread especially cautiously a line between borrowing extensively from a collateral, more established variety and maintaining the integrity of what they perceive as the cultural and linguistic authenticity of their own language.

3 Linguistic authenticity and the authentic speaker

Authenticity can be understood as an ideological construct (Eckert 2003: 393) that is an essential element in the practices of speakers and learners of languages and those who analyse them. It is part of the broader construction of language itself as a natural, living object, which has its roots in 19th century romanticism, a movement which also constructs a distinct nation or people, the *volk*, as having a distinct language of its own. Indeed, nations have been defined as ethnolinguistic groups since that period in Europe, despite the multilingual and multicultural reality of much of European society since ancient times. The metaphor of language as a living object has permeated popular as well as intellectual culture so that languages are described as "in danger", "dying", "dead", "on their last legs", "revitalised" or "revived" in a similar way that one might talk about a hospital patient or a family pet. Eckert (2003) summarises Coupland (2003) and Bucholtz (2003) in showing how authentic speakers are constructed as belonging to particular places, producing locally orientated language that is in and of that location. In cases of European minority languages, authenticity has been tied tightly to the speech of rural peasants from isolated communities as these are speakers who have been seen as untainted by social contact with other cultures, particularly the dominant ethnolinguistic culture that triumphed in the dynamics of language shift. Dialectology and anthropology (including ethnology and folklore) have sought out authentic truths from such informants (Bucholtz 2003), truths from a place out-of-modern-western time, extolling the speech and values of the *volk* as a window into an untainted yet almost lost culture that thrived in an unspecified period in the past before the modern world and globalised culture despoiled it. Speakers who are bilingual, who have been educated, moved from their rural community to the towns at home or abroad, or who aspire to contemporary middle class values are seen as "tainted" in the sense that they have wandered beyond their natural habitat to be subject to conscious, hence unnatural, social influences (Eckert 2003: 392–393). Authentic speech is thus portrayed as static, conservative and imbued with a particular native culture, every peasant faithfully reproducing the speech of the generation of peasants that went before, with any change being framed as degeneration, while variation is defined as variance from the imagined pure local norm of older speakers. Sociolinguistics has also shown the tendency of men to be more conservative, or less innovative, in their speech than women and so the ideal informant for classical sociolinguistic and dialectological studies, as well as the choice informant for oral literature and folklore collectors has thus been what Chambers and Trudgill (1998) described as the

NORM, the Non-mobile Older Rural Male. Such individuals were the core informants of the classic *Linguistic atlas and survey of Irish dialects*, which includes Manx data (Wagner 1958–1969), and especially so for those regions where the language was less widely spoken. Language revival movements and revitalization initiatives have largely continued with this ideological construction, seeking to isolate speakers and communities from "contamination" due to multiculturalism and language contact in order to provide idealized models for language learners and reversers of cultural shift. Many scholars have, perhaps unconsciously, expanded the construction of the "tainted speaker" and sought to categorize the value of a language's fluent speakers by applying a form of *authenticity quotient* by which they may be described as "traditional speakers", "semi-speakers", "young fluent speakers", "re-nativised speakers", "fluent learners", rather than understanding a minoritised language's speakers as having a range of practices within communities of practice rather than as representatives of particular discrete coded varieties (Jaffe 2007).

Arveiller (1967: x–xii) is almost apologetic in describing the participants in his linguistic study of Monegasque, saying that none of the speakers had the profile of the "ideal informant", not being intelligent yet poorly educated farmers. Monaco was an isolated village of fisher folk and small farmers, he tells us, until all brutally changed after 2 April 1863 when Prince Charles III granted the rights to François Blanc to build a casino in Spélugues (an area which was re-named Monte Carlo in 1886 in his honour), followed quickly by modern roads and the railway from France, which all submerged the native population in a flood of foreign immigration. By his fieldwork in 1943 the Monegasques had become business people and civil servants or had taken up professions, and had mostly shifted to using French. All those who still spoke Monegasque well had received formal education and were often highly cultured. Some had learnt Latin or Italian, and had often thought about their "patois", comparing it to neighbouring varieties, and some had even followed Louis Notari's example and started writing poems and short stories. In his pursuit of "pure" Monegasque Arveiller decided to rely only on similar information from multiple sources in an effort to screen out *tainted* elements that an informant might have offered, that might have been based on a Monegasque version of a French, Italian or Latin word. In my own field work in the Isle of Man from the late 1980s through to the present, contemporary speakers who knew the last of the "traditional native speakers" have remarked how those elderly people were interested in other varieties of Gaelic, and how Ned Maddrell, the last reputed traditional speaker, enjoyed meeting speakers of Irish and of Scottish Gaelic in particular, comparing words and phrases, and wondered whether that contact had influenced the last traditional speakers' own linguistic practice. The last traditional speakers of these languages were clearly

intelligent, curious people, who failed to fit the classic profile required by traditional linguists in the pursuit of the pure speaker of a pure linguistic variety.

Once there are no living authentic speakers to produce authentic speech according to those nostalgic norms, languages and their speakers have been perceived as inauthentic and of lesser value by linguists, but also by some of their own speakers, be they "traditional" or "new" speakers, as they try to hold to the ideology associated with other languages that have more abundant "natural" resources. It is thus pertinent to consider how speech communities which continue after ELS deal with the essential linguistic concern that is authenticity, and whether there are implications in their actions for new speakers of more widely spoken minoritised languages.

4 Tainted languages and their speakers

In treating languages as living natural objects, linguists and wider society will often pass value judgements on them as if the languages themselves have intrinsic value that warrants their protection or condemnation. There is a view, once widely expressed, that a language does not merit survival if it has no monoglot speakers, something which can be directly linked to the romanticised view of authenticity. In his (1932) discussion of the Gaelic dialects of Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man, T. F. O'Rahilly says of Manx:

> From the beginning of its career as a written language English influence played havoc with its syntax, and it could be said without much exaggeration that some of the Manx that has been printed is merely English disguised in a Manx vocabulary. Manx hardly deserved to live. When a language surrenders itself to foreign idiom, and when all its speakers become bilingual, the penalty is death. (O'Rahilly 1932: 121)

While it is true that later spoken and revitalised Manx display a range of linguistic features which are classically only associated with dialects in terminal decline in Ireland and Scotland, they seem to have been acceptable in Manx at least as far back as the translations of the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* in the 17th century. O'Rahilly's opinion is probably based on experience with "untainted" monolingual subjects in Gaelic Ireland and Scotland in the early 20th century, but it has been argued that the deep-rooted "English influence" on Manx Gaelic may in fact be evidence of Norse contact and have its origins in the medieval period when the Isle of Man was a Gaelic-Nordic kingdom (Williams 1994: 737). That Manx had these contact features while there were still many monolinguals does not undermine its intrinsic authenticity as a named variety of a defined speech community, any more than would be the case of any other contemporary lan-

guage that reveals evidence of language contact and mixing in its idiom, vocabulary and syntax.

Arveiller also laments what he perceives as the decline in "true Monegasque" as a result of linguistic contact, the language having been largely superseded in the mid-20th century by:

> *un mélange non unifié de monégasque proprement dit, de parlers de la Rivièra italienne – c'est le fond le plus important, qui lui donne les caractéristiques acoustiques signalées –, de niçois, de corse, de piémontais et de français souvent à peine patoisé ... Nous voudrions insister sur le fait que se « parler des rues », comme disent avec mépris les vieilles gens du Rocher, est composite peu fixé. Ce n'est pas l'ancien patois évolué, enrichi par quelques emprunts. Il y a eu, dans l'histoire de du patois monégasque, une cassure nette, et* mortelle*, qui s'explique par l'histoire récente de la Principauté*. (Arveiller 1967 : ix [my emphasis in roman])
> [a non-unitary mix of proper Monegasque, varieties from the Italian Riviera (which is the most important element, giving it the acoustic qualities described), Niçois, Corsican, Piedmontese and barely dialectalised French. I insist that this "street language" as the older people from Monaco town call it with disdain, is an unstable mixture. It is not a developed version of the local patois enriched by borrowings. There was a clean and *fatal* break in the history of Monegasque, which can be explained by the recent history of the Principality.]

In so doing, he also portrays language contact and mixing as the death knell for the living entity which was the language. Yet contemporary teachers of Monegasque, Dominique Salvo and Eliane Mollo (personal communication, 25 November 2009), argue that Monegasque exists on a linguistic continuum in the practice of its speakers, and that this has been the case for some generations. At one end of the continuum is the literary and traditional language that is taught in schools and spoken by language activists, in the middle there would be the spoken, mixed varieties and at the other end Monegasque lexical items which are used within French discourse, for example:

(1) *J'ai sguié* (< *sghiya*) *et je me suis fait une bandole* (< *bandola*).
    'I slipped and gave myself a bump.'

Speakers, they believe, are aware that these are Monegasque words and choose, perhaps unconsciously, to use them among those who share their linguistic and cultural background because they afford a solidarity function, or what Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) have called "acts of identity". For such speakers, these usages carry no stigma and are not seen as corrupted Monegasque or a threat to traditional Monegasque, but simply as a marked local usage within their linguistic repertoire.

The nuanced decoupling of the target variety for language learners from the "authentic" speech of the traditional speakers who were brought up at the end of

the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century is a feature of the language movements and revitalisation process in these countries. Indeed the near-demise of the languages and the end of traditional transmission only appear to affect the general public's consciousness of the numbers of fluent speakers and the authenticity of their speech in a marginal manner. Monaco's government promotes Monegasque as a *langue tendance* 'fashionable, trendy language' in its publicity campaigns, whereas when I conducted a *vox pop* in Monaco's old town and in the market area in November 2009, asking Monegasque residents if they knew good speakers of Monegasque, the most common reply was that they did not speak it well themselves but that older people did and the children, because they learn it at school. There was an assumption that it was a living idiom and that there were "others" within their community that continued to speak it. Sallabank (2012: 101, 642) observes that many supporters of endangered languages like Manx never use terms such as "language death" or "last speakers", and that officially sponsored organisations like the Manx Heritage Foundation (now called Culture Vannin) do not refer to its perilously endangered status but instead focus on learning Manx as a living tongue.

5 Beyond the authenticity of the traditional speaker

The population of the Isle of Man was 84,497 according to the (2011) Isle of Man Census, of whom 1,823 people (2%) claimed to be able to speak, read or write Manx (Isle of Man Government 2012: 10, 27). At a *Forum ny Gaelgey* [Manx forum] gathering convened by Adrian Cain (Manx Language Officer at Manx Heritage Foundation) and the author on 30 March 2010, some thirty language professionals (mainly school teachers, voluntary teachers, writers and translators) and activists estimated that there were around a hundred highly fluent members of a Manx speaker community. They were sure that the number had grown in recent years to the extent that not all fluent Manx speakers could now say that they knew all the others, which had certainly been the case for almost all the 20th century.

    This meeting was part of long-term project on Manx sociolinguistics which started in earnest in October 2003, with a Manx-medium study of the attitudes of the most fluent Manx speakers towards a range of issues in Manx development. At that time a list of the most fluent speakers of Manx was compiled by asking known Manx speakers to name all those who they believed also to be very good speakers. These speakers were then approached in turn and asked to do the same. The process continued until nobody came up with new names. A group of ten key

informants verified the list, and a total of 55 completely fluent speakers of Manx speakers were identified. This sample was thus a group of speakers who had primarily defined themselves according to their own definitions of a "good speaker". All of the speakers were contacted by letter with a short questionnaire containing questions with multiple-choice and Likert scale answers, with large spaces for their comments on the issues raised by each of the question headings. The hard copy was accompanied by electronic copies on PC and Mac compatible disk which could be filled out and returned by post or e-mail. Both the letter and questionnaire were in Manx only as this was one of the filters being used to be certain of the participants' language skills, but allowing for participants' possible reluctance to write in Manx given the oral/aural nature of much of Manx language activity, it was made clear that an English version was available on the disk and that replies would be welcome in any language. Thirty four full, valid questionnaires were returned. The replies and statistical analysis were presented at an open seminar in the Isle of Man in November 2003, where the data was further discussed with many of the informants and those who had not returned their questionnaires. There is no evidence of any widespread refusal to participate in the study, but most of those who did not respond did reply by e-mail or at the meeting to say that they had simply not got around to it. Thirty four out of 55 possible responses is a strong statistical basis for analysis.

Data regarding aspects of literacy practice and Manx orthography from the survey have been discussed elsewhere (Ó hIfearnáin 2007), but the data also offers additional insights into this group of most fluent speakers' attitudes to the last of the traditional speakers and to what they believed to be the characteristic qualities of "good Manx". Their views are particularly salient because the majority of respondents had a language teaching role, and ongoing research in 2012 shows that adult learners tend to see their own teacher as their primary linguistic role model. Figure 1 shows what respondents thought to be essential in identifying speech as "good Manx", using a five point Likert scale with the range "unimportant (1)" to "essential (5)". The numbers of respondents are small, as is the speech community, and so variation in the response by only one or two participants could change the percentages significantly, but the spread of responses within each category is noteworthy. Only "general fluency" and "using native idiom" were seen by as much as a half of the respondents as being an essential element in "good" speech. Only two respondents thought that modelling speech on the last of the traditional speakers was essential. Indeed, nine of thirty-two respondents thought that the last "native" speakers were of little or no importance to their appreciation of a good Manx speaker.

In the survey feedback seminar in 2003 and the *Forum ny Gaelgey* meeting and field research in 2010, several of the older Manx speakers who had them-
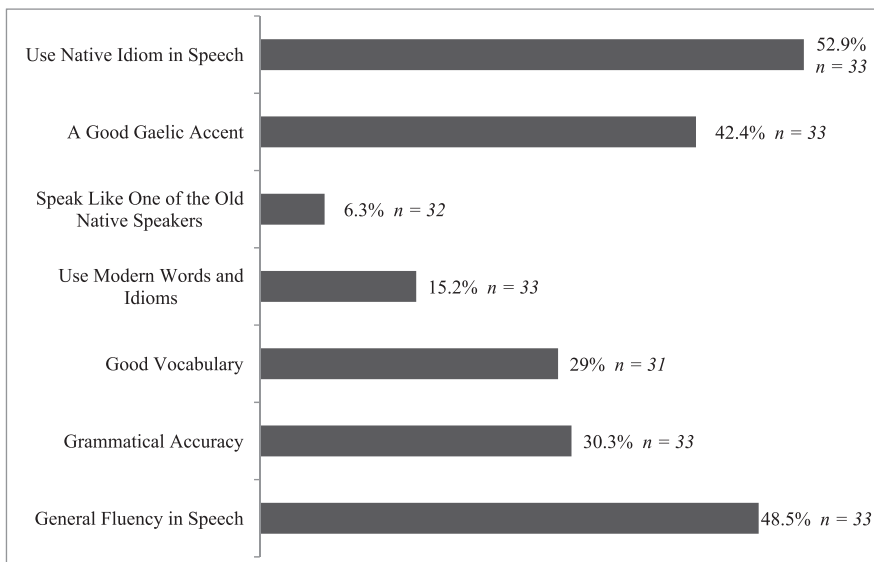
Fig. 1: Essential qualities in identifying "good" Manx, n = 34

selves learnt at least some of their Manx from the traditional speakers expressed surprise at how little use is made of the last native speaker materials, much of which are readily available on CD, the internet and much of it transcribed. They also pointed out that although fluent Manx speakers are a small group of people, there are tiers of experience within the group who have different levels of experience of, and contact with the traditional language. While none of these older speakers, described by others as the "bed rock" of the revitalisation movement, believed that the traditional native speakers were the best models, they believed that they should have a more prominent place in informing the new speakers, particularly with regard to pronunciation, such as the quality of /r/, and of lenited consonants. One possible explanation for the marginalisation of the traditional native speaker model is the perception of cultural distance between them and contemporary times.

> Ta mee er geaishtagh rish kuse dy recoyrtysyn jeant jeh ny shenn loayreyderyn dooghyssagh. T'eh feer anaasagh, agh son yn cooid smoo, chanel yn Gaelg ny share na'n Gaelg ta goll er loayrt nish, as chanel ad loayrt mychione cooishyn t'ayn yn laa t'ayn jiu. Share lhiam geaishtagh rish loayreyderyn flaaoil (BS, BC agh ta ymmoddee loayreyderyn feer flaaoil elley) t'ayn nish, loayrt mychoine cooishyn t'ayn nish.
>
> 'I listen to some of the recordings made with the old native speakers. It is strange, but for the most part, the Manx isn't better than the Manx being spoken now, and they don't speak

about modern issues. I prefer to listen to contemporary fluent speakers like BS, BC, but there are many very fluent speakers now, speaking about current matters.'

Fluent speaker informant, 2003

The two speakers mentioned (BS and BC) are well regarded among Manx speakers and learners, and learnt their Manx from the traditional speakers, but as they underline themselves, these model individuals also learnt their Manx from other sources, including written materials and other contemporary speakers, and have spent years and much time and energy exercising and adapting the language to their needs. There have been fluent "learner" speakers of Manx for over a hundred years and less than forty of those years have been in the absence of traditional speakers. For speakers of Manx and other ELS languages, authenticity is a more fluid concept than that which is often portrayed in the literature of language revitalisation, but the levels of fluency achieved by certain speakers create of themselves a linguistic authority which provides a new target variety for learners, albeit something of a "moving target" in the words of one of the 2010 Manx-speaking discussants.

The ambiguous attitudes of the contemporary fluent speakers to the speech of the last traditional speakers show that the new speakers are not bounded by the "authentic speech" of the rural past, but there are nevertheless boundaries in the speech community between fluent, competent speakers and "learners". These group boundaries have taken on a new dimension with the increasing institutionalisation of Manx, as with other ELS languages, where activists who once strove to achieve status for their language against opposition from government have gradually found official doors opening and have ultimately taken up publicly funded professional employment in teaching and in language and cultural development functions. The natural linguistic authority built up in the revitalisation milieu has thus been boosted by the seal of government approval, and many of the generation of activists-turned-professionals now have a gate-keeping function in describing and applying norms of good linguistic practice. Manx has been an optional subject in schools for twenty years now and since 2001 there is a Manx-medium primary school, which is a venue for new linguistic developments and further hybridity (Clague 2007, 2009), and it is to be expected that at least some of the pupils will continue to use Manx in their teenage and adult lives. Monegasque is now a compulsory subject until the second year of secondary school in Monaco, and so in several small polities and European regions the general population is now exposed to the historically traditional language associated with their home place primarily in the form that these key individuals exercise it, with the associated covert and overt ideologies (Shohamy 2006) that the teachers and language developers hold.

6 Conclusion: bounded speech communities

Coupland (2010) argues that it is probably in relation to the speech community as a concept that authenticity and community in sociolinguistics have most need to be clarified. The speech community has been the cornerstone of the modern discipline of sociolinguistics, prominent in the canonical work of Hymes, Gumperz and Labov, to cite but three, but it has never really had a lasting consensual definition. It has often been treated as self-evident, an existing structure that provides the definitions of a boundary that can be used as the setting for sociolinguistic research among a targeted group of speakers. Research can be set, for example, among teenage schoolchildren in one school, co-workers in a call centre, pensioners in one part of a city, each with an assumed community. There is an enormous variety of groups that have been called "communities" in the research. One core area is the idea of community as demography; that is that a particular group of people is of itself a "community". It has been understood that members of such a community participate in linguistic variation within a system, sharing interpretive norms in that they have a common belief, for example, of what it is to speak a particular language or variety, thus defining group membership. In the ELS example above, the Manx speakers define their own group by a collective and shared sense of what it means to be a "speaker" of the language, rather than a "learner" who is on the path to becoming fluent, or to be one of those who may have a good knowledge of the language but are not participants in any activities of the group. Participants in the 2003 and 2010 seminars readily used terms like "Manx speaker community" to describe the group. Yet "community as demography" is not a strong social concept, as Labov has warned in many places in his work. It could well be that speaking the language, or the linguistic variety concerned, is one of only a small number of the shared values that a community or any demographic group may have in common. Outside of linguistics community is defined by sociologists and anthropologists as being formed in matrices of shared values, be they concrete or abstract. It is perhaps this contrast between "natural", geographically based communities, some of whom speak the traditional yet marginalised community language as one element of their culture, and "revival" groups which share their own linguistic practices and certain collective beliefs about the value of the target language, which have been at the root of perceived conflicts between "traditional" and "new" speakers of minority languages.

Minority language revivalist movements are often dogged by tensions between speakers of the traditional variety and those who have learnt a school-based variety, developed by the language movement and that has to some extent diverged linguistically from the traditional variety but yet is imbued with the

vitality of activist commitment. Breton and Scottish Gaelic are particularly illustrative cases. In both settings the number of people who acquired the language traditionally from their families and neighbours vastly outnumbers those who have reached fluency as second language speakers. While the "learners" are often the propagators of reversing language shift and have greater literacy skills (see MacCaluim [2007] for a detailed discussion of the Scottish Gaelic experience), many traditional speakers and scholars have been reluctant to adopt what they see as "unnatural" linguistic developments and do not participate in the revitalisation ideology and programme. Hornsby (2005) has critically examined the posited linguistic and metalinguistic divide between speakers of traditional Breton varieties and those who speak *neo-Breton*, but it is possible that this divide may be overcome by "revival speakers" who come from and who now work as language professionals in the geographic areas where traditional communities of speakers live, as they negotiate between the traditional and the new in language ideologies and practices (Ó hIfearnáin 2011, 2013). Traditional speakers of minority languages live in communities whose members have a wide range of linguistic competences, ranging from the authentic poster-boys of the dialectologists to those who acquired their language natively but who have limited productive skills in it. The language may or may not be a defining element in what the community understands as its collective identity. Competence in, and positive attitudes towards the role of the language do not necessarily define the community. It therefore can be much easier for a member of the community who has only limited knowledge of the language to be a participant in that linguistic community because of their complex of family and neighbourly connections to the traditional speakers, than it is for a highly competent "new speaker" to move easily amongst them. As Dorian (1982) has said, language communities must be considered to include the wide range of competences that they encompass. In contrast to the communities of traditional speakers, "new speakers" may define their group around their language competences.

If traditional speakers are bounded by their community membership, we can nevertheless describe new speaker groups as forming bounded groups that have common norms, linguistic practices and ideologies of their own. The cores of these groups are also invested with power by non-speakers, as the Manx example illustrates, the language professionals providing the linguistic role models for learners and the officially sponsored presence of the language in the public space. This is more especially the case in ELS languages where there are no apparent, living "traditional" speakers to offer alternative "authentic" models. Yet we must consider to what degree the boundaries that exist between traditional speakers and new speakers, and between the core groups of ELS speakers and the wider community of learners and non-speakers are porous, and what is required of a

new member that s/he may join such a community of practice, without necessarily joining the wider social network that is an essential part of more traditional communities.

Widely spoken languages such as English in England, have speech communities which are bounded by social practice and language ideology. It is expected by the majority population that new arrivals will learn and use English with English-speakers. These porous linguistic community boundaries may also exist in minority languages where there has been a long history of institutionalisation and where "new speakers", once they reach a level of linguistic competence which allows them to participate, become accepted by "traditional" speakers as simply other "speakers" rather than "learners" from an out-group. McCubbin (2010, 2011) shows how Irish-speaking immigrants, who have no family connection with Irish, or even to Ireland, have integrated fully into Gaeltacht society, often to the extent that they have a Gaelic or Gaeltacht identity, but not an Irish one. ELS languages such as Manx illustrate examples of very porous boundaries which are governed primarily by linguistic competence. Polities such as the Isle of Man and Monaco, and many French and Spanish regions, for example, promote their local languages as elements which can cement communities which have become very heterogeneous in their cultural origins over the last century. Although most of the core activists cite their pride in their own heritage and deep roots in their culture as their own initial motivating factors, each core also has members who had little or no connection to the country before taking up the language. The Manx study, where 11 of the 34 respondents in the core speaker group did not describe themselves as Manx and where just under half of the general population were born in the island according to the (2011) census, presents significant challenges to the Fishmanian conception of reversing language shift, which relies on ethnocultural essentialism as a motivating factor, restoring X-ish and X-ish practices to X-men. In contrast, minority languages such as Scottish Gaelic, which are at a much earlier stage in institutionalisation, have a far more bounded community and social network. "New speakers" are still the marked minority for them. Breton may be emerging from that division as new speakers and traditional speakers come into more regular contact.

Communities which have undergone an extreme language shift and which now manifest varied but real sociolinguistic vitality illustrate one answer to Romaine's (2006) question of what it means for a language to survive the loss of intergenerational transmission. The evidence shows that core groups of new speakers define themselves as distinct social groups but that membership of such a language speaker community is optional once a person reaches and crosses a linguistic threshold which is established by the common values of the core group

and which is increasingly invested with perceived authenticity by learners and non-speakers.

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