



TAITHÍ AGUS DEARCTHA AN PHOBAIL

I LEITH NA GAEILGE I GCEATHARLACH 2010

Results of a survey on people's experience of, and opinions of, the
Irish language in Carlow 2010

le

Fionnuala Ní Mhórdha

Maoinithe ag:



Foras na Gaeilge

TAITHÍ AGUS DEARCTHA AN PHOBAIL

I LEITH NA GAEILGE I GCEATHARLACH 2010

le

Fionnuala Ní Mhórdha

Tuairisc a d'ullmhaíodh i 2010/2011 le haghaidh
Grúpa Taighde Theanga na Gaeilge Ceatharlach i gcomhar le Glór Cheatharlach

Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil leis na heagraíochtaí agus leis na daoine seo leanas a chabhraigh leis an tuairisc:

Glór Cheatharlach
Grúpa Taighde Theanga na Gaeilge Ceatharlach
Na hoibrithe deonacha a rinne ceistneoir an tsuirbhé a riaradh
Cathal Ó Catháin a chuir Gaeilge ar an tuairisc
Pádraig Ó Riagáin, ITÉ
Antaine Ó Coileáin, Gael Linn

Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil le Foras na Gaeilge as ucht an tuairisc seo a mhaoiniú

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Réamhrá

Sa bhliain 1985 rinne Coiste Ghlór na nGael i gCeatharlach, taighde i gCeatharlach agus sa tír máguaird, chomh fada is a bhain le dearcadh an phobail i leith na Gaeilge. Rinneadh an taighde seo i gcomhar le hInstitiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann (ITÉ). Thug an suirbhé seo le fios go raibh tacaíocht thar na bearta ann do theanga na Gaeilge, cé gur admhaigh cuid mhaith daoine nach raibh líofacht Ghaeilge acu. Thug an suirbhé seo le fios chomh maith go raibh tacaíocht láidir ann go gcuirfí oideachas ar fáil i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge.¹ De bharr na tacaíochta seo don oideachas trí Ghaeilge tá rath ar an mbunscoil, Gaelscoil Eoghain Uí Thuairisc agus tá fás leanúnach faoin mheánscoil, Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach. Cuirtear oideachas ar fáil do nach mór 800 mac léinn idir an dá ionad seo. I measc na nithe a ardaíodh sa suirbhé seo bhí ceisteanna faoi sheirbhísí trí Ghaeilge a bheith ar fáil ar an raidió agus ar an teilifís, agus is féidir a rá go bhfuil TG4, a bunaíodh i 1996, Raidió na Gaeltachta agus an clár raidió áitiúil Tobar an Cheantair ag freastal ar na riachtanais seo. Tháinig bláth faoin saol sóisialta i gCeatharlach, trí fhéilte agus trí imeachtaí mar Éigse, Féile an Fhómhair, Oíche SULT, Club Cultúrtha, 7rl.

Ón uair a rinneadh an suirbhé seo, tá athrú mór tagtha ar Bhaile Cheatharlach, san am a dtugtar an “Tíogar Ceilteach” air, ach go háirithe. Ní raibh aon chur síos ar an tionchar a bhí ag an athrú seo ar theanga na Gaeilge. Rinneadh cinneadh dá bharr gur cheart go ndéanfaí an dara suirbhé a chur i bhfeidhm. Faoi choimirce Ghrúpa Taighde Theanga na Gaeilge Ceatharlach, i gcomhar le Glór Cheatharlach, tharla an tionscadal seo i Samhradh na bliana 2010. Bhí sé mar aidhm ag an tionscadal seo eolas suas chun dáta a chruinniú maidir le taithí agus dearcadh na ndaoine i leith Theanga na Gaeilge i mBaile Cheatharlach. Cuirfidh an t-eolas a cruinníodh, faisnéis úsáideach ar fáil faoin meon i dtaca leis an nGaeilge agus faoi úsáid na teanga. Cuirfidh sé ar chumas phobal na Gaeilge measúnú a dhéanamh faoin tsuim atá sa teanga, agus an pobal a chur san airdeall maidir le mórcheisteanna a bheadh ag daoine i leith na teanga agus conas mar a chuirtear chun cinn í. Cuirfidh sé ar a chumas chomh maith, clár gníomhaíochtaí a cheapadh agus a chur i bhfeidhm don dúiche seo agus é a dhírú ar na gnéithe sin den teanga a bhfuil suim ag daoine iontu. Rinne Foras na Gaeilge an suirbhé a mhaoiniú.

Modh Oibre

Rinneadh cinneadh gurb é an bealach a b’fhearr a d’oirfeadh don suirbhé seo ná go gcuirfí ceistneoir ar fáil chun an t-eolas cuí a bhailiú. I gcomhairle le hionadaithe ó Ghlór Cheatharlach, rinneadh ceistneoir a dhearadh, ceistneoir a bhain le ceisteanna iata agus ceisteanna neamhiata. Rinneadh staidéar triallach sular thosaigh an suirbhé críochnaitheach. Ba i mBéarla a bhí an ceistneoir féin, agus bhí 24 cheist ann. Shocraíomar ar agallaimh duine le duine a chur ar bun chun an ráta freagartha a uasmhéadú. Is daoine fásta amháin iad (> 18 mbliana) na daoine a rinneadh sampláil orthu. Baineadh úsáid as braisleshmpláil ilchéimneach chun na rannpháirtithe a roghnú. Is éard a bhí i gceist sa teicníc seo ná gur roinneadh Baile Cheatharlach i dtús báire, i rannóga éagsúla, agus baineadh úsáid as na toghcheantair atá ann cheana féin. Chomh fada agus a bhain le gach toghcheantar, piocadh samplaí randamacha de mhioncheantair, agus taobh istigh de na ceantair seo roghnaíodh comhludair go randamach le hagallamh a chur orthu. An bua a bhaineann leis an modh oibre seo ná go mbíonn an deis chéanna ag gach uile bhall den daonra bheith roghnaithe, agus go mbíonn laghdú ar chostas, agus ar an am a ghlacann an t-agallóir indibhidiúil ar an obair, toisc go ndearnadh na hagallaimh i mbráislí ó thaobh suímh. Caithfear a thuiscint nár thug an modh oibre seo deis d’aicmí áirithe bheith páirteach sa suirbhé, mar shampla, iadsan a bhí in ospidéal, i dtithe altranais nó gan dídean.

¹ Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann (1986) *The Irish Language in Carlow, 1985. A survey of public attitudes towards Irish, abilities in Irish and Use of Irish* <http://www.glorcheatharlach.ie>

As an 300 comhlúadar a roghnaíodh, ghlac 298 páirt, sin ráta 99.3% freagartha. Ach amháin nuair a deirtear a mhalairt, déantar torthaí a ríomhadh ar an mbonn $n=298$. Cuireadh traenáil ar ocht n-agallóir deonacha áitiúla dhéag a rinne na hagallaimh i rith Mhí Iúil agus Mhí Lúnasa 2010.

Rinneadh anailís ar thorthaí an tsuirbhé ag baint úsáide as na pacáistí bogearraí SPSS agus Excel. Baineadh úsáid as staitisticí tuairisciúla chun achoimriú a dhéanamh ar na sonraí agus iad a chur ar taispeáint. Rinneadh anailís chomhghaolaithe (Pearsons & Spearman) agus Feabhas na hOiriúnachta tástálacha (chí-chearnóg) a chur i bhfeidhm nuair ba ghá, chun iniúchadh a dhéanamh ar ghaolta idir athróa. Baineadh úsáid as leibhéal suntais de 5% sna tástálacha ar fad.

Miondealú Déamagrafach

Inscne

Mná is mó a ghlac páirt sa suirbhé; fir ab ea 39.1 % de na daoine a ghlac páirt ann.

Áit Bhreithe

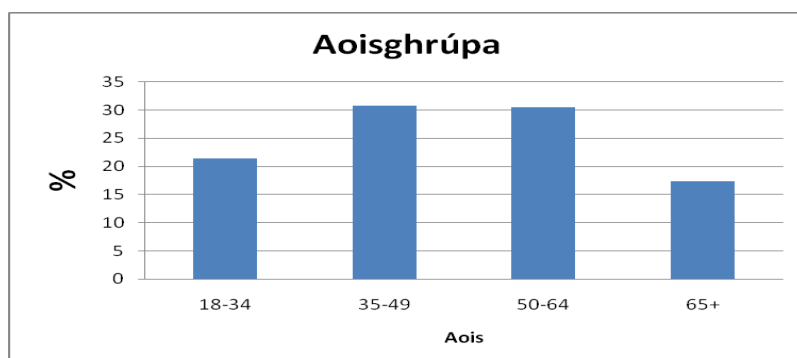
Rugadh 92.62% in Éirinn agus 5.37% in áiteanna eile san Eoraip. Tugann **Tábla 1** miondealú.

	% freagróirí
Ceatharlach	49
Éireannaigh Eile	43.62
An Bhreatain	3.02
Eorpaigh Eile	2.35
Gan Aon Fhreagra	2.01

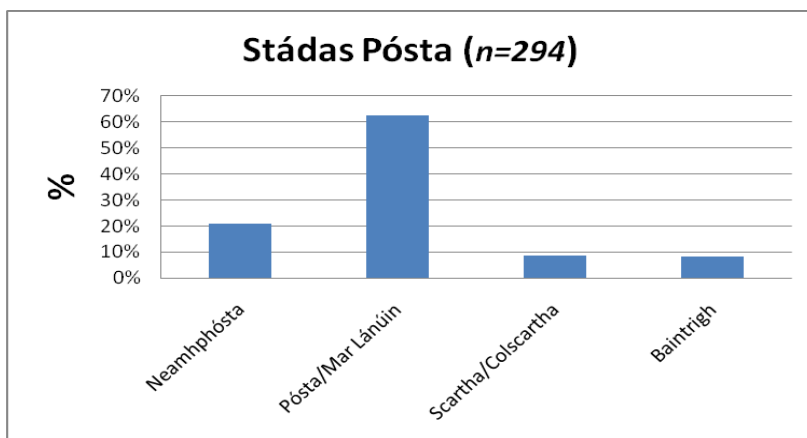
Tábla 1: Freagróirí de réir áit bhreithe

Aoisghrúpa agus Stádas Pósta

Tá aoisdáileadh agus stádas pósta rannpháirtithe an tsuirbhé ar fáil i **bhFíoracha 1** agus **2**.



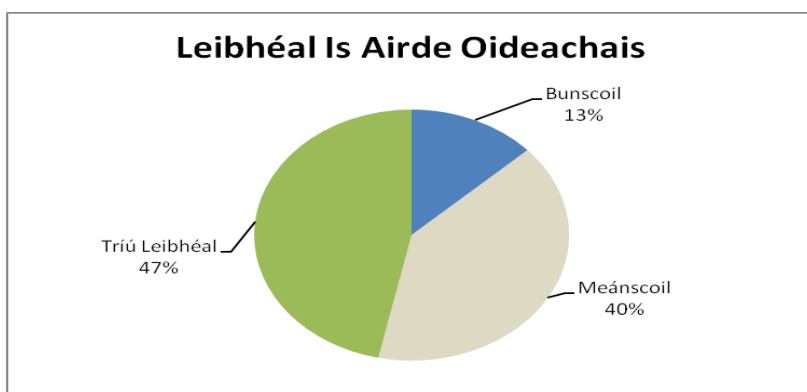
Fíor 1: Freagróirí de réir aoise



Fíor 2: Rannpháirtithe de réir stádas pósta (n=294)

Oideachas

Bhí céatadán ard fhreagróirí a raibh cáilíocht a bhain le hoideachas tríú leibhéal acu (**Fíor 3**). Seans go bhfuil tionchar ag an dá institiúid thríú leibhéal atá ar an mbaile ar an gcéatadán ard seo.



Fíor 3: Rannpháirtithe de réir leibhéal oideachais

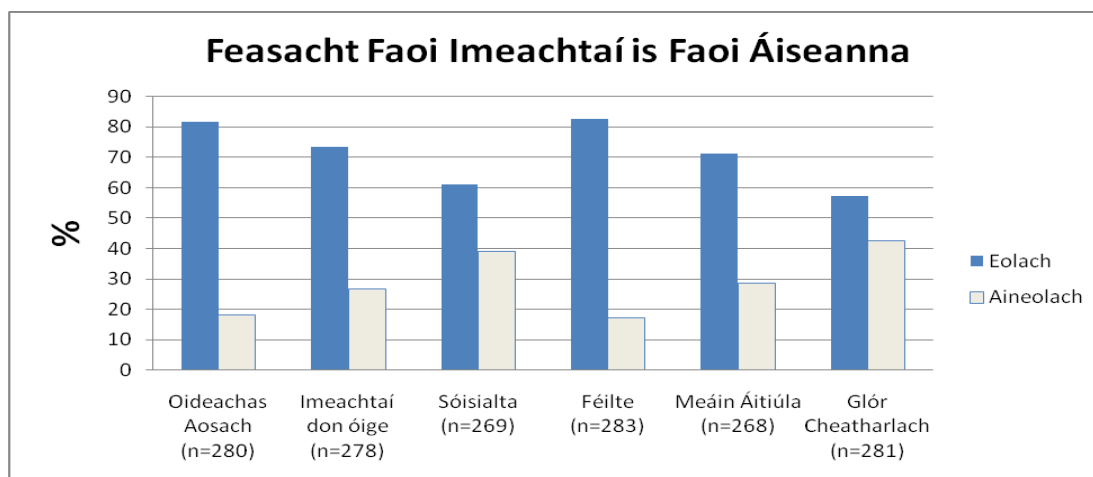
Slí Bheatha

Cuireadh ceist ar na rannpháirtithe cén tslí bheatha a bhí acu, ach thug céatadán ard de na freagróirí freagraí a bhí ró-éiginnte le go bhféadfaí catagóiríú inmharthana socheacnamaíoch a chur i bhfeidhm orthu. I gcomhar leis an ráta réasúnta íseal de fhreagraí (80%), glacadh cinneadh gan an t-eolas seo a úsáid nuair a bhí anailís á dhéanamh ar na sonraí.

Feasacht ar an nGaeilge agus ar Phobal na Gaeilge i gCeatharlach

Tugann na torthaí ar na ceisteanna maidir leis an rannán seo le fios go bhfuil feasacht láidir ann maidir le pobal na Gaeilge sa dúiche seo, agus tuairim is 73% de dhaoine ag rá go raibh feasacht acu air, ach nach raibh an fheasacht chéanna ann chomh fada agus a bhain le heagraíocht Glór Cheatharlach, le breis agus 40% de dhaoine ag rá nár chuala siad riamh faoin eagraíocht seo, agus 6% de dhaoine a bhí éiginnte faoi bheith eolach fúithi. Is féidir a rá gur eagraíocht réasúnta nua atá i nGlór Cheatharlach, gur bunaíodh an eagraíocht i 2008, agus gur dócha go raibh tionchar ag an nuacht seo ar na figiúirí.

Nuair a ceistíodh na rannpháirtithe faoi imeachtaí agus faoi áiseanna éagsúla atá ar fáil i gCeatharlach, bhí éagsúlacht ag baint leis an fheasacht a bhí ag daoine fúthu. De réir mar a fheictear i bhFíor 4 thíos, bhí leibhéal ard feasachta ann ó thaobh cúrsaí don oideachas aosach bheith ar fáil, agus ó thaobh na bhféilte de, ach nach raibh leibhéal chomh hard feasachta ann (cé go raibh sé ard go leor ag 61%) i dtaca le heolas bheith ag daoine faoi imeachtaí sóisialta bheith ar fáil. Thabharfadh sé seo le fios go gcaithfidh muintir Ghlór Cheatharlach cur leis an bhfeasacht atá ann maidir leis an eagrais féin, cé go bhfuil ag éirí go maith leo na himeachtaí a réachtálann siad a chur chun cinn.



Fíor 4: Feasacht Faoi Imeachtaí Is Faoi Áiseanna i gCeatharlach

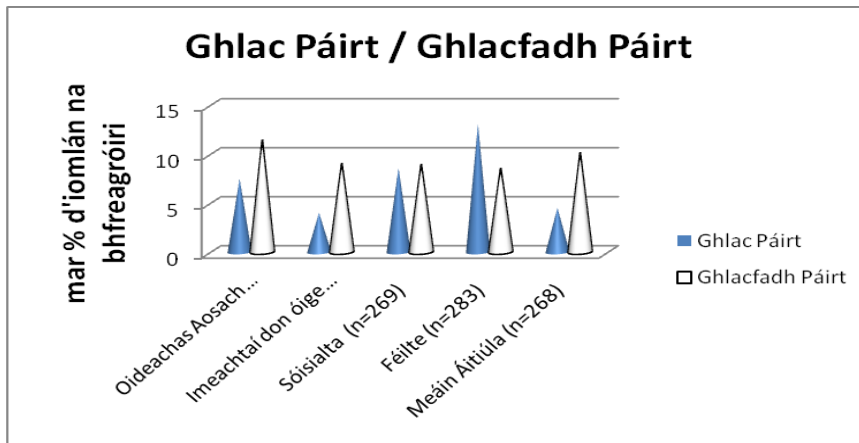
Rinneadh tástálacha comhghaolaithe chun iniúchadh a dhéanamh ar na gaolta a bheadh ann idir feasacht bheith ag daoine faoi na himeachtaí/áiseanna thuas, agus na trí athraitheach seo leanas, inscne, aois, agus oideachas. Bhí gaol suntasach ann idir inscne agus an fheasacht bheith ag daoine faoi imeachtaí don óige, léirigh mná an fheasacht ba mhó; agus idir aois agus fheasacht faoi imeachtaí sóisialta, inar léirigh daoine sna haoisghrúpaí óga go raibh eolas níos mó acusan faoi imeachtaí sóisialta ná mar a bhí ag freagróirí a bhí níos sine ná iad.

Nuair a cuireadh na leibhéil fheasachta i gcomparáid leis an gcéatadán de na freagróirí a ghlac páirt in aon cheann de na himeachtaí, nó a bhain úsáid as na háiseanna, feictear go bhfuil éagsúlacht mhór idir na figiúirí. (Fíor 5) Caithfear cuimhneamh air, áfach, go bhfuil teorainn leis an méid daoine a fhreastalódh ar chuid de na himeachtaí seo, m.sh. Campaí Samhraidh, Dioplóma sa Ghaeilge, agus luaigh cuid de na hagallaithe go ndearna siad iarrachtaí áiteanna a fháil ar na cúrsaí/campaí seo, ach go raibh na cúrsaí lán.

Freagairt thipiciúil a bhí ann maidir leis an gceist faoi na meáin áitiúla, an Colún Gaeilge sa Nationalist ach go háirithe, ná

“Amharcaim air, agus déanaim sruthléamh air, ach ní thuigim i gcónaí é, agus dá bhrí sin caithfidh mé freagra diúltach a thabhairt agus a rá nach léim i gceart é” (Agalláí 279).

Léirigh daoine go raibh suim acu go gcuirfí ar an eolas iad i dtaca leis na himeachtaí a luadh, agus páirt a ghlacadh iontu. Ba cheart go ndéanfadh Glór Cheatharlach díriú ar an ngné seo den obair, agus tá cur síos níos mine air seo níos déanaí i rannán eile den tuairisc seo.

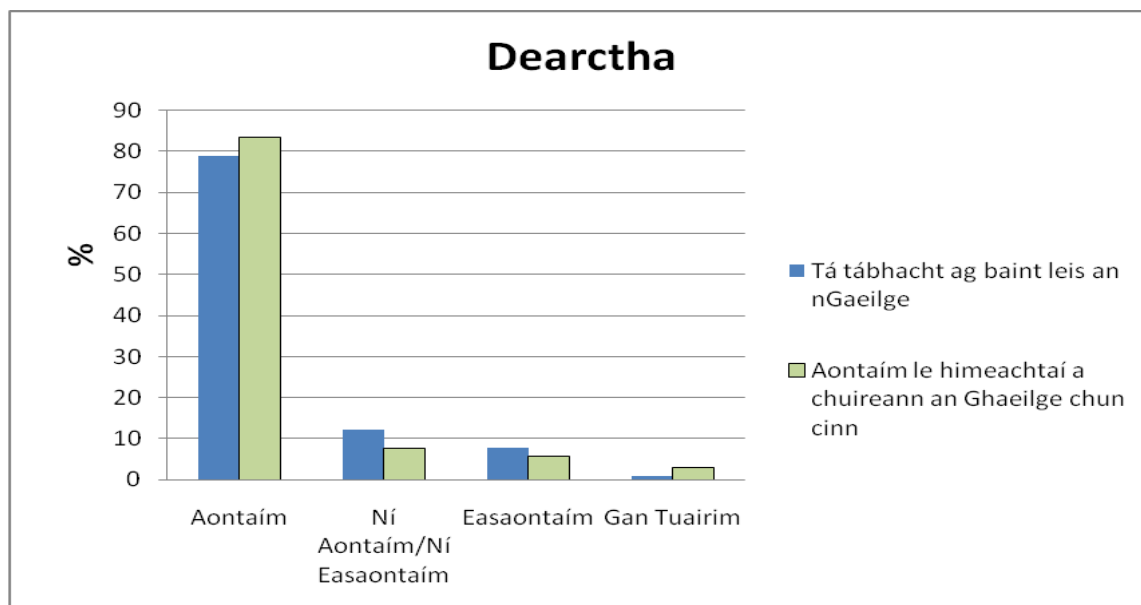


Fíor 5: Céatadán na bhfreagróirí a ghlac páirt in imeachtaí atá ar fáil, nó a ghlacfadh páirt iontu

Nuair a cuireadh ceist ar na daoine a bhí ar an eolas, maidir le tionchar na n-imeachtaí thuasluaite orthu féin, d’fhreagair an chuid ba mhó daoine nach raibh tionchar ag na himeachtaí seo ar mhéadú ar an méid Ghaeilge a labhair siad, agus dúirt 38% gur labhair siad níos mó Gaeilge dá bharr. Caithfear a chur san áireamh go bhfuil daoine istigh ar an méid a dúirt nach raibh tionchar ag na himeachtaí thuasluaite ar an méid Ghaeilge a labhraíonn siad, a labhraíonn an Ghaeilge ar aon nós, beag beann ar na himeachtaí sin.

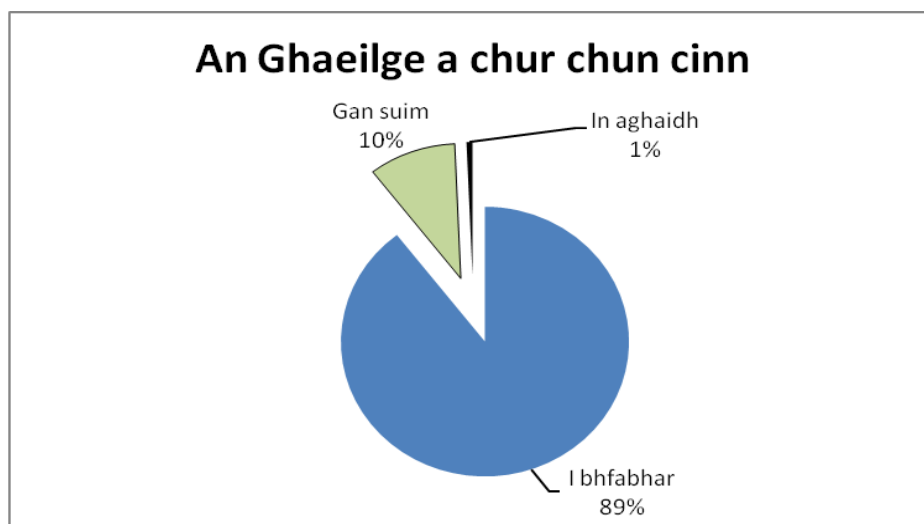
Dearcadh i Leith na Teanga

Bhí tuairim is 80% d'fhreagróirí a d'aontaigh go láidir, nó a d'aontaigh ar aon nós leis na ráitis “Creidim go bhfuil tábhacht ar leith ag baint le teanga na Gaeilge” nó “Aontaím le himeachtaí a chuireann an Ghaeilge chun cinn.” (Fíor 6)



Fíor 6: Dearcadh i leith na Gaeilge agus i leith imeachtaí chun í a chur chun cinn

Tá an dearcadh dearfach seo i leith na Gaeilge le sonrú sna freagraí a thug daoine nuair a ceistíodh iad maidir leis na tuairimí a bhí acu chomh fada is a bhain leis an nGaeilge bheith á chur ar aghaidh. (Fíor 7)



Fíor 7 : Dearcadh i leith chur chun cinn na Gaeilge

Ceistíodh na hagallaithe i dtaca leis an tionchar a bhí ag daoine eile nó imeachtaí áirithe ar an dearcadh a bhí acu i leith na Gaeilge. Tugann **Tábla 2** miondealú ar na torthaí.

	Dearfach	Diúltach	Gan Tuairim
Tuismitheoirí (n=260)	41.2	13.1	45.7
Siblínní (n=257)	36.2	10.5	53.3
Múinteoirí (n=285)	57.2	27.8	15
Na Meáin (n=254)	40.2	10.6	49.2
Cairde (n=253)	34.4	12.6	53
An Ghaeltacht (n=251)	29.1	8.4	62.5
Imeachtaí Phobail (n=246)	35.8	7.7	56.5

Tábla 2: Tionchair ar dhearcadh i leith na Gaeilge

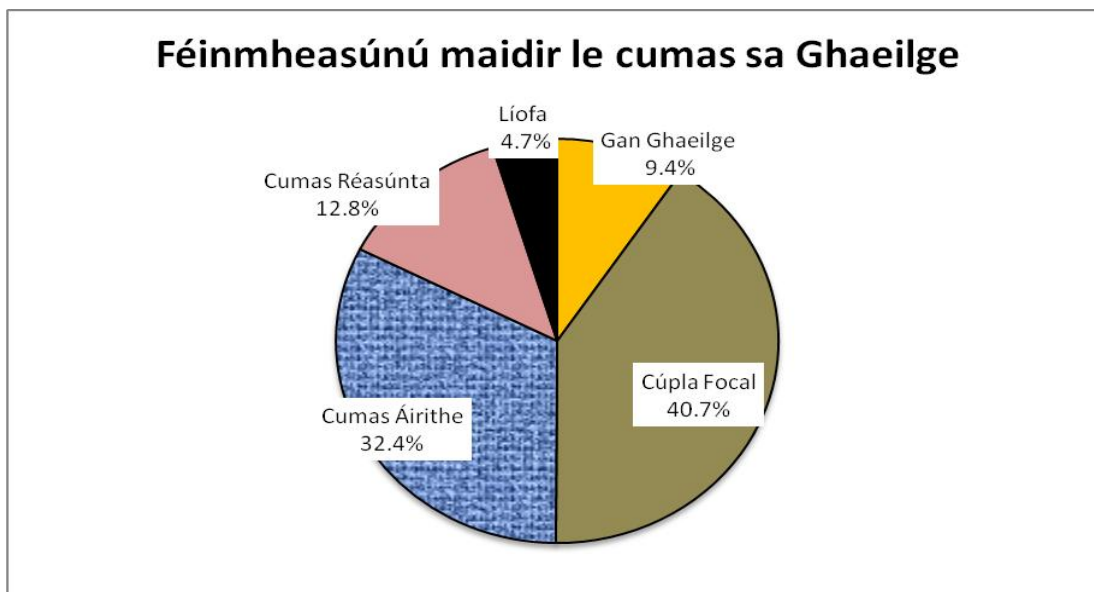
Tacaíonn na torthaí seo leis na torthaí a fuarthas cheana féin maidir le tábhacht an chórais oideachais ó thaobh dearcadh an phobail i leith na Gaeilge a mhúnlú. Léiríodh gurb iad na múinteoirí ba chúis leis an tionchar dearfach is mó agus an tionchar diúltach is mó a bhí ar na freagróirí.

D'imir an teaghlach tionchar láidir dearfach rithábhachtach ar fhreagróirí maidir le dearcadh i leith na teanga, na tuismitheoirí agus na siblínní araon. Tá sé suimiúil a thabhairt faoi deara go raibh na meáin chumarsáide sa tríú háit ó thaobh tionchar dearfach a bheith acu ar thuairimí dhaoine i leith na Gaeilge, beagnach 6% níos airde ná an tionchar a bhí ag cairde orthu.

Cumas i Leith na Gaeilge

Is iad na freagróirí féin a rinne meastachán ar an gcumas Gaeilge a bhí acu. Tugadh 5 rogha do na rannpháirtithe chun an cumas a mheas. Tá na torthaí curtha síos i bhFíor 8:

Dúirt 9.4% de na daoine ar cuireadh agallamh orthu nach raibh Gaeilge ar bith acu. Istigh ar an bhfigiúr seo tá 3.8% de dhaoine a d'fhás aníos taobh amuigh de thír na hÉireann, agus nach raibh deis acu aithne a chur ar an teanga. Den 90.6% d'fhreagróirí a dúirt go raibh Gaeilge acu, dúirt tuairim is 50% go raibh ábaltacht acu sa teanga agus 40.7% a dúirt go raibh cúpla focal acu, ar a laghad. (Fíor 8 agus Tábla 3)



Fíor 8: Féinmheasúnú maidir le cumas sa Ghaeilge

Má chuirimid na torthaí seo i gcomparáid le torthaí an tsuirbhé ó 1985, (achoimre i d**Tábla 3**), tá an chosúlacht ann go bhfuil bail níos sláintiúla ar an nGaeilge faoi láthair i gCeatharlach, agus ardú suntasach i líon na ndaoine atá líofa inti. Bhí titim íseal i líon na ndaoine gan Ghaeilge ar bith, íslíú 18% i measc daoine le cúpla focal, agus ardú tuairim is 20% sna rannáin ar fad a léirigh cumas níos airde sa teanga.

Catagóirí an tSuirbhé 2010	%	Catagóirí an tSuirbhé 1985	% (n=256)	Athrú (%)
Gan Ghaeilge	9.4	Gan Ghaeilge	11	-1.6
Cúpla Focal	40.7	Cúpla Focal / Abairtí Simplí	59	-18.3
Cumas Áirithe	32.3	Comhrá Áirithe	19	+13.3
Cumasach	12.9	Gnáth-Chomhrá	10	+2.9
Líofa	4.7	Gaeilge ón Chliabhán	1	+3.7

Tábla 3: Comparáid maidir le cumas sa Ghaeilge idir 1985 agus 2010

Is féidir comparáid fhabhrach a dhéanamh idir na figiúirí seo agus torthaí an tsuirbhé náisiúnta a ghlac an tAonad Suirbhé agus Taighde, An Roinn Socheolaíochta, NUI Maigh Nuad, suirbhé a cuireadh i bhfeidhm idir Mhí na Samhna 2007 agus Mhí an Mhárta 2008.² Má dhéanaimid scrúdú ar na catagóirí i dtaca le cumas sa teanga, (tugadh “gan líofacht” agus “meánach” orthu sa suirbhé náisiúnta) feicimid gur mheas 45.2% de dhaoine i gCeatharlach go raibh siad cumasach, i gcomparáid le 34% ar fud na tíre. (**Tábla 4**)

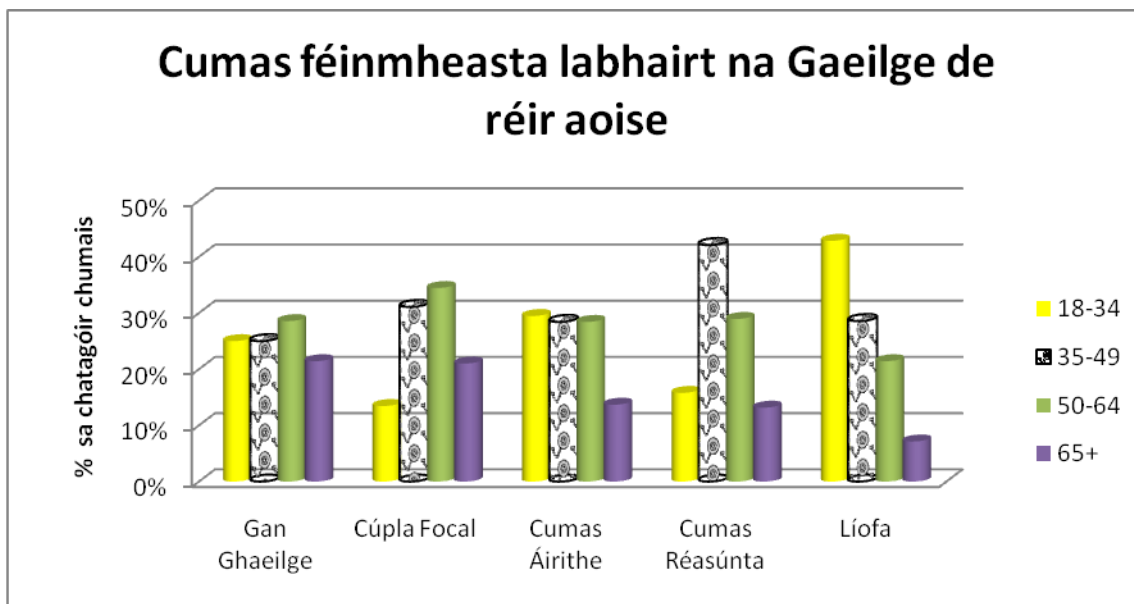
Catagóirí an tSuirbhé Náisiúnta	%	Catagóirí an tSuirbhé i gCeatharlach	%
Gan Ghaeilge	26	Gan Ghaeilge	9.4
Beagán Gaeilge	33	Cúpla Focal	40.7
Gan Líofacht	14	Cumas Áirithe	32.3
Meánach	20	Cumas Réasúnta	12.9
Líofa/An-Líofa	8	Líofa	4.7

Tábla 4: Comparáid idir shuirbhé náisiúnta 2009 agus shuirbhé Cheatharlach

Ní raibh comhghaol suntasach ann maidir leis an nGaeilge bheith ag duine, agus na hathróa seo leanas: inscne, stádas pósta agus áit bhreithe. Bhí comhghaol dearfach a bhí suntasach ó thaobh staitistice de le sonrú idir leibhéal chumais sa Ghaeilge, agus aois agus leibhéal oideachais. Déantar scagadh níos mine ar na gaolta seo thíos.

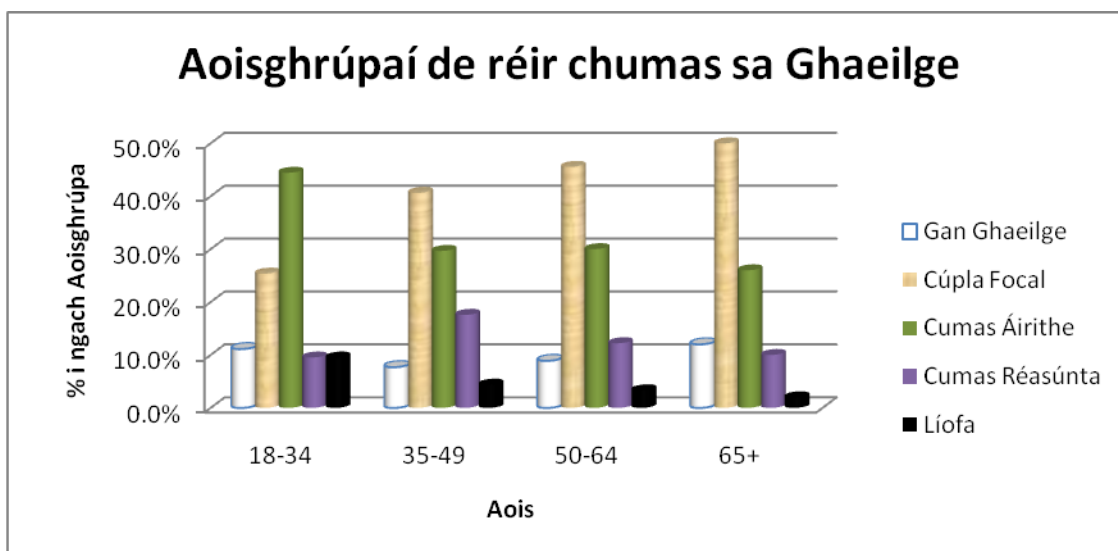
² McGréil, M. & Rhatigan, F. *The Irish Language and the Irish People*. (2009)

http://www.pobail.ie/ie/Preaseisiuinti/file_9801_ie.pdf



Fíor 9: Cumais féinmheasta labhairt na Gaeilge de réir aoise

Tugann **Fíor 9** léargas ar an gcéatadán aoise maidir le gach uile chatagóir labhartha. Tabhair faoi deara nach bhfuil mórán difríochta idir na haoisghrúpaí i dtaca leis an gcatagóir dóibhsan gan Ghaeilge. Baineann an líon is lú chainteoirí cumasacha agus chainteoirí líofa leis an gcatagóir de dhaoine thar 65 bliana d’aois, agus léirítear go bhfuil cuid mhaith de dhaoine óga sa dúiche atá réasúnta cumasach nó líofa sa teanga. Is dócha go bhfuil tionchar nach beag ag an nGaelscoil atá bunaithe le tamall, agus ag Gaelcholáiste an bhaile ar na figiúirí seo. Tá fás leanúnach ann sa mhéid is a bhaineann le líon na ndaltaí a fhreastalaíonn ar na scoileanna seo. Cuireann na scoileanna seo cohórt de dhaoine le Gaeilge ar fáil agus d’fhéadfadh pobal na Gaeilge tógáil ar an acmhainn seo.

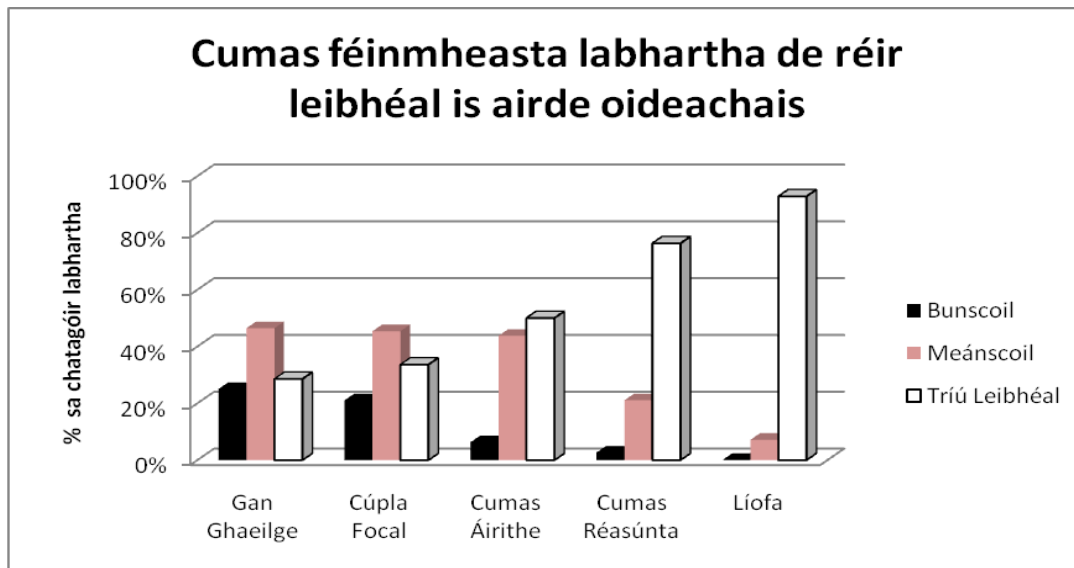


Fíor 10: Aoisghrúpaí de réir chumas sa Ghaeilge

Ní féidir linn comparáid dhíreach a dhéanamh le torthaí an tsuirbhé i 1985 toisc gur baineadh úsáid as catagóirí d’aoisghrúpaí éagsúla, ach is féidir linn comparáidí ginearálta a dhéanamh. Léirigh an dá shuirbhé gurb iad na freagróirí is sine (>=65 bl) na daoine is lú chumais sa Ghaeilge. (**Fíor 10**) Sa bhliain 1985, bhí na daoine idir 25 agus 55 i bhfad níos líofa ná na daoine 25 bliana agus níos óige. Léiríonn na torthaí ó 2010 go bhfuil cumas sa Ghaeilge níos fearr ag an óige ná mar atá ag daoine níos aosta. Tá tuairim againn nach leanann an leibhéal ard líofachta seo nuair a théann an óige in

aois. Is féidir go dtarlaíonn seo toisc go mbíonn níos lú deiseanna acu an teanga a úsáid. Dúirt céatadán ard fhreagróirí gur cheart go gcuirfí imeachtaí ar fáil a fhreastalódh ach go háirithe ar dhaoine níos sine, imeachtaí a thabharfadh taitneamh i rith an lae, ar nós grúpa léitheoireachta nó cluichí cártaí a réachtáil.

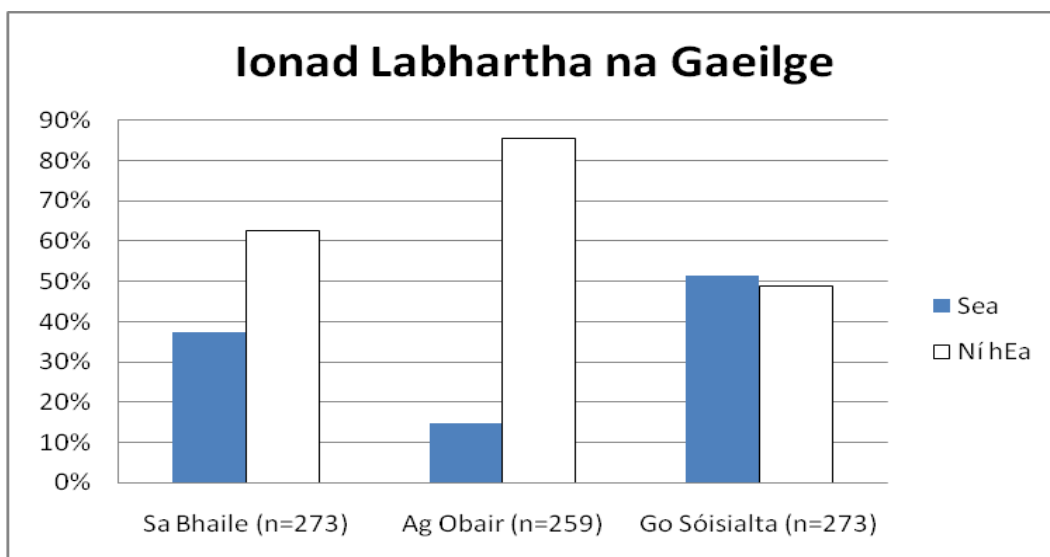
Léirítear go soiléir an gaol láidir atá ann idir chumas sa Ghaeilge agus leibhéal oideachais i bhFíor 11. Bhí céim thríú leibhéal ag formhór mór na ndaoine atá cumasach agus líofa sa teanga. Is féidir an chonclúid a bhaint as san, gurb iad na daoine óga le cáilíochtaí arda, na daoine sna rannáin den daonra is cumasaí sa Ghaeilge.



Fíor 11: *Cumas labhartha féinmheasta de réir leibhéal oideachais*

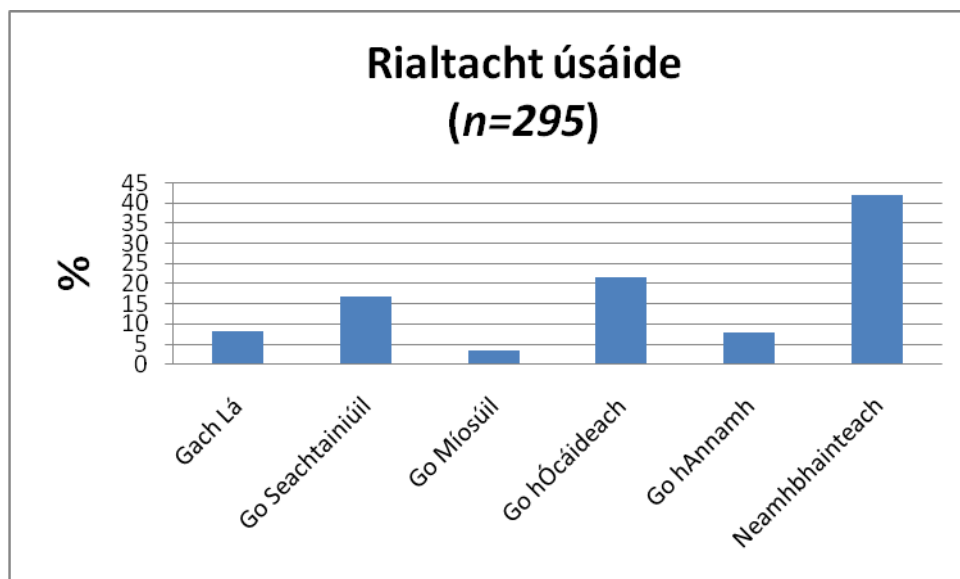
Minicíocht agus Ócáidí Úsáide Theanga na Gaeilge

Is i suíomhanna neamhfhoirmiúla is mó a labhair daoine Gaeilge, ag ócáidí sóisialta is mó a labhraíodh í (51.3%), labhair 37.4% sa bhaile í agus ní raibh ach 14.7% ann a labhair Gaeilge ag an ionad oibre. (Fíor 12)



Fíor 12: *Ionad úsáide na Gaeilge*

Cuireadh ceist ar na freagróirí ar fad a dúirt gur labhair siad Gaeilge sa bhaile, san ionad oibre, nó go sóisialta, cé chomh rialta agus a labhair siad í. De réir mar a fheictear i bhFíor 13 níor bhain an cheist seo ach le 58% d'fhreagróirí.



Fíor 13: Rialtacht úsáide Theanga na Gaeilge

Cuireadh ceist ar na rannpháirtithe i dtaca leis an uair dheireanach inar labhair siad an Ghaeilge. Dúirt tuairim is 83% de dhaoine (n=164) gur labhair siad Gaeilge le mí anuas, agus dúirt 17% gur labhair siad Gaeilge i rith na bliana a d'imigh thart. Istigh ar an uimhir mhór de dhaoine a labhair Gaeilge i rith na míosa roimhe sin bhí rannpháirtithe a mhínigh gur ag cabhrú le páistí obair bhaile a dhéanamh a raibh siad.

Ardaíonn na torthaí seo ceist shuimiúil maidir leis an gcúis atá ann nach n-úsáideann daoine atá cumasach sa Ghaeilge an teanga ar bhonn níos rialta. Tá an tuairim ag Mac Gréil go bhfuil noirm soch-chultúrtha ann a d'fhéadfadh cur isteach ar úsáid na Gaeilge, cé go mbíonn leibhéil arda cumais agus dearcadh dearfach ag daoine i leith na teanga.³ De réir na noirm seo, agus leagtar amach iad i dtuairisc ó 1975 a d'fhoilsigh CILAR, bíonn leisce ar dhaoine bheith ag caint i nGaeilge mura mbíonn líofacht sa teanga ag gach uile dhuine a bhíonn i láthair, agus bíonn míshuaimhneas ar dhaoine labhairt le daoine atá níos líofa sa teanga ná iad féin.⁴

De réir na dtorthaí atá leagtha amach i dTábla 4 feictear go bhfuil na noirm theanga seo ann, agus go bhféadfadh go gcuireann easpa misnigh agus féin-chomhfhiosacht isteach ar úsáid níos mó a bhaint as an teanga. Ní dúirt ach 26% d'fhreagróirí (n=296) go gcuirfidís féin tús le comhrá as Gaeilge agus dúirt 54.4% de dhaoine go mbeadh míshuaimhneas orthu bheith ag labhairt Gaeilge le daoine a d'fhéadfadh bheith níos líofa ná iad.

³McGréil, M. & Rhatigan, F. *The Irish Language and the Irish People*. (2009) <http://www.pobail.ie/ie/Preaseisiuinti/file,9801,ie.pdf>

⁴ Committee on Irish Languages Attitudes Research (CILAR) (1975) *Report 1975* Dublin Government Publications

	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Gan Tuairim (%)
Ba cheart go mbeadh ionad cultúrtha na Gaeilge ann le go bhféadfadh daoine bualadh go neamhfhoirmiúil le chéile chun Gaeilge a labhairt ann (<i>n=294</i>)	68.4	15	9.9	3.1	1.3	2.3
Ba mhaith liom go mbeadh deiseanna sa bhreis ann chun an Ghaeilge a labhairt i gCeatharlach (<i>n=295</i>)	38	15.6	18.3	8.5	10.2	9.4
Ní labhraíonn daoine im' thimpeallacht shóisialta Gaeilge (<i>n=291</i>)	40.5	8.9	17.9	9.3	21	2.4
Chuirfínn tús le comhrá sa Ghaeilge (<i>n=296</i>)	17.9	8.1	12.5	10.1	49	2.4
Bíonn míshuaimhneas orm bheith ag labhairt Gaeilge le daoine atá níos líofa ná mé (<i>n=296</i>)	44.6	9.8	12.2	7.1	22	4.3

Tábla 4: Freagraí ar cheist 8: 1 = “aontaím go láidir”; 2= “aontaím”; 3 = “neodrach”; 4= “esaontaím” agus 5 = “esaontaím go láidir”, cén bharúil atá agat faoi na ráitis seo leanas?”

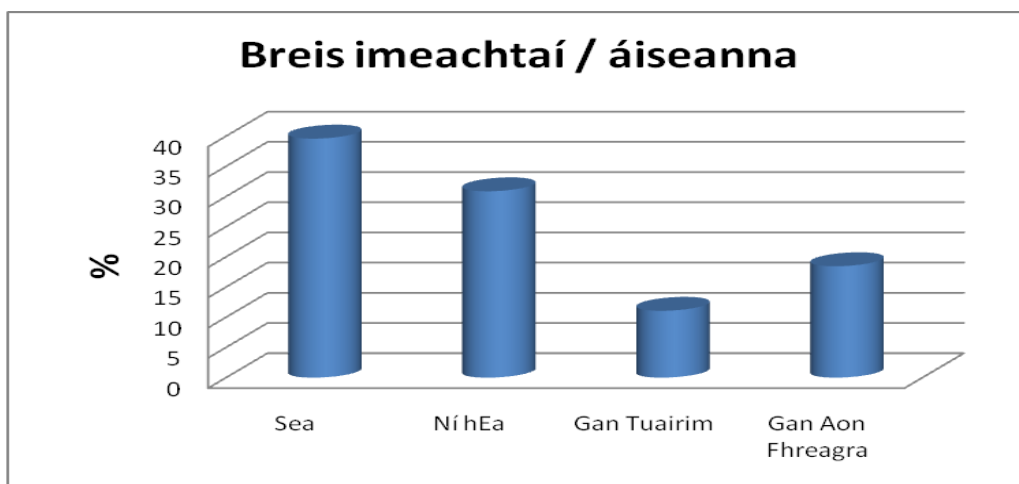
Cé go bhfuil na srianta seo ann, tá fianaise ann chomh maith go bhfuil athrú ag teacht ar chúrsaí. Tá fás 9.3% tagtha ar an méid daoine a deir go mbíonn Gaeilge á labhairt sa timpeallacht shóisialta lena mbaineann siad, i gcomparáid leis an suirbhé ó 1985, agus titim de nach mór 6% i méid na ndaoine a deir go mbíonn míshuaimhneas orthu bheith ag caint i nGaeilge le daoine atá níos líofa ná iad féin.

Tá an dearcadh dearfach seo i leith phobal na Gaeilge le sonrú arís sa mhéid is go raibh céatadán an-ard daoine a d’aontaigh gur ceart go mbeadh Ionad Cultúrtha na Gaeilge ann i gCeatharlach. (83.4%; *n=294*).

Bhí freagra an-dearfach ann chomh maith don cheist a cuireadh maidir le deiseanna labhartha na Gaeilge bheith ann. Samhlaítear dúinn go bhféadfaí cur le húsáid na Gaeilge toisc gur aontaigh 53.6% d’fhreagróirí (*n=295*) go gcuirfidís fáilte roimh dheiseanna breise Gaeilge a labhairt i gCeatharlach.

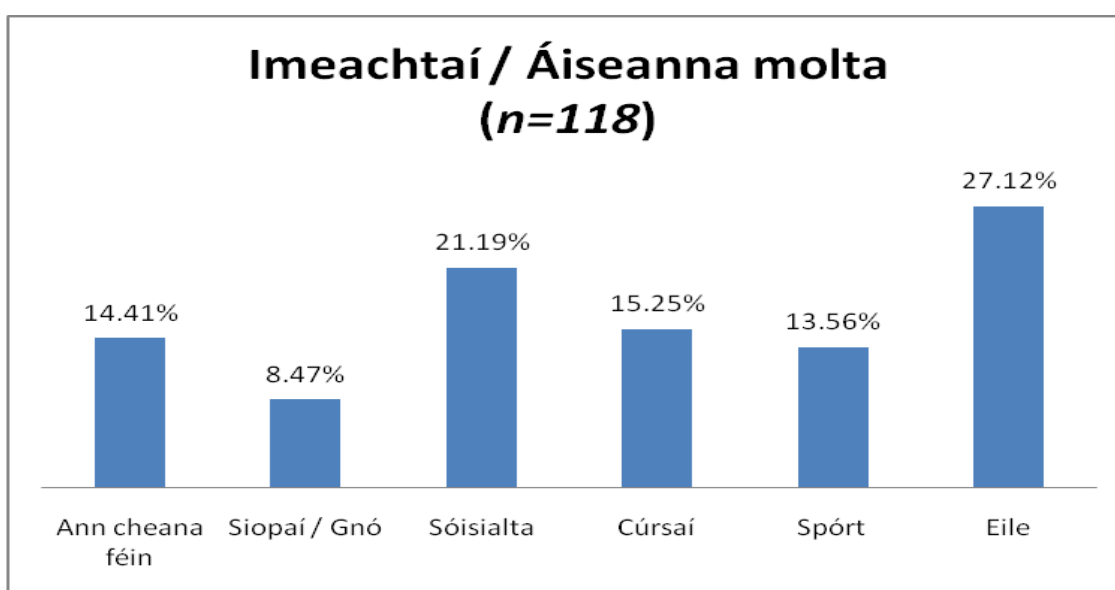
Ba mhaith le formhór mór de na daoine bheith in ann an Ghaeilge a úsáid nuair a bhíonn seirbhísí á lorg acu. Dúirt 81% (*n=247*) d’agallaithe gur maith an rud é dá mbeadh bainc, siopaí, proinntithe, agus údaráis áitiúla ag cur seirbhísí ar fáil trí Ghaeilge.

Cuireadh ceist ar na freagróirí ar fad imeachtaí nó áiseanna breise nach raibh ar fáil ag an bpointe sin a mholadh, rudaí a d’éascódh an fonn a léiríodh i dtaca leis an teanga a úsáid ar bhonn níos rialta. De réir mar a fheictear i bhFíor 14, bhí ráta réasúnta íseal freagraí ar an gceist seo.



Fíor 14: Ag lorg breis áiseanna/imeachtaí trí Ghaeilge

Rinneadh mionscrúdú ar na freagraí agus roinneadh i 6 chatagóir iad (**Fíor 15**). Toisc go ndúirt 14.4 % de dhaoine go raibh siad ana-shásta leis an leibhéal imeachtaí agus áiseanna a bhí ann cheana féin, glacadh cinneadh é seo a bheith istigh ar na catagóirí. Bhí éagsúlachtaí suntasacha ann maidir leis na freagraí taobh istigh de na catagóirí éagsúla. I measc na moltaí a bhí ann mar shampla, sa chatagóir sóisialta ná go raibh fonn ar dhaoine níos mó imeachtaí bheith ar fáil do na leanaí, agus iarratais go gcuirfí imeachtaí ar fáil i rith an lae do phinsinéirí. Bhí mórcheisteanna ag daoine i dtaca leis an gcatagóir faoi chúrsaí maidir leis an gcostas a bhí orthu, agus ceisteanna ó thaobh ama ann. D’aontaigh daoine gur ceart go mbeadh fógraí dátheangacha ann, agus bhí tacaíocht acu do lucht gnó agus do sheirbhísí poiblí a chuir na fógraí seo ar taispeáint in oifigí agus i siopaí, agus a thug le fios go raibh fáilte roimh Ghaeilge a úsáid sna háiteanna sin. Maidir leis an gcatagóir faoi rudaí eile, bhí moltaí ann ó thaobh leabhar frásaí d’fhoghlaimoirí a chur i gcló agus a dháileadh, club leabhar trí Ghaeilge a eagrú, grúpa drámaíochta i nGaeilge a bhunú, agus breis Gaeilge bheith in úsáid sna meáin áitiúla. Bhí cuid mhaith daoine ann a luaigh i dtosach báire gur mhaith leo go mbeadh an Ghaeilge in úsáid go nádúrtha i ngnáth-imeachtaí an lae, agus nach gá go mbeadh úsáid na Gaeilge teoranta d’ócáidí Gaelacha faoi leith.



Fíor 15: Imeachtaí/Áiseanna molta

	Go Rialta %	Anois & Arís %	Riamh %	Neamheolach %
Raidió (n=269)	9.7	29	58.7	2.6
Teilifís (n=291)	33.7	50.5	15.1	0.7
Cló Seachas Leabhair (260)	10.4	23.8	62.3	3.5
Leabhair (n=262)	14.1	22.9	60.7	2.3
Ar Líne (248)	0.8	6.5	82.7	10

Tábla 5: Minicíocht maidir le meáin trí Ghaeilge a úsáid

Glactar leis go forleathan leis go bhfuil ag éirí go han-mhaith le TG4 agus is léir é seo o Thábla 5. Bíonn breis agus 84% daoine ag breathnú go rialta nó go hócáideach ar chlár Ghaeilge ar an teilifís. Bhí dáileadh cothrom thar aoisghrúpa agus inscne ar na figiúirí seo. Ba é an chatagóir ó thaobh leabhair i nGaeilge a úsáid an dara chatagóir ba mhó, le 37% de dhaoine á léamh go rialta nó go hócáideach. Ní aon ionadh gur léirigh céatadán beag daoine go ndeachaigh siad ar líne chun áiseanna i nGaeilge a úsáid, toisc nach mbíonn na deiseanna seo ar fáil go forleathan, agus toisc go bhfuil feasacht theoranta ann i measc an phobail maidir leis na háiseanna seo.

Ba mhaith le nach mór 60% d'fhreagróirí go mbeadh níos mó Gaeilge in úsáid ag na meáin, agus an bhéim chéanna á leagadh acu ar mhéadú ar an méid Gaeilge a bheadh in úsáid go háitiúil is a bheadh go náisiúnta. Nuair a ceistíodh iad faoin earnáil ar leith inar mhaith an rud go dtarlódh an méadú seo, d'fhreagair a bhformhór gur mhaith leo go mbeadh níos mó Gaeilge in úsáid ar an raidió is ar an teilifís i gcoitinne. (30.4%; $n=164$).

Conclúidí/Moltaí

Tá stádas ard deimhneach ar an iomlán ag baint le teanga na Gaeilge i gCeatharlach. Tá cuma fholláin uirthi, agus líon níos mó daoine á labhairt i gcomparáid leis an mbliain 1985. Is féidir comparáid fhabhrach a dhéanamh chomh maith leis na torthaí náisiúnta ón suirbhé a rinne Mac Gréil agus Rhatigan i 2008.

Beidh ról lárnach leanúnach ag Glór Cheatharlach (bunaíodh 2008) maidir le tógáil a dhéanamh ar an mbunchloch seo, agus i dtaca leis an líon daoine a labhraíonn an teanga a mhéadú. D'éirigh thar barr leis an eagraíocht seo taobh istigh d'achar gearr ama. Bíonn freastal chomh mór sin ar na Campaí Samhraidh go mbíonn liostaí feithimh ann gach uile bhliain chun áiteanna d'fháil orthu. Tá fás tagtha faoin méid cúrsaí a chuireann Glór Cheatharlach ar fáil, agus faoi líon na ndaoine a bhíonn ag freastal orthu. Cuireann an rath agus an fhorbairt leanúnach atá faoin nGaelscoil agus faoin nGaelcholáiste go mór leis an nGaeilge bheith mar theanga bheo bhríomhar anseo i gCeatharlach.

Mar sin féin is gá féachaint chuige go mbeidh go leor deiseanna ann le gur féidir le daoine leanúint leo ag labhairt na Gaeilge tar éis dóibh na cúrsaí sin a thabhairt chun críche. Is gá an úsáid a bhaintear as an teanga i suímh shóisialta agus fhóillíochta a spreagadh. Tá gá ann chomh maith maidir leis an mbearna atá ann idir inniúlacht agus úsáid a líonadh, ionas gur féidir dul chun cinn a dhéanamh.

Dá bhféadfaí Ionad Cultúrtha a chur ar bun i gCeatharlach líonfaí an bhearna seo, agus thaobhódh formhór mór daoine leis. Ba chóir go ndéanfaí machnamh ceart faoi áit mar seo a chur ar bun mar bhealach chun timpeallacht shuaimhneach neamhfhoirmiúil a chruthú le go bhféadfaí imeachtaí mar ghrúpa máithreacha agus leanaí, maidin chaife do sheanóirí, grúpa léitheoireachta, club drámaíochta a réachtáil le haghaidh labhairt na Gaeilge. Comhlánú loighciúil a bheadh anseo ar an bhfóras faoi fhorhór na ndaoine bheith ag labhairt na Gaeilge i suímh neamhfhoirmiúla, sa bhaile nó go sóisialta.

Is léir go bhfuil bá ag daoine le go ndéanadh lucht ghnó obair trí Ghaeilge. D'fhéadfaí bearta praiticiúla a chur i bhfeidhm ar bheagán chostais ar nós biachláracha bheith i nGaeilge, nó fógraí i siopaí a léireodh fáilte roimh ghnó trí Ghaeilge.

Caithfidh daoine indibhidiúla a gcion a dhéanamh maidir le hathrú a chur ar na noirm agus ar na struchtúir atá "bacúil", dar le Mac Gréil.⁵ Caithfear iad seo a shárú sula bhféadfaí an Ghaeilge bheith in úsáid go nádúrtha mar chuid den ghnáthshaol laethúil i gCeatharlach.

⁵ McGréil, M. & Rhatigan, F. *The Irish Language and the Irish People*. (2009)

<http://www.pobail.ie/ie/Preaseisiuinti/file,9801,ie.pdf>

LEABHARLIOSTA

Committee on Irish Languages Attitudes Research (CILAR) (1975) Report 1975 Dublin Government Publications

Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann (1986) The Irish Language in Carlow, 1985. A survey of public attitudes towards Irish, abilities in Irish and Use of Irish <http://www.glorcheatharlach.ie>

McGréil, M. & Rhatigan, F. The Irish Language and the Irish People. (2009)
<http://www.pobail.ie/ie/Preaseisiuinti/file,9801,ie.pdf>

Introduction

In 1985 Coiste Glór na nGael in Carlow, in conjunction with the Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann (ITÉ), carried out a survey of public attitudes towards Irish in Carlow town and its environs. This survey revealed that there was an overwhelming support for the Irish language despite the fact that many people admitted to not being proficient in it. It also indicated high support for the provision of all-Irish schools.⁶ The support expressed for education through Irish has translated into a flourishing primary school, Gaelscoil Eoghain Uí Thuairisc and an expanding secondary school Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach. Between them, these two facilities cater for approximately 800 children. The provision of radio and television services through Irish were issues which arose in this survey and again these have been successfully provided by TG4 which was established in 1996, Radio na Gaeltacht and the local radio programme Tobar an Cheantair. Carlow has also seen the development of a thriving social scene, with festivals and events such as Éigse, Féile an Fhómhair, Oíche SULT, Gaeilge le Chéile, etc.

Since this survey was carried out, Carlow town has experienced huge change, particularly during the period commonly referred to as “The Celtic Tiger”. The effect, if any, of this change on the Irish language was unknown. It was therefore decided that a second survey should be carried out. Under the auspices of the Carlow Irish Language Research Group, in association with Glór Cheatharlach, this project was carried out during the summer of 2010. The aim of this project was to collect up-to-date information on people’s experiences of, and opinions on, the Irish language in Carlow town. The information collected will provide useful information on attitudes to, and the usage of, the language. It will also allow the Irish language community to gauge the level of interest in the Irish language and alert them to issues that people have about the language and its promotion. It will enable them to focus their programme of activities on areas which people are interested in and facilitate the development of an Irish language plan for this area. The survey was funded by Foras na Gaeilge.

Methodology

It was decided that a questionnaire survey would be the most effective way to collect the relevant information. In consultation with representatives from Glór Cheatharlach, a detailed questionnaire was designed which consisted of both closed and open-ended questions. A pilot study was carried out before the final survey commenced. The questionnaire was in English and contained 24 questions. It was decided to carry out face-to-face interviews to maximise the response rate. Only adults (> 18 years of age) were included in the sampling process. Multistage cluster sampling was used to select participants. This technique involved initially dividing Carlow town area into a number of districts; existing electoral districts were used. Within each electoral district a random sample of smaller areas was selected and within these, households were randomly selected for interview. The advantage of using this technique is that while every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected, the cost and time involved for each interviewer was reduced as interviews were geographically clustered. It should be noted that this method did exclude certain groups of people from selection, for example, those who were in hospitals, nursing homes or homeless. Out of 300 households selected, 298 participated, resulting in a response rate of 99.3%. Unless otherwise stated in this report, calculations are based on $n=298$. The interviews were carried out by 18 trained local volunteers in the months of July and August 2010.

⁶ Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann (1986) *The Irish Language in Carlow, 1985. A survey of public attitudes towards Irish, abilities in Irish and Use of Irish* <http://www.glorcheatharlach.ie>

Analysis was carried out on the survey results using the software packages SPSS and Excel. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise and display the data. Correlation analysis (Pearsons and Spearman) and Goodness-of-Fit tests (chi-square) were carried out, where appropriate, to explore for relationships between variables. A 5% significance level was used for all tests.

Demographic Breakdown

Gender

The majority of participants were females; 39.1 % of those surveyed were male.

Place of Birth

92.62% were born in Ireland while 5.37% were born elsewhere in Europe. **Table 1** supplies a more detailed breakdown.

	% of respondents
Carlow	49
Other Ireland	43.62
United Kingdom	3.02
Other Europe	2.35
No Response	2.01

Table 1: Respondents categorised by place of birth

Age Group and Marital Status

The age distribution and marital status of those surveyed are displayed in **Figures 1** and **2**.

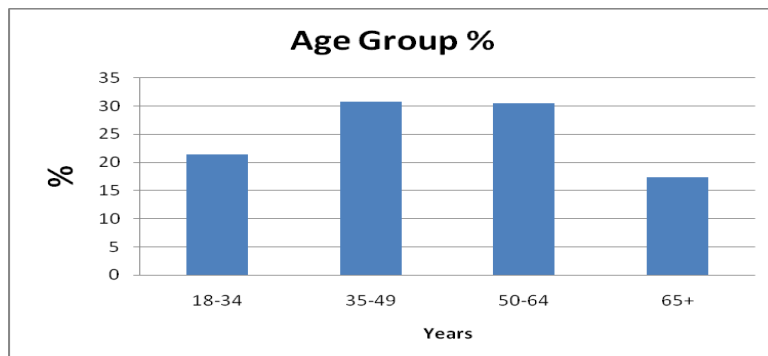


Figure 1: Participants broken down by age

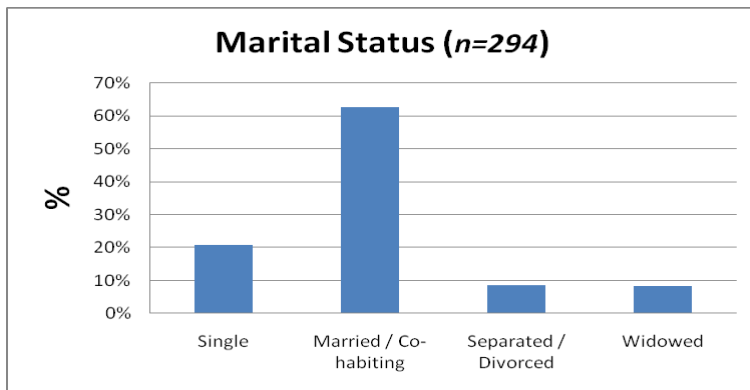


Figure 2: Participants broken down by marital status (n=294)

Education

There were quite a high proportion of respondents who had a third level qualification (**Figure 3**). This high figure may be influenced by the fact that there are two third level institutions in the town.

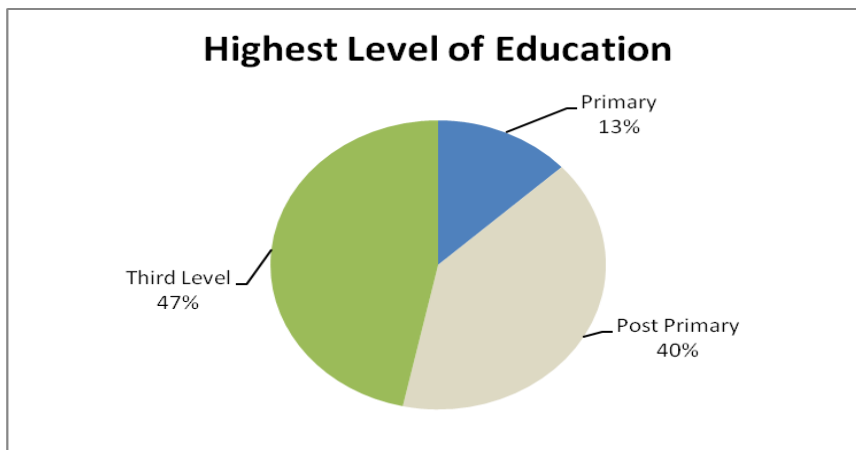


Figure 3: Participants broken down by education level

Occupation

Participants were asked what their occupation was but a large percentage of the responses received were too vague to allow for viable socio-economic categorisation. In combination with a relatively low response rate of 80% it was decided not to use this information in the analysis of the data.

Awareness of the Irish language and its community in Carlow

The results for this section indicate that while there is a very strong awareness of the Irish Language community in the area, with approximately 73% of people stating they are aware of its presence, there is not the same level of awareness of the organisation Glór Cheatharlach, with over 40% stating that they had not heard about the organisation and 6% not sure if they had. These figures may reflect the fact that Glór Cheatharlach is a relatively new organisation in the town, having only been set up in 2008.

When questioned about the specific activities and facilities that are available in Carlow, there were varying levels of awareness. As can be seen from **Figure 4** below, there was a very high level of awareness with regard to adult education courses and festivals but a relatively low level (although still quite high at 61%) of awareness of social events that are taking place. These figures would seem to indicate that while Glór Cheatharlach is very successful at promoting their activities it needs to increase awareness of their own organisation.

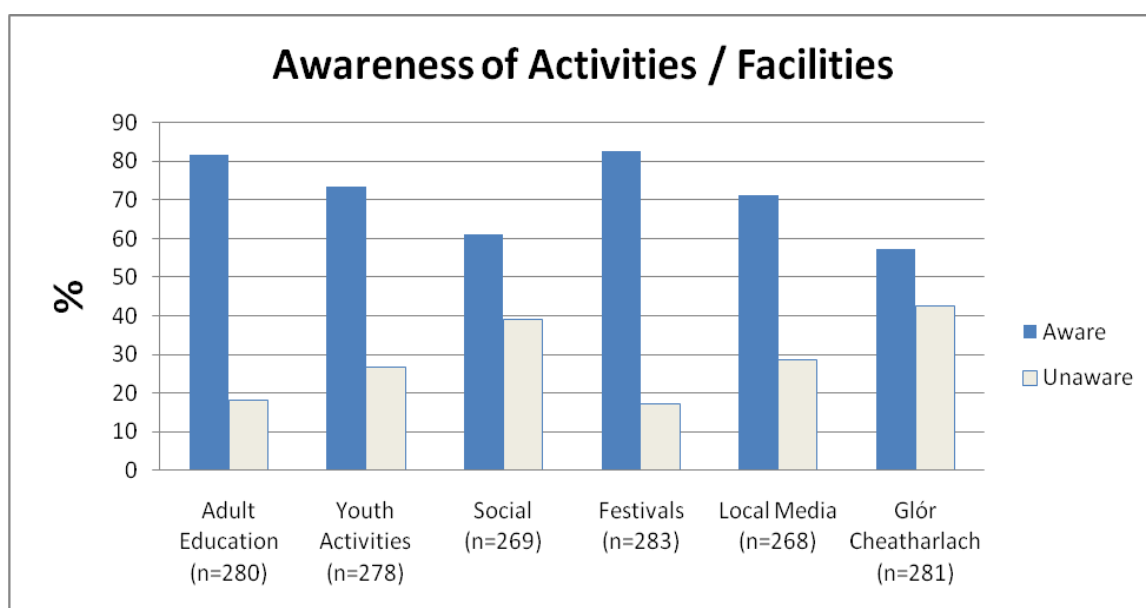


Figure 4: Awareness levels of activities and facilities in Carlow

Correlation tests were carried out to explore for relationships between the awareness of each of above activities / facilities and the following three variables: gender, age and education. There was a significant relationship between gender and awareness of youth activities, with females showing a higher awareness; and between age and awareness of social events, with people in the younger age groups displaying more knowledge of social events than older respondents.

When the awareness levels are compared with the percentage of respondents who have actually participated in any of the activities or used the facilities, we can see that there is a large difference between them. (**Figure 5**) It must be borne in mind, however, that some of these activities, e.g. Campaí Samhraidh, Díoplóma sa Gaeilge, have a cap on the number of people who can attend and it was commented on by interviewees that they had tried to get on these courses / camps but they had been full.

A typical response also with regard to the local media question, in particular the Colún Gaeilge sa Nationalist, was

“I do glance at it and skim through it, but I don’t always understand it, so I suppose I’d have to say no, I don’t really read it” (Interviewee 279).

There was interest expressed in becoming more informed and participating in the activities listed. This is an area which Glór Cheatharlach could focus on and is dealt with in more detail in a later section of this report.

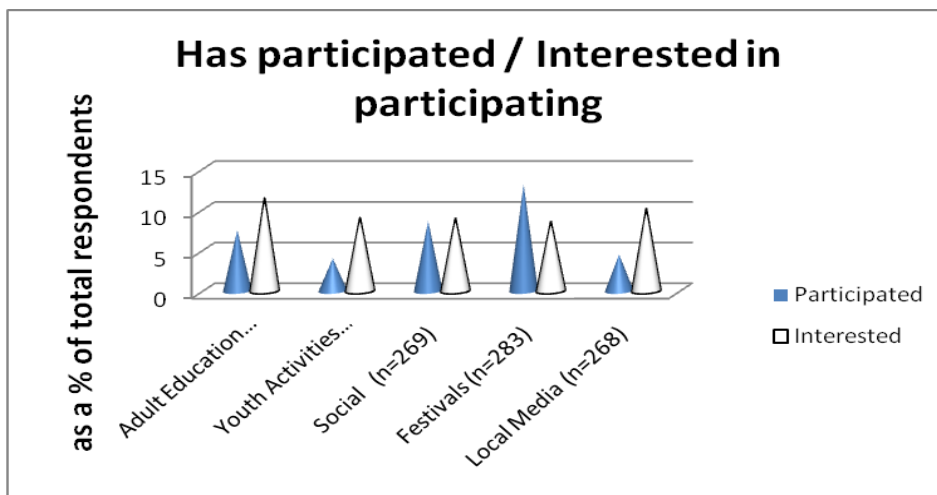


Figure 5: Percentage of respondents who have participated in existing activities and those who are interested in participating in them.

When those who were aware of the above activities were asked about the impact of these activities, the majority responded that they had not influenced them to speak more Irish, while 38% confirmed that they had. It should be noted that the percentage replying that they hadn’t influenced them includes people who stated that they speak Irish anyway, regardless of these activities.

Attitude to Language

Approximately 80% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statements “I believe that the Irish language is very important” and “I am in favour of activities which promote the Irish language”. (Figure 6)

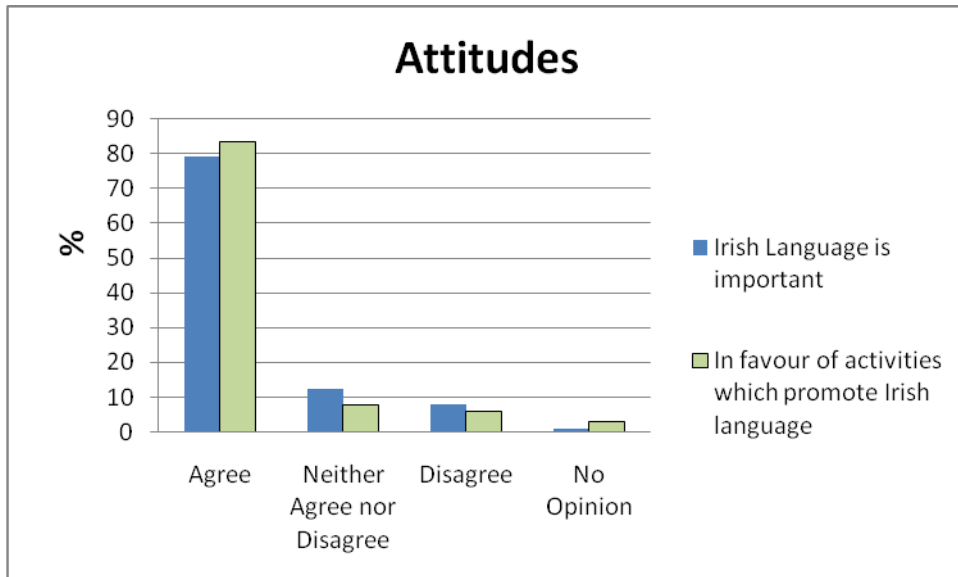


Figure 6: Attitude towards Irish language and activities which promote it

This positive attitude towards the Irish language is again evident in the responses when asked how they felt about the promotion of the Irish language. (Figure 7)

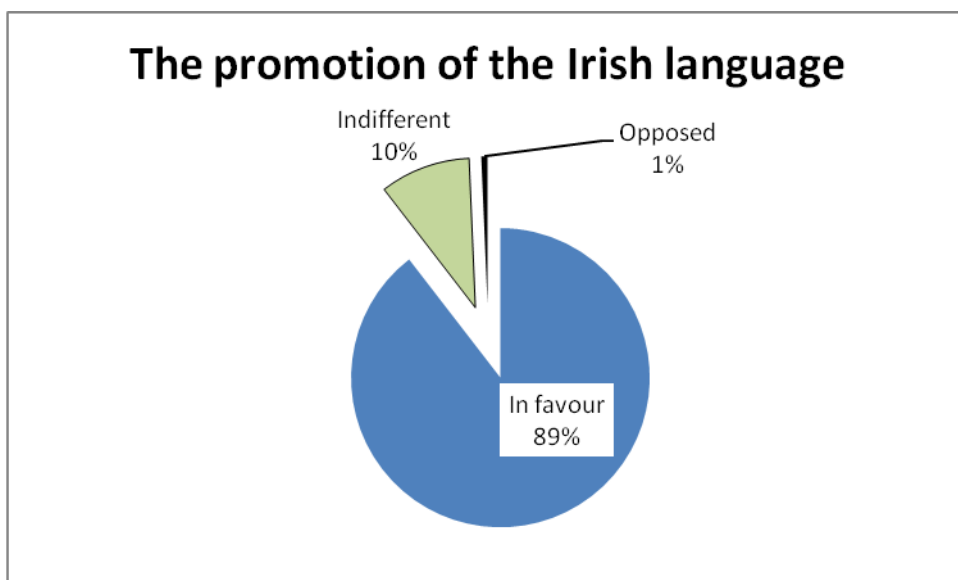


Figure 7: Attitude to the promotion of the Irish language

There were also very high numbers who agreed that there should be an Irish Cultural Centre in Carlow (83.4%; $n=294$) and who would like to see more businesses offer their services through Irish (81%; $n=247$).

Participants were asked to assess whether various people / events had influenced their opinion of the Irish language. The results are summarised in **Table 2**.

	Positively %	Negatively %	No Opinion %
Parents (n=260)	41.2	13.1	45.7
Siblings (n=257)	36.2	10.5	53.3
Teachers (n=285)	57.2	27.8	15
Media (n=254)	40.2	10.6	49.2
Friends (n=253)	34.4	12.6	53
Gaeltacht (n=251)	29.1	8.4	62.5
Community activities (n=246)	35.8	7.7	56.5

Table 2: Influences on opinion of the Irish language

The findings reinforce previous findings on the importance of the education system in forming people's opinions on the Irish language. Teachers were found to have had both the highest positive influence and the highest negative influence on people.

Families also exerted a strong positive influence, with both parents and siblings being very important. It is interesting to note that the media had the third highest figure for influencing people's opinions of the Irish language in a positive way, nearly 6% higher than the influence of friends.

Irish Language Ability

The ability of people to speak Irish was self assessed. Participants were given 5 options to assess their competency which are displayed in **Figure 8**:

9.4% of people interviewed replied that they had no Irish at all. This figure includes 3.8% of people who grew up outside of Ireland and were therefore never exposed to the language. Of the 90.6% of respondents who claimed to have some level of Irish, approximately 50% stated that they have some level of competency in the language and 40.7% stated that they have at least “cúpla focal”. (**Figure 8** and **Table 3**)

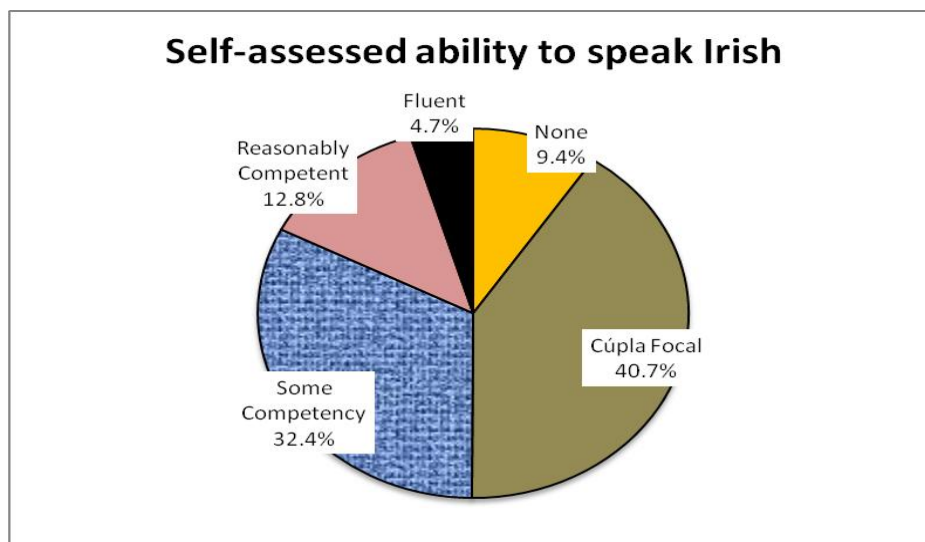


Figure 8: Self assessed ability to speak Irish

If we compare these findings with those of the 1985 survey, summarised in **Table 3**, we can see that the Irish language in Carlow appears to be in a healthier state, with a notable increase in fluency. There has been a small decrease in the number of people with no Irish at all, an 18% decrease in those with the “Cúpla focal” but an increase of approximately 20% in all of the higher ability categories.

2010 Survey Categories	%	1985 Survey Categories	% (n= 256)	Change (%)
None	9.4	No Irish	11	-1.6
Cúpla Focal	40.7	The Odd Word / A few Simple Sentences	59	-18.3
Some Competency	32.3	Parts of Conversations	19	+13.3
Reasonably Competency	12.9	Most Conversations	10	+2.9
Fluent	4.7	Native Speaker Ability	1	+3.7

Table 3: Comparison of ability to speak Irish between 1985 and 2010 surveys

These figures for competency in the Irish language also compare favourably with the results of a national survey by the Survey and Research Unit, Department of Sociology, NUI Maynooth, which was carried out between November and March 2008.⁷ If we examine the two categories of competency in the language (categorised as “not so fluent” and “middling” in the national survey) we see that 45.2% of people in Carlow assess themselves as being competent compared to 34% nationally. (Table 4)

National Survey Categories (2009)	%	Carlow Survey Categories (2010)	%
None	26	None	9.4
Only a little	33	Cúpla Focal	40.7
Not so fluent	14	Some Competency	32.3
Middling	20	Reasonably Competency	12.9
Very fluent / fluent	8	Fluent	4.7

Table 4: A comparison between national survey and Carlow survey

There was no significant correlation between the ability to speak Irish and the variables gender, marital status and place of birth. There was a statistically significant, positive correlation between the level of ability to speak Irish and both level of education and age. These relationships are explored in greater detail below.

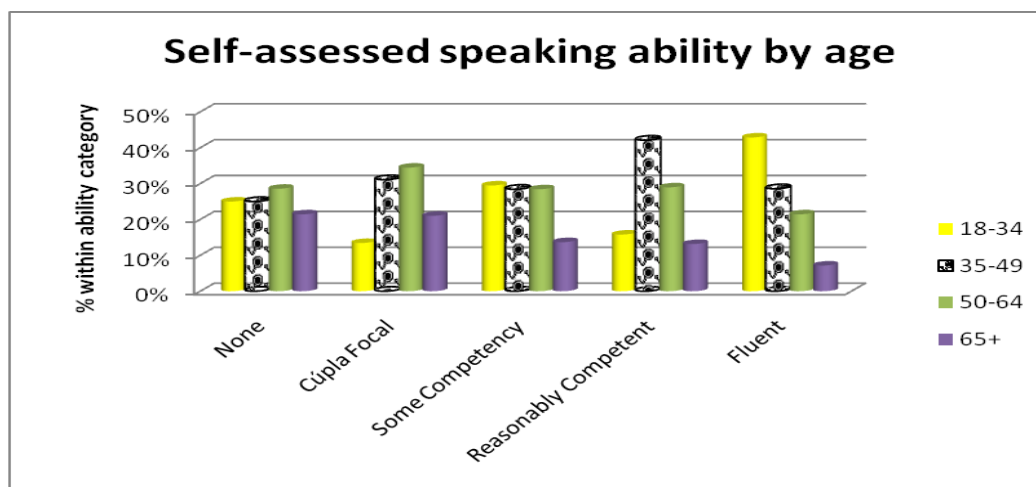


Figure 9: Self assessed speaking ability broken down by age group

Figure 9 displays the percentage age breakdown within each speaking category. It can be seen that there is little variation between the age groups in the “None” category. The over 65 category shows the least number of competent and fluent Irish speakers, while there are large numbers of young “reasonably competent” and “fluent” Irish speakers in the region. These figures may reflect the impact of having a well established Gaelscoil and a Gaelcholáiste in the town. These schools have increasing numbers of students attending them. They also provide a cohort of people around which the Irish community can develop.

⁷ McGréil, M. & Rhatigan, F. *The Irish Language and the Irish People*. (2009)

http://www.pobail.ie/ie/Preaseisiuinti/file_9801_ie.pdf

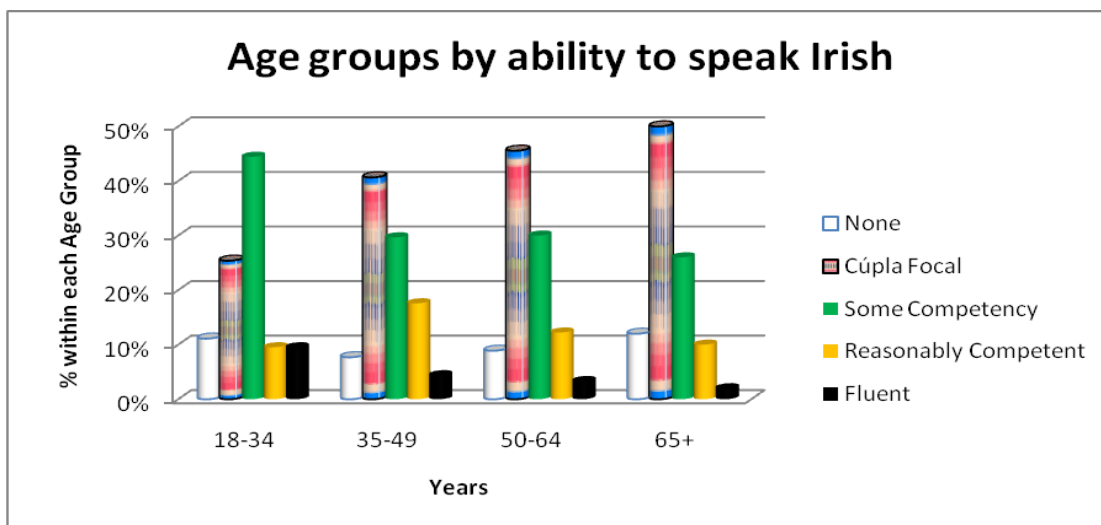


Figure 10: Age groups broken down by ability to speak Irish

While it is not possible to carry out a direct comparison with the results of the 1985 survey due to the different age groups categories which were used, we can compare the general findings. Both surveys found that the oldest respondents (≥ 65 years) were the most likely to have the minimum levels of Irish. (Figure 10) In 1985, those aged between 25 and 55 were considerably more fluent than those aged 25 and under while the results from 2010 show that younger people have a higher competency in Irish than the older age groups. It would appear that a high level of fluency is not maintained into later life. This may be due to a decrease in the opportunities to use the language. A high percentage of respondents suggested activities which are specifically for older people should be organised, activities that could be enjoyed during the day, such as a reading group or card group.

The strong relationship between the level of Irish and level of education is illustrated clearly below in Figure 11. The vast majority of those who are competent and fluent in the language have a third level qualification. We can conclude that the sections of the population who have the highest competency in Irish are young and highly educated.

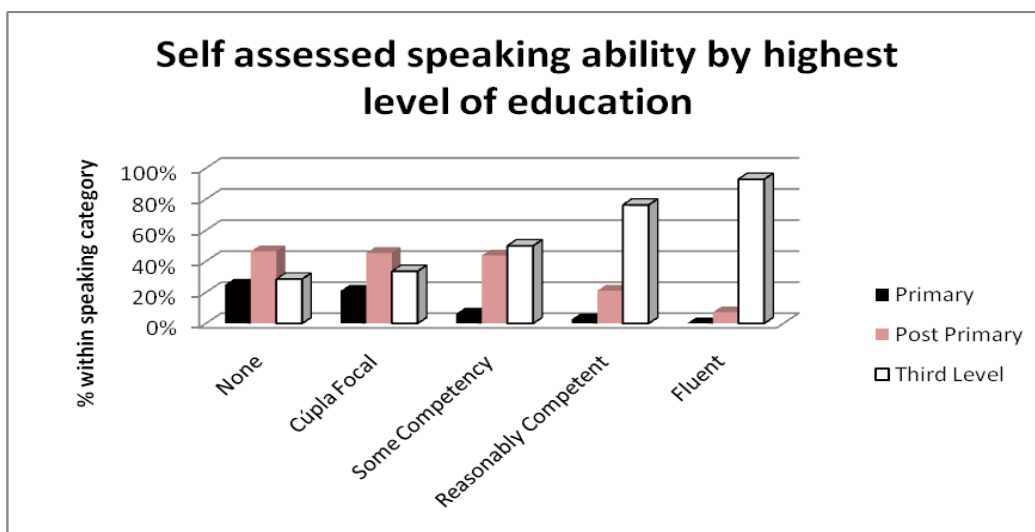


Figure 11: Self assessed speaking ability broken down by education level

Frequency and Occasion of Irish Language Usage

The places where people spoke Irish were predominantly informal, with socially (51.3%) being the most common place to speak Irish; 37.4% at home and only 14.7% speaking Irish at work. (**Figure 12**)

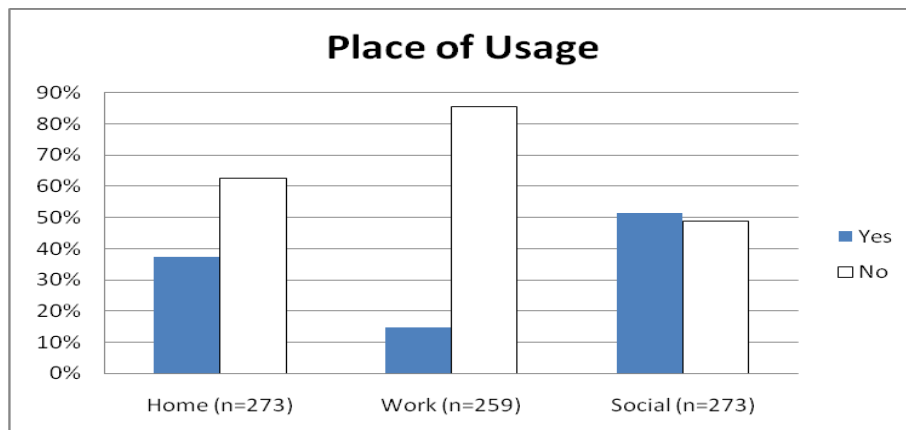


Figure 12: Place of usage of Irish language

All respondents who answered yes to having used Irish either at home, in their place of work or socially were then asked how regularly they would speak it. As can be seen below in **Figure 13** this question was applicable to only 58% of respondents.

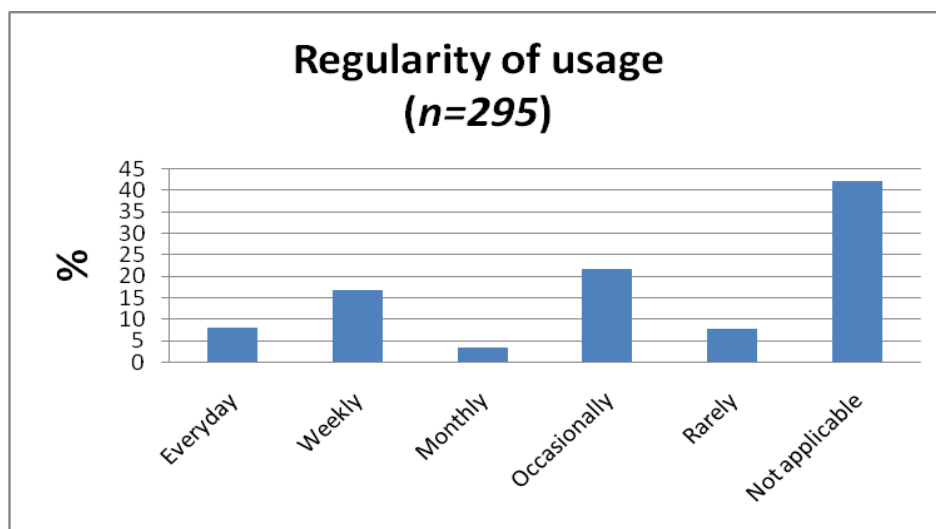


Figure 13: Regularity of usage of Irish language

The participants were also asked when they had last spoken Irish. Approximately 83% of users ($n=164$) replied that they had spoken Irish in the last month and 17% in the past year. This large number of people who have spoken Irish in the last month includes participants who stated that this had been to help their children with school work.

These results raise interesting issues around why those who are competent in the language are not using it on a regular basis. McGréil argues that there are socio-cultural norms which may be

impeding the use of Irish despite high levels of competency and a positive attitude to the language.⁸ These norms, also outlined in the 1975 report by the committee on Irish Language Attitudes Research, include being reluctant to converse in Irish if not everyone present is fluent and feeling uncomfortable conversing with others who may be more competent.⁹

The findings detailed in **Table 4** confirm that these norms of language do exist and that a lack of confidence and a self-consciousness may be barriers against increased usage. Only 26% of respondents (n=296) agreed that they would initiate a conversation in Irish and 54.4% stated that they feel uncomfortable speaking Irish with people whom they perceive to be more proficient.

	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	No Opinion (%)
I think there should be an Irish Cultural Centre where people could informally meet and use their Irish (n=294)	68.4	15	9.9	3.1	1.3	2.3
I would like more opportunities to speak Irish in Carlow (n=295)	38	15.6	18.3	8.5	10.2	9.4
People in my immediate circle don't use Irish at all (n=291)	40.5	8.9	17.9	9.3	21	2.4
I would start a conversation in Irish (n=296)	17.9	8.1	12.5	10.1	49	2.4
I am uncomfortable speaking Irish with people who may know it better than I do (n=296)	44.6	9.8	12.2	7.1	22	4.3

Table 4: Results of question 8: 1 being “strongly agree”; 2= “agree”; 3 = “neutral”; 4= “disagree” and 5 = “Strongly Disagree”, how would you rate the following statements?”

Despite these restrictions, there is evidence that the position is changing. Compared to the 1985 survey, there is an increase of 9.3% in the number of people who say that people in their circle use Irish and a decrease of nearly 6% in the number of people who feel uncomfortable speaking Irish with those who may know it better.

This positive attitude towards the Irish language community was again evident in the very high numbers who agreed that there should be an Irish Cultural Centre in Carlow (83.4%; n=294).

There was also a very positive response to the question about opportunities to speak Irish. It would appear that the usage of Irish could be increased as 53.6% of respondents (n=295) agreed that they would like to have more opportunities to speak Irish in Carlow.

The vast majority of people would like be able to use Irish while availing of services. 81% (n=247) of those surveyed said that they would like to see banks, shops, restaurants and local authorities offer their services through Irish.

⁸McGréil, M. & Rhatigan, F. *The Irish Language and the Irish People*. (2009) <http://www.pobail.ie/ie/Preaseisiuinti/file,9801,ie.pdf>

⁹ Committee on Irish Languages Attitudes Research (CILAR) (1975) *Report 1975* Dublin Government Publications

All respondents were asked if they would like to suggest any activities or facilities, not currently available, that would facilitate their desire to use Irish more often. As can be seen in **Figure 14**, this question had a relatively low response rate.

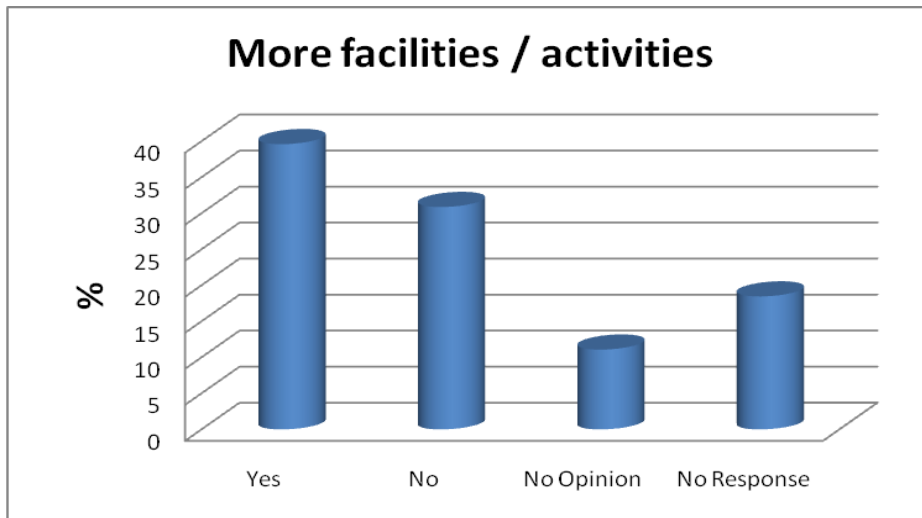


Figure 14: Desire for more Facilities / Activities through Irish

The responses were then broken down into 6 categories (**Figure 15**). As 14.4% stated that they were very satisfied with the level of activities and facilities that already existed, it was decided to include this as one of the categories. The responses within each category varied. For example, the suggestions in the social category ranged from a desire to see more activities for children to a request for activities for retired people to be organised during the daytime. Issues that arose within the courses' category were the timing and the cost of courses. There was a lot of support for businesses and public services to have bilingual signs in their shops and offices and also to advertise that Irish could be used on the premises. The category "other" includes suggestions such as printing and distributing a phrase book for beginners; organising a book club through Irish; creating an Irish language drama group; and more use of Irish in the local media. A large number of people prefaced their suggestions by stating that they would like to see Irish being used naturally in everyday activities, that its usage should not necessarily be restricted to a particular Irish language event.

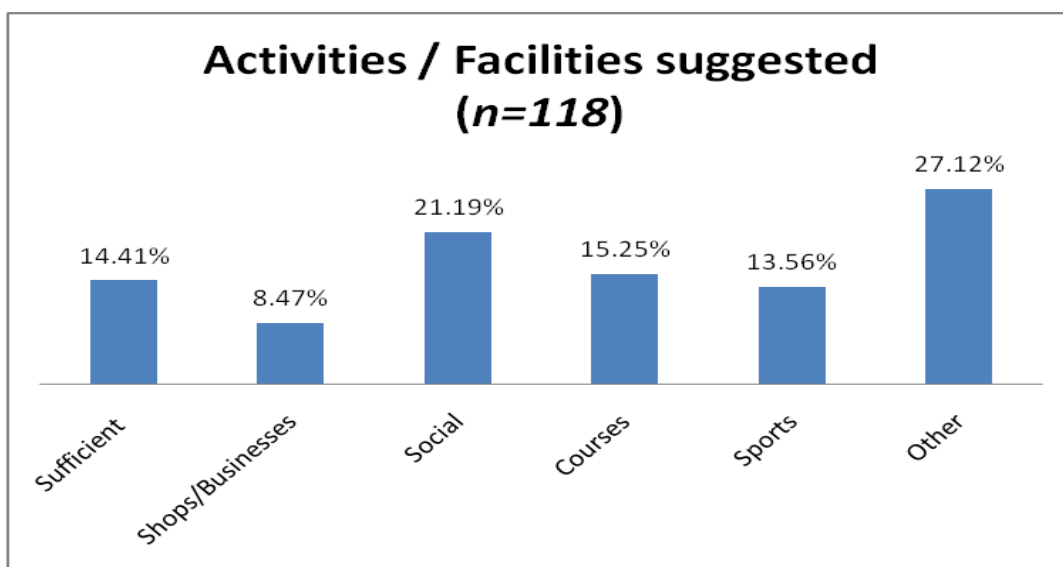


Figure 15: Activities / Facilities suggested

	Regularly %	Occasionally %	Never %	Unaware of it %
Radio (n=269)	9.7	29	58.7	2.6
Television (n=291)	33.7	50.5	15.1	0.7
Print other than books (260)	10.4	23.8	62.3	3.5
Books (n=262)	14.1	22.9	60.7	2.3
Online (248)	0.8	6.5	82.7	10

Table 5: Frequency of accessing media through Irish

The success of TG4 is evident from **Table 5**. Over 84% of people watch Irish language television programmes occasionally and regularly. This figure was evenly distributed across age-groups and gender. Books was the second highest category, with 37% reading books in Irish either regularly or occasionally. The low figure for online usage was not surprising as there is limited opportunity for usage and limited awareness of the facilities.

Nearly 60% of those questioned would like to see more Irish being used in the media, with equally strong support from these respondents for an increase in the use of Irish both locally and nationally. When asked where they would like to see it used, the majority of these people stated that they would like to see an increase in general usage of the language on radio and television (30.4%; n=164).

Conclusions / Recommendations

Overall the Irish language enjoys a positive status in Carlow. It is in a healthy state with increased usage of the language compared to 1985. It also compares very favourably with the figures from the national survey carried out by McGréil and Rhatigan in 2008.

The establishment of Glór Cheatharlach in 2008 will play a vital role in building on these foundations and in increasing usage of the language. It has enjoyed great success in a short space of time. The “Campaí Samhraidh” have proven so popular that every year there have been waiting lists for places. It has increased both the number of Irish language courses available and the numbers of people attending them. The continued success and expansion of the Gaelscoil and the Gaelcholáiste also assists in enhancing Irish as a living, vibrant language in Carlow.

However, it is important to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for people to continue using their Irish after they complete these courses. The use of Irish in social and recreational settings must be strongly encouraged. The gap between competency and usage needs to be bridged in order to move forward.

The establishment of a Cultural Centre in Carlow could fill this gap, a centre that the vast majority of people are in favour of. It should be given serious consideration as a way of creating a relaxed, informal environment in which to host suggested activities such as a mother & toddler group, senior citizens coffee mornings, reading group and drama club through Irish. It would complement the fact that the majority of people use Irish in an informal setting, either at home or socially.

The results also show strong support for businesses to carry out their work through Irish. Practical measures such as having menus in Irish and having signs in shops welcoming the use of Irish on the premises could be implemented at very little effort and cost.

Individuals must play a role themselves in changing what McGréil refers to as “obstructive” norms and structures.¹⁰ These must be overcome before the Irish language can be used naturally as part of everyday life in Carlow.

¹⁰ McGréil, M. & Rhatigan, F. *The Irish Language and the Irish People*. (2009)
<http://www.pobail.ie/ie/Preaseisiuinti/file,9801,ie.pdf>

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