# EXEMPLARY UP UNTIL APPLICATION: EVALUATING LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE TREATMENT AND USE OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN A POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA AND THE IRISH LANGUAGE ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND SINCE THE MID-1990S

Dominic Lee
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**Abstract:** The African languages in South Africa and the Irish language in Ireland have both been the subject of extensive language policy by their respective governments in order to promote their usage and protect them. Both situations are linked by the hegemonic position of English in their respective societies and difficulties to promote the languages. This study will investigate how the languages are treated and used in various aspects of society, considering the efforts of language policy and where it falls short. The treatment and use of African languages is evaluated in government, education, and the media. In comparison, the treatment and use of Irish is examined in the Gaeltacht area, education, and the media. The situations of the African languages and the Irish language are also contextualised within models of language vitality, maintenance, and revitalisation. The results of this study show that the African languages arguably find themselves in a situation of language maintenance and Irish finds itself in a situation of language revitalisation. Nonetheless, governments can arguably be doing more to promote the usage of minority and native languages.

**Keywords:** Language policy, Ireland, Irish language, South Africa, African languages

**Supervisor(s):** Karen Corrigan

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**Exemplary up until application: Evaluating language policy and the treatment and use of African languages in post-apartheid South Africa and the Irish language on the island of Ireland since the mid-1990s**


## Abstract

The African languages in South Africa and the Irish language in Ireland have both been the subject of extensive language policy by their respective governments in order to promote their usage and protect them. Both situations are linked by the hegemonic position of English in their respective societies and difficulties to promote the languages. This study will investigate how the languages are treated and used in various aspects of society, considering the efforts of language policy and where it falls short. The treatment and use of African languages is evaluated in government, education, and the media. In comparison, the treatment and use of Irish is examined in the Gaeltacht area, education, and the media. The situations of the African languages and the Irish language are also contextualised within models of language vitality, maintenance, and revitalisation. The results of this study show that the African languages arguably find themselves in a situation of language maintenance and Irish finds itself in a situation of language revitalisation. Nonetheless, governments can arguably be doing more to promote the usage of minority and native languages.


## 1-Introduction

This study will evaluate language policy with respect to the treatment and use of African languages in post-apartheid South Africa alongside the Irish language on the island of Ireland since the mid-1990s. These situations are linked by their attempts to promote the use of minority languages and the dominance of English in their societies. Similarly, both situations have seen a flurry of language policy to promote the usage of minority languages. Section 2 will review some of the literature concerning the topic area and establish the aims of the study. Section 3 will introduce models which can be used to assess the treatment and use of the African languages and the Irish language. Section 4 will give some historical background on the situations which the African languages and Irish language find themselves in. Section 5 will introduce some studies around the African languages and Irish language with respect the aims introduced in section 2. Section 6 will evaluate these studies and their implications for the African languages and the Irish language. Finally, section 7 will conclude that in the

case of both languages, governments can arguably be doing more to promote the use of African languages and the Irish language.

## 2- Literature Review

The situation of the African languages in South Africa can arguably be summarised by an incongruity between language policy and its implementation. Beukes argues that while the country's language policy is commendable, South Africa finds itself in a situation of widespread policy failure (Beukes 2009: 43). Furthermore, Beukes notes that the governments flat approach to implementing their language policy, combined with English's hegemonic position and negative attitudes towards African languages, has led to language issues becoming less prominent in the government's agenda (Beukes 2009: 43). Similarly, Orman notes the existence of an unharmonized language policy situation, with a gap between policy and language practices (Orman 2007: 125). Kamwangamalu is critical of South Africa's institutions, arguing that they have flouted their commitments to language equity set out in the constitution (Kamwangamalu 2001: 413). Consequently, Kamwangamalu sees the inclusion of African languages in the constitution as symbolic, due to government structures having failed in their mission to implement the proposed multilingual language policy (Kamwangamalu 2001: 414).

In comparison, the position of the Irish language on the island of Ireland can be considered more positive in some respects. Like the situation facing the African languages in South Africa, English holds a hegemony in the Republic with Ó Laoire noting that modern Ireland is almost universally English-speaking (Ó Laoire 2005: 252). Ó Laoire further states that language planning in Ireland largely revolves around protecting and regenerating the Irish language (Ó Laoire 2005: 252). McDermott argues that this has been most effective at the community level, citing the Gaeltacht area as the government's cornerstone of their language policy (McDermott 2011: 28). However, McDermott argues that this focus on the Gaeltacht areas has potentially neglected other areas such as urban areas (McDermott 2011: 28). In Northern Ireland, the position of the Irish language can be considered more political, and opinions are largely split by political and religious dividing lines. McMonagle notes that political polarisation has placed the Irish language within a dichotomy of "two traditions", with Irish being seen as correlating with Nationalism and Catholicism which has alienated

Protestants and Unionists (McMonagle 2010: 254). Furthermore, Pritchard draws a comparison between Northern Ireland and the Republic arguing that while the Irish language has become a cultural issue in the Republic, where it is an official language, Irish was linked politically to Republicanism at various points in Northern Ireland (Pritchard 2004: 62).

Education is one key area of comparison, and it can be argued that Irish-language education has been slightly more successful than education in the African languages in terms of language proficiency and promoting usage. Murtagh argues that the teaching of Irish in education has been the main way in which the goal of societal bilingualism has been achieved (Murtagh 2007: 428). Furthermore, Ó Ceallaigh and Dhonnabháin state that the education and schools play a critical role in supporting the maintenance and revitalisation of Irish (Ó Ceallaigh and Dhonnabháin 2015: 186). However, a distinction can be drawn based on the influence of Gaeltacht, All-Irish and English-medium schools. Harris argues that English-medium education particularly is no longer playing its traditional role in language revitalisation and maintenance (Harris 2007: 361). Nonetheless, Parsons and Lyddy note that Irish usage in the Gaeltacht for those attending Irish medium schools is on the decline (Parsons and Lyddy 2016: 512). However, All-Irish education outside the Gaeltacht has proven successful, as Ó Laoire and Harris note that children in these schools have achieved high levels of proficiency, to go alongside a rapid growth in the number of these schools available (Ó Laoire and Harris 2007: 27). In comparison, the situation of the African languages in South African education looks bleaker. South Africa adopts an additive bilingualism approach to its language policy in education, but Alexander notes that the government's education policy is weak and makes it clear that there is no single correct approach to the language medium question (Alexander 1999: 12). Furthermore, Beukes argues that the impact of the belief that African languages have little instrumental value has led to the more parents sending their children to English-medium schools (Beukes 2009: 45-46). Thus, given the flexible nature of the government's language policy in education it can be argued that it is this which is driving a de facto English-only policy, though the attitude towards African languages certainly plays a part.

Media can also be considered a point of comparison for African languages and Irish, with both being served by national and language-specific media. Kaschula argues that the language policy of South African state broadcaster is a good one but again the problem of implementation rears its head (Kaschula 2006: 146). Kaschula observes that SABC's programming is still largely in English, though all of South Africa's 11 official languages

have their own radio stations (Kaschula 2006: 156). However, Barnett argues that SABC's tendency towards English-language broadcasting is due to financial constraints, as the broadcaster jeopardised its financial viability in 1996 and 1997 by attempting to pursue language equity (Barnett 1999: 292). Moreover, Barnett notes that increased advertising expenditure did not cover the costs of producing African language programs as they lacked the demand from viewers to make them economically viable (Barnett 1999: 292). In comparison, Watson sees Irish-language media as an increasingly important avenue of promoting Irish, as he argues that for most Irish speakers the Irish-language programs on radio and television are their only regular exposure to Irish (Watson 2016: 14). Furthermore, Kelly-Holmes et al. (2009) note that there are some difficulties in Irish-language broadcasting. For example, they argue that Irish-language broadcasting must balance its aims for language management with the linguistic human rights of Irish language speakers (Kelly-Holmes et al. 2009: 233). Nonetheless, despite a strong policy favouring Irish usage, such as the mention of Irish in RTÉ's charter, English remains the dominant media language in Ireland (Kelly-Holmes et al. 2009: 233).

It is the aim of this study to investigate the use and treatment of African languages in South Africa and Irish on the island of Ireland. With respect to the African languages, this study will evaluate their treatment in government, education, and the media. In comparison, the Irish language will be investigated with respect to its treatment at a local level in the Gaeltacht area, as well as in education and the media.

## 3-Models for the analysis of language policy

To contextualise and analyse the usage and treatment of African languages in South Africa and Irish on the island of Ireland, it is first necessary to examine models such as language vitality, maintenance, and revitalisation. Language vitality, which Giles et al. term ethnolinguistic vitality is the extent to which a linguistic group will survive and thrive in an intergroup context (Giles et al. 1977: 308). Groups with more vitality are likely to survive, while groups with little vitality may cease to exist as a distinctive group (Giles et al 1977: 308). Giles et al. state that three structural variable groups are most likely to influence vitality, which are status, demographic, and institutional support variables (Giles et al. 1977: 309). Status variables pertain to prestige variables of the linguistic group, and encompass

economic, social, sociohistorical, and language status (Giles et al. 1977: 309). Demographic variables relate to the number of speakers and their distribution throughout the territory (Giles et al. 1977: 309). Finally, institutional support variables refer to the extent which a language group receives formal (mass media, education, and government services) and informal (industry, religion, and culture) representation in the various institutions of a nation, region, or community (Giles et al. 1977: 309).

Pauwels states that language maintenance can be best described as the continued retention of a minority or heritage language in one or more spheres of language use (Pauwels 2016: 20). Furthermore, Pauwels argues that key elements in identifying a situation of language maintenance are: the period of continued use since the initial language contact with the dominant language, the extent to which it is the exclusive language in any given context, and the number of contexts within which the language is still exclusively or in conjunction with another language (Pauwels 2016: 21). Language maintenance can also be understood in comparison to language shift, which it seeks to avoid, which is the process where a language is gradually replaced by another dominant or majority language in all spheres of life (Pauwels 2016: 20). However, language shift usually results in the disappearance of a language from a speech community rather than the death of the language (Pauwels 2016: 18).

Language revitalisation effectively differs from language maintenance in the extent of the situation which the minority language is in (Pauwels 2016: 21). In situations of endangerment or decline ranging from near extinction in terms of usage or low levels of usage in the community, language revitalisation strategies may be put into place to increase its usage (Pauwels 2016: 21).

## 4-History of language policy in South Africa and the island of Ireland

### 4.1-History of language policy in South Africa

The social and political landscape of South Africa underwent a seismic shift with the rise of the Afrikaner-dominated National Party in 1948, which had a dramatic effect on the linguistic landscape of the nation (Orman 2007: 113). The party identified a key role for language policy and planning in their policy of separation, which was better known as apartheid (Orman 2007: 113). Education was to play a large part in the apartheid policy, as was

outlined by the Institute for Christian National Education (I.C.N.O.) who published their manifesto for Christian National Education in 1948 (The Education League 1959: 7). The manifesto echoed the spirit of apartheid, arguing for separation in almost every aspect of education. For example, article 8 stated that there would be no mixed schools (The Education League 1959: 18). Additionally, article 12 reinforced the need for separate mother-tongue medium institutions (The Education League 1959: 20). Black and multiracial, referred to as "coloured" during the apartheid era, populations were also to be treated as inferior when it came to education, which would make up only part of the systemic inequalities they would face under the apartheid regime. The white man's perspective would be instilled through education, being presented as a senior figure of trust to be obeyed (The Education League 1959: 22). Black children were to be taught in their native language, with the two official languages serving as vehicles of social mobility (The Education League 1959: 22).

The 1953 Bantu Education Act was the hallmark bill of the I.C.N.O.'s educational ideology, as it transferred all control of the education of black children to the state (Lavin 1965: 433). The Bantu education model would see non-white schools severely underfunded, with pupils receiving only a few hours of education each day (Tabata 1960: 35). Furthermore, the Bantu model was designed to stunt the development of black children and deny them the opportunity for social mobility (Tabata 1960: 42). Tabata argues that South Africa were effectively creating an unskilled black labour force, who would occupy cheap labour in mining and agriculture (Tabata 1960: 43). Additionally, as primary, and secondary school education would be provided in the mother tongue, black children were prevented from acquiring sufficient knowledge of English or Afrikaans, which further restricted their social advancements (Orman 2007: 115). Furthermore, by dividing up the black population by mother-tongue the Bantu model attempted to prevent the black population from uniting in collective action against the state (Orman 2007: 115-116).

However, this prevention tactic was unsuccessful, as demonstrated by the 1976 Soweto uprisings. The uprisings were a reaction to Afrikaans and English being given a 50:50 status as the official languages of instruction from the last year of primary school until completion of high school (Ndlovu 2007: 327). This decision sparked the stigmatisation of Afrikaans which characterised the uprising, as the language was seen as the language of the oppressor (Orman 2007: 146). English on the other hand received a very different treatment, as it became the de facto preferred language of the African National Congress (ANC) and the

Black Consciousness Movement, despite levels of competence in English being low amongst the Black population (Orman 2007: 118).

### 4.2-History of language policy on the island of Ireland

The beginning point for the language ecology of the island of Ireland as pertains to the content of this essay is the first meeting of the Dáil Éireann on the 21st of January 1919 (Crowley 2005: 2). Alongside being a highly important political event in the build up to establishing what would later become the Irish Free State, the Dáil also played an instrumental role in policy regarding the Irish language. In 1922 the Dáil enacted the Constitution of the Irish Free State, article 4 of the constitution stated that the national language would be Irish, and English would be equally recognised as an official language (Crowley 2005: 3). Additionally, it was decided that all teaching in infant classes be conducted in Irish (Crowley 2005: 3). Teaching for the children of parents who wanted them taught in English would take place before or after the normal timetable (Crowley 2005: 4). The Intermediate Act was introduced in 1925 along with the creation of a Department of Education, as education affairs were previously the jurisdiction of the Minister for Irish (Crowley 2005: 4). The act introduced grants to encourage teaching in Irish, with schools being categorized according to their Irish usage: "A" schools were effectively all-Irish, "B" schools taught several subjects in Irish and "C" schools taught Irish as an academic subject (Crowley 2005: 4). Irish was successful in education from the 1920s to the 1950s, at which point half of primary schools were offering a full- or partial-immersion plan, but this declined from the 1960s when public opinion faltered. Alongside a large focus on education, the Irish government were also keen to maintain the Irish-speaking communities that were already in place (Ó Riagáin 1997: 20-21). The Gaeltacht Commission was set up in 1925 to assess the percentage of Irish speakers were required for a district to be categorised as fully or partly Irish speaking (Crowley 2005: 5). The mass exodus of workers contributed to a decline in the number of Irish speakers in the region, with the language itself gaining a reputation as the language of poverty (Crowley 2005: 5). This led to a slight level of shift towards English within the community (Ó Riagáin 1997: 24).

While Irish revival attempts in the South centred around government-mandated educational policy, attempts in Northern Ireland were more community-led. After the partition, the Irish

language became a highly political issue and was seen as a symbol of Irish nationalism (Crowley 2005: 14). Consequently, in 1923 funding was withdrawn for Irish language teacher-training colleges and Irish language organizations were abolished (Crowley 2005: 14). Consequently, any revival efforts had to occur on a voluntary basis; as was the case in Catholic schools, where the language continued to be taught thanks to funding from voluntary organisations (Crowley 2005: 15). Belfast was to play host to numerous voluntary organisations (Crowley 2005: 15). However, arguably the biggest advancement was made in 1969 when a Gaeltacht community was founded on Shaw's Road in Belfast, with a primary school, Bunscoil Phobal Feirste, opening in the community in 1971 (Crowley 2005: 16). Nonetheless, state support eventually came with the formation of the government funded Cultural Traditions Group in 1988, which sought to divorce the Irish language from being purely nationalist (Crowley 2005: 26). In doing so, the Ultach Trust was founded which made Irish classes available in areas where protestants would feel unthreatened and comfortable in learning and using the language (Crowley 2005: 26).

## 5-Treatment of minority and native languages in the language policy of South Africa and the island of Ireland

The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa was arguably the most significant turning point for African languages post-apartheid, as it elevated nine of these languages (Zulu, Xhosa, Sepedi, Tswana, Sotho, Tsonga, Swati, Venda and Ndebele) to official status alongside English and Afrikaans (Government of South Africa 1996A). Furthermore, the constitution appeared to make some attempts to reconcile with past linguistic injustices during the apartheid era, by recognising the historically diminished use of African languages and the need to elevate the status and advance the use of them (Government of South Africa 1996A). Additionally, the constitution established the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) which would promote and condition the development and use of the 11 official languages alongside other minority languages (Government of South Africa 1996A).

It can be argued that the constitution's promises have arguably not produced satisfactory results in terms of elevating the usage of African and minority languages. This is particularly evident with regards to the usage of official languages in government. Prior to 1994, only

English and Afrikaans had ever been used in parliament, which made the task of creating an inclusive system for 11 official languages complex (Hibbert 2016: 34). In 1999 one of the main issues in parliament was language policy and which languages would be used for documentation and which for oral communication, ensuring equitable representation for all 11 official languages (Hibbert 2016: 34-35). Two proposals were made that year, with one option being that documentation would appear in two official languages and two other languages and the other being a "language of the month" model (Hibbert 2016: 35). The first option was favoured by Hansard's deputy editor at the time, arguing that some speakers speak better in their own language (Hibbert 2016: 35). The language of the month option would entail that one language would be chosen each month for written documentation (Hibbert 2016: 35). During this month, all documentation and debate transcripts would appear in the original language in which they were delivered, in an English translation, and in the language of the month if it were neither of these (Hibbert 2016: 35). However, there has arguably been a failing in terms of implementing the pledges set out in ensuring equal equity for all 11 official languages in government, as no progress was made in this regard until the Use of Official Languages Act was introduced in 2012. The act promised to regulate and monitor the use of official languages by the national government for government purposes, alongside setting out the requirement that all national departments, public entities, and public enterprises adopt a language policy (Government of South Africa 2012: 4). Furthermore, this adoption of a language policy must have taken place within 18 months of the act coming into force (Government of South Africa 2012: 6). Nonetheless, the act has arguably also been ineffectual, as evidenced by PANSALB's (2019) report on a hearing which examined the implementation of the act by national government departments. Of the 42 departments invited to the hearing, 11 did not attend, 13 had a finalized language policy, 10 had a draft policy, 9 had a language unit and 6 had an implementation plan (PANSALB 2019: 8). Given that the act expected all departments to adopt a language policy and put a language unit in place, these results indicate a significant discrepancy between the stipulations of the act and the actions of government departments. Moreover, the report made numerous concerning observations, stating that most departments admitted to having done nothing about the act and that there appeared to be a lack of understanding among the departments as to why the promotion of all 11 official languages and status elevation of previously marginalised African languages was important (PANSALB 2019: 9). There also appeared to be a lack of understanding amongst departments as to what a language policy was, with almost all departments perceiving multilingual language policy to be solely translation and

interpretation services (PANSALB 2019: 9). Furthermore, most departments defaulted to English on the assumption that it is easier and more logical than other languages (PANSALB 2019: 9). Most departments cited budgetary constraints as the reason why they were unable to follow all the stipulations of the act, particularly when it came to implementing a language unit (Hlengwa-Selepe 2020: 106). However, it can be argued that to a certain extent these budgetary constraints are self-imposed, as Hlengwa-Selepe explains that governments are unlikely to allocate funds for poorly planned projects (Hlengwa-Selepe 2020: 106). Thus, it can be argued that there has been a serious lack of endeavour to implement the act on behalf of these departments and that stipulations within the act and the 1996 constitution have not been implemented.

In education too, there have arguably been failings to implement language policy, particularly when it comes to uplifting the status and use of African languages. The original policy in this area is the South African Schools Act (1996) which pre-empted the Language-in-Education Policy (1997) (LiEP). The schools act has its own section on language policy, which states that the governing body of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to the constitution, the act and provincial law (Government of South Africa 1996B: 8). By extension, LiEP aimed to provide for students to be able to choose their medium of instruction in schools, which would likely be their home language, whilst also facilitating for students to learn one additional language, which is known as additive bilingualism (Government of South Africa 1997: 2). However, the government's policy regarding language-in-education has been arguably poorly implemented and has not created a system which promotes the use of the nine official African languages. For example, Probyn (2005) argues that the most controversial aspect of LiEP is that bilingualism should be achieved by having more than one language as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) (Probyn 2005: 159). In Probyn's view this allows schools to maintain the status quo by teaching in English (Probyn 2005: 159). Furthermore, as Von Staden et al. argue, the LiEP allows schools to implement their own language policies (Von Staden et al. 2016: 2). Consequently, Von Staden et al. (2016) show that from grade 4 the LoLT changes to predominantly English or Afrikaans for over 80% of children from African language backgrounds (Von Staden et al. 2016: 2). Von Staden et al. investigated the difference in results between children who took a 2011 preProgress in International Reading Literacy Study (prePIRLS) test in their home language, compared to children tested in a language other than their home language (Von Staden et al. 2016: 1). Each child took the test in one of the 11 official languages of the

constitution (Von Staden et al. 2016: 6). The results showed that in most languages the mean test scores were considerably higher for children tested in their home language, apart from Afrikaans, Zulu, and Sepedi where there was no significant difference (Von Staden et al. 2016: 6). Additionally, the largest discrepancy was found with tests completed in English, as children whose home language was English had a mean score 80 points higher than children with a home language other than English (Von Staden et al. 2016: 7). However, it was also noted that children tested in English, no matter whether it was their home language, had considerably higher mean scores than children tested in an African language and slightly higher than children tested in Afrikaans, which was shown to be a significant factor through regression analysis (Von Staden et al. 2016: 7). Thus, Von Staden et al. argue that the LiEP has been ineffective due to a lack of political will to implement mother-tongue based bilingual education focused on the African languages, which has led to low proficiency (Von Staden et al. 2016: 8-9). Further research into these effects can be found in Spaull who analysed the cost, in terms of marks, when students are forced to complete literacy and numeracy tests in English when it is not their home language (Spaull 2016: 5). Spaull's analysis was based on a unique case where students took the same literacy and numeracy tests twice, once in their home language and once in English, with one month elapsing between the two tests (Spaull 2016: 6). It was noted that students may perform better on the second test, since they may remember some of the questions or answers, so it was decided that students should complete the second test in English as they were less familiar with the language (Spaull 2016: 6). However, since the students whose home language was English would complete both tests in English, their scores would likely improve in the second test. The results of the literacy tests found that students whose home language was not English performed significantly better when tested in their home language, with their average score being 33%, than when they were tested in English with their average score being 22% (Spaull 2016: 11). However, there was no noticeable difference in the two tests for children whose home language was English (Spaull 2016: 11). The results of the numeracy tests showed no noticeable difference in the results for the non-English-home-language students, with students averaging 33% across the two tests (Spaull 2016: 14). However, there were some differences based on the language content of the questions, with students performing slightly better on high-language content questions in their home language and slightly better on questions with ambiguous or no-language content in English (Spaull 2016: 14). English-home-language students performed noticeably better in the second test, making the largest improvements in high-language content questions (Spaull 2016: 14-15). However, this could

be attributed to having remembered high-language content questions more easily from the previous test (Spaull 2016: 15).

It can also be argued that there have been failings in South Africa to implement constitutional language policy into the national media, particularly in the practices of the South African Broadcasting Company (SABC) which is the South African state broadcaster. Broadcasting in South Africa is regulated under the Broadcasting Act (1999) which itself contains a general language mandate, alongside language mandates for what it terms to be the three tiers of broadcasting (public, commercial and community), which is to extend a range of programming in South Africa's official languages to all South Africans as circumstances permit (Du Plessis 2006: 54). SABC also have their own language policy, which promises to inform, educate, and entertain South Africans in their home languages, alongside promoting acceptance between linguistic and cultural groups in the country (SABC 2004: 2). Additionally, the policy aimed to promote multilingualism in South Africa and contribute to the continual development of the 11 official language as well as South African Sign Language (SABC 2004: 2). SABC is also regulated by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) which ensures compliance with the Broadcasting Act (1999), alongside issuing SABC's broadcasting license (Du Plessis 2006: 56). ICASA also sets quotas for the SABC which aim to regulate the allocation of programming for shows in English and shows in languages other than English during prime-time television hours, which are not defined by SABC, across SABC's main channels: SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 (SABC 2020: 55). However, SABC's most recent annual report shows that they are below this quota in numerous areas (SABC 2020: 55). For example, during the period of April 1st 2019-March 29th 2020, SABC1 and SABC 2's total output in languages other than English during prime time was below ICASA's quote, with both channels at least 3 hours under their quotas (SABC 2020: 55). Furthermore, while SABC2 outperform ICASA's quota for marginalised languages, SABC1 underperforms it (SABC 2020: 55). However, one confusing aspect of the annual report is that a second graph is shown which depicts both channels outperforming ICASA's quota, with no distinction made between the two graphs, which both measure language delivery during prime time and present the data in average hours and minutes per week for the same period (SABC 2020: 55). Thus, while the data is somewhat unclear, SABC are arguably failing to deliver, at least in part, on its language related quota. Furthermore, as there is no breakdown of programming for each of the 11 official languages it is unclear whether equal status is given to languages other than English. There is also

precedent for not giving the African languages airtime on SABC, as shown in Kamwangamalu who investigated the airtime given to each of the 11 official languages from the 10th to the 16th of May 1998 (Kamwangamalu 2000: 54). Table 1 is adapted from Kamwangamalu's results and shows the airtime for each language on the three main SABC channels:

Table 1: Total airtime for each of South Africa's official languages on SABC 10th-16th May 1999 (Adapted from Kamwangamalu 2000: 54)

| Channels | SABC1 | SABC2 | SABC3 | Total airtime: 22680 minutes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Languages | Minutes | Minutes | Minutes | Total minutes across channels |
| Ndebele | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Swati | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tsonga | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Venda | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sepedi | 0 | 35 | 0 | 35 |
| Tswana | 0 | 65 | 0 | 65 |
| Xhosa | 90 | 0 | 0 | 90 |
| Zulu | 120 | 0 | 0 | 120 |
| Sotho | 30 | 200 | 0 | 230 |
| Afrikaans | 30 | 1255 | 0 | 1285 |
| English | 7290 | 6005 | 7560 | 20855 |

Table 1 shows that the airtime given to African languages is considerably lower than that of Afrikaans and English, with even the airtime for Afrikaans being substantially lower than that of English (Kamwangamalu 2000: 54). Additionally, four African languages (Ndebele, Swati, Tsonga, and Venda) were given no airtime during the week, despite SABC's claim in their language policy to promote and contribute to the development of all 11 official languages (Kamwangamalu 2000: 54). Some of these statistics can be explained, as SABC1 are required to broadcast predominantly in the Ngunu language group (Zulu, Xhosa, Swati and Ndebele) and English, while SABC2 are required to broadcast predominantly in the Sotho language group (Sotho, Tswana and Sepedi) as well as Afrikaans, Tsonga and Venda (Du Plessis 2006: 57). In contrast, SABC3 is a commercial service and can broadcast largely in English (Du Plessis 2006: 55). Additionally, SABC may be able to mitigate a lack of linguistically diverse television output with their radio output, as they have 18 stations in total, including stations dedicated to each official language. Furthermore, as the Broadcasting Act (1999) makes no distinction between provisions for radio and television, SABC are arguably meeting the requirements of the act, despite their unequal television output (Du Plessis 2006: 55). However, SABC are still arguably ignoring their commitments made in their language policy.

Assessing the effectiveness of current policy with respect to the Irish language is perhaps more complicated than assessing the situation for African languages in South Africa, as policy concerning Irish is legislated for in both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. Thus, any reasonable discussion of Irish language policy must encompass legislation from both states. Since the turn of the century, the most significant act in establishing a modern language policy in the Republic of Ireland has arguably been the Official Languages Act (2003), which aimed to promote the use of Irish for official purposes in the Republic (Government of Ireland 2003: 8). The act established Irish and English as the official languages of the state, with Irish being the national and first official language and English being the second official language (Government of Ireland 2003: 12).

In comparison, policy in Northern Ireland is sparser, with no specific language act in place. Furthermore, the lack of a specific language act contributed to a political deadlock in Northern Ireland. Stormont, the Northern Irish devolved assembly, collapsed in 2017 following the resignation of Sinn Féin's Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness as both nationalist and unionist parties, in this case the ruling Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), must join in a power-sharing executive to form an assembly (Kelly 2019). During talks

between the two parties, one of the main talking points driven by Sinn Féin was the introduction of an Irish Language Act (Kelly 2019). However, whilst no such legislation was enacted when the DUP and Sinn Féin re-entered government, provisions were made to establish commissioners for both Irish and Ulster Scots and to grant official language status to both languages under the stipulations of the New Decade, New Approach document (Gov.uk 2020: 15). Furthermore, the ban on the use of Irish in the courts, established under the Administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) (1737) was repealed, and a central translation hub was established in Stormont (Gov.uk 2020: 16).

One area key to the Republic of Ireland's policies to promote Irish is the Gaeltacht, which is an area where the inhabitants speak predominantly Irish (O'Donoghue and O'Doherty 2019: 1-2). Currently, Gaeltacht related affairs and policy are managed by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media, and the respective minister for the department. The Gaeltacht area has been a hotbed of Irish language policy for decades, but arguably the first significant development after the mid-1990s came in 2007 with publication of the Comprehensive Study of Irish use in the Gaeltacht (O'Donoghue and O'Doherty 2019: 5). The study established three kinds of Gaeltacht districts which were distinguished by their level of Irish usage (Ó Giollagáin et al. 2017: 13). Category A districts are districts where more than 67% of the total population (aged 3+) are daily Irish speakers (Ó Giollagáin et al. 2017: 13). This figure for Category B districts is between 44% and 66%, and less than 44% for Category C districts (Ó Giollagáin et al. 2017: 13). Whilst the daily use of Irish as a communal language was found to be strong in Category A districts, there was some evidence of a potential language shift as younger speakers tended not to use Irish as their main language of communication in certain contexts (Ó Giollagáin et al. 2017: 25-26). For example, it was noted that in Category A areas only around 60% of younger speakers use Irish as their main language with their family and neighbours, and only 24% use Irish as their primary language with peers (Ó Giollagáin et al. 2017: 26). Category B and C districts were determined to be based on limited social networks, centred on a limited number of families whose main language was Irish and Irish-speaking social networks comprised of older-age speakers (Ó Giollagáin et al. 2017: 25). In the cases where these networks were broader and more inclusive, it was often found that this was through support from Irish-medium or bilingual educational institutions (Ó Giollagáin et al. 2017: 25). The study hypothesised that the future of the Category A districts would not be dissimilar from this situation, and that these communities would become based on social networks rather than an Irish language

community (Ó Giollagáin et al. 2017: 25). In response to this, the government passed the Gaeltacht Act (2012) to reverse the worrying trends in the area. The Act gave the minister, at the time the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, powers to designate any Gaeltacht area a Gaeltacht Language Planning Area (Government of Ireland 2012: 8-12). Furthermore, the Údarás na Gaeltachta (Gaeltacht Authority) is allowed, under the act, to select an organisation which they feel is most capable of preparing a plan to provide for, and encourage, the use of Irish in all aspects of life in the Gaeltacht Area (Government of Ireland 2012: 12). Irish is particularly encouraged in family, educational, public, social, recreational, and commercial life in the area (Government of Ireland 2012: 12). Additionally, the act grants the Minister powers to designate Gaeltacht Service Towns, which provide public services alongside social, recreational, and commercial facilities which are of benefit to the Gaeltacht area (Government of Ireland 2012: 18). The final power granted to the minister is the power to designate an area, outside of the Gaeltacht, an Irish Language Network, which is an area which supports the use of Irish and has agreed to the implementation of an Irish language plan (Government of Ireland 2012: 22). In relation to the act, 26 Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas and 16 Gaeltacht Service Towns have been designated, with 21 language plans approved. Using census data, it is possible to analyse the effectiveness of these plans and of the Gaeltacht Act as a whole. The 2016 census showed that the number of Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht area was 63,664, which amounts to 66.3% of the total population (96,090) (Central Statistics Office). This figure has decreased by 2,574 since 2011 and the overall proportion has fell from 68.5% (Central Statistics Office). Table 2 shows the percentage of speakers who use Irish daily in each Gaeltacht county (Central Statistics Office).

Table 2: Percentage of speakers who use Irish daily in each Gaeltacht County (Adapted from Central Statistics Office).

| County | % of speakers who speak Irish daily |
|---|---|
| Galway County | 29% |
| Waterford | 26.9% |

| | |
|---|---|
| Donegal | 26.2% |
| Kerry | 24.2% |
| Cork | 23.2% |
| Meath | 15.9% |
| Mayo | 8.9% |
| Galway City | 4.3% |

As shown in table 2 the number of speakers who use Irish daily are low across all Gaeltacht counties, with Galway county being home to the most daily Irish speakers at 29.2% and Galway city being home to the least at 4.3% (Central Statistics Office). Furthermore, data showed that of the 26 Language Planning Areas established by the Gaeltacht Act (2012), the number of daily Irish speakers had only increased in four areas (Central Statistics Office). Therefore, the provisions set up under the act have arguably been ineffective. However, since there was only a short amount of time between the act's inception and the 2016 census, it may be unfair to judge the act's provisions based on this data.

Education in the Republic of Ireland comes under the remit of the Education Act (1998) which dictates Irish-medium education in the country. The language aims of the act are to contribute to the extension of bilingualism in Irish society and encourage greater use of Irish in schools and communities (Government of Ireland 1998: 10). Furthermore, regarding the Gaeltacht areas the act aimed to contribute to the maintenance of Irish as the primary community language (Government of Ireland 1998: 10). However, it can be argued that Irish education policy has been somewhat ineffective in places, as evidenced by the Harris report (2006). The report examined the difference in Irish language tests in schools between 1985 and 2002, looking at listening, speaking, and reading tests, though the reading tests had recently changed so there were no comparative results. The Harris report demonstrated that there had been a decrease in the average scores for students taking the Irish listening test, which can be seen in table 3 (Harris et al. 2006: 44).

| Table 3: Mean score differences for students taking the Irish listening test in 1985 and 2002 (Harris et al. 2006: 44). | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| School Type | 1985 mean score | 2002 mean score | Difference |
| Ordinary | 46.9 | 34.0 | -12.9 |
| All-Irish | 66.0 | 63.7 | -2.3 |
| Gaeltacht | 59.8 | 56.1 | -3.7 |

As shown in table 3 the largest decrease over the period was in ordinary schools, with an average score 12.9 lower in 2002 than in 1985 (Harris et al. 2006: 44). However, while there were decreases in All-Irish and Gaeltacht schools, these were only minimal (Harris et al. 2006: 44). Furthermore, the report found that there were increases in the number of failed Irish speaking tests, with all types of schools demonstrating an increase in failure for every objective of the Irish speaking test (Harris et al. 2006: 58-67). Differences between institutions were also found in Murtagh's (2007) study of Irish usage in post-primary education. Murtagh's study focused on students from three different academic backgrounds, which were referred to as Instructional Category (IC) 1, 2, and 3 (Murtagh 2007: 431). IC1 students were Ordinary Level Irish students from mainstream (English-medium schools), whilst IC2 students were Higher Level Irish students from mainstream schools (Murtagh 2007: 431). On the other hand, IC3 students were Higher Level Irish students from immersion (All-Irish) schools (Murtagh 2007: 431). Students completed a self-assessed questionnaire to assess their spoken ability in Irish, alongside their use of Irish outside school and their motivation for learning Irish (Murtagh 2007: 432). Students then were then evaluated on their attitudes to learning Irish (Murtagh 2007: 433). IC3 students show the highest mean ratings for these measures, demonstrating that students in All-Irish schools are the most positive about learning Irish and invest the most effort in learning it (Murtagh 2007: 433-434). IC1 students have the lowest mean ratings for these measures, indicating a negative attitude towards learning Irish, while IC2 students fall mid-way in the results which suggests a neutral attitude to learning Irish (Murtagh 2007: 433-434). Students also evaluated their Irish course based on three evaluation measures (utility, evaluation, interest) (Murtagh 2007:

433-434). Generally, students rated the course highest for utility, showing students value their Irish course most for being educational, necessary, useful, and important, rather than its interest (Murtagh 2007: 433-434). IC3 students were most positive about their Irish course and rated the course low for difficulty (Murtagh 2007: 433-434). IC2 students saw the course as useful but were less likely to find it interesting, also finding it above average in terms of difficulty (Murtagh 2007: 433-434). Contrastingly, IC1 students showed the lowest interest ratings, found the course the most difficult, and tended to be neutral about its utility value (Murtagh 2007: 433-434). When tested for their self-assessed Irish ability, 51.9% of IC1 students said that they could understand parts of conversations, while 37% could understand a few simple sentences (Murtagh 2007: 435). Contrastingly, 44.2% of IC2 students stated that they could understand parts of conversations, and 48.1% could understand most conversations (Murtagh 2007: 435). On the other hand, 81.3% of IC3 students claimed to have native speaker ability (Murtagh 2007: 435). Students were also asked about how often Irish was used in the home, for which the results can be found in table 4 (Murtagh 2007: 436).

Table 4: How often Irish was used in the home on average for each group of students (Adapted from Murtagh 2007: 436).

| Usage | IC1 | IC2 | IC3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Never | 59.3% | 38.5% | 0% |
| Seldom | 18.5% | 25% | 18.8% |
| Occasionally | 11.1% | 28.8% | 43.8% |
| Often | 11.1% | 5.8% | 12.5% |
| Very Often | 0% | 1.9% | 6.3% |

As shown in table 4, IC1 students most often never encountered Irish in the home, with 59.3% in this category, which was also the case for IC2 students who had a slightly lower

result at 38.5% (Murtagh 2007: 436). IC2 students also showed high results for the seldom (25%) and occasionally (28.8%) measures, whilst IC3 students scored highest for the occasionally (43.8%) measure (Murtagh 2007: 436).

Table 5: Opportunities for speaking Irish outside school on average for each group of students (Adapted from Murtagh 2007: 436).

| Usage | IC1 | IC2 | IC3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| None at all | 51.9% | 38.5% | 0% |
| Not very much | 29.6% | 23.1% | 6.3% |
| A little | 7.4% | 19.2% | 25% |
| Quite a bit | 7.4% | 17.3% | 43.8% |
| A great amount | 3.7% | 1.9% | 25% |

Furthermore, table 5, which shows students' opportunities for speaking Irish outside school, demonstrates that numerous IC1 and IC2 students have either no opportunity or not very many opportunities to speak Irish outside of school (Murtagh 2007: 436). However, some IC2 students have a little (19.2%) or quite a bit of time (17.3%) afforded to them to speak Irish (Murtagh 2007: 436). IC3 students are afforded the most opportunities for speaking Irish outside of school, with 43.8% afforded quite a bit of time and 25% given a great amount (Murtagh 2007: 436).

Irish language media, particularly television, is one area where there is some crossover between Northern Ireland and the Republic. 2012 saw an agreement between the Irish and UK governments which allowed RTÉ, the public service broadcaster in the Republic of Ireland, and Irish-language broadcaster TG4 to be aired free of charge in Northern Ireland (Ivory 2014: 135). This change arguably means that any legislation enacted in the Republic which concerns RTÉ and TG4 will also apply in Northern Ireland. Thus, any analysis related to the channels will be applicable on both sides of the border. RTÉ and TG4 are both

governed by the Broadcasting Act (2009), which set out numerous language requirements for the broadcasters. The act states that RTE should have special regard for the culture of the island of Ireland and in particular the Irish language (Government of Ireland 2009: 115). Furthermore, RTE were required to ensure that they provide programming in the Irish and English languages that reflect the cultural diversity of the island of Ireland (Government of Ireland: 115-116). TG4 are governed by similar regulations, with the only difference being that they broadcast primarily in Irish, which requires them to provide programming which reflects the cultural identity of the island of Ireland whose preferred language is Irish or who have an interest in Irish (Government of Ireland 2009: 123). RTÉ's most recent annual report came in 2019, which provided some details around Irish language programming, although no breakdown of how much time was given to Irish in comparison to English was provided (RTÉ 2019: 46). However, the report did state that 22 new half-hour programmes, one 40-minute programme and one 52-minute programme had been broadcast in Irish in 2019 (RTÉ 2019: 46). Furthermore, one-off Irish-language summer programmes proved popular, such as Spéis sa Spás, marking the 50th anniversary of the moon landing and attracting 118,200, and Ar ais go Berlin '89 which commemorated the 30th anniversary of the Berlin wall and attracted 102,600 viewers (RTÉ 2019: 46). Similary, TG4's last annual report came in 2019, which stated that their national audience share had increased to 1.84%, making them the sixth largest broadcaster in Ireland (TG4 2019: 7). This was a record performance for the broadcaster, who also claimed a 71% reach with the Irish-speaking audience (TG4 2019: 46). Nonetheless, Irish-language media is arguably having some positive impact, which can be seen in Moriarty's (2009) qualitative study of the influence of TG4 on Irish university students' use and perception of Irish. Results showed that students felt strongly that Irish being on television was important for Irish people and that the presence of Irish on TG4 has changed the perception of the usefulness of Irish in society (Moriarty 2009: 144). Furthermore, participants saw the channel as being a positive promoter of Irish, identifying the show "Amú le Hector" as a driver of changing perceptions (Moriarty 2009: 144). Results showed that 51.4% of respondents reported the programme as the one that they watch most frequently on TG4 and 22.3% reporting that they would like to see more Hector-like programming on TG4 (Moriarty 2009: 145). Focus group responses also showed that Hector promoted a youthful and cool image for the language (Moriarty 2009: 145). Additionally, it can be argued that TG4 is having some effect on promoting the use of Irish, as 2.4% of students stated that their increase in Irish ability was a direct result of TG4 (Moriarty 2009: 145). However, 5% of students reported no change in their Irish ability and that this was due

to their contact with the language via TG4 (Moriarty 2009: 145). Nonetheless, TG4's positive impact on the students cannot be underestimated as 12.5% of students stated they speak more Irish and 46.4% said they would like to speak more Irish because of TG4 (Moriarty 2009: 145-146).

## 6-Discussion

Comparing the challenges faced by African languages in South Africa and the Irish language on the island of Ireland is difficult, as each government has a vastly different approach to language policy and there have been varying levels of success at implementing these policies. However, one point of comparison is the attitudes shown to both African languages and Irish, as this may suggest why policy has potentially been unsuccessful.

This can be seen in South Africa, where speakers of African languages often have negative feelings towards English despite its dominance as a lingua franca. Sweetnam Evans' study of language attitudes in South Africa noted that young Black speakers of African languages often felt disconnected from their home culture due to the dominance of English in education and society (Sweetnam Evans 2015: 6). Furthermore, one participant in the study noted that the dominance of English posed a threat to African languages, insisting in their case that there must be a return to Xhosa and that the language must make itself attractive to begin to grow again (Sweetnam Evans 2015: 4). However, despite some negative feelings towards English, speakers do often recognise that English has instrumental value in terms of opportunities (Sweetnam Evans 2015: 7). This can be seen particularly in education, where English is seen as having a multitude of advantages. For example, Kamwangamalu and Tovares noted in their study of the language attitudes of university-educated Africans in Durban that participants viewed English as an international language, business language and a language of education, with one participant stating that English was the key to everything (Kamwangamalu and Tovares 2016: 431). In comparison, participants noted that their home language, Zulu, had more sentimental and cultural value, with one participant stating that it defined where they were from (Kamwangamalu and Tovares 2016: 434). Thus, it can be argued that despite their official status in the constitution, the African languages are suffering from English's association with wealth and education which arguably points to flaws in the implementation of South African language policy.

A similarly difficult relationship can be found with Irish on the island of Ireland, where language attitudes towards Irish often vary between the Republic and Northern Ireland. For example, Ó Riagáin's (2007) study of attitudes towards Irish on both sides of the border demonstrated that Northern Irish Protestants viewed Irish negatively, while Northern Irish Catholics and speakers from the Republic viewed it positively. Table 6 shows a breakdown of the various attitude statements towards Irish for speakers from the Republic and for Northern Irish Catholics and Protestants (Ó Riagáin 2007: 381).

Table 6: Average agreement to attitude statements for people from the Republic of Ireland, as well as Northern Irish Catholics, and Protestants (Adapted from Ó Riagáin 2007: 381).

| Attitude Statement | Republic of Ireland % | Northern Ireland | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Catholic % | Protestant % |
| Irish is a dead language (% disagree) | 54 | 74 | 30 |
| To really understand traditional Irish culture, one must know Irish | 48 | 36 | 23 |
| The Republic of Ireland would not really be the Republic of Ireland without Irish-speaking people | 41 | 50 | 23 |
| Northern Ireland would not really be Northern Ireland without Irish-speaking people | 23 | 21 | 4 |

As shown in table 6 shows, Northern Irish Protestants are more likely to think Irish is a dead language and see less of a link between the Irish language and Irish culture, as well as seeing the language as less important to both the Republic and Northern Ireland (Ó Riagáin 2007: 381). In comparison, Northern Irish Catholics and those from the Republic are less likely to think Irish is a dead language, particularly so in the case of Northern Irish Catholics (Ó Riagáin 2007: 381).

Thus, the Irish language on the island of Ireland and the African languages in South Africa are arguably in a similar position, as while they are seen as important culturally, they are not seen as languages of education. However, it can be argued that in South Africa, this view is the result of an ineffective LiEP which has led to a poor performance in African languages. For example, Von Staden's study found that children performed noticeably better in English than in African languages on the prePIRLS tests, and English-speaking children also performed markedly better than children with a home language other than English (Von Staden et al. 2016: 6-9). Therefore, it can be argued that the system of additive bilingualism is not being enforced strongly enough in South African education, as Von Staden points out that African languages are often replaced by English as the LOLT after grade 4 which looks more like subtractive bilingualism than additive bilingualism and may be why literacy test results are poor (Von Staden et al. 2016: 2). Kaschula and Maseko argue that language intellectualisation is key to the prosperity of the African languages in education (Kaschula and Maseko 2014: 10-11). Finlayson and Madiba see language intellectualisation as the process of accelerating the growth of the African languages in line with modern developments, theories, and concepts (Finlayson and Madiba 2002: 40-41). Finlayson and Madiba argue that the failure of African languages to be used as mediums of instruction, as is the case beyond most grade 4 classes and at tertiary levels, has impeded their intellectualisation (Finlayson and Madiba 2002: 46). They cite the case of the intellectualisation of Afrikaans due to its use as a medium of instruction, including at some specialised scientific institutes and universities, which creates a demand for new terms and textbooks (Finlayson and Madiba 2002: 46). In this case the African languages arguably have a low level of formal institutional support since they are largely neglected in education, which could affect their linguistic vitality.

In comparison, it can be argued that the situation for the Irish language is more variable depending on the LOLT in schools and where they are located. In the case of the Irish language, issues are more concentrated around attitudes to Irish and opportunities to use the

language outside of education rather than on the intellectualisation of the language. Ó Murchú notes that Irish as a discipline is offered in all seven state-aided higher education institutions (Ó Murchú 2016: 39-40). However, it is observed that there is a shortage of scientific journals in Irish and, despite there being a range of books published in various academic areas, there is no clear policy to fill this need (Ó Murchú 2016: 41). Thus, this may be an area of concern in future. Nonetheless, in Northern Ireland too Irish is used as a LOLT in higher education. Ó Ciáran (2019) notes that while English is usually the LOLT, Irish is used in Irish language courses (Ó Ciáran 2019: 33). Thus, it can be argued that issues around Irish-language education arise due to language attitudes and disparities between Gaeltacht and All-Irish schools, and English-medium schools. For example, Harris et al. (2006) showed that there was a considerable attainment gap in Irish language test results between the three, with Gaeltacht and All-Irish schools performing considerably better than the English-medium schools (Harris et al. 2006: 44). Furthermore, as Murtagh (2007) showed students in All-Irish schools were more positive about learning Irish and had considerably more opportunities for speaking Irish outside of school than students from English-medium schools (Murtagh 2007: 433-436). This could potentially be a situation in which language revitalisation would take place since the language is in decline.

However, while performance on Irish-language tests may be high for students in the Gaeltacht, it can be argued that the area is undergoing a shift towards English, particularly among younger speakers. For example, Ó Giollagáin et al. observed that younger people from Category A Gaeltacht areas tended not to use Irish as their main language in certain contexts, such as with their peers (Ó Giollagáin et al. 2017: 25-26). Furthermore, census data from 2016 demonstrated that the number of Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht area had decreased since the 2011 census (Central Statistics Office). However, while this looks to be a failure by government to manage Irish, it may be that financial constraints have led to the decline in Irish in the area. For example, Ó Ceallaigh notes that Údarás na Gaeltachta, which manages Irish in the Gaeltacht, saw their budget slashed from €25.5 million to €6.7 million between 2008 and 2015 due to the 2008 financial crisis (Ó Ceallaigh 2020: 106). Furthermore, the financial crisis had a devastating effect on the Gaeltacht labour market, which led to high levels of emigration out of the area (Ó Ceallaigh 2020: 106). Most emigrants were young adults aged 18-34, which Ó Ceallaigh argues is significant for the language since this age group are most likely to have children and continue the intergenerational transmission of Irish (Ó Ceallaigh 2020: 108). Furthermore, Ó Ceallaigh argues that the decline of the main

language-focused industry, the coláistí samhraidh (summer colleges), contributed to this decline (Ó Ceallaigh 2020: 107). The colleges, which are estimated to be valued at €20 million annually, suffered a 25% decline in attendance between 2008 and 2014 due to the recession (Ó Ceallaigh 2020: 107). Thus, for Ó Ceallaigh these economic impacts arguably contributed to a sense of Irish not having a significant impact on the local economy and pushed people away from promoting the language (Ó Ceallaigh 2020: 107-108). In this case, Irish arguably has a low demographic vitality, since there has been a lot of emigration out of the area leading to a decline in Irish. Thus, efforts to increase Irish usage in the area would likely be categorised as revitalisation.

While it can be argued that the Gaeltacht suffered from economic effects more than poor management from the government, the same cannot be said for the use of African languages in South African government. For example, PANSALB's 2019 report noted that most government departments admitted to having done nothing about the Use of Official Languages Act (PANSALB 2019: 9). Additionally, while many departments cited budgetary constraints as a reason for not implementing many of the requirements of the act, Hlengwa-Selepe stated that governments are unlikely to allocate funds to poorly formed language plans (Hlengwa-Selepe 2020: 106). Thus, government departments are arguably ignoring their constitutional requirements to promote the use of African languages as well as what is required of them under the act. However, while PANSALB has observed the shortcomings of these government departments to introduce language policies, it can be argued that due to its limited powers it can do little to enforce language policy. Perry notes that many departments which PANSALB have received complaints about have ignored PANSALB's recommendations (Perry 2004: 506). However, Perry argues that departments are unlikely to yield to PANSALB's requests as the body has no enforcement powers (Perry 2004: 507). Additionally, Phaswana (2003) argues that the government itself does not believe it can fulfil its constitutional requirements. Phaswana conducted interviews with ANC representatives who stated that the implementation of the 11 languages policy in parliament was impossible, and that English is a functional language which should be utilised in parliament (Phaswana 2003: 123-124). Furthermore, another ANC representative argued that African languages required corpus planning, which involves engineered changes such as the creation of new words in a language, before they could be used in parliament (Phaswana 2003: 126-127). Therefore, it can be argued that similarly to the situation with the African languages in education, it may be that the African languages require a degree of corpus planning or

intellectualisation before they can be used in government. However, it can also be argued that government departments are not taking their constitutional duties to promote the African languages seriously, and that PANSALB's limited powers in enforcing changes has left the board relatively ineffectual. Thus, the African languages again have a low level of institutional support since they are receiving very little promotion in government.

Another direct point of comparison which can be drawn between the African languages and the Irish language is their usage in the media. As was pointed out by Kamwangamalu (2000), there is a case to suggest that the SABC are not giving equal time to each of the 11 official languages, at least in their television output. Kamwangamalu notes that English receives far more airtime than any other language, with some African languages receiving no airtime at all (Kamwangamalu 2000: 54). However, Du Plessis points out that since the Broadcasting Act (1999) makes no distinction between radio and television output, SABC can meet their language requirements through their language-specific radio stations (Du Plessis 2006: 55). Thus, Du Plessis argues that the Broadcasting Act's language requirements are too broad, and that more specific arrangements must be made in broadcasting licensing conditions and in SABC's own language policy (Du Plessis 2006: 56). Olivier argues that subtitling is the ideal way of giving languages equity on SABC, as this gives speakers of languages other than English the ability to consume television in their language, as well as subtitling providing opportunities for standardisation and the promotion of languages (Olivier 2011: 239). For example, Olivier argues that bilingual subtitling, which involves the provision of subtitles in two languages simultaneously, and multilingual subtitling, where users select what language to see their subtitles in, would be suitable in South Africa (Olivier 2011: 237). Furthermore, Olivier notes that subtitling is cheaper than lip-synchronised dubbing and creating new programmes and as such would get around any budgetary constraints which SABC might have (Olivier 2011: 239). Therefore, while SABC are arguably doing good work in terms of giving languages airtime on radio, they could be doing more in terms of sharing airtime between languages on television. In comparison, the situation with Irish language media is arguably more positive. For example, Moriarty observed that Irish university students felt strongly that Irish being on television was important for Irish people and that hearing Irish on TG4 made Irish appear more useful in society (Moriarty 2009: 144). Furthermore, the channel was shown to have a positive effect on increasing Irish usage among young people, as many students reported that their Irish usage had increased due to TG4 and many more stated that they would like to speak more Irish due to TG4 (Moriarty 2009: 145-146).

Furthermore, Moriarty comments on the impact which TG4 has had by arguing that TG4 normalises the Irish language by providing a forum for it outside of education in language revitalisation (Moriarty 2009: 146). Thus, it can be argued that if a more considered effort was made by SABC to include the African languages more in their television output, the African languages would be evaluated similarly positively. With respect to media, it can be argued that both languages have some degree of institutional support, primarily through radio for African languages and through television for Irish. However, given Kamwangamalu's (2000) findings it can be argued that Irish receives slightly more.

In terms of their linguistic vitality, it can be argued that the African languages receive less in the way of institutional support than Irish due to failings in education and at a government level. In comparison, Irish suffers more in terms of demographic vitality due to emigration in the Gaeltacht. The situation with the African languages looks to be one of language maintenance as though in terms of status they are clearly behind English, there is no evidence of decline. In comparison, Irish is arguably in a situation of language revitalisation, as emigration out of the Gaeltacht has led to a decline in Irish speakers and low levels of use outside of education.

## 7-Conclusion

The use and treatment of the African languages in South Africa and of the Irish language on the island of Ireland can be considered vastly different. While the South African government have attempted to provide language equity in all aspects of society, the Irish government have focused their attention mostly on the Gaeltacht. However, this has arguably been to little avail, as the number of Irish speakers in the region has reduced (Central Statistics Office), alongside Irish-language proficiency in Gaeltacht schools decreasing (Harris et al. 2006: 44). Additionally, while economic difficulties around the 2008 financial crisis can partly account for the reduction in Irish speakers in the area (Ó Ceallaigh 2020: 106-108), there is arguably work still to do to increase Irish usage outside of education which is concerningly sparse. The South African government have likewise faced difficulties in achieving language equity for the African languages, which can be seen in the use of the languages in government. PANSALB observed that government departments have shown an apathy for introducing language plans to both promote the use of African languages and cater for those who speak

them (PANSALB 2019: 8-9). However, PANSALB itself is arguably ineffectual due to its limited powers (Perry 2004: 507), and without the government expanding its remit government departments will likely continue ignoring their constitutional duties regarding the African languages. There have also arguably been failings in education regarding the treatment of African languages. The system of additive bilingualism has also been poorly implemented. While the intention behind the educational policy is to develop skills in an additional language alongside maintaining the home language, English often ends up replacing African languages as the LOLT due to the LiEP policy being far too flexible (Von Staden et al. 2016: 2). Consequently, it can be argued that the government must work to intellectualise the African languages for schools to see the languages as viable LOLTs. In comparison, attitudes towards Irish vary depending on the type of school, with Gaeltacht and All-Irish students being more positive about learning Irish (Murtagh 2007: 433-434). Thus, it can be argued that key area which the government must focus on is to improve attitudes towards Irish among younger speakers, including promoting its usage outside education which was a concern in the Gaeltacht. Nonetheless, Irish-language media has arguably been a success, as TG4 has grown in recent years. Furthermore, TG4 has shown that it has improved attitudes towards the Irish language as well as in some cases increasing its usage (Moriarty 2009: 145-146). However, it can be argued that a greater effort is needed from RTÉ to grow Irish in the media more, as the broadcaster does not publish specific figures for its Irish-language programming in its annual reports. The same can be said for SABC who only report the number of hours of non-English programming, rather than for African languages specifically. Thus, it is impossible to tell whether they are meeting their commitments or not. However, earlier studies have shown that SABC do not dedicate nearly as much time to African languages as they do to English, and that the broadcaster uses what is effectively a policy loophole to account for their lack of African-language television broadcasting with their radio output (Du Plessis 2006: 55). While financial constraints appear to be a factor in SABC's lack of African-language television output, avenues such as multilingual subtitles could be explored which are cheaper than dubbing and producing African-language programs (Olivier 2011: 237-239). In conclusion, it can be argued that the Irish government's policies have focused too much on formal education and the Gaeltacht region and need to do more to encourage more positive views of Irish and increase opportunities for speaking Irish outside education. While economic problems may be affecting the Gaeltacht if negative attitudes towards Irish are not addressed the language will arguably diminish further. In comparison, the South African government need to deliver on their constitutional promises, which are

exemplary up until the point of application. Language policy in South Africa is arguably too flexible which can be seen in education, and not specific enough as in the case of SABC's licensing requirements. Additionally, the government must expand PANSALB's powers to make impact meaningful changes regarding government departments. Thus, it can be argued that without making its language policies more specific and expanding the remit of PANSALB, the African languages will continue to be marginalised in South African society. These differences are further characterised by the African languages arguably being in a situation of language maintenance and Irish being in a situation of language revitalisation.

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