An Investigation into the Effectiveness of using Child Created Video in the Learning and Retention of the Irish Language in an Irish Primary School.

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Submitted to the University of Limerick in October 2012
Declaration

I hereby declare that this is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted for the award of any degree at any other university.

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Cormac Cahill
9114203
October 2012
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my father for giving me a love of learning and to my mother whose support every day made it possible to complete this project.
Abstract

This thesis looks at the use of child created video as an aid in the learning and retention of the Irish language in an Irish Primary School. It also investigated the effect of using these child created videos on the motivation of children to learn the Irish language. The methodology used in this research utilised a Task Based Language Learning and Teaching model.

The study found that the use of child created video was beneficial to children enabling them to develop greater skills in automaticity, fluency and language output in the target language. The study also found that the actual creation of the videos by the children led to greater retention of the language in comparison with vocabulary learned using traditional methods. The new methodology also led to increased levels of motivation to learn the Irish language amongst the children. Many reported they were more positive about learning the language after the introduction of the new methodology.

The attitudes and beliefs of children, teachers and parents towards the Irish language were also explored to better understand the current standing of the Irish language in Ireland.

The study found that the attitudes of teachers towards the Irish language was primarily positive though many would prefer to see a greater emphasis on oral language development at Primary level.

Parents were found to have a complex mix of attitudes towards the Irish language. While many could express positive reasons to learn the language a substantial minority made very little effort to speak the actual language.
Acknowledgements

Thank you to my tutor, Ken Rea for his support especially in the final days before publishing.

I would like to thank the parents of Burnfort National School for allowing me to complete the research with their children and for participating and returning the questionnaires.

I would also like to thank the many teachers who completed and returned the questionnaires on their attitudes and beliefs on the Irish language.

Most especially I would like to thank the children of first and second class at Burnfort National School whose enthusiasm for the project kept me going even on the tough days. Without your support and encouragement each day this thesis would not have been completed.
# Table of Contents

Abbreviations 12

Irish terms used in this Thesis 13

List of Tables and Graphs 14

## Chapter 1: Introduction 15

1.1 Introduction 15

1.2 Background to the Project 15

1.3 The Irish Language in Primary Schools 17

1.4 The use of Digital Video in Irish schools 18

1.5 Role of Language 18

1.6 Rationale for the Research 19

1.7 Aims and Objectives of the Research 20

   1.7.1 Aims of the Research 20

   1.7.2 Objectives of the Research 20

1.8 Research Methods 20

1.9 Scope and limitations of the research 22

1.10 Structure of the Thesis 22

## Chapter 2: Literature Review 24

2.1 Introduction 24

2.2 The Irish Language 24

   2.2.1 The History of the Irish language 25
2.12 Benefits of Video in the Language Classroom 45
2.13 Constraints of Video in the Language Classroom 46
2.14 Task Based Language Learning and Video 47
2.15 Twenty Classes Survey 47
    2.15.1 Role of the school 48
    2.15.2 Motivation to learn Language 49
    2.15.3 Self Assessment 49
    2.15.4 Children’s Opinions on the Lessons 49
    2.15.5 Oral Irish skills 50
    2.15.6 Other factors affecting attainment in Irish 50
2.16 Teachers and the Irish Language 51
    2.16.1 Teachers and the Teaching of Irish 52
    2.16.2 Teachers and Parental Support 53
2.17 Parents and the Irish Language 53
2.18 Other methods to improve Irish in Primary Schools 55
2.19 Conclusion 56

Chapter 3: Methodology 58
3.1 Introduction 58
3.2 Rationale for the Research 58
3.3 Research Questions 59
3.4 Approaches to Researching Education 59
3.5 Use of Digital Video 61
3.6 Task Based language Learning and Video 62
    3.6.1 Preparation (Pre-task Stage) 62
3.6.2 The Task (Recording Stage)

3.6.3 Presentation and Review (Post Task Stage)

3.7 Research Participants

3.8 Scope and limitations of the Research

3.9 Data Collection
   3.9.1 Piloting of the Questionnaires
   3.9.2 Questionnaires
   3.9.3 Observation
   3.9.4 Focus Groups
   3.9.5 Reflective Journal
   3.9.6 Ethical Issues
   3.9.7 Children’s Bias
   3.9.8 Researcher Bias

3.10 Qualitative and Quantitative Data

3.11 Triangulation

3.12 Validity and Reliability

Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Overall Organisation of the Project

4.3 The Children’s Retention of the Irish language

4.4 Results of the Children’s Questionnaires

4.5 Results of the Focus Groups

4.6 Results of the Teacher Questionnaires

4.7 Results of the Parents Questionnaires
4.8 Technical Issues
4.9 Time Factors
4.10 Conclusion

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings
5.1 Introduction
5.2 Retention of the Irish Language
5.3 Motivation to learn the Irish Language
5.4 Teachers Questionnaires
5.4.1 Teachers and Digital Video
5.5 Role of Parents
5.5.1 Parental Support for the Language: The Paradox
5.6 Student Exemptions in Irish
5.7 Other Issues
5.7.1 Time Factors
5.7.2 Hardware and Software
5.7.3 Editing Issues
5.7.4 Classroom Management
5.8 Conclusion

Chapter 6: Conclusion
6.1 Introduction
6.2 Principal Findings
6.2.1 Retention of the language
6.2.2 Motivation to learn the Language 112
6.2.3 Benefits/Constraints of using Digital video in language learning 112
6.2.4 Children’s Questionnaires 113
6.2.5 Children’s opinions after the introduction of the new methodology 113
6.2.6 Teacher’s Questionnaires 114
6.2.7 Parent’s Questionnaires 115

6.3 Limitations of the Research 115

6.4 Time Factors 116

6.5 Recommendations and areas for further research 116

Bibliography 121

Appendix 1 131

Reflective Journal Entries 131

Appendix 2 133

Vocabulary Sheets 133
Abbreviations

C.E.B.  Curriculum and Examination Board
C.L.T.  Communicative Language Teaching
Divis  Digital Video Streaming and Multilingualism
DVD  Digital Versatile Disk
E.S.R.I.  Economic and Social Research Institute
E.U.  European Union
Fís  Film in Schools Project
G.A.A.  Gaelic Athletic Association
I.T.  Information Technology
ITÉ  Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann
I.C.T.  Information Communication Technology
I.N.T.O.  Irish National Teachers Organisation
L2  Second Language
N.C.C.A.  National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
N.C.T.E.  National Centre for Technology in Education
P.P.P.  Presentation, Practice, Production Method
R.T.E.  Radió Teilifís Éireann
S.E.C.  State Examinations Commission
S.E.N.  Special Educational Need
S.L.A.  Second Language Acquisition
T.B.L.T.  Task Based Language Teaching
TG4  Irish Language Television Station
Irish terms used in this Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Irish Term</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaelscoileanna</td>
<td>Schools where the primary language of instruction is Irish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaeltachts</td>
<td>Regions in Ireland where the first language of many homes is Irish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mé Féin</td>
<td>Myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bia</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Éadaí</td>
<td>Clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Aimsir</td>
<td>The Weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sa Bhaile</td>
<td>Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ar Scoil</td>
<td>At School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Teilifís</td>
<td>Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siopadóireacht</td>
<td>Shopping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables and Graphs

Graph 1: Children’s opinions on the Irish language  
Graph 2: Areas the children found most difficult in Irish 
Graph 3: How often is Irish spoken by anyone in your home at present?  
Graph 4: Do you read any Irish books/watch Irish TV?  
Graph 5: How would you rate your ability to speak Irish?  

Table 1: How the children rated themselves in English/Mathematics/Irish  
Table 2: Which statement is closest to your opinion of the Irish language?
Chapter 1: Introduction

"Books will soon be obsolete in the schools. Scholars will soon be instructed through the eye. It is possible to teach every branch of human knowledge with the motion picture. Our school system will be completely changed in the next ten years"

(Thomas Edison 1913 cited in Saettler, 1968:98)

"Is it time to stand up and proclaim that the language is dead, that it is really time now for a decent and respectful burial, perhaps somewhere in the groves of academe?"

(INTO 2004)

1.1 Introduction

This study examines the potential of child created digital video as a resource to aid in the motivation to learn and retention of the Irish language. It also investigates the current attitudes and beliefs of children, parents and primary school teachers towards the Irish language. This background of attitudes and beliefs will be used to give a background to the project and will also be used to assess the impact of this new methodology on the motivation and attitude of children learning the language in primary schools. This chapter opens with an explanation of the background to the project and the role of language. The rationale behind the project is then explored as well as the aims and objectives for the study. Research methods are briefly outlined as well as the scope and limitations of this particular research study. Finally a brief outline of the chapters is given.

1.2 Background to the Project

In Ireland, Irish or “Gaeilge” is one of the core subjects covered under the Primary School Curriculum (NCCA, 1999). Irish is also the first official language in the Republic of Ireland, English being the other (Government of Ireland 1937). Since January 2007 it has also been an official language of the European union. Uniquely, it is the only official language in the EU which is not spoken by the majority of the population of that country. The 2006
National Census was the first to include a question on usage of the Irish language in the daily lives of respondents outside of the education system.

"Just over 72,000 persons, representing 4.4% per cent of all those who could speak Irish, spoke it on a daily basis outside education".


However this equates to less than 2% of the countries overall population at the time. Considering the time, effort and expense put into the promotion of the Irish language many would ask if it is really worth it? An INTO discussion document noted that

"with close on two million learning hours undertaken each week by Irish primary school children in Gaeilge, one can extrapolate that roughly two billion pupil hours will be given in the next quarter century by the next generation of teachers to the implementation of the Gaeilge curriculum. Will the State, one might wonder, be just about as far along the road to language revival then as it is now, after labouring for the best part of the last century?"

Harris et al (2006) has commented that motivation to learn the language is crucial to its success. However he warns that to maintain motivation amongst learners, children must achieve some level of proficiency and he warns of the consequences of declining pupil and teacher motivation in the teaching and learning of Irish in primary schools.

One significant change at Leaving Certificate level has seen a greater emphasis being placed on Irish as a spoken language. From 2012 the percentage of marks being offered for the Oral Examination in Irish is being raised from 25% to 40%. This is a substantial amount of the overall marks and reflects a growing belief that if Irish is to survive into the future an emphasis must be placed on developing oral Irish skills in children. However, the current Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, has spoken of his desire to see Irish become an optional subject in the Leaving Certificate (Kenny 2011). Fine Gael have also expressed a desire to see the percentage marks awarded for the Oral Irish examination at Leaving Certificate level raised to 50% while they have also pledged to double the numbers sitting the Leaving Certificate Higher Exam by 2018 (Fine Gael 2011; Kenny 2011).

Laing (1988) highlighted the successful example of the bilingual education strategy employed in parts of Canada. One of the main reasons highlighted for the success of this programme was its voluntary nature. In a survey on adult opinions conducted at the time
most adults were quick to admit their frustration at being unable to conduct a conversation in a second language despite spending years learning it at school. This is very similar to the Irish situation. The introduction of the learning of a second language as a voluntary and optional choice saw parents who were committed to a multilingual Canada enrolling their children in these bilingual schools. An INTO discussion document noted the similarities between this and the growing number of Gaelscoileanna opening in Ireland.

It is against this background of increased interest in and public debate on Irish as a spoken language that this research is being conducted. It will assess the potential of video as a tool in teaching and retaining Oral Irish and increasing motivation to learn the language.

1.3 The Irish Language in Primary Schools

The Irish Primary School Curriculum recommends a number of strategies including “role-play, language games, tasks and problems, drills, drama, video, story, and poetry” (NCCA 1999). Video is recommended particularly as an aid in introducing new vocabulary. However, its recommendations refer only to the watching of videos and do not refer to the creation of videos by children.

An Inspectorate report conducted in 2007 stated

“a higher standard of Irish should be expected from pupils. To this end teachers need to reflect creatively and imaginatively when selecting teaching methodologies. It is recommended that a particular emphasis be placed on structuring situations where pupils can create language for themselves. Drama should play a very central role in learning” (Inspectorate 2007).

An INTO discussion document also highlighted the potential of using video in the Irish language classroom believing that videos could be made in the Irish language by the children which could be sent home to keep parents informed of the language their children were learning.

This research explores the use of child created video as an aid in the teaching and retention of Oral Irish. It also explores the potential of Digital Video as a motivational tool to encourage children to speak the Irish language. A BECTA Report in 2004 noted that using
video led to increased student motivation. It also noted that the creation of video led to students thinking more deeply on their subject. This research looks at child created video in relation to the study of the Irish language in a primary school. In a similar study on Podcasting in third level institutions it was noted that Podcasts were particularly useful to foreign language students allowing them to stop and re-listen to language they may not have understood at the first time of hearing (McGarr 2009). Research by Frydenberg (2006) found that while Podcasting was helpful the main benefits were seen when students were asked to author their own material. Lee et al (2008) believe that it is in this creation of “learner generated content” that its true potential is found. This is also in keeping with the Constructivist method of learning. While the studies noted above relate to the use of podcasting in third level education there are many similarities between Podcasting and video (particularly the use of enhanced podcasts). This research will also investigate if the use of child generated video content is of benefit to both those who create it and those who simply watch it.

1.4 The use of Digital Video in Irish schools

Film has been a part of the daily lives of people since its invention over a hundred years ago. Yet in schools it appears to have had a limited use despite the prophetic words of Thomas Edison (cited in Saettler, 1968:98). The Department of Education and Skills notes how the use of technology can be beneficial to children and actively encourages its use in Irish Primary Schools. The use of child created films in Irish Primary Schools is not a new phenomenon. The Fís Project is an annual film festival aimed at Irish Primary Schools. While entries are often received in the Irish language these are judged on the film rather than the language used.

1.5 Role of Language

The Revised Irish Primary School Curriculum (1999) notes the importance of language in all curricular areas.

“Language is the principal means of human communication. Through it ideas and information are expressed and communicated, aspirations, attitudes and emotions are articulated and imaginative possibilities are predicted”.
The Irish Primary School Curriculum has two languages at its core. These are English and Irish and are taught in three different school contexts;
• Schools where English is the primary language at home and is the principal language through which all subjects are taught at school.
• Schools where Irish is the primary language spoken at home and is the principal language through which all subjects are taught at school.
• Schools where Irish may not be the primary language spoken at home but is the principal language through which all subjects are taught at school.

This research is being conducted in the first example, a school where English is the primary language of instruction with Irish being taught as a separate subject. All of the children will have learned basic words and phrases in the junior classes but this study will look at the creation and retention of a larger vocabulary of Irish words and phrases.

1.6 Rationale for the Research

For many children learning the Irish language is difficult. Many teachers also express difficulty in motivating children to speak the language. Many children learning Irish see the language as merely a subject which is done in school but is not spoken once they leave the classroom. “Irish like homework, rules and uniforms is best forgotten outside school” (INTO 2004).

Parental involvement is also important when learning a new language but the literature points to a growing belief amongst parents that the Irish language is irrelevant, particularly when choosing a job in the future. It is also becoming more common for children to receive exemptions from learning the language for a variety of reasons.

Teachers too find it difficult to motivate children to speak the language. A substantial percentage of teachers believe that a greater emphasis needs to be placed on developing children’s oral language skills in primary schools.

It is hoped that this new methodology will help to overcome some of these issues in increasing the motivation of the children to speak the language and also in assisting the retention of new vocabulary. The research looks at the attitudes and beliefs of children,
parents and teachers in order to give a greater overall picture of the study of Irish in Primary Schools.

1.7 Aims and Objectives of the Research

The following section outlines the aims and objectives of this research study and asks a number of questions which will be answered through this research.

1.7.1 Aims of the Research

This research aims to utilise modern technologies including a digital video camera and an Apple iPad to motivate children to learn the Irish language. It is also hoped that the new methodology will lead to increased retention of the language amongst the children involved in this research study. In doing this the questions outlined below must also be answered.

1.7.2 Objectives of the Research

- What are the potential benefits/constraints of using digital video in language learning?
- What are children's, parents and teachers current attitudes towards the learning of the Irish language?
- What are the potential benefits/constraints of using child-created content on the learning process? Do the children retain the vocabulary better when they have created the video?
- Does the use of digital video have any effect on the motivation of children to learn the Irish language?

1.8 Research Methods

This study will involve a literature review on current attitudes towards the Irish language amongst children, parents and teachers, second language learning and a review of the use of digital video in second language learning.

The research will take the form of a Case Study and based on a Task Based Teaching Method. The practical research will involve the following steps;
The children will be assisted in creating scripts using the new vocabulary taught.

The children will be given two alternatives to create their video resource;

- The children will create short dramas based on these scripts and create short animations using an Apple iPad and the Puppet Pals App.
- The children will create short dramas based on these scripts and film them using a digital video camera.

The research will take place in a school where English is the primary language of tuition with Irish being taught as a second language. The target group is based within the researchers own classroom. The class is made up of 15 first class children and 18 second class children aged currently from 6 years 6 months to 9 years 1 month. The school is a rural four teacher school and is not located in a Gaeltacht (Irish speaking area).

The children currently receive three and a half hours instruction per week in Irish as per the recommendations of the Irish primary School Curriculum (NCCA, 1999). To ensure fairness over the term of the research project the time allocated to teaching Irish in the class will remain the same. Some discretionary time is allocated in the curriculum and this may be used by a group when creating their video.

Particular care will be taken with children with specific learning difficulties and those with general learning difficulties. Exemptions from Irish have been approved for two of the children in the class. These exemptions were sought based on recommendations made in psychological assessments. While the exemptions have been granted the children are continuing to take Irish lessons for the foreseeable future at the request of the parents. An exemption for a third child is pending. All children and their parents have agreed to take part in the research.

The research will take place over an eight week period. The Irish curriculum is divided into ten broad themes. Since it will not be possible to cover all themes using the new methodology during an eight week period the children will cover the themes of Mé Féin (Myself), Bia (Food), Éadaí (Clothes) and An Aimsir (The Weather) using this new method while the other themes will be covered using the traditional methods. This will allow the children's knowledge and retention of the language learned using two methods to be compared.
Research methodologies including questionnaires, focus group interviews, a reflective journal and teacher observation will also be used during the research process to gather information and data and support triangulation of the data to ensure valid and reliable results. The results of the children’s, parents and teachers questionnaires will be compared to the results of previous studies into the Irish language. This background to attitudes towards the Irish language will be crucial in identifying some of the difficulties faced when teaching the Irish language.

1.9 Scope and limitations of the research

This is a small scale research project involving just the researchers class over a short time scale and as such the results will be limited. The results obtained from this research project will help to gauge the effect of using digital media in this particular class. While the results may not be applicable to all classes throughout the country it is hoped that the research will impact positively on this particular cohort of children and will provide areas worthy of further research in the future.

1.10 Structure of the Thesis

- Chapter One inquires into the context on which this research study is based. It also sets out the aims of the research and sets out a number of sub-questions.

- Chapter Two reviews the literature relevant to this research. It will look at the role of the Irish language and second language learning in general. It also focusses on child, parental and teacher attitudes to the learning of the Irish Language. The use of digital media in schools and in language learning will also be looked at. The areas of Action Research and Task Based Language Learning and Teaching will also be explored.

- Chapter Three looks at research methodologies and data gathering tools. It also looks at the issues of reliability, ethics and validity.

- Chapter Four presents the main findings of this research.
• Chapter Five discusses and examines the results in relation to the literature review presented in Chapter Two.

• Chapter Six illustrates the conclusions that can be drawn from the research and gives recommendations in relation to further study which could be conducted based on this research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature associated with the teaching and learning of the Irish language. It begins with a brief history of the language and the key attempts of the Irish government to encourage the use of the language. It also looks at the future for the language in an ever changing global society. The review also examines the role language and that of the Irish Primary School in teaching and promoting the Irish language.

The Literature Review then examines the most common methods used to teach second languages focussing particularly on a Task Based Language Teaching approach. The use of video as a tool in learning a second language is examined including some attempts in Ireland to promote more use of video in primary schools.

Finally research into the Irish language is examined and the importance of storytelling and drama in facilitating the learning of Irish is investigated. Literature pertaining to the complex mix of attitudes and beliefs of children, parents and teachers towards the Irish language is then explored.

2.2 The Irish Language

According to Article 8 of the Irish Constitution, the Irish language is the first official language of the Republic of Ireland. The English language, which is the other language of the vast majority of people in Ireland is recognised as a second official language (Government of Ireland 1937). Since January 2007 it has also been an official language of the European union. Uniquely, it is the only official language in the EU which is not spoken by the majority of the population of that country. Although it is the mother tongue of a minority of the Irish people, the language is highly significant for reasons of heritage and national identity and it plays an important role in educational and cultural life (Department of Education 2005).
2.2.1 The History of the Irish language

The Irish language has had a long troubled history. Initially the language was brought to Ireland around 500 BC by the Celts (Ó Siadhail 1989 cited in McDermott 2011; Ó Laoire, 2005). The language grew in strength through the centuries until British rule began to strengthen in the 1600’s. By the nineteenth century Irish, while still spoken throughout the country, was seen as the language of the poor and played no part in Ireland’s economic or political affairs. In fact it was not unusual for children to be physically beaten for speaking the language (McDermott 2011).

Once independence was gained from Britain in the early twentieth century the new Irish government saw the revival of the Irish language as a crucial aspect of the new state and more importantly saw the education system as the tool which would bring this about. From early on the new state began to pursue a policy whose ultimate goal was the creation of a bilingual but preferably full immersion system of education in all primary schools (Harris 2005). Reforms aimed at the revival of the Irish language took precedence over other concerns (Coolahan 1981; Clancy 1995 both cited in Nolan 2008) which reached a peak in the 1940’s (Ó Buachalla, 1984, cited in Harris 2005; Harris and Murtagh, 1988).

A drop in the numbers speaking the language led the government to set out a new plan for the language using the approach of Pressure, Preferment, Projection (Breathnach, 1956:134 cited in McDermott, 2011). Irish became a compulsory subject in schools, a situation which still exists to this day. Those who spoke Irish enjoyed advantages in seeking employment in the civil service. In recent years this has been less prevalent yet it is still a pre-requisite to working as a primary school teacher.

Throughout the 1970’s and 1980’s the numbers of children reaching the standards for achievement continued to drop at both primary and secondary level (Ó’Riagáin 1997 cited in Murtagh, 2009). A report by Comhairle an Gaeilge (The Irish Language Council) in 1974 noted that even after 12 years of tuition many children emerged from primary school unable to hold even a basic conversation in Irish (cited in Murtagh (2009)).

Despite these attempts at reviving the language results from the 2011 National Census show how the language is still showing little sign of being spoken outside of the education system. From a population of 4.37 million just over 1.77 million indicated an ability in Irish
(Central Statistics Office, 2011). Of those who indicated that they could speak the language, just over half a million stated that they spoke Irish only within the education system. The figures also show that just 1.36% of the adult population (aged 20+) stated that they spoke Irish on a daily basis outside of the education system.

2.2.2 Public Opinion

Numerous studies have shown that the attitude of Irish people towards the language is complex. People are not just “for” or "against" Irish. Public opinion on certain aspects of the Irish language can range from enthusiastic to cautious and sometimes even to extremes of hatred and cynicism (MacAogain 1990). However, overall support for the preservation of the Irish language remains quite high amongst the adult population (Mac Gréil & Rhatigan 2009). Ó'Riagáin (2007) notes that 70% of adults believe it is important for their children to grow up knowing the language.

2.2.3 Gaeltachts and Gaelscoileanna

Irish is still the daily spoken language of small areas in the country known as Gaeltachts. However it would appear from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) figures that even within these areas Irish is not spoken on a daily basis by all. Agencies such as Údarás na Gaeltachta argue that

“the existence of areas where Irish lives as a community language help to provide an environment where the language can evolve naturally in a modern setting”

Údarás na Gaeltachta, 2010 cited in McDermott 2011

A recent report however, showed that there was an “alarming drop” in the number of speakers of Irish in a Kerry Gaeltacht Parish (Hickey 2012). There is anecdotal evidence that this situation is occurring in many other Gaeltacht areas throughout Ireland.

Some have argued that this emphasis on preservation rather than revival has assisted the decline of the language and many feel that the language needs to be promoted in more urban areas where the population is greater and has a greater chance of being widely spoken. As more and more people migrate from rural Gaeltacht areas many seem to leave the language behind them (McDermott 2011).
In the past number of years however, great strides have been made in promoting the language at school level. An increasing number of Irish immersion schools (Gaelscoileanna) have opened in non-Irish speaking areas and particularly urban areas and it is hoped that through these new communities of Irish speakers may emerge. Figures from 2012 show that there are 140 Primary Gaelscoileanna in the Republic of Ireland. This equates to 4.4% of all primary Schools outside Gaeltacht areas (Gaelscoileanna Teo 2012). However, others have noted how this commitment to using the Irish language in schools has not in reality continued after children leave school (McDermott 2011).

### 2.2.4 Government Initiatives

In 2003 the Official Languages Act was enacted by government to ensure “*better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish*” (Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2010). This is currently under review by the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs. In 2007 Irish became an official working language of the European Union (EU). There have been many critics of these initiatives with many arguing that these changes effect institutions and do not aid the day to day speaking of the Irish language at societal level (McDermott 2011).

A recent Twenty Year Strategy prepared for the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (now the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs) acknowledged that knowledge of the Irish language “*has not automatically been converted into actual everyday usage of Irish*” (Fiontar, 2009: 11). The report believes that reversing this trend is “*the single greatest challenge and opportunity for the nation's language planning.*” The aim set out in this report is to raise the number of people speaking the Irish language on a daily basis to 250,000 by 2030. It also notes that “*the education system is the critical engine for generating the linguistic capacity on which the 20-year Strategy is premised*” (Fiontar 2009:17).

It has recommended that a new curriculum for the teaching of the Irish language be implemented in both primary and secondary schools. As of yet this has not been followed through by the Department of Education and Skills.
One of its more interesting recommendations is for the introduction of two syllabi for Irish at Leaving Certificate level. Both programmes would have an ordinary and higher level paper. However one would concentrate on oral competence in the language with some work on basic written communication. The second option would be for those students who intend to study Irish at degree level or those who will use the language on a professional basis at a later stage (Fiontar 2009: 21).

2.2.5 The Future of the Irish Language in Education

A significant change at Leaving Certificate level will begin in 2012. This will see an increase in the percentage of marks being offered for the Oral Examination in Irish being raised from 25% to 40% (Department of Education and Science 2010). This is a substantial amount of the overall marks and reflects a growing belief that if Irish is to survive into the future an emphasis must be placed on developing oral Irish skills in children. Fine Gael have also stated that they wish to raise this to 50% as well as looking at the way teachers are taught to teach the Irish language (Fine Gael 2011). However research has shown that motivation amongst many children for the Irish language appears to be poor and raising the percentages available may not be sufficient.

A number of other initiatives have helped raise the profile of the Irish language and aided its growth as a living language such as the opening in 1996 of an Irish language television station, TG4 (Moriarty, 2009; Watson, 2003—both cited in McDermott 2011). In 2012 RTÉ and the boxer Bernard Dunne began an campaign to get 100,000 people to sign up to use what little Irish they had. The goal was simple-to get 100,000 adults to use a “cúpla focal” whenever they could. Despite a large advertising campaign and an accompanying television programme only 24,740 people signed up to take part (RTE 2012).

2.3 The Role of Language and the Irish Primary School System

In 1999 a new Primary School Curriculum was introduced in Ireland. This included a new curriculum for Irish as a subject (NCCA 1999). Language is now seen as more than simply a system of rules but as a dynamic resource for the creation of meaning.
Primary responsibility for the promotion and teaching of the Irish language falls on the education system. In an Inspectorate report on Irish in Primary Schools (2007) it was stated that the primary purpose of the Irish curriculum was to develop the use of spoken Irish (Inspectorate 2007).

As noted in the introduction there are three distinct types of schools within the Irish Primary School system. This research is being conducted in a school English is the main language of instruction and Irish is taught as a separate subject. These are the most common in Ireland and are frequently referred to as Ordinary Schools.

### 2.4 Storytelling and Drama in the Irish Language Classroom

An Inspectorate Report conducted in 2007 noted that in classes where a high standard of oral Irish was present there was an emphasis on storytelling. New vocabulary was introduced through the stories before any communicative activity took place. Teachers ensured through a range of different facial gestures, hand movements, etc that children understood the general outline of the story. They also noted that teachers in these classes made excellent use of a range of technological supports to support the telling of the story. They also noted that;

“In these classes a story was told and followed by a dramatic representation to bring the story to life. Pupils engaged in their own learning, they liked the story and were excited about their representation of it”.

(Inspectorate 2007)

However, they also noted that this type of work was only being conducted in a few classes. It was also found that in general story was used in less than half the classes surveyed and was generally confined to the junior classes. When story was used it was primarily a listening exercise with little pre-preparation work being done to ensure children could follow the story. Many of the stories used were too advanced for the children in question and it was observed that many of the teachers had not prepared adequately prior to telling the story. The Inspectorate report also believed that a follow up oral activity would have been more beneficial than the more commonly used activities based on worksheets.
The Inspectorate report commented that the ultimate goal of acquiring a language was to allow the child to create the language themselves. They noted that;

“To create language the newly acquired language needs to be blended with the language previously learned”.

When the appropriate structures were put in place by the teacher, motivation to learn the language was more easily acquired (Baker 1998 cited in Inspectorate 2007). Drama was recommended as the most ideal way for this to occur within the classroom. The Inspectorate noted that drama was not emphasised in the Irish curriculum as a means for consolidating language and recommended that the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) review this.

The Inspectorate evaluation found that in 94% of classes there was little emphasis placed on drama. They found evidence that a small number of teachers were writing their own sketches which were used by the children. While some research has advised against rote learning of the language the Inspectorate felt that it was of benefit to children in learning useful phrases and exploring the “rhythm of the language”. Where this was most successful it was noted that children used language they had acquired previously to creatively add to the drama.

The Inspectorate Evaluation concluded that;

“A higher standard of Irish should be expected from pupils. To this end teachers need to reflect creatively and imaginatively when selecting teaching methodologies. It is recommended that a particular emphasis be placed on structuring situations where pupils can create language for themselves. Drama should play a very central role in learning”.
2.5 Methods used to teach Irish

Over the years many different methods have been employed in the teaching of the Irish language at Primary level. Below is a brief overview of the main strategies used;

2.5.1 Cúrsa Comhrá ABC

From the early 1930s an aural-oral approach was used in the teaching of Irish. The booklet "Notes for Teachers-Irish" which was issued by the Department of Education gave explicit instructions as to the methods to be used in the teaching of Irish and the course content to be covered at each class level in the primary school. The method came to be known as the ABC method because it was structured in three stages (INTO 1985).

A - language structure
B - vocabulary
C - fluency or creative conversation.

2.5.2 The 'Buntús' Conversation course

In the 1950's the 'Buntús Gaeilge' was introduced. Based on research a series of audio-visual Irish language courses was created for each class level at Primary School. The programme used “cut-out figures, filmstrips and recorded tapes of the basic conversations”. The teachers' handbooks gave explicit instructions for the structure of each lesson (INTO 1985).

Each lesson followed the following structure:
1. Hearing and recognition;
2. Imitation;
3. Repetition from stimulus;
4. Speech-mould and vocabulary exercises;
5. Free Creative Conversation.

The first three steps were audio-visual with step four utilising a variety of drills and exercises. The Department of Education advised spending the bulk of the time on the fifth section (INTO 1985).
2.5.3 The New Primary School Curriculum

In the 1990’s there was a substantial demand for a new more communicative curriculum. In 1999 a revised Primary School Curriculum was introduced into Irish schools. One of the major changes for the Irish language was an emphasis on a Communicative Method of teaching. The curriculum emphasised the importance of enjoyment for pupils when they were learning Irish (NCCA 1999). The teaching and learning content of the Irish Curriculum (Curaclam na Gaeilge) was organised under four strands;

- Listening (Éisteacht)
- Speaking (Labhairt)
- Reading (Léitheoireacht)
- Writing (Scríbhneoireacht)

This method will be described in more detail later in the chapter.

The aim of the curriculum is to enable the child to communicate in the Irish language in a number of different categories. Guidelines were issued for the structure of Irish lessons which would be split into three phases;

- Pre-Communicative phase: The new language is introduced to the children.
- Communicative Phase: The children are given the opportunity to communicate with each other using the language.
- Post-Communicative Phase: The children’s use of the language is assessed and the children are given the opportunity to use the language in different contexts.

The new curriculum also recommended the use of a wide range of activities and resources including “games, language tasks, rhymes, poems, rhythmical songs, word play, tongue-twisters and drama” (NCCA 1999). Video was recommended as an aid in introducing new vocabulary. However, its recommendations refer only to the watching of videos and do not refer to the creation of videos by the children.

The Communicative method has seen teaching moving from a focus on form and grammar to a role where children are prepared to use the language in a setting outside the classroom either in the local community or a Gaeltacht area. However Mac Aogáin (1990) argues that the language tasks set should not always be designed to teach children to converse in a situation many are unlikely to find in the local community. The CEB
(Curriculum and Examination Board) argued that the classroom itself must be used to motivate learners (CEB 1985, p. 31). It noted that the classroom is

"a valid communicative situation, which can in itself be exploited as a valuable resource for learning. To view it merely as a rehearsal studio for the world outside is an approach unlikely to sustain the motivation of many learners of Irish".

2.6 Current Situation in Irish Primary Schools

Despite the changes in the Irish curriculum the most recent survey of achievement in Irish shows a substantial decline in the standards of spoken Irish in ordinary level schools (Harris et al 2006). In the case of key speaking objectives Harris notes that “the percentage failing now constitutes a majority”. To maintain motivation amongst learners he notes that children must achieve some level of proficiency and he warns of the consequences of declining pupil and teacher motivation in the teaching and learning of Irish in primary schools.

In a report by Bord na Gaeilge (1987) it was noted that the most critical issue in the Irish language was achieving ‘greater spoken use of the language” (Government of Ireland 1992-The Irish language in a Changing Society 1987). The Green Paper on Education (1992) stated that the aim of the study of the Irish language was to enable children, on completion of primary education, to conduct simple conversations in Irish on a variety of everyday topics.

“It is the function of the educational system to provide the means for students to learn the Irish language. The outcome, in terms of students command of the language, is crucially related to their motivation and the opportunities for them to use the language outside the classroom”

(Government of Ireland 1992:121)

2.7 Methods of Teaching

As noted above there have been many different methods employed in teaching the Irish language in Ireland throughout the years. These have generally been based on linguistic research undertaken throughout the world. The following sections provide a brief history of the most common methods employed over the past fifty years in the area of Second
Language learning. This will provide some background to the new methodology being used in this research study.

2.7.1 The AudioLingual Method

The AudioLingual Method was motivated by a belief that “practice makes perfect” (Mitchell and Myles 2004). Dörnyei (2009:274-5) describes the method as the acquisition of “new vocabulary and structures through dialogues”. These were learnt through imitation and repetition. The belief was that learners would develop automatised responses to language through repetition. Ellis (2002) believes that the audio-lingual method “was a blinkered and limited implementation of theories of frequency and habit in language learning”. The emphasis was on the content rather than the process (Nunan 1989). The learner had little control, reacted to teacher direction and had a passive role in the learning process.

2.7.2 Communicative Language Teaching

The Communicative Method is currently the method championed by most Second Language teachers throughout the world and in the Irish Primary School Curriculum. This has already been outlined earlier in the chapter. Widdowson, however notes that as with all popular theories this can sometimes lead to a lack of critical thinking and research into its practice (Widdowson 1978:p. ix).

Nunan (1989) believes the term “Communicative Approach” is a misnomer as there are many different approaches which claim to be communicative in their approach. Richards and Rodgers (2001:155) concur stating that “there is no single text or authority on it, nor any single model that is universally accepted as authoritative”.

The central theme of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach is the importance of meaningful communication, often simulated and usable communicative skills in a Second Language (L2) (Dörnyei 2009). Savignon (1990:210) states that the primary focus in CLT was

“the elaboration and implementation of programmes and methodologies that promote the development of L2 functional competence through learner participation in communicative events”.
An NCCA (2011) research report on language teaching noted that

“It is generally recognised that one of the challenges of a communicative approach to language teaching is to provide pupils with opportunities to communicate meaningfully with their peers”.

This was in contrast to the techniques of automatisation through memorising drills used in the AudioLingual Method. Nunan 1989 notes that in the Communicative Method the learner has an active negotiative role and contributes as well as receives the language. It is the priority of process over content (Breen 1984). For this reason the learning of scripted dialogues was usually replaced by activities such as games and problem solving tasks.

Breen (1984:52-3) believes it is has a

“greater concern with capacity for communication rather than a repertoire of communication, with the activity of learning a language viewed as important as the language itself”

Breen suggests that with communication at the centre of the curriculum, the goal of that curriculum (individuals who are capable of using the target language to communicate with others) and the means (classroom activities which develop this capability) begin to merge.

However, while Communicative Language Teaching may be the most common amongst the teaching profession many linguists have now begun using the term Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to describe the method. This will be discussed in a later section.

2.7.3 Presentation, Practice, Production Method (P.P.P.)

Most second language teachers believe that practice in production of the target language is essential for developing L2 proficiency amongst children. This belief is seen in almost all strategies used for teaching a second language. It generally consists of three stages and is often referred to as the PPP model, “Presentation-Practice-Production” (Byrne 1976, Harmer 2001).
The current Irish Primary School curriculum is an example of this. The Irish Curriculum recommends the following stages to an Irish lesson.

- Réamhchumarsáid (Pre-Communicative Phase)
- Cumarsáid (Communicative Phase)
- Iarchumarsáid (Post Communicative Phase)

(N.C.C.A. 1999)

Each lesson is carefully structured to produce a specific language learning outcome. Initially the language or rule to be learned is presented. This is followed by teacher controlled practice. Control is then relaxed until a communicative activity where the learner has the opportunity to produce the targeted language. These stages are often found in a single lesson (Willis & Willis 2007). They note that this approach has four main characteristics;

- There is a focus on a small number of teacher specified forms which will later be used in a communicative activity.
- The focus on form comes before the communicative activity.
- The teacher controls the language at the beginning of the lesson. This is relaxed as the lesson progresses
- Success is measured by how accurately the target language is produced at the end of the lesson.

2.8 Task Based Language Teaching

Ellis (2003) believes that Task Based Language Teaching is simply another version of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Dörnyei (2009) is in agreement and asks why we then need yet another term to describe a style of second language learning.

As in all things related to CLT there are many different definitions as to what constitutes a task (Crookes 1986: 1). Ellis (2003) asks how a task differs from other methods used to elicit language from a learner. How does it differ from a drill, activity or exercise?
Long (1985) believes a task is

"the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play and in between. "Tasks" are the things people will tell you they do if you ask them and they are not applied linguists".

Nunan (1989) defines a communicative task as

"a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focussed on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right".

What all definitions have in common is a belief that the focus should be on meaning and not form. Tasks become the primary means of instruction in the classroom. Tasks can motivate learners to use the targeted language by providing them with a reason to communicate (Oliver, Philp & Mackey, 2008). Willis and Willis (2007) note that a task must have some sort of relationship to comparable real world activities. The role of the teacher during these tasks is to monitor the language of the pupils and intervene when necessary. In a study on the impact of teacher input while pupils were completing a task Oliver, Philp & Mackey (2008) found that for younger learners (5-7 years old) giving input during the task was unhelpful. They advised giving guidance to younger learners after the activity was completed.

Samuda and Bygate (2008) explain that Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

"refers to contexts where tasks are the central unit of instruction: they ‘drive’ classroom activity, they define curriculum and syllabuses and they determine modes of assessment" (p58)

Willis and Willis (2007) note that the more confidently we can answer yes to each of the following questions the more task-like the activity

1. Does the activity engage learners interest?
2. Is there a primary focus on meaning?
3. Is there an outcome?
4. Is success judged in terms of outcome?
5. Is completion a priority?
6. Does the activity relate to real world activities?
In summary a task should be focussed on meaning rather than form. The task itself should be a stand alone activity with the task itself being the principal means of assessment. The outcome of the task should be clearly defined and it should relate to real world activities.

2.9 Current Issues in L2 learning and teaching

While in the past many Second Language Acquisition researchers were interested in finding the one best method to use to teach a second language (Kumaravadivelu 1994, 2006; Long 1991) todays Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers are more interested in “which combination of ingredients is the best” rather than which particular method is best (Dörnyei 2009:280).

2.9.1 Fluency

Many form-focussed strategies are primarily concerned with grammatical correctness and linguistic accuracy. Dörnyei (2009) notes that in order to be understood in another language one does not need to be entirely linguistically accurate in order to be comprehended. He believes that fluency in the L2 is equally, if not more important. Fillmore (1979) defines fluency as “a non-hesitant flow of continuous speech with few pauses and interruptions” (cited in Dörnyei 2009). Pinter (2011) defines fluency as the naturalness of speech production without too much hesitation and accuracy as the extent to which this speech production follows the rules of the target language or not. The question for researchers is how to assist in the development of this flow of speech in an a second language (L2).

2.9.2 Automaticity

In nearly all theories related to Second Language Acquisition, automaticity features in one form or another. In fact it is also a strong feature in the acquisition of a first language (Segalowitz 2003:394). A central issue in SLA is how we can promote fluency amongst learners in an L2.

As noted earlier the AudioLingual method utilised rote learning and drills to develop “automatic stimulus-reaction chains”. Communicative Language teaching shifted the focus to meaning. Segalowitz and Hulstijn (2005) believe that CLT does not allow the learner sufficient practice to develop these automatic responses. As a result automatisation does
not always occur. They believe that it is important to find instructional techniques which allow this skill to develop and still fit within the Communicative method of L2 learning (cited in Dörnyei 2009).

### 2.9.3 Language output

Output practice refers to any activity designed to provide learners with opportunities to produce output in the target language. The term practice in this context is different to that used in the PPP model in that practice is more than a drill like activity. De Keyser (2007) defines this practice as an activity which has improvement in the target language as its ultimate goal.

Swain (1985, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2005) believes that allowing learners the opportunity to produce output in the target language is crucial. It not only allows learners practice their existing knowledge of the language but also aids in the creation of new language. She argues that during this process of producing the language L2 learners notice new features, grammatical rules and test hypotheses related to the language. De Bot (1996) notes that producing output also enhances fluency and leads to greater automaticity in the language.

Swain also believes that through producing output in the language learners often notice gaps in their knowledge which she refers to as a “hole” (Swain 1998). Through production the learner notices that there are some things they would like to say but cannot (Swain 1995). This will lead the learner to sourcing the relevant language (Swain 1998, Swain & Lapkin 1995). This process is called cognitive comparison and is seen by some as a crucial process in the language acquisition process (Doughty 2001, Ellis 1997, Nelson 1987, Slobin 1985).

### 2.9.4 Rote Learning and Instance Theory

While now considered by many to be outdated and not suitable for todays world, rote learning was once the most common strategies used to develop fluency in a language. It was a vital element of the AudioLingual method. Rote learning has been virtually ignored by linguists since Audio-Lingualism became less popular (Dörnyei 2009). However some argue that it can be useful in second language acquisition.
Instance Theory is a form of rote learning (Logan 1988, 2005). The idea is that through rote learning the learner is able to access a specific response from memory. Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988, 2005) also believe that rote learning may be beneficial in SLA. They claim that one reason rote learning has not been successful in the past has been its tendency to be “geared toward the mastery of specific structures or rules, not of utterances as such” Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988:477). They argue that more of an emphasis should have been placed on common word combinations.

### 2.10 What method to use?

“There can be ‘no one best method’, however much research evidence supports it, which applies at all times and in all situations, with every type of learner”

(Mitchell & Myles, 1998, p. 195)

When deciding on what particular method to use when teaching a second language Willis & Willis (2007) outline three different ways it can be approached;

1. A Focus on Meaning: concerned with communication.
2. A focus on Language: in which learners pause during a meaning focussed lesson and decide how best to express what they want to say. The teacher acts as facilitator.
3. A Focus on Form: where one or more grammatical forms or rules are taught and practiced.

A Meaning Based approach is based on the belief that learners should be encouraged to use the language as much as possible even if some of the language they use is inaccurate. This does not mean there is not a focus on form in the lesson but that a focus on meaning and language should come first (Willis and Willis 2007:4). A Meaning based approach has the following characteristics;

1. Success is measured by whether or not learners communicate successfully in the target language.
2. A focus on language will still form a part of the lesson. The teacher will assist where necessary helping the learner to clarify what they wish to say.
3. A focus on Form may be included but at the end of the lesson. Most of the time will be spent on activities which promote communicative language use but these can be supplemented with activities which promote accuracy in the target language.
Willis and Willis (2007:7-8) suggest to start with a focus on meaning with form developing from this. Learners should be encouraged to use the language as much as possible. A bank of basic vocabulary is essential for this to occur so learners would need to be initially introduced to this language. Grammar would not be ignored but it would not be the aim of the teaching. Learners would be provided with sample sentences which could be used to illustrate grammar.

2.11 The Use of Video in Language Teaching

The following sections outline the various efforts to use video in the classroom and the importance of digital literacy. The recent Literacy and Numeracy: Learning for Life strategy (Department of Education and Skills 2011) is currently being implemented in Irish Primary schools and has as one of its primary aims a belief that digital literacy needs to become an important element of the education process at primary level. Children today are what Prensky has termed “Digital Natives” (Prensky & Gee, 2006; Prensky & Heppell, 2008). Traditional methods of presenting information are being replaced by digital technologies which many children use on a daily basis in their lives outside school.

2.11.1 Using Video in the Classroom

“The most potent use of Digital Video is as a medium of expression and communication”

BECTA 2002

Griffin (1981:7) believes that the visual component is an increasingly important dimension of communication (cited in Van Els et al 1984). In the 1980s many researchers promoted the use of video in the language classroom (Allan, 1985; Cooper, Lavery, & Rinvolucrì, 1991). However much of this research related to the use of video as an observing tool. Both Lonergan (1984) and Allan (1985) worried that many children were accustomed to watching television in a “passive” manner. Van Els et al (1984) also noted that much of the language used on observed videos was not relevant to what was being taught during that class and much of the language was pitched too high above the learners capacity for them to fully understand. As such they believed that video was used in many cases for entertaining rather than teaching students. The goal then is to encourage the learner to become actively involved in the use of video within the classroom.
Van Els et al (1984) believes that an important factor has been the expansion of the functions of visual media. In the past it has often been seen as simply a means of “adding frills” to foreign language learning to motivate learners. It can now be used to provide guidance to L2 learners through a visual representation. Many foreign language teachers and language methodologists now agree that the use of video can offer the learner a more authentic representation of a real life situation than for example written texts or audio (Dal 2010). A research document presented by the INTO (2004) recommended the making of a video in Irish by the children which could be sent home. This could also be used to keep parents informed of the language their children were learning.

In the past the use of video was hampered by the formats available such as video tape. Fast-forwarding to relevant sections often led to delays and a decrease in motivation amongst both learners and teachers (Dal 2010). Now new formats for recording offer advantages over the older tape method. It is now possible to have options such as showing subtitles or not and allowing scenes to be divided into bite “bite sized chunks”. It is also possible to create DVD's with transcripts, comprehension questions, stills, etc all in one convenient location. Brett and González (2009) believe that this is a trend that will become even more accessible in the future.

Another technical issue in the past has been the difficulty of putting together the final video. Much of this work was only possible if one was an expert in editing (Buckingham, Harvey, & Sefton-Green, 1999). Today this process is much easier with both the hardware and software needed to accomplish these tasks much more cost effective and freely available (Dal 2010).

2.11.2 Student Created Video

Today children can become “media producers” instead of just consumers (Hobbs, 2005) leading to a more constructivist approach to teaching. Constructivism proposed that the curriculum should be built around the child’s interests, active discovery and direct experience. Piaget believed that if we wanted children to genuinely grasp concepts then we must give them opportunities to discover them for themselves (Berk 2003; Crain 2005). Constructivism calls for a more child-centred approach where the teacher acts as a facilitator. Papert (cited Forrester & Jantzie 2000) believed that children must be provided with the tools to participate and take ownership of the learning process.
Lonergan (1984) and Allan (1985) highlight that when making a video it invariably becomes a group exercise and that in the process of planning and production there is a considerable amount of language production involved, in addition to any language used in the video itself. In fact Burger (2001) advises that the target language should be used while making the video. He also advises that time should be spent preparing the learners for this task, teaching the appropriate technical language to be used. Some researchers, however, advise that as this language may be too advanced for some beginner learners support may need to be provided (Ellis 2003; Dal 2010).

Video production also allows the learner control over not only what they want to say but how they want to say it (Long & Doughty, 2009). Ellington & Race (1993:199) add that

"the act of making a video tends to be memorable. Whether operating a camera, or playing a part in the recording, heightened learning outcomes are normally achieved".

They also note that when filming each other it often

"leads to 'deep thinking' about the processes involved and ultimately helps learners develop the respective language skills far more effectively than simply watching other people demonstrating them".

(Ellington & Race 1993)

The use of video does not mean that all will be perfect and that no errors will be produced. Errors will always be found. Dal (2010) notes however that today errors are tolerated and are “seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills in a foreign language”. Students learn from these mistakes in order to develop their interlanguage. Interlanguage is neither the learners mother tongue nor the L2 they are studying but a form of hybrid of the two, a third language with its own grammar and language rules (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 2004). It is an emerging system of language formed by a learner who is still not proficient in an L2 and uses language rules from their L1 while conversing in their L2.
2.11.3 The Fís Project

The Fís Project initiative was set up by the Department of Education and Science in 2000. It was described as an "an historic and imaginative project" (Oideas 2006). Initially it involved 28 Primary Schools but this has expanded in the intervening years. The aim of the project was to explore film as a way of learning and encouraging children to work in a co-operative and "educationally enhancing" way.

A BECTA report (cited in McNamara and Griffin 2006:90) found that using video increased children's motivation for the task they were engaged in. They also noted that young children

"are able to use digital video to communicate at a higher level than would be possible if they were only writing".

McNamara and Griffin (2006:96) note that eliciting information from children through questionnaires can be difficult but it is essential to get the perspective of those most closely involved in the process. To this end the videos created by the children during the Fís process proved invaluable as a means of assessing the learning involved. During the assessment of the initial Fís Project, video/film-elicitation interviews were conducted with the children involved. This involved viewing the final videos with the children who made them and encouraging them to give a “commentary” as they reviewed their work (Gold 1997; Schratz and Walker 1995-both cited in McNamara and Griffin 2006). These interviews were to a great extent unstructured allowing the children to “articulate in their own way their experiences of working on the project”. Findings from this process noted that it challenged traditional teaching methods in that teachers were seen in a “facilitator” rather than the more common “knowledge provider” role. The main benefits for children were development of team working skills to complete a task, increased motivation and an increase in self-esteem and confidence. It was also noted that working on a Fís Project led to language development skills. It was particularly noted that children with a SEN benefited from the non textual nature of the communication.

A similar project being run on a European wide basis is the Divis Project (Digital Video Streaming and Multilingualism). This is a European funded Project that aims to “encourage, motivate and equip” teachers to include video production into their teaching. In a survey undertaken in 2008 almost 75% of language teachers rated “active or
productive activities’ to be the most successful in their classrooms. This was due to the growing use of the communicative method in language teaching and providing learners with opportunities to use the language through games, role play, and problem solving tasks. This is also encouraged in the Irish Primary School curriculum (NCCA 1999). A majority of teachers also considered video production to be a beneficial tool to support this (Dal 2008).

2.12 Benefits of Video in the Language Classroom

There are many benefits to using video in the language classroom. Dal (2010) believes that one of the main principles behind using technology in the classroom is that it encourages collaboration amongst learners. He believes that bringing new technology into a second language classroom can be of particular benefit to the learners involved.

Tomalin (1991:48) notes that one of the main aims in relation to the teaching of English as a second language to young children is

“to instil in them the idea that language learning is a happy experience, and video creates an attractive enjoyable learning environment”.

Children gain confidence and absorb more language through repetition. The use of video allows for easier repeating of role plays, stories, etc. McGarr (2009) has noted in relation to Podcasting that foreign language learners also enjoyed being able to stop and re-play sections they did not fully understand the first time. Research by Frydenberg (2006) found that while Video Podcasting was helpful the main benefits were seen when students were asked to author their own material. Lee et al (2008) believe that it is in this creation of “learner generated content” that its true potential is found.

Another important feature of using video is the almost instant replay that is possible. “Mistakes can be rectified, changes made, new elements added or removed” (Phillips 1982). The knowledge that the process can be re-shot helps boost confidence amongst children especially children with learning difficulties or low self-esteem. The making of a video recording provides a goal for learners to work towards and this is a motivating factor in learning the language (Allan 1985:77).
Allan (1985:76) believes that setting students a language task using video also assists in showing children the difference between written and spoken language. Language teaching has all too often been about the teaching of the written language. Brown and Yule (1983) note that written language is concerned with well-formed sentences. Spoken language is more informal by comparison. They suggest that when looking at oral language teachers should ask if it is reasonable for learners to produce spoken language as structured as written language. When engaging in tasks to assist spoken language teachers should look at those with a real world rationale which require learners to approximate in class, the sorts of language expected of them in the world beyond the classroom.

The language children are learning is often only heard in the classroom. Working with video production is one of the ways in which the target language can become more visible for the children (Burger, 2001). As noted from the research related to the Irish language this is particularly important for children in ordinary schools where the language is not always heard in the wider local community.

Communication is not exclusively verbal. Other elements such as paralinguistic signals (gestures and facial expressions) are also relevant (Van Els et al 1984). Video can show gestures and other visual clues than can assist the learner to grasp the meaning of what is being said. Video can also be a way for learners to view different communicative situations (Cogill, 1999) which it may not be possible to do in an average classroom.

2.13 Constraints of Video in the Language Classroom

The most obvious constraint on using video in the classroom is related to the equipment involved much of which can be expensive. However, new technology is now available which can assist in reducing these costs. In the past a digital video camera, external microphone, tripod and a computer for editing were essential. However new technologies such as the Apple iPad can be used for both the filming and editing side reducing the cost substantially.

One of the most crucial aspects of using video in the classroom is time. Secules et al (1992) note that finding the time to include video activities in an already packed curriculum
can be difficult. The time required for scripting, rehearsing, filming and editing can take place over a prolonged period. Many classrooms may find it difficult to find this time.

The production phase of the process is often the most problematic for teachers. As much of the process involves children using video within a classroom setting this can lead to classroom management issues (McNamara and Griffin 2006).

McNamara and Griffin (2006) also note that for video to be used in the classroom professional development courses for teachers need to be more widely available. The skills of production and editing are not skills that all teachers will have and the proper training to facilitate its use need to be arranged.

### 2.14 Task Based Language Learning and Video

As noted in the section on Task Based Language learning and Teaching it is essential to ensure that the task being completed has a basis in the real world. It is also important to ensure that the emphasis is on meaning. When undertaking a video creation task with a class students learn better if the learning outcome is made clear in advance (Ellington & Race 1993). Hutchinson & Waters (1987:108-9) suggest a model of "*input, content focus, language focus, task.*" Dal (2010) points out that when tasked with creating a video, many children will tend to focus on special effects and music and not on the use of language. He suggests that a task-based learning model should be used when working with video production in the language classroom such as that suggested by Willis (1996).

- Preparatory stage or pre-task.
- The Task Itself or during the task
- Presentation and evaluation of the task or post-task (Willis, 1996)

These will be outlined in more detail in the Methodology Chapter.

### 2.15 Twenty Classes Survey

A number of different studies have been conducted on Irish students attitudes and motivations towards the Irish language. A report conducted by the E.S.R.I. (Economic and Social Research Institute) noted that little is known about attitudes among primary school
children towards the Irish language at present (McCoy et al 2012). The most recent large scale study was the Twenty Classes Survey.

The Twenty-Classes Study (Harris & Murtagh, 1999) was a survey of sixth class children in schools throughout Ireland and was undertaken to provide a clearer picture of the range of conditions under which spoken Irish is taught. It also described in detail the strategies used to teach the Irish language. Parents and teacher attitudes towards the language were also looked at. This survey was based on children at the end of their primary schooling. It should be noted that many of the children involved in the survey would have received the majority of their tuition in Irish under the older 1971 Primary School Curriculum. Harris and Murtagh found that children were reasonably well disposed towards the Irish language itself. However, they also found that motivation to learn the language was poor and that there was very little commitment to learning the language. They also found a direct correlation between a child’s motivation to learn the language and their overall achievement. The following sections provide more detail on the Twenty Classes Survey in addition to other research surveys conducted into the Irish language in primary schools.

2.15.1 Role of the school

Harris (2005) notes that ordinary primary schools have a key role in improving oral Irish in Ireland, especially since the vast majority of Irish children attend ordinary schools. However, he also points out that opportunities for these children to speak the language outside of the classroom are almost non-existent and unless this changes the likelihood of success is limited.

“*The resulting paradox is that while pupils learn to speak Irish in school in order to use it in their own lives, they know that there are very few occasions outside (particularly involving their peers) in which there might be either a real need, or even an opportunity, to speak it*”

(Harris et al 1996)

This brings problems for teachers and schools trying to motivate children to learn the language since there are few credible contexts when the children will use oral Irish outside of the classroom (Harris 2005).
2.15.2 Motivation to learn Language

Hood (2006) suggests that motivation is important for success in language learning, particularly when paired with a "desire to learn for its own sake" (Lamb 2001, 85). However, O’Laoire (2005) notes that the Irish language within the education system has always been associated with problems of "poor motivation and underachievement". These problems with the language begin in primary school and have resulted in negative attitudes toward the language. Compared with other subjects, views on Irish are the least positive, with only a fifth of children “always” liking the subject. Furthermore, a third of boys and a quarter of girls report never liking Irish (McCoy et al 2012). Interestingly this recent survey also found that children in multi-grade classes were slightly more negative about Irish than children in single classes as were children with a male teacher.

Research conducted by Ó'Laoire (1996) found that children do not see the study of Irish in the same way as they see the study of other languages. Martin (2010) noted that many children can articulate positive reasons for learning a second language. These include future job prospects, use while traveling, etc. Many Irish children cannot see these as potential reasons for learning the Irish language. The problem for many children is that if school is the only place that Irish is used then when school is over children often forget about the language and see it as something irrelevant. "Irish like homework, rules and uniforms is best forgotten outside school" (INTO 2004).

2.15.3 Self Assessment

When asked to rate their own ability in the Irish language children tended to rate their ability poorly in relation to other subjects. In a Hungarian study spanning the primary and secondary phases, Nikolov (1999) studied the motivation of children learning English, and concluded that self confidence in Second Language (L2) learning plays a major role in achievement. When children felt successful, they desired further success. Harris (2006) found that a substantial minority of children admitted to feeing anxious about speaking Irish in class.

2.15.4 Children’s Opinions on the Lessons

Overall children found the lessons and materials used to teach Irish to be “boring, old-fashioned and repetitious”. They would like to have seen lessons which were more fun, realistic and modern (Harris & Murtagh 1999; Harris 2006). This was also borne out in an
Inspectorate Report in 2007 which noted that in classes where children were enjoying the learning teachers used a lively, interactive approach to teaching the language. The Primary School Curriculum: Gaeilge (NCCA 1999:4) emphasises this

“Is fearr a fhoghlaimeoidh an páiste an Ghaeilge mà bhíonn taitneamh le baint aisti agus dearcadh dearfach á chothú.” [The children will learn Irish better when they can enjoy the learning experience and when they have developed a positive attitude to the language].

Where “teacher talk” was the primary method of teaching Irish the children were less engaged and found the classes to be monotonous. In some classes there was too much emphasis on colouring in activities which did little to consolidate the language (Inspectorate 2007). Pupils in classes with low levels of achievement in Irish often found the teacher difficult to understand and this led to further demotivation in learning Irish (Harris 2006).

2.15.5 Oral Irish skills
Research conducted by Cummins (1982), Harris (1984) and Harris and Murtagh (1987) have shown that children in Gaelscoileanna tend to have much higher levels of oral Irish than children in ordinary schools (cited in Murtagh 2007). It should be noted here that opportunities for speaking the language are greater amongst this cohort of children than for children in an ordinary school. Murtagh believes that “the limited instructional time in Irish and opportunities to use the language for real communication” are reasons behind the failure of the majority of children to reach the standards set by the Primary School Curriculum. She also believes that the limited time devoted to the Irish language leads to children not personally investing in the language. The Inspectorate Evaluation also found that in 44% of classes, children had real difficulty in communicating in Irish (Inspectorate 2007).

2.15.6 Other factors affecting attainment in Irish
A substantial minority of children stated that they did not receive support or encouragement from their parents towards the Irish language. Those who did receive encouragement from parents tended to have a higher overall achievement and more positive opinions towards learning Irish (Harris & Murtagh 1999; Harris 2006).
A number of studies conducted in Irish Primary Schools have shown that there is a strong correlation between a child’s general academic ability and their achievement in oral Irish (Harris and Murtagh, 1988b). Other factors include social class (CLAR, 1975; Ó Riagáin, 1997), 1974; Burstall, 1975), location and class size (Harris 1983), use of the language at home (Ó Riagáin and Ó Gliasáin, 1994) and gender (Maccoby and Jacklin. Boys are almost twice as likely to have negative attitudes to Irish (McCoy 2012). This is reflected in later years in the number of students taking the Higher Level Paper at Leaving Cert level. In 2000 almost twice as many females (65%) as males (35%) took the higher level option (Murtagh 2007). These figures remained relatively unchanged in 2012 (State Examinations Commission 2012).

2.16 Teachers and the Irish Language

The role of teachers is important. In many instances they are responsible for introducing children to the language. The INTO (2004) discussion paper noted the difficulties teachers face everyday in the teaching of Irish. In effect it noted teachers are “the sole life-support system to our native tongue”.

In an INTO survey on teacher attitudes to the Irish language 73% of teachers described their attitude to teaching Irish as “enthusiastic” with a substantial minority of 22% describing their attitude as “indifferent”. 67% of respondents reported that their attitude to teaching Irish had either remained favourable or had become more favourable since they had begun teaching (INTO 1985). Similar findings were found in a survey by Harris (2006) on sixth class teachers. The vast majority had attitudes that were either “very favourable” (36.2%) or “favourable” (51.4%) towards the Irish language. The majority of teachers felt the time dedicated to Irish was just right but a significant minority believed that less time should be given to teaching Irish (21.4%). Most teachers felt that the standard of spoken Irish amongst children had fallen in the previous 15 years (76.6%). However most teachers (80%) believed that the results obtained by children did not reflect the amount of time spent teaching Irish. A quarter of all teachers felt that in the case of most children teaching Irish was a waste of time.

75% of teachers reported that they taught Irish partially through Irish with 22% teaching the language entirely through Irish. Despite it being recommended in a number of reports
80% admitted that they did not teach any other subject through Irish. Of those that did Music and Physical Education were the two most common subjects. 63% stated that they would like to continue spending the same amount of time teaching Irish as they do at present. However a substantial minority wished to see the amount of time spent teaching Irish reduced.

Almost half of teachers agreed with the statement that no matter what the Government did any attempts to revive the Irish language as a daily spoken language were bound to fail (INTO 1985). Almost three quarters of teachers believed that most people were not interested in the revival of the Irish language. This is not in line with much of the research surrounding parental attitudes where it was found that almost half of all parents stated that their attitude towards the language was either “favourable” or “very favourable” Harris (2006).

Teachers were also asked to rate their own ability to speak the language. The vast majority of students in ordinary schools had teachers who rated their ability to speak Irish as “fluent”, “very fluent” or “native speaker”. John Carr the former General Secretary of the I.N.T.O. notes that teachers were “taught using methods that the Department knew were ineffective, particularly in the area of spoken language” and this would explain how a substantial minority (24.8%) rated themselves as being “weak” speakers of Irish (Harris 2006, Carr 2008).

Just under half of the teachers (48%) thought that a teacher's competence was often judged on the teaching of Irish. This was particularly evident when asked about inspector visits. Many teachers felt that their teaching was often judged on their ability in the Irish language (INTO 1985). The majority of teachers (93%) stated that they would reply in Irish if they were spoken to in Irish. However, just over 50% of respondents to the survey admitted that they did not like beginning a conversation in Irish and 40% had issues with speaking the language to fluent speakers of Irish (INTO 1985).

2.16.1 Teachers and the Teaching of Irish

The majority of respondents (80%) favoured the introduction of oral Irish at the infants class level. This contrasts with some of the research into Second Language Learning which has found that starting early does not lead to greater acquisition of second
languages (Johnstone 1999 cited in Pinter 2011). Anecdotally this appears to be a belief held by many teachers and non-teachers alike. In Japan no reading or writing of a second language is done until the child begins secondary school school. The emphasis at primary level is on acquiring second language oral skills (INTO 2004).

Over 60% of teachers believed that children with either “low achievement in language skills or low academic achievement levels” should be allowed to seek exemptions from Irish. 80% of teachers believed that the motivation of children towards the language was the most likely cause of their becoming less favourable towards the Irish language.

2.16.2 Teachers and Parental Support
A lack of parental support was also cited by three quarters of teachers as an issue likely to make them less favourable towards the teaching of Irish (INTO 1985). Interestingly 47% of teachers believed that if a parent wished their child to drop Irish as a subject in Primary school they should be allowed do so (INTO 1985).

2.17 Parents and the Irish Language
The education system in many countries has played a pivotal role in helping revive or even save minority languages (Benton, 1996; May, 2001; Stiles, 1997). Nonetheless, relying on the education system to accomplish this is not enough. Fishman (1991) emphasises the critical role played by family. He argues that without the support and involvement of the family, schools are fighting a losing battle with each generation of learners starting at the same point as the previous generation. Parental involvement is therefore crucial to ensure the revival of a language.

Some critics of the Irish system have pointed to the fact that government policy has failed to increase the numbers of people speaking Irish outside the education system (O hlfearnain, 2001). In fact some have said that successive government policies on the Irish language have been a complete waste of time (Fishman 1996).

The Twenty Classes Study found that parents were generally positive about Irish and supported the idea that Irish was taught in schools. The survey noted also, however, that in reality many parents did little to promote the language with their children (Harris and
A follow up survey by Harris (2006) on long term national trends in the Irish language asked parents for their general attitudes and beliefs about the teaching of the Irish language. 39.6% of parents of children in ordinary schools said that their attitude towards the Irish language was “neutral”. The majority of parents described their attitude as being “favourable” or “very favourable” (48.7%).

When asked what subject areas they believed their child had most difficulty with the most common area cited was oral Irish with a third of parents stating that their child had difficulty in this area. The corresponding figure in Gaelscoils was just 0.9%. Interestingly the figure for Gaeltacht schools was 14.2%. Harris believes that this is due to the great diversity of backgrounds in Gaeltacht schools. Looking more closely at these figures the author found that 53.3% of pupils who were “hardly ever” praised by their parents on their oral Irish also experienced difficulty with this area.

Parents are less likely to praise their child’s work in Irish than they are in other subjects and assist with Irish homework less than with other subjects (Harris and Murtagh 1999). Harris (2006) found similar results. He noted that the while 8.8% of parents said that they “hardly ever” praised their child’s Oral English this figure rose substantially to 25% for Oral Irish.

Despite the relatively positive outlook towards the language from parents the percentages of parents stating that they had a fluent grasp of Irish was very small with just 1% of parents of children in ordinary schools stating that they had “native speaker ability”. 37.7% rated their ability at no more than a few simple sentences. 32.5% of parents left their children know that Irish was important but a significant majority (66.2%) left it up to their child to decide their attitude towards the language (Harris 2006).

Harris (2006) found that just over 3% of parents said they spoke Irish to their children “often” or “always”. 20.6% used Irish “occasionally” with their children with 75% of parents admitting that they “never” or “seldom” spoke to their children in Irish (33.1% seldom and 42.3% never). Similar figures were found in a survey in 1994 where it was found that Irish was never spoken in over two-thirds of Irish homes (Ó Riagáin and Ó Gliasáin, 1994).
Various surveys undertaken by ITÉ have shown that even minimal use of the language at home can have significant effect on pupils achievement in attaining the language (Harris, 1984; Harris and Murtagh, 1988a,b). The importance of positive home re-enforcement was also shown in Murtagh’s (1999) study on sixth class children.

2.18 Other methods to improve Irish in Primary Schools

After the Twenty classes study there were two follow on projects which attempted to address some of the issues which arose during the research.

The Communicative Materials Project attempted to address the issues of “low levels of class attention and class interest, pupils’ difficulty in understanding the lesson, pupils’ reluctance to speak in class, pupils’ lack of confidence in their own ability to succeed at Irish and lack of active support from parents”

Harris (2005).

The emphasis was to be on allowing the children to practice using the language in “life like” situations. Teachers were advised not to correct children’s errors during activities but to do it afterwards. It also emphasised the importance of using children’s voices on audio and video tapes. Much of the material used prior to this was narrated by adults.

“A central goal was to promote a positive attitude to learning Irish and to make the learning process itself more enjoyable and interesting”.

(Harris 2005)

The second project was the Teaching Through Irish Project which encouraged the teaching of another curriculum subject through Irish. Harris (2006) notes that there is evidence that the use of Irish as the medium of instruction in other subject areas is associated with increased proficiency in the language.

Teaching resources in the Irish language are also an issue. There is a very poor range of Irish language materials in comparison to those available for modern European or World languages. One of the recommendations of the Twenty Class study was the
production of textbooks and audio, video and IT based resources in Irish. However Harris points out that these resources would need to be revised often in order to avoid becoming old fashioned as many children in the twenty classes study complained about the resources being used. An INTO discussion document noted that while TG4 was a positive advance in this regard it had been too long in coming and was not promoted enough in schools. They also recommended that tapes of the cartoons shown on TG4 should be made available or sold to schools (INTO 2004).

2.19 Conclusion

This Literature Review began with a look at the history of the Irish language and the important role it has played in Irish history and culture. The role of Gaeltachts, Gaelscoileanna and a variety of government initiatives was looked at in relation to reviving the Irish language. However, it was apparent that many of these efforts have not proved fruitful.

The various methods used throughout the world to teach a second language were also discussed including the AudioLingual Method, PPP and Communicative Language Teaching. The latter is currently the option used in most countries throughout the world.

The literature Review then focussed on the area of Task Based Language Teaching and its growing prevalence in L2 learning and teaching. The importance of areas such as fluency and automaticity were highlighted as was the role of controlled practice. Despite much negativity towards the idea of rote learning its importance in assisting children develop automaticity was noted. What method to use is always a contentious area and the research noted the importance of not relying on one area but choosing aspects each method.

The review also noted the emphasis being placed by the current government on the area of digital literacy. It was apparent from the research that the area of video can be beneficial in motivating children to learn an L2. The use of digital video is not new to Irish classrooms as the Fís Project has shown and its benefits are many and varied. Student created video was noted as being particularly to foreign language students. Finally the different stages of
a task based lesson were outlined and the importance of allowing children the opportunity to review their work.

The review then looked at the role of the Irish Primary School in this revival. This included a look at the role of language and a review of the various methods utilised to teach the language in Irish schools in past. The current situation in primary schools was highlighted as were some studies into the attitudes and beliefs of children, parents and teachers towards the Irish language. In particular the research looked at the problems of motivating children to learn the Irish language and the importance of parental support. Parental and teacher attitudes towards the language were also highlighted. The research also focussed on the area of Oral Irish and the worry that many children are not reaching the required standard. While many parents and teachers were supportive of the teaching of Irish in Primary Schools it was also apparent that in reality many made very little effort to speak the language once they had left education.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research instruments that will be used to examine the effects of using child created videos on the learning and motivation to learn the Irish language amongst children in an Irish primary School. Research methodologies, data collection instruments, validity, reliability and ethical issues regarding working with children will also be discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Rationale for the Research

The revised Primary School Curriculum (1999) noted the importance of integrating ICT into the primary school classroom. It also noted the importance of the Irish language as a means of creating a sense of national identity amongst children.

Much of the research found that attitudes towards the Irish language meant that many children found the Irish language unnecessary and was not seen as fun. For many children the levels of motivation to learning the language were also poor. The research also found that much of this stemmed from poor parental attitudes towards the Irish language which were also based on poor experiences learning the language when they were in school.

This research looks at a new teaching methodology to aid the oral language skills of children learning the Irish language in an Irish Primary School. The teaching method is also aimed at increasing motivation amongst children learning the language by making the practice of new language learning an exercise in fun. The research was conducted with children in 1st and 2nd classes aged between six and eight years of age. This is a particularly good group to investigate this method as the writing of Irish is not introduced until 2nd class with the main bulk of their work in Irish done on an oral language basis.

The new teaching methodology being used for the purpose of this research is the use of a digital camera to assist the children create videos using the new language they are
learning. They will also utilise an Apple iPad to create short animations using the language. This is being undertaken to allow for children who may not feel comfortable standing in front of a camera. An app called “Puppet Pals” is being used for this purpose.

### 3.3 Research Questions

This following research questions which were outlined in chapter 1 form the basis on which this research is being conducted.

- What are the potential benefits/constraints of using digital video in language learning?
- What are children’s, parents and teachers current attitudes towards the learning of the Irish language?
- What are the potential benefits/constraints of using child-created content on the learning process? Do the children retain the vocabulary better when they have created the video?
- Does the use of digital video have any effect on the motivation of children to learn the Irish language?

It is hoped that the new method being employed in learning the Irish language will prove motivational to the children and enable them to further improve their grasp of Oral Irish. It is also hoped that should the method prove successful the researcher will continue to utilise this method when teaching the Irish language in the future. It is also hoped to encourage other teachers within the school to utilise the method allowing for a larger scale study to be undertaken in the future.

### 3.4 Approaches to Researching Education

A case study approach has been chosen for this research because of the short time scale involved in the project. A case study has been defined as “a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle” (Nisbet and Watt 1984). In this study the “specific instance” is the class of children involved in this project. Denscombe notes the strength of a case study as it allows the researcher to use a variety of sources, a variety of data and a variety of research methods. (Denscombe, 2003)
Case studies attempt to portray “what it is like to be in a particular situation” (Cohen et al 2007). They involve looking at a case in its real-life context (Robson 2002: 178) and are descriptive and detailed (Dyer 1995: 48–9).

There are several different types of case study. Some of these include;

- Exploratory Case Study: Used as a pilot to other studies or research questions.
- Descriptive Case Study: Used to provide narrative accounts.
- Explanatory Case Study: Used for testing theories.

Yin (1984)

Case studies are “a step to action”. The insights derived from a case study can be put to use for staff or individual professional development or in educational policy-making (Adelman et al 1980). The findings can be used to improve teaching practices. Case studies also help present data in a more easily accessible form than other research methods (Adelman 1980; Nisbet and Watt 1984). They also help provide insights into other similar cases and can be undertaken by a single researcher (Cohen et al 2007)

However the results of case studies can also be difficult to compare with other similar cases as each case can be considered unique to that particular time and place. They can also be subject to researcher bias and subjectivity (Nisbet and Watt 1984).

Like other research methods, a case study has to show reliability and validity. However this can often be difficult with a case study. As case studies focus on a particular situation which may in essence be unique, the selection of information to be included is crucial. While standard or common behavior observed during the course of the study should be included there may also be instances which are less typical but still important to the overall findings of the study.

“Significance rather than frequency is a hallmark of case studies, offering the researcher an insight into the real dynamics of situations and people”.

(Cohen et al 2007: 258)
3.5 Use of Digital Video

The children in the research group were already accustomed to using a digital video camera. The children have been involved with the Fís Project in the past and were familiar with storyboarding, scripting, camera angles, etc. As time for the research was limited editing was completed by the researcher outside of class hours to ensure that the overall project did not get bogged down in the technical aspects of the project. This allowed the children time to focus on the Irish language being used rather than spending their time worrying about the more time consuming aspects of editing.

The class was divided into four groups and each took responsibility for one theme.

- Mé Féin (Myself)
- Bia (Food)
- Éadaí (Clothes)
- An Aimsir (The Weather)

Each child was given a teacher prepared vocabulary sheet which also contained a short drama, written in both Irish and English. The children were free to use this script or to use the extra vocabulary to create a script of their own. Some groups chose to work as a large group while others chose to further split into smaller groups thereby creating two or more videos. Each video was watched as a whole class activity and a discussion took place after each viewing with the children critically judging each groups work. Each group was then offered a chance to re-film their drama taking these suggestions into account. A green screen was also used to allow the children to create special effects and add further enjoyment to the process.

As noted in the introduction an Apple iPad was also used and this option to create animated films was particularly popular with the younger children in 1st class. The same process of storyboarding, scripting and rehearsing were involved.
3.6 Task Based language Learning and Video

As noted in the Literature Review a task based approach was considered the best option for this research project. The task was divided up into three distinct stages (Willis 1996)

- Preparatory stage or pre-task.
- The Task Itself or during the task.
- Presentation and evaluation of the task or post-task.

3.6.1 Preparation (Pre-task Stage)

Dal (2010) noted that using video with a large class can be difficult and it is generally advised to work with smaller groups. As noted above the children were divided into groups with each group given responsibility for a specific theme. An essential part of the pre-task work is the preparation of a script. As the children in this group have not begun work on written Irish (1st class) or have only recently begun work on written activities (2nd class) the scripts were prepared in advance by the researcher using the language the children were being introduced to. However, the children were free to amend these scripts if they wished. Scripts can be more or less complicated depending on the students age and their language abilities (Kenworthy, 2006). Slattery & Willis (2001) believe that using a pre-written script for beginners is advisable and is especially helpful with pronunciation. Dal (2010) recommends that when using role-play or drama at beginner levels the filming should be done using scripts which have been rehearsed prior to filming. The children were each given a copy of the script and as noted some of the children practiced over the weekend prior to filming.

3.6.2 The Task (Recording Stage)

An important part of the recording process is the rehearsals that take place as a result. These rehearsals can aid the learning process as learners become more confident and fluent with the language being used. It is not necessary to be strict when it comes to editing during the recording process as most changes can be made later on a computer. However it is advisable to have a well planned out storyboard for the filming process. Recording should be done in short sequences to improve the pace the final film (Ang, 2005; Hull, 2008; Towse, 2002). This was also an important factor as the filming was being conducted while a class was still in progress. The use of short sequences allowed the
class to continue relatively uninterrupted. It is however, extremely important that the spoken language used is the most central element of the film (Fraser & Oram, 2003).

### 3.6.3 Presentation and Review (Post Task Stage)

Post task activities should provide an opportunity to present the video and encourage reflection. The goal here is to draw attention to the language used and to highlight any pronunciation issues or difficulties encountered (Dal 2010). This can be done on a whole class, small group or even individual basis. Phillips (1982) notes that video is an ideal medium for dealing with linguistic error analysis. In fact many mistakes will often be spotted by the children who initially made them.

When a video recording is done mainly for motivational purposes, any language learning objectives are achieved through the performance of the task itself. Allan (1985) believes that a viewing of the end result is not strictly necessary if the main point of the exercise was to have students perform a task which required them to communicate with each other in the target language as they worked on the task. However, if the video was made so that learners can assess their performance or language then playback is essential. When this is done everyone observing should have a clear knowledge of what they should be looking out for in terms of pronunciation, fluency, etc. As the videos created for the purposes of this project were made so that learners could assess their use of the target language playback was considered essential.

When viewing a recording Allan (1985) believes that we can choose to do so in three different ways. We can focus on;

- Performance: Where the video itself is looked upon in terms of quality, etc.
- Language production: Where the language used is looked at.
- Content: Where the subject matter used is commented on.

In the case of this research the children were encouraged to observe the videos from the viewpoint of language production looking for errors in the way phrases were said in Irish.

Tschirner (2001) argues that the use of video alone does not guarantee language learning. Karppinen (2005:233) agrees and notes that it is how the video is used in the pre and post task activities that is important. For corrections to be effective and more meaningful for the
learner they need to re-live the moment when an error or difficulty occurred. Video can assist in showing the context where the error was made and assist in rectifying this (Hick et al 1982).

3.7 Research Participants

The total number of children involved in this project is 33. This was made up of children from first (15 children) and second (18 children) class aged between 6 and 8. The children in the researchers class were the participants for the purposes of this research. A control group was not used as another class of the same age and ability was not available in the area. The research was conducted over an eight week period during which time the themes of Mé Féin (Myself), Bia (Food), Éadaí (Clothes) and An Aimsir (The Weather) were covered using the new methodology. All other themes continued to be covered in the traditional format. This allowed the children's standard of oral language in each theme to be compared. It also allowed the researcher the opportunity to observe the children at work using both methodologies for discussions on their motivation to learn the language when using both methods to be discussed. To ensure fairness the same amount of time was allocated to each theme.

3.8 Scope and limitations of the Research

This research projects is small scale and is primarily based within the researchers own classroom. The findings of this study will also be limited given that the research was conducted over an eight week period and would ideally take place over a full school year from September to June. It could be argued that the introduction of any new methodology could lead to increased motivation on a short term basis. The findings of this research will, it is hoped, lead to a larger scale study into the longer term effects of this new methodology.

Any findings or discussions based on child, parental or teacher attitudes towards the Irish language are limited by the numbers of people involved in completing the questionnaires. The findings of this small study based on the parents and children of a small rural primary school in Co. Cork cannot be said to be the opinions of all parents and children. A larger scale study on attitudes would need to be conducted to ensure a more accurate picture of
attitudes towards the Irish language. However, in light of the current study, conducting this small scale survey was beneficial to the overall project.

Teachers from Galway, Limerick, Tipperary, Dublin and Cork replied to the teachers questionnaire. Again the findings of these cannot be said to represent the beliefs and attitudes of all primary school teachers.

3.9 Data Collection

A variety of data collection instruments were used during the research process to ensure that any claims made by the research were as valid and reliable as possible in such a small scale study.

3.9.1 Piloting of the Questionnaires

Pre-testing of questionnaires is crucial to their success (Cohen et al 2011:402). They also note that a pilot has several functions including increasing the validity, reliability practicability of the questionnaire (Oppenheim 1992; Morrison 1993; Wilson and McLean 1994). All questionnaires used in this research were piloted with any changes and re-drafts being undertaken prior to using them with the research group.

Initially a copy of the questionnaires were delivered to children from other schools, their parents and other primary school teachers. These questionnaires were designed to elicit information on motivation for teaching and learning the Irish language. Following this piloting certain questions were re-worded to minimise misunderstanding. The children's questionnaire was considered too wordy so a redrafting involved the inclusion of images to assist children with literacy difficulty (Ionia-Georgiou and Pavlov 2003). Pinter (2011) recommends that when working with younger children it may be best to administer the questionnaires personally and it was decided as a result to conduct the completion of the questionnaire with the children as a whole class activity with each question read by the teacher.

3.9.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used initially to elicit the opinions of children, their parents and other primary school teachers on the Irish language and the use of digital technologies.
Wilson and McLean (1994) note that a questionnaire is capable of being administered without the researcher being present. Robinson (1986) notes that children often find it difficult to distinguish between what is said and what is meant by a question. Pinter (2011:215) recommends including visual elements to make the questionnaire more child friendly. Each question contained an image which corresponded to an answer. Children were assured in advance that honesty was important and that there was no right answer. Pinter also recommends having the researcher present to administer the questionnaire when young children are involved to spot confusion and clarify misunderstandings. Consequently because of the age of the children involved in this project and the fact that some of the children had literacy difficulties the children's questionnaires were done as a whole class activity with the questions read to the children by the researcher.

A series of past questionnaires on the Irish language were also used and phrasing of questions was kept as close to these as possible to ensure that results could be compared to other studies on the Irish language.

Questionnaires contained a variety of different types of questions including Multiple Choice, Rank Ordering, Rating Scales and Dichotomous questions and were designed to elicit the opinions of all respondents on their attitudes towards the Irish language. Great care was taken in designing the appearance of the questionnaire to ensure that respondents took time when completing the questions. Dillman et al (1999) advise that most respondents expect to read a question, make a mark and move on to the next question. This was taken into consideration when the questionnaire was designed particularly after the initial piloting of the questionnaires.

Assurances that all questionnaires would be anonymous and treated in the strictest confidence were included in the questionnaire as suggested by Cohen et al (2011:399).

3.9.3 Observation

Teacher observation of the children engaging with the new methodology formed a large part of the assessment process. As the children rehearsed their scripts the researcher was able to observe how the children reacted. Observation is a widely used form of data collection (Cohen et al 2011:456) and is recommended in the Revised Primary School curriculum as an important tool in the assessment process (Primary School Curriculum 1999). The distinctive feature of observation is that it offers the opportunity to collect “live”
data. The observations take place as the research is being conducted rather than being collected later. Robson (2002:310) also notes that what people say they do often differs from what they actually do so observation allows the researcher to note what is actually occurring.

In the case of this research teacher observation allowed for the collection of information on events and behaviours occurring within the classroom (Cohen et al 2011:456). Morrison (1993:80) notes that observations allow the researcher to gather information on;

- The Physical Setting: How the physical environment is organised.
- The Human Setting: How the research group is organised.
- The Interactional Setting: The interactions that occur between members of the group.
- The Programme Setting: The resources used and pedagogic styles employed.

Observation also allows the gathering of information on non-verbal behaviour (Bailey 1994:244).

There are differing degrees of involvement in observation. Participant Observation has been described by Simpson and Tuson (2003:14) as “the most subtly intrusive” form of observation. It requires the researcher to be an “empathic, sympathetic member of the group while remaining detached enough to observe act with a degree of detachment. This form of observation is very time consuming as it involves the researcher working with the group and later writing up the notes of the observations for that day. In this project the researcher was involved with the groups and maintained notes on a daily basis. While time consuming it allowed for observations to be collected over the duration of the project.

3.9.4 Focus Groups

“Children have been regarded as the best source of information about themselves” (Doherty and Sandelowski 1999:177). However impediments to reliability include children’s distractibility, memory limitations and over attention to certain perceptual features in the situation (Donaldson 1978). Hughes and Grieve (1980) also note children’s desire to give some sort of response however nonsensical.

After initially collecting the data on children's opinions and motivations for learning Irish through a questionnaire the researcher felt that a different approach was needed to further illicit the response of the children after the practical research had concluded. It was
decided to conduct interviews with the children at the end of the practical research to better gauge the children's opinions and motivation to learn the Irish language. As noted earlier permission was sought from the parents of all the children involved in the project. The interviews were recorded in audio format to make transcribing them easier.

A research interview is described by Cannell & Kahn (1968) as “a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information”

Cohen et al (2011:409) note that “interviews are a powerful and flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi sensory channels to be used”. They are however, not without their disadvantages. They can be time consuming and open to interviewer bias. Cohen et al (2011:409) note that interviewer fatigue may affect responses and this is particularly true in the case of younger children.

It was then felt that the best process would be to conduct a small focus group. “Focus groups are a qualitative data collection method where the group conversation is the data collected” (Ryan et al 2006:157). The focus group interviews were recorded to enable transcripts to be prepared following the sessions. Using focus groups also allowed the children to respond to each others answers leading to a more collaborative process. Children in each focus group were chosen at random. Children were given adequate time to answer each question and all questions were open ended to allow children to express themselves.

Watts and Ebbutt (1987) note that group interviewing has certain advantages over individual interviews. These include the potential for discussions to develop. They note that “such interviews are useful...where a group of people have been working together for some time or common purpose”. Arksey & Knight (1999:76) agree believing that having more than one interviewee present may lead to additional information being gained with each respondent complementing each other with additional information. Bogdan and Biklen (1992:100) also note that group interviews are less time consuming.

Arksey and Knight (1999:116) note that it is important to establish trust with the children. Group interviews with children are less intimidating to the children and can assist in eliciting responses from children more easily (Greig and Taylor 1999:132). This was possible with the research group as they had been working with the researcher for months
prior to the beginning of the actual research study. Lewis (1992) recommends making the
group interview as informal as possible and suggests using games or including it as part of
circle time. In keeping with this the group interview was conducted as part of a circle time
with the children sitting on the floor alongside the interviewer. This led to the children being
placed at ease as it was a format they were familiar with. Arksey & Knight (1999:76) also
note that it is important to ensure that group interviews are not dominated by one or more
members of the group and it is important for the interviewer to ensure that all members of
the group are given time to develop their answers. This problem was overcome in that the
children were used to circle time and the notion of turn taking. Lewis also recommends
that group sizes are optimal at around 6 or 7 participants and in keeping with this the focus
group contained seven children (three from 1st class and four from 2nd class).

When dealing with the focus group the sessions began by showing the children their
videos again. This was done to refresh the children’s memories of the task they had
completed. This is also recommended by Pinter (2007:138-39) who states that these
“concrete reminders trigger children’s thoughts and feelings to start the discussions”.

3.9.5 Reflective Journal
Throughout the duration of the project the author kept a reflective journal of observations
noted on a daily basis. This journal noted information on the days work as well as
observations on the behaviours of the children in the class as they went about their work.

Kember (2000:43) notes that a journal is helpful in keeping a record as it is often “too easy
to take things for granted without taking some time to stop and reflect”. The reflective
journal allowed the author to note changes over the duration of the research in the
behaviours of the group members (Farrell 2003). It also allowed for reflection on the
process as it was taking place which is one of the key elements of action research. As
recommended by Lofland (1971) the notes kept were written up as soon as possible after
the actual event described.

3.9.6 Ethical Issues
Berger and Patcher (1994) explain how any research involving human participation, to be
truly ethical needs to be voluntary. It was also important to note that since video was being
used as part of the process extra care would be needed with regards issues like privacy. “It
is important to consider the indiscriminate taking of photographic or visual images of children without their consent” (Cohen et al 2011:533).

As children are the primary data source for this project and the use of video was an integral part of the research, permission was sought from the parents of all children concerned. A letter was sent to the parents explaining the background to the project and detailing the steps that would be involved for their children. The letter also informed the parents of who would have access to the results of the project when it was completed. It also stated that a questionnaire would be provided to parents at a later date in the process. A parental permission form was also included which was returned by all parents concerned allowing for all of the children in the class to participate in the research.

3.9.7 Children’s Bias
When a research project is conducted at school, children may think that the research is a test. This may make them reluctant to be critical in any way and give answers they feel will please the researcher rather than honest opinions. In school many answers have a right and a wrong answer. Children may feel the same is true of the research questions. Pinter (2011) notes that children need to be carefully told in advance about what is expected of them. Prior to beginning the research the children were briefed on what the research project was about. They were told that the questionnaires were anonymous and that it was important that they were very honest when completing them. While this cannot be guaranteed the researcher felt that the children all understood that this was not a test and would not be graded. A wooden box was placed at the front of the room and the children were invited to post their questionnaires to the teacher using this box. The questionnaires were swapped around in the class using a form of musical chairs. From this it was impossible to tell who had what child’s questionnaire when they were posted.

3.9.8 Researcher Bias
In conducting research of this type the issue of researcher bias is going to a concern. Even subconsciously the researcher may have pre-conceived ideas about the project being undertaken. To account for this the research began with the issuing of questionnaires to the children, parents and other primary school teachers. The questions in these questionnaires were based on question formats already used in previous studies into the Irish language.
Cohen et al (2011) note that the most practical way of achieving validity in a study is to combat researcher bias as much as possible. While it is almost impossible to eliminate researcher bias entirely it is hoped that the steps taken in beginning with questionnaires and utilising previous research into this area will have helped in this regard.

3.10 Qualitative and Quantitative Data

In its simplest terms quantitative data refers to data which is primarily numbers based and qualitative data refers to data which is word based (Fraenkel and Wallen (2003:16). This research will use a combination of both. Fraenkel and Wallen note that it is not uncommon for research to contain both types of research. Reams and Twale (2008:133) argue that a mixture of the two “are necessary to uncover information and perspective, increase corroboration of the data and render less biased and more accurate conclusions”.

Denscombe (2008:272) suggests that this mixed method can;
• Increase the accuracy of the data.
• Provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon.

The areas of child, parental and teacher attitudes towards the teaching and learning of the Irish language will be dealt with in primarily quantitative terms. The use of teacher observation and the focus group interviews will be based primarily on qualitative data. The use of the two methods should produce a more accurate picture of the Irish language in primary schools.

3.11 Triangulation

Triangulation is defined by Cohen et al 2011:195) as “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour”. Exclusive reliance on one method of data collection may lead to bias or distort the researchers view of the research topic (Lin 1976 cited in Cohen et al 2011:195). Ryan et al (2006) recommend the use of techniques of gathering data that may seem opposed to each other.

Triangulation allows for the same data to be seen from different perspectives and this can help “to confirm or challenge the findings of one method with those of another” (Law 2003 cited in Bell 2005:116).
Triangulation in the case of this research was achieved through the use of questionnaires, interviews, teacher observation and a reflective journal. It is hoped that through the use of a variety of different data gathering tools the areas of validity and reliability have been addressed.

3.12 Validity and Reliability

“Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the inferences researchers make based on the data that they collect. Reliability refers to the consistency of these inferences over time, location and circumstances” (Fraenkel and Wallen 2003:463).

Validity is an important key to effective research (Cohen et al 2011:179). Without validity the findings of any research are worthless. In qualitative validity there is always an element of bias and Gronlund (1981) notes that validity should be seen as “a matter of degree rather than an absolute state”. Lave and Kvale (1995:220) note that “the paradox is that the most sufficiently complex instrument to understand human life is another human” but naturally this also means that errors are possible.

Validity in qualitative research has several key principles (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Bogdan and Biklen 1992).

• The natural setting is the principal source of data.
• The researcher is part of the researched world.
• The researcher, rather than the research tool is the primary instrument of research.
• The data is descriptive.
• There is a concern for process rather than just the outcome.
• Data is presented in terms of the respondents rather than the researcher.

Wellington (2000:201) refers to validity as “the degree to which a method, a test or a research tool measures what it is supposed to measure”.

Reliability “is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions” (Bell 2005:117). Reliability is an important
consideration, in that it may be useful as an indicator of the quality of the research (Opie 2004:65). Wellington (2000:200) describes reliability as

“the extent to which a test, a method or a tool gives consistent results across a range of settings, and if used by a range of researchers”.

By using a variety of data gathering tools it is hoped that the issues of validity and reliability have been addressed adequately.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

This research project had two broad areas of enquiry and these will be dealt with separately in this chapter.

1. How has the use of child created videos affected the learning and motivation to learn the Irish language?

2. What are the current attitudes and beliefs of children, parents and teachers towards the teaching and learning of the Irish language in an Irish primary school?

The data for the first area was broadly qualitative whereas the latter was quantitative. However, the findings from both areas can be taken together to create a broader picture of the current state of the Irish language in primary schools.

The majority of this chapter focuses on the results of the questionnaires given to the children, parents and other primary school teachers and on the observations of the researcher during the research project conducted within the classroom. These observations were recorded in a Reflective Journal kept by the researcher over the duration of this project.

The findings presented in this chapter will be discussed in further detail in chapter 5.

4.2 Overall Organisation of the Project

The total number of children involved in this project was 33. This was made up of children from first (15 children) and second (18 children) classes aged between 6 and 8. The children in the researchers class were the participants for the purposes of this research. The research was conducted over an eight week period during which time the themes of Mé Féin (Myself), Bia (Food), Éadaí (Clothes) and An Aimsir (The Weather) were covered using the new methodology. All other themes continued to be covered in the traditional format.
Prior to the introduction of the new methodology the children were taught Irish following the guidelines set out in the Irish Primary School Curriculum (NCCA 1999). This curriculum follows the communicative method of language teaching. While this had been successful in teaching children the basics of the Irish language the researcher felt that the results of the children’s oral language skills had been less successful than hoped. With a greater emphasis now being placed at Secondary level on oral language development the researcher felt it was an appropriate time to research a new methodology. It was also hoped that as well as aiding in the retention of the language the new methodology would also lead to increased motivation amongst the children for learning the Irish language. This was highlighted in the literature review as being an area of concern. The curriculum recommends the use of drama and role play as well as the use of video recordings to aid oral language development. This methodology sought to combine the two methods to increase retention of the language and motivate the children.

The new methodology involved the use of child created digital videos in the Irish language. All children involved in the research created a digital video on a chosen theme. These videos were used as both a resource for practicing the new vocabulary taught as well as being used as a resource for teaching the vocabulary to other children. All videos were created during class time. Additional time was allocated from the discretionary time allocated by the curriculum. During the period of the research, however, new guidelines for the allocation of this discretionary time was instigated by the Department of Education and skills. While this curtailed the amount of time given to the creation of the videos it did not lead to any great problems. The children rehearsed their scripts at the beginning of the week and filmed towards the end of each week. This routine worked well with rehearsals done in class and as homework activities. Filming was done within the classroom with class continuing as normal until a segment needed to be filmed. On these occasions all talking in the class stopped for the duration of the filming. As the children were filming in short segments of no longer than 30 seconds this led to minimal disruption.

As noted earlier the use of digital video in the classroom was not new to the children involved in this research as they have been involved in the Fís Film Project in the past. However much of their work prior to this had been in the area of animation and the use of digital video in the area of the Irish language was new to the children. It should be noted that the skills the children had learnt previously in scripting and storyboarding did prove very beneficial to the whole process. Since the class was divided into groups it meant that
only one group was filming at any particular time and this led to very little disruption to the running of the class.

Each child was given a teacher prepared vocabulary sheet which also contained a short drama written in both Irish and English (see Appendix B). The children were free to use this script or to use the vocabulary on these sheets to create a script of their own. Some groups chose to work as a large group while others chose to further split into smaller groups thereby creating two or more videos. Each finished video was watched as a whole class activity and a discussion took place after each viewing with the children critically judging each groups work. Each group was then offered a chance to re-film their drama taking these suggestions into account. Green screen features were also employed to allow the children to create special effects and add further enjoyment to the process.

4.3 The Children’s Retention of the Irish language

One of the main aims of the project was to research the use of digital video to aid in the retention of the Irish language. Since this deals with the area of Oral Language a written test was not utilised to test the children's skills during or after the research. Instead the researcher spoke to the children in Irish using the vocabulary they had used at the end of the research project questioning them on each of the themes covered by the Irish curriculum. It has also been noted earlier that the children in first class do not officially begin written work until second class. The researcher felt that a written test would not adequately reflect the children’s knowledge. Instead the children were observed over the course of the research by the researcher and a reflective journal was kept with observations recorded during the process. An Inspectorate Report in 2007 also recommended that assessment using oral activities was preferable to other methods.

The Inspectorate Report (2007) also advised that a follow up oral activity was more beneficial than the more commonly used activities based on worksheets. In keeping with this the follow up activities used in this research were oral language based. At the end of the research period the researcher asked each of the children a series of questions based on the scripts they had used. They were also asked a series of questions using vocabulary they had learned based on the themes they had covered using traditional methods such as the book. This allowed for a comparison to be made between themes covered by the new methodology and those covered in the traditional method.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes covered by the New Method</th>
<th>Themes covered in the Traditional Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mé Féin (Myself)</td>
<td>• Sa bhaile (At Home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bia (Food)</td>
<td>• An Scoil (At School)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Éadaí (Clothes)</td>
<td>• An Teilifís (Television)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An Aimsir (The Weather)</td>
<td>• Siopadóireacht (Shopping)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over the course of the research in the classroom it was noted that the children gained greater skills in “automaticity”. When a commonly used question was put to them in Irish the children appeared to give answers more easily. It was also observed that when asked questions on themes covered using traditional methodologies this hesitation between question and answer was greater. This was also noted in the Reflective Journal kept by the researcher which will be dealt with in the next chapter. It was also notable that children appeared more confident when being asked questions on a theme they had created the video for.

The literature review showed that many children admitted feeling anxious when asked a question in Irish in class. The researcher observed that amongst the majority of children involved in this research this anxiety appeared to be lessened as the children became more confident using the language. Particularly noticeable was the responses from the two children who have received exemptions from Irish. While one noted in the focus groups that he still did not like Irish he was able to answer simple questions when put to him on the theme he had worked on with his group. It was apparent however that when dealing with the other themes in Irish both children still had substantial difficulties understanding what was being asked of them. This was true of themes covered using the traditional methods as well as those covered by the new methodology.

The areas of fluency and language output are considered important when acquiring a second language. Fillmore (1979) defined fluency as “a non-hesitant flow of continuous speech with few pauses and interruptions”. While it cannot be stated that the children are now fluent in the Irish language many of the children made great strides in developing this continuous flow of speech. The children through repetition and practice of the scripts developed a greater understanding of the rhythm and structure of the Irish language leading to less hesitation when speaking. It was also noted in the Literature Review that
when using a second language children often encounter “holes” in their knowledge. This was also noted amongst this cohort of children during the process of creating the videos. The children who decided to amend the scripts were constantly looking for new words to use and new ways of saying what they wanted. This new vocabulary was then incorporated into the scripts and used during filming. One group also used some of the script from another group to further add to their final video.

The Literature noted that the use of Rote learning is now considered unfashionable in the learning of a second language by most linguists. However it was also noted that many believe that it is important for learners to be able to access specific responses to questions from memory. The researcher observed that as the children practiced their scripts they became more comfortable with these responses. When the same question was put to them outside of their work on the script the children were still able to access these responses from memory. This led to more fluency when conversations were conducted with the children during class time.

4.4 Results of the Children's Questionnaires

At the beginning of the research all children in the class undertook a questionnaire which was designed to elicit their opinions on the teaching and learning of the Irish language. This was conducted prior to the introduction of the new methodology. These were gathered to give a greater overall picture of the attitudes and beliefs of children towards the Irish language. Much of the literature on previous studies have shown that while children understand that Irish is important motivation to learn the language is poor. The researcher wished to look at the attitudes of the children involved in this project as part of the introduction of the new methodology.

After the introduction and use of the child created video the researcher returned to these areas with a small random selection of the children in the form of a small focus group. This was done to gauge if the children’s attitudes or motivation to learn the language had changed as a result of the introduction of the new methodology.

When asked how they felt about Irish 39.4% of the children in the class stated that they “hated” Irish. A further 24.2% of children stated that they did “not like” Irish. The remaining 36.4% said they either “loved” or “liked” Irish (see Graph 1).
63.4% of children in the class stated that they would not like to spend more time learning Irish in school. 42.4% of children stated that they found speaking Irish the most difficult aspect of the language with spellings being the next most difficult area (see Graph 2 for the full break down).

Over two thirds of the class (69.7%) said they found it difficult to understand the teacher when they were speaking Irish to them and the same amount of children stated that they wished English was spoken more during the lesson.
Almost two thirds (63.6%) of the children said they would speak Irish outside of the class if they had the opportunity. A substantial majority (72.7%) of the children said they got nervous when they had to speak Irish in class with 45.5% of the children worried that their classmates would laugh at them when they tried.

Most (63.6%) of the children said that their parents encouraged them to work hard at Irish. However, when asked if their parents spoke Irish to them at home only 30.3% of the children noted that their mothers spoke some Irish to them. This percentage dropped to 18.2% when asked if their fathers spoke in Irish to them. 45.5% of the children stated that Irish was “never” spoken in their homes with 27.25% stating that Irish was either “always”, “very often” or “often” spoken at home (Graph 3).

The children were asked to rate their ability in the subject areas of English, Maths and Irish. 67.7% rated themselves as “very good” at English with 45.5% agreeing with this statement in Maths. This dropped substantially in Irish to 12.1%. Just 8.1% of children rated themselves as “bad” at English, 18.1% in Maths with 27.3% of the children rating themselves as “bad” at Irish (Table 1). Interestingly 66.7% of the children still agreed that Irish was important to learn.
Table 1: How the children rated themselves in English/Mathematics/Irish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rated Ability</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Maths</th>
<th>Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am very good</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am ok</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not good</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am bad</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The children were overwhelmingly in agreement that they did not like the book used (Bun go Barr) with 12.1% stating that they “did not like” the book and a substantial 51.5% stating that it was “boring”. 39.4% of the children would prefer to learn another language instead of Irish with 42.4% stating that they would like to learn both Irish and another language. Only 18.2% wanted to learn Irish only. 69.7% of the children did not read any Irish books at home with similar figures (63.6%) stating they did not watch Irish programmes on television (Graph 4).

Graph 4-Do you read any Irish books or watch Irish language programmes on TV?

- Yes
  - Irish Books: 30.3%
  - Irish TV: 36.4%

- No
  - Irish Books: 69.7%
  - Irish TV: 63.6%
4.5 Results of the Focus Groups

With such negative attitudes towards the Irish Language amongst the children the researcher was interested to find out if the introduction of the new methodology had made a difference to their motivations and attitudes towards the language as well as affecting their language retention.

As outlined in the chapter on methodology Focus Groups were conducted with a small group of the children involved in the project after the research stage had been completed. The children were chosen at random from both first and second classes. The focus groups were conducted during Circle Time as recommended in the Literature Review. The group discussions began by showing the children the videos they had created. This was done to refresh the children’s memories of the task they had completed as recommended by Pinter (2007:138-39). The interview was recorded and a transcript made of the discussion.

The discussions began by asking about the process of creating the videos. The children stated that they enjoyed making the videos. One child stated that they liked the acting. They also said that it “was tougher acting in Irish but I liked it”.

The children enjoyed using the digital video camera though the Apple iPad proved to be a more popular choice. As noted earlier this enthusiasm could have stemmed from the novelty of using a new technology in the classroom. However many of the children commented that they loved the animations they had made and they found the iPad easy to use.

When asked if they felt any different about learning Irish, the reactions of the group were predominantly positive with the children stating that their opinions had changed positively though one child stated that she had always loved learning Irish. One child in the group said that they still do not like Irish. This particular child was one of the children who has received an exemption from studying the Irish language but is currently continuing to take lessons. Another stated “I hated it before, but I like it now. I started having fun with Irish”. Commenting on the difference between using the books and the new methodology they were all in agreement that they preferred making the videos. As noted in the questionnaire
results the children appear to have a predominantly negative attitude towards the books and the children enjoyed the break from their use and the use of the new methodology.

They were also asked to self-evaluate their abilities in Irish and all felt that they knew more Irish now than at the beginning of the process. They all said that learning and rehearsing their scripts was more interesting than using their books. Interestingly some even said they had met up at weekends to practice their dramas. While some of the children stated that they sometimes found it difficult to remember their lines one child commented that the digital video camera helped.

“It’s different to doing real drama. You don’t have to remember all your lines. You can stop the camera to check what you have to say”.

This advantage was also noted by the researcher during the observation phase of the project. The children often prompted and supported each other while filming was taking place and often the voices of other children could be heard whispering hints in the background of the videos.

**4.6 Results of the Teacher Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were sent to teachers throughout Ireland. All teachers worked in ordinary schools similar to the one used in this research. Teachers surveyed came from a variety of different class levels and both rural and urban located schools.

11.1% of the teachers surveyed rated their ability to speak the Irish language as that of a “Native Speaker”. 55.6% rated themselves as a “very fluent second language speaker” with the remaining 33.3% rating themselves as “fluent”.

44.4% stated that their own attitude towards the Irish language was “very favourable”. 33.3% were “favourable” and the remaining 22.2% stated that they had a “neutral” attitude towards the language.

A substantial 55.6% stated that their attitude towards the teaching of Irish had become “more favourable” since they had begun teaching. However a third of all teachers surveyed stated that their attitude had become “less favourable” since leaving teacher training college.
A third of teachers “always” spoke Irish outside of the classroom. Just over half stated that they spoke Irish “occasionally” outside of school hours with a tenth of those surveyed admitting that they “never” spoke Irish once they left the school.

A quarter of the teachers surveyed believed that “less time” should be spent on Irish in primary schools. The same figure stated the opposite and believed that “more time” should be spent on the subject. The remaining 50% believed that the time currently spent (3.5 hours) was sufficient. One teacher commented

“I feel that trying to fit Irish into the day can at times be difficult. When a class is weak, English and maths are a slightly higher priority for me to teach though it would be the next subject that I would teach” (Teacher A).

55% believed that the children’s motivation was the single greatest difficulty they encountered when teaching Irish.

Interestingly the only area in which all teachers surveyed were in agreement was the area of where the emphasis should be placed in primary school. Without exception all of the teachers agreed that the emphasis should be on the development of Oral Irish in Primary schools.

Two thirds of teachers had taught another subject through Irish with the most common being Physical Education, Drama and Visual Arts. A substantial majority of teachers also stated that they used drama as part of Oral Irish lessons. The literature review noted the importance of this and the “Teaching Through Irish” Project highlighted the benefits of this approach. Teacher B commented

“I truly believe the Irish language should be taught as a language that integrates with other subjects such as drama and PE. The curriculum could be restructured so that the emphasis is more strongly on spoken Irish up to at least 3rd/4th class and that children have more access to PE/Drama type activities if they are taught through Irish. It would be helpful if teachers were supplied with an Oral language book guiding topics/conversations that extend past junior years-similar to Treo Nua but more advanced and stimulating to the children”.

With increased percentage marks available for the Leaving Certificate Oral Irish Examination the teachers were asked if this would have any bearing on the way they approached the teaching of the language. A substantial 65% stated that they would place
more emphasis on Oral Irish as a result. The remainder said it would not with one teacher commenting

“The Leaving Certificate is a long way off for the children I teach. They need a good grounding in Irish verbs and grammar” (Teacher C).

However Teacher A believed

“There is an over emphasis on writing and reading. If oral language was taught and used more I feel it would be more beneficial for the pupil. There should be greater emphasis on how oral language could be taught creatively, for example role play” (Teacher A).

Teacher C’s comment is particularly interesting in light of the overwhelming response in the survey that the emphasis should be on Oral Irish in primary schools.

The teachers were also asked a series of questions relating to their use of IT in the teaching of Irish. The use of TG4 was not widespread with one teacher commenting that they used it on special occasions like “Seachtain na Gaeilge (Irish Week)”. While the use of audio recordings was more widespread these were predominantly the recordings provided by the educational publishing companies. Only 11.3% of teachers stated that they had created audio or video resources of their own. One teacher stated

“During teacher training I created animation style PowerPoints for teaching 1st and 2nd class. It was very effective-I used the Bart Simpson character” (Teacher B).

Teachers opinions on the effect of parental involvement was also investigated. 75% of teachers believed that parents had an “unfavourable” attitude towards the Irish language with one teacher stating “parents don’t seem to care enough to encourage a love for it” (Teacher D).

While not queried in the questionnaire many teachers noted the books used in primary schools for teaching Irish in the questionnaires. All of the comments in this regard were negative with Teacher A believing

“the book is a waste of money in this climate and is basically a colouring book with difficult pages throughout. Children are expected in Senior Infants to know the word and match these phonetically to an Irish word. It is completely unrealistic”.

Teacher B had similar views noting that the children simply “guess how many blanks and match the word”. 

85
4.7 Results of the Parents Questionnaires

Questionnaires were also sent to the parents of the children involved in the research. A total of 28 questionnaires were sent to the parents with 26 returned. It should be noted that all of the children in the class are Irish with no non-national parents. This made it possible to ask all parents about their experiences with the Irish language.

Speaking about their childhood 92.3% of the parents stated that “only English” was spoken in their homes growing up. The remaining 7.69% said that both English and Irish was spoken in their homes when they were children.

When asked to rate their ability in speaking the Irish language the results were overwhelmingly negative. 42.3% rated their ability as that of a “weak second language speaker” with the remaining 57.7% rating themselves as “very weak second language speakers” (Graph 5).

![Graph 5-How would you rate your ability to speak Irish?](image-url)
Despite this 53.8% of parents said that their attitude to the Irish language was either “very favourable” or “favourable”. 34.6% had a neutral attitude towards the language with the remaining 11.54% having an “unfavourable” or “very unfavourable” attitude. When asked how often Irish was spoken in their homes no parent spoke Irish “always”, “very often” or “often”. 15.4% spoke it “occasionally” with 46.2% stating that they “seldom” used the language at home. A substantial percentage said they “never” spoke it at home (38.5%).

Parents were asked if the felt Irish was important for their children’s future job prospects. 11.54% of parents believed it was either “very important” or “important”. The majority believed it was of “little” or “no importance” (88.4%). One parented stated that it was “only relevant for certain jobs like teaching, government jobs and TG4” (Parent A). Another parent commented

“I did Honours Irish in the leaving Cert. I liked Irish and found it easy to learn. However, since leaving secondary school I have never once had to use the Irish language either socially or in the workplace” (Parent B).

46.2% of parents said they let their children know that Irish was “very important” but 53.8% stated that they left this decision up to their children to make. No parent discouraged their children from taking Irish seriously. 69.2% believed that the amount of time spent teaching Irish in primary school was “just right” with 11.5% believing that “less time” should be spent on the subject.

53.8% of parents stated that they believed that the methods used to teach the language at present were “suitable”. 30.8% had no opinion on this question. However 23.1% of parents also stated that they knew nothing of the way Irish was taught in schools with 69.2% stating that they only knew a little. One parent noted the benefits of using drama in the teaching of Irish.

“The way Irish is now taught through drama...is much better than the way we were taught. It makes it much more interesting for the children” (Parent C).

38.5% believed that the school could be “doing more” to improve their child’s progress in Irish with 46.2% believing the school was doing “everything possible”. The remaining 15.4% did not answer this question. A substantial 57.7% of parents believed that more emphasis should be placed on Oral language.
When asked if they would like their child to learn a modern European language instead of Irish only 3.85% stated that they would like their child to study “only Irish”. This equates to only one parent from the survey. However just 7.69% of parents stated that they would let their child drop Irish and take on another language. The substantial majority (88.5%) stated that they would like their child to have both a modern European language and Irish.

“I always felt Irish was a huge part of this country, but lately I think it would benefit the children more to learn a European language” (Parent D).

The parents were given a series of statements and asked to choose the one which most matched their opinion of the Irish language. 46.2% agreed that it was an important part of our culture and heritage. 3.85% stated that Irish was a dying language and had no place in our schools. Only 7.69% believed that Irish should remain a compulsory subject to Leaving Certificate level (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Irish language is an important part of our culture and heritage.</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of low academic achievement should not be obliged to learn Irish.</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There should be the option of studying a modern European language.</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All children should learn Irish.</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Irish language is a dying language and has no place in our schools.</td>
<td>3.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish should remain a compulsory subject for all children up to the Leaving Certificate Examination.</td>
<td>3.85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about their children’s use of Irish outside the classroom 92.3% said their children “never” read books in Irish at home. 69.2% stated that they did not watch Irish language television. Outside of their homework 69.2% of parents reported that their child “never” used Irish at home.
4.8 Technical Issues

The camera used for the purpose of this research was a Canon Legria FS306 digital video camera. This was used in conjunction with a tripod. An external microphone was not available and the children quickly became conscious of the fact that recordings needed to be made in a quiet environment. The camera proved very suitable for use in the classroom as the same button was used to both start recording and to pause the recording if needed.

The camera feature on an Apple iPad was also used and in fact turned out to be more popular with the children. Some of this could be put down to the novelty of using this new technology but many of the children commented that it was easier to use because of the large viewing screen available. This was not used in conjunction with a tripod. While the recordings were a little shakier the overall quality was impressive.

The digital camera was used primarily with the children from second class with the children in first class using the Apple iPad. This was done as some of the children in first class appeared nervous when standing in front of the camera. The iPad allowed the younger children to create short animations and to have the script to hand if needed.

The majority of the recordings were edited by the researcher using iMovie on an Apple Mac. This was done primarily to save time but in future research of this nature asking the children to also edit their footage would be most beneficial as it would allow the children to pick up on mistakes earlier in the process and give them time to correct these. The animations created on the iPad for the most part required no editing leading to a substantial reduction in the time spent on the entire process.

4.9 Time Factors

The Revised Irish Primary School Curriculum recommends that three hours and thirty minutes are spent on the teaching the Irish language each week. In the interests of fairness this was strictly adhered to. As noted there is some additional time available in the curriculum for use in all subject areas and at times this was needed by the children to finish the recordings of some of the videos.
As noted earlier during the process a circular was received from the Department of Education advising that this additional curricular time was to be used for the areas of Literacy and Numeracy. While this limited the amount of time available to work on the videos it did not hinder the research to any great degree as much of the work had been completed at this stage. This could however impede further implementation of this methodology in other classrooms. The researcher has previous experience in using digital video in the classroom and is aware of the issues involved. However for teachers new to this methodology the extra time needed for filming and editing may prove more difficult with the limited time available.

4.10 Conclusion

The principal aim of this chapter was to present the observations of the researcher over the course of this project. It also aimed to illustrate the results of the focus groups after the implementation of the new methodology and to report the findings of the children’s, parent’s and teacher questionnaires.

It is worth noting that the new methodology implemented as part of this research appears to have had two primary successes. The children’s questionnaires highlighted that most children disliked the Irish language prior to the introduction of the new methodology. However the use of digital video appears to have had a positive impact on the children’s motivation to learn the language as noted in the focus groups conducted at the end of the research. It was also apparent from observation and an oral examination by the researcher that it also led to increased retention of the language taught. The children showed greater automaticity and fluency and over the course of the filming many of the children actively sought out new vocabulary to add to their scripts. Many of the children had reported feeling anxious about speaking Irish in class before the implementation of the new methodology. While the focus group was only a sample representation of the class the children stated that they now felt less nervous. This was also observed by the researcher in classes taught after the end of the research.

The questionnaires paint a rather complex picture with regard parent’s attitudes towards the language with many rating their own ability in the language as “weak” or “very weak”. Despite having a primarily positive view of the Irish language parents regarded the language as having “little” or “no importance” to their child’s future job prospects.
Teachers appeared to be primarily supportive of the teaching of the language though a substantial minority had a “neutral” attitude towards the teaching of Irish. A substantial percentage of parents and all teachers surveyed believed that there should be more emphasis placed on developing children’s Oral language skills in primary schools and that children of weaker academic ability should be exempt from the study of the Irish language.

The issues arising from these findings will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.
Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the main findings outlined in Chapter 4. These will be discussed in relation to the findings and the research outlined in the literature Review.

5.2 Retention of the Irish Language

One of the main objectives of the research was to use child created video to aid in the retention of the Irish language. Prior to the introduction of the new methodology the researcher was unhappy with the retention of the language by the children when traditional methods were used. The literature also highlighted the failure of many children to reach the prescribed levels required by the curriculum particularly in the area of oral language (Inspectorate 2007). It was hoped through the introduction of the new methodology that the retention levels of the children would improve. It was noted in the Literature Review that there have been a number of different methods employed over the years to teach second languages. While some are no longer fashionable to use some linguists believe that we should not focus on one method but use a variety of elements from each of the processes. This new methodology attempted to combine and mix elements of each of the strategies to aid the retention of the Irish language amongst the children.

As noted in the Chapter 4 the children’s retention of the language taught was tested through a question and answer process with the researcher. The children showed a marked improvement in their retention of the vocabulary taught using the new methodology. The children’s difficulty with some of the vocabulary covered in traditional ways was apparent in the way the children hesitated or often gave a reply which was not correct or suitable. It was also observed that the children were most comfortable when using the vocabulary they had used when creating their video rather than vocabulary they had learned through watching other children’s videos. It would appear that the creation of the video itself and the collaborative work with their classmates assisted the children with learning the language. While much of this could be put down to the fact that the children
were personally invested in their own scripts and were therefore more likely to work harder
this observation proved very interesting. Similar results were found in a study on
Podcasting amongst 3rd Level University students where it was found the process of
actually creating the video was beneficial to language retention (Frydenberg 2006; Lee et
al 2008; McGarr 2009).

A reflective journal was kept by the researcher during the course of the project to record
observations made during the day. Examples of this are found in Appendix A. The
following extract from the reflective journal written towards the end of the process outlines
some of the observations of the researcher after this oral testing of the children was
completed.

“I was very impressed by the way the children responded to the questioning
especially when a child was asked a question relating to the theme they had
covered directly. There were slight delays when they were asked questions
relating to the other themes covered using the new methodology but these
delays were significantly longer when dealing with the themes covered in a

However to properly evaluate the children’s knowledge and retention of the vocabulary the
researcher feels it would be wise to return to this group after a period of a few months (the
new school year) to properly evaluate how this method has led to the retention of the
vocabulary. The researcher also feels that as more time would be available over the
course of a full year it would be beneficial to the children to create short videos on each of
the themes. As highlighted above it was noticeable that each child was most comfortable
when dealing with the vocabulary they had learned specifically for their own video. In this
regard the use of a video camera could become even more time consuming and the use of
the Apple iPad would be a more suitable option. This allows the children to create
animated movies in a very short time period without the need for excessive editing.

The Literature Review highlighted that todays children are “media producers” as well as
consumers (Hobbs, 2005). Allowing the children to edit their movies will allow the children
to increase this role as producers. This is also in line with a constructivist way of teaching
allowing for a more active discovery approach. Papert (cited Forrester & Jantzie 2000)
believed that children must be provided with the tools to participate and take ownership of
the learning process. While errors were in pronunciation were common in the videos these
were not highlighted immediately by the researcher. Instead these were covered as a whole class discussion after viewing each of the videos. Dal (2010) noted that today errors are tolerated and are “seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills in a foreign language”. Brown and Yule (1983) noted that oral language is in itself more informal than written language and that it is reasonable for leaners to produce spoken language that is not of the same standard as written work. The use of video also allowed the children to grasp and understand the importance of non verbal signals. During the filming of the videos the children needed to be aware that as well as speaking the language they also had to act. Allowing the children to edit the videos would allow the children to take further control over the language that they use and the message that is told in the story. It would also allow the children to spot grammatical or pronunciation errors earlier in the filming process. The children would then be able to edit these errors earlier leading to the children taking greater ownership of the process.

While some research has advised against rote learning of the language the Inspectorate report (2007) felt that it was of benefit to children in learning useful phrases and exploring the “rhythm of the language.” Children gain confidence and absorb more language through repetition. The use of video allowed the children to hear themselves speaking in Irish and for many this was their first time hearing themselves speaking in another language. Where this was most successful it was noted that children used language they had acquired previously to creatively add to the drama. The children involved in this study modified the scripts occasionally especially adding in elements they believed would be funny and make their classmates laugh. The Irish Primary School Curriculum believes that children will “learn Irish better when they can enjoy the learning experience”. Through the rote learning of their scripts the children became more confident in using the language. This was commented on by the children in the focus group who stated that they now felt less anxious about speaking Irish in class. The researcher also feels that this increased confidence in speaking the language in front of the class was also as a result of speaking Irish in front of a camera. The use of the digital camera appears to have assisted some of the children become more confident of their abilities.

In the Literature Review it was noted that the Audio Lingual method of second language learning was a method where “practice makes perfect” (Mitchell and Myles 2004). It was described as acquiring new vocabulary through dialogues which were learned through
imitation and repetition. Critics believed that the focus of this method was on content rather than the process. The learner had little control and had a passive role in the learning process. The literature also noted that many second language teachers believe that practice in production of the target language is essential for developing L2 proficiency amongst children. Many linguists believe that a PPP model (Presentation-Practice-Production) is essential (Byrne 1976). In this instance the language was presented to the children orally and through teacher designed vocabulary sheets which contained the required vocabulary for each particular theme. The new methodology used for this research utilised some of the features of the Audio Lingual and PPP models. Dialogues were rehearsed and through these the children’s ability to recall automatised responses were improved. However while in the past this was simply an activity that was teacher led, the creation of the videos by the children led to the children having a greater role in the learning process. While the scripts were pre-prepared by the teacher the children could amend these to tell their own story on video. This greater involvement in the process led to the children feeling more confident in their use of the target language.

These scripts also helped to develop “automatic stimulus-reaction chains” or “Automaticity” amongst children. Some have argued that Communicative Language Teaching does not allow children sufficient practice to develop these automatic responses (Segalowitz and Hulstijn 2005). The new methodology while still remaining primarily communicative also took this into account. Through rehearsals on the scripts the children developed a substantial repertoire of automatic responses. It was noticeable that during questioning at the end of the research process many of the children showed increased levels of competence in this area. When commonly used questions were put to them the children could recall an automatic response. This in turn led to greater levels of confidence and also motivation.

Output practice refers to any activity designed to provide learners with opportunities to produce output in the target language. De Keyser (2007) defined it as any activity which has improvement in the target language as its ultimate goal. One of the main objectives for this methodology was to facilitate an increase in the retention of the language by the children. The time spent rehearsing scripts by the children would appear to have assisted greatly in this regard. The children practiced in class and in many instances at home and the final result was an improvement in the ability to speak and retain the vocabulary over a
short time period. Further study would need to be undertaken into its more long term effects.

In keeping with the primary school curriculum the new methodology was also communicative in nature. The central theme of the Communicative Language Teaching approach is the importance of meaningful communication. An NCCA (2011) research report noted the importance of providing children with opportunities to communicate meaningfully with their peers. In the Communicative Method the child contributes as well as receives the language. While it was recommended that the learning of scripted dialogues be replaced by activities such as games and problem solving tasks this new methodology used video as a method to allow the children communicate while still utilising scripts. Breen (1984) noted that with communication at the centre of the curriculum, the goal of that curriculum (individuals who are capable of using the target language to communicate with others) and the means (classroom activities which develop this capability) begin to merge. In this instance the means was the utilisation of child created video with the goal being children who can communicate with each other using the Irish language. It can be argued that the use of this new methodology was a success in this regard with the children finding it easier to communicate with each other in Irish after the use of the video resource.

The research followed a Task Based Teaching method. Nunan (1989) defined a communicative task as “a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language”. The task should also stand alone as a communicative act. The task set for the children was to create a video resource. While the task was understood to be the creation of a resource which would be used again in the future, the creation of the video itself was also a stand alone task. The children were first introduced to the new vocabulary before being allowed to manipulate the scripts if they needed to. Production of the target language was then included as part of the task set.

The focus of the lessons was on meaning and not form again following a Task Based approach. The task set by the teacher provided the children with a reason to communicate in Irish (Oliver, Philp & Mackey, 2008). Willis and Willis (2007) noted that a task must have some sort of relationship to comparable real world activities. The primary school
curriculum also highlights this. The themes used in the new Irish Primary School Curriculum uses themes which encourage the learner to use the language in common daily settings.

Oliver, Philp & Mackey (2008) advised giving guidance to younger learners after the activity was completed. While some assistance was given to the children during the rehearsing and recording phases the use of the completed video as a whole class activity allowed the researcher to give further guidance to the children. During these sessions issues regarding pronunciation and grammar were also brought up. This is also in line with the literature review which recommended an initial focus on meaning with a focus on form following.

Willis and Willis (2007) outlined a series of questions to denote the use of a task based approach. Looking at the methodology used in this research the researcher believes that the activity engaged learners interest, had a primary focus on meaning and related to real world activities fitting into a task based approach.

Through the completion of the task (creating the video resource) the children were actively engaged in using the target language on a daily basis. Through the use of the rote learning of the scripts the children were better able to recall automatised responses. Instance Theory believes that rote learning enables the child to access a specific response from memory. As noted above this was evident when speaking to the children at the end of the research process. The children’s ability to recall automatic responses or phrases was greatly improved. In the past rote learning has been “geared toward the mastery of specific structures or rules, not of utterances as such” (Gatbonton and Segalowitz 1988:477). A focus on form was still included in the methodology but the primary focus was on meaning and the use of simple phrases which through rote learning of the scripts could be more easily recalled.

5.3 Motivation to learn the Irish Language

The results of the children’s questionnaires showed that motivation to learn the language was poor with two thirds of the children in the research group stating that they “did not like” or “hated” Irish. The book the children used proved unpopular with many
calling it “boring”. In discussions with the children during the Focus Groups some of the children stated that their Irish homework often took only a few minutes as in many instances it was simply a colouring in exercise. One child commented “even if you don’t know the answer it’s kinda easy to guess the right one”. This was also noted in the teachers questionnaires with Teacher C stating

“I would take Irish workbooks out of the classroom as I believe they do not help children. They guess how many blanks and match the word”.

It was noted in the Literature Review that

“the resulting paradox is that while pupils learn to speak Irish in school in order to use it in their own lives, they know that there are very few occasions outside (particularly involving their peers) in which there might be either a real need, or even an opportunity, to speak it”

(Harris et al 1996)

The Literature Review also noted the issue of textbooks in Irish with many teachers believing they were not suitable. 63.6% of the children surveyed stated that they would like to use Irish outside of the school if there was an opportunity with 42.4% of the children saying they occasionally used Irish outside of doing their homework. One opportunity to use the language is within the local G.A.A. (Gaelic Athletic Association) of which most of the children in the research group are active participants. However, on speaking to the coach in charge he admitted that the only time Irish was used was to write the children’s names on team sheets. Training was never conducted in Irish although he was open to the possibility. He did wonder if it was feasible though.

“I don’t have any Irish myself other than a few words here and there and I don’t know if I or the kids would be comfortable using it” (Local Coach).

In previous research it was noted that a third of boys and a quarter of girls reported never liking Irish (McCoy 2012). The results from this questionnaire were even more negative with 60% of the girls reported not liking or hating Irish and 65.3% of the boys feeling the same way. It has also been noted in the research that children in multi-class settings with a male teacher have more negative opinions on the Irish language. As the children in this particular research group are in a multi class setting with a male teacher this may go some way to explaining the higher figures recorded in this survey.

Research has also shown that a substantial minority of children stated that they did not receive support or encouragement from their parents towards the Irish language (Harris
Interestingly this survey found that 90% of the girls stated that their parents encouraged them in Irish. This figure dropped to 52.2% on the boys questionnaires. With parental support so vital this is reflected in the number of students taking the Higher Level Paper at Leaving Certificate level. In 2012, 63% of those sitting the Higher Level paper in the Leaving Certificate Examination were girls (State Examinations Commission 2012).

From a motivational point of view the introduction of the new methodology proved very successful with many of the children stating that they enjoyed learning Irish more than doing it in the traditional format. Ellington & Race (1993:199) noted that "the act of making a video tends to be memorable. Whether operating a camera, or playing a part in the recording, heightened learning outcomes are normally achieved". They especially enjoyed the rehearsal stage of the process as they had found that the mistakes they made during this time to be funny. The children also enjoyed the fact that they were in control of the correcting side of the process. Despite re-filming their video one group were still arguing over the pronunciation of some of the Irish words used. “I told ‘child A’ that he was saying that word wrong but he kept doing it anyways”. The children were very proud of their work and one asked “Can we share these videos with other classes?” The importance of making the experience of learning a language enjoyable is also highlighted by the Primary School Curriculum: Gaeilge (NCCA 1999:4)

“The children will learn Irish better when they can enjoy the learning experience and when they have developed a positive attitude to the language”.

Many of the children were not content to simply use the vocabulary contained on the teacher designed sheets. Many sought to add to the scripts. When gaps appeared in the children’s language knowledge they sought out new words and phrases to use. This process of seeking new language is called cognitive comparison and is seen by some as a crucial process in the language acquisition process (Doughty 2001, Ellis 1997, Nelson 1987, Slobin 1985). This desire to seek out and use new phrases showed that the new methodology led to increased motivation amongst the children. While this may primarily have been done to create a better video than another group the end result was children with a greater repertoire of Irish than had been anticipated.
The Focus Group discussion noted that all the children stated that they preferred learning Irish through drama and they particularly enjoyed watching themselves speaking Irish when their video was played on the Interactive Whiteboard. Many noted that it was funny to watch themselves acting in Irish. As noted in the findings some of the children stated that they had met up at weekends to practice their scripts. This was something which the researcher had not expected and highlights the increased motivation of the children to learn the language. The following comment by one of the children was noted in the Findings Chapter

“It's different to doing real drama. You don’t have to remember all your lines. You can stop the camera to check what you have to say”.

The use of an Apple iPad proved particularly popular with one child who has been granted an exemption in Irish but still took part in the project. Prior to this the child had found learning the language very difficult. While he still has considerable difficulties with retention of the language the use of video appeared to lead to greater motivation to speak the language. He enjoyed the fact that he could create his own movie without having to stand up in front of the class. He admitted to making lots of mistakes but said he deleted these and tried again. He received support from his partner on the project whose voice could be heard prompting him in the background of the finished animation. This was also observed by the researcher in the Reflective Journal;

“It is becoming very apparent that Child A is having difficulty remembering his lines. When he finally grasps one line he soon forgets another. However his partner in creating the video has a strong grasp of the language and I have been noticing that she is enjoying helping Child A out. She sits alongside him when they are rehearsing the scripts and often prompts him when he gets stuck on a word” (Reflective Journal-21st May 2012).

This increased collaboration between the children was also noticed by the researcher. The children assisted each other when one of them found the language difficult. In the introduction to the New Primary School Curriculum collaboration amongst children is encouraged. It notes that

“working collaboratively provides learning opportunities that have particular advantages. Children are stimulated by hearing the ideas and opinions of others, and by having the opportunity to react to them”

(NCCA 1999:17).
Increased collaboration between children while using video technology in the classroom was highlighted in the research on the use of digital video in classrooms. One child commented

“ Its kinda good to work with people, cos say you don’t know something, you can ask someone else. And they might know it”.

5.4 Teachers Questionnaires

The teachers were asked to rate their ability on speaking the Irish language. Previous surveys of this kind had found that the majority of teachers rated their own ability in the language as “fluent”, “very fluent” or “native speaker”. The results of this small scale research would concur with all of the teachers surveyed stating the same. Harris (2006) noted that a substantial minority (24.8%) rated themselves as being weak speakers of Irish. Of the teachers participating in this survey none rated themselves as “weak” speakers of Irish.

Almost all of the teachers believed that children of “weak academic ability” should be granted exemptions from the study of Irish. This was also a view held by many parents. This contrasts with the 60% of teachers surveyed by the INTO (1985). This could be explained by the time difference between this survey and the INTO survey with exemptions now becoming more common. This survey also found that 80% of teachers believed that the motivation of children towards the language was the most likely cause of their becoming less favourable towards the Irish language. This survey received less stark results with 55% of teachers agreeing.

67% of respondents to the INTO survey reported that their attitude to teaching Irish had either remained “favourable” or had become “more favourable” since they had begun teaching (INTO 1985). The teachers surveyed for this project had similar feelings (66.7%). While the figures are high there is a substantial minority who had “less favourable” feelings towards the language. Many of the teachers felt that not enough attention was paid to oral language development. All felt that a greater emphasis should be placed on the spoken language in primary schools.
5.4.1 Teachers and Digital Video

From the teachers questionnaires it was evident that not many had thought of using digital video as a resource. An INTO discussion document noted that the Irish language television station, TG4 was not promoted enough in schools. This was also apparent from the teachers replies. One teacher commented

“We sometimes use TG4 on special occasions. We would watch a cartoon in Irish”.

The use of audio recordings provided by the educational publishing companies was widespread but only 11.3% of teachers stated that they had created audio or video resources of their own.

As noted an Inspectorate Report conducted in 2007 noted that in classes where a high standard of oral Irish was present there was an emphasis on storytelling. They also noted that teachers in these classes made excellent use of a range of technological supports to support the telling of the story. They also noted that;

“In these classes a story was told and followed by a dramatic representation to bring the story to life. Pupils engaged in their own learning, they liked the story and were excited about their representation of it”.

The Inspectorate report also stated that this type of work was only being conducted in a few classes. The results of the teachers questionnaires confirm this with the majority of the teachers responding stating that they had not used video as part of the resources they used in teaching Irish. The Inspectorate also noted that

“the ultimate goal of acquiring a language is to allow the child to create the language themselves” (Inspectorate 2007).

The creation of resources in this research was done by the children themselves allowing them to engage even further in their own learning leading to a more collaborative and constructivist approach.

When appropriate structures are put in place by the teacher, motivation to learn the language is easily acquired (Baker 1998). The Inspectorate report recommended drama as the most ideal way for this to occur within the classroom. The structures put in place during this research included the provision of vocabulary sheets to each of the children and sample drama scripts which the children were free to use or modify as they saw fit. Many of the teachers surveyed had stated that they had taught drama through Irish. A
substantial majority of teachers also stated that they used drama as part of Oral Irish lessons. The importance of this was noted in the Literature Review.

The Inspectorate Evaluation concluded that;

“A higher standard of Irish should be expected from pupils. To this end teachers need to reflect creatively and imaginatively when selecting teaching methodologies. It is recommended that a particular emphasis be placed on structuring situations where pupils can create language for themselves. Drama should play a very central role in learning”.

The researcher believes that the use of this new methodology reflects this creativity. This research project allowed the children to use digital technology to create their own stories. As a result the children were engaged in their own learning creating resources which led to a better understanding of the content.

5.5 Role of Parents

The 20 Classes Study found that parents were generally positive about Irish and supported the idea that Irish was taught in schools. The survey noted also, however, that in reality many parents did little to promote the language with their children (Harris and Murtagh). A follow up survey by Harris (2006) found that 39.6% of parents said that their attitude towards the Irish language was “neutral”. The majority of parents described their attitude as being “favourable” or “very favourable” (48.7%). This survey found similar results with 34.6% describing their attitude as “neutral” and 53.8% “favourable” or “very favourable”.

However despite so many parents feeling “favourable” towards the language and learning it themselves for many years all of the parents involved in this study rated their ability to speak the language as either “weak” or “very weak”. 76.9% of parents surveyed rated it as “of little importance” to their child’s future job prospects. One parent commented that it was only useful for “for certain jobs like teaching, government jobs and TG4”.

Interestingly when asked what they believed would be the best option to improve their child’s level of Irish most believed that a greater emphasis should be placed on Oral Irish. A substantial minority believed that “more informal Irish spoken throughout the school by the teachers” would also be beneficial. Harris (2006) found that just over 3% of parents
said they spoke Irish to their children “often” or “always”. 20.6% used Irish “occasionally” with their children with 75% of parents admitting that they “never” or “seldom” spoke to their children in Irish (33.1% seldom and 42.3% never). The results of the questionnaire carried out for this research found that none of the parents spoke Irish to their children “always”, “very often” or “often”. 15.4% used Irish occasionally with the 84% stating that the “seldom” or “never” spoke Irish to their children. It would appear that while parents wish their children to speak the language they are not prepared to do so themselves. Relying on the education system to accomplish this is not enough. As outlined in the Literature Review Fishman (1991) emphasised the critical role played by family. He argued that without the support and involvement of the family, schools are fighting a losing battle with each generation of learners starting at the same point as the previous generation. Parental involvement is crucial to ensure the revival of a language but it does not appear to be occurring with the Irish language.

It should be noted that in the children’s questionnaire the children reported different figures with just 57% “seldom” or “never” speaking Irish. This difference could be accounted for by the children believing that even the use of a few words constituted using Irish. For instance during the focus groups one of the children commented that their father often said “time for leaba (bed)” as they were heading for bed at night. The child construed this as speaking Irish whereas an adult may not.

5.5.1 Parental Support for the Language: The Paradox

As noted in the Literature Review, research into the Irish language can be difficult. Studies have shown that peoples opinions on the language are complex. Support for the preservation of the language is high but many find it difficult to express why. The parents in this study had primarily positive attitudes towards the language. For almost half the respondents it was “an important part of our culture and heritage” with only one parent believing it “was a dying language and had no place in our schools”. One parent stated,

“I think as a country with great history, culture and lots of heritage it is of great importance to hold on to our Irish language. It is very much a part of our past and should not be done away with”.

Another believed
"it has a very important place in Irish schools as it is our native language, already in my generation dying out".

Perhaps it is here that the problems arise. It would appear that most parents are worried that the language is in danger of disappearing altogether yet are not willing to make an effort to speak the language in order to secure its future. Each generation appears to pass the responsibility for saving the language on to the next generation. With many parents unable to speak the language after years of study in both primary and secondary schools should we be surprised when their children too have difficulties when much the same methods are applied to the teaching of the language?

Earlier this year, RTE and the boxer, Bernard Dunne began a campaign to get more people to use what little Irish they had. The goal was simple-to get 100,000 adults to use a “cúpla focal” whenever they could. Despite a large advertising campaign and an accompanying television programme only 24,740 people signed up to take part (RTE 2012). This apathetic response illustrates how the generations who have left school (and their study of the Irish language) behind have stopped using the language. “Irish like homework, rules and uniforms is best forgotten outside school” (INTO 2004).

5.6 Student Exemptions in Irish

One area where teachers and parents shared common ground was a belief that exemptions for children of weaker academic ability was important and necessary. One teacher commented

“It’s hard enough for some children to grasp phonetic sounds in English at Infant level without having to explain to them that in Irish the letter makes a different sound”

(Teacher F).

Only 7.69% of parents believed Irish should be compulsory for the Leaving Certificate echoing what the current Taoiseach, Enda Kenny has said about making Irish an optional subject at this level.
5.7 Other Issues

The following issues which were noted by the researcher during the project are also noteworthy.

5.7.1 Time Factors
The issue of the time needed to create a video in the classroom was commented upon in the Literature Review (Secules et al 1992). It was also noted that in the past a certain amount of discretionary time was available in the Irish Primary School Curriculum. This time has now been allocated to the areas of literacy and numeracy curtailing the amount of time available for projects such as this. However much of the work on this project was completed in class in the allocated time available for the teaching of Irish. While this can be attributed to the fact that the editing of videos was done outside of class time and the prior experience of the teacher in the area of digital video it is not unfeasible to state that time was not as big an issue as had been expected. However teachers with less experience in using video and who may require additional professional development training might find that classroom management and time could curtail the use of a methodology such as this.

5.7.2 Hardware and Software
The school in which this research took place does not have a large IT budget. Therefore the equipment used over the duration of this project was the property of the researcher. A Canon Legria FS306 Digital Camera was used. The children found this camera particularly easy to use as it has a large red button which is pressed to record and also used to pause/stop the recording process. This was used in conjunction with a tripod to facilitate a steady image. No external microphone was used though this would have proved advantageous especially when used within the setting of a busy primary school classroom. An Apple Mac laptop was also used in conjunction with Apples iMovie software for the editing of the children’s videos.

Another issue regarding the equipment is the cost. However it is important to remember that it is not the quality of the video that is important but the language used in the video. Many teachers carry phones which are capable of recording digital video and these can be used to great effect in the classroom. The literature review highlighted how new formats for recording have made using video easier (Dal 2010). The new range of smart phones
available can be easily used to record in these new digital formats. Brett and González (2009) noted how this trend is becoming more popular.

In this research the use of an Apple iPad proved very popular with the children and did not require any additional equipment to be used. The iPad was capable of filming and editing the videos for the children. The Apple iPad was used in conjunction with an App called “Puppet Pals”. This software allows for the easy creation of animated stories. The children move the characters on the screen with their fingers while narrating the story. This is then saved as a movie file. This required very little or no editing and the children enjoyed using this new technology. Buckingham et al (1999) noted how in the past one had to be an expert in editing to undertake a methodology such as this. However Dal (2010) highlighted how newer technologies have made the editing of videos much more cost effective and freely available. One child commented “I like using the iPad because it is very easy to use”. The researcher feels that this is an area that would be suitable for future research as it allows teachers with even basic IT skills to utilise video in the classroom. The camera feature was also used during the filming process as the children found the larger screen on the Apple iPad easier to work with.

5.7.3 Editing Issues

As time was a factor during this research process the researcher took on the role of editing the videos. While this was done in the evenings outside of school it did not take overtly large amounts of time. Nonetheless it should be stressed that the researcher has had a lot of experience editing videos. It should be acknowledged that not everyone will have these skills and that this part of the process could prove quite time consuming for some teachers. However, as mentioned earlier the researcher feels that there is much to benefit from giving this task to the children. It would allow them to spot grammatical or pronunciation errors earlier in the process allowing them to re-film or edit these errors out of the final product.

While the Fís Project is up and running in many schools this is not the case everywhere. Professional Development Courses are available through the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) in using video in the classroom which also cover the editing process. Many of the courses are run over the summer months but these are generally at the teachers expense. An NCTE Census conducted in 2006 found that 68% of
schools had not facilitated professional development courses in IT for their staff in the two years prior to the report. More training needs to be made available on these aspects to allow teachers to be confident in their abilities to complete these tasks. It should also be noted that many children are already familiar with some video editing software. Some of the children in the researchers class use these facilities at home as they create small lego animations utilising software such as iMovie on an Apple Mac or Windows Movie Maker. It is not necessary for the teacher to have all the skills allowing them to step back from the role of “Sage on the Stage” and act more as the “Guide on the Side”. As noted above the use of the Apple iPad required no editing and thus proved even easier to use.

5.7.4 Classroom Management

The study was conducted over a period of eight weeks. During that time one week was spent on each of themes outlined earlier. The children were given the vocabulary sheets on the Friday prior to each week beginning. They were not obliged to work on these over the weekend but as noted earlier some of the children practiced at the weekends. The dramas were rehearsed at the beginning of each week. The children were given the cameras when they felt they were ready to begin the process of filming. Each video had to be completed by Thursday so that it could be presented to the rest of the class though most were ready by the Wednesday. Any errors that were noticed were corrected and re-filmed if necessary.

Dal (2010) highlighted the potential for collaboration amongst learners when using digital video and this was very noticeable in the workings of each of the groups. Many of the children also commented on this and stated that they liked working with others on the project. As noted in the Literature Review this collaborative work is encouraged by the Primary School Curriculum (NCCA 1999). During the process the children assigned different roles to each of the members of the group. All children were asked to speak in the videos but some of the children were assigned different roles. When some of the children were acting others took up roles behind the camera. Others assisted with script prompts if needed. This naturally led to a busy and at times a little noisy classroom. However one of the children in the focus groups commented that they liked the fact that instead of sitting at their desks they could get up “and move around” and ask questions of each other. The teacher continued working with the rest of the class while filming was ongoing. When quiet was needed the children would shout “Ciúnas” (quiet) and this was the signal to stop
talking. In general the clips being videoed were no more than 30 seconds each so this led to very little disruption. Tomalin (1991:48) also noted that video can make learning a language a happy experience and again many of the children commented on the enjoyment they had while rehearsing the scripts and filming the videos.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed and discussed the findings outlined in chapter 4 in conjunction with the Literature Review of chapter 2.

The children’s retention of the Irish language was shown to have been improved as a result of the introduction of the new methodology. This was most apparent in areas where the children had worked directly on creating a video. In some of the other themes covered by the new methodology the children showed a marked improvement in their ability to recall the vocabulary. However while the children showed improvements in all the themes covered by the new methodology themes the greatest improvements were in themes which they had worked directly on. In themes covered using the traditional methods the children appeared to still have difficulty recalling the vocabulary used. Segalowitz and Hulstijn (2005) highlighted the importance of children developing “automatic stimulus-reaction chains” or “Automaticity” in the target language. The children showed a marked improvement in their ability to recall phrases and vocabulary from the themes covered using the new methodology.

The children’s motivation to learn the language was also improved with all of the children enjoying the use of drama and video in the learning of the language. For many it was their first time hearing themselves speaking Irish and this encouraged the children to be more confident with the language. Some of the children even met up to practice at weekends showing the increased motivation levels of the children to learn the language.

While TG4 was used occasionally by some teachers and some had created digital resources in college many of the teachers had never considered using video as a resource in learning the language. Teachers relied primarily on recordings provided to them by the publishing companies. Many teachers taught drama through Irish and it was noted that this was also recommended in the Primary School Curriculum as well as
in the Inspectorate report. This research put this in the hands of the children and led to
greater collaboration amongst the children.

The support of parents was shown to be critical to the learning of the language but this
research found that while parents encouraged their children to work hard at Irish very few
parents made an effort to speak the language to their children at home. All parents
rated their own ability to speak the language as “weak” or “very weak”. Parents also saw
the language as of little importance to their child’s future job prospects. Both parents and
teachers were in agreement that exemptions should be available to children of weaker
academic ability and that the main focus should be on developing the oral language skills
of the children.

Finally the issues of time, equipment needed, editing and classroom management were
discussed. While the amount of time available to dedicate to new methodologies is being
reduced the research shows that it is still possible to include a methodology such as this in
the teaching of Irish. The equipment needed for a project such as this does not have to be
of a high spec allowing for the use of already available resources. An Apple iPad was
shown to be of great benefit in a methodology such as this. Editing requires a certain skill
level which many teachers may not have though training courses are available. Again the
use of an Apple iPad was shown to be beneficial in this regard. Finally the scope for
collaboration in a methodology such as this was shown to be beneficial to the children.

The final chapter will summarise the findings of this study. It will also make
recommendations for further study.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

At the outset of this study the researcher outlined the purpose of conducting this research.

This research aims to utilise modern technologies including a digital video camera and an Apple iPad to assist in the retention of the Irish language. It is also hoped that the new methodology will lead to increased motivation amongst children to learn the language.

The following questions were also posed;

- What are the potential benefits/constraints of using digital video in language learning?
- What are children’s, parents and teachers attitudes towards the learning of the Irish language?
- What are the potential benefits/constraints of using child-created content on the learning process? Do the children retain the vocabulary better when they have created the digital video?
- Does the use of digital video have any effect on the motivation of children to learn the language?

6.2 Principal Findings

The principal findings of the research are outlined below.

6.2.1 Retention of the language

While this was a small scale study conducted over a period of just eight weeks it was found that the use of child created videos improved their oral language skills in Irish. In comparison to traditional methods the use of video led to greater automaticity in answering questions posed by the researcher. This would require further investigation with a larger cohort of children and over a more prolonged period of time.
It was also noted that the children appeared to retain the language better when they were responsible for creating the video. This could stem from spending more time with the material and scripts used or as a result of the increased motivation to learn the language exhibited by the children. To further test this hypotheses research would need to be conducted over a full school year with all children being responsible for creating videos in all themes. These videos would then be used as a resource for the entire class with the children’s knowledge of the irish language in all thematic areas tested at the end of a school year.

6.2.2 Motivation to learn the Language
Hood (2006) noted that motivation was important for success in language learning. O’Laoire (2005) however noted that the Irish language within the education system has always been associated with problems of “poor motivation”. This research aimed to improve the motivation of the children in the research group to speak and learn the Irish language. It was found that the use of a digital video camera and an Apple iPad led to increased motivation amongst the majority of the children. The children in the focus groups stated that they preferred the new methodology with most now stating that they like Irish. This increased motivation was most apparent with some of the children stating that they practiced the drama scripts at weekends. In the authors opinion this brought the Irish language out of the classroom and become a spoken language at home. This was an area which highlighted in much of the research as being of paramount importance in the learning of any second language.

6.2.3 Benefits/Constraints of using Digital video in language learning
The use of video is not uncommon in Irish classrooms. The Fís Project which has been running for a number of years has proven quite popular. However its use as an aid in the teaching of the Irish language is less common. The benefits included greater motivation to learn the language and an increased retention of the language over a short period of time in comparison to traditional methods. The children showed an improved ability in recalling important phrases and vocabulary as a result of the new methodology. It also led to a number of the children seeking out new vocabulary to use in their dramas thereby creating a greater bank of phrases in the Irish language. The areas of fluency and language output were also shown to have been improved.
More research is needed with a larger cohort and over a prolonged period of time to test this hypothesis further. Disadvantages include possible classroom management issues, expensive equipment and a lack of professional training for teachers in the use of video. However, it was also noted that the use of the Apple iPad allowed for the creation of animations using simpler and cheaper technologies. As this is a relatively new piece of technology research is still limited but the author feels that it is worthy of further research especially as it limits the time needed to create a video resource and requires less management as the children are in charge of creating the video entirely from scripting through to editing. By handing the technology to the children it also requires less input from the teacher with their role becoming one of facilitator rather than instructor.

6.2.4 Children’s Questionnaires
The results of the questionnaires showed that the children in the class predominantly “did not like” or “hated” Irish prior to the introduction of the new methodology. The majority of the class also stated that they would like to spend less time learning Irish in school. Almost half the class stated that they found speaking Irish the most difficult aspect of the language. Most of the children said that their parents encouraged them to work hard at Irish. However when asked if their parents spoke Irish to them at home the majority noted that Irish was “rarely” or “never” spoken in the home. In general it was the mother who used Irish more often with the children. The children rated themselves very poorly with regard their aptitude in Irish in comparison with English and Maths. The children were overwhelmingly in agreement that they did not like the book with with over half stating it was “boring”. Almost 40% of the children stated that they would prefer to learn another language instead of Irish. Most of the children did not read books in Irish or watch Irish television at home.

6.2.5 Children’s opinions after the introduction of the new methodology
Following the introduction of the new methodology the children’s opinions were re-visited through a small focus group. The children were chosen randomly from the class. The majority of children had a more positive opinion of the Irish language after the use of digital video. Many commented that it was more fun than using the book. It was also noticeable that some of the children practiced their Irish scripts at weekends which in this researchers experience has not been common in the past. The children also stated that they enjoyed doing the dramas in Irish. While some found learning their scripts difficult others noted that being able to pause the video to practice was an advantage.
The use of the Apple iPad produced the most positive remarks from the children. While much of the enthusiasm could be put down to the use of such a new technology the researcher also feels that the ease with which children could create professional looking animations in Irish led to them enjoying the process more. The editing for the videos created using a digital camera was conducted by the researcher to limit the amount of time spent on this duty in class. However the use of the iPad led to very little time being spent on editing meaning that the finished product was entirely the creation of the children.

6.2.6 Teacher’s Questionnaires

The majority of teachers surveyed for this research rated their ability to speak the Irish language as “fluent”, “very fluent” or “native speaker”. Almost all of the teachers were in agreement that that children of “weak academic ability” should be granted exemptions from the study of Irish. This was also a view held by many parents. Anecdotally exemptions being granted for children from the Irish Language are increasing. In this school where this research was conducted exemptions have been sought and granted for four children for the current year. Many are availing of the exemption for use in the future and are still currently taking Irish lessons. However this is a trend that is likely to become more common.

66.7% of respondents reported that their attitude to teaching Irish had either remained “favourable” or had become “more favourable” since they had begun teaching. These figures were similar to a survey conducted by the INTO (INTO 1985). A substantial minority stated that they had “less favourable” feelings towards the language. While the figures for “favourable” and “more favourable” are high it is worrying that for one third of respondents their feelings towards the language had become more negative since they had started teaching. All teachers believed that a greater emphasis on oral language was essential in primary schools. However it would seem that it is in the secondary school section that this move to an emphasis is occurring. Perhaps it would be wiser to develop this oral language prior to secondary school.

It was evident that not many had thought of using digital video as a resource in the irish language classroom. A few noted that they used TG4 but for many this was only on special occasions. A range of popular cartoons are available on TG4 in the Irish language. While the language used in some of these may be above the standard of the children it would
nevertheless be beneficial if these were made more easily available to teachers of the Irish language.

An Inspectorate report noted the importance of using drama to teach the Irish language. While some of the teachers indicated that they sometimes taught drama through Irish it would not appear to be common amongst teachers.

6.2.7 Parent’s Questionnaires
The results of the parent’s questionnaires showed that all rated their ability to speak the Irish language as that of a “weak” or “very weak second language speaker”. Despite this just over half the parents said that their attitude to the Irish language was either “very favourable” or “favourable”. The vast majority of parents admitted to only using Irish seldom or never. Most parents believed the language was of little or no importance to their child’s future job prospects.

These results highlight the unusual situation of the Irish language. Despite being favourable towards the teaching of the language very few parents made any effort to actually speak the language to their children. Many were unable to give reasons for learning the language other than it being a part of our national culture and heritage.

57.7% of parents believed that more emphasis should be placed on Oral language. Almost all parents would prefer their child to learn both Irish and a modern European language. However the recent cancellation of the modern Languages Project by the Department of Education and Skills means that this possibility is not now possible.

6.3 Limitations of the Research
The main limitations of this study were time and cohort size. The research took place over an eight week period which the researcher feels was inadequate to fully explore the potential of digital video as an aid to increase motivation and retention of the Irish language amongst primary school children. Ideally the research would take place over a full school year with the children creating video resources which could be used at later stages during revision of the language learned throughout the year. These videos could also be made available to other classes for use in learning the Irish language. As noted earlier Action Research is cyclical in nature with the results from one aspect leading to
change and further research. As such the researcher intends to utilise this process again in the coming school year leading to further study into the use of digital video. By conducting the research over the course of a full school year the real advantages and disadvantages of this new methodology should become more apparent. This would also allow the children to create videos on all themes.

6.4 Time Factors

As noted earlier the curriculum recommends three and a half hours be allocated to the teaching of Irish in a school week. Adding in the use of video on a full time basis would stretch this as it can be a time consuming exercise. The New Literacy and Numeracy Strategy recommends that all extra curricular time be devoted to the areas of English and Mathematics in an ordinary school where English is the primary language of instruction. This will further limit the amount of time available to the creation of videos as part of classwork.

However, this researcher has been participating in the Fís Project for a number of years and believes while it is yet another in a long line of additional extra curricular activities taking place in a school it can be tied in with a number of different subjects. In past years the Fís Project has integrated subjects such as English writing, art and music. There is no reason why the same cannot be applied in Irish. The children still create stories expressing themselves in the Irish language through the medium of film. As the project integrates with other subjects it allows for the use of the Irish language in other curricular areas. Sets could be created as part of a Visual Art Lesson or Music could be composed through the medium of Irish. Harris (2006) highlighted the importance of integrating the Irish language with other curricular areas and using film can be a valuable aid in ensuring its success.

6.5 Recommendations and areas for further research

This research has looked at the use of digital video camera to allow the children to create videos in the Irish language as an aid to learning the language. It also looked at the possible advantages to increasing motivation to learn the language. Children’s, parent’s and teachers attitudes towards the language were also explored. Questionnaires, focus groups, a reflective journal and teacher observations lead the researcher to make the following recommendations.
The use of digital video would appear to lead to greater motivation amongst children studying the Irish language. In this small scale study children showed increased retention of the language learned in comparison with traditional methods involving books. They also showed greater levels of automaticity and fluency. Children were more active in the learning process creating resources to be used in the classroom and collaboration amongst the children was high. The researcher recommends that all teachers of Irish in primary schools should aim to use digital video in their classrooms during the school year. However the researcher recommends that a larger scale study be carried out into the longer term effects of using child created digital video on the motivation of children to learn, speak and retain the Irish language. Ideally this research would be an Action Based research project. Action Research has been defined as a form of research which allows a researcher to make “a personal attempt to understand, improve and reform practice” (Hopkins 1985:32). Cohen and Mannion (1994:186) describe it as “a small scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention”. This can be done with an individual class or with a larger school environment with the purpose of improving classroom practice. McNiff (2002) notes that action research involves researchers doing research on themselves and examining the effects the intervention made (Cohen & Mannion 1994:186). Action Research is also cyclical in nature and is in effect a process which does not end. The lessons learned from one cycle are carried through to the next.

The research also looked at the use of an Apple iPad in the creation of animated videos using the Irish language. This proved very popular with the children and led to a less time consuming method of creating video resources. The availability of Apps in the Irish language is limited at present but the researcher believes that further research into the use of the Apple iPad is worthy of consideration. In particular the use of apps designed for the creation of digital books, comics and animations could prove invaluable in creating a bank of resources for use in the teaching of the Irish language. Mobile technologies are becoming more and more prevalent in Irish schools. Research could designed to look into its possible uses in the teaching of Irish but also other curricular areas.

The author recommends the use of a Task Based methodology in the teaching of the Irish language. Using this methodology the focus is on meaning and using the language
in real world examples. This gives the language a focus and reason to be used outside the classroom. The use of this method promoted the creation of scripts and a stage by stage process in the creation of the videos. Children understood from the outset the task that had been set for them and worked well together to achieve their goals. This collaborative learning is encouraged in the Primary School Curriculum.

- To effect this increased use of digital video training will need to be provided to teachers in the use of digital cameras and the safeguards needed when using digital video with young children. This training should ideally be part of pre-service training for teachers. For current teachers training should take the form of Professional Development Courses which should be ideally school based. The training should include aspects of the language of film, the correct use of equipment, ethical issues of filming with children and editing the final videos.

- Many of the parents surveyed had no idea what strategies were used to teach the Irish language. During an online discussion on Twitter one evening another teacher noted how the videos created by the children could be used to inform parents of the vocabulary their children were learning. The children, on completing their video, could take these home to show their parents. This was also noted in an INTO discussion document on the future of the Irish language. After watching their children’s work the author feels that it could encourage some parents to begin to use this vocabulary at home more often. This is an area which could be researched quite easily over the coming year in an extension of the current project.

- Exemptions from the study of Irish for children with special educational needs or children of weaker academic ability should be more freely available. It is difficult to understand why we insist on a child with literacy difficulties in English learning a language which they will be highly unlikely to use at any part of their lives once they leave school. At present these exemptions are suggested in academic or psychological assessments carried out on a handful of children in each school. This requires children being assessed by a child psychologist. However, these are often only available to a handful of children in a school each year. Perhaps the option to make this decision should now be available to the class teacher in collaboration with the principal, the School Board of Management and the child’s parents. While open to abuse it may lead to these children receiving more tuition in the area of English literacy which would be more beneficial in the long term.
The researcher recommends that in light of the responses from children, parents and teachers in the questionnaires a larger scale study should be carried out into attitudes and beliefs about the Irish language. It is apparent that while parents believe that Irish is an important part of our heritage and culture very few take the trouble to converse in the language once they leave schools. This was highlighted in 2012 by the campaign run by Bernard Dunne which failed to attract large numbers of Irish speakers. Without a change in this attitude the Irish language will always remain a subject taught in schools but ignored once school is out. However this survey should not be simply designed to gather information which is then filed away. A broader national debate on the future of the Irish language needs to begin. Naturally this debate will be difficult as the issue of the Irish language is a complex one. However the place of the Irish Language in our modern society needs to be discussed openly rather than continuing to follow the path we have followed for decades and which has so obviously failed to make an impact on the numbers speaking the language outside of education.

Unless we want our citizens to be Anglophones, or unless we can declare the language to be dead, then this is a time for serious reflection and for open, creative debate”.

I.N.T.O. 2004

The current Taoiseach, Enda Kenny and the current Minister for Education, Ruairí Quinn have hinted at possible changes to the compulsory nature of Irish in secondary schools. The higher percentage of marks being awarded from 2012 for the oral part of the Leaving certificate Examination is a welcome move but unless standards are raised we are simply giving more marks for the same level of spoken Irish. A revised curriculum for Primary Schools in the teaching of Irish, perhaps placing more emphasis on oral Irish, is needed. The teachers involved in this study believed that Oral Irish should be the priority in primary schools. This could lead to an improvement in the fluency with which the language is spoken leading to a greater love for the language amongst young children. As highlighted earlier the success of the bilingual system in Canada was founded on its voluntary nature. This is showing signs of popularity in Ireland with the growing numbers of parents choosing to send their children to Gaelscoileanna. Perhaps this is where the future of the language shows the most potential.
The 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language (Fiontar 2009:21) recommended the introduction of two syllabi for Irish at Leaving Certificate level. One would concentrate on oral competence in the language with some work on basic written communication. The second option would be for those students who intend to study Irish at degree level or those who will use the language on a professional basis at a later stage. The researcher would encourage this and believes that an emphasis on oral language is the key to the survival of the Irish language in the future. This was also highlighted in the responses of both parents and teachers to the questionnaires where an emphasis on Oral Irish was the most popular opinion.
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128


Appendix 1

Reflective Journal Entries

The following are extracts from the Reflective Journal kept by the researcher over the course of the project.

“Today the children from Group B worked on their Aimsir (Weather) video. They have chosen to break it up into three sections with one child each covering the past, present and future tense...What was very apparent was that the child covering the past tense was having great difficulty with their lines. The other children devised a solution which involved practicing and reading their script one line at a time giving the child time to practice their line before recording this. While this will lead to more editing needing to be done this will not be noticeable in the final video” (Reflective Journal-10th May 2012).

“It is becoming very apparent that Child A is having difficulty remembering his lines. When he finally grasps one line he soon forgets another. However his partner in creating the video has a strong grasp of the language and I have been noticing that she is enjoying helping Child A out. She sits alongside him when they are rehearsing the scripts and often prompts him when he gets stuck on a word” (Reflective Journal-21st May 2012).

“Today I began speaking to the children in Irish using the phrases that have come up in their scripts and their books over the past eight weeks. I was very impressed by the way the children responded to the questioning especially when a child was asked a question relating to the theme they had covered directly. There were slight delays when they were asked questions relating to the other themes covered using the new methodology but these delays were significantly longer when dealing with the themes covered in a traditional method. In fact in many instances the children were not able to reply to the questions posed to them when dealing with these themes.
When dealing with the themes covered by video I was also impressed by the fact that children (even what I would consider the weakest in the class) managed to reply to almost every question that was put to them.

Some of the children showed very good knowledge in all themes but even these children appeared to answer more fluently in the themes that had been covered through using video” (Reflective Journal-15th June 2012).
Appendix 2

Vocabulary Sheets
USE THESE WORDS TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR DRAMA ON FOOD

DEOCHANNA DRINKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drink</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gloine Glass</td>
<td>Ar mhaith leat?</td>
<td>Would you like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cupán Cup</td>
<td>Cad ba mhaith leat?</td>
<td>What would you like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caife Coffee</td>
<td>Ba mhaith liom...</td>
<td>I would like...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tae Tea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creathán Bainne Milkshake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liomanáid Lemonade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lógart Yoghurt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sú Úll Apple Juice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bainne Milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sú Oráiste Orange Juice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MILSEOG DESSERTS

Cáca Cake
Uachtar Reoite Ice Cream
Traidhfil Trifle
Sailéad Torthaí Fruit Salad
Milseán Sweets
Custard Custard

BRICFEASTA BREAKFAST

Arán Bread
Uibheacha Eggs
Calóga Cereal
Leite Porridge
Im Butter
Subh Jam
Tósta Toast
Pancóga Pancakes
Bia Eile
Other Food

Ponairí
Beans

Ceapaire
Sandwich

Piotsa
Pizza

Salann
Salt

Piobár
Pepper

Sceallóga
Chips

Iasc
Fish

Méara Éisc
Fish Fingers

Anraith
Soup

Bia

B’fhéarr liom......
I’d prefer.....

Suipéar
Supper
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Páiste 1</th>
<th>Dia daoibh.</th>
<th>Hello.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 2</td>
<td>Dia s Muire duit</td>
<td>Hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 3</td>
<td>Dia’s Muire duit</td>
<td>Hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 1</td>
<td>Conas atá sibh?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 2 agus 3</td>
<td>Táimid go maith, go raibh maith agat.</td>
<td>We are good, thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 1</td>
<td>Seo dhaoibh an biachlár.</td>
<td>Here is the menu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 2</td>
<td>Go raibh maith agat</td>
<td>Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 3</td>
<td>Go raibh maith agat</td>
<td>Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 1</td>
<td>Anois cad ba mhaith libh a ithe?</td>
<td>What would you like to eat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 2</td>
<td>Ba mhaith liom .... agus .....</td>
<td>I would like ..... and .....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 3</td>
<td>Agus beidh ....... agus ...... Agam...le do thoíll.</td>
<td>And I will have ..... and ...... please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 1</td>
<td>Ceart go leor. Agus cad ba mhaith libh a ól?</td>
<td>OK And what would you like to drink?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 2</td>
<td>Beidh gloine ....... agam, le do thoíll</td>
<td>I will have a glass of.....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 3</td>
<td>Ba mhaith liom ....</td>
<td>I would like ......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 1</td>
<td>Ceart go leor.</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 1</td>
<td>Seo dhaoibh.</td>
<td>Here you go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 2 agus 3</td>
<td>Go raibh maith agat</td>
<td>Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tar éis an béile</strong></td>
<td><strong>After the meal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 2</td>
<td>An féidir linn an bille a fháil anois.</td>
<td>Can we get the bill now please.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Páiste 1</td>
<td>Seo dhaoibh.</td>
<td>Here you go.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
USE THESE WORDS TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR DRAMA ON CLOTHES

Cad tá ort? What are you wearing?
Cuir ort do .... Put on your ........
Bain diot do...... Take off your ____

Caipín Cap
Hata Hat
Carbhat Tie
Scairf Scarf
T-Léine T-Shirt

Léine Shirt
Geansaí Jumper
Cóta Coat
Cóta Báistí Rain Coat
Lámhainní Gloves
ÉADAÍ
CLOTHES

Gúna
Dress

Sciorta
Skirt

Bríste
Trousers

Bríste Gairid
Shorts

Fo-Éadaí
Underwear

Pitseámaí
Pyjamas

Stocaí
Socks

Bróga
Shoe

Brógai
Shoes

Buataísí
Boots

Bróga Spórt
Sports Shoe

Cnaipí
Buttons

Culaith Shnámha
Swimsuit

Clogad
Helmet

Bríste Géine
Jeans
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Páiste 1</th>
<th>Gaeilge</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dia duit.</td>
<td>Hello.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conas atá tú?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tá mé go maith, go raibh maith agat.</td>
<td>I am good, thank you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An féidir liom cabhrú leat?</td>
<td>Can I help you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ba mhaith liom.....le do thoil.</td>
<td>I would like....please.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seo dhuit.</td>
<td>Here you go.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go raibh maith agat.</td>
<td>Thank you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tá failte romhat.</td>
<td>Your welcome.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cé mhéad atá ar an ______ seo?</td>
<td>What price is this......?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deich Euro</td>
<td>Ten Euro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tá sé sin ró dhaor.</td>
<td>It is too expensive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nil ach cúig euro agam.</td>
<td>I only have five euro.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuír ort an ceann sin.</td>
<td>Try this one.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tá cúig euro air.</td>
<td>It is 5 euro.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tógfaidh mé an ceann sin.</td>
<td>I will take this one.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seo dhuit an t-airgead.</td>
<td>Here is the money.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go raibh maith agat.</td>
<td>Thank you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slán anois.</td>
<td>Goodbye now.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slán.</td>
<td>Goodbye</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
USE THESE WORDS TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR DRAMA
ON THE WEATHER

Yesterday: Bhi sé ag cur báisti.
Today: Ta sé ag cur báisti.
Tomorrow: Beidh sé ag cur báisti.

Yesterday: Bhi sé go breá.
Today: Ta sé go breá.
Tomorrow: Beidh sé go breá.

Yesterday: Bhi sé scamallach.
Today: Ta sé scamallach.
Tomorrow: Beidh sé scamallach.

Yesterday: Bhi sé gaofar.
Today: Ta sé gaofar.
Tomorrow: Beidh sé gaofar.

Yesterday: Bhi sé ag cur sneachta.
Today: Ta sé ag cur sneachta.
Tomorrow: Beidh sé ag cur sneachta.

Yesterday: Bhi sé grianmhar.
Today: Ta sé grianmhar.
Tomorrow: Beidh sé grianmhar.
**Páiste 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gaeilge</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dia dachb. Seo é an aimsir.</td>
<td>Hello. This is the Weather.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inniu tá sé... sa T uaisceart ach tá sé... sa Deisceart.</td>
<td>Today it is ... in the North but it is ... in the South.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inniu tá sé... i mBaile Átha Cliath ach tá sé... i gCorcaigh.</td>
<td>Today it is ... in Dublin but it is ... in Cork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Níl an scéal go maith i Luimneach mar tá sé...</td>
<td>The story is not good in Limerick because it is...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beidh sé fuar anocht agus bi cúramach ar na bóithre ar maidin mar beidh sioc ann.</td>
<td>It will be cold tonight and be careful in the morning because it will be frosty in the morning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amárach beidh sé... sa T uaisceart ach beidh sé... sa Deisceart.</td>
<td>Tomorrow it will be ... in the North but it will be ... in the South.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Directions**

- **Sa Tuaisceart**
  - **San Oirthear**
  - **Sa Deisceart**
  - **San Iarthar**

- **Sioc**
- **Frost**

- **Na Bóithre**
- **The Roads**

- **Bi Cúramach**
- **Be Careful**