The Interaction of Language Policy, Minority Languages and New Media

A Study of the Facebook Translations Application

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ABSTRACT

The site of this research is new media, primarily the WWW. Language policy has traditionally been seen as the work of governments and their institutions and not related to domains such as Web 2.0. The primary research question of this thesis is to consider: what impact do new media have on language policy, in particular with regard to minority languages? It focuses on both the ‘top-down’ language policy and the increasingly ‘bottom-up’ language practices in new media. It is situated within the field of ‘new media sociolinguistics’ and aspires to move the focus of this area from the issue of linguistic diversity to the issue of language policy. What differentiates it from previous work is its attempt to link practice on the WWW with language policy. The method of investigation is virtual ethnography, which involves looking at computer-mediated communication (CMC) in online networks and communities, analysing the language content and observing the online interactions at the level of the users. It is used here to observe and investigate the **de facto** language policies on Facebook. It was the potential use of the community driven Facebook Translations app as a mechanism of language policy by ‘bottom-up’ interests, which first drew the researcher’s attention. In terms of language policy, Facebook, the Irish language community and their members act in both a ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ sense depending on the context of the situation, and thus the current research demonstrates that the assumed dichotomy of ‘bottom-up’ forces opposed to ‘top-down’ forces is not always in evidence. It conceptualises language policy as a process, ongoing and fluid, developed discursively and via the practices of commercial entities and language speakers. Furthermore, it finds that language ideologies play a primary role in language policy processes. Finally, it considers if the future of language policy in the current convergence culture era (Jenkins, 2006) will be driven by non-official language policy actors.
DECLARATION

Material from this dissertation has been previously published in two edited volumes:


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<tr>
<td>ASCII</td>
<td>American Standard Code for Information Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AoIR</td>
<td>Association of Internet Researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBS</td>
<td>Bulletin Board System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERN</td>
<td>Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire (European Organisation for Nuclear Research)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMC</td>
<td>Computer-Mediated Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMD</td>
<td>Computer-Mediated Discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMDA</td>
<td>Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoP</td>
<td>Community of Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSS</td>
<td>Cascading Style Sheets</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCOE</td>
<td>Discourse-Centred Online Ethnography</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMC</td>
<td>Electronically-Mediated Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAHSS</td>
<td>Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (University of Limerick)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTML</td>
<td>Hypertext Markup Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTTP</td>
<td>Hypertext Transfer Protocol</td>
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<tr>
<td>i18n</td>
<td>Internationalisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICANN</td>
<td>Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDN</td>
<td>Internationalised Domain Name</td>
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<td>ILE</td>
<td>Irish Literature Exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Intellectual Property</td>
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<td>IRC</td>
<td>Internet Relay Chat</td>
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<td>IRE</td>
<td>Internet Research Ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>Internet Service Provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITU</td>
<td>International Telecommunications Union</td>
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<td>LANs</td>
<td>Local Area Networks</td>
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<td>LPLP</td>
<td>Language Policy Language Planning</td>
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<td>LPP</td>
<td>Language Policy and Planning</td>
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<td>LSPs</td>
<td>Language Service Providers</td>
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<td>LVE</td>
<td>UNÉSCO’s Language Vitality and Endangerment Methodology</td>
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<td>MOO</td>
<td>Multi-User Domain (MUD) Object Oriented</td>
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<td>MUD</td>
<td>Multi-User Domain</td>
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<td>PCTs</td>
<td>Personal Communication Technologies</td>
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<td>RnaG</td>
<td>Raidió na Gaeltachta</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTÉ</td>
<td>Raidió Téiliann Éireann</td>
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<tr>
<td>RML</td>
<td>Regional and Minority Languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>RandD</td>
<td>Research and Development</td>
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<td>SNS</td>
<td>Social Network Site</td>
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<td>SNSs</td>
<td>Social Network Sites</td>
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<td>TG4</td>
<td>Téiliann na Gaeilge</td>
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<td>TLDs</td>
<td>Top-Level Domains</td>
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<td>TnaG</td>
<td>Téiliann na Gaeilge</td>
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<tr>
<td>VR</td>
<td>Virtual Reality</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Uniform Resource Locator</td>
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<td>WANs</td>
<td>Wide Area Networks</td>
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GLOSSARY
OF FACEBOOK TERMINOLOGY

All Languages Leaderboard

Translations App element (removed in February 2009): This categorised and outlined all of the languages open for translation according to what step of the translation process they were in and the percentage completed at that time.

Dashboard

Translations App element: Homepage of the app, contains information on what step of the translation process the language is in, an overview of the number of translators, the number of translations the user has submitted, the top ten leader translators that month, the names and Profile photos of nine random translators involved, the three latest Topics on the Discussion Board as well as links and navigation text to the other components of the app.

Discussion Board / Discussions

Translations App element: Where translators can create Topics to discuss translation issues with the community and post replies on Topics already open.

Glossary

Translations App element: Contains a list of the glossary terms that were translated, voted on and decided in step one of the translation process.

Group

Facebook users can form Groups around a common interest. These Groups have their own Facebook Page where members can post comments, photos, etc., and discuss common interests with other members of the Group. Facebook Groups can be open to all users or by invite only according to the administrator of the Group.

Inline Reporting

Translations App element: When words or phrases in need of review are marked by green lines underneath them as a translator uses Facebook. This is only available in the later steps of the translation. To report a word/phrase the translator hovers over it and right-clicks with their mouse.

Inline Translation

Translations App element: When words or phrases in need of translation are marked by green lines underneath them as a translator uses Facebook. To translate a word or phrase, the translator hovers over it and right-clicks with their mouse.
Inline Voting

_Translations App_ element: When words or phrases available for voting are marked by green underlines as a _translator_ uses Facebook. This is only available in the later steps of the translation. To vote a word or phrase, the _translator_ hovers over it and right-clicks with their mouse.

Leaderboard

_Translations App_ element: This section shows the _translators_ in three time-specified leaderboards: _Weekly, Monthly_ and _All Time._

My Awards

_Translations App_ element: Outlines when the _translator_ submitted their first translation, first voted, the number of votes submitted, when they last translated and last voted. It also outlines the _Awards_ that the _translator_ has received and has yet to.

My Translations

_Translations App_ element: This element displays the actual translations the user has submitted and whether these have been accepted as the translation to use. It also allows the _translator_ to edit the translations they have previously submitted.

Networks

Facebook users can join _Networks_ of other Facebook users according to geographical area (country, city, etc.), workplace, education (school, college, university, etc.), etc. Initially, Facebook users had to specify a number of _Networks_ when joining the SNS and in doing so, their _Profiles_ were fully visible to other members of the _Networks_. Users can be members of up to five _Networks._

Page

These are similar to a _Facebook Profile_ but are used by businesses, public figures, websites or apps. They contain a number of elements such as an _About_ section, a _Timeline_, where subscribers/Fans can post to, a _Competitions_ area, a _Photos_ section, etc.

Preferences

_Translations App_ element: Where individual _translators_ are able to set preferences in relation to how they see and use the app.

Profile

Each Facebook user has a personal _Profile_ which consists of a _Timeline_, a cover photo, a _Profile_ picture, some of their personal details such as age, gender, current occupation, relationship status, etc., and a number of other sections.
Review

Translators App element: Where translations that have been reported by individual translators or auto-checked by Facebook are sent.

Style Guide Wiki/Style

Translators App element: A wiki which is editable by the top 20 All Time translators as per the Leaderboard. It is used to outline rules and norms of the translation effort.

Timeline

This replaced the Wall element of a user’s Profile. The user’s Friends can write or post photos on this and it shows a record of the user’s recent activities on the SNS and major life events.

Translate

Translators App element: Here the words/phrases that are open for translation and voting are displayed, users click on the Translate button beside them to submit a translation.

Translators App

Every language open for translation has its own Translators app comprised of a number of elements.

Translators App Page

This is the overall homepage of all the Translators apps. It directs Facebook users to the app, to add it to their Profile, publishes updates from Facebook about the app, allows users to become a Fan of and rate the app and a Discussion Board and Wall where translators can discuss issues concerning the app.

Vote

Translators App element: Here, the translations that have been submitted are visible and open for voting.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

‘Tá Éire fiorálainn...’ [Ireland is truly beautiful] (Hadfield, 2013). This simple sentence made headline news both in Ireland and worldwide, in February 2013, simply for being in the Irish language. Its significance came from the fact that it was part of a tweet posted by Commander Chris Hadfield from the International Space Centre and was heralded by the media as the first Irish language tweet from space. Both, minority languages and new media are a regular topic of the more traditional forms of media, as they are both issues which evoke strong opinions and attitudes from individuals, communities, other interested parties and the public in general. The current study aims to look beyond the hype and anecdotal accounts of new media and minority languages, considering the impact of this new domain of language use and communication on sociolinguistic theory. Given new media domains are often thought of as open, free, unregulated domains, where at times anything goes, the current study set out to explore if language policy is found in this context, in what form it is found, what the language ideological underpinnings of it are, and how it might impact our understanding of language policy.

The site of this research is new media, primarily the Internet, one of the primary communication developments in the late 20th and early 21st century. The current study is concerned with this recent communicative domain, which can hold ‘potential power... for some audience members’ (Devereux, 2003: 6), theoretical conceptualisations of language policy and minority languages. Existing research on the interaction of minority languages and new media has focused on the potential for greater linguistic diversity afforded by the Internet. Despite initial fears that the Internet would reinforce the position of English, a body of work now questions this, as will be discussed below (Section 3.2.12). Recent developments online have lead to an increased presence of minority languages online and also a greater role for minority language speakers in their languages’ presence in this domain.

Language policy has traditionally been seen as the work of governments and their institutions and has not been related to domains such as Web 2.0. The current research is situated within the field of ‘new media sociolinguistics’ (as will be considered in Section 3.2.15) and aspires to move the focus of research on minority languages and new media from the issue of linguistic diversity on the WWW to the
issue of language policy. It sets out to investigate the language reality and language practices of minority language users, communities and stakeholders of new media and consider these in relation to current language policy theory. What differentiates it from previous/existing work is its attempt to link practice on the Internet with language policy. In particular, the current study focuses on both the ‘top-down’ language policy and also the increasingly ‘bottom-up’ language practices and covert policies in new media (Shohamy, 2006). It was the potential use of the WWW as a ‘mechanism’ of language policy (ibid.) by ‘bottom-up’ interests, which drew the researcher’s attention to the activities and language policies of the crowd-sourced translation effort, the Facebook Translations application (app). However, from initial data analysis it was clear that the Translations app could not be described categorically as a ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up’ language policy effort, with many levels of language policy ongoing in this context. Therefore, the researcher identified the following research question and subsequent sub-questions for the current study.

1.1 Research Questions

The primary research question of this thesis is: what impact do new media have on language policy, in particular with regard to minority languages? This central question can be broken down into three sub-questions which consider language policy in the technologically globalised domain of new media and existing theoretical conceptualisations:

1. How do new media technologies change or challenge language policy and the language ideologies underpinning these?
2. What role do language ideologies play in language policy processes in new media environments?
3. In this technologically globalised context, is the future of language policy, in relation to minority languages, produser-driven?

As a way of addressing these broad questions, the following specific questions are examined in relation to the context of Facebook:

1. What is the ‘top-down’ language policy of Facebook and what are the language ideologies underpinning this?
2. What is the ‘bottom-up’ language policy of the Irish Facebook Translations community and the language ideologies underpinning it?
1.2 **Overview of Chapters**

To consider existing theoretical conceptualisations of language policy, a review of literature concerned with language policy is found in Chapter 2. This review focuses on the development of an expanded definition of language policy from early language policy models to current research which views language policy as a more social, contextually defined and influenced concept. This is followed by an overview of language ideologies, in particular at language ideologies in the media, as these play a central role in policy formation by both *Facebook* and the Irish *Translations* community. It concludes by discussing the relationship between language policy and language ideology and the influence of power on these notions in the current globalised context.

Chapter 3 examines the complex context of the current study; new media, minority languages and multilingualism. It begins by outlining the development of the research field of new media, from cyber-studies in the late 1980s/90s to current studies concerned with SNSs, such as *Facebook* in the current study, and presents an overview of the *Facebook* SNS. This is followed by a discussion of the Internet and multilingualism, including the influence of technological globalisation on the development of the Internet for minority languages and on new media sociolinguistics as a research area. Finally, it considers a limitation of the current research, the digital divide.

After outlining the theoretical foundations of the current research, Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology of the current study. Firstly, it considers a number of related methods for ethnographic, new media and language policy research. The research approach of this study, virtual ethnography, is then discussed.

Chapter 5 gives an overview of the methodological approach taken in the current study. It firstly considers the data collection processes carried out during this research. Next, some of the methodological issues and ethical considerations that arose over the course of the current study are discussed and the approach taken to these presented.

Based on the theoretical conceptualisations of language policy and language ideologies presented in Chapter 2, Chapters 6 and 7 discuss the findings of the current study. Chapter 5 examines the practices, policy and underpinning ideologies of *Facebook* in relation to language, multilingualism, translation and community. It closes
by discussing the ‘top-down’ aspects of the Translations app, including Facebook’s role in the app, the design of the app and the Facebook i8n/Translations Team.

The penultimate chapter, Chapter 7 is concerned with the Irish Translations app and the language community here. The chapter begins by presenting some ethnographic data on the translators of the Irish and other language’s apps. It then considers the practices, policy and the ideologies underpinning these of the Irish language community with regard to their practices on the app, their discussions about Irish, their perceptions of Facebook, translation and the app and of ‘official’ language policy and practices. Next, the relations of power occurring within the Irish language community are discussed, including the existence of a sub-community of ‘senior translators’ and this chapter concludes by presenting the case of the translation of the term ‘mobile phone’, the most discussed translation.

Having examined the language practices, ideologies and policy of both Facebook and the Irish Translations community, the final chapter, Chapter 8, discusses the impact of this analysis on current conceptualisations of language policy. It considers the impact of globalised new media on language policy, in particular the dichotomy of ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ language policy. Furthermore, it considers the possible commercial, technology and community-driven convergence (Jenkins, 2006) future of language policy. Finally, this chapter concludes by outlining a number of possible directions for future research.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW
LANGUAGE POLICY AND LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY

This chapter will present the theoretical background of the current study. Firstly, it will review recent language policy research, models, definitions and approaches to present the definition of language policy of this research. In particular, it will focus on unplanned and bottom-up language policy to situate the expanded view of language policy the current study subscribes to. Furthermore, it considers the role of individuals, society, globalisation, business and the media in language policy to consider the complex language policy context of new media. Secondly, it considers the notion of language ideologies and their use in related studies concerned with media, translation and new media. The current study uses the notions of language ideologies, metalanguage and language ideological debates in this new media translation context to uncover the de facto language policy of Facebook and the Irish Translations community. Finally, the relationship between language policy and language ideology is discussed. In the current study, language policy and language ideology are fundamentally linked, as language ideologies do not just influence/impact language policy in this domain, but create and drive the multilingual Facebook SNS and its approach to language(s).

2.1 Language Policy

This review will focus on the theoretical background of language policy, its development as a research area and the definition of language policy the current study subscribes to. Firstly, the terminological and conceptual issues with language policy/language planning will be discussed and a number of language policy models outlined. Next, the notion of language management will be introduced and the development of the field using Ricento’s (2000a) categorisations outlined. Then, the issue of conceptualising language policy will be considered along with related notions of levels, unplanned, and ‘bottom-up’ language policy outlined. This is followed by an overview of the expanded definition of language policy, the approach this research subscribes to. The latter half of this review then discusses the role of individuals in and the social aspect of language policy. An overview of language policy and the Irish language is then presented. Language policy research from five domains/themes related to the current research are then considered; translation, technological globalisation,
business, media and new media. The penultimate and final sections also consider the Irish language and media, ICT and new media.

2.1.1 Language Policy/Language Planning

In the literature, the terms ‘language policy’ and ‘language planning’ are used throughout, at times interchangeably and also at times as conceptually different notions. Linguist Uriel Weinreich is credited with the first use of the term ‘language planning’ in his work on bilingual communication in the early 1950s, and, in early research, it is the term used to describe any planning related to a language. Haugen (1959, 1966) uses the term language planning to describe the processes of selecting new norms and of language change throughout society. Cooper (1989) discusses other terms that have been used in early research such as language engineering, language development, language regulation and twelve definitions of language planning from Haugen (1959).

Language policy, he views as the goal(s) of language planning, which, he defines as ‘deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition of, structure or functional allocation of their language codes’ (Cooper, 1989: 45). At a basic level, Cooper examines language planning under ‘Who plans what for whom and how’ (ibid.: 31) and this definition is often used in subsequent literature.

Tollefson (1991: 16) defines language planning as ‘all conscious efforts to affect the structure or function of language varieties’ and language policy as language planning carried out by governments. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: 3) define language planning as a ‘body of ideas, laws and regulations (language policy), to change rules, beliefs, and practices intended to achieve a planned change (or to stop change from happening) in the language use in one or more communities and situate language policy within language planning. Ager (2001) subscribes to a similar distinction, viewing language planning and language policy in an official/unofficial divide. Drawing on Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) he refers to language planning as the ‘unofficial’ influence on language behaviours of individuals and communities and language policy for the ‘official’ influence of governments and states.

The terminological definition and re-definition has been explicitly discussed in the literature (cf. Schiffman, 1996). Baldauf (1994) acknowledges the confusion of terms in his writing and offers some definitions to distinguish between language policy and language planning. He offers a broad definition of language policy, drawing on Cooper (1989) (as above) and sees it as ‘the decision-making process, formally stated or
implicit, used to decide which languages will be taught (or learned by) whom for what purposes’ [emphasis in original] (Baldauf, 1994: 83). It is interesting to see the inclusion of implicit decisions in this definition of language policy, as, until the 1990s the focus of language policy/planning has primarily been on language planning in an explicit ‘top-down’ sense. Language planning, he views as the execution of language policy across all the domains provided for in the policy. Here, we can see the shift in terminology from language planning to language policy to describe the overall effort made in relation to language. Ricento (2000a: 209) also addresses the terminological confusion, using the term language policy over language planning, as it is concerned with official/unofficial acts by government/other institutions and the ‘historical and cultural events and processes that have influenced, and continue to influence societal attitudes and practices with regard to language use, acquisition and status’. Finally, Spolsky (2012a: 5) names the field ‘as a whole “language policy”’.

Hornberger (2006) brings together language policy and planning definitions to develop an ‘integrative framework’ for language policy and planning (LPP). McCarty (2011a: 7-8) views LPP as ‘mutually constitutive, interdependent, and co-occurring sociocultural processes’. The term language policy language planning (LPLP) is also in use. Wright (2004a: 2) defines LPLP ‘as a field of enquiry that can range over the whole human activity of making meaning and conveying our meaning one to another’. Using this perspective she does acknowledge that the limits are therefore hard to define. In this research the current understanding of language policy, which includes the planning and policy undertaken and encompasses the wider historical and socio-cultural contexts which influence the language policies of a society as will be discussed below, will be used.

2.1.2 Language Policy Models
Language policy has been described in a number of models. In one of the earliest, Haugen (1966, 1987) discusses language planning under four aspects, selection, codification, implementation and elaboration. Selection involves the selection of a norm when a language problem is acknowledged and codification the written or spoken language norm, such as its grammar and lexicon. Implementation looks at the acceptance of and adherence to a policy by the target population, the spreading out of the language form as selected and codified. Finally, elaboration is the continued development of the norm to ensure modernisation as the language situation changes.
These steps do not necessarily occur successively; they may be ongoing simultaneously or in a cyclical manner (Haugen, 1987). In his revised model of language planning, Haugen (1987) includes policy planning and cultivation planning, which correspond to status planning and corpus planning.

Kloss (1969) engaging with Haugen’s (1966) model terms selection as ‘status planning’ and codification as ‘corpus planning’. Corpus planning is concerned with issues regarding the terminology, script and other ‘language as object’ issues. Status planning is concerned with the perceived importance or position of a language in relation to other languages. This notion has been extended to include the functions allocated to languages such as ‘official language’, ‘treaty language’ and ‘working language’ in the case of the EU. To these definitions, Cooper (1989) adds a third category of language planning, names acquisition planning which is planning directed towards increasing a languages users.

Other types of planning included in discussions are ‘usage planning’, which is concerned with increasing the domains in which a particular language is used and prestige planning, which concentrates on the ‘aesthetic or intellectual regard’ of a language (Lo Bianco, 2010: 148) (cf. Haarmann, 1990). Discourse planning links ideology and discourse and at its most basic means, involving ‘education to develop persuasive or assertive ways of expression’ and in its ‘worst’ sense, it encompasses propaganda and brain washing with particular ideologies and attitudes (Lo Bianco, 2010: 149). Examples from Lo Bianco’s discussion are advertising and political ‘spin’. Hornberger’s (2006) LPP ‘integrative framework’, identifies status, corpus and acquisition planning as activities that count as language planning and two approaches, named policy planning and cultivation planning. Policy planning is when the planning is in relation to the form of the language and cultivation planning when the emphasis is on the function(s) of the language.

A popular language policy model is Spolsky’s (2004) tripartite model of language policy which is comprised of: language practices, language beliefs or ideology and language management. Language practices are ‘the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire’ (ibid.: 5). Spolsky (2012a: 5) describes the actual language practices of the speech community and its members as the “‘real’ language policy of the community... the ecology or the ethnography of speech’. Furthermore, he notes that if any members of the community do not adhere to this ‘real’ language policy they may be marked as ‘alien or rebellious’ (ibid.), as occurs in the
Irish *Translations* community, when some *translators* are excluded from the language policy process as they do not conform to the policy of the community (see Sections 6.2.5.3 and 6.2.6). Language beliefs or ideology are: ‘the beliefs about language and language use’ (Spolsky, 2004: 5), the ‘more elaborate combinations of the values shared by certain members of the community’ (Spolsky, 2012a: 5). Finally, language planning/management are ‘any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention’ (Spolsky, 2004: 5). Although Spolsky describes this model in the context of the language policy of a speech community, this model as he later states, can be applied to any stakeholder in a given language situation to investigate and describe their language policy. In his view, these three components must be studied to give a complete view of the language policy of a nation, community or domain. The current study examines the language practices, language beliefs and ideologies, and language management of *Facebook* and the Irish *Translations* community to consider the language policy of the *Facebook* SNS.

Shouhui and Baldauf (2012: 3) note that two new trends have emerged in conceptualising LPP, ‘the idea of prestige planning and the concept of levels of LPP’. Shouhui and Baldauf believe Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, 2003) and Hornberger’s (2006) LPP frameworks give ‘an overview of the four major approaches to LPP’ as well as linking them to language planners’ goals. They summarise these approaches as: ‘status planning (societal goals), corpus planning (language goals), language-in-education planning (learning goals) and prestige planning (the image of the language)’ and acknowledge the other two dimensions which Kaplan and Baldauf (2003) suggest: ‘Explicitness: overt vs. covert (explicit vs. implicit)’ and ‘Level: macro, meso and micro (on a continuum)’ (*ibid.*). The acknowledgement that LPP occurs at different macro, meso and micro levels has, Shouhui and Baldauf (2012), drawing on Baldauf (2008) write, led to a rethinking of agency: ‘determining who has the power to influence change in these micro language planning situations’. The current research considers actors at the micro level of the *Facebook* SNS.

### 2.1.3 Language Management

It is also import to include a discussion of the term language management. Language management for Chaudenson and Robillard (1989) is the totality of a diverse operation in a particular setting which enables the realisation of a defined operation. It is a complex process which involves decision making on many levels and issues, many
minor decisions are included in the language management process. Jernudd and Nekvapil (2012: 16) define ‘language management behaviour’ as ‘how people behave towards languages and utterances, how people manage their discourse, how they evaluate languages and their features and think about adjusting them and occasionally do, another’. In language planning terms, it is the state or authorised agency that carries out language management in accordance with the language policy. This concept of ‘language management’ differentiates between two processes ‘(a) the generation of utterances, and (b) the management of utterances’ (ibid.: 33). Management aims to ‘help explain how a speaker makes use of grammatical competence to generate utterances’ (ibid.). This management occurs at the level of the individual’s production of utterances: ‘in discourse, and in discourse about utterances’ (ibid.). Language management theory distinguishes between ‘simple management’ and ‘organised management’. ‘Simple management’, is also termed ‘discourse-based management’ or ‘on-line management’, while ‘organised management’, is also referred to as ‘directed management’ or ‘offline management’ (Jernudd and Nekvapil, 2012: 16). ‘Simple management’ occurs in a number of phases, e.g.: noting a deviation, possibly evaluating this, thinking of an adjustment and possibly implementing the adjustment, whereas ‘organised management’ including measures such as language reforms and the introduction of languages into a school system (ibid.).

Spolsky (2009) views language management as a component of language policy, along with language practices and language attitudes. He prefers the use of the term language management over planning, as it better captures the nature of the ‘explicit and observable effort by someone or some group that has or claims authority over the participants in the domain to modify their practices or beliefs’ (ibid.: 4). Spolsky (2004) refers to any effort by an individual or group to manipulate the language situation as language management and those involved as language managers. Spolsky (2009) identifies language management only when he can identify a language manager who attempts to modify the language practices or beliefs of others. Language managers are portrayed on a continuum from national assemblies, to provincial/local government, to an interest group, to businesses, families and individuals. It may be a written policy document, but also the creation and implementation of a policy, which the researcher would argue could also be unconscious/implicit. Later, Spolsky (2012a: 5) defines language management as ‘efforts by some members of a speech community who have or believe they have authority over other members to modify their language practices’. 
Drawing on his previous research (Spolsky, 2009), Spolsky (2012a) outlines an example of language management as the forcing or encouragement of members of the speech community to use a different variety or variant of language, and this can clearly be seen in the *community of translators* as will be discussed in Section 7.2.4.5.

### 2.1.4 Phases of Language Policy Research

Language policy is not traditionally associated with new media, with previous research tending to focus on language policy within the boundaries of nation-states or in domains such as education. At the turn of the 21st century, Ricento (2000a) took stock and classified the research field of language policy and planning in the 20th century from WWII on, in three ‘stages’ of development. The study of language policy began with studies of newly independent nations or societies seeking nationhood and their consequent language problems. The macro socio-political or structuralist phase sought to solve language problems through planning and was carried out primarily by nation-states, in particular developing nation-states in the post WWII nation building era.

Language, at this time was conceptualised as a resource with value attached and could therefore be subject to planning. Also, language(s) were removed and seen as separate to their sociohistorical and ecological contexts. Language planning was undertaken to unify a region or nation-state, to modernise, be efficient or democratise a nation-state context. Also, status and corpus planning were seen as ideologically neutral activities by studies of this time. Language planning here was carried out only by governments/states and comprised of explicit or conscious efforts to change language practices.

The second phase, which Ricento (2000a) locates in the 1970s to late 1980s, saw modernisation policies in the developing world failing and researchers began to question the limitations and negative effects of some planning theories and models. Critical sociolinguistics emerged; sociolinguistic notions were critiqued as ideologically ‘laden’ and more complex conceptualisations than previously thought. It was recognised that language behaviour is social behaviour and affected by societal and individual attitudes, beliefs and ideologies and also by the bigger picture of macro economic and political contexts (cf. Rubin *et al.*, 1977). Jernudd and Nekvapil (2012), drawing on Ricento (2000a), describe the activities of linguists in the 1970s and 1980s as the ‘classical language planning’ era. These linguists, as Spolsky (2012a: 5) writes, believed ‘that language planning was as possible as economic planning, and applicable to solving the linguistic problems of the newly independent nations of Asia and Africa’.
He acknowledges that, for some, this conceptualisation is still the common approach to language policy.

Finally, the third stage of language policy and planning research Ricento (2000a) places from the mid 1980s to his time of writing, the times of post-modernism, globalisation and geo-political change. The devolution of the USSR, supranational organisation formations such as the EU, the re-emergence of national identities, and the penetrative effects of Western culture, and of the English language via globalisation have impacted on the language situations world wide. Concerns are now raised in relation to language loss, language maintenance, linguistic imperialism, linguicism and linguistic human rights. Although, there are still those who claim language loss is a natural almost evolutionary phenomenon (cf. Mufwene, 2001). The role of ideology in language policies was questioned in many contexts and domains (as will be discussed here in Section 2.3). Ricento (2000a) sees the main difference in current critical/post-modern approaches to language policy research as agency, namely the ‘role(s) of individuals and collectivities in the processes of language use, attitudes, and ultimately policies’ (ibid.: 208). The current study is situated in this era as it is concerned with ideology and agency, that is, the role of ideology and ideologies in language policy and the role of both individuals and communities in processes of language use and policies.

2.1.5 Conceptualising Language Policy

Language policy research has dramatically changed in comparison to early post WWII research; previously language policy was viewed as operating within a vacuum managing one language and one linguistic modification (language revival, literacy development, etc.) at a moment in time (Kaplan, 1994: 4). Spolsky (2012a: 6) points to the 1990s in particular as the period when this approach to language policy was shaken, due to two developments. Firstly, the failure of economic models and the resulting loss of confidence in language planning; and, secondly, the realisation of the existence and role of actors and agents other than the nation-state in language matters (cf. Ricento, 2000b), especially as Spolsky (2012a) notes, minorities. He points to Fishman’s (1990) ‘Reversing Language Shift’ concept as reinforcing this latter revelation. The notion of language policy expanded to involve a number of languages and modifications oftentimes occurs simultaneously in the same language reality. Furthermore, it was realised that language policy cannot be contained; Kaplan (1994) describes the potential ‘ripple effect’ of LPP in French, impacting many nation-state entities and contexts.
Language policy operates at many different levels, at the national, pan-national, regional and local levels, and it is now acknowledged that many forces are at play in the reality of language policy at different levels and contexts. In this era of technological globalisation and transnationalism, we can now add the global level to language policy concerns. Indeed, Kaplan moves towards a broad understanding of language policy writing that ‘any underlying theory that attempts to explain/predict events related to language planning must also be fairly broad’ (*ibid.*: 5).

The change in focus is noted by Grabe (1994), in the *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* thematic volume on LPP, in response to the changing world context of that time. In reading language policy literature it is clear that the field exists along a continuum, influenced continuously by the changing world events and issues as time progresses. Early language policy studies may not have taken social, political, economic, etc. contexts into consideration, but we now cannot consider language policy as divorced from these contexts. Grabe points to seven trends in research which illustrate the shift in studies from the second to third phase of language policy research (Ricento, 2000a). Included in these, he discusses planned and ‘unplanned’ language policy (cf. Baldauf, 1994), which is beginning to take account of grass-roots planning and non-planning as resulting in *de facto* language policies which affect ‘official’ language policies. He notes the shift in focus from language policy on a national level to taking into account the ‘LPP efforts of corporations, local groups and even individuals’ (Grabe, 1994: viii), although these are not included in a definition of LPP per say. Also, language policy can be negotiated; policies can be reinterpreted at the micro level in response to local interests and contexts. Although, all of this ties in with the present expanded view of language policy as will be discussed below, throughout this 1994 volume, language policy and planning is still seen as something ‘language planners’ do. The reality of the world is heterogeneous, and language realities are no different, they are multilingual, inter-connected and complicated. Language policy research in this world context must be re-investigated and re-thought.

Cooper (1989) argues against earlier views of language planning as the solution to language problems, and shifts the focus to language planning as efforts to influence language behaviour. He begins to question the objects of language planning and notes that it occurs in other situations outside of nation-states, e.g. the Catholic Church as institution. However, he still views language planning operating in a ‘top-down’ only manner. There is now a recognition that ‘the same processes which operate
in macro level planning also operate in micro level planning’ (*ibid.*: 37-8) and that the micro level domain of language policy must be studied. Schiffman (1996) highlights the lack of research on covert, implicit, informal, unstated, *de facto*, codified, manifest policies which this study aspires to investigate.

Distinction must be made between overt and covert language policy. O’Rourke (2011: 58), defines overt language policy as ‘that which is most easily recognizable as policy by the fact that it tends to be explicitly stated and is often formalized by legal or constitutional means’. Schiffman (1996: 2), considers covert, *de facto* or grass-roots language policy as ‘the policy as it actually works out at the practical level’, while official, *de jure* or overt policy is ‘the policy as stated’. O’Rourke (2011: 58) describes covert language policy as those which:

make no explicit mention of language in any legal document or in administrative code. The guarantees of language rights of speakers and language users must therefore be inferred from other policies, constitutions or provisions. These policies are thus implicit, informal, unstated, *de facto* and very often grass roots.

The current study is concerned with the *de facto* language policy of the SNS Facebook and the Irish Translations community.

2.1.6 Levels of Language Policy

Language policy occurs at many levels including the unplanned, as Haarmann’s (1990) typology of language cultivation and planning illustrates and for many different purposes. It is found at national level, in the ‘language problems’ of nations, and international level, when linguistic human rights are discussed with international groups Spolsky (2004). Macro level is language policy at a large-scale level, e.g. nation-state. Ager (2001: 108) gives examples of macro policy as ‘laws, directives and instructions’ and micro as ‘influence on action by state representatives such as teachers, bureaucrats or law enforcers’. However, as Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) remind us, micro language policy occurs in our everyday lives. Micro level language policy is small scale language policy or examines the effects of macro policy on micro situations. Levels of language policy are oftentimes viewed as a ‘hodge-podge of rules, regulations and policies’ (Schiffman, 1996: 4). But, Spolsky (2004) points to a lack of usable data on language policies at all levels as a missing element of language policy research, which his book and current language policy research, including this, attempt.

It is now acknowledged that language policies at the national level interact with and affect language polices, implicit or explicit, at levels below and above it.
(Spolsky, 2004). McCarty (2011a: 7-8) believes that LPP is an ‘integrated and dynamic whole that operates within intersecting planes of local, regional, national, and global influence’ (ibid.: 8). Spolsky (2004: 56) now believes that studies which focus only on the centralised language policies of individual nation-states ‘are likely to miss many significant features’. Any language situation is a multifaceted affair, with language management, in his terms, occurring at various levels. In the context of the nation-state it is now noted that groups of ethnic, religious or other minorities do attempt to influence and modify language policy. They can implement language management, and the researcher would argue policy, amongst their societal group by influencing the language practices and beliefs of other group members, smaller groups affect and effect the de facto language policy.

2.1.7 Unplanned Language Policy and Planning

One of the earliest examples of language policy research applying a broader view of language policy and at the micro level is Baldauf (1994) who calls attention to ‘unplanned’ LPP. Although not offering an explicit definition of what he means by ‘unplanned’ language policy and planning, he offers four reasons to consider this aspect of the LPP field. Firstly, he draws attention to the fact that planned and ‘unplanned’ LPP coexist in the same situation, they interact and affect each other and ‘unplanned’ LPP must be considered by the language planner. Secondly, the absence of language planning in a situation provides an insight into the situation under examination. For example in a diglossic situation, where one language can be subject to ‘planning’ but the ‘unplanned’ situation of the other language must be taken into account when forming the language planning for the first language. Thirdly, he points to the power relations involved in LPP. Here LPP is seen as primarily at the ‘macro-level’, carried out by those in authority in a ‘top-down’ sense and reflecting their ‘political and economical imperatives’ (ibid.: 83). Finally, he considers the ‘micro-level’ in LPP as ‘language is a skill all humans acquire with some reasonable degree of competence, it is a medium in which everyone has a stake and can claim to have some expertise’ (ibid.). Therefore, many people get involved in ‘micro-level’ language planning, which language planners may not previously or still classify as ‘language planning’.

An example of ‘unplanned language planning’ was the impact of the English language via television in American Samoa, which was a language-in education planning method, from an educational policy decision (Schramm et al., 1981). There
was no wider consultation or language planning and the effects of this decision by the Governor on the community were ‘unplanned’ in a language planning sense. Baldauf (1994) refers to ‘unplanned’ LPP as the ‘hidden dimension’ of the field, which occurs mainly at the ‘micro-level’ due to a lack of awareness of ‘official’ or ‘top-down’ language planning. He concludes that at this level ‘unplanned’ language planning is ongoing and commonplace and its effects on language planning should be recognised, but only in relation to its effect on the ‘official’ planning and the problems this lack of planning causes.

2.1.8 Bottom-Up Language Policy

Language policy efforts by those in official authority are described as ‘top-down’ language policy, and are carried out by ‘people with power and authority who make language decisions for groups, often with little or no consultation with the ultimate language… users’ (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997: 196). Other language policy efforts such as ‘language regulation by non-governmental, commercial and private bodies’ (du Plessis, 2011: 196), i.e. non-official or governmental entities, are, in contrast, described as ‘bottom-up’ language policy. Hornberger (1996: 357) describes ‘bottom-up’ language planning as ‘the involvement and initiative of the indigenous communities themselves’ in language planning efforts. Canagarajah (2006: 154) describes ‘language planning from the bottom up’ as policy formation and institutionalisation of linguistic practices by local communities and contexts: ‘in interpersonal and classroom relationships, marginalized subjects are resisting established policies, constructing alternative practices that exist parallel to the dominant policies and, sometimes, initiate changes that transform unequal relationships’. Current theory predominantly conceptualises ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ language policy as a dichotomy, acting in contrast with each other and as two distinct entities (Hornberger, 1996; Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997).

Hornberger (1996: 357) acknowledges the role of non-indigenous governmental and non-governmental organisations in language planning efforts, however, she concludes that the greatest impact is made by those which are ‘initiated and carried out’ by the indigenous community. Moriarty (2011) considers the potential for language change from the ‘bottom-up’ in the case of minority languages being present in new domains of use. In particular, she examines the use of the Irish language in the comedic domain by stand-up comedian Des Bishop, who is identified as a
‘bottom-up’ language planning actor, and the considers the potential for these new domains to boost ‘top-down’ language planning. A special issue of the *Current Issues in Language Planning* journal, edited by Hogan-Brun, is concerned with language planning from below: ‘ways in which social acts from below can combine to address language problems at local levels’ (Hogan-Brun, 2010: 91). Hogan-Brun acknowledges that the contributions to this issue are concerned with acts of language planning from below that ‘compliment “making” (or managing such processes) from above’ (*ibid*.). The contributions to this volume illustrate how ‘problems at the micro-level can (or could) be addresses through (bottom-up) facilitative means’ and the future goal of research like this is to gain further insight into how language policy from above can interact with grass-roots ‘facilitative, self-organised acts from below’ (Hogan-Brun, 2010: 94).

The contributions to Hornberger and McCarty’s special issue of the *International Multilingual Research Journal* adapt Appadurai’s (2001) concept of ‘globalisation from below’ to consider ‘globalization from the bottom-up’ in language planning and policy by and for indigenous peoples (Hornberger and McCarty, 2012). This volume focuses on the ‘dynamics of interacting globalizing and localizing processes in Indigenous language planning and policy’ (*ibid.*: 2). This is the focus of the current study, one of the particular concerns of Hornberger, McCarty and their contributors, is how ‘globalization from “the bottom up” create new ideological and implementational spaces’ (*ibid.*). *Facebook*, via the *Translations* app create a new space of use for the Irish language and also for the Irish language community, furthermore, it places individual language speakers and the language community at the heart of a language issue, the translation of the *Facebook* SNS, and gives them ownership, to a certain point, of this process (cf. Chimbutane and Benson, 2012). Hornberger and McCarty (2012: 6) believe their special issue illustrates the ‘continuing salience of the local and the grass roots in Indigenous sociolinguistic ecologies, even as those ecologies shape and are transformed by larger globalizing forces’.

### 2.1.9 Expanded Definition of Language Policy

It is important to remember that ‘language policy exists even where it has not been made explicit or established by authority’ (Spolsky, 2004: 8). ‘Many countries and institutions and social groups do not have formal or written language policies, so that the nature of their language policy must be derived from a study of their language
practice or beliefs’ (ibid.). Indeed, O’Rourke (2011: 59) believes that ‘there is no such thing as no language policy because there is always at least an implicit policy in place’. We have now moved beyond ‘restrictive’ early definitions of language policy (Lo Bianco, 2010). Indeed, Trim (2003: 73) believes the ‘dynamic forces at work in the everyday activity of language communities are far more powerful than conscious, ideologically motivated policies’.

Language policy can come in two forms, it can be an explicit language policy, a change in practices via ‘a set of managed and planned interventions supported and enforced by law and implemented by a government agency’ (Spolsky, 2004: 5) such as *Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003/Official Languages Act 2003* and the *Gaeltacht Act 2012* in the Irish language context (see Section 2.1.1.2 for discussion of official and legislative provisions for the Irish language). Language policy can also be viewed in a broad sense, it can also be changes in the language practices of speech communities that cannot be attributed to explicit policy as above, but rather due to ‘alterations in situation, conditions and pressures of which even the participants are unaware’ (Spolsky, 2004: 5). Blommaert et al. (2009) acknowledge that the state is no longer the primary language policy actor or instructor of language norms. Language policy can be explicit and implicit, it is complex; it is influenced by the context of the situation, the ideologies, beliefs and practices of its stakeholders and the motivations and reasoning behind the language decisions. In line with Schiffman (1996, 2006) and Shohamy (2006), McCarty (2011b) define language policy in an expanded sense: ‘overt and covert, top-down and bottom-up, *de jure* and *de facto*’ (McCarty, 2011a: 2).

Shohamy (2006), in her seminal book on language policy, points out the need to understand language policy as more complex, it should be examined and interpreted ‘in broader ways than just policies... through a variety of mechanisms that are used by all groups, but especially those in authority, to impose, perpetuate and create language policies, far beyond those that are declared in official policies’ (ibid.: xvi). ‘Mechanisms’ of language policy or ‘policy devices’ are those overt and covert devices that are used to create language policies in society, examples from Shohamy are language tests or the choice of language(s) on public signage. She believes that these ‘mechanisms’ or ‘policy devices’, with their ideologies and influences are the illustration of the real *de facto* language policy of an entity. ‘Mechanisms’ are typically used by those in authority to impose, disseminate and construct language policies, although they can be used by all societal groups, both ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’.
Ager’s (2001: 208) study on motivation and language planning, finds communities and groups (eg. minority communities) change language behaviour also, but ‘do not construct policy in the formal sense’ in his restricted definition of language policy and planning as discussed previously. In investigating integration and instrumentality (Gardner and Lambert, 1972), Ager explores the language behaviours of individuals and communities to ascertain if these behaviours changes are responsive and planned finding that immigrant community’s language behaviour appears planned, rather than resulting from economic or political chaos. This demonstrates the need for an expanded view of language policy and planning, as Schiffman (1996) wonders if language policy can be managed in an explicit interventionary manner at all.

Shohamy (2006), and also Schiffman (1996, 2006) argue for an expanded view of language policy, believing it to be found outside of what is inscribed in policy documents, expanding its remit to all decisions made about language on any level, explicit or implicit, overt or covert. Ricento (2006a) writes that we all have a stake in language policies. Indeed, Spolsky (2004) notes some entities have no explicit written language policy, such as the USA, and their language policy must then be situated from a study of their implicit language practices and language beliefs. Also, just because a language policy is written in law or constitution does not necessarily mean the policy is implemented or that its affect on language practices is as planned or consistent (ibid.) (cf. Irish). Some researchers go further ‘decisions about language made by legislators, educational leaders, dictionary makers, businesses, and advertisers are probably more influential in shaping language attitudes and patterns in language use than the combined effects of all the measures designed to protect moribund languages’ (Ricento, 2006a: 19) (cf. Pennycook, 2006 also). This illustrates the importance of an expanded view of language policy in this age of technological globalisation and new media with its increased multilingual connectedness, communication and community alongside the nation-state (Wright, 2004a). There is thus a change in focus from language policy as a state sponsored activity within which individuals had no access to policy making ‘organs’ (Tollefson, 1991) to include theories of individual, familial, group and ‘bottom-up’ or grass-roots language policies, such as Spolsky (2009) discusses in his theory of language management. Language policy is no longer a tool for use by governments/states; language policy can be created by any stakeholders in any linguistic reality/situation. It is not just documents setting out governmental policies in relation to
language, but the everyday decisions individuals, business, etc., make as they encounter de facto language realities.

2.1.10 Individuals and Language Policy

Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: 12) include individuals in their discussion of those involved in language planning, but language policy here is ‘an accidental outcome of the primary function of the body’. Spolsky (2004) writes that language policy can be made, by individuals, businesses etc., in response to linguistic diversity. However, in recent work Shohamy (2009) highlights the role of the individual in language policy, and places the emphasis on one’s personal experience, viewing language policy as an occurring experience also. Shohamy calls for the refocusing of language policy research from a ‘bureaucratic field into a human one’ (ibid.: 186). The field of language policy now offers insights into the complexity of the concept, but neglects the human personal dimension in her view. A focus on language policy as experiences illustrates the language policies originating in practices, which can be opposed to the ‘top-down’ policies of that entity. Shohamy calls for these voices from the ‘bottom-up’ to be heard and incorporated in the formation of policy.

Cameron (1996) writes on how language stirs strong feelings, a traditional and popular pastime of many language enthusiasts. These enthusiasts (i.e. individuals) can act in lieu of language academies in the US and UK contexts and take part in such language related activities such as collecting unusual linguistic expressions and language improvement schemes. These enthusiasts she writes have become known as ‘language mavens’. ‘Language Mavens’, Cameron tells us, stereotypically write letters to newspapers on linguistic decline and blunders. She notes how the media, print media such as newspapers and books and broadcast media are concerned with language and linguistic matters. These ‘verbal hygiene’ tendencies are not natural or pre-existing but are culturally constructed and specific to their context. Cameron rallies against the division of linguists and non-linguists view(s) on language, as Niedzielski and Preston (2000: 1) note the typical “us” versus “them” position’. Cameron references the ‘amateurs’ who have influenced linguistic scholarship e.g. Roget’s Thesaurus and The Oxford (New) English Dictionary, and notes the existence of a ‘popular culture of language’ which non-linguistically trained people participate in. Cameron writes how value judgements on language are a part of every speaker’s linguistic repertoire. She argues against the ignoring of the metalinguistic discourse of laypeople on language and
value, and the polarisation of the lay/expert perspectives. Simply put her research investigates what people have to say about language and why they say it. Evaluative discourse is how people ‘make linguistic phenomena make sense’ (*ibid.*: xiv).

Shouhui and Baldauf (2012) consider individual agency in language planning. They believe the question of the people, the ‘whom’ of Cooper’s (1989) explanation of language planning process (as outlined in Section 2.1.1), has not been addressed, asking ‘who are the actors’ and ‘what are their roles?’. In this paper, Shouhui and Baldauf (2012) extend Harrmann’s conceptualisation of the role of the individual in prestige planning promotion, categorising the individual’s role into three cases: people with expertise, people with influence and people with power. Examples of people with expertise are linguists, intellectual elite, people with influence are social elites and people with power are national leaders and officials (*ibid.*: 6). Furthermore, they examine these individual agency roles with regard to the five stages of the LPP implementation continuum. They believe there is a need to ‘reify actors’ individual or group roles through an examination of the policy implementation process’ (*ibid.*: 5). They acknowledge that ‘individual agency in LPP includes a wide variety of categories of individuals, and that the impact that they can have on LPP occurs at different levels, with differing amounts of vigor, producing different types of outcomes (productive or receptive)’ (*ibid.*). However, this does not mean that those involved should be left undefined and undifferentiated.

To consider the individual agency roles played by their three groups Shouhui and Baldauf relate the stages in language planning (Section 2.1.2) to individual impact and not to framework-level macro goals (*ibid.*). They find that the impact of individual LPP agency occurs in five ‘I’s’: ‘initiation, involvement, influence, intervention and implementation-and-evaluation’. Furthermore, Shouhui and Baldauf consider ‘what actors play what roles’ in a given language policy domain and propose a ‘model of influence for LPP actors across the five language planning stages’ to illustrate and examine ‘who-does-what’ (*ibid.*: 9-10) as reproduced in Figure 2.1 below.
This ‘actor-stage model’ is proposed to ‘explain the interactive relationship between three groups of LPP actors and five major language planning procedures’ (ibid.). The focus of their study is primarily prestige planning and the role individuals play in official planning efforts, with the case study of Chinese script planning. Shouhui and Baldauf acknowledge that LPP must ‘come to terms with nascent societal diversity and socio-political democracy’ (ibid.: 18). Furthermore, they point out the possibilities new media bring for individual involvement in LPP:

One possibility is the internet which offers new, informal and horizontal ways of communication on an unprecedented scale. It provides a convenient channel for more robust individual involvement that enables ordinary script reform activists with limited power and resources to compete with larger, well-financed organizations. For countless maverick intellectuals and amateur enthusiasts who are interested in LPP and struggling to find a democratic voice, internet use provides public empowerment in domains that were previously monopolized by official bodies (Shouhui and Baldauf, 2012: 18).

Blackledge and Creese (2010: 63) acknowledge that ‘micro-ethnography has demonstrated that people do not just follow cultural rules but actively and non-deterministically construct what they do’. In the current study we can see that this construction by individuals can lead to the construction of language norms, a language community and language policy.

### 2.1.11 The Social in Language Policy

Schiffrin (1996, 2006), grounds language policy in ‘linguistic culture’: ‘the set of behaviours, assumptions, cultural forms, prejudices, folk belief systems, attitudes, stereotypes, ways of thinking about language and religio-historical circumstances associated with a particular culture’ (1996: 5). In other words, the beliefs and sometimes myths or mythologies, a speech community has about language(s) or indeed, the language policy, as Schiffman writes we must remember that language policy is primarily a social construct. Spolsky (2009) drawing on Saussure (1931) notes that language policy like other aspects of language is a social phenomenon dependant on the
‘beliefs and consensual behaviours of the members of a speech community’ (Spolsky, 2009: 2). Language use, as Cameron writes, is primarily a social and public act, talking, writing and signing (and translating in the current study) are carried out in the context of language norms. These language norms can become the subject of overt and covert discussion and debate, which we can see evidenced in the debates of the community of translators. Cameron also notes that verbal hygiene tendencies are not natural or pre-existing but they are culturally constructed and specific to their context. Her interest is in the possibility that these practices of ‘verbal hygiene’ are as fundamental to the use of language as vowels are to its phonetic structure. A rough definition of which Cameron (1996: vii) writes is ‘the urge to meddle in matters of language’. Cooper (1989) titles his book Language Planning and Social Change viewing language planning as a form of social planning also and linked to social change. Language policy can be hegemonic (Wright, 2004a), it is in the everyday decisions and actions of individuals and societal groups: ‘the dynamic, daily practice of language policy that resides in concrete activities’ (Lo Bianco, 2010: 154). Hogan-Brun (2010: 91) believes that language planning ‘needs to acknowledge the relationships of the social world in its complexity and consider localised settings in order to fully take account of language issues at stake’. Rephrasing Heath, Street and Mill’s (2008) discussion of ‘culture as verb’, McCarty (2011a: 2) believes that ‘policy too is best understood as a verb; policy ‘never “is” but rather “does”’. Lo Bianco (2010) takes this notion of the social in language further and looks to public texts, public discourses and performative action as three sources of language policy activity in his recent study of language policy and education. These sources of language policy activity interact and affect the de facto language situation and language policy. The ‘performative action’ of one individual can reinforce or challenge the language policy from public texts or as espoused in prevailing discourses (ibid.). The current research looks at the public texts of this domain; Facebook publications, Facebook’s discourses on language and translation and also the prevalent discourses of the Irish Translations community on these topics and the performative action of the community of translators and individual translators to consider language policy activity in this context.

Lo Bianco (2010) examines public discourse as a source of language policy activity, language policy public texts are framed in public discourses and need popular legitimacy. He defines ‘performative action’ as ‘instances of language used both to convey messages in regular communication and at the same time to represent models
for emulation of language forms’ (ibid.: 161). Regular language use always reflects the taken for granted standards, norms and rules of a speech community. Modelling of ‘ordinary’ language users can occur on the language of celebrities, political leaders etc., by modifying and aligning one’s speech to the model, the norm. Regular communication is part of ongoing processes of language policy as other language use is purposive and has other functions than to simply convey a message. Lo Bianco classifies language use as mundane and ideological. This simplification enables us to look at regular use of language which aims to affect language change and thus operates as ‘discursive’ language policy. Ideological use of language is defined as language ‘heavily laden with performativity and profoundly constitutive of its message; that is its use helps form and influence patterns of language, social relationships and meanings’ (ibid.: 162). Examples are sexist and racist language and indeed, the rejection of these ideologies in language. Another concept in use is that of ‘discursive action’ as a site of language policy, a place for the ‘enacting, contesting and formulating’ language policies’ which Leppänen and Piirainen-Marsh (2009) use. The new media context, primarily constructed through written language(s) and discourse(s), must be examined for socially discursively constructed language policies.

Pennycook (2006: 65), when discussing postmodernism and language policy, acknowledges how this approach ‘suggest[s] that in order to understand how the regulation of domains of life may be effected, we need to look not so much at laws, regulations, policing or dominant ideologies as at the operation of discourses, educational practices, and language use’. Indeed, all of the contributions to McCarty (2011b) take as a starting point ‘the notion of language policy as processual, dynamic, and in motion’ (McCarty, 2011a: 2).

2.1.12 Language Policy and the Irish Language

This section shall discuss the Irish language and language policy. First, official language policy provisions will be considered, including a number of related common discourses and two sub-sections considering the Irish language dialects and the contested nature of this term in sociolinguistic research. Next, the development of Irish language legislation since the inception of the Irish State is outlined, along with the primary legislation which protect and promote the language today. Finally, this sub-section concludes with an examination of official Irish language corpus planning and translation efforts, from the 1920s to present day.
2.1.12.1 Language Policy Provisions

The Irish language is the first official language of the Republic of Ireland as per article eight of the Constitution of Ireland (1937). The Constitution also outlines the status of the English language; it is ‘recognised as the second official language’. Furthermore, provision is made for using either language for official purposes. The Irish version of the Constitution, which was translated from the original English version, is the official version from which all interpretations must be made (Ó Catháin, 1996). After The Good Friday Agreement was agreed in 1998, the Irish language gained some official recognition and status in Northern Ireland. This agreement also made equal provision(s) for the Ulster Scots language. [For more on Irish language policy in Northern Ireland see Walsh (2011: 53-6)]. In addition, Irish is an official language of the EU since 2007, however, it is not on a par with other EU official languages as not all legislative documents are required to be translated into Irish (Council Regulation 920/2005).

Despite all these status provisions, the Irish language is classified as ‘definitely endangered’ on the UNESCO (2009) vitality scale. 1.77 million of the 4.5 million resident Republic of Ireland population claim to be able to speak Irish, but 1.16 million of these either report they never speak the language, or speak it less frequently than weekly (Central Statistics Office, 2012). There are effectively no monolingual Irish-speakers today, although, there are many individuals who use Irish as their primary language of communication. [See Punch (2008) for further discussion of census data on the Irish language from 1851 to 2008 and Walsh (2011: 26-33) for more on the issues associated with Census questions and results; For more on the current situation of the Irish language see Mac Giolla Chríost (2005) and Ó Laoire (2007)].

Many scholars (cf. Hourigan, 2004; Kelly-Holmes, 2006a) have noted the complex situation of the Irish language; it has state support and status as the official language of the Republic of Ireland but also has many problems associated with a regional or minority language and is always ‘threatened’ by the English language, the majority language in the Irish context. Lo Bianco (2012: 518) comments that ‘Ireland represents a case of failure and success, conquering all areas of formal legal recognition but marked by relative neglect of domain normalization’. As the first official language of the Republic of Ireland it is privileged in public life, the education system and other domains including media. However, it is a minoritised language with declining speaker numbers and English is the dominant language of ‘everyday life’ in Ireland. For these reasons, Kelly-Holmes (2011: 512) terms it a ‘privileged, minoritised language’; this
contradictory combination of adjectives she believes demonstrates its complex nature. The Irish language is ‘simultaneously a national, official and minority language’ (Walsh, 2011: 4).

Kelly-Holmes (2011) outlines a number of current common discourses and perceptions around the Irish language, including ‘superiority’, that the Irish language makes ‘us’ different; ‘inferiority’, that Irish is not a ‘real’ language as it is not suitable for a ‘real’ world; ‘discourses of endangerment’ (cf. Duchêne and Heller, 2007), that Irish should be maintained for linguistic diversity’s sake and finally, a discourse around Irish language competence, that assumes only native or fluent Irish-speakers can use or discuss the language (cf. Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson, 2007a). Crowley (2005) notes a shift in public feeling towards Irish in the late 1990s from unfavourable, unsympathetic attitudes to more favourable ones. Previously, the Irish language was associated with old ways of living and times gone by, however at this time, Irish began to be and associated with, Crowley believes, ‘middle-class, well educated Dubliners’ (Crowley, 2005: 188). Kelly-Holmes (2011) terms this discourse ‘sexy Irish’. This discourse constructs and commodifies Irish-speakers as young, beautiful and mediatisable, bilingualism here adds value (Jaffe, 2007a). Crowley (2005) credits this change in perception to voluntary groups rather than state efforts and media ventures such as TG4 (as discussed below).

Watson (2007) believes that Irish language broadcasting in the Republic of Ireland is supported by positive attitudes towards Irish and its role as a symbol of Irish identity. He notes that the support of the majority of the Irish population for the Irish language is quite normative in the sense that most believe Irish people should speak Irish. Although this positive attitude must be considered in light of the number of people who actually speak Irish regularly as discussed above, as Watson writes, the Irish population, ‘leave the actual practice of communicating in Irish to a minority’ (ibid.: 49). The recent economic context in Ireland has impacted greatly on attitudes towards the Irish language and also on state monetary support for language related activities and organisations. Kelly-Holmes (2011) outlines the re-emergence of the inferiority discourse around the Irish language which manifests itself today as the Irish language having no economic value and being useless in the ‘real’ world. The thinking is that ‘with “real” economic problems concerning the majority, Irish language policy and economic development for officially bilingual areas... [are] a “trivial issue”’ (ibid.: 529). Walsh (2011: 13) considers if ‘the promotion of Irish positively influence Ireland’s
socio-economic development?’. He concludes, although with a number of qualifiers, that the promotion of the Irish language seems to positively influence the socio-economic development of Ireland.

There is much written about the success, or not, of language revitalisation efforts and the current situation of the Irish language. Crowley (2005: 164) believes ‘the story of the Irish language in independent Ireland has been a dismal one’. He acknowledges the recent developments in the status and public perception of the Irish language but he cautions that revival efforts are ‘wide… [but] not yet deep’ and questions the sustainability of the pace of change of the early 2000s. Ó Catháin (1996: 21) too is not positive about efforts to date, arguing that policy does not lead to language use, writing that the Irish language has ‘a plethora of policies and planning documents, and that these have been to no avail’. Others, however, are more positive, with Ó Laoire (1996) emphasising that the revival of the Irish language is more successful than perhaps credited. He describes the restoration efforts in relation to the Irish language as language revival, since ‘full’ revitalisation has not occurred, but revival efforts have led to an increase in the numbers having some knowledge of Irish. Furthermore, Romaine (2008: 24) notes that ‘after years of disuse, Irish is once again a literary language as well as a language of modern media such as radio, television and the Internet’.

2.1.12.1.1 The Irish Language Dialects
Comment must also be made on the dialects of Irish, as this is an issue which the Irish Translations app community consider (see Section 7.2.4.5). The Irish language has three dialects corresponding to the geographical areas within which they are spoken: Munster, Connacht and Ulster or Donegal Irish. The issues around the use of the term dialect in sociolinguistics will be discussed next (Section 2.1.12.1.2). Ó Siadhail (1989) believes that the Irish language is perceived of as three distinct dialects due to the fragmented nature of the Gaeltachtí [Irish speaking areas]. The notion of geographically defined and differentiated dialects of the Irish language is acknowledged in studies such as O’Rahilly (1932) and Ó Cuív (1980). Both of these studies account for a number of Irish language dialects as far back as the 16th century, with Ó Cuív (1980) noting there were five dialects of Irish in the 18th century. [For more on the linguistic dialectical variations of the Irish language see Hickey (2011).]
There is also an official standard, *An Chaighdeán Oifigiúil* [The Official Standard], developed in 1958 (Oireachtas, 2013) and this is the variety of Irish taught in schools, used in government and media domains. As Hindley (1990) notes, the Munster dialect is the basis of the modern standard. *An Chaighdeán Oifigiúil* is also referred to as ‘Dublin-Irish’ or ‘School-Irish’ due to its use primarily in the official domain, which is based in Dublin the capital of the Republic of Ireland, and the educational context. Hindley describes Dublin Irish as ‘*Gaeilge B “I” Áth*’ [Baile Átha Cliath (BAC) is the Irish version of Dublin] or sometimes ‘*Nua-Ghaeilge*’ [New Irish] (ibid.: 60). He defines it as ‘the artificial and synthetic norm created by the state for official publications and taught in all schools outside the *Gaeltachtaí* as well as in most schools in the parts of the latter where Irish is no longer the vernacular’ (ibid.).

In historical times, the Irish dialects were mutually incomprehensible (O’Rahilly, 1932) and today they are mutually comprehensible but are still ‘distinctive’ from each other (Hindley, 1990). However, there are inequalities amongst the status and provision of materials, publications and resources, for each dialect. Hindley (1990), drawing on Wagner (1958), acknowledges the use of ‘Dublin-Irish’ in a lot of state sponsored maintenance efforts and publications. Indeed, he notes that Irish language speakers are reluctant to engage in media programming, radio in his example, in dialects other than their own. Of the three dialects, discrimination is most common in relation to Ulster/Donegal Irish, for example in relation to school texts (Hindley, 1990). It is also anecdotally perceived of as being the most divergent dialect in comparison to the Munster and Connemara dialects. Hindley acknowledges this view, noting that it is perceived of as being the furthest from the standard form and as ‘very distinctive and often closer to Scottish Gaelic’ (ibid.: 63).

### 2.1.12.1.2 Considering Dialect

Much has been written in the sociolinguistic field around the use of certain terms, dialect in particular, to refer to ‘ways of speaking’ (Hymes, 1974). Fishman (1972: 22) defines a dialect as a variety ‘that initially and basically represents divergent geographical origins’. This is a non-judgemental understanding of the term used in the sociolinguistic field. It is in this sense that Irish language dialects are categorised and discussed, as outlined above. However, terms such as language, dialect, etc. are associated with a number of beliefs, attitudes and judgements which are oftentimes negative, as acknowledged previously relation to Ulster/Donegal Irish. Therefore,
terming a way of speaking a language or a dialect oftentimes passes judgement on that variety, it is both indicative of and elicits emotion and opinion (ibid.: 21-2). As Chomsky (1997: 125) acknowledges, the term dialect is associated with ‘nonlinguistic notions, which can be set up one way or another, depending on particular interests and concerns’. Terming a language variety a dialect is particularly problematic, as Fishman (1972: 22) writes, this term connotes other factors than geographic ones such as lower social status and the perceived value or status of that variety.

One of the associations with the term dialect is that it is a subunit to a language, language being a ‘superordinate designation’ and dialect a ‘subordinate designation’ (ibid.: 23). As Widdowson (1997: 141) puts it ‘a dialect presupposes a language it is a dialect of’. It is in this sense that Facebook uses the term dialect in its publications, as will be considered further below (Section 6.1.1.1). Houston (1969), in her research on Black English, notes the use of dialect in a number of senses, including pejorative and as referring to certain linguistic types such as social, situational or racial. Wolfram (1998) considers language ideology and dialect in his research on the Oakland Ebonics controversy in the USA at that time. He discusses the use of dialect in popular culture to refer to a language variety as ‘an aberration of language that is somehow different from authentic language’ (ibid.: 113). Wolfram also notes that the term language does not have the same ‘connotative baggage’ as dialect does (ibid.).

Weinreich is credited with the popularisation of the anecdotal statement that ‘a language is a dialect with an army and navy’ (Chomsky, 1997) or as Widdowson (1997: 141) puts it ‘a code which declares independence is no longer a dialect but a language in its own right’. This statement illustrates the arbitrary nature of the distinction between what is termed a language or a dialect.

The choice of term used in sociolinguistics is often clarified according to these numerous meanings or ‘references’ (Wolfram, 1998). Wolfram contrasts the popular understanding of dialect as mentioned previously, with the linguistic understanding, in line with Fishman (1972) as above, and notes his choice not to use this term when speaking to non-linguistic specialist audiences ‘to avoid any misunderstandings about the reference of this term’ (Wolfram, 1998: 113). Fishman (1972: 21) acknowledges that the term ‘variety’ is used in sociolinguistics as a ‘nonjudgemental designation’ to refer to a kind of language. He believes variety does not indicate any linguistic status and instead allows researchers to differentiate one variety from another, ‘it merely designates a member of a verbal repertoire’ (ibid.: 23).
The current study acknowledges the many issues around the use of the term dialect and, indeed, others using the term language variety to discuss ‘ways of speaking’ (Hymes, 1974) and the term dialect only when discussing the geographically defined dialects of the Irish language.

2.1.12.2 Irish Language Legislation

The revival and maintenance of the Irish language first became the responsibility of the Irish government when Ireland became a free state in 1922 (Kelly, 2002). Previously, it had been in ‘the sole care of cultural pressure groups’ (ibid.: 1). Ó hIfearnáin (2000) describes Irish language policy at the time of the Free State and early governments (1922-48) as a period of ‘language policy development’ which laid the foundations for future developments. The Free State and subsequent governments envisioned language revival through policy in two areas: the Gaeltacht areas and the education system. The Gaeltacht areas are Irish-speaking areas as designated by the government, primarily on the rural West coast of Ireland. Commins (1988) considers the state policy of providing more support for the economic and social development of Gaeltacht areas than ‘Galltacht’ areas, ‘the English-speaking area which comprised most of the Irish Free State’ (Kelly, 2002: 1), with regard to language maintenance. It was thought that language decline in these areas was a result of depopulation due to a lack of employment opportunities in these peripheral areas, and therefore population stabilisation was sought via economic and social policies. Irish has more second language than native speakers, which is altogether unusual in the context of minority languages worldwide (McCloskey, 2001: 46). The Comprehensive Linguistic Survey of the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007) finds that if the current rate of language shift amongst young adults continues, the Irish language will no longer be a community language in the Gaeltacht within the next 20-25 years. [For more on the current situation of the Irish language and the Gaeltacht population see O’Giollagáin et al. (2007) and Walsh (2011).]

In the 19th century, when language shift in Ireland was underway, change was also occurring in the education system. This led to the perception in the Irish Free State that the education system was responsible for the decline in the Irish language as a spoken language (Kelly, 2002). Hence, the attempts by the Irish Free State and subsequent governments to revive Irish were primarily via the education system: the thinking being that if the education system had caused the problem, it could also solve
the problem. The government hoped to use the education system, primarily the primary school education system, to revive Irish in the ‘Galltacht’. Kelly notes the differing attitudes of the communities involved in these two areas of revival, with Gaeltacht communities quite proactive and welcoming of state policy, while revival through education was ‘imposed through compulsion’ on all involved, students, teachers and parents, and not necessarily accepted by all. Irish is still, with some exceptions, a compulsory subject at primary and secondary level education and students receive 13 years of Irish instruction. Another domain targeted for language revival by early governments was the use of Irish in the public service and the Free State Government sought to standardise and modernise the language itself (Ó Riagáin, 1997). Ó Laoire (1996) notes that the Irish Free State government promoted revival through a goal of Irish monolingualism rather than societal bilingualism. This goal he credits as a response to the ‘Irish-Ireland movement’ which espoused a culture and image entirely distinct from any British influence.

Ó Riagáin (1997: 19) describes the language policy efforts of the 1948-70 period as one of ‘stagnation and retreat’. He credits the 1950s as the high point for the Gaelicising of Irish schools and argues that in subsequent decades bilingual or Irish-only education declined due to the shift in policy from promoting bilingualism/all Irish in education to developing Irish as a subject to be taught. 1956 brought a review of the Gaeltacht boundaries which revised figures down to 85,700 Irish-speakers in those areas. In contrast, language standardisation efforts were progressing well, with an official guide to the new spelling system published in 1945, the principles of Irish grammar in 1953, an English-Irish dictionary including the new standard forms in 1959 and an Irish-English diary in 1977. A number of specialised dictionaries were also published from the 1920s onwards. Ó Riagáin believes the political commitment of the government towards the Irish language weakened at this time, the government distanced itself from language policy leadership and responsibility.

The period 1970-93, Ó Riagáin describes as a time of ‘benign neglect’ of the Irish language (ibid.: 23). Changes in the social and economic organisation of Irish society, Ó Riagáin believes caused problems for language maintenance policies for Irish as a minority language. The number of Irish-only schools was 3% of the total number of schools in 1980-81 and census data in the 1970s demonstrated that Irish was not being maintained in the Gaeltacht regions. He notes how governments of this time did contribute to the development of Irish language organisations such as Bord na Gaeilge.
However, language policy strategies had shifted again to language maintenance and the emphasis on language revival weakened, which developments such as RnaG and TG4 illustrate. Ó Laoire (1996) credits the lack of focus on what form a language revival would take as the reason language revitalisation never happened. The government, he writes, assumed that the Irish public outside of Gaeltacht areas had the same ideological base as the government, the cultural nationalism model. Also, the school-home link regarding language use was not fostered; it was merely assumed that language knowledge would lead to language use (ibid.).

We are in the fourth period of Ó hIfhearnáin (2000)’s categorisation of Irish language policy efforts in relation to media, from 1992 to his time of writing which he terms: ‘Heritage Language and Minority Rights’. From the early 1990s onwards Irish has been categorised as a minority issue. In line with current neo-liberal discourses, the Irish language is treated as a language of individuals and not as a language of community (Watson, 2007). This trend, Watson writes, illustrates the shrinking of the Gaeltacht areas and a move to focussing on individuals who speak Irish as a second language throughout Ireland. Mac Giolla Chríost (2012: 412) believes this focus on linguistic human rights will ‘work counter to reversing language shift in some subtle ways’. He argues that this agenda positions Irish as a minority language and therefore reduces the status of the Irish language from that of the national language in the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore, he believes that the positioning of Irish-speakers as a distinct minority group ‘represents a negative change in the power relationship between the state and Irish-speakers’ (ibid.). Walsh (2011: 39) believes the trend in Irish language policy in the Republic has changed from ‘promoting the revival of Irish as the national language to a softer policy of bilingualism, with a minority discourse emerging in later years’. He wonders if since 2000 we are in a new phase of language policy for the Irish language?

The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is the Irish government department with responsibility for the promotion and maintenance of the Irish language today. Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003/Official Languages Act 2003 is the most important legislation produced to date regarding the Irish language. This act promotes the use of Irish for official purposes in the state and provides for the availability of public services in the Irish language. Under the act, public bodies must agree a language scheme for their organisation with the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The act is currently under review by the Department of Arts Heritage and
the *Gaeltacht* under the current government’s programme for government (Department of Arts Heritage and the *Gaeltacht*, 2012a). In doing so, the Department sought survey responses and submissions from the public and ‘interested parties’ during a public consultation process in 2011-12 and they are currently analysing these responses.

Many however, do not think *Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003/Official Languages Act 2003* delivered what was needed or went far enough. Ó Riagáin (2008) calls for a sustainable bilingual policy, as he notes this act services those who speak Irish but does not make provision for increasing speaker numbers from the English-speaking population. He believes the act ‘signals a false dawn or, maybe, a last hurrah’ (*ibid.*: 65). Kelly-Holmes (2011) notes there is ongoing tension in Irish language policy/planning efforts between the goals of language management for acquisition to increase speaker numbers and language rights which are needed to guarantee the rights of Irish-speakers. Hourigan (2004: 96) writes, Irish language policy has rarely been defined separately from English-speaking and Irish-speaking areas or communities; *Gaeltacht* communities are ‘significantly different’ to the majority of Irish citizens and she believes policy should consider this. Furthermore, for the reasons discussed above, Mac Giolla Chríost (2012: 412) criticises the act as ‘while Bunreacht na hÉireann (1937) confers national status upon Irish, the Official Languages Act (2003) minoritises the language’.

The *Gaeltacht Act 2012* ‘provide[s] for a new definition for the *Gaeltacht* and to make amendments to the structure and functions of Údarás na *Gaeltachta*’ (Department of Arts Heritage and the *Gaeltacht*, 2012b). Under this act it is planned that *Gaeltacht* areas will be based on linguistic criteria instead of set geographical areas in future and aspires to have ‘language planning at community level’ as central to the new definition of the *Gaeltacht* (*ibid.*). It also gives areas outside of the existing *Gaeltacht* the opportunity to become Irish Language Networks or *Gaeltacht* Service Towns and achieve statutory recognition as such, although still being defined territorially. Finally, it amends some of Údarás na *Gaeltachta*’s functions and ‘gives statutory effect to the implementation of the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030 by Údarás na *Gaeltachta* in the *Gaeltacht*’ (*ibid.*).

### 2.1.12.3 Corpus Planning and Translation Provisions

O’Connell and Walsh (2006) note the important role translation can play in the maintenance of a minority language and how it may be involved in a turning point for a
minority language. They point to the Hebrew case and the translation of children’s literature. In the current information age, translation, they note, continues to be an important cultural activity. [See O’Connell and Walsh (2006) for an account of the history of the Irish language and translation]

An Coiste Téarmaíochta [The Terminology Committee] is the body charged with statutory responsibility for Irish terminology development, including the development of ICT and WWW terminology. Its *modus operandi* is to ‘To approve, develop and provide authoritative, standardized Irish-language terminology in order to increase the capacity of the language as a modern medium in modern society’ (Foras na Gaeilge, 2011a). It was part of the Department of Education and is now part of Foras na Gaeilge. Foras na Gaeilge is the body charged with the responsibility of promoting the Irish language in Ireland, both in the Republic and Northern Ireland (Foras na Gaeilge, 2011b). It was founded in 1999 as a result of *The Good Friday Agreement* (*ibid.*). An Coiste Téarmaíochta is comprised of 20 members who meet on a monthly basis and has a number of voluntary sub-committees of smaller groups of experts from specialised fields. One of the responsibilities of An Coiste Téarmaíochta is to ‘deliver standardized authoritative terminology to the public by means of the most efficient and modern communications media’ (*ibid.*). To date, it has developed a number of online portals for terminology dissemination including: the *Database of Public Service Terminology*; acmhainn.ie, a website for translators; and the *National Terminology Database*.

In the 1920s and 1930s, An Gúm, the publications branch of the *Department of Education*, translated major literary classics from English, Latin, etc., into Irish. An Gúm is now part of Foras na Gaeilge and is still publishing Irish language material. To date it has published approximately 2,500 books and 350 pieces of music (Foras na Gaeilge, 2011c). Its current focus is on the publication of textbooks and other resources for schools and other reading materials for children (*ibid.*). Another organisation O’Connell and Walsh (2006) discuss in their overview of the Irish language and translation is the Irish Literature Exchange (ILE). This body was founded in 1994 and since then has facilitated the translation of 600 works of Irish literature written in Irish or English into 40 different languages. Although these two examples illustrate the translation of literature, O’Connell and Walsh note Irish translation also occurring in many different and even specialised fields including medicine, law, and astronomy. This outlook must be considered with caution, as the contributions to the special issue

Another statutory entity with responsibility for translation is *Rannóg an Aistriúcháin* [The Translation Section] which is part of the *Oireachtas* or Irish parliament. In the early years of the state it was the body with responsibility for language planning, terminology development, language standardisation, as well as interpretation and translation for the *Oireachtas* [government] and the civil service (O’Connell and Walsh, 2006). [For more on the historical role of *Rannóg an Aistriúcháin* see *Oireachtas* (2011)]. Its primary function today is translating statutory documents, and, since mid-2006 when section seven of *Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003/Official Languages Act 2003* came into operation, it has published legislation simultaneously in Irish and English. It has made some developments in terms of translation and new technologies. Since 2002 ‘Official Translations of Acts of the Oireachtas began to be made available in electronic format, and in 2003 they were brought together in a single database with the enacted versions’ (*ibid.*). This database is now available to the public online at www.achtanna.ie and www.oireachtas.ie, the website of the Houses of the *Oireachtas* (*ibid.*). Furthermore, this database was used to develop a ‘Translation Aid (Precedent Locator)’ for *Rannóg an Aistriúcháin*, {which} allows ‘speedy access to precedents in the Official Translations’ (*ibid.*). In discussing *An Coiste Téarmaíochta*, O’Connell and Walsh (2006) note a general lack of consistency in the terminology developed by it and by *Rannóg an Aistriúcháin* which also develops terminology as needed.

Technological and communication developments, O’Connell and Walsh note, have created new terms and spaces to be translated into Irish but have also provided new approaches or technologies for translation to and from Irish. Included in their examples are the localisation of software and the development of translators’ tools for building glossaries. There are many Irish language translation services, dictionaries and instant translators. A brief Internet search (on the 7th December 2011) found online Irish dictionary sites: *IrishDictionary Online* and *Lexilogos* and instant translation sites which translate words, sentences and paragraphs into and from Irish, such as the most well known (and community driven) *Google Translate* and others including *World Star Translators, Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias, Irish Translation Online* and *IMTranslator*. *IrishGaelicTranslator* is an online community forum site where people post texts for which they are seeking translations and other members post translations.
for free. Finally, a number of professional translation companies have an online presence, including Transilia and IrishTranslation.ie. Some offer a service whereby the text for translation can be emailed or directly uploaded to their site and the translation sent by email or other means. Ó hÍearnaíin (2000: 109), believes the state no longer leads the way in the publication of dictionaries for the Irish language, rather corpus planning for the Irish language has been ‘turned over to the open market, where those with either a need for the product or a commercial incentive to create it actually do the lexicographic work’. The Translations app is an example of this hypothesis at work, Facebook needed localised versions to access more markets for their SNS and also to foster continued growth in existing markets by creating good will around its localisation into different versions.

2.1.13 Language Policy and Translation
Lambert (2013: 20), considering the development of the field of translation studies, comes to a number of conclusions with regard to the current global academic context of ‘academic co-habitation’. His first, applicable to the current study, is that ‘there can be no language policy without a translation policy’ (ibid.). Lambert further notes that ‘oral, written and electronic translation policies (just like language policies) are largely implicit, if not systematically kept “under the waterline”’ (ibid.). These statements illustrate the ties between these two disciplines. It is for this reason and as the context of the current study is a crowd-sourced translation effort, as will be discussed below, that translation studies and translation are briefly introduced here. Translation will also be considered in relation to language ideologies and language attitudes in the language ideologies section of this literature review (Section 2.2.8).

2.1.13.1 Translation Studies and Translation
As Lambert (2013: 7) notes, translation and interpreting activities go back as far as Babel or further, ‘if not the Garden of Eden’. Translation has also long been an activity in the Irish context, with Cronin (2011) pointing out the translation of English language content into Irish as far back as the 17th century. Translation studies as a discipline originated in the 1970s and is conceptualised under a number of areas and subareas proposed by Holmes, the founding father of this research area (Malmkjær, 2013). Holmes map, as interpreted by Toury (1995), Malmkjær (2013) writes, divides the discipline into a pure and an applied branch. Applied translation studies has four sub-
areas: pedagogical, translation aids, translation policy and translation criticism, with Malmkjøær adding another sub-branch of ‘translating’ here. Pure translation studies is comprised of descriptive and theoretical studies, each of which have a number of sub-branches. Millán and Bartrina (2013) acknowledge the many approaches within translation studies, including traditional approaches such as historical, cultural, ideological and linguistic perspectives and newer methodologies such as corpus linguistics, sociology and multimodality. Munday (2001) acknowledges the normative and subjective judgements behind early writings on translation. Translation theory in the latter half of the 20th century and continuing today thus attempts to redefine the notions of ‘literal’, ‘free’, ‘meaning’, and systematically documents taxonomies of translation phenomena. [For more on the development of the field of translation studies see Lambert (2013) and Malmkjøær (2013)].

Werner (1994: 61) defines translation as ‘the transfer of spoken language or the written word from one language into spoken or written forms of another’. This definition understands translation at its simplest level, as an uncontested process of the transfer of one language into another language. Furthermore, it assumes ‘translatability’, the notion that ‘all human languages are intertranslatable (ibid.: 68). Bassnett (2002: 12) defines translation as:

the rendering of a source language (SL) text into the target language (TL) so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and (2) the structures of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted.

She terms this a ‘restricted concept of translation’ and aligns it with the view of translation as purely a mechanical process (ibid.: 13). Munday (2001) views this definition as simply describing the process of translation. He acknowledges the multiplicity of meanings around the term ‘translation’: ‘it can refer to the general subject field, the product (the text that has been translated) or the process (the act of producing the translation, otherwise known as translating). Indeed, Vermeer (1994) does not believe the field can come to a unified definition of translation.

Bassnett (2002: 19) acknowledges the ‘great stumbling block’ of translation studies, the notion and question of evaluation. She acknowledges the implicit value judgements found in translation, some translators set out to ‘improve’ the SL text or existing translations, while other translators are concerned with the weaknesses of their
peers and not their own work, Also, critics consider translations from one or other of two standpoints:

the narrow view of the closeness of the translation to the SL text (an evaluation that can only be made if the critic has access to both languages) or from the treatment of the TL text as a work in their own language (*ibid*).

This leads Bassnett to conclude that translation is ‘not just the transfer of texts from one language into another, it is now seen as a process of negotiation between texts and between cultures, a process during which all kinds of transactions take place mediated by the figure of the translator’ (*ibid.*: 5-6). Werner (1994) also considers evaluation and translation studies, in particular, the evaluation and judging of the quality of a translation produced. Werner, drawing on Krupat (1992), discusses the quality evaluation of ethnographic translation as occurring along two independent continua: ‘authenticity (accuracy, fidelity) versus accessibility (artistry/style)’ (Werner, 1994: 72). He conceptualises both continua on a five point scale, the increase of the accuracy of a translation decreasing its accessibility and the reproduction of the artistry of the target language (the language being translated into) decreases its accuracy. The notions of evaluation and evaluation of quality, are found throughout the *Facebook Translations* app, both in its design, as will be discussed below (Section 6.2.1.3), and in the Irish *Translations* community. For example, this first viewpoint is illustrated in the Irish *Translations* app community, as will be discussed below, in their views on the relationship between the Irish and English languages (Section 7.2.5) and the use of borrowings, primarily from the English language (Section 7.2.6).

Bassnett (2002) takes issue with these two standpoints on translation as discussed above and identified in the Irish *Translations* app community. She acknowledges that it is important that a translation of a text is readable, understandable, etc., however, these standpoints fail to take account of the complexities involved in translation and do not consider a translation as a metatext ‘a work derived from, or containing another existing text’ (*ibid.*). Bassnett, drawing on Newman, acknowledges, that the evaluation of translations can be made on ‘purely academic criteria’ but also on other elements and criteria (*ibid.*: 19). Assessment of translation can be culture bound, tied to norms, status, value and other judgements. Therefore, Bassnett believes it is ‘pointless… to argue for a definitive translation, since translation is ultimately tied up with the context in which it is made’ (*ibid.*: 19-20). In the current study, the Irish
translation and other translations of the Facebook SNS are tied up in the Facebook context itself.

Other issues in translation studies include ‘equivalence in meaning’ (Munday, 2001: 36), which draws on semantics and Saussure’s (1931) concept of the sign. This examines the arbitrary nature of language and the implications of this for conceptualising translation, as a purely mechanical or simple process, as discussed above (Munday, 2001). Another concern in the translation studies field, is ‘the nature of meaning’. Again, drawing on semantics but also pragmatics, meaning is considered in three categories to attempt to account for the complexity of meaning (ibid.: 38). Meaning is no longer perceived of as a fixed concept, rather, it is functionally defined: ‘a word “acquires” meaning through its context and can produce varying responses according to culture’ (ibid.). The three categories are: linguistic meaning (Chomky’s generative-transformational grammar model), referential meaning (denotative) and emotive (or connotative) meaning (ibid.). Translation studies also examine translation strategies and their accompanying translation procedures, such as borrowing, ‘the SL word is transferred directly to the TL’ (ibid.: 56) and literal translations ‘word-for-word translation’ as problematic concepts (ibid. 57). Both of these translations procedures are considered by the Irish Translations community but in relation to Irish terminology and not the concept of translation. With the exception of the reactions of professional translators, the issues which arise and are discussed in the Irish Translations community relate mainly to terminology in Irish, and are issues which arise in Irish in any case, outside of the Facebook context of translation.

2.1.13.2 Crowd-Sourced Translation
The field of translation studies is now, as Millán and Bartrina (2013) write, responding to changes in translation technology such as audiovisual translation and crowd-sourced translation, the context of the current study, as will be discussed next. Gambier (2013) notes, that new technologies offer new translation opportunities but also change translation practice. [For more on the response of the field of translation studies to new technologies and the changing translation practices they bring, see Malmkjær (2013)]. Carson-Berndsen et al. (2009: 59) note that in the late 2000s, crowd-sourced localisation along with community platforms have taken ‘centre stage’ in localisation practices (localisation will be discussed below, see Section 3.2.5) and it is beginning to be acknowledged as a source for high quality translations (cf. Losse, 2008a). Howe
(2006) coined the term ‘crowdsourcing’, also more commonly written as ‘crowd-sourcing’. He defines it as ‘the act of taking a job traditionally performed by a designated agent (usually an employee) and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call’ (ibid.). Furthermore, he believes it is ‘the future of corporate R&D’ (ibid.). Crowd-sourced localisation is when ‘the translation job traditionally done by a professional translator is done in a more informal fashion by a group of volunteers’ (Lewis et al., 2009: 30). Typically, volunteers are involved in a community around the product or service that is being translated (ibid.).

New media developments in crowd-sourcing from Facebook, Google and Microsoft involve the creation of ‘crowdsourcing frameworks that allow volunteer translators and localisers to translate digital content into marginally commercial languages [or minority languages]’ (O’Keeffe, 2009: 82). These developments are viewed positively by the localisation industry. However, the process is not completely user driven, and Carson-Berndsen et al. (2009) acknowledge the role of professional translators in crowd-sourced translation projects. Professionals are part of the models and work to ‘validate and post-edit user-localised sites before going live’ (ibid.: 59).

O’Keeffe (2009: 82) describes how Facebook has ‘a central authority’ which drives the localisation ‘rather than being bottom-up and community-driven’. This statement has implications for considering the Facebook Translations app in language policy terms as being ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up’; clearly Facebook is more involved in the app than first appears (for discussion of Facebook’s role in the app see Section 6.3.1). One possible reason for the developments in crowd-sourced translations is the advent of the ‘long tail’ market. As Ryan et al. (2009: 17) note the long tail may lead to Internet users being: ‘… motivated to volunteer translations for social reasons, such as prestige or the desire to share digital content with other users who speak their language’ (for more on the motivation(s) of the Facebook translators see Section 7.1.3). The ‘long tail’ market is defined by Anderson (2004) as the market which includes everything out there no matter how small or niche the audience, such as back catalogues, older albums, live tracks, B-sides, remixes, etc. The idea is that ‘enough nonhits on the Long Tail and you’ve got a market bigger than the hits’ (ibid.: 3). It allows space in the market for niche media products for small numbers of consumers, such as having an Irish language version of the global Facebook SNS.

An advantage or attraction of crowd-sourced translation is the cost. As Carson-Berndsen et al. (2009) note, it can reduce the costs associated with localisation,
since the users do it for free. Furthermore, there is an argument that the outputs are better tuned culturally as users from the target communities ‘help tune the localised output to the (linguistic) requirements and expectations of a particular user (or “fan”) base’ (ibid.: 59). Carson-Berndsen et al. note that crowd-sourced localisation of non-consumer facing content, technical or legal docs, is not popular. The Translations app was initially only intended to translate consumer-facing content, i.e. ‘the main web-pages visible to a Facebook client’ (ibid.: 60) but has now been extended to allow the localisation of Facebook’s legal publications, the automatically generated Facebook emails, etc., illustrating that crowdsourcing can be extended to lesser popular content.

2.1.14 Language Policy and Technological Globalisation

Wright (2004a) sees language policy moving away from the nation-state to the global domain, as she describes it in the era of the ‘unmaking’ of the nation-state. She feels we are in the ‘postnational’ era, within which two phenomena are ongoing, the decline of the nation-state and globalisation. Spolsky (2004) also believes that globalisation is the force which now dominates the sociolinguistic repertoire of almost all nations. Ricento (2010) notes that globalisation affects societies and their languages; and the globalist discourse affects how people think and talk about language(s) everyday, which affects language policies and practices over time.

Recent language policy research has begun to consider the relationship between language policy and globalisation. A number of the chapters in Spolsky’s (2012b) volume consider globalisation and modernisation, in relation to a number of defined contexts and domains, such as language education, language management agencies and language activism (cf. Coulmas and Guerini, 2012; Edwards, 2012; Ferguson, 2012; King and Rambow, 2012). Ricento (2010) asks if languages intersect with the processes of globalisation and, secondly, can and should countries protect their national linguistic resources, or to increase access to technology, trade, etc., promote ‘languages such as English’ (ibid.: 125). Language change, language shift and language loss are oftentimes discussed as natural, inevitable and necessary, just as globalisation is beneficial and necessary. Considering the role of English in language policies as an imperial, national and indigenised language (cf. Kachru, 2006) and critiquing the public globalist discourse around globalisation, Ricento (2010) finds that reality is very different from this discourse which centres on the economic benefits of globalisation. This leads Ricento to question claims that minority or marginalised languages come to
these peripheral positions due to social change, human creativity and desire, and people’s personal decisions.

Ricento finds that the ideologies attached to this discourse influence the hegemonical, common-sense notions about language(s) and their nature. These attitudes view language(s) as commodities with a market value and if viewed as so, their loss is accounted for by their worthlessness in that market. Spolsky (2009) believes that new technologies and the profit margin can work together for minority language media. But Ricento (2010) drawing on Grin (2006) reminds us that linguistic environments are often market failures in the provision of linguistic diversity, and language policies must be developed which democratise the market or ‘level the playing field’ for minority or less powerful language speakers. However, Wright (2004a) points to globalisation as an opportunity for minority languages, believing that language revitalisation of small languages can ‘coexist’ easier with globalisation than with nation-states, reaffirming the notion that it allows a space for minority languages. In the media context, technological globalisation has brought fragmentation of audiences, a decentring of the media and opens up new spaces for language use (Kelly-Holmes et al., 2009). Audiences and individuals expect to be able to find and interact with media which address their particular perspective, appeals to their interests and speak their language (ibid.). Block (2004: 23) discussing technological globalisation and the Internet particularly with reference to the role of English as its ‘homogeneous’ language, believes that the Internet is increasingly a ‘communication space for other language communities’. (See Section 2.1.17 below for a discussion of language policy and new media).

2.1.15 Language Policy and Business
Business is not a traditional domain of enquiry in language policy research but recent research points to the role of businesses in de facto language policy (cf. Shohamy and Gorter, 2009). O’Rourke (2011: 58) notes ‘in the absence of explicitly stated formal policies, decisions about language have always been embedded in the agendas of powerful commercial interests’. Spolsky (2004: 6) considers language an economic good: ‘something that is available to be learned by anyone exposed to it and that gains rather than loses value the more it is shared with others’. In this light it is unsurprising that he includes businesses as stakeholders in language policy. Language policy and businesses/the workplace can be explicitly defined and overseen from the governmental level, such as Canadian military or locally determined, with businesses individually
deciding how to manage multilingual workplaces and markets (*ibid.*). New media organisations are businesses, and as Spolsky (2004) and Shohamy (2006) acknowledge businesses, on every level from the local to the global, are involved in language policy formation, overt and covert, whether this is their intention or not. The commercial world, as Nic Craith (1996) writes, offers languages opportunities and challenges. Furthermore, with technological globalisation and new media, businesses are impacting further on the language reality of the Internet and their customers. Spolsky (2009) highlights that the presence or absence of language(s) in the public space, including mass media and the Internet as affecting language practices and the *de facto* language policy.

One of Spolsky’s (2004) fundamental notions is that language policy occurs and operates within a speech community of any size, later he writes that: ‘I accept the view, increasingly common in the field, that any speech community has a language policy (practice, values and perhaps management)’ (Spolsky, 2012a: 10). The domain of language policy is now any definable group or community, from local to organisation to nation to international context. This expanded view of language policy presents the notion now of discovering or uncovering language policy, such as Spolsky writes in the case of the UK or the USA: ‘in the absence of explicit constitutional statements of language policy, where does it reside and how can it be discovered?’ (*ibid.*: 92). He outlines four principle factors in determining the language policy of a nation: ‘the sociolinguistic situation, the national ideology, the existence of English as a world language and notions of language rights’ (*ibid.*: 110).

Norrby and Hajek (2011a: 242) note ‘the endorsement of a particular linguistic behaviour is also a means of promoting a corporate identity and ideology, and, by extension, a way of selling a certain lifestyle’. They consider the language policy of the multinational entities IKEA and H&M to examine if their decisions on language use impact the relationships between employees and also with customers in the current globalised economy. They are concerned with these companies use of informal language, in particular their informal address practices. They examine the websites of these companies to consider their actual language behaviour towards a number of different speech communities. Incelli (2008) looks at the language management strategies of a number of small and medium sized enterprises in Italy to consider the relationship between macro-level language planning and language ‘problems’ in the micro-level, such as within a company or region, which may affect national language
education policy. Language policy research also looks to call centres. Also, Kingsley (2009) examines the language management policies of two international financial institutions in Luxembourg. She considers implicit policy, the language practices of the workplace and explicit policy, the explicit working language of the institution. In doing so she demonstrates the complex nature of language policy and of the pressures on language practices, from the ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’.

2.1.6  Language Policy Studies and Media

The media, Kelly-Holmes (2012: 337) argues, can ‘be seen to carry out all of the key functions of language policy and planning for the regulation of linguistic variation and multilingualism in speech communities’. Media can be ‘agents of corpus planning’ using official terminology and/or disseminating (and it could be added creating) new terminology. Kelly-Holmes believes is a ‘strong feature’ of minority language media in particular (ibid.). They can also act as ‘agents of status planning’ by ‘allocating space, prominence, ect. To particular language(s) and variety(ies)’ (ibid.). Furthermore, media can be ‘agents of standardization’, using and therefore spreading a standard language and its accompanying attitudes/ideologies about norms. The media can be ‘agents of language diffusion’, by which Kelly-Holmes means they can encourage people to learn a language by their decision to dub/subtitle programming and ‘agents of language learning’ by showing language learning programmes. Finally, the media can be ‘agents of language ideology’, explicitly and implicitly they constitute their speech community as mono-, bi- or multilingual and through their discourse about language(s) they can inform the perceptions of members of the speech community (ibid.).

Recent studies have looked at language policy and more traditional media. Ó Laoire (2000) in response to Ó hIfearnáin (2000) discusses the broadcast media’s role in language planning. Television and radio can be ‘agents of language change’ (Ó Laoire, 2000: 150) and he queries if media can contribute to language revitalisation, language maintenance, language teaching and language learning. Acknowledging the role of the state typically the main language planning agency, he points to the importance of ‘bottom-up’ efforts as ‘new language planners’ (Ó Laoire, 2000: 151) and the need for more research at this micro-level. Discussing the management of multilingualism by the Swedish public service broadcasting company SVT, Hult (2010) considers television as a language planning mechanism. SVT plays an explicit role in status planning; through governmental policy and licence documents and an implicit
role in discourse and by extension, prestige planning through the decisions it makes in relation to languages. Moriarty (2009) finds that minority language media in particular, have a role to play in language revitalisation planning. Media can affect and effect people’s language attitudes, beliefs and therefore, their language practices (cf. Spolsky, 2009).

Studies on new media technologies and language policy are still lacking, with research in relation to minority language and language policy looking at specific issues such as corpus planning and terminology issues (cf. Baxter, 2009). The special volume of the journal Language Policy moves to rectify this gap in language policy research and media/new media, the papers within investigating multilingual (new) media contexts (cf. Blommaert, 2009; Lane, 2009; Leppänen and Piirainen-Marsh, 2009). Studies such as Kelly-Holmes et al. (2009) investigate the (mis)match of explicit policies and the language reality in relation to public service broadcasting in the Basque, Irish and Sámi contexts and how official language policies play out in relation to de facto language situation. In this study they examine the adaptation of linguistic resources in multilingual contexts via policy and the practices by media professionals and the media. Attention must now be given to how individuals are creating their own language policies in the user-driven context of new media.

To discuss language policy in these new fluid contexts, Blommaert et al. (2009) propose the concept ‘language policing’. Extending Foucault’s theories of ‘police’ and ‘policing’, ‘policing’ is ‘the production of “order” - normatively organised and policed conduct - which is infinitely detailed and regulated by a variety of actors’ (ibid.: 203). They propose a move from ‘policy’ to the notion of ‘normativity’ and then to the ‘policing’ of language practices. The practices and policing of multilingual media contexts question the concept of ‘language’ as set out in the modernist era of official language policies. Practices in these contemporary contexts are ‘hard to classify in terms of established dichotomies (e.g. ‘top-down’/‘bottom-up’ and continua (overt-covert)’ (Blommaert et al., 2009: 204). This concept of ‘language policing’ moves the focus from the dichotomy of ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ and the continuum of overt and covert language policies to the actors involved in multilingual media contexts. They propose a conceptual shift, to now focus on the multiplicity of actors and actions involved in de facto language policy situations. ‘Language policing’ is found in the interplay between policy and practice (Kelly-Holmes et al., 2009).
Irish governments, over many periods saw media as a mechanism for language policy aims. Watson (2003: 17) outlines efforts by the Free State Government and the early governments of the Republic to use radio to preserve and restore Irish in the early 20th century, although much of the actual Irish language broadcasting came down to the use of cúpla focail, a few token words, in Irish which exposed the audience to some Irish and aimed to ‘make Irish a natural part of everyday life’. Some examples of programming are the Listen and Learn series on Radio Éireann in the 1940s and the recent RTÉ series Turas Teanga (2004), which is ‘is an innovative multimedia language course comprising 20 television programmes, a radio series, book, three audio CDs, two DVDs and website.’ (RTÉ, 2013). Next, a subsection will consider the Irish language traditional mediascape from its beginnings in the 1940s to present day.

2.1.16.1 The Irish Language Traditional Mediascape

Watson (2007) discusses the development of Irish language broadcasting from the foundation of the Free State onwards. He highlights 1940 as the ‘zenith’ of Irish language broadcasting, even though at that time Irish language broadcasting on the radio was primarily geared towards language learners. In 1937 the national state radio service which began as 2RN and then Radio Athlone became Radio Éireann (RTÉ, 2012). The programming on Radio Éireann was, as Hourigan (2004) notes, mostly symbolic, with what little programming there was oriented towards basic language learning. From the 1920s on there were discussions about the creation of an Irish language only radio station, however, it was not until 1972 that RnaG was established (Watson, 2007).

Raidió na Gaeltachta (RnaG), the Irish language radio station, was established by legislation, and given the function to serve the Irish language speakers of the Gaeltacht areas with a focus on community issues and news within them. RnaG began broadcasting on Easter Sunday, the 3rd of April 1972 (Watson, 2003). The policy of RnaG from its inception was to have a ‘high standard’ of Irish on air and this would be provided by ‘native speakers’ (Day, 2000). Interestingly, listenership figures are not recorded and published for RnaG as they are for other state and commercial radio entities in Ireland. Watson (2003) points to two studies which assessed listenership figures for RnaG. The 1979 study found that 35% of the Gaeltacht population ‘listened yesterday’, while in 2001 41% of the Gaeltacht population listened.
Another Irish language radio station is *Raidió na Life*, an independent Irish language radio station based in Dublin. It began broadcasting in 1993, founded by *Comharchumann Raidió Átha Cliath Teoranta* [Dublin Radio Co-operative Society], and is staffed by volunteers (Watson, 2007). It describes itself as ‘Urban Irish Radio’ and broadcasts Monday to Thursday from 08:00-04:00, and 24/7 at the weekends, it also streams live online (*Raidió na Life*, 2012a; 2012b). [For more on *Raidió na Life*, in particular its role in language revitalisation, see Cotter (1999).] Day (2000) credits community radio stations with producing more Irish language content than their commercial counterparts in the Irish independent radio sector.

Television broadcasting began in Ireland in 1961, and for the first decade Irish language programming was, Watson (2003) writes, at an ‘absolute minimum’. The liberal ideology of the 1960s changed the focus of Irish language broadcasting from imposing Irish on the public through the education system (as discussed previously) and the radio, to acknowledging that people had choices (*ibid*.). In the 1970s there were campaigns for more Irish language broadcasting on television in Ireland while some called for a separate television channel as with the radio. These campaigns, Watson notes, lasted until the 1990s and the creation of *TnaG* in 1996.

Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2011) identify three eras in the development of minority language media: the gifting era, the service era and the performance era, using the case of the Sámi language in Finland and the Irish language in the Republic of Ireland. These campaigns can be seen as part of the gifting and service eras. The gifting era involves the provision of minority language media primarily by the state, the ‘management and deployment of minority-language resources for the achievement of presence or visibility in the public and high-status domain of media within the nation-state system’ (*ibid.*: 57-8). But it also includes lobbying by minority language activists ‘to make minority language media happen’ (*ibid.*: 58) as occurred in the case of *TnaG*. In the current study, *Facebook* participates in gifting, providing a new domain of use and space for minority languages and their speakers. The service era moves from the gifting of media space to the ‘provision of a service for the minority language speakers, often intertwined with growing political activism and language revitalization’ (Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes, 2011: 59). In this era the language community has ‘wrested’ some power from the state in the development of regional/community stations and they aim to provide a full service in the language rather than fitting into, the gifted slots on national media. Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes believe the campaign for an Irish
language television station was a key focus of this era, the Irish language community now wanted a full television service in Irish.

*Téilifís na Gaeilge (TnG)* began broadcasting on the 31st of October 1996. At the 1996 launch of *TnaG*, Hourigan (2004: 130) notes how management stated that their goal was to create a service that ‘emphasized youth and modernity rather than more traditional aspects of Irish culture’. This focus on modernity, she notes, operated on two levels: to present a modern image of the Irish language speaker, and to offer programming which focuses on modern aspects of Irish society that *RTÉ (Raidió Teilifís Éireann)* did not, in relation to Irish language programming. In 1999 *TnaG* was relaunched as *TG4*. *TnaG/TG4* is different from *RnaG* as although it is based in the county Galway *Gaeltacht* it is primarily national in focus with some consideration for *Gaeltacht* affairs and programming (Watson, 2007). In 2007 *TG4* was separated from *RTÉ*, under the *Broadcasting Act 2001*. Previously, *TG4/TnaG* was under the statutory umbrella of *RTÉ*, although it operated separately (ibid.). Under this new situation *RTÉ* is still obliged to provide *TG4* with 365 hours of programming per year. *TG4* was the biggest Irish language media employer with 75 employees in 2007 (ibid.). Walsh (2011: 217) acknowledges the ‘strong influence’ *TnaG/TG4* has had on the *Gaeltacht* areas in socio-economic terms, noting that the station sources programmes from independent television companies, many of which have located themselves near the station in the Connemara *Gaeltacht*. It can be said that *TG4* has created language workers (cf. Thurlow, 2007).

The trend of the 1990s, as Watson (2007) discusses, was towards an increase in the quantity of Irish language broadcasting, with more Irish language programming being made and shown on many different radio and television stations such as *BBC Northern Ireland*. Watson also discusses Irish language radio and television in Northern Ireland including *BBC Radio Ulster*, *BBC Radio Foyle*, *BBC2 NI*, *Iúr FM* in Newry, *Féile FM* and *Raidió Fáilte* both in Belfast. These programmes, he notes, have been geared towards Irish-speakers and not Irish language learners. The *Belfast Agreement* has played a primary role in the development and provision of Irish language broadcasting in Northern Ireland. *TG4* is available in Northern Ireland since 2005 via *Sky* satellite services (Watson, 2007.).

The Irish language national newspaper *Foinse* was established in 1996 and it existed as a separate newspaper until 2009 when it closed for economic reasons. It is now a weekly supplement with the English language national newspaper *The Irish*
Independent. In Foinse’s life as a newspaper it was published in the Galway Gaeltacht area and ran under the banner of ‘the Irish language weekly newspaper’ [emphasis in original] (Foinse (2003) cited in Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson (2007a: 40)). It had a circulation of approximately 10,000 and Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson (2007b) describe it as catering to regional, Gaeltacht and national Irish language speaker audiences. [For more on Foinse pre-2009 see Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson (2007b)].

There are many challenges for Irish language media, as Watson (2007) notes, one being that, in common with many minority language media, Irish language media have two primary audiences: Irish-speakers, mainly from the Gaeltacht, who want information, entertainment, etc., and Irish language learners. They find themselves in a contradictory ideological situation, being asked to cater for both groups, seen as a mechanism both for language promotion and language restoration and for language maintenance. In other words, fulfilling the linguistic human rights of L1 speakers and ‘speakers of choice’ as Ó Laoire (2008) calls them. Other issues include the peripheral location and nature of much Irish language media. Delap (2008), describes Connemara in the Galway Gaeltacht as the ‘global village’ of Irish language media. However, he also points out that this growth has led to language marginalisation in mainstream media outlets, with little Irish language content available in the English language national newspapers for example. However, this peripheral geographic location of the main Irish language media in the Galway Gaeltacht can provide another outlook on news and other issues: ‘it is not so much a question of reading, watching, or listening to the Irish-language media, therefore, as finding yourself in a different mental and cultural space’ (ibid.: 160). TG4 play on their geographical local and alternative outlook in their marketing strategy the tag line being ‘siúl éile’ meaning ‘another view’. Delap (2008) does however warn of the Irish language media becoming too local, noting it must find a balance between its core audience’s interests and those of the wider public.

Watson (2007) identifies a shift in Irish language broadcasting from the 1940s to the 1970s where Irish language broadcasting was an element of the construction of an Irish-speaking state to one which focussed on providing Gaeltacht communities and Irish-speakers (first and second language speakers and learners) with a radio service (RnaG); it was he writes a move from nation to community. There was also a shift between the 1970s and 1990s from a focus on community to a focus now on the individual (cf. Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes, 2011). Current legislative provisions that oversee Irish language programming in English language ‘traditional’ media
include the *Broadcasting Act 2009*. This gives Údarás Craolacháin na hÉireann [the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland] responsibility for promoting and stimulating production of Irish language programming on radio and television. Watson (2007) outlines how *Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003/Official Languages Act 2003* is focussed on the individual and the provision of services and opportunities for Irish language use at the level of the Irish speaker. Ó hIfearnáin (2000) believes the current management of the Irish language as a distinct marginal issue, seen in minority and heritage terms as bringing threats and opportunities for Irish language media. Watson (2007) attributes the individualisation of today’s media context to an increased focus on audience figures and in the current economic context the researcher would add on ‘value for money’. These issues may distract, Watson fears, from public service endeavours/remit forcing a move to a more commercial outlook and influence.

Ó hIfearnáin (2000) believes the stature of the Irish language on radio is linked to its strength in society, its place in public opinion and national language policy. This view can be extended to the new media domain, the presence of a minority language such as Irish online demonstrates its viability and modernity. Fishman (1991, 2001) and Crystal (2000) include the use of an endangered language in the mass and electronic media as a stage in the reversal of language shift. Ó hIfearnáin (2000: 115) concludes his discussion of Irish language media and state government policy by noting that minority language speakers in the Irish language community have never ‘been in the driving seat’, but at the turn of the 21st century more power and responsibility is being placed in their control, although still within the parameters of the state. He sees the media as contributing to the ‘solution’ of the Irish language situation.

**2.1.17 Language Policy and New Media**

Previously, media were seen as a ‘domain’ through which language planners could ‘channel’ their endeavours as Jones and Singh (2005) note. However, technological globalisation and new media contexts challenge this view. Companies, groups and individuals are now impacting on the language situation as Kaplan and Bauldauf (1997) note, which is especially relevant to new media given its user-driven or citizen journalist nature. Spolsky (2009) notes that a number of participants are involved in language management of this domain, having earlier noted (Spolsky, 2004) that service providers are setting out language rules in relation to obscene language, which he categorises as language management. This demonstrates the service providers
responding to societal language attitudes and beliefs in relation to obscene language and also the explicit written language policy obscenity laws.

Language policy today is ‘rapidly expanding across the world in response to growing real-world communication problems in the wake of economic globalisation, mass migration and communication technologies’ (Lo Bianco, 2010: 154). The effect of new communication technologies such as the Internet on language choice and use cannot be ignored, the Internet has led to: ‘the intermixing of languages, the creation of hundreds, if not thousands, of new words and acronyms, and changes in communication patterns and styles’ (Ricento, 2006a: 20). Shohamy (2006: 10) argues that ‘languages are dynamic, energetic, evolving and fluid’ and Ager (2001: 124) notes that ‘language behaviour is not random nor unplanned’. Therefore, language policy must be affected and effected by new communication technologies also. Ricento (2006a) describes how some view the language situation online as ‘chaos’ and that attempting to regulate language online is pointless. ‘Top-down’ language policy is not common on the Internet, therefore, we must now examine the grass-roots, ‘bottom-up’, ‘unplanned’ language policies that are made in these new contexts. In line with postmodern concerns, as Pennycook (2006: 62) outlines, we must consider ‘the very concepts of language, policy...’ we must examine how new media impact on conceptualisation of language policy.

The Internet is included in Spolsky’s (2009) discussion of the public linguistic space, which is the language policy of our public environment; the places that are neither private nor institutional. In relation to new media, Spolsky singles out translation engines as impacting on the multilingual language situation of the Internet, examples such as these create the de facto language policy of the Internet. The Internet, Shohamy (2006) writes, is a mechanism in which language negotiation(s) take place, which affect language behaviour and practice. Ricento (2006a) too believes the Internet is a site where language policies will determine or influence what languages we will use, our language practices. Given the ‘open and free’ nature of the Internet in contrast to other mechanisms of language policy Shohamy (2006: 128) has examined, she believes it can be a space for different languages and language practices. And due to the possibilities of access worldwide with the possibilities for language alternatives, it can be considered a ‘powerful mechanism’ (Shohamy, 2006: 128.). She does however believe that it can disseminate the English language, but notes the increasing use of a variety of multiple languages and the possibilities for language communities.
The domain of new media is believed to be a free and open space, often thought of as an unregulated medium of instant, global communication. How then do we encounter language policies in this domain? New media are a space for ‘language communities’, and as Spolsky (2004) writes language policy is primarily community based, with language policies at work within language communities of any size. Attention must now be given to the ‘language communities’ which are developing as a result of this age of technological globalisation, and the researcher would argue glocalisation. Androutsopoulos (2009) notes that the Internet and its user-generated content offer ‘unlimited’ potential to challenge official policies and for practising new policies. Blommaert et al. (2009: 206) note, that new media and the Internet in particular is a dynamic space and ‘dichotomies such as top-down versus bottom-up in language policy may not capture fully the dynamics of the processes of normativity and normalisation that operate there’. However, the focus of much research in this area is still on how language policies are ‘interpreted and appropriated’ by speakers and communities, to illuminate the ‘power’ of these ‘to make policy on their own terms’ (Hornberger and Johnson, 2011: 280). In new media there may not be any official ‘top-down’ policy and we must consider the policy corporate and language communities develop themselves.

Leppänen and Peuronen (2012: 397) note that ‘many Internet sites, although they seldom spell out an explicit language policy of their own, often in fact develop some kind of regulatory mechanisms that can also affect language choice and use’. Examples of these mechanisms are etiquette, be it collectively established and monitored, and/ or the ‘policing’ (cf. Blommaert et al., 2009) of language use by moderators and/or other users (Leppänen and Peuronen, 2012). These mechanisms, they note, although implicit oftentimes can be ‘a key fact’ in user’s language choice and use online (ibid.). These mechanisms can be uncovered by survey, interviews or as in the current study, by participant observation and ethnography.

Kelly-Holmes (2012: 343) concludes ‘many global media products still either enforce a one-language policy, generally English, or provide parallel monolingual channels’. Parallel monolingualism is when bilingualism is perceived as ‘the coexistence of two separate linguistic systems’ i.e. as two separate ‘whole bounded units of code and community’ (Heller, 2007a: 1) or two ‘autonomous systems’ (Heller, 2006: 5). Heller (2006: 5) believes that bilingualism or multilingualism as two or a set of parallel monolingualisms is what is valued in the current societal context, ‘not a
hybrid system’. Furthermore, she notes that what is also valued is ‘a mastery of a standard language, shared across boundaries and a marker of social status’ (ibid.). Heller (2007a) calls for bilingualism studies to move away from this ‘“common-sense” but in fact highly ideologized, view of bilingualism’ and to consider a more critical perspective ‘which allows for a better grasp on the ways in which language practices are socially and politically embedded’ (ibid.). This would allow, she believes, ‘a more processual and materialist approach which privileges language as social practice, speakers as social actors and boundaries as produces of social action’ (ibid.). Although many believe, as Hogan-Brun (2011: 325) writes, that ‘Language boundaries have become more fluid through multiple and diverse usage of media for different purposes’, the reality is that new media entities, including Facebook (as will be discussed in Section 6.1.2.2) still treat languages as bounded entities.

Some of the contributions to the volume 12, issue three issue of Current Issues in Language Planning journal (2011) deal with ‘bottom-up’ efforts and practices of language communities and the media (cf. Moriarty and Pietikäinen, 2011; Perrin, 2011). Contributors were asked to consider the ‘role of conventional and new media for language planning... Should the media take account of the cultural heterogeneity of its potential consumers? If so, is enough being done at the national and regional levels to cover the diverse needs?’ (Hogan-Brun, 2011: 326). Overall, Hogan-Brun (2011) finds that the papers of this issue find that media can be used to sustain linguistic diversity and there are ‘possibilities for planning and action at the micro-level, or from below’ (ibid.). Hogan-Brun believes that the contributions to the issue ‘point to the potential of bottom-up practices in the use of conventional and new media for dynamic language planning in minority contexts’ (ibid.: 328). Hogan-Brun also believes that globalisation and new media and communication technologies, challenge or force us to re-evaluate traditional approaches to language planning in plurilingual or minority language contexts. She acknowledges that to be successful, language policy actors from the ‘top’ and ‘bottom’ must work together. Hornberger and Johnson (2011: 281) believe that a sociocultural approach to language policy ‘redefines notions of “bottom” and “top”, since individual agents are allowed to “make” or “enact” policy through everyday interaction’.

In the Irish language context, there is currently no official or ‘top-down’ language policy for the Irish language and new media, although moves are being made in this direction. Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003/Official Languages Act 2003 does
not make provisions in relation to websites of public bodies. However, a public body can include the provision of website services in Irish in its language scheme, which if not provided according to the language scheme, can be investigated by An Coimisinéir Teanga [the Language Commissioner]. Also, in 2010, the Irish government published the Straitéis 20 Bliain Don Ghaeilge 2010-2030/20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030. This strategy ‘promotes a holistic, integrated approach to the Irish language which is consistent with international best practice’ (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2012c). Significantly, one of the nine areas for action it sets out is media and technology. The report notes the ‘new directions’ in which the Irish language is going and that developments in communications and media technologies have ‘immense potential’ and ‘open up new channels for individuals and communities to increase their knowledge and regular use of Irish’ (Government of Ireland, 2010: 26). Possible initiatives discussed include encouragement of writing in Irish by young people in a range of media formats, including blogging and also youth-focussed Internet radio broadcasting (ibid.: 26-7). This strategy is currently in the ‘Establishment Phase’ which the Department outlines will ‘be devoted to the communication of the goals and content of the Strategy and setting up the organisational and operational structures’ (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2012c).

Next, the Irish language and new media is considered by first discussing its predecessor, ICT. A brief overview is then presented of the current Irish language new mediascape and finally, a number of studies which investigate the Irish language and new media are discussed.

2.1.17.1 The Irish Language and ICT

In 2005 Foras na Gaeilge worked with Microsoft to develop and launch Windows XP in Irish. Scannell and Ó Ciardhuáin (2006/07) note that Microsoft controls 95% of the desktop computer market and they describe an initiative in the other 5% of the market by independent software developers and volunteer translators who developed a free/open source Irish language operating system in 2002, which can be categorised as a ‘bottom-up’ localisation effort (localisation will be discussed further in Section 3.2.5). Scannell and Ó Ciardhuáin discuss their involvement in this volunteer developer and translator localisation community whose achievements include: KDE a desktop operating system, office suite and other applications; OpenOffice.org, GNU Translation Project, Linux applications and utilities and Mozilla, an Internet browser. Collectively,
over 1.5 million words (and growing) have been translated into Irish at their time of writing, which they believe may be the largest Irish language translation effort since the 1930s.

In October 2012, the META-NET Network of Excellence funded by the European Commission, published a report on *The Irish language in the Digital Era/An Ghaelge sa ré Dhigiteach* (Judge *et al.*, 2012). With a focus on language technology, this report finds that the Irish language ‘...is at risk of being left behind in respect of such [language technology] advances if action is not taken to provide basic component language technologies to support the language’ (*ibid.*: 44). However, it does find that the ‘strong pedigree’ of translation, localisation and also language technology research means Ireland is in a ‘strong position to develop such technologies and also play an important role both economically and scientifically in making significant advances in the field at large.’ (*ibid.*). New media and their accompanying technologies can be used for language learning, however, wider consideration of this is outside of the remit of the current study.

2.1.17.2 *Irish Language New-Mediascape*

Ní Chartúir (2002) notes that new Irish language websites, chat rooms, etc., are created online faster than any traditional publication can keep track of, therefore, this discussion of the context of the Irish language will focus on the position of Irish online and discuss some key Irish language Internet spaces rather than attempting to provide an overview of every Irish language website, blog etc.

In terms of language policy, policing and ‘verbal hygiene’ (Cameron, 1996) there are no legislative provisions for the Irish language and new media; however there are moves towards developing a strategy as will be discussed here. Foras na Gaeilge, the statutory body responsible for the promotion of Irish, published *Straitéis Idirlín don Óige (Dréacht)/Internet Strategy for Young People (Draft)* report in 2009 (Foras na Gaeilge, 2009). This organisation carried out research to ascertain what online Irish language services young people want, what services are already online in Irish and the gaps between their needs and existing services online. The report acknowledged the use of SNSs by young people and finds there are many profiles available in Irish on Bebo, another SNS popular with teens in Ireland. In relation to Facebook, the report simply notes that it has been localised. The Irish language is available for translation on Facebook via the *Translations* app since July 2008 and completed Step two in October
2009. It remained in step three until October 2011 when a new version of the
Translations app was introduced and the three step translation process removed (see
Appendix 1). The presence of the Irish language online is described anecdotally as
‘Gaeltacht 2.0’, combining the current ‘Web 2.0’ user/community driven context with
the notion of the ‘Gaeltacht’, the state defined Irish-speaking areas of the Republic of
Ireland. Other terms in use to describe the Irish language presence and community on
the WWW include ‘virtual hyper-Gaeltacht’ (Ó Conchubhair, 2008) and ‘cyber-
Gaeltacht’ (Delap, 2008). The creation and use of these terms illustrates that within new
media, there is seen to be an Irish-speaking space and an Irish language community.

There is no seminal text outlining the Irish new-mediascape, although a
number of publications have provided a brief overview. Ní Chartúir (2002) carries out a
search via an un-named search engine for ‘Irish Gaelic’ which generated 2,804 results,
large numbers given the time of this study, a decade ago. These results yielded content
‘from excellent to silly’ but nevertheless gave her an overview of the Irish language
online at that time. She also provides an overview of some Irish language websites at
the time including organisations such as Údarás na Gaeltachta, Comhdháil and
Náisiúnta na Gaeilge, sites that provide the Irish font for download, language learning
sites and the Irish language media outlets online. Kelly-Holmes (2006a) also gives an
overview of Irish language new-mediascape at her time of writing, discussing a number
of Irish language portal sites: Gaeilge ar an Ghréasán [Irish on the Web] and An
Ghaeilge ar an Idirlíon [Irish on the Internet]. Ó Conchubhair (2008) in his discussion
of globalisation and the Irish language diaspora, examines what resources are available
online and lists a number of websites and blogs. Finally, Walsh (2011) acknowledges
the existence of online news website Nuacht 24, the monthly e-zine BEO! and briefly
observes that: ‘Irish language blogs and websites have proliferated’ (ibid.: 66).

Watson, although writing in 2007 in the age of new media, only briefly
considers new media, outlining the main services at that time. In Northern Ireland he
simply notes the BBC website carries information for Irish language learners such as
Bitesize Revision and Colin and Cumberland. Online he credits TG4 with being the
most advanced Irish language webcast service; it has a live stream of content and a
playback feature of broadcast and archived programming. In terms of radio and
podcasting online, Watson believes Irish language new media are lacking and lagging
behind the English language content that is available. Both RnaG and Raidió na Life
offer live streaming and downloadable podcasts online. Podcasts and programmes that
are broadcast on several radio stations/sites exist, and independent, user or community developed podcasts are also available. Again Watson believes the Irish language is lagging behind in these developments, this time in comparison with podcasts available in Scots Gaelic. He also considers digital television and the Irish language, believing it will offer opportunities to increase the number of domestic Irish stations and, therefore, Irish language programming. TG4, he notes, has considered creating a second digital television station, but it has second thoughts on this and at the time of writing here (early 2013) and there have not been any recent developments along these lines. Watson concludes that digital television in Ireland will lead to an increase in the number of channels, leading in turn to further fragmentation of media audience(s) and thus may have negative effects for Irish language broadcasting.

The presence of the Irish language on the Internet is growing, with many traditional or edited websites available, such as: www.gaeilge.ie, the website of Foras na Gaeilge, www.nosmag.com, Nós an online Irish language magazine, and the recently launched www.nuacht24.com, an Irish language news portal with breaking news, daily videos and weekly newspaper features. Nuacht24 is an example of a globalised genre being localised into the Irish language. Indigenoustweets.com tracks Twitter Tweets in indigenous or smaller languages with the aim of ‘help[ing to] build online language communities through Twitter’ (Scannell, 2011). This site reports that on the 25th of October 2012 there were 4574 Irish language Twitter users who had sent 237,537 Irish language Tweets (Scannell, 2012). Ní Chartúir (2002) believes Irish language websites became popular as soon as the Internet began to be used widely in the mid 1990s. Irish language media embraced the Internet and new media, with newspapers such as Foinse and Lá (which is now defunct) rapidly being made available to read online. Raidió na Gaeltachta and TG4 stream most of their programming live on their websites and make archives and podcasts of broadcasted content available, as discussed previously. However, Romaine (2008) urges caution, noting that Irish on the global context may seem bright but Irish ‘at home’ in Ireland and its future, is, in her words cloudy.

Delap (2008) sees new media forms as complementing traditional media efforts, describing the Internet magazine Beo as operating effectively as a ‘cyber-Gaeltacht’ and conceptualising new media in terms of information providing, blogs, and language learning via podcasts, radio/television streaming. He does, however, point to new media and SNSs in particular as an important space for the Irish language, although noting at that time: ‘there is no social networking site operating exclusively through
Irish’ (Delap, 2008: 163). An Irish language SNS AbairLeat, www.abairleat.com, was launched in February 2012, as well as allowing users to connect and communicate it also has an independent learning section which allows language learners to ‘to make their own recordings, complete self-correcting questions and undergo themed interviews – anticipating the correct answers to preset questions’ (AbairLeat, 2013). Whatever the use of the technology, Delap notes that ‘although the interactivity of the Internet opens up many possibilities for the Irish language, content rather than technology must still be the master in this brave new world of choice’ (ibid.: 162).

The foundation and development of RnaG and TG4 resulted from campaigns waged over many years by Irish language voluntary organisations and ‘bottom-up’ efforts of Irish language speakers (cf. Watson, 2003; Hourigan, 2004). In the 20th century media context, these stations could not have been set up without ‘top-down’ policy plans and finance from the Irish government. However, in today’s context of the globalised new media domain, members of the language community are being looked to as the drivers of minority language media development as will be discussed in Section 8.5.3 [See also Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2011)].

2.1.17.3 Irish Language and New Media: Related Studies

One of the first publications to consider the Irish language and the WWW is Kelly-Holmes (2006a). In this study she investigates the authenticity of the Irish language version of the Google search engine and ascertains the range of domains online where Irish is found. She notes from previous research that state support for languages has an effect the new-mediiascape of that language. However, this does not hold true for all languages with state support and she uses the Irish language as an example to ascertain if the WWW is extending the domains of use for the language. To consider these issues Kelly-Holmes carried out searches with five words from ‘typical’ and ‘non-typical’ domains of Irish use and analysed the results according to: the authenticity of the search process and results, the language usage on the sites found, and the domains of use uncovered in the search.

Kelly-Holmes (2006a: 234) finds that the domains in which the Irish language is used online demonstrate ‘the “compulsory” aspect of Irish and its privileged position in Ireland as a result of language policy and planning’. Even the next biggest domain of use, commercial sites, illustrated this aspect of the Irish language as they were mixed domains such as the bookshop elements of statutory Irish language bodies.
She also notes that outside of bookselling there are not many other commercial or retailing opportunities for the Irish language online. She finds the majority of sites examined were in Irish only at 36%, followed by bilingual Irish/English at 23% and English only at 21%. Monolingual Irish, bilingual, and Irish with some English categories were greater than English only and English with some Irish sites. She also notes that on sites where code-switching and code-mixing were found on the Irish with some English, English only and English with some Irish sites, tokenistic use of Irish was most frequent.

Kelly-Holmes also considers language use in terms of the domain of the site. She finds that the most monolingual Irish sites were from the official domain and other domains used by government and language policy institutions. However, sport, arts and entertainment domains had the most instances of English with some Irish in terms of language used. She did not find any standard approach in the commercial domain, with monolingual and mixed language sites used. Finally, she notes that the educational domain sites analysed were mostly bilingual. Kelly-Holmes concludes that Irish is used extensively across a number of domains in her study, which augurs well for the maintenance and promotion of the Irish language in general and in new media. However, she notes that Irish use is bound up with domain, as the official domain is the sector that has the most Irish-only websites. Without the impact of the official and other domains resulting from language policy efforts, the quantity of Irish-only websites she found would be reduced greatly. Finally, she notes that the results of her study do not illustrate that the Internet is affecting the domains in which Irish is used; rather this ‘new’ space is replicating offline domains of use, even down to the type of information and services that are available in English. At the time Kelly-Holmes finds the Internet is an ‘additional medium’ for the existing domains in which Irish is used.

In his study of globalisation and diaspora, Ó Conchubhair (2008) finds that Irish language speakers in any nation-state are no longer in isolation which he credits as an outcome of technological globalisation. He believes ‘the global communication revolution allows Irish-speakers to participate in the virtual hyper-Gaeltacht any where, any time…’ (ibid.: 238). The Irish language communication network, he writes, is now a global phenomenon. Furthermore, Ó Conchubhair notes new media development(s) open the Irish-speaking community up to those not based in Ireland or Irish born.

Finally, Kelly-Holmes (2011) investigates the complex sociolinguistic and ideological context of the Irish language by analysing discussions on the Irish based
online discussion forum *Boards*. She focuses on a thread discussing the political leaders’ debate *as Gaeilge* [in Irish] on the Irish language television station *TG4* during the 2011 general election. From this analysis she identifies three discourses around the Irish language: a ‘truth’ discourse, a ‘them and us’ discourse and a ‘sexy Irish’ discourse. The ‘truth’ discourse is one of wanting to expose the ‘real’ situation of the Irish language; it is an official language but lacks authenticity and use in the ‘real’ world. Secondly, the ‘them and us’ discourse constructs two distinct groups: Irish-speakers and non-Irish-speakers, and also distances these groups from each other. Having a leader’s debate in Irish is perceived as elitist in this discourse. Kelly-Holmes notes that these two discourses are nothing new in the discussions about the Irish language, describing them as ‘strong and familiar’. However, in this online language ideological debate she identifies a third new discourse that of ‘sexy Irish’ (as will be discussed further in Section 2.1.12.1).

Also as part of this study, Kelly-Holmes examines the language practices of those involved in the discussions. She notes the covert policy of the site is that all posts are English only, the Irish language board, along with other language sections, is marked as different to the English language, as it is categorised and filed under the topic ‘recreational’. Here in the Irish language board the policy is explicitly stated to be Irish only. The thread of her study contains 83 posts in English only and 5 in Irish only, with a further 27 use English and Irish, although more English than Irish. Considering these results along with the discourses of the thread on the presidential debate in Irish, Kelly-Holmes concludes that an important element of the sociolinguistic reality of Ireland, the mixed everyday language practices, are erased. Rather, those involved in this debate see ‘complete monolingualism in Irish or English or balanced bilingualism between two separate linguistic systems as the only possibility for normal language relations’ (2011: 531). The current study also considers the language practices, of both *Facebook* (Section 6.1.2.4) and the Irish *Translations* community (Section 7.2.1.1).

In looking at new media contexts, one must be aware that this is a space where Internet users are language policy actors, but users operate within a space provided by a company, service provider etc. Individual language policy actors are also subject to the language policy of the site providers; implicit or explicit (cf. Leppänen and Piirainen-Marsh, 2009). There is ‘low-scale policing practices’ by new media users and the policy of new media providers, e.g. *Facebook* (Androutsopoulos, 2009). In the postmodern spirit in light of recent developments in communicative technologies on
macro and micro levels, we must re-examine the concept of language policy, to rethink, to disinvent and to reconstruct (Pennycook, 2006; Makoni and Pennycook, 2007). The field of language policy like others concerned with dynamic and changing systems ‘must be ready to change and not just recognize new phenomena but re-evaluate old data and existing theories in the lights of new knowledge’ (Spolsky, 2012a: 15).

The current research offers a new perspective in language policy research, focussing on a community which is very much a ‘language community’, formed on the basis of a common language and with a common goal to translate that language in the Facebook context. Language policy is not just unidirectional, but can be found in ‘multiple discursive relations’ (ibid.) which this current study investigates, the language policy of the language community and of Facebook itself; the new media outlet. Having considered language policy, the next section will consider language ideologies, an intrinsic element of language policy (Spolsky, 2004), in particular when considering the covert, implicit nature of language policy in the new media domain.

2.2 Language Ideologies

‘Language ideologies’ are present in – and expressed through – the metalinguistic discourse of Facebook’s Translations app and in the metalinguistic commentary of Facebook translators as a community. Schieffelin and Doucet (1998) note that language issues and orthography provoke emotional reactions in Haiti, the context of their study and this is also true of other countries and societies such as Spain (Paffey, 2007), Germany (Johnson, 2005) and Latvia (Hogan-Brun, 2006) as will be discussed below. We can now expand to the new media domain, where language issues and emotional reactions are rife. This section of the literature review will firstly discuss the development of language ideologies of a field of research. Next, language ideologies will be defined and the terminological and conceptual issues with this term considered. Then, the study of language ideologies will be discussed, along with the related notions of ‘language ideological debates’, including a number of related studies which use this, and ‘metalanguage’. Finally, this section concludes with a discussion of language ideologies in relation to translation, media and, as with the current study, new media.

2.2.1 Language Ideologies: Development of Field

The field of inquiry of ‘language ideologies’ is broad, intersecting with a number of fields of interest, anthropology, (socio)linguistics, sociology to name a few. Blommaert
(2006: 241) credits the development of language ideologies from Sapirian and Whorfian linguistic anthropology. Woolard (1998) notes this in the seminal volume Schieffelin et al. (1998), there is no single core literature and ‘language ideologies as a field contains a number of different emphases. Gal (1998) discusses how Schieffelin et al. (1998) bring together concerns from the ethnography of speaking approach, metalanguage, interaction, language contact and language policy and reframes them as questions of ‘language ideology’ which allows for new insights. Johnson and Ensslin (2007a: 7) note that the field concerned with ‘language ideologies’ incorporates theoretical insights from ideology studies as a connecting point between the areas of linguistic and social theory. These studies question the power and interest that are intertwined in language structure and use, in which various contexts (cultural, social, discursive, historical, economic, technological and political) linguistic processes are embedded. McGroarty (2010: 10-30) emphasises the nature of language ideological research as interdisciplinary and both diachronic and synchronic. She gives an overview of the many methodologies and approaches to language ideological research including: social psychological studies using surveys and questionnaires, corpus based research using frequencies and key word analysis: qualitative research looking at classroom interactions and language choice in specific contexts and studies investigating the ideologies in language teaching materials, institutions.

The early attempts at organising and formulating language ideology as an area of enquiry were carried out by Kroskrity, Schieffelin and Woolard. They edited a special edition of Pragmatics in 1992 on language ideologies and held a symposium on ‘language ideology: practice and theory’ at the 1991 annual meeting of the American Anthropology Association. The organising principle of the symposium Woolard (1992: 235) writes was the belief that ‘language ideology is a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk’ and that ideology is in a dialectical relationship with and therefore influences social, discursive and linguistic practices. Woolard [and by extension Kroskrity and Schieffelin the co-editors] believes that language ideology can be a ‘much needed bridge between work on language structure and language politics, as well as between linguistic and social theory’ (ibid.: 236). Woolard calls for the systematic analysis of language ideology in language studies, building on Goffman (1972) she believes language ideology does not just appear sometimes or should be kept at a distance and not drawn on occasionally or ignored. Drawing on Geertz (1964) she calls for attention on the ‘semiotic processes’ via which ideologies come to signify
Woolard describes how the term ideology began appearing in language studies in the 1970s and 1980s, noting the existence of the Silversteinian concept of ‘linguistic ideology’, ‘grammatical ideology’, ‘purist ideology’, ‘language ideology’, ‘ideologies of standardization’ and ‘ideology/ies of language’ across a number of disciplines (ibid.). These studies she finds are all concerned with the cultural conceptions of the nature of language and point to a need to review and co-ordinate this field of inquiry. Woolard espouses the use of ‘language ideology’ to label the field as almost all of the related studies are concerned with the social origins of thought(s) on language and the term ideology believing it ‘calls attention to the socially-situated and/or experientially-derived dimension of cognition or consciousness, simultaneously positioning our research with traditionally cultural and social theoretical realms’ (ibid.: 237).

Later, Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) review the literature on ‘ideologies of language’. At the time of their review Woolard and Schieffelin note it is an area of academic research ‘just beginning to coalesce’, with no explicitly defined boundaries and with no single core literature (ibid.: 55-6). The studies they review all have different focuses with Woolard and Schieffelin stressing language ideology ‘as a mediating link between social structures’ (ibid.: 55). Woolard and Schieffelin note three academic discussions (at least) concerned with language or linguistic ideologies: studies looking at language contact, studies of public discourse(s) and studies concerned with language ideologies with regard to linguistic structures. Related research they note is also found in studies of metalinguistics, attitudes, standards, etc., which deal with the cultural attitudes and beliefs about language(s). Woolard and Schieffelin give an overview of several approaches to the study of language ideology in several areas of research including: ethnography of speaking approach, studies looking at language contact, competition and politics, literacy studies and historical studies to name a few.

Woolard and Schieffelin, in personal discussion with Kroskrity, believe that the study of language ideology can be a bridge between linguistic and social theory as it ‘relates the microculture of communicative action to political economic considerations of power and social inequality, confronting macrosocial constraints on language behavior’ (ibid.: 72). The study of language ideologies is for all languages and language users, it is an area of study which can as Mc Groarty (2010: 3-4) writes ‘illuminate’ analysis of language(s), communicative interactions and situations of formal/informal language use. Mc Groarty believes language ideologies can illustrate the ‘boundary- and
identity-making functions within a community’ due to the variety and varieties of language users know and combine (ibid.: 9).

2.2.2 Defining Language Ideologies

Woolard (1998: 3) defines ‘language ideologies’ as ‘representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world’. A similar broad definition she points to is that of Rumsay (1990: 346) who conceptualises language ideologies as ‘shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world’. Woolard (1998: 3) also points out that ‘language ideologies’ are not about the language alone, but also tie language to identity, aesthetics, morality and epistemology. She further notes their possibilities and remit as these ties lurk behind linguistic form and use, but also notion(s) in relation to individual persons, social groups, social institutions, the nation-state, etc. An example of this in the current research is the issue of the individuals behind the translator, such as whether their name is in Irish or English alongside the ‘language ideological debates’ of the community of translators. Schieffelin and Doucet (1998: 286) see ‘language ideology’ as the ‘mediated link between social structures and forms of talk, standing in dialectical relation with, and thus significantly influencing social, discursive and linguistic practices’. Drawing on Woolard (1992) they go further describing research on language ideology as ‘a bridge between language structure and language politics, as well as between linguistic and social theory’ (Schieffelin and Doucet, 1998: 286).

These very broad definitions of the nature and remit of language ideologies are counteracted/complemented by other more explicit and bounded definitions. Silverstein (1979: 193) describes ‘linguistic ideologies’ as ‘sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use’ and here we see the correlation of ideologies with the internal structure of the language itself and its domain/context of use (see further below). Bringing the notion of the social to language ideologies as Woolard (1998) notes are Heath (1989) and Irvine (1989) who emphasise the individual, group, cultural, political and other influences and aspects of ‘language ideologies’.

Spitulnik (1998) develops Woolard’s (1998) assertion that language ideologies are never just about language alone. She notes the involvement of power, social relations and cultural stereotypes, amongst others, in language ideologies and language valuation processes. Language ideologies are about the construction and
legitimation of power and the development of social relations regarding sameness and
difference (Spitulnik, 1998), both of which we find evidence of in the everyday
interactions of the community of translators in the current study. In the Facebook
Translations app, an element of the community position themselves as more ‘senior
translators’ and exercise power in the translation and voting processes, steering them
according to their wishes (see Section 7.2.5.1). Furthermore, debates about which
dialect/standard of Irish to use for the Facebook version/translation illustrate the social
construction of a Facebook standard by the ‘senior translators’ (see Section 7.2.4.5).

Silverstein (1998: 125) writes that ideology is an ‘intensional characteristic,
predictable of a society, or of a group in a social formation abstracted from society;
ideology is even predicable as a possession or characteristic of individuals so long as
they are understood to be living within some defined population’. Like culture and
language he notes ideology is shared and also found within an individual’s
consciousness Watts (1999: 68) views language ideology as ‘a set of beliefs about the
structure of language and/or the functional uses to which language is put which are
shared by the members of a community’. This definition demonstrates the ‘sharedness’
of language ideology and ideologies. Silverstein further notes how these characteristics
are problematic to our investigations, and affect the validity of our discussions on the
language and culture we examine. Mc Groarty (2010: 3) draws on Silverstein (1998) in
her definition of language ideologies ‘the abstract (and often implicit) belief systems
related to language and linguistic behaviour that affect speakers’ choices and
interpretation of communicative interaction’.

Gal (1998: 319) writes how the concept of ‘language ideology’ encourages
analysis which encompasses social interaction and state policy to illustrate the
verbalised, thematised aspects found in discussion and the implicit understandings and
assumptions embedded and reproduced via state institutions. In the current study the
language policy and language ideologies of the domain itself, Facebook, are considered
to illuminate the language policies and practices of the language community, the
Facebook translators. Blommaert (1999a: 33) and the other contributions to his edited
volume view ‘language ideologies’ as theories of language, and these theories as
discourses, aligning themselves with postmodernist conceptualisations of ‘theories as
reductive mechanisms highlighting some aspects of reality while backgrounding
others’. This they believe will allow them to ascertain the hows and whys of this
theorising and illustrate some of the mechanisms by and through which power is
distributed and exercised.

Gal (2006: 13) describes language ideologies as ‘cultural ideas, presumptions and presuppositions with which different social groups name, frame and evaluate linguistic practices’. Drawing on Woolard (1998) she describes it is ‘a set of cultural notions in the anthropological sense: a frame, not always conscious or within awareness, through which we understand linguistic practices’ (Gal, 2006: 15). Gal also defines the assumptions around nation, state and language an ideology of language as they are a ‘perspective on the empirical world, erasing phenomena that do not fit its point of view… linked to political positions’ (ibid.) and ‘register, accent, voicing, variety, are all terms designating linguistic practices that come to index (point to, co-occur with) some set of social relations, social identities, situations and values’ (ibid.: 17). Language ideologies according to Blommaert (2006: 241) are ‘socially and culturally embedded metalinguistic conceptualizations of language and its forms of usage’ (emphasis in originals). Blommaert describes language ideologies eloquently as the conceptions language users have about language and language use in relation to (perceived) quality, value, status, etc. These conceptions he notes influence the behaviour of the language users, ‘they use language on the basis of the conceptions they have and so reproduce these conceptions’ (Blommaert, 2006: 241-2). The conceptions we internalise are ideological constructs and must be seen as sites of power and authority (ibid.: 242). Blommaert notes all ‘language use is ideologically stratified and regimented’, in every use of language ‘good’ language and ‘bad’ language is distinguished (ibid.).

Blackledge and Creese (2010: 59) ‘do not see ideologies and practices as separate entities. Rather... the interactional is suffused with the ideological and the ideological with the interactional’. The current study investigates the processes of power occurring in the community of Facebook translators, and their effect on the language policy of the community, by identifying the actors, practices and contextual factors of the translation process (Blommaert, 1999a: 11).

2.2.2.1 Language Attitudes

Baker (1992: 10) defines an attitude as a ‘hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human behaviour’. In other words, they are how we explain behaviour patterns and allow us to ‘summarise, explain and predict behaviour’ (ibid.:
11). Attitude research, Baker notes, is concerned with both group and individual representations but with more emphasis on the individual. The related notion of ideology refers to ‘the codification of group norms and values’ (ibid.: 15). Language attitudes are thus primarily concerned with explaining people’s behaviour in relation to language. Garrett (2010) identifies Labov’s (1966) research on the social stratification of speech communities and the influence of the prestige and stigma speech communities attribute to specific linguistic features, as the beginning of the use of attitude as a central concern of linguistics. In other words, language attitudes can be learnt and considered in relation to one’s social group (Garrett, 2010; Lasagabaster and Huguet, 2007). Edwards (1999), drawing on social psychology, acknowledges the great variation in people’s reactions and evaluations of different levels of language, in particular, accents and dialects. He points to the ‘social perceptions of the speakers of given varieties’ (ibid.: 102) as the cause of this variation in language attitudes. In this study, the language attitudes of the Irish Translations app community are identified to consider the language ideologies and language policy of this community and context.

Garrett (2010: 1) notes that language attitudes, or attitudes of language use, ‘permeate our daily lives’, however, they are not always articulated in public nor are we always conscious of them. Baker (1992) only acknowledges attitudes as latent and hidden notions, which need to be inferred from someone’s behaviour. On the other hand, Garrett (2010) believes that many language attitudes are overt, explicitly articulated and oftentimes negative or argumentative in nature. Furthermore, they can be explicitly stated in public domains such as the media and private or local contexts, such as everyday conversations (ibid.). Language use in any domain can ‘reflect and evoke’ language attitudes (ibid.: 3). Edwards (1999) finds, with regard to linguistic stereotyping, that listening to a certain language variety acts as a stimulus that evokes attitudes about that language’s speech community. Language attitudes, Garrett writes, are held in relation to all levels of language, from aspects of usage within a particular language, for example spelling, punctuation and grammar, to issues such as accent, dialect and indeed, languages themselves. The individual translators of the Irish Translations community hold language attitudes in relation to Irish on all of these levels, including on the level of personal names, as will be discussed further in Section 7.2.2.4. Language attitudes as a research concern intersects with a number of related fields, including language learning (cf. Lasagabaster and Huguet, 2007) and cognitive linguistics (Speelman et al., 2013).
Language attitudes can also be affected by language policy initiatives, Moriarty (2010) considers the effect of Irish and Basque language policy on the language attitudes and practices of university students in these contexts. She considers two language attitudes, firstly, their general attitudes, their attitudinal support for the minority language and secondly, language and identity, the degree to which they see Irish/Basque as markers of their ethnic identity. Moriarty finds high levels of attitudinal support for both minority languages; however, this positive support is not necessarily translated directly into actual language use. Huguet and Lasagabaster (2007) believe that in any multilingual context where language policy and planning is to be implemented, an understanding of the attitudinal trends is needed to consider the potential outcomes of this. Also, language attitudes are considered in interaction analysis, to examine ‘the effects of language on social judgement... [as] an integral part of uncovering the communication process’ (sic) (Giles and Billing, 2004: 187). In other words, language attitudes can have a significant influence on many levels, from the macro level to perceptions of cultures and societies, to the micro level of interpersonal relationships. In the Irish Translations app, the language attitudes of translators must be considered to examine the language ideologies of the Irish community as an entity, the underlying beliefs and ideologies that influence the discursive construction of language policy in this new media context, as will be discussed in Section 7.2.

As Speelman et al. (2013) note, language attitudes can be identified in two ways using direct or indirect techniques. Interviews or questionnaires are direct techniques as these measure conscious, intentionally constructed and expressed attitudes, however, as they acknowledge these can be critiqued owing to the possibilities of strategies of self-flattering or social desirability. Indirect techniques ‘target information that is more implicit and less easily accessible through introspection’ (ibid.: 85). Thus, this form of attitude assessment is not subject to the problems direct techniques are. Matched guise technique (MGT) is the most well known indirect measurement tool in this area. In this technique, a number of audio fragments of a number of language varieties all spoken by the same speaker are presented to listeners and their attitudinal responses noted (ibid.). This particular method is often critiqued, Speelman et al. acknowledge, due to its lack of authenticity. The current study uses the indirect and non-invasive technique of ethnographic observation to consider the language attitudes of the Irish Translations community. Two language attitudes that are
identified in the Irish Translations community and are introduced next are language purism and prescriptivism.

Thomas (1991: 1) describes the common understanding of a purist as ‘a person who attempts to purify a language of certain undesirable features – be they unwanted foreign elements, vulgar colloquialisms, or some new-fangled popular jargon’. The act of purification can be performed consciously or unconsciously and by individual and/or collective choice (ibid.). The only criteria of purity is the ‘absence of words of non-native origin’ and it is typically concerned with only the lexicon of a language (ibid.: 10). Thomas notes that no matter what form it takes, linguistic purism is a phenomenon that never goes unnoticed and that ‘even within a community attitudes may be sharply divided over the issue’ (ibid.: 2), as is the case in the Irish Translations app community. It is a value-laden concept in nature, as Hall (1942: 4) [cited in Thomas (1991: 11)] defines purism, it ‘consists of considering one type of language (a given dialect or the speech of a given social class or of a certain epoch etc.) as “purer” than and therefore “superior” to other types’. In the Irish community, purism is frequently considered with regard to the relationship between the Irish and the English languages. Purism as a language attitude, Thomas notes, is both condoned and condemned for many reasons and the responses of the Irish community and its translators to purist attitudes, practices and translators who identify as purists, will be discussed further below (Section 7.2.4.3).

Milroy and Milroy (1991: 1) define prescriptivism as a set of beliefs ‘concerning language which requires that in language use, as in other matters, things shall be done in the “right” way’. Language prescriptivism involves the ‘imposition of norms of usage by authority’, in other words it is a societal construct, ‘imposed from “above” by “society”’ (ibid.: 1-2). Prescriptivism is thus an arbitrary notion, dependant on one’s social context (ibid.). As Milroy and Milroy note, it is probable that most language speakers have opinions on what is ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ in their language use and indeed, that of others (ibid.). Also, instead of relying on their own knowledge, language speakers may look to ‘expert’ opinion to help them decide what is ‘correct’ or not (ibid.). Prescriptivism in this manner is identified in the Irish Translations community, with translators often discussing what is the ‘correct’ translation for a certain term as opposed to other possible translations. Furthermore, individual translators and the wider community impose norms of usage on their translator peers. They also consider official language policy, in particular corpus policy, and ‘expert’
opinion when deciding on translations to use. These prescriptive attitudes and practices of the Irish Translations community and its translators will be discussed further in Section 7.2.2.2.

2.2.3 Terminology

The terms ‘linguistic ideology’, ‘language ideology’ and ‘ideologies of language’ are all terms in use in the literature. Woolard (1998) uses the term ‘linguistic ideologies’ interchangeably with ‘language ideologies’ and also the term ‘ideologies of language’. However, these terms are often delineated as distinct terms, coming from different traditions of use and research, even within the contributions to the Schieffelin et al. (1998) volume. Woolard (1992: 235) does note different usages in that special issue of Pragmatics whether the author focuses on ‘linguistic structures or on representations of a collective order’. Woolard and Schieffelin (1994: 56) note the difficulties with terminology in the field believing that these terms only sometimes signal different emphasis but distinctive definitions are not fixed. In their article Woolard and Schieffelin use the three terms interchangeably. Woolard and Schieffelin assign ‘linguistic ideology’ to studies concerned with formal linguistic structures and ‘ideologies of language’ with studies looking at ‘representations of a collective order’ (ibid.: 56).

Woolard (1998) notes three distinct areas which draw on linguistic/language ideologies. Originating in linguistic anthropology there are studies which are concerned with the relation of linguistic ideology to linguistic structure, as is evident in Silverstein’s definition previously, and is concerned with commentaries on and about language-in-use. These commentaries can be implicit or explicit and this research is centred on metapragmatics. Secondly, she notes the use of ‘language ideologies’ in language contact, such as ideologies of language purism, standardness and standardisation. Finally, she notes discourse studies, i.e. use of language ideologies to discuss public discourses on language, with a focus on ‘ideologies of language’. The current study is concerned with ‘language ideologies’ in a manner that intersects with all these traditions. In the community of translators comment can be made on the metalinguistic discourse which occurs in the Discussion Board of the app as the translation process progresses. The ‘language ideologies’ of the media context, Facebook itself and the translators, can be examined from a language contact standpoint as Facebook manages the multilingualism of the site via the Translations
app, its technical interface, the evaluation of language and its ideologies on language as discussed in their own publications (*The Facebook Blog*, etc.). The metalinguistic discourse of the community of *Translations* also illustrates ideologies in relation to language contact and there is evidence of linguistic purism (Thomas, 1991) with the discussions of the community. Furthermore, the language beliefs and attitudes of the *community of translators*, as a community of practice (CoP) and individual *translators* and of the corporate entity *Facebook* are bound up in the overall context of discourse(s) on/about language and the ‘ideologies of language’ these contain.

### 2.2.4 Examining Language Ideologies

Language ideologies must be investigated as they ‘influence our understanding of what is usual; they shape a constellation of “common sense” beliefs about language use. As these beliefs continue to hold sway, they assume ever-greater force, regardless of their accuracy or correspondence to present realities’ (McGroarty, 2010: 4). Language ideological research examines ‘what people think, or take for granted, about language and communication’ (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994: 56). Language ideologies are numerous, as Woolard and Schieffelin put it ‘there is as much cultural variation in ideas about speech as there is in speech forms themselves’ (*ibid.*: 55). Language ideologies can illustrate the power relations and roles of same in contexts as diverse as social settings, within institutions and in language policies (*ibid.*). This Woolard and Schieffelin believe highlights the importance of their study as a form of social analysis. Furthermore, McGroarty (2010) points to the current era of globalisation and the forces that encompasses it as illustrating the importance of research looking at the power of individuals and groups. Gal (1998: 323) believes that ‘hegemony is never complete... ideologies – including linguistic ideologies – are multiple and at odds’. Attempting to identify the complex nature of language ideologies is the focus of a number of studies. A wide range of studies are concerned with competing ideologies about language in the nation-state context, the media, reaching into all domains, in situations of translation, language policy and language change settings. Spolsky (2012a: 9) notes that empires have both the power and efficiency to ‘develop strong language policies leading to homogeneity and hegemony’. In the current study, we see the language community themselves are aiming for homogeneity in their task of translating *Facebook* into Irish, as will be discussed in Sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.5.
Schieffelin and Doucet (1998: 285) examine the orthography debates about Kreyòl in Haiti over the previous 50 years. Linguistic and language ideologies are bound up in the creation and development of an orthography for this previously oral language, the decisions involved in orthography development are ‘always based on someone’s idea of what is important’ and thus influenced by frameworks of value. Furthermore, they believe these battles about orthography are bound up in concerns about how speakers want to define themselves to each other and represent Haiti as a nation and ‘Haitianess’ at national and international levels. They draw on Anderson (1993) to illustrate that orthography choice ‘is really about “imagining” the past and future of a community’ (Schieffelin and Doucet, 1998: 285). In the current study ideologies of language contact (Haugen, 1966; Duchêne and Heller, 2007) are also seen in the community of translators (Section 7.2.2.5). Wiley (2000) investigates the ideology of English monolingualism in the USA and how it has been used and influenced policies for the incorporation/subordination of particular groups in the USA. Phillipson (2000) discusses literature of that time on the English language in the world order of languages, noting the various opinions, ideologies and scholarly approaches to the English language. One, some or all of these thoughts on English may influence future language policies, research, etc.

Schieffelin and Doucet (1998) also note that in countries where ‘nation-ness’ (Anderson, 1993) is being negotiated, every aspect of language can be and is contested. Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) too note that ideologies of language are not just about language alone, but are bound up in issues of group/individual identity, aesthetics, morality and epistemology and thus social institutions. This rings true for the Translations app, where a multilingual website and a community-driven translation are negotiated, translation by translation and vote by vote. Woolard and Schieffelin also describe how in these contexts, there is rarely one ideology of language, there are instead multiple, competing and contradictory ideologies of language, which we can see in the discussions of the Irish language translators. These logics, they write, are often claimed to be scientific when they are in fact culturally constructed and may represent political and social interest(s) (cf. Blackledge, 2002; Johnson, 2005; 2007).

A grey area in the field of language ideologies is the fact that they are latent, they are not necessarily stated directly but must be ‘inferred from various forms of observable behavior’ (Mc Groarty, 2010: 11). Mc Groarty believes language ideologies undoubtedly influence one’s language use but their influence is not always directly
observable. However, in the case of the Translations app the influence of the beliefs and attitudes identifiable in the Discussion Board and Style Guide of the app is directly observable in the Vote element of the app. Mc Groarty reminds us that actual language behaviour and explicitly defined language ideologies may not be consistent, ideologies she writes can be ‘internally contradictory (ibid.: 3). Also, language ideologies do not exist in a vacuum but co-exist with beliefs and agendas regarding social norms, government policies, etc.

2.2.5 Language Ideological Debates

‘Language ideologies’ in the media and other contexts are often examined as ‘language ideological debates’. These are defined as ‘debate[s]… in which language is central as a topic, a motif, a target, and in which language ideologies are being articulated, formed, amended, enforced’ (Blommaert, 1999a: 1). In his edited volume, Blommaert (1999b), the contributions all deal with ‘language ideological debates’, which have an impact on the real-life ‘language situation’ of that context share the assumption that ‘language ideological debates’ can influence practices and attitudes. They have consequences such as inequality amongst speakers, restrictions on the use of particular language varieties, negative labels being attached to particular language varieties and the speakers of same. He grounds ‘language ideological debates’ in research examining the relationships between discourse and social conflict, struggle and inequality (Blommaert, 1999a: 2). By ‘debates’ Blommaert means processes of discursive exchange, clearly bounded speech events that can be part of decision making processes and also, debate in the ‘larger, slower type of debate’ (ibid.: 11-2), which occurs over a prolonged period. Debates are an excellent research site, as there are so many processes, thoughts, attitudes and ideologies going on. Blommaert notes ‘they are textual/discursive, they produce discourses and metadiscourses, and they results in a battery of texts that can be borrowed, quoted, echoed, vulgarised etc.’ (Blommaert, 1999a: 10), further they can be sites of contestation and negotiation. They influence actions and practices, for example, minority views can become the view of the majority and vice versa, socio-political alliances are shaped or changed in discourse and a variety of discursive means, such as arguments, claims to authority, are utilised.

Those involved in the debates must be identified. Blommaert includes the notion of ‘ideology brokers’ in his concept of ‘language ideological debates’. These he defines as ‘categories of actors who, for reasons we set out to investigate, can [and the
researcher would add do] claim authority in the field of debate’ (ibid.: 9). Ideology brokers include: politicians and policy-makers, interest groups, academicians, policy implementers, the organised polity and finally, individual citizens (ibid.). Blommaert notes, it is not the same ideology brokers in each debate, in the debates of the Translations app, the Irish state is not involved for example, those involved, the translators, are all members of the same peer community.

Blommaert (1999a: 10) acknowledges that debates about ‘language(s)’ can define or redefine those language(s), so too can debates about ‘language ideologies’. Debates about language ideologies are a locus of ‘ideology (re)production’. In the debates of the translators in the current study we can see how the language beliefs and attitudes themselves and the language itself are defined and redefined by the ideologically driven discussions. The influence of ‘language ideological debates’ can be long lasting, the texts, outcomes, conclusions, etc. may become ‘the canon on which echoes, borrowings etc. are based, and from which other discourses or political practices can be derived, or on the basis of which they can be motivated and legitimized’ (ibid.: 9). A debate can be a historical point in the ongoing discourse(s) on a language or language variety. The debates of the translators of the current study are a new context for continuing debates surrounding the dialects, lexical/terminology policy, policy for the language itself: status, corpus and acquisition policy, etc. about the Irish language. The vice versa is also possible, debates can presuppose language ideologies and can cause new direction(s) onto existing language ideologies. This is not to say that all debates are consequential, some are inconsequential but others provide a lexicon and a set of stock arguments which lurk behind the formation of authoritative, folk and expert rhetoric about the language or issue and hegemonise the debate.

Drawing on Bourdieu (1982), ideologies, Blommaert (1999a) writes, are not just taken up and intertwined with popular ‘common sense’ notions and public opinion rather they are reproduced by institutional, semi-institutional and everyday practices. Media practices, Blommaert notes, are a site for these reproduction practices. These practices may develop into ‘normalization’, which Blommaert defines as ‘a hegemonic pattern in which the ideological claims are perceived as “normal” ways of thinking and acting’ (Blommaert, 1999a: 10-1). Therefore, debate analysis must acknowledge the forms of ‘stasis’ both preceding and following them: the structure, causes and development(s) of the debate. Blommaert identifies a number of target domains for the analysis of language ideological debates including: language policy and language
planning, language in nation-building processes, language and symbolic power, language change, the nature of politics as a discursive or textual process, and attempting to better understand ideology and ideological processes. In the language policy/planning domain Blommaert believes that ‘language ideological debates’ may give insights into what goes on behind the scenes in language planning processes, the motivations behind particular language policy options so as to ascertain why certain language planning initiatives failed. In the current study, the concept of ‘language ideological debates’ is used to gain insights into the various language policy processes occurring, from the ‘bottom-up’ perspective, within the language community.

2.2.6 Researching Language Ideological Debates

Collins (1999) examines the ‘Ebonics debate’ of 1997 in California, sparked when a school proposed recognition of and student instruction in Ebonics. This debate he notes was held over a number of different contexts and media domains, including email lists and the Internet. Bokhorst-Heng (1999) investigates the Speak Mandarin Campaign of Singapore as a language ideological debate which occurred in the mass media, within the larger context of the discourses of imagining the Singapore nation.

DiGiacomo (1999) describes a phase of the ‘language ideological debate’ about Catalan and Spanish, sparked by the hosting of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona and the resulting debates until 1996. DiGiacomo sees the print media as playing a ‘double role’ in the reproduction of linguistic ideologies in two ways. Firstly as they are a space where public figures present their positions and fault those of their opposition: indirectly and directly, and as texts themselves print media embody ideologies of orthography, usage, etc. and through the actual usage and practices of the media. Newspapers can become actors in ideological debates, DiGiacomo notes, when they take editorial positions on social and political issues; they oftentimes take positions on language issues and enter as actors in ‘language ideological debates’ (cf. Johnson, 2002; Blackledge, 2005; Paffey, 2010). She also notes that from time to time, journalistic reproduction becomes an issue of disagreement and debate, such as in the negotiations between Spanish and Catalan media over broadcast rights for the Olympics.

Jaffe (1999a) discusses the ‘language ideological debate’ resulting from the 1989 Corsican translation of the French novel Knock, involving culturels i.e. translators and their critics, language ideological brokers (Blommaert, 1999a) and language
workers (Thurlow, 2007). This debate occurred in Corsican cultural and literary circles but it also entered into the public domain and received media coverage. The debate centred on the ways translations from French to Corsican could be politicised and symbolise power relations on a wider historical and societal level. Assumptions about language, identity and power were shared by the translators and their critics, but they disagreed on the function and outcomes of translation to resist French language domination.

Hogan-Brun (2006) examines the ‘language ideological debate’ around educational reform in Latvia in 2004. She examines Latvian and Russian media, and found that the implementation of the educational reform was framed quite differently by the press at the macro level. The actors who claimed authority were positioned in the foreground and their values were emphasised. The Latvian and Russian social groups were framed in the background and continued to be polarised. The data she examines illustrates the difference between the language policy as explicit in law and the real-life beliefs, needs and practices amongst majority and minority language communities.

2.2.7 Metalanguage
Metalanguage is often understood simply as language-about language but, as Jaworski et al. (2004a: 4) suggest, this is too literal a characterisation for what they prefer to describe more broadly as any ‘language in the context of linguistic representations and evaluations’, it is a set of processes including commenting, describing, discussing, comparing, etc., of any aspect of self or others language use or language in general. Certainly, the individual translators of Facebook are engaged in policing language in the sense that Blommaert et al. (2009: 203) talk about the ‘production of “order” – normatively organised and policed conduct’. Metalanguage thus inevitably works at an ideological level, influencing people’s actions and priorities in a number of often quite concrete ways. The current study offers an insight into the ways language ideologies are uniquely produced by the community of translators who are themselves also facilitated (and encouraged) by Facebook.

Blommaert (1999c) highlights the importance of metadiscourse in establishing the language situation of a country, how the language(s) are being debated and discussed in societies can offer sociolinguistic insights. He finds that the metadiscourse used in language ideological debates including the tropes, associations, symbolisations used to discuss language(s), the qualities, disadvantages and how they
should be used in society, all illustrate the ideological sources/traditions drawn on, their
power or lack thereof and intertextuality with other debates, traditions and sources.

Preston’s (2004) model of metalanguage consists of three strata of
metalanguage, metalanguage one, two and three. Metalanguage one is concerned with
language about language, such as when people comment explicitly on language, e.g.
discussing the pronunciation of a word. Niedzielski and Preston (2000: 302) categorise
overt comment about language on a particular phenomena they are aware of as
metalanguage one. Metalanguage two Preston writes are the less explicit commentaries
on language when there is just a mention of talk itself, for example expressions such as
‘in other words… can you say that more clearly… do you understand me?’ (ibid.: 85),
which Johnson and Ensslin (2007a) note is akin to Jakobson’s (1960) notion of the
classify as the presuppositions behind metalanguage one, the ‘unasserted beliefs which
members of speech communities share... [the] shared folk knowledge...’. Finally,
metalanguage three is the general shared beliefs and attitudes around language structure
and use within a speech community and influences the commentary on language of
metalanguage one and, to a lesser extent, metalanguage two (Preston, 2004: 87).

acknowledges, all language use is in some manner metalinguistic,
in that its production and interpretation depend on the successful deployment and uptake of what
has been variously referred to as the framing and keying strategies, contextualisation cues,
metamessages, code-orientation, and a plethora of other signals and devices exploiting and
relying on the reflexive nature of language.

Johnson and Ensslin (2007a) note that metalanguage three from Preston’s (2004)
tripartite model intersects with the field of inquiry investigating ‘language ideologies’.
They believe that studies of metalanguage and ‘language ideologies’ are linked and
even entwined, given many of the ideological underpinnings of language attitudes and
beliefs can be found in what people say about language which is Preston’s
metalanguage one. In relation to the media, Thurlow (2007: 229) acknowledges that the
news-media in particular has ‘more than its fair share’ of language maven or grammar
crusaders who want to uphold and preserve particular linguistic standard(s) as it
disproportionally values negativity. Johnson and Ensslin (2007a) situate themselves in
the ‘meta-zone’ (Jaworski et al., 2004b), interested in the metadiscourse,
metapragmatics, metacomunication, metasemiotics and ‘metamediality’ in and of the
media. They argue for more academic work on the ‘meta-zone’ and specifically in the
media context, to enable us to understand the production and reception of meaning in the ‘meta-zone’ about language, discourse and communication in general. Thurlow (2007: 217-8) writes how popular metadiscourses and media representations frame actual practice, media analysis give us an insight into ‘the ideological assumptions by which social practices come to be institutionally organised and popularly understood - or, in this case, misunderstood’. Horner (2007) too points to metalanguage and language ideologies as areas needing investigation, and as a ‘fundamental dimension’, in linguistic research. Laypeople’s opinions on language are not just misinformed opinions but represent how language is understood and thought of in the ‘real’ world, as Horner puts it ‘lay perspectives on language... are much too valuable to ignore because they provide a window to real-world social dynamics, including the valorization and stigmatization of specific linguistic repertoires’ (ibid.: 144). Metalinguistic discourse is closely allied to notions of power and social order, as Thurlow (2007: 226) writes ‘the promotion or denigration of certain styles and ways of speaking... serves as a means of rehearsing or reproducing the social order’. And he further notes that ‘all metadiscourse... is always a site of constant bureaucratic and interpersonal struggle’ (ibid.).

Jaffe (1999b: 14) writes on the interconnectedness of metadiscourse and language practice(s) noting that ‘metadiscourse is social action, linguistic practice is also always metadiscursive at some level’. Jaffe describes metadiscourse as explicit language practices and distinguishes it from language practices, finding in the Corsican context there is a gap between the promoted image of language practice and the popular everyday conceptions and practices of Corsican. Jaffe does not think of ‘spontaneous linguistic practice(s) as more “real” than ideological statements about language’, instead she examines the social forces that influence discourse and metadiscourse (ibid.: 15).

The contributions to Johnson and Ensslin (2007b) are concerned with metalanguage and the media: how the media represent language-related issues and how media policy and practice in relation to language are central to the construction of what we think language is, could or should be like. Examining media texts and practices where language is thematised, more or less explicitly, their focus is on ‘the language used to reflect on language within the media texts that are themselves the object of study and the language used by the producers and/or consumers of those texts when talking or writing about them’ (ibid.: 6). Schieffelin and Doucet (1998) note how metalinguistic terms themselves become an area of interest in the Haitian Kreyól.
The terms used to describe speech varieties express the hierarchical values that are assigned to each variety.

2.2.8 Language Ideologies and Translation

Meylaerts (2007: 298) includes translation in her definition of ‘language ideologies’: ‘a constellation of beliefs, assumptions and expectations, held by groups of people in a certain geo-political and institutional context, about language use, language values, language users, but also about language contacts and translation’. Cronin (1996) argues that the context(s) of translation are rarely neutral as translation is conducted within the context of existing language regimes and hierarchies with their inherently unequal power relations. Translation in relation to minority languages is oftentimes polemical, which we can see in the current study, due to the unequal relationship(s) between majority and minority languages (ibid.). Negotiation in the current study is between the translators and their context, the confines of the Translations app as designed by Facebook, and between the community of translators themselves in this community driven translation. The importance of investigating translations and translation contexts is stated by Jaffe (1999a: 42) who notes it is a:

metalinguistic and metacultural activity which makes explicit contrasts and conflicts between modes of discourse and models of linguistic value and power which are able to remain buried or implicit in much of everyday life and in some other forms of writing

She believes there is an underlying political dimension to translation, as translation ‘posits a relationship of power (whether equal or unequal) between languages and culture’ (ibid.). Meylaerts (2007) too believes there is an underlying political dimension to all translation, noting that in multilingual contexts languages never coexist as equal partners. Furthermore, Jaffe (1999a) notes that in translation contexts where there are language hierarchies, the political significance of translation is increased. Meylaerts (2007) writes problematic language relations, which we could term the Translations app, involve the perception of language values and oppositions and therefore, language ideologies. This is illustrated in the current study, there are over 100 languages open for translation and translators competing for their translations to be used within these language communities.
2.2.9 Language Ideologies and Media Studies

Lippi-Green (1997: 151) writes about mass media and information, writing that ‘the translation process from raw material to finished news report involves news filters of all kinds’, although discussing media content here, she extrapolates this to apply to language and the kinds of language the media tell us we should and shouldn’t speak or use. The notions of ‘broadcast’ and ‘publication’ standards, due to the use of this standard by newspapers, television and radio, illustrate the role the media can play in the conceptualisation of language ideologically driven notions such as ‘standard language’ (ibid.). Furthermore, in her discussion of standard US English definitions, Lippi-Green notes how the editor of the Merriam-Webster dictionary draws on the ‘language of the educated’ via the media and other contexts, to ascertain the standard for that dictionary: ‘the editor listens to “talk shows, medical shows, interviews, news, commentary, the weather”’ (New York Times, 1993 in Lippi-Green, 1997: 54). These examples illustrate the influence of the media on one notion associated with language: ‘standard language’, which leads us to infer that other language notions and concepts are influenced explicitly by the media. Kelly-Holmes (2012: 333) goes further, writing that the media ‘are one of the main means by which individuals may engage with and be exposed to discourses about multilingualism and multilingual practices’ and therefore, that media can play a ‘major role’ in challenging or supporting existing language regimes, attitudes and ideologies. The media, as Johnson and Ensslin (2007a) note provide a channel for the ‘articulation and transmission’ of language ideologies, beliefs and attitudes. Drawing on Jaworski et al.’s (2004b) and Hyland’s (2005) view of the contextualising function of metalanguage (the study of language representation as constituted by and of linguistic reality), they note that how language is represented provides a discursive frame for language use, but the constitutive role of that meta-dimension influences our understanding of what language is.

Lippi-Green in her chapter on the ‘information industry’, describes the role of the media in the advancement of the notion of homogeneity. She finds a process of linguistic assimilation to an abstract standard is portrayed as natural, common-sense and for the greater social good. In this case, those who claim authority are print journalists, who she finds take ‘a special interest in preserving and promoting a standard written language’ (ibid.: 135-6) and broadcasters who assume a role of overseeing pronunciation and accent issues. In the Translations app context, authority is claimed by
Facebook as the provider and overseer of the web domain (Section 6.3) and also by members of the community of translators (see Section 7.2.5).

Spitulnik (1998) also investigates the role played by ‘powerful institutions’, such as the media, in the production and reproduction of ‘language ideologies’. She illustrates how ‘language ideologies’ are embodied and implicit in the everyday practices of these institutions, such as the division of airtime between languages. She espouses investigating the ‘language ideologies’ of institutional practices as a process of ‘language valuation and evaluation’ (ibid.: 163), which occur through semiotic processes. She conceptualises ideology as a process, language valuation and evaluation, she notes, are processes ‘through which different social values and referents come to be associated with languages, forms of speaking and styles of speaking’ (ibid.: 164). She expands Irvine’s (1989) concept of language ideologies as ‘ideas’, believing that ‘language ideologies’ can be ideas, but also cultural conceptions, meaning construction processes, implicit evaluations, explicit comments, etc. (Spitulnik, 1998: 164). Media practices are both a source for and resulting from particular language valuations and can influence the sociolinguistic landscape of an entity.

Language valuation and evaluation, Spitulnik believes, also allows for a conceptualisation of the ‘interpretive and value-laden dimension of all human reality’ (ibid.), in that all social groups undertake social evaluations, having ideological interests and making judgements. Her example of this concept applied to language is that language use is/can never be value free, due to social judgements and orientations. The linkage of ideology and social evaluation guards against a postmodern critique as ideology assumes a distinction between appearance and reality. Realities can be mystified or falsified by ideologically created appearances, and in other instances ideologies can be both appearance and reality (ibid.).

Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) examine west European newspapers from November 1990 to ascertain the specific role that language played in nationalist ideologies of that time. They find the role of language in nationalist ideology is presented in a political manner, it can be a mobilising force in interethnic conflicts but in reality its resources can be distributed unevenly. They also set out to develop a methodology to approach research on/of ideology, to ascertain the ‘view from below’. To this end they find that a systematic search using pragmatic analysis of patterns of wording, presents an empirical tool for the investigation of ideologies, public opinion and ideas.
Hill (2007: 70) examines how media discourse in the USA works for the interests of the elite by reproducing a ‘personalist’ (Duranti, 1988; 1993) language ideology. A ‘personalist’ view of meaning is one that sees ‘meaning as defined by the speaker’s intentions or psychological state’ (Duranti, 1988: 14). This permits us to say that when a speaker speaks, he or she “means” something. That is, meaning resides not only in the content of words, as determined by baptismal ideology, but in what speakers intend by uttering them. Because of these intentions, words not only represent the world, they represent the inner states of persons’. That is, meaning resides not only in the content of words (Hill, 2008: 89).

Hill (2007: 85) argues for the inclusion of ‘language ideologies’ such as ‘personalism’ in the critical analysis of media discourse as ‘foundational premises in language ideology constitute the frames that make possible the kinds of mystifying hegemonic discourse’ which we are interested in.

Johnson (2007) examines the language ideological debate resulting from the reform of German orthography in the 1990s. Here she concentrates on how the Frankfurt Declaration and the more general disputes about the reform were represented visually on the front cover of *Der Spiegel*, an influential German news magazine in 1996. She investigates how an aspect of language is represented metadiscursively in a visual format by re-thinking the boundaries between language and image and in the context of ‘symmetry’ (Johnson, 2001; 2005). Central to this approach, she notes is ‘the need to move away from a focus on the public and/or the media as the exclusive source of *mis*-understanding or *mis*-representation, together with a demand for greater reflexivity on the part of scientists/academics themselves’ [emphasis in original] (Johnson, 2007: 93). Using Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) framework for analysing the structure and effects of visual and multimodal texts, Johnson (2007) finds the *Der Spiegel* image uses a range of meaning-making strategies with regard to the representation of social actors, modality and image composition that ‘simultaneously... quite cleverly - position the intended viewer as both detached onlooker and actively participating subject in this debate’ (Johnson, 2007: 107). In the analysis of the textual-discursive structure and provenance of the image, she uncovers the analogies underlying it between the 1996 Frankfurt Declaration and the 1848-9 Frankfurt Revolution, which proves that orthography is not just a discrete feature of the language system, instead it and the overall language system operate in the social, cultural and political contexts, not in isolation from it.
Milani (2007) considers the language ideological debate in 2002 around the proposed compulsory Swedish language test as part of the naturalisation process, in particular the language ideology ‘an ideology of language testing’. He analyses the arguments supporting the introduction of the language test to gain an insight into the relationship between language, ideology and media representation(s). Milani also notes that given the role of the print media as a contextual space in which this debate took place, his analysis illustrates how this ‘ideology of language testing’ is (re)produced and disseminated in the press’ (*ibid.*: 112). Language testing is used as a semiotic resource by some social actors who link perceived language skills with representations of social, economic and moral aspects of Sweden. These social actors, he finds, are helped by the print media and, through it, become public voices who attempt to bring to life a ‘regime of representation’ in which a subjective logic is masqueraded as natural common sense ‘buttressing the legitimacy of particular set of political proposals’ (*ibid.*: 127). Drawing on Gal and Woolard (2001), Jaffe (2007b) investigates how the Corsican media are involved in ‘the public construction of languages, the linguistic construction of publics, and the relationship between these two processes’ (Gal and Woolard, 2001: 1). Using data from Corsican regional radio station RCFM, Jaffe’s focus ‘is on the creative, constitutive role of media practices and representations *vis-à-vis* the languages/codes of the community, the audiences/identities/publics indexed by those languages, and the way that language identity are assumed to be connected’ (Jaffe, 2007b: 150).

Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson (2007a) examine a bilingual comedic sketch on a radio programme, where a parody of ‘Hector’ a L2 Irish-speaking television personality (who presents programmes on the Irish language *TG4* and in English on the national broadcaster *RTÉ*) meets a parody of Tom Cruise. The context of this study is a very different genre to that of press releases, speeches, reports, etc., about Irish in the media. They find the discourses of ‘Irish as a waste of time’ and Irish as ‘a language of no relevance in the world’ in media texts, and also that if an individual is making a statement in relation to the language, oftentimes typically they declare their competence in the language and refer to the status and role of Irish in the world (*ibid.*: 178-9). Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson note that a pattern of attitudes and ideologies emerges from the surrounding media coverage, this pattern they describe in terms of two continua: the competence in the language and the status, the role and importance of the Irish language worldwide. This pattern continued into the comedic genre under study here, where the character of ‘Hector’, is situated on the competence continuum and via the context of
the sketch, goes along the status continuum from Irish as a dead language to Irish at the heart of Irish identity and defining ‘otherness’. Rather than finding these two discourses incompatible, Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson find these views are almost necessary in any discussion of the language in the media: ‘the one counter-balancing the other and providing a check so that a point of view can be mainstreamed’ (ibid.: 186).

2.2.10 The Move to Language Ideologies and New Media

Although written in 1996 on the cusp of Internet popularisation, Cameron notes the promise of ‘language mavens 2.0’, writing how global communication on language matters is possible via the many communication spaces of the Internet seeing ‘cyberspace as an ideal arena for swapping linguistic trivia and debating matters of usage’ (ibid.: ix). Language attitudes and ideologies in the current study play a particular role in the language policy of the Facebook Translations community, as Cameron writes: ‘all attitudes to language and linguistic change are fundamentally ideological’ (ibid.: 4). To Spitulnik (1998) the mass media are a domain for battles regarding language representation due to their visibility and publicising function. Media here are also a communicative space of the nation-state, all the languages, language varieties and speech communities of this bounded entity, which then creates relationships between all of these. What then of the domain of new media, the free, uncensored, open, alternative, multilingual space where the line between media producer and consumer/audience is becoming ever more porous and fluid? How is language used/represented/created/negotiated in new media spaces which contain commercial entities such as Facebook, speech communities such as the community of translators, the focus of the current study, and individuals with their own practices and beliefs? In the present context of technological globalisation and new media (see Section 3.2.8) as Johnson and Ensslin (2007a) note, the communicative landscape, and the contexts of production and reception have changed exponentially over the past decade. The re-ordering of discursive contexts, increased public participation and interactivity have changed the notion of co-presence where language users are (Johnson and Ensslin, 2007a: 9). But new technologies have also heightened the linguistic reflexivity of language users and as Johnson and Ensslin put it the policing and disciplining of language, discourse and communication.

Research on the interaction of new media and ‘language ideologies’ includes Ensslin (2010) in which she investigates the use of Received Pronunciation
(RP) and Standard North American English accents in computer games. She finds that the use of ‘standard’ and ‘nonstandard’ accents utilised and reproduced stereotypical images of their speakers with regard to social class, race and gender. But she also notes the subversive potential of new media, that what is valuable online, including language, is not necessarily the same as the offline world. In the same volume, Johnson et al. (2010) analyse the BBC Voices website, which was developed to celebrate linguistic diversity in Britain. They find that although attempting to ‘materialize an ideology of linguistic diversity’ on the site, there is tension between the attempts at presenting linguistic diversity and the visual prominence of southern England as a representation of the UK as a whole (ibid.: 246).

Johnson and Ensslin (2007a) in discussing the representation of language issues in the media, question the belief that the media mis-represents what linguists know about language and thus the wider public mis-understands what there is to know about language. In other words, they question the ‘conduit metaphor’ (Reddy, 1993), which views knowledge as there to be discovered by the experts, who decide what is then communicated about the knowledge to the public. In terms of language and media, the media are seen to mediate or interrupt the flow of (accurate) information from expert to the public. This view of course is reliant on linguists communicating via the media, a process which Johnson and Ensslin (2007a) believe linguists have not realised the value of and do not do, noting that oftentimes linguists have not tried to communicate their knowledge on language via the media for fear of misrepresentation. However, Johnson and Ensslin point out the ‘conduit metaphor’ does not account for the meaning-making processes and agency of the producers and consumers of the media texts, the motivations of the media are not understood and the public are passive and uncritical readers of the selected information they receive. They wish to explore the meaning-making processes, the nature of language and communication, when examining language in the media.

In the current study new media is not just a medium of communication through which knowledge is presented or mis-presented, it is a space that allows knowledge to be presented from many sources, ignored and discussed. New media are a space where ‘language ideologies’ from many sources, individual and commercial interests as will be considered here, meet and influence language practices and in the current study, the construction of language: ‘Language is itself subject to a process of discursive construction’ (ibid.: 8). Furthermore, the ‘language ideologies’ of the media
itself, here *Facebook*, are important as Johnson and Ensslin write media policy and practice in relation to language are ‘central to the very construction of what we all (experts or otherwise) think language is, could, or ought to be like’, influencing language practices (*ibid.*: 4).

Norrby and Hajek’s (2011b) volume includes a section on ‘language policy in real and virtual worlds’. However, of the six chapters in this section, only two of these deal with the new media context, Kretzenbacher (2011) and Norrby and Hajek (2011a) both consider netiquette and forms of address online. Kretzenbacher (2011: 226) notes that new forms of communication have lead to the creation of many online communities and sub-communities which have ‘their own respective sets of communicative rules and conventions, explicitly or implicitly expressed and policed in various ways and degrees of intensity’. Kretzenbacher investigates ‘policies of appropriate linguistic behaviour’ in German-speaking Internet forums. In particular, he is concerned with the German address forms, the informal *du* and the formal *Sie*, in other words ‘netiquette policies’ (*ibid.*). The common assumption online he finds is that the informal *du* is the default address pronoun, with many arguing that the Internet is a different social space of offline contexts and that it has its on rules in this instance. Kretzenbacher finds that addressing policies for online groups are established in three ways, by (1) tacit or expressed reference to perceived address policies valid across the web, (2) by way of an interred address policy of the particular forum (which I term *a priori* policies) or else (3) by explicitly discussing the setting up of an address policy for the particular forum’ [emphasis in original] (*ibid.*: 228). He notes that these discussions can be started by forum members or administrators.

2.3 **Language Policy and Language Ideology**

Having discussed the notions of language policy and language ideology distinctly, this section considers the interrelatedness of policy and ideology. First, the relationship between ideology, practices and policy is investigated. Next, a number of studies which examine language policy and ideology are outlined. This section concludes with a discussion of policy, ideology and power.

2.3.1 **Relationship between Ideology, Practices and Policy**

Language ideology and language practices are at the heart of language policy; this is particularly applicable in the new media domain where there are little official, ‘top-
down’ language policies. Discussing speech communities, Spolsky (2004: 14) points out, that their shared beliefs about language practices ‘can be a basis for language management or a management policy can be intended to confirm or modify them’.

Language practices are the ‘sum of the sound, word and grammatical choices that an individual speaker makes, sometimes consciously and sometimes less consciously, that makes up the conventional unmarked pattern of a variety of a language’, the ‘conventional differences between levels of formality of speech and other agreed rules as to what variety is appropriate in different situations’ and in multilingual societies the ‘rules for the appropriacy of each named language’ (ibid.: 9). Language practices are what people actually do. Spolsky describes a speech community as sharing a general set of beliefs in relation to language practices and that this can form a consensual ideology. However, it must also be noted that many different practices, beliefs and ideologies are found within a given speech community. Some members of that community can act as implicit language managers or correlate their language activities with the explicit policy. In other words, there could be numerous levels of language policy ongoing within a particular speech community, as will be discussed in the current study (Section 7.2.5).

Given the expanded view of language policy, which goes beyond explicit language policies to include implicit and unconscious language decisions as language policies, Shohamy (2006) questions the differences between language practice and language policy. This question is very relevant to language use on the Web, where there are fairly limited explicit policies. Spolsky’s (2004) model of language policy, as discussed above (Section 2.1.2), includes the language beliefs of a community and he believes language practices are the manifestations of language policy. These efforts are often seen as common-sense or natural as Tollefson (1991) notes. Spolsky (2004: 217) also writes that choice, ‘the choice of a specific sound, or expression, or of a specific variety of language’ etc, is the ‘very core’ of language policy (ibid.: 42). Shohamy (2006) feels that taking an expanded view of language policy leads one to question the difference between policy and practice, as they influence and affect each other, in a symbiotic manner.

However, Spolsky (2004: 96) is more cautious, as he notes it is ‘… risky to assume that ideologies lead to policies. In fact, beliefs about language choices and values tend to be inconsistent and inconstant, to vary with changes in the ecology, and to be partially or at least open to influence of language practices and manage’.

Language policy and practice can be now conceived of as having a relationship of
dynamic dialogue, rather than one based on opposition (Androutsopoulos, 2009).
Androutsopoulos reminds us, that language practices ‘often aim at embedding or
realizing an overt language policy’, but by doing so, they transform policy, adapting,
adjusting or challenging it (ibid.: 286). He finds that ‘rather than practice translating
policy, it is policing that emerges in and through practice’ (ibid.). Influenced by
Spolsky’s (2004: 222) statement that ‘the real language policy of a community is more
likely to be found in its practices than its management’, the current study examines the
language beliefs and practices of an online community within the context of a new
media site, with its own language ideologies and practices. This study is attempting to
link Internet practice with language policy and language ideology, starting from the
perspective that all language decisions made in the community and SNS context are
language policies in themselves, manifestations of personal, community and
organisational language policies, with varying levels of authority.

2.3.2 Language Policy and Language Ideology Studies
Jaffe (1999b) investigates language practices and language ideology bound up in the
language planning efforts to reverse language shift in Corsica. The ideological
underpinnings of the Corsican language planners themselves are examined and she
looks at how these ideologies are situated in the historical context of the European and
French political economies of the Corsican context. Furthermore, she investigates the
effects of minority language activism and the dominant language policy on language
practices and attitudes. Jaffe writes that the language situation in Corsica is defined by
the language ideologies and policies of the French state and found in social institutions
of Corsica and the local reactions of accommodation and resistance to language
domination. Jaffe proposes an analytical typology to discuss the conditions where
dominant ideologies of language and identity can be resisted and/or transformed. The
three strategies she notes are ‘resistance of separation’, a ‘resistance of reversal’ and a
‘radical resistance’ (ibid.: 2). Jaffe looks at how language ideologies influence language
policy by exploring the ‘effect that the gap between militant discourse and social
practice has had on popular responses to language planning and how these responses
have caused changes in the discourse of language planners’ (ibid.: 15). Jaffe believes
that the language planning strategy of Corsican normalisation via a number of domains
resulted from the language activist’s internalisation of the French language ideology and
a response to what she terms the ‘diglossic mentality’ of their community (ibid.: 23).
She describes how in social institutions such as schools, Corsicans learned the French language and learnt French language ideology and thus naturalised the association of language with a collective national identity, personal identity and worth. They internalised the monolingual norm, learning French meant losing Corsican (ideology). Jaffe believes that Corsicans learnt about the value of the French language in ‘the abstract (language ideology) and in the concrete circumstances of their lives’ (Jaffe, 1999b: 117). Corsican language planners have tried to change language ideology of monolingual/monocultural norm with a more plural and heterogeneous perspective(s) on language and identity (ibid.: 189).

Jaffe undertook an ethnographic study of language policy, language practices and language ideology in Corsica. The focus of her study is on the ‘lived experience’ of language ideologies and policies and how ‘political economies of language are translated into explicit policies and implicit assumptions that shape individual experiences at the local level’ (ibid.: 1). The current study is also an ethnographic study of language policy, practices and ideology in the new media context of Facebook. It investigates what is happening with language in this new domain of language use and how this relates to current conceptualisations of language policy (Section 1.1). Facebook and the translators of this context bring explicit and implicit language ideologies, beliefs and attitudes to this context which affect the language situation of the wider language community on Facebook and the community generated Irish language translation.

The contributions to Ricento (2000b) can be grouped thematically in four categories to assist in the comprehension of the roles language policies played/play in supporting particular political and cultural agendas and interests. The first theme notes that ‘different language policies may share a common underlying ideology, and similar language policies may derive from competing ideological orientations’ (Ricento, 2000c: 3). The second theme is concerned with language policies, finding that ‘ideologies are linked to other ideologies that can influence and constrain the development of language policies’ (Ricento, 2000c: 4). The third theme relates to ideologies in colonial and post-colonial contexts, Ricento writes that ideologies in these contexts ‘do not flow in one direction from the Center to the Periphery; rather, the direction is two-way and colonial ideologies are shaped as much in the Periphery as they are in the Center’ (ibid.: 4-5). Finally, the fourth theme concludes that ‘ideology does not always apply to the efforts of dominant social groups to legitimate their power’ (ibid.: 6).
In Ricento’s (2000b) volume, Pennycook (2000) examines colonial language policies in India, Malaya and Hong Kong to illustrate the complexity of the material and ideological contexts which language is situated in and to discuss language policy in general. Pennycook, in his discussion of the ‘poles’ of colonial language policy demonstrates how colonial discourses on language are intertwined with broader colonial discourses and colonial governance. He notes four important notions when looking at language policies in general: complexity, contextuality, complicity and complementarity and finally, continuity. Firstly, the ‘complexity’ that language policies are in must be noted, in other words the social, cultural, economic and political concerns that are intertwined with language policies. Language policies must also be comprehended ‘contextually’, i.e. how they relate to the particularities of each of context must be investigated to grasp why they have been developed in particular ways and the possible implications of same. Thirdly, the ‘complicity’ and ‘complementarity’ of language policies must be recognised, which Pennycook writes are ‘the ways in which apparently competing or oppositional policies may nevertheless on another level be complementary with each other and complicit with the larger forms of cultural and political control’ (ibid.: 50). Finally, the ‘continuity’ of language policies must be noted, that is, the continuity between the effects of previous language policy efforts and how language is constructed in the present context (ibid.). Pennycook notes how colonial constructions of language still influence current understandings of language and how the Orientalist vs. Anglicist dichotomy is reproduced in current liberal view of the functions of language: identity and intelligibility. Language policy research must oppose this simplistic dichotomisation and view languages as ‘flexible tools of change, not static media of transmission’ (ibid.: 64).

Also in the same volume, Sonntag (2000) investigates the politics of the English language in Northern India, looking at the ideologies of the left and right politically inclined and how these inform English language politics and policy. From this case study he concludes that ideology informs policy but does not determine it and that ideology cannot be derived from policy. Language policies, he writes, are ‘practical applications of substantially amorphous ideologies’ (Sonntag, 2000: 134). He differentiates policy and ideology by noting that policies are contingent and adapt to changes in their material context, while ideologies are persistent in nature.

Later, in Ricento (2006b), Blommaert (2006) places language ideology, a ‘monoglot’ ideology (from Silverstein, 1996), at the centre of his study of national
identity and language policy in the Tanzanian context. Blommaert (2006) believes that print media, print capitalism as he terms it, became an ‘instrument’ for the transmission (‘massification’) of language ideologies. He finds that the Tanzanian case illustrates in terms of language policy that ‘singular projections of language onto national identity do not work anymore’ (ibid.: 249). Language policy, he notes, should be viewed as a ‘niched’ activity, as too should its product: national identity: ‘we can now identify it as a niched ideological activity, necessarily encapsulated in and interacting with many others, regardless of how dominant it may seem at first sight’ [emphasis in original] (ibid.: 250). Baker (2006), in the same publication, notes that in psycho-sociological research on language policy, a strand of research on language attitudes exists from the 1920s to the present day. He acknowledges that language attitudes about a particular language play an important part in language revitalisation, revival, decay and death. In terms of language policy implementation, Baker writes, that attitudes to bilingual education and language laws can affect the outcomes of the strategy. With regard to minority languages, he finds, the attitudes of a community can ‘provide an imperfect barometer of the health of the language’ (ibid.: 210-1).

Milani and Johnson (2010: 4) are concerned with the ‘social mechanisms through which particular ideas or beliefs about linguistic practices are produced, circulated and/or challenged through meaning-making activities under particular conditions... a materialist approach’ [emphasis in original]. Furthermore, they believe this approach cannot be achieved without a close examination of ‘the texts, practices, and politics of mass mediation’ [emphasis in original] (ibid.). Milani and Johnson write that the ‘power of the media in language ideological processes’ lies in how they open up ‘discursive spaces... thereby giving a public voice to a variety of social actors who compete with each other in staking various claims regarding what counts as legitimate knowledge in the domain of language’ [emphasis in original] (ibid.: 5). They also acknowledge that these spaces are not totally open or democratic, as seen in the current study when Facebook intervenes in a ‘top-down’ manner in the Translations app, as will be discussed below (Section 6.3). Milani and Johnson note the potential of new media, and Web 2.0 in particular, open up and provide a variety of discursive spaces, such as the Discussion Board of the Translations app, to individuals, groups and communities who my not have had access to public media fora previously. Milani and Johnson (2010: 6) acknowledge that Facebook and all media producers, can potentially
‘re-scale social, cultural and political capital’, consequently ‘re-shuffling’ authority and expertise on issues, including as in the current study, language.

In the context of minority languages the media can be seen as a site of language policy for the language, both status and corpus policy (Jaffe: 2007b). Also, the language practices of minority language media can raise issues and debates on language standards, authority and authenticity within the language community (ibid.). Jaffe notes that these are linked to how the minority language community is imagined, what speech and speakers are regarded as authentic and/or authoritative. Media practices, Jaffe writes, in this public representational space:

have the power to amplify dominant ideologies and representations of languages and linguistic communities of practice, in which singular identities are mapped onto homogenous codes and monolingual practices... less scripted practice in the media also puts on stage and potentially validates much more heterogeneous linguistic forms, practices and identities (ibid.: 150).

The media are involved in the language revitalisation efforts of Corsican, as Jaffe notes, in status planning, with many speakers learning the language from the informal public domain, including the media. Also, due to the media’s ‘potential to be persuasive and influential for a wide audience’, they are seen to play a part in changing negative attitudes and beliefs about the Corsican language (ibid.: 151). New media too have a role to play; using Corsican with new technologies brings associations with modernity, and again a possible influence on the negative views of Corsican as old, inferior language. Jaffe notes how minority language contexts are not simply for communication or entertainment, but rather are ‘always interpreted as representations of language within politically and ideologically charged frameworks’ (ibid.: 152). People look to the media to ‘represent, legitimate and instruct’ on the minority language and are oftentimes concerned with what is ‘correct’, ‘pure’ or ‘authentic’ (ibid.).

In terms of media production, Jaffe notes how the choices media professionals make in relation to the use of the Corsican language have language ideological implications, with more intense implications if the programme or content is on language or for language teaching. The media have ideological implications through the production choices and practices of the media outlet and also through the evaluations and judgements the audience makes on the media output. Jaffe believes the participants judgements are ‘very likely shaped by the overtly purist ideology of the newscasts themselves, which set up a framework for evaluation in which most of the choices open to Corsican language broadcasters could be negatively evaluated with
respect to some criterion of purity or authenticity’ (1999b: 160). Jaffe concludes that the media are involved in the public construction of language(s) in ways that conform to and resist existing dominant ideologies: bounded speech communities are linked with homogeneous language practices and codes. Gal (2006) makes reference to language ideologies of minority languages and rural accents as being ‘reframed through the Internet’, however, in the current study the new media context and those interacting within it reaffirm more traditional notions of standard language (see Section 7.2.4.5).

2.3.3 Policy, Ideology and Power

Blommaert (1999a) writes that the recognition of the role and influence of language ideologies in sociolinguistics is necessary, when examining the relationships between language and power/social structures and the motives/causes of language change. Blommaert (1999c) notes that language does not just lead a life of its own in the studies conducted in his edited volume, rather when languages are discussed, how people manipulate them, manufacture them and name them becomes apparent. In investigating language policy and the Translations app in the current study, the role of language ideologies in the debates and policy formulation in this context must be considered due to the influence of power and power relations on the translation produced. Facebook as the provider and overseer of the context are in a position of power with regard to the community of translators, but also within the community itself, power relations between translators (Section 7.2.6) influence the actions and outcomes of the translation/voting process – the language.

Ricento (2006c) believes in LPP social structures and processes cannot be considered without ideologies. Furthermore, Ricento notes ‘ideologies end up having very real effects on language policies and practices as they are socially shared’ (ibid.: 50). He also notes that those ideologies that political institutions, education and the media reproduce ‘tend to persist’ (ibid.). Ricento (2000c) warns against a ‘false consciousness’ view of ideology and outlines that his volume seeks to demonstrate that ‘language policy can only be understood in the complex contexts of language use’ (Pennycook, 2000: 64). O’Rourke (2011: 59) notes that a ‘language policy, whether explicitly or implicitly stated, reflects the ideological views and orientations of a society, government, institutions or individuals’. Indeed, she believes that it is possible ‘to infer form language policy decisions or statements what the ideological orientation of a society is in relation to assumptions about a specific language or language in
Hornberger and Johnson (2011: 281) go further, writing that ‘official policy texts... may be trumped by the power of dominant language ideologies’. Akin to Schiffman (1996) and drawing on Milroy and Milroy (1991), Lippi-Green (1997) considers notions of standard language and non-accent, in the US context, as abstractions and myths. Myths, she writes, are used to justify the social order, they are ‘magical and powerful constructs; they can motivate social behaviours and actions which would be otherwise contrary to logic or reason’ (ibid.: 41).

Ricento’s (2000b) volume on politics, language ideologies and language policies aims to explore how language ideologies and politics shape language policies, how policies change over time and why they do. Its main focus is on the English language and the role of English(es) in society. Ricento (2000c: 1) illustrates the variety of ideologies associated with a dominant language and demonstrates that the role of a language, symbolic or functional, within a social niche or a speech even cannot be comprehended without a thorough understanding of the sociocultural contexts it evolved in, which they describe as ‘ideological clustering’. The contributions to this volume note the importance of context to interpreting/discussing language policy(ies) and as Ricento writes ‘the role (symbolic and/or functional) of that language within a particular social niche - or even within a particular speech event - cannot be determined without a fairly deep understanding of the sociohistorical contexts within which it has evolved’ (ibid.).

Ricento’s (2000b) volume illustrates that language policies cannot be understood or analysed as stand alone documents or practices, and he sees ignoring the role of ideology and ideologies as being ‘ideological subterfuge of the worst sort’ (Ricento, 2000c: 7). Tollefson (1991), Ricento (2000a) notes, critiques the view of language planning as a neutral activity, pointing out that ‘this is precisely the sort of attitude that post-structural and neo-Marxist critics identify as ideological, and one which easily becomes hegemonic’ (ibid.: 206). Explicit or formal language policies, Ricento (2000c) writes, are political documents full of compromises and assumptions about expected outcomes influenced by ideologies. Ricento shows that language policies are always socially situated and continuously evolving. Furthermore, he states his volume’s contribution to the field as “teasing out and operationalizing “fuzzy” terms such as ideology and language policy, and showing that there is no one-to-one correspondence between ideologies and policies” (Ricento, 2000c: 2), noting the existence of cited/public/explicit rationale for policies and the hidden agendas behind
these. Another conclusion of the volume is that language policy can achieve different end results for different groups within a nation-state, citing the acculturation aim of the promotion of English in North America in the 19th century which included the aim of the deculturation of other groups.

Gal (2006) notes the wider impact of language ideologies; they are often the basis of sociological and political theories of considerable influence and affect everyday conceptions of ‘language’. Spitulnik (1998) notes previous research which has looked at the construction and maintenance of ‘linguistic hegemonies’ and the ideological functions of language planning and policy institutions. She situates her own research as on a more micro level, below the overall ideological function, examining how the practices within institutions affect/effect language(s) and how they are used. Ricento (2000a: 206) notes that researchers of the first period of language policy and planning research were aware of issues of ideology and hegemony but did not see these issues as central in LPP processes. Hornberger (2006), in her discussion of an integrative framework of LPP, notes that her framework did not illustrate how language planning does not occur in a vacuum devoid of other languages. To account for this missing dimension of the framework she turns to language ideology and to Ruiz’s (1984) concept of language policy orientations, in particular.

Johnson (2005: 5), citing Tollefson (1991), notes that language policy and planning ‘can be seen as crucial areas of social life where struggles for hegemony are acted out in, and over, language as a part of broader social struggles to maintain and contest dominance in social relations’. In the current study, there is a struggle for authority in the Irish Translations community, as will be discussed in Sections 7.2.1.2 and 7.2.6. Johnson and Ensslin (2007a) acknowledge how in the present Western context of late/post modern society, our daily lives are becoming more and more characterised and determined by the production and consumption of mediated meanings. They believe we are involved in an ‘almost constant process of encoding and decoding linguistic and non-linguistic messages’ and, therefore, we are subject to and in control of an abundance of ‘technological and media information flows that construct and transfer ideologies; between ourselves, our information providers and our target audience’ (ibid.: 11). With regard to the current study, as will be discussed in Sections 6.1 and 6.2, the language ideologies of Facebook as a commercial entity, and the expression of these ideologies through the design and administration of the Translations app, influence the language practices of the translators and wider Facebook user
community. Following McCarty (2011a: 9), this study uses the notion of language ideologies to consider the context-dependent language policy processes ongoing on Facebook and its Translations app.

Hornberger and Johnson (2011: 279) state that current language policy research is characterised by a ‘tension between structure and agency, between critical theoretical work that focuses on the power invested in language policy to disenfranchise linguistic minorities, and ethnographic and action-orientated research emphasizing the powerful role that practitioners play in language policy processes’. The current research aspires to consider the complicated context of Facebook and its Translations app and the impact of the globalised new media domain on current theoretical conceptualisations of language policy.

Shohamy (2009) describes the current era of research as the ‘come-back’ of language policy as a discipline in applied linguistics. Language policy research now is concerned with public responses to policies, the motivations behind policy statements, the (mis)match between explicit policies and the language reality and is primarily focussed on the de facto practice of language policies (ibid.). The emerging paradigm of language policy, which the current study continues, ‘explores language policy as an evolving phenomenon shaped and reshaped by discursive practices, which in turn are embedded in the multiple contextual and semiotic resources available in specific social activities and environments’ (Blommaert et al., 2009: 207). It is now acknowledged that language policy cannot be separated from the shared norms and normative discourses of language communities (Leppänen and Piirainen-Marsh, 2009), and in the case of the Facebook Translations app, the discourses of the facilitating new media entity, Facebook. The next chapter will consider the context of the current study, new media, minority languages and multilingualism.
Studies on the micro-scale using ‘Internet ethnography’, as Lievrouw (2004: 13) terms it, such as the current study, can be seen to be situated in the ‘interior turn in new media’. Lievrouw (2004: 13) notes how some scholars warn against small scale studies which obscure the bigger picture of ‘social, political and economic developments, technological changes, and structures of power that do in fact constrain or direct (if not determine) how ICTs are designed and used’. The current research takes this bigger picture into account when discussing the case of the Facebook Translations app, acknowledging the influence of issues such as the digital divide and technological globalisation, the wider context of this research. With this in mind this chapter will consider the macro and micro context of the current study. Firstly, it considers ‘new media’, in particular on the current context of new media research and how the current study subscribes to the definition of sites like Facebook as social network sites as opposed to social networking sites. Next, it reviews recent studies concerned with the Internet and multilingualism, including studies concerned with globalisation, the role of individuals and communities in minority language new media and reconsidering existing sociolinguistic theory, all of which are considered in the current study. Finally, this chapter closes with a discussion of the digital divide, a limitation of the current research and other studies concerned with minority languages and new media. This study acknowledges the popularisation and development of new media technology as a result of globalisation but acknowledges that access to these technologies is not globally universal. Given the terminological differences and definitions in use, as considered in Section 3.1, although the current study uses the term ‘new media’, when discussing other research the terminology these sources use is not changed.

3.1 Defining New Media – ‘The Impossible Task’
This section will focus on the new media context of the current study. Firstly, new media will be discussed in terms of the Internet and WWW and a distinction made between these two as technologies. Next, new media as an entity will be considered, its definitions, terminological issues, nature, etc., and the current field of new media studies outlined. Finally, SNSs as a new media genre will be defined and introduced.
3.1.1 The Development of Internet/WWW and Early Research Field

Berners-Lee et al. (2003), writing in 1994, outline a number of definitions or understandings of what the WWW is. Primarily it is ‘a boundless information world in which all items have a reference by which they can be retrieved’ (ibid.: 793). It is also the address system by which this information retrieval is possible, a network protocol known as HTTP to be used by WWW servers, and a markup language HTML which is used to transmit text, information, etc., online (ibid.). Finally, it is ‘the body of data available on the Internet using all or some of preceding listed items’ (ibid.). The WWW is both the form and the content; the address system and the data available on the Internet. Berners-Lee (2011) defines the difference(s) between the Internet and the WWW (Web):

The Internet (‘Net) is a network of networks. Basically it is made from computers and cables ... the Internet ... delivers packets - anywhere in the world, normally in? well under a second ...

The Web is an abstract (imaginary) space of information.

The WWW is coupled with ‘browser’ software, such as Mosaic, Cello or Netscape, to ‘allow people to navigate in this electronic maze...’ (de Kerckhove, 1995: 54). It is a decentralised network, managed by several not-for-profit governing organisations (Jones, 1998). Although these terms are oftentimes used interchangeably in research the Internet and the WWW are not technically synonymous, as Thurlow et al. (2004: 29) note ‘the web is a technology within a technology; it is just one part of the Internet which also hosts the transfer of other types of documents or files’.

There are issues, terminological and conceptual, with the Internet and the WWW. Silver (2004) describes the situation best as he writes about ‘Internet/Cyberculture/Digital Culture/New Media/Fill-in-the-Blank Studies’. Nayar (2010: 1) notes that the terminology used to discuss cyberculture, as he primarily terms it, is as multiple as the ‘actions’ within it. The terms ‘Internet studies, new media studies, digital media studies, digital arts and culture studies, networked culture studies, information society studies, and contemporary media studies’ (Nayar, 2010: 1) and ‘multimedia, interactive media, online media and digital media’ (Harries, 2002: ix-x) are all in use to describe scholarship concerned with the WWW and culture. To some, what term is used or whether the various terms carry different meanings is not an issue. For example, Nayar (2010) uses the terms cyberculture and new media interchangeably. This is not an issue which will be definitively concluded here, indeed, Manovich (2001: 19) wonders ‘where shall we stop?’ when it comes to defining new media.
There are also many terms in use for new media research. Silver (2000), categorises cyberculture research from 1990-2000 into three stages: popular cyberculture, cyberculture studies and critical cyberculture studies. Popular cyberculture started in the early 1990s and is characterised by its origins in journalistic writing and its ‘descriptive nature, limited dualism, and use of the Internet-as-frontier metaphor’ (ibid.). Cyberculture studies, the second stage in the mid-1990s, involved an influx of academic researchers to the field and included studies concerned with cybercultures’ ‘twin pillars’ - virtual communities and online identities (ibid.). Finally, critical cyberculture studies in the late 1990s, took a broader view of what cyberspace is. As a result, cyberspace is no longer approached as an entity to simply describe; rather it is now a place to ‘contextualize and seek to offer more complex, more problematised findings’ (ibid.).

Another term in use is ‘Internet studies’, which Silver (2004) describes as a meta-field of study developing from older research in computers and composition, computer-supported cooperative work, hyper/cybertext theory, etc. He points to 1995-97 as the ‘central academic beginning of the meta-field’ [emphasis in original] with the publication of a number of important anthologies of Internet studies at that time (ibid.: 57). Wellman (2004: 124-5) acknowledges the very beginnings of the research field of Internet studies, the ‘pre-Internet history’ of the late 1970s to early 1990s and categorises three ages of Internet studies from the mid-1990s to early 2000s. The first stage he terms ‘punditry rides rampant’ in the mid-1990s, when the Internet was perceived as a ‘technological marvel’ above everyday matters (ibid.: 124). The second age Wellman terms the ‘systematic documentation of users and uses’ phase (ibid.: 125). This was at the turn of the 21st century and incorporated the dot.com burst of 2000. Finally, the third age Wellman categorises as the present time, when research is moving ‘from documentation to analysis’ (ibid.: 127). This is the time that ‘the real analysis begins with more focussed, theoretically-driven projects’ (ibid.). Wellman believes the Internet is now making everyone become ‘a communication and information switchboard, between persons, networks, and institutions’ (Wellman, 2004: 125).

3.1.2 New Media
Harries (2002: ix) notes how the term ‘new media’ has become a catchword today ‘both as a description of the digital delivery of media via the Internet, DVD and digital television and as a reference to the “newness” such technologies have brought to media
more generally’. Manovich (2001: 8-9) lists new media as including: ‘Web sites, virtual worlds, virtual reality (VR), multimedia, computer games, interactive installations, computer animation, digital video, cinema, and human-computer interfaces’. In Harries’ (2002) publication *The New Media Book*, a range of new media technologies are discussed, including: cable, satellite and digital technologies, digital film, CDs, DVDs, the Internet and the WWW. Changes in media distribution and consumption are also features of the new media era, Harries believes. Films can now be streamed online, viewers can now interact with a television show while viewing via twitter or other means, and exhibitions are also becoming more interactive (*ibid.*). We are in the age of the ‘integrated media experience’ (*ibid.*: ix). It must be acknowledged, as Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006) do, that the archetype of new media is the Internet. As Murray (2003) notes, we can now define new media more precisely than by pointing to its novelty.

Harries (2002: ix) considers what is the ‘new’ of new media: ‘Is it the ways in which we interact with media? Is it the new convergences (and bundling) of media technologies? Or is it the increasing interdependence (and overlap) of various media products?’ In brief, Harries believes that the new in new media cannot be attributed to any one factor but can be seen as all of these factors and more. ‘New’ and ‘old’ media do not exist as separate bounded media, rather, as he notes, they interact with, depend on and enhance each other in a synergistic relationship. Indeed, he believes that the convergence and fluidity of media forms ‘are some of the most prominent aspects of contemporary media’ (*ibid.*). In the current economic climate Harries notes that old media tap into new media and new media are happy to work with established old media brands. Lievrouw (2004: 14) believes ‘the ongoing process of technological and cultural adaptation, reinvention, and recombination’ is what has made new media new. These processes are still on-going but must now be considered in light of users’ expectations of reliability and stability, which she believes will lead to more regulation, standardisation, institutionalisation and centralisation of new media.

Manovich (2001: 49) also offers a discussion and critique of ‘what new media is not’, some popular thoughts on the differences between old and new media. This includes the assumption that digitisation leads to information being lost, that digital representations can be infinitely copied without degradation and that new media are interactive and co-authored by users in contrast to old media. Just as the broadcast media did not replace the print media at their inception and popularisation, new media
have not supplanted older or traditional media (Lievrouw and Livingstone, 2006). Instead media have converged, as Lievrouw and Livingstone note: ‘people’s information and communication environments have become ever more individualized and commodified, integrating print, audio, still and moving images, broadcasting, telecommunications, computing, and other modes and channels of communication and information sharing’ (ibid.: 1).

Manovich (2001) believes that new media are a convergence of two distinct historical paths, those of computing and media technologies. He believes that the synthesis of these two histories by ‘the translation of all existing media into numerical data accessible through computers’ results in what we now term new media (ibid.: 20). Manovich believes that popular definitions of new media which place the computer as a means of distribution and exhibition of media at the centre of new media are too limiting. Rather, he believes that all new media objects ‘have the same potential to change existing cultural languages, And all have the same potential to leave culture as it is’ (ibid.: 19). Furthermore, Manovich does not believe that what is going on in new media is unique, rather, he situates new media in relation to other areas of culture, present and past.

Kiesler (1997) notes that the inter-relatedness/entwinedness of the relationship between users and new technologies, how people use technology, not just the features of the technology itself, influences whether a technology has an amplification or transformative effect. Kiesler notes the ‘bottom-up’ nature of electronic communication and how these communications comprise ‘fascinating cultural phenomena, and perhaps a significant cultural change’ (ibid.: x). She points to the chapter of her volume *Culture of the Internet* as illustrating how the Internet is a new domain of human activity not just a communicative means or appliance. Castells (2002a: xxx) too argues against the view of the Internet as just a medium of communication: it ‘is not just a tool, it is an essential medium for the network society to unfold its logic. This is a clear case of co-evolution between technology and society’.

Porter (1996) sees Internet users as co-producers of their virtual worlds through the words they use to negotiate and navigate the medium, their identity and interactions with peers. Words, Porter believes ‘can and do stand in for physical presence in these online encounters’ (ibid.: xi-xviii). (See Sections 7.2.3.5 and 7.2.3.8.1 for a discussion of how translators negotiate/subvert the *Translations* app).
The embeddedness of the Internet is a characteristic vital to understanding and carrying out research online, as Haythornthwaite and Wellman (2002: 7) write ‘ignoring the Internet is as huge a mistake as seeing it as a saviour. It is the boringness and routineness that makes the Internet important because this means that it is being pervasively incorporated into people’s lives’. The reality of the Internet, as they write, is more important than the ‘dazzle’ (Haythornthwaite and Wellman, 2002: 5). Silverstone and Haddon’s (1996) concept of ‘domestication’ describes how a new technology has become a part of everyday life. It is not, as Baron (2008) writes, an all or nothing concept there are different levels of domestication according to individual preferences, age, geographical location, etc.

New media, Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006: 1) write, are now ‘everyday’ technologies, ‘embedded and routinized in the societies where they are most widely used’. The current context of new media change involves refinements, adaptations and improvements to existing media as opposed to technological invention and newness: it has ‘gone from radical to routine’ (ibid.). Lievrouw and Livingstone credit this to two major unforeseen events: the bursting of the dot.com bubble and the 11th September terrorist attacks in the USA, both in 2001. They believe the fear of technology being utilised by those with radical ideologies and those who wished to eliminate those ideologies cooled the interest in technological innovation and created demand for safe, reliable technologies. Furthermore, Lievrouw and Livingstone believe that popular interest in new media is now concerned with regulation, reliability and safety as opposed to previous interest in improvement(s) and originality. New media and ICTs have become ‘banalized’ (ibid.). Lievrouw and Livingstone point to the success of new media and their ‘routinization’ as opening up more areas of research, raising questions and necessitating further theorising.

Lievrouw (2004: 10), in her introduction to the fifth anniversary issue of *New Media and Society* notes how the contributions to the special issue all discuss what she terms ‘the “mainstreaming” of new media’. She notes how ‘a variety of media technologies, forms, and content, [are] often lumped together under the single (and misleadingly homogenizing) rubric of “the Internet”’ (ibid.). New media or ‘the Internet’ as outlined, have become commonplace in a number of domains including work, education and leisure. The ubiquitous nature of new media, Lievrouw believes, has led to their being taken for granted. We are in the era of the ‘new, ordinary incarnation’ of new media (ibid.). Lievrouw notes that a consequence of this era is that
users’ expectations are more expansive and routine. Technological change is now more of an incremental process than one of radical developments. Two contradictory trends in the field resulting from the ‘mainstreaming of new media’ are the interest in issues of power and political action and the complacency and ‘lack of scepticism’ around new media and how ‘power relations are built into, and exercised through, all media, including new media’ (Lievrouw, 2004: 11). The issues of power and power relations are illustrated in the current study and will be discussed in Sections 7.2.5 and 7.2.6.

The commercial nature of the Internet is an issue for language related research and Nayar (2010: 4) acknowledges the material nature of new media, reminding us that it is driven by ‘material considerations of profit and power’. It ‘reflects and refracts’ material and ‘real-world’ conditions; as he notes, search engines have their own politics driven by commercial concerns (*ibid.*). Herring (2002) notes access to CMC itself is becoming increasingly bound up in commercial Internet service providers, web browsers and web domains such as Facebook in the current study. New media developments, such as SNSs and Facebook, have huge economic potential; ‘the Internet is big (for) business’ as Nayar (2010: 4) reminds us. Beer (2008: 523) highlights the importance of considering SNSs (as will be discussed below) in their commercial context, as they hold ‘immense value’ in capitalist terms. He believes that boyd and Ellison’s (2008) call to focus research on users’ interactions overlooks the commercial context of SNSs: ‘the software and concrete infrastructures, the capitalist organisations, the marketing and advertising rhetoric, the construction of these phenomena in various rhetorical agendas, the role of designers, metadata and algorithms, the role, access and conduct of third parties using SNS, amongst many other things’ (Beer, 2008: 523).

### 3.1.3 New Media Studies

Lievrouw (2004: 12) notes how new media studies to date have been concerned with ‘micro-scale, social constructivist approaches, opposition to technological determinism, and ethnographic methodologies... the local interpersonal, domestic, experiential... on the interiority of new media uses and meanings’ [emphasis in original]. She believes this is a reaction to earlier 1970s and 1980s ICT and society research which focussed on macro-scale social research and ‘information society’ studies. Lievrouw also asks ‘what’s changed about new media?’, in deliberate juxtaposition to the 1999 first issue of *New Media and Society* which asked ‘what’s new?’ If there is a single difference in the
intermediate five years she believes it is that the earlier uncertainty about the role and significance of new media has now been replaced with more confidence. She wonders ‘what’s next?’ for new media studies (ibid.: 14). As new media become increasingly mainstreamed across many domains, she believes the biggest challenge will be analysing them as normal or banal rather than extraordinary. To do so, Lievrouw believes, we need a better balance between micro- and macro-level research than currently exists; individual experience(s) and society-wide/institutional influences must be considered together to develop stronger descriptions of the role and significance of new media in society. The current study takes both the individual/community level, the Irish Translations community, and the influence of the macro level, here Facebook and the wider WWW into consideration.

For media/communication research today, Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006) believe the central question is whether new media differ from ‘old’ media/communication technologies in terms of artefacts, practices and social arrangements, and if so in what ways?. They espouse a move from analysing media in terms of production, text and audience to artefacts, practices and social arrangements, believing the latter to be broader terms, ‘more thoroughly socialized and inherently culturally and historically conditioned’ (ibid.: 3). Furthermore, they do not outline a set relationship amongst these three components of new media, they see social shaping and social consequences as an ensemble and the interrelationship between these three components as guiding analysis.

3.1.4 Social Network Sites
There is some early research which foresees SNSs as they are today or describes early websites and applications that today would be categorised as a SNS. One such example is Wellman (1997: 179), who, writing in the late nineties, connects social network theory with electronic groups and appears to predict current SNSs:

> when a computer network connects people, it is a social network. Just as a computer network is a set of machines connected by a set of cables, a social network is a set of people (organizations or other social entities) connected by a set of socially meaningful relationships

Furthermore, he describes how an electronic group/community is ‘virtually a social network’ by using social network analysis to describe how users connect to each other via CMC (ibid.). Indeed, Androutsopoulos (2010) does not think of Web 2.0/social media as something completely new, believing it is better understood by considering its
novel aspects in light of previous stages of CMC. He identifies four stages: organisation, interaction, self-presentation and spectacle. For example, he considers social networking sites as a continuation of personal homepages, drawing on Döring (2002), who describes these as beginning the practice of self-presentation online.

Firstly, with regard to the terminology of social network(ing) sites, boyd and Ellison (2008) acknowledge the popular term ‘social networking sites’ is used to describe websites such as Facebook and Bebo, however, they choose to describe these sites as ‘social network sites’. They prefer the use of ‘network’ to ‘networking’ for two reasons: emphasis and scope (ibid.: 211). boyd and Ellison believe that ‘networking’ places the initiation of relationships, possibly between strangers at the core of these sites, whereas they believe that although networking is possible on these sites it is not the main practice users engage in. Furthermore, they do not believe that ‘networking’ is what differentiates SNSs from other CMC; rather, the novelty of an SNS lies in how it enables users to ‘articulate and make visible their social networks’ (ibid.). They believe that SNS users communicate mostly with people they already know, who are already part of their social network. The ‘articulated social network’ is the primary and differentiating feature of the SNS and their term emphasises this feature (ibid.: 210). Beer (2008) responds to boyd and Ellison’s (2008) discussion of SNS. He disagrees with their definition of these sites as ‘social network sites’ as it is too broad and lacks analytical value. Beer (2008) believes there is a need to classify websites under more precise terms to allow for in-depth descriptive analysis. ‘Social networking sites’ and SNSs are in his view two different types of website: ‘we should be moving towards more differentiated classifications of the new online cultures not away from them’ and he calls for a typology of new media sites and cultures [emphasis in original] (Beer, 2008: 519). In other words, he wants to use ‘a term like Web 2.0 to describe the general shift [in new media technologies] and then fit categories, such as wiki’s, folksonomies, mashups and social networking sites within it’ (ibid.).

Using boyd and Ellison’s (2008: 210) term, SNSs can be defined as websites which...
Furthermore, many SNSs target user audiences according to linguistic groups, which is undoubtedly the case with the development of the *Facebook Translations* app. boyd and Ellison define SNSs according to three primary features as:

... web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system *(ibid.*: 211)

Although different SNSs have different features and methods of communication, the backbone of SNSs, according to boyd and Ellison, are user profiles which ‘display an articulated list of Friends’ *(ibid.*). SNS profiles are webpages where, as Sundén (2003: 3) writes, the user can ‘type oneself into being’. Profiles are produced from a number of descriptors, including: age, physical location, Internets, ‘about me’ section, profile photo, etc. *(boyd and Ellison, 2008)*. Some SNSs allow users to change the appearance of their profile *(cf. the SNS Bebo)* and most allow users to upload photos and video to share with their network of friends *(ibid.*). The visibility, accessibility and searchability of profile pages vary according to the particular SNS and according to the privacy settings users choose *(ibid.*).

Profiles on SNSs form networks as if ‘sewn together into a large web’ *(boyd, 2007: 1)* by adding their friends to their list of Friends on the SNS. boyd believes *Friends* lists allow SNS users to ‘articulate their imagined audience... who they see being a part of their world within the site’ *(ibid.*: 2). She believes SNSs are the latest example of ‘mediated publics’; in other words ‘environments where people can gather publically through mediating technology’ *(ibid.*). She believes they are in some ways like unmediated publics, such as a coffee shop or a shopping centre, places where people meet up to converse and where others are present who can be included/excluded in the conversation. Drawing on Arendt *(1998)*, boyd *(2007: 2)* notes how SNSs are another form of social space, allowing people to ‘make sense of the social norms that regulate society, let people learn to express themselves and learn from the reactions of others, and let people make certain acts or expressions “real” by having witnesses acknowledge them’.

SNSs first began appearing in 1997 and became popular in the mid-2000s to 2006 *(boyd and Ellison, 2008)*. *Facebook* at its inception was a Harvard only SNS and to become a member the user had to have a Harvard email account. It then began supporting other college and school networks, although again an email account from the particular college/school was needed. In 2005, *Facebook* expanded to allow high school
students join, then professionals via their corporate accounts, and, finally, anyone who had an email account. boyd and Ellison see 2003 as the year that SNSs became mainstream and 2005 as the year SNSs became a global phenomenon. [See boyd and Ellison (2008) for a timeline outlining the launch of major SNSs and the re-launch of community websites with SNS features.] For an overview of the Facebook SNS and the Translations app see Appendix 1.

3.2 The Internet and Multilingualism

This section first outlines recent statistics for language presence and use online. Next, it examines the influence of the English language online, given its role in technological globalisation. Then, it considers previous language and Internet/WWW research across three periods, firstly that which conceptualised language online as computer-mediated communication (CMC), and the English only, monolingual Internet period. The influence of localisation and glocalisation, both part of the process of technological globalisation are then examined, followed by a discussion of technological globalisation and media, and also, new media. This review then moves to current research in this area, outlining the potential of the Internet for minority languages, some provisions made by authorities for a multilingual Internet, interrogating multilingualism online and recent research on the multilingual Internet. Then, it moves to the specific context of this study considering research concerned with multilingualism and minority languages on SNSs, crowd-based information generation and multilingualism, this includes a discussion of ‘convergence culture’ which facilitates this repositioning of individuals. It concludes by discussing the move to new media sociolinguistics and the sociolinguistics of globalisation in which the current research situates itself.

3.2.1 Internet Language Statistics

Internet World Stats report ‘Internet Users by Language’ in their latest statistics. According to these, the English language is still the most dominant language online, although a number of other languages are catching up. The top ten languages of the Internet used by Internet users, as of the 30th of June 2010, are English with 536.6 million users, Chinese with 444.9 million users, followed by Spanish, Japanese, Portuguese German, Arabic, French, Russian and Korean as illustrated on the bar chart, Figure 3.1, below:
Figure 3.1: Top Ten Languages in the Internet (Internet World Stats, 2012b)

All of the other languages used online are included in the category ‘all the rest’ and make up 350.6 million Internet users (ibid.). Internet World Stats also outline the ‘Top Ten Languages Used in the Web’ as of the 31st of May 2011, included here as Table 3.1 below. The statistics on Table 3.4 correspond to the order of languages as outlined in the bar chart above.
Table 3.1: Top Ten Languages used in the Web  

(Internet World Stats, 2012b)

Table 3.1 also outlines the Internet penetration rate for each language, the Internet growth of that language from 2000-11, the percentage of Internet users that use that language and the world population for that language.

However, Internet World Stats do not outline if these figures are of the number of web pages in that language or number of users depending on language of their country, either way these figures are flawed as for example, Korean language speakers could use English online. Internet World Stats do not count bi- or multi-lingual Internet users. noting that ‘we assign only one language per person in order to have all the language totals add up to the total world population (zero-sum approach)’ (ibid.).

Furthermore, Internet World Stats note the difficulty around statistics and estimations of language(s) and the Internet cautioning that:

Tallying the number of speakers of the world’s languages is an increasingly complex task, particularly with the push in many countries to teach English in their public schools. How many people can actually use the global language? David Graddol estimated a total of 750 million L1 (first or native language) plus L2 (second or nth language) speakers of English in his Future of English Report for the British Council... Kachru’s new book Asian Englishes which claims that India and China combined have over half a billion “users” of English (ibid.).

Pimienta et al. (2009) compare the presence of a number of languages, including Spanish, French and Catalan, to that of English as outlined in Table 3.2
Table 3.2: Web Presence of Studied Languages Compared to English (Pimienta et al., 2009: 28)

[The graph works by reading ‘as of September 1998, for 100 Web pages in English, there were three pages in Spanish, four pages in French, two pages in Italian and one page in Portuguese’ (ibid.).]

They estimate the ‘absolute presence’ of languages online by estimating the presence of the English language online, ‘by iteration, playing with the value of the rest of languages’ and then ‘applying the comparative percentages for other languages from the study.’ (ibid.: 32). Their results are outlined in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.3: Absolute Percentage of Studied Languages in the Web (Pimienta et al., 2009: 33)
Pimienta *et al.* also undertook analysis that used domain names for the English, French, Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries to investigate the production of content in various languages. They found that the USA produces 66% of English language content online in 2007 with the UK producing 6.5%. Canada and Australia also contribute to English language content online but so too does Germany perhaps surprisingly. This demonstrates how many countries for which English is not the first of main language contribute greatly to the production of English language content online. Multilingualism online can also be studied via *Usenet*, blogs, or *Wikipedia*, which Pimienta *et al.* (2009: 38) find to be ‘one of the most linguistically-diverse spaces of the Internet’. Pimienta *et al.* caution that ‘it is increasingly more difficult to make this estimate with confidence, due to the explosion of users in Asia and also taking into account search engine bias (towards English)’ which this method uses (*ibid.*: 32). They consider a variety of methods used over 12 years to measure linguistic diversity on the Internet.

Baron (2008: 24) describes the issues with accurate Internet statistics as ‘like trying to lash the wind’. Cunliffe (2007) and Crystal (2011) warn against reading too much into figures of use of the Internet and language as they do not illustrate the content, purpose, etc., of the webpages or how they are used, and results can vary according to how and what are reported, counted and categorised. Indeed, Leppänen and Peuronen (2012: 387) believe that statistics which report that English is the largest language on the Internet ‘... can be somewhat misleading, in that they suggest that the majority of Internet users are people for whom English is their primary linguistic code. In reality, however, most are non-native speakers of English, for whom English is a resource on which they draw in different ways’. A further complication is that the amount of language used on a website varies widely on a continuum from total localisation/translation to surface/partial translation/language use, thus making its classification in one particular language problematic. Furthermore, Cunliffe (2007) acknowledges the difficulties with quantifying what is a ‘successful’ online presence for a minority language. It has been suggested that UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) oversee the development of databases relating to Internet language presence and of the world’s user profiles (spoken language populations), however this has not happened as yet (Crystal, 2011). [For further discussion of the issues with figures and information about languages online see Crystal (2011: 86-91)].
3.2.2 Technological Globalisation and the English Language

Phillipson (2009: 4) believes that English ‘plays a supremely important role in the ongoing processes of globalization’ and is ‘central to ongoing processes of europeanization and globalization’ (Phillipson, 2003: 23). Phillipson (2003) notes how globalisation has changed the role of national boundaries and languages, with global businesses operating worldwide, with new technologies, in a changing economic system. The English language’s ties with global business entities and its use by these, strengthens its position. Phillipson acknowledges that there are a number of ‘international languages’, Arabic, Chinese, Hindi and Japanese, but finds that none of them has the same status in globalisation as English does. However, he does note that English is not the world’s *lingua franca* or the language of the Internet, instead noting that ‘many languages are used as *lingua francas*, and many languages are used on the internet, including demographically small ones.’ (*ibid.*: 71). Indeed, he concludes that the ‘status of English’ could in the future be challenged.

Seargeant (2009) believes that globalisation is linked to developments in communications technology and the movement of ideas across the globe. He notes that English ‘relates directly to this source point in the process, and is thus implicated in the many consequences of the increased flow of information (and the capital, power and people who follow in its wake)’ (*ibid.*: 64). Therefore, ‘English is often seen as a symbol of globalization, while globalization becomes a key motif in the symbolic meaning that the English language attracts’ (*ibid.*). Caliero and Jenkins (2010: 9) note that the ‘economical situation created by an ethically ambiguous global market has been extremely willing to recognize English as the globally dominant means of communication of our times’. They conclude that English ‘serves as a global means of communication in traditional and new media’ (*ibid.*:10-1).

3.2.3 Early Research: Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)

Early research concerned with language and new media (for further discussion of the concept of ‘new media’ see Section 3.1) approached language use as CMC (computer-mediated communication). Herring (1996a: 1) defines CMC as ‘communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers’. Text-based CMC is defined as CMC in which ‘participants interact by means of the written word... by typing a message on the keyboard of one computer which is read by others on their computer screens, either immediately (synchronous CMC) or at a later point in time
asynchronous CMC’ (ibid.). Baron (2008: 11) uses the term CMC to describe a ‘range of platforms used for conversing online, including email, list servs, chat, or instant messaging’. However, she believes with the advent of mobile communication technologies such as mobile phones, blackberry, etc., the term CMC is ‘something of a stretch’ (Baron, 2008: 11). She notes the use of other terms such as ICTs which refer to the technologies rather than the information they convey. Baron coins the term ‘electronically-mediated communication’ EMC as an umbrella term to describe the numerous types of language transmitted using ICTs (Information Communication Technology). Bringing the Internet and CMC together Herring (2002: 110) notes that the Internet increasingly ‘defines CMC by providing the context within which many, if not most, CMC applications operate’. Previously, LANs (local area networks) and WANs (wide area networks) worked semi-independently, but these were incorporated into the Internet in the late 1990s (ibid.). Thurlow et al. (2004) see CMC as existing since the 1940s when the first digital electronic computer was created or at least since the first prototype emails were sent in the 1960s. They see CMC research from the 1980s and 1990s as ‘classic’ CMC literature, since it was the foundation period of the field when topics of study and issues of debate were identified.

An early seminal work from the ‘classic’ period is Herring (1996b) which comprises 14 interdisciplinary empirical case studies of CMC, with an overall focus on language, culture and social interaction. However, as Herring (1996a) acknowledges all but one of the contributions to her volume are concerned with CMC in English. She outlines three key issues in CMC research at that time: the language of CMC, the role of extra-linguistic cues in CMC, and community formation online. Herring’s (1996b) volume considers CMC from four perspectives: linguistic, social and ethical, cross-cultural and group interaction. The linguistic perspectives in this edited collection use three methodological approaches: corpus linguistics, conversation analysis and text linguistics, all primarily quantitative methods. At this time the primary concern of research was how CMC compared with other language modalities, speech and writing. Later, in 2004 Herring takes stock of how CMC technology has changed from other previous technologies, whether new CMC technologies are causing new social practices and, if so, where these new social practices are going? At this point, the central issue in CMC research is CMC becoming mundane and ordinary and how to reconcile this with the view that technological innovation is endless (Herring, 2004a).
Androutsopoulos edited a special issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* on sociolinguistics and CMC in 2006. The contributions to this special issue Androutsopoulos (2006a: 421) notes illustrate the shift in focus of CMC research ‘from medium-related to user-related patterns of language use’, with group practices to the forefront; it acknowledges the influence of technology on language use but does not see it as a determining factor. The focus of CMC research in this period is on how various communication media are ‘locally appropriated to enact a variety of discourse genres’ (*ibid.*). Androutsopoulos identifies this wave of CMC research as conceptualising the language of CMC as ‘resources that particular (groups of) users might draw on in the construction of discourse styles in particular contexts’ (*ibid.*).

CMC research has now moved from the ‘language of CMC’ in the 1990s to computer-mediated discourse (CMD) as conceptualised by Herring (2004b) (Androutsopoulos, 2006a). Herring (2004b: 338) espouses this approach as ‘Online interaction overwhelmingly takes place by means of discourse’ and thus ‘scholars of computer-mediated behavior need methods for analysing discourse, alongside traditional social science methods such as experiments, interviews, surveys, and ethnographic observation’. Androutsopoulos (2006a) stays with the notion of CMC and outlines two trends at the heart of CMC research concerned with multilingualism on the Internet. Firstly, the English language as the *de facto* lingua franca of the Internet and secondly, studies examining the relationship between transnational communication and linguistic diversity online. The current study is concerned with the role of language policy in the multilingual reality of the Internet, with a special consideration of minority languages. Linguistic diversity studies examine the ‘interplay of global and local forces’ and their effects on the diversity of languages in the Internet domain (*ibid.*: 428). Some specific areas of interest include: the measurement of linguistic diversity online, the potential benefits of Internet use for maintenance and revitalisation and patterns of language choice in different modes of CMD (*ibid.*).

Georgakopoulou (2006) describes the shake-up of sociolinguistics and the effects of this ‘third wave’ of sociolinguistics on CMC research. She acknowledges that the age of innocence [of early CMC studies]... is well and truly over: that things are much messier and more complicated than was previously thought of; that links between language and social and cultural processes tend to be mediated, indirect, variably salient and more or less subtle; that one-dimensional typologies of a textual kind hardly ever work as they are conspired against by interacting and intersecting contextual variables of sorts, making for example spoken and written at best two ends of a continuum that cuts across social practices rather than well definable poles of a dichotomy... (*ibid.*: 549)
Georgakopoulou begins her re-conceptualisation of CMC research with a consideration of its naming, wondering what CMC emphasises? Should other mediated communication forms be brought together with CMC and considered under the broader framework of ‘technologically mediated communication’ research? Or in line with Scollon and Scollon (2004), should all discourse be considered as mediated and so should computer communication be considered using this approach?

Georgakopoulou (2006) believes that the exploration of language choice with regard to the broad repertoire of multi-modal semiotic resources available in CMC would add to our research. She wonders how multi-modality could reinforce or undermine language choice of either the global imaginary or at a localised nature. She is also interested in the role of language choice in self-presentation/styling online, the construction of an identity of belonging and the communicative styles of certain interactive sites. Finally, Georgakopoulou concludes by reflecting on how CMC research has developed from focussing on the features of medium(s) in language use to more contextualised studies which reconsider the concepts and dimensions of analysis, it is now concerned with investigating the role of CMC in the everyday lives of its users and its meaning as a ‘socio-cultural resource and practice’ (Georgakopoulou, 2006: 555). Herring (2002: 152) believes the promise of CMC research is that ‘it will eventually reveal to us the underlying principles, the systematic dimensions of variation, that can account for the relationship between features of communication media and human communication more generally’.

### 3.2.4 The Monolingual Internet
Initially it was feared that the Internet would reinforce the dominant global position of English. The English language often described as the ‘medium of globalisation’ (Wright, 2004a: 157), and Phillipson (2009: 55) also sees processes of globalisation as linked ‘symbolically’ to the English language. A discourse can be seen to have grown around new technologies implicating them in language shift to English. A common anecdote about the Internet and language is the story of the eight year old son of Kyrgyzstan’s President, who went to his father and told him he had to learn English, why the president asked? To which the child answers ‘Because the computer speaks English’ (Crystal, 2011: 78). Warschauer (1999) acknowledges the initial domination of the Internet by the English language, as it was developed and is still dominated by Americans. The technological structure of the Internet was based on the ASCII
Warschauer believes ‘complicates written exchange in anything other than the Roman alphabet’ and has ‘served to normalize the use of English’ (ibid.: 171). He does however foresee the challenging of English in cyberspace by other languages and other English language varieties.

Previously, smaller or minority languages were not seen as viable by new media entities as they did ‘not represent sufficiently profitable markets for the software giants’ (Thomas (2000) cited in Maurais (2003: 19)). Interventions from ‘top-down’ authorities were needed to make these languages commercially viable, for example ‘the Basque Autonomous Government paid… Microsoft in order to have Windows and Office in the Basque language’ (ibid.). However, now ‘the Integrated Product Service team in Windows International responsible for localization… aims to handle 80 different languages’ (Spolsky, 2009: 59). As Spolsky (2004: 87) writes ‘technology and the profit motive work together to open up multilingual possibilities!’.

Thurlow (2001) discusses the diminishing relative importance and presence of English online, which he sees as a result of the increasing presence of other languages, in particular Chinese (cf. Wilhelm, 2010). Furthermore, he notes the increasing commercialisation which demands attention for niche markets as another cause of the lessening importance of English online (as will be discussed in Section 3.3.3). The current study illustrates how Facebook’s desire for more markets has led to the development of a multilingual website.

Others are not so optimistic, Goggin and McLelland (2009) believe English will remain the language of the Internet, despite the increased presence of Spanish and Chinese, due to its role in the architecture of the Internet, domain names, QWERTY keyboards, issues with non-Roman scripts, search engine bias towards English and that most of the information is stored online in English. White (2002) considers the technical background of the Internet, its source code and domain names ASCII and Unicode, and the use and influence of the English language here. He concludes that this will lead to English being the language of Internet developers, related global businesses and infrastructure language for a multilingual Internet. Kibbee (2003: 50), believes that those languages that colonisation has not killed ‘will succumb to the poison of modern technologies of communication’ and quotes Krauss who describes new media as ‘cultural nerve gas’ (Krauss (1992: 6) cited in Kibbee (2003: 50). There is also caution concerning the type of presence a language has online; as Crystal (2011: 81) writes,
there can be disparity among the range and quality of content in some languages, as in
the offline world all languages are not equal. (See Section 3.3 below for a discussion of
the digital divide).

3.2.5 Localisation

Androutsopoulos (2010: 204) notes the discussions around globalisation and its
direction and diffusion of linguistic and cultural elements, but believes another
conversation deserves equal attention: ‘how the global is localized, that is, appropriated
and productively used as a medium of local expression, providing a resource for local
negotiations of identities and relationships’. Localisation is defined as

... the process of adapting products, services and associated documentation so that they are
understandable, acceptable and functional in target locals. Content is made understandable in
locals by accurately translating it, acceptable by taking cultural differences into account, and
functional by post-translation testing and editing (Ryan et al., 2009: 15)

Androutsopoulos (2010: 205) outlines his use of the term ‘localization’ as:

‘a discourse process by which globally available media content is modified in a (more
or less salient) local manner, involving some linguistic transformation to a local code
and an orientation to a specific audience, defined by means of language choice’. He sees
it as a reaction to globalised popular culture which creates a ‘linguistic locality’. It is a
process that draws on a number of semiotic resources, ‘semiotic material from
“elsewhere” is made to speak “from here” and “to here”’ (ibid.) The concept of
‘localness’ he writes is a ‘scalar construct, its scope depending on situated contrast; it
usually indexes a space below the nation-state level, but this can range from a large
region to a small locality’ (ibid.: 205-6). Localisation in his case study involves the
recontextualisation of popular texts: ‘the fit, into a new setting, of social practices that
have been lifted from a previous, perhaps “original” context’ (ibid.: 206). Drawing on
Fiske (1997), Androutsopoulos (2010: 223) conceptualises ‘localization from above – a
corporately driven tailoring of global patterns to local conditions and audiences’. In
the current study Facebook is engaging with ‘localization from above’, making its
website available in multiple languages to gain new markets and new market share on
the basis of language (see Section 6.1.1.3).

3.2.6 Glocalisation

Robertson (1994: 34) writes of the ‘mythology of globalisation’, which sees
globalisation as a wave of cultural homogeneity overthrowing other cultures. He
believes that the global does not obliterate the local, even noting that the local can be constructed on a global basis, it can be regarded as almost an aspect of globalisation, not a counterpoint. As he notes ‘diversity sells’, glocalisation involves the ‘construction of increasingly differentiated consumers’ [emphasis in original] (ibid.: 37). Friedman (2006: 479) credits Indrajit Banerjee, an Indian-born globalisation expert, with the coining of the term ‘globalization of the local’. In an interview with Soh (2005: 29) Banerjee describes the concept as follows:

One would think that globalization in Asia would mean going English but that’s not the case... The diasporic market means you can have international newspapers, international TV and radio channels which are completely based on local languages. This is what I call the globalization of the local. It is not the global which comes and envelops us. It is the local which goes global.

Multilingual business and businesses accommodating to the languages of their consumers is nothing new, with Cooper and Carpenter (1976) finding that it is the seller who usually learns the buyers’ language. Facebook can be seen to be undertaking glocalisation or ‘micro-marketing’ which is the ‘tailoring and advertising of goods and services on a global or near-global basis to increasingly differentiated local and particular markets (Robertson, 1994: 36). It can be described as the “‘interpenetrating” of the “particular” and the “universal”’ (Robertson (1995) cited in Block (2004: 24)) and involves a ‘synergetic relationship between the global and the local’ (Block, 2004: 24-5). Glocalisation oftentimes involves translation, as in the current study, and as Myerson writes, the future of translation lies in ‘technology and automation… but there will always be a place for human intervention’ (Myerson (2001: 13-4) cited in Cronin (2003: 111)).

3.2.7 Technological Globalisation and Media

Fairclough (2006) discusses the media, mediation and globalisation. He believes that the mass media play an important role in the development of new scales, the changing relations between scales, the ‘re-scaling - of spatial entities, and the construction and consolidation of a new “fix” between a regime of accumulation and a mode of social regulation’ (ibid.: 97). These processes depend on a number of factors: on the social dissemination of the discourses, narrative, ideas, values, practices, etc., on their legitimisation, on the positioning and mobilisation of publics with regard to them and on the fostering of consent or compliance with change. Fairclough believes that in contemporary society, the media are the main social field and agent for these processes, with mediation as the primary mechanism: ‘most
public reflection, debate and contestation over globalization, Europeanization and other processes of change take place within the mass media... the primary space in contemporary public spheres’ (Fairclough, 2006: 97). He concludes that the construction of the cultural conditions for economic and political systems and changes, what the cultural political economy identifies as such, is dependant on the influence of the mass media on ‘beliefs, practices, values, attitudes and identities’ (ibid.). He does so with the proviso that one’s social experience is a combination of unmediated and media experience: ‘in which each shapes and inflects their response to the other’ (ibid.).

Hourigan (2004) considers minority language media and media campaigns, as a means of ‘escaping the global village’ focussing on television media, in light of the social change in the European context, the process of globalisation being an underlying theme. She examines the minority language media campaigns in particular with regard to theories of global change and finds that these campaigns resulted from the activities of national elites and broadcasters as opposed to the impact of global media entities on micro communities. Hourigan believes that minority language media campaigners are not reacting defensively to the current context of globalisation rather, they are ‘taking advantage of the opportunities created by global processes to dismantle or challenge oppressive national institutions’ (ibid.: 9). Drawing on Morley and Robbins (1995) who view regionalisation and localisation as occurring in parallel with globalisation, Hourigan (2004: 50) notes how this has created a space for minority language media. Furthermore, in light of their theory on the development of imagined transnational communication spheres, Hourigan sees minority language media campaigns as part of efforts ‘to create a subnational electronic space’. Minority language media can be viewed as resulting from and operating in globalisation, but Hourigan takes it further contending that ‘minority television services and their associated groups are accomplishing from below the same erosion of national structures which globalisation and the EU are accomplishing from above’ (ibid.: 175). In other words, she sees minority language media operating as a force of globalisation through glocalisation, ultimately contributing to the decline of the nation-state: ‘Rather than seeking to escape the global village, campaigners involved in indigenous minority language media campaigns are willing participants as long as they can have their own voice, their own discursive space and some control over their own destiny’ (ibid.: 176).
3.2.8 Technological Globalisation and New media

Manovich (2001: 6) describes the Internet as ‘the most material and visible sign of globalization’. Cooke and Simpson (2012) believe that multilingualism has been intensified by processes of globalisation, such as the electronic mass media and online communication. Friedman (2006: 483) notes that at his time of writing Google was available in 116 languages, which leads him to conclude that ‘the more people can easily inform themselves in their own languages, the more likely those languages and texts are to survive and the more likely others will write in them and not feel compelled to switch to English’. Androutsopoulos (2010) believes research on language and globalisation has not thoroughly considered the WWW and research on CMD has not taken account of the relationship between language online and globalisation. Language must be considered in globalised new media contexts, since, as Honeycutt and Cunliffe (2010) write, language is a ‘powerful mechanism’ which can be used to re-localise global media.

Block (2004) situates the Internet as a global phenomenon, ‘a means of disseminating information, a medium for exchange and a market place’ (ibid.: 35) and cautions that global does not necessarily mean English only. Drawing on Nederveen Pieterse’s (1995) thoughts on hybridisation and Robertson’s (1994, 1995) concept of ‘glocalization’, Block (2004: 24-5) sees globalisation as ‘a synergetic relationship between the global and the local as opposed to the dominance of the former over the latter’. Furthermore, he wonders if there is a parallel ‘linguistic globalization’ where English and lesser used or minority languages are being used more and more as alternatives to national languages.

Androutsopoulos (2010) situates himself at the intersection of globalisation and CMD research, investigating linguistic practices in computer-mediated ‘Web 2.0’ spaces. The primary object of his analysis are ‘vernacular spectacles’ which he outlines as ‘multimedia content that is produced outside media institutions and uploaded, displayed, and discussed on media-sharing websites such as YouTube’ (ibid.: 203). He contends that these spectacles offer those with a local perspective new opportunities to interact with global media flows. These interactions are receptive and productive, again illustrating the prosumer, active consumer, etc. theories, and in terms of vernacular speech offer new opportunities for ‘public staging’ in the current global digital age.

Bolter and Grusin’s (2000) concept of ‘remediation’ addresses what they see as the contradictory needs for immediacy and hypermediacy in culture. They see a
desire for immediacy via media in the audiences wishes to be in the environment of the
media, such as in point of view television with on-board cameras and web camera
streaming online. Hypermediacy is the fusion of media forms and styles in one media
outlet, ‘riots of diverse media forms – graphics, digitized photographs, animation, and
video’ (ibid.: 6). News programmes on television which use split screen displays,
various video streams, photographs and graphics to discuss a news item. Immediacy and
hypermediacy are contradictory but coexisting features of media culture, Bolter and
Grusin (2000: 7, 9) note how these concepts are also dependant on each other:
immediacy depends on hypermediacy. As they write, televised news engages in
hypermediacy to be immediate, to be up to the minute and hypermediated music videos
use the various media elements to portray an immediate style and draw the audience
into the musical experience. They define ‘remediation’ as ‘a double logic... Our culture
wants both to multiply its media and to erase all traces of mediation: ideally, it wants to
erase its media in the very act of multiplying them’ (ibid.: 5).

3.2.9 The Potential of the Internet for Minority Languages

‘Traditional’ media forms, such as radio and television, were seen as a way to revitalise
minority languages – e.g. Fishman’s reversing language shift (Fishman, 1990, 1991).
Crystal’s (2000) theory of language revitalisation also outlines six factors minority
languages should engage with to promote language revitalisation. One of these areas is
‘electronic technology’, with Crystal believing that ‘an endangered language will
progress if its speakers can make use of electronic technology’ (ibid.: 141). Hogan-Brun
(2011: 328) believes that minority language communities can use some of the ‘tools of
globalisation’ such as media and communication technologies to attract potential
speakers, inspire creativity, gain market recognition which could lead to an increase in
the perceived value and also prestige of these languages, aiding their revival and
revitalisation. Warschauer (1999: 177) describes the Internet as ‘potentially the most
democratic medium’, allowing users to control what they access, giving them the ability
to publish their own texts and communicate with others around the world - in others
words it can be controlled from ‘below’ more so than other media forms. Crystal (2001:
221) believes the WWW is ‘the ideal medium for minority languages, given the relative
cheapness and ease of creating a Web page, compared with the cost and difficulty of
obtaining a newspaper page, or a programme or advertisement on radio or television’.
The potential of the Internet for minority languages to create a space for language use and for language communities, for language maintenance and revitalisation has been considered by many scholars. Eisenlohr (2004) discusses a number of ways new technologies can facilitate language revitalisation. They give communities opportunities to hear, see and use the particular language and improve their language skills. Speakers can be recorded and different language varieties within a minority language community archived and/or used for language learning. Furthermore, new technologies offer opportunities for new ways teaching minority languages which can be easier to develop and less costly, for example language lessons uploaded on YouTube. Although, as Eisenlohr (2004) notes, a language must be valued enough to be recorded and then revitalised.

As Cunliffe (2007) and Crystal (2011) note, developing an Internet presence in a minority language is easier than establishing a minority language television station, as a state does not have to be negotiated with nor a public demand for it shown. Furthermore, the costs are subsequently lower and a high degree of technical expertise is not required as there are many free and ready-made websites/hosts to create different types of Internet presence such as Blogger for blogs, Ning for SNSs and Yahoo Groups for community discussion areas. The WWW offers minority language communities the opportunity to be producers of media content as well as consumers (Cunliffe, 2007), ‘produsers’ as Bruns (2008) terms it, as will be discussed below (Section 7.1). Minority language speakers and communities can get their message(s) out there, in their language, quickly, to a potential global audience with or without a translation (Crystal, 2011). It must also be recognised that the existence of the Internet could undermine efforts by minority language communities to develop state assisted minority language media, but could also be used to illustrate the demand for a given language (Cunliffe, 2007).

Minority languages and cultures should not just be viewed as ‘victims of the Internet or as passive recipients of Internet technology, services and content’ (Cunliffe, 2007: 147). Cunliffe (2007) and Cunliffe and Herring (2005) support an acknowledgement of minority language community’s potential to be actively involved and shape this technology by creating their own tools, adapting existing and developing content to their local needs and community: ‘the community must “own” the application or technology is particularly crucial when considering issues of linguistic and cultural integrity’ (Cunliffe and Herring, 2005: 132). Cunliffe’s (2007) view of culture and
technology is that they interact and change each other, therefore the Internet should not be seen as in opposition to minority languages, rather it should be seen as a ‘real opportunity’ for those minority languages and minority language communities who have the resources and determination to, as he describes it, ‘make the transition to the Internet’ (ibid.: 147). The real potential of the Internet, he writes, is not in the replication of traditional media and passive communities of consumers ‘but in the formation of active communities of collaborative minority language producers’ (ibid.: 136-7). These communities, as Cunliffe notes, allow the production of minority language new media and community engagement, and the Facebook community of translators of the current study is an example of this potential.

Cunliffe and Roberts-Young (2005) discuss the possibilities that civil society’s engagement with new media could bring, including: a space to campaign for the particular language, engage with the debate around it, help normalise minority language use and maintain its visibility to speakers, non-speakers and the wider global community. We can see here how ‘bottom-up’ engagement by the language community is seen as key to language maintenance/survival and revitalisation efforts online. Honeycutt and Cunliffe (2010) note that SNSs not only provide a new space and opportunities for minority language use but also, as the current study demonstrates, a space for the language community and others to discuss the language itself and its future (Section 7.2.2.3). Eisenlohr (2004) also discusses the ownership of revitalisation efforts by the language communities themselves. Producing and developing materials for teaching, an online presence, etc., can help speakers identify not only with revitalisation efforts but also with the language itself. It can also lead to strengthening of the offline language community and allows networking with others interested in the language and revitalisation efforts (ibid.).

The WWW does not just mean positive possibilities for minority languages, since, as Cunliffe (2007) notes, it is not clear how minority languages can best use the Internet and other technologies for language maintenance and revitalisation. Indeed, Leppänen and Peuronen (2012: 385) describe early research and developments in the field of multilingualism on the Internet as ‘the dream of a genuinely multilingual Internet’. Warschauer (1999: 177) expresses caution about the possibilities of the Internet for minority language maintenance as he claims that

... there is a difference between a medium and a voice... knowledge of the languages and discourses of power and opportunities to reflect critically on whether, when, and how to use them as well as opportunities to develop and use their own dialects and language as they wish.
He hopes for a ‘digital era that is more free, more just, and more equal than the print era we may one day leave behind’ (ibid.: 178).

Cunliffe also considers the Internet a space of both opportunities and threats. Establishing an online presence is easier and cheaper than gaining access to ‘traditional’ media as discussed above, but attracting users to content, and in particular enticing and motivating teens to use web content in a minority language is not easy given the huge amounts of content available in majority or other languages. Simply having access will not make the Internet beneficial to minority languages, as Cunliffe notes a successful minority language online community needs media producers and consumers. The commercial aspect of the Internet poses a challenge for minority language communities. It is hard to make an argument for minority languages with commercial entities on the basis of social grounds alone, as Androutsopoulos (2006a) acknowledges, linguistic diversity depends on the market volume of the language community online. However, Thurlow (2001), Spolsky (2004), as discussed previously, and also Kelly-Holmes (2005) argue that minority language consumers can become an attractive niche for producers. As Heller (2010a: 108) writes, ‘In much the same way as with call centers, language has become central to niche marketing and to the localization dimensions of globalization’ (This will be discussed on Facebook in Section 6.1.1.3).

3.2.10 Cyberpolicy: Provisions for a Multilingual Internet

In terms of language planning and policy, there have been several developments by a number of organisations and bodies to facilitate and foster a multilingual Internet. UNESCO is concerned with multilingualism online under its ‘communication and information’ remit. UNESCO espouse a multilingual Internet, in terms of content and access, as ‘Language is the primary vector for communicating knowledge and traditions, thus the opportunity to use one’s language on global information networks such as the Internet will determine the extent to which one can participate in emerging knowledge societies’ (UNESCO, 2011a). This approach is akin to one of individual linguistic human rights, which Ricento (2000a) acknowledges is one of the primary concerns of language policy research in the current era of globalisation. In 2003 UNESCO published its Recommendation Concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace. In total, 25 sub-recommendations were made in four areas: development of multilingual content and systems, facilitating
access to networks and services, development of public domain content, and reaffirming
the equitable balance between the interests of rights-holders and of the public. The sub-
recommendations include: the promotion of and support for linguistic diversity online,
language survival in cyberspace, technological adaptation for different languages and
multilingual domain names, amongst others.

UNESCO, in line with this document, supports a multilingual Internet with interventions in three areas: including new languages on the Internet, creating and disseminating content in local languages in cyberspace and providing multilingual access to digital resources (UNESCO, 2011b). UNESCO’s project Initiative B@bel promotes multilingualism and universal access through three areas: policy, awareness raising and the implementation of pilot projects. In the first two areas, policy and awareness raising, a number of guidelines and studies have been developed, including the thematic issue of the International Journal on Multicultural Societies (2006) which will be discussed below. Pilot projects supported included a Report on Multilingualism on the Internet (2004), MLCM – the Multilingual Content Management Platform and SILA – a multilingual web browser.

The ITU is the UN agency for information and communication technologies (ITU, 2011a). Under the remit of their Internet policy and governance activities they engage with some activities for a multilingual Internet (cf. ITU, 2011b). The 2006 World Telecommunication Development Conference set out six priority domains of Programme three of the Doha Action Plan (ITU, 2011c). One of these domains was ‘Internet Multilingualization’ and the ITU was asked to contribute to ‘the development of multilingualization of the Internet and to supporting the introduction of tools for multilingualization’ (ibid.).

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers - ICANN (2011a) describes itself as co-ordinating the global Internet, in other words it is in charge of the Internet’s naming system. It was founded in 1998 and is a not for profit organisation with the aim of keeping the Internet ‘secure, stable and interoperable’ (ibid.). ICANN has overseen developments which have led to IDNs. Previously, the Root Zone (the top of the domain name system hierarchy, ‘[it]... contains all of the delegations for top-level domains, as well as the list of root servers, and is managed by IANA’ (ICANN, 2011b), ‘was limited to a set of characters conforming to US-ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) or “Latin” alphabets’ (ICANN, 2011c). The introduction of IDNs ‘introduced top-level domains (TLDs) in different
scripts’ and for the first time ‘enabled Internet users to access domain names in their own language’ (ibid.). UNESCO and ICANN have agreed to work together to promote a multilingual Internet and support the implementation of internationalised country code top-level domains (IDN ccTLDs) (UNESCO, 2010). The main aim of this partnership is ‘for UNESCO to provide assistance to its Member States by creating a reference table of country names and abbreviations for countries whose official languages are based on Cyrillic script’ (ibid.). Atkinson (2006) discusses the campaign by the Catalan language community for a .ct/.cat upper domain name. Historically, ICANN assign upper level domain names on the basis of geographical location, i.e. for Irish websites, etc. He describes how the awarding of the .cat domain name gives Catalan status in the WWW domain, it recognises Catalan as an ethnic, linguistic and cultural entity separate to the Spanish nation, culture and language. However, in awarding domain names in this manner, ICANN still links nations to languages – difficult in a multilingual and so-called borderless domain.

Previous constraints to linguistic diversity such as software issues and the dominance of the Roman alphabet for website addresses are being overcome (cf. Block, 2004; Warschauer, 2004). The Unicode Consortium is a non-profit organisation founded in 1991 which is ‘devoted to developing, maintaining, and promoting software internationalization standards and data, particularly the Unicode Standard, which specifies the representation of text in all modern software products and standards.’ (Unicode Consortium, 2012a; 2012b). Unicode facilitates the use of many different languages in computer programming and website development. The introduction of Unicode has replaced a multiplicity of oftentimes conflicting encoding systems and ‘provides a unique number for every character, no matter what the platform, no matter what the program, no matter what the language’ (Unicode Consortium, 2012c). Unicode has been adopted by all the major industry leaders, including Apple, IMB, Microsoft, etc., and by all modern Internet browsers (ibid.). Crystal (2011) believes that Unicode ensures that all scripts are equal, with 99 scripts currently supported (Unicode Consortium, 2012d). However, some scripts are not yet supported and must be proposed to the Unicode Technical Committee who will decide to include them in the next version of the Unicode Standard, a ‘top-down’ policy making apparatus (Unicode Consortium, 2012e). [For more on Unicode and the Unicode Consortium see www.unicode.org/]
3.2.11 Interrogating Multilingualism Online

Kelly-Holmes and Milani (2011) in their discussion the thematisation of multilingualism in the media consider ‘the claim of being multilingual’ found in new media. Delivering content to new media users in their native or their own language is they note the ‘new imperative of hypermedia’ (ibid.: 279). New media, such as Facebook in the current study, brands itself as multilingual entities by having a range of language options. As Kelly-Holmes and Milani write the multilingualism of new media entities can be interpreted as being global but tolerant of the local or can be examples of ‘linguistic fetishisation’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2005). Evidence of the branding of multilingualism is the practice of explicitly stating and advertising the language options and the number of options available on a particular site (Kelly-Holmes and Milani, 2011). For Kelly-Holmes and Milani this raises questions about multilingualism and languages online such as: Who is counting the language options? How and what are they counting? Why is there such a fixation with having the most options? Furthermore, when multiple language options are offered as parallel monolingualisms (Heller, 2007b), what is the effect of presenting multilingualism in this manner? Is multilingualism normalised or reinforced as ‘abnormal’? (Kelly-Holmes and Milani, 2011: 479).

Kelly-Holmes and Milani also note how technology itself is bound up in thematising multilingualism. Structural factors can impact online debates such as the dialogic form of the discussions. For example, in their study, Wright and Street (2007) find that pre-moderation of posts and the threaded structure of the message board appears to influence how the discussion about multilingualism develops in an online forum. Kelly-Holmes and Milani (2011: 481) conclude that ‘the way in which a particular media forum is designed will affect both the multilingual content and the discourse about multilingualism on that forum’. In the current study, the discussions about the Irish language are considered in light of the sociolinguistic context of the Irish language and the discourses this contains, but also analysed in terms of the new media context and the impact the structure and features of the Translations app have on them. As Kelly-Holmes and Milani acknowledge, new media can be both constraining and enabling in terms of multilingualism. New media ‘add a novel dimension to the thematising of multilingualism, in that they create the proliferation of sites of multilingual practices, discourses and metadiscourses, and these are on public display’ (ibid.). New media can be a space of new language practices, ideologies and discourses.
in terms of multilingualism but can also reinforce more ‘traditional’ notions of purism, standardisation and the association of (a) language with (a) culture (ibid.).

3.2.12 Current Research: Studies of the Multilingual Internet

This section will focus on studies related to the language practices and language choices of individual web users, focussing on minority languages and minority language individuals/communities. Leppänen and Peuronen (2012: 386) view research on multilingualism and the Internet as being in two categories: ‘research into the choice and diversity of languages on the Internet’ and also ‘research into the multilingual practices of Internet users’. The UNESCO sponsored special issue of the International Journal on Multicultural Societies (2004) considers the Internet and linguistic diversity, linguistic rights and language policies, with a focus on actual language practice in relation to lesser used languages and English. It sought to address whether the Internet as an element of international networks and flows of globalisation ‘is actually leading to greater contact across language boundaries’ and, if so, whether English is the preferred language (Wright, 2004b: 5).

Another special issue focussed on minority languages and the Internet, albeit from a more technical perspective, is the New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia (2005) edited by Cunliffe and Herring. The majority of these studies find that non-English users are using their languages online and that new media can be used as a space for language use, learning and potentially revitalisation. Nichols et al. (2005) describe the Greenstone software tool that is used to create digital libraries, which in turn can facilitate the creation and distribution of local information in minority languages. While Kalish (2005) discusses multimedia designed for adult Chiricahua language learners, in this case multimedia that were developed and used to simulate immersion learning. Cunliffe and Harries (2005) discuss the potential of bilingual online environments for minority language communities. They consider the Pen i Ben online community for head teachers in Wales. Cunliffe and Harries find that the site needs further development of strategies to encourage interactions in Welsh to combat the increasing use of English in the community. Kralisch and Berendt (2005) found that if information on a website is not presented to users in their native language the accessibility of the website is affected. Finally, Wei and Kolko (2005) consider how the Internet can be a site of resistance towards the homogenising effects of globalisation by
facilitating cultural expression. They discuss language choice in the Uzbekistan content, finding Russian was the language most used online.

The special issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* mentioned previously, focuses on computer-mediated communication with a number of papers investigating language choice and language practices. Siebenhaar (2006) investigates the use of Swiss German dialects and standard German in Swiss Internet Relay Chat (IRC) rooms. The language choice of participants depended on two factors: their individual preference and the variety being used on the specific IRC thread. Kelly-Holmes (2006b), in a study of ten global consumer brands and their country, region and language-specific websites using de Swaan’s (2001) world language system theory, finds that English ‘plays a limited hypercentral role’ and that ‘a small number of supercentral languages... are used to connect to consumers across the globe’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2006b: 517). It is important to consider the impact of commercial entities, such as Facebook, on linguistic diversity online as their language practices, Kelly-Holmes writes, can ‘have a considerable impact on the potential multilingualism of the Internet’ (*ibid.*: 507). Androutsopoulos (2006b) investigates linguistic diversity and language choice on websites for diasporic groups in Germany, considering the relationship between language choice and the layout and design of the websites. He finds that in edited sections of the websites the home language is not used, however, in the discussion forums of the websites home languages are used.

More research undertaken under UNESCO’s remit is reported in a special issue of the *Journal of Language and Politics*. Wong *et al.* (2006) considers the use of an intelligent URL search engine to encourage language diversity on the WWW. Menezes (2006) outlines the results of a study of the language practices of 3000 students in ten states where English is not an official language or the language of education. The study found that students used their national language online more than English and when English was used, it was in well-defined and limited domains. Wodak and Wright (2006) consider language practices and language choice in the EU’s discussion forum *Futurum*. They investigate the sociolinguistic characteristics of Internet debate forums, looking at which groups have access, how the medium influences the debate, who is included/excluded, and why? Furthermore, they also examine how participation, democratisation, communication and representation are connected with each other and the respective language policies. English was the
dominant language of the forum; however, there was a significant minority who participated in a number of languages.

Wright (2006), building on Anderson’s (1993) concept of the ‘imagined community’, considers the relationship between print capitalism and the English language and wonders if this historical precedent will hold true for the development of the Internet in relation to languages. She reports on the findings of field research carried out to establish if the Internet is a mechanism minority language communities can use to publish information and access the general public. She notes that much publishing in minority languages online is done by individuals, which may have implications for language standardisation. This also illustrates the role and impact individuals can have on the new-mediascape of a minority language and the wider multilingualism of the WWW (as will be discussed further in Section 8.5.3). The website domains in which the RML are used parallel the situation in traditional print publishing, thus, Wright hypothesises that the WWW is increasing the volume of publishing in minority languages but not introducing it to new areas of use.

The studies of Danet and Herring’s (2007b) volume *The Multilingual Internet* consider: writing systems and the Internet, linguistic and discourse features of CMC, gender and culture in online language use, language choice and code-switching online, and the future of language diversity online. They focus on language and Internet research concerned with languages other than English (cf. Indian languages, Greeklish, Thai, Arabic, German), as well as non-native varieties of English, and the studies examine language use primarily on the micro level. In their introduction to the volume, and some would say to the field, Danet and Herring welcome readers to the era of the multilingual Internet, believing the Internet is now a ‘truly global communication network’ (*ibid.*: 1). Language choice must be considered on the Internet, since ‘wherever multilingualism exists, language choice becomes an issue’ (*ibid.*: 17) and in the new media language choice is dependent on the technological, sociocultural, and political context of the medium. They find that languages used online form hierarchies on global and regional scales (cf. de Swaan, 2001), typically English is at the top, then the more important regional languages, and finally, if at all, local languages (cf. Kelly-Holmes, 2006b). The question is, Danet and Herring (2007a) write, whether the spread of English poses a threat to other languages and to language diversity globally? Although the possibility of English dominating over all others seems remote to Danet and Herring, they do urge caution and acknowledge the need to protect multilingualism.
Finally, Thurlow and Mroczek’s (2011a) volume *Digital Discourse: Language in the New Media* has a number of contributions which consider language choice and language practices in a variety of new media entities and communication genres. Androutsopoulos (2011) discusses the concept of variation in light of empirical research carried out on English, German and French language use online in Web 2.0 domains. He finds that language variation online is both ‘socially and generically patterned’ (*ibid.*: 278). Peuronen’s (2011) interest is with young people’s bilingual practices online in styling the discourse of an online community and its members. She examines how they use a social-communicative style by mixing resources from English and Finnish to negotiate their identity. She finds that translocality is illustrated by the heteroglossic linguistic and discursive resources used by young Finns in this community to construct identities as Finnish users of the English language. In this way, the forum users localise a global language.

### 3.2.13 Multilingualism and Minority Languages on SNSs

As SNSs such as *Facebook* are in their infancy, only existing from 2003 onwards, the fields of research concerned with SNSs and multilingualism and also SNSs and minority languages too are in their infancy, beginning in the late 2000s. Herring *et al.* (2007) analyse language use in 6,025 *LiveJournals* (a social network style blogging platform) to investigate the overall language demographics of the site, the vigour of the Russian, Portuguese, Finnish and Japanese language networks on it, and the characteristics of the *LiveJournal* users who go between these different languages. In this case study they find English does not dominate locally, that the robustness of the language networks investigated is dependant on population size, and that journals which bridge various languages are typically written by multicultural and multilingual users or that the non-linguistic or visual content of the journal is broadly accessible. They conclude that *LiveJournal* is not as multilingual as perceived given its international scope and the accommodation of the interface to languages other than English. Other language networks on *LiveJournal* are increasing, in particular Herring *et al.* note how the Russian network is developing and predict that others will follow, ‘creating language-specific blogospheres within LJ [*LiveJournal*]’ (*ibid.*: 10). Although this prediction echoes the organisation of multilingualism as parallel monolingualisms (Heller, 2007b), as discussed previously (Section 2.1.16), Herring *et al.* (2007)
acknowledge how the *LiveJournal* design allows for monolingual and multilingual/cross-language interactions.

Das (2007) investigates the linguistic variation of bilingual Bengalis on the *Orkut* SNS (social network site) with insights from social network theory, in particular the notion that standard variants align with weak social network ties, while vernacular variants align with strong network ties. Das finds that *Orkut* functions as a ‘shared cultural space’ for diasporic Bengalis, a ‘virtual Bengal’. Within this, Bengali is the language of reference even though all the members of the community studied live in English-speaking countries or also speak English. Carroll (2008) analyses the language choice of Puerto Rican users of *MySpace*. He finds the Puerto Rican users’ reality is bilingual, with the participants using both English and Spanish. Furthermore, he acknowledges the existence of ‘Puerto Rican netspeak’ on the site. Cunliffe (2009) discusses the use of the Welsh language on SNSs such as *Flickr*. One area of use he notes is tagging - tags are keywords the user attaches to their content to allow others to find it - showing how bilingual tagging in Welsh and English appears to be the norm on *Flickr*. Cunliffe also reports the presence of resistance groups on *Flickr*, with the ‘seym-raeg’ group displaying photos of what they deem ‘poorly translated’, Welsh language signage. SNSs such as *Flickr* can facilitate groups which are based on existing offline pressure groups and organisations but can also facilitate new forms of online activism (*ibid*.).

Honeycutt and Cunliffe (2010) investigate the extent to which Welsh language use is normalised on *Facebook* in personal networks (*Profiles*) and social spaces (*Groups*). They discuss the need to normalise Welsh and other minority language use online, since, as they argue, online social networks, such as those of Welsh speakers on *Facebook*, play a role in language shift just like offline networks in the ‘real’ world. However, as Cunliffe (2007) notes, there are threats in the online context to minority language normalisation, one example being the ubiquitous threat of the dominance of English and also other large/majority languages online. In a later paper, Honeycutt and Cunliffe (2010) note that the unavailability of a website interface in a minority language is unlikely to stop minority language use but could lead to the adoption of English/majority language terms into the minority language (cf. Carroll, 2008). Honeycutt and Cunliffe (2010) conclude that the number of Welsh language speakers on *Facebook* demonstrates that Welsh speakers believe it is an environment for Welsh language use. They credit this normalisation of Welsh on *Facebook* to the language
community themselves. It is, they write, ‘a bottom-up process driven by individuals, rather than a top-down process driven by government’ (ibid.: 244). They acknowledge explicit language activism efforts on Facebook but note that much Welsh language use on the site is simply ‘natural language behaviour’.

Honeycutt and Cunliffe do not investigate the Translations app element of Facebook, the research site of the current study, although they do address it briefly, writing that Facebook has become a mechanism for language activism and they also discuss how a Facebook Group ‘Facebook Cymraeg? Welsh Language Facebook’ campaigned successfully for Facebook’s interface to be available in Welsh. They credit campaigning in this manner by language communities with the developments in the internationalisation of Facebook (campaigning on Facebook by language communities will be discussed further in Section 7.2.3.5). The Translations app, Honeycutt and Cunliffe believe, is a ‘direct contribution’ towards the normalisation of Welsh on Facebook and indeed, the wider WWW context. The existence of the Translations app and the language activism encountered on the site Honeycutt and Cunliffe view as indicators of the importance of the site to Welsh speakers and their commitment to community driven, ‘bottom-up’ language normalisation efforts. However, Honeycutt and Cunliffe are still cautious about the future of Welsh on Facebook, believing English will continue to have an impact via Facebook as it is so widely used for apps, groups, etc., which may affect Welsh normalisation efforts. Androutsopoulos (2010) echoes this perception, in light of his understanding of heteroglossia. He sees languages in competition online in Web 2.0 contexts as they become ‘sites of tension and contrast between linguistic resources that represent different social identities and ideologies’ (ibid.: 214). Honeycutt and Cunliffe (2010) call for further research on the impact(s) that minority language presence on SNSs are having on actual language behaviour and long term language maintenance/revitalisation efforts. The current study investigates the Irish language Translations app, the language practices, choices and ideologies of its translators to consider its existence in light of current language policy theory, and, as such, can be seen to be responding to this call.

Cunliffe et al. (2013) consider online social networks and language shift by examining the use of Welsh by young bilinguals on Facebook. They find that Welsh language use on Facebook varies according to a number of different factors. They believe that language behaviour in online social networks must be considered in the context of language use in offline social networks, noting that language behaviour
online can be conceptualised as an extension of offline network language practices. *Facebook* do not influence their language behaviour directly, rather it does so indirectly via its various communicative elements, e.g. *Status Updates*. Cunliffe *et al.* note that ‘Facebook provides an online venue in which Welsh is an everyday language of communication’ (*ibid.*: 19) and acknowledge the particular significance of the availability of *Facebook* in Welsh for young Welsh speakers.

Cunliffe *et al.* do not consider the *Translations* app aspect of *Facebook* although they do discuss participants’ perceptions of the Welsh translation of the site, in particular on the style of language used, as part of their research. One quote from a student notes that words were used that they did not understand while another student notes that it is full of mistakes and that ‘They try to Welshify some English words, without making an effort to see if the Welsh was correct’ (*ibid.*: 18). The latter quote illustrates the common issue of Anglicising minority language terms, as discussed in the Irish *Translations* app in Section 7.2.2.6. They conclude that ‘there was little evidence to suggest that the Welsh language interface was a positive influence to use Welsh, but there was also no evidence to suggest that the use of the English language interface was consciously perceived of as a negative influence’ (*ibid.*). Cunliffe *et al.* believe having the interface available in Welsh will aid the normalisation of Welsh-language terminology on *Facebook* and also, possibly in the wider domain of IT, and, in light of the current research, this researcher would add, the WWW as a whole.

### 3.2.14 Crowd-Based Information Generation and Multilingualism

There are also a small number of studies which focus on communities of users working towards a common goal with reference to the issue of multilingualism. Van Dijk (2009) discusses *Wikipedia* and, as he terms them, lesser-resourced languages. This study is interesting given *Wikipedia*’s presentation of the various language editions in a hierarchy, grouping the languages together in terms of which have the most pages of content at various levels. Van Dijk’s study concludes that the size of the linguistic community is not the most important factor in the development and growth of a particular language, as the Danish edition is larger than the Bengali edition which has more speakers. Van Dijk also observes that the various language editions of *Wikipedia* and their language communities compete with each other. He notes that some contributors are more concerned with increasing the number of pages available rather than developing the amount of useful content available to readers. ‘Pseudo-articles’
exist, which are articles that do not satisfy Wikipedia criteria and would probably be deleted in the larger language editions, but are created to make the language edition look as if it has more content. Van Dijk categorises the language editions into four classifications: large, medium, small and micro-Wikipedias. He theorises a number of factors that are needed for a ‘successful’ language edition of Wikipedia, for example such as the language community’s desire to have Wikipedia in their language and the belief that their language is worthy of having a Wikipedia edition, which he notes is bound up with ideologies of status and acceptance.

Ensslin’s (2011) case study is also Wikipedia. She examines Wikipedia’s explicit and implicit language policies and practices, as Wikipedia could have significance for public conceptualisations of multilingualism and/or would add to how multilingualism develops on the WWW. Wikipedia itself and its treatment of multilingualism are different to Facebook in the current study as it is a not for profit organisation and is run primarily by volunteer Wikipedians. Ensslin considers how the users negotiate language policies and practices and ultimately whether Wikipedia enables or impedes multilingualism. She analyses firstly, the ‘explicit metalinguistic practice’ (Woolard, 1998) of Wikipedia by considering a number of the public discourses and the exemplary user practice and discussion on its ‘Multilingual Coordination’ entry. Secondly, she examines the ‘implicit metapragmatics’ of Wikipedia’s interface, logo and its paratextual metacommentary on this and other websites; and a code-critical reading of their user language templates. Ensslin (2011: 554) finds that Wikipedia multilingualness is becoming ‘decreasingly explicit... diversely embedded within the site’s many features and disclaimers’ and indeed, when found contains many inconsistencies regarding the salience of its multilingualism.

Wikipedia is a discursive space with no territorial boundaries, however, it is not an open and free space devoid of rules and regulations; instead there are local norms to which all members, discussions, etc., are subject (ibid.). Although Web 2.0 spaces can empower minority language communities, Ensslin notes how one such space, Wikipedia, operates more within a Web 1.0 paradigm, as Anglo-American conformity is implicit in its interface and on other levels. Rather than empowering the majority, changes come about as a result of individual user initiative(s). Ensslin concludes that despite having the potential for multilingualism and the empowerment of users, Ensslin finds Wikipedia is still driven by the market and the language of the market - English. Whether Wikipedia
enables or impedes multilingualism Ensslin cannot answer definitively: she finds instead that it is a potentially hybrid space, but English is the language of the ideal user.

3.2.14.1 Convergence Culture
Related to crowd-based information generation is Jenkins’ (2006: 1) concept of ‘convergence culture’, which describes the technology, industry and societal changes in contemporary culture. He defines it as the culture where ‘old and new media collide, where grassroots and corporate media intersect, where the power of the media producer and the power of the media consumer interact in unpredictable ways’ (ibid.: 2). To consider this ‘convergence culture’ he proposes three concepts and considers the relationship between them: media convergence, participatory culture, and collective intelligence. Jenkins points to Pool (1983) as the prophet of convergence as he outlines a concept of the ‘convergence of modes’. Jenkins (2006: 11) believes digitization and the beginnings of cross-media ownership in the mid-1980s facilitated and initiated convergence: ‘Digitization set the conditions for convergence; corporate conglomerates created its imperative’.

Convergence, Jenkins (2006: 16) writes ‘involves both a change in the way media is produced and a change in the way media is consumed’. Jenkins defines media convergence as ‘the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want’ (ibid.: 2). He also considers the convergence of the roles of media producers and consumers, rather than having distinct roles they now interact more as participants in a manner we are still getting to grips with, as this study attempts to consider in relation to current language policy theory. However, it must be acknowledged, as Jenkins notes, that not all participants are equal, participants have different levels of power or are able to participate more fully than others. Convergence, he believes ‘alters the logic by which media industries operate and by which media consumers process news and entertainment’ (ibid.: 15-6). Jenkins views his concept of convergence as accounting for the media change of the last few decades better than the digital revolution paradigm as ‘old media are not being displaced. Rather, their functions and status are shifted by the introduction of new technologies’ (ibid.: 14).

Jenkins places the active participation of consumers at the heart of his concept of convergence culture. Convergence should not be considered as a purely
technological phenomenon; rather Jenkins believes it signifies a cultural shift from passive media spectatorship to today’s participatory culture when ‘consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content’ (ibid.: 3). He places the individual and the individuals mind at the core of convergence, being it ‘occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their interactions with others’ (ibid.) Bruns (2008) draws on this notion and terms active media users and producers ‘produsers’, as will be discussed below (Section 7.1).

Jenkins (2006) also notes the collective nature of convergence. He draws on Lévy’s notion of ‘collective intelligence’ which describes how individually we cannot know everything but we can bring together what know individually and combine our knowledge (ibid.: 4). This collective intelligence Jenkins sees as ‘an alternative source of media power’ and will lead to changes in how religion, politics, advertising, etc., work (ibid.).

Convergence is both ‘a top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer-driven process’ (ibid.: 18). Jenkins notes how media companies are expanding the flow of media to gain viewers, markets, opportunities and keep existing audiences engaging. Media consumers at the same time are beginning to get more control over these media and interact with other consumers. As Jenkins notes ‘the promises of this new media environment raise expectations of a freer flow of ideas and content’ and he notes consumers ‘are fighting for the right to participate more fully in their culture’ (ibid.). Convergence culture does not mean homogenisation. Media companies and media consumers can be at loggerheads or working together towards a common goal, creating closer relationships between producer/consumer. The Facebook SNS, the Irish Translations community and the language policy processes here are an example of convergence culture, with the media producer and consumer participating in a flow of media and interaction, in this case in relation to languages (see Section 8.5).

3.2.15 The Move to New Media Sociolinguistics

Recent developments in the new media and language field have been to delineate its name, boundaries, concepts, theories and methodologies. Two primary works with this ambition that will be discussed here are Crystal (2011) and Thurlow and Mroczek (2011a; 2011b). Crystal (2011: 1) uses the term ‘Internet linguistics’ to describe the field of research investigating the Internet and language. He defines it as the ‘scientific study of all manifestations of language in the electronic medium’ (ibid.: 2). The field of
‘Internet linguistics’ does not exist as a field, recognised by the wider linguistics discipline. Crystal predicts the development of fields looking at Internet syntax, semantics, pragmatics, etc culminating in a domain of applied Internet linguistics. Internet linguistics and linguistic descriptions online bring linguistics into contact with non-linguistic areas of communication that must be considered. Indeed, Crystal (2011) believes Internet linguistics may well develop into Internet semiotics due to the multimodal and multimedia nature of new media. Crystal’s conceptualisation of Internet and language research is primarily a linguistic approach.

Crystal sees this theory of Internet language emerging and being different to current offline theoretical perspectives. How different it will be is unclear due to the unknown technological developments of the future and the constraints these will bring which will affect language. In the move towards a theoretical Internet linguistics, ‘every question linguistics have asked about language, in relation to speech, writing, and sign, has to be re-asked with the qualification “on the Internet” appended’ (ibid.: 135). The language we encounter online, Crystal writes, forces us to rethink our explanatory principles. In the current study, language policy is reconsidered in light of current language practices and choices online. He also calls on researcher to consider languages other than English and the effect of the Internet on these, their use online, etc., which the current study does by considering the Irish language online.

Thurlow and Mroczek’s (2011a) volume, as discussed previously, illustrates the current move in sociolinguistics towards the field of ‘new media sociolinguistics’. Studies in this volume focus on language in the new media in five areas: metadiscursive framings of new media language (including a chapter on some of the preliminary observations of the current research Lenihan (2011)), creative genres, style and stylisation, stance and emerging methodologies. The languages examined include Irish, Hebrew, Chinese, Finnish, Japanese, German, Greek, Arabic, French and English. Thurlow and Mroczek (2011b) describe the shift in computer-mediated communication studies towards discourse-ethnographic studies, espoused primarily by Androutsopoulos. Androutsopoulos (2010) calls for a move from research concerned with the features of new media language and defining discourse genres, as discussed previously, to studies which investigate the situated practices of new media and the intertextuality and heteroglossia which are intrinsic in today’s new media convergence.

Thurlow and Mroczek isolate four concepts that define or should define this field: discourse, technology, multimodality and ideology. They put language in its place
as the object of study, but situate their interest in ‘the everyday life of language in use - or just discourse’ [emphasis in original], as it gives us an insight into social and cultural processes (ibid.: xxiii). The second orientation of the field Thurlow and Mroczek (2011b) outline is a need to conceptualise technology critically and in light of current theory. They discuss a number of considerations of technology including its materiality, i.e. how it affords some communicative possibilities but not others, its embeddness in everyday life and role as ‘prosthetic extensions’ of people’s abilities and lives (ibid.: xxv). They privilege the notion of media over technology, seeing ‘new media’ as ‘a way to debunk - and reflexively acknowledge - the tendency for popular and scholarly writing to fetishize technology at the expense of its social meanings and cultural practices’ (ibid.). Thirdly, new media sociolinguistics has the notion of multimodality at its core. However, Thurlow and Mroczek note the need to understand the difference between medium and mode in research while also realising the interplay between them. This understanding is paramount given developments in multimedia formats due to the convergence of old and new media and the layering of new media with other media. Finally, the ideological nature of digital technologies must be given attention; they are tied up in political economies of access and control and are potentially used as mechanisms for normative and resistive representation. Furthermore, the ideological nature of what people say via new media and the consequences of this must be considered, the current study considers both the ideological nature of Facebook and the Irish translators and the implications of these for current conceptualisations of language policy considered.

Thurlow and Mroczek add a caveat to these organising principles on the ‘newness’ of new media sociolinguistics and its contradictory nature. New media sociolinguistic (and in general) research can claim novelty as a new field of research but by the time much research is finalised and published the technologies may have developed further, matured and/or embedded more or differently into people’s lives. Furthermore, they caution against seeing new media and their elements as entirely new, believing it to be more of an evolutionary process, giving the example of the likenesses between current SNS ‘profiles’ and early personal webpages (see Section 3.1.4).

Finally, they caution against the conceptualisation of new media as free flowing ‘global networks’ and ‘global media’ as ‘the opportunities of new media may span the global, but they certainly do not cover it, nor do they span it in equal measure’ (ibid.: xxviii).
3.2.16 Sociolinguistics of Globalisation

Coupland (2003) notes that globalisation has been discussed in many areas of research but until recently not widely considered in sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics must now consider globalisation as a theme, as when researching domains of social life the global and local foundations of social organisation must be considered (ibid.). Coupland argues that since a number of factors bound up in globalisation processes account for the local context of our studies, globalisation is a ‘salient context’ for more and more local sociolinguistic experiences (ibid.: 466). Furthermore, the context of globalisation can impact the sociolinguistic theories and concepts and the experience of these at the local level. In particular, Coupland notes how the features of ‘linguistically mediated social experience that define “local”’; - inhibition of social networks, social identities, senses of intimacy and community, differentials of power and control – all potentially carry an imprint from shifting global structures and relationships’ (ibid.). He offers a rubric of a ‘sociolinguistics of globalisation’, which he outlines as ‘help[ing] us to see and understand how global factors impinge on language variation, use and value in diverse situations. They also begin the process of theorising sociolinguistics in more explicitly global terms, and provide a strong platform for us to progress...’ (ibid.: 470).

The papers, Coupland (2003) writes, in a special issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* are a first contribution to a ‘globalisation-sensitive’ sociolinguistics. These explore sociolinguistic research into globalisation in two ways. Firstly, they examine how some ‘feature, use, genre, footing or domain of language use’ needs to be considered as part of some as yet undefined ‘global social system’, whether this is as Coupland notes ‘a system of relationships between languages or language varieties, or an economic, cultural or ideological system’ (Coupland, 2003: 466). Secondly, the papers explore some new social domains of language use resulting from the globalised world, such as hip-hop music, country and regional versions of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, in-flight magazines and heritage tourism. The current study can be seen to be responding to calls for more research into the sociolinguistics of globalisation is examining how current sociolinguistic theories around language policy apply in the new context of new media, in particular on SNSs.

Coupland discusses some of the effects of globalisation and its processes on languages and new media. He acknowledges the many ways that, resulting from globalisation, communities ‘interface with and impact upon one another, and where language is both a medium and a marker of new forms of interdependence’ [emphasis in
original] (ibid.: 467). Communities are beginning to find ways of ‘bridging the gap(s) of globalisation’ so to speak, Coupland notes the emergence of ‘sociolinguistic reappropriation’, the dilution of some of the social structures of modernity and ‘new opportunities for democratic participation’ (ibid.: 470). From wider globalisation theories it can be seen how multi/trans-national or global businesses act as forces which can reshape community life and which can in turn affect language practices, language ideologies, etc.

Coupland notes how commodification and consumerist culture accompanies globalisation, including the commodification of language. Coupland draws on Giddens (1991; 1994) theory of disembedding ‘the “lifting out” of social relations from local contexts and their rearticulation across indefinite tracts of time-space’ (Giddens, 1991: 18). In sociolinguistic studies this can describe how a language variety is revalued when re-embedded in a different context resulting from globalisation (cf. Heller, 2003; Pennycook, 2003). Coupland (2003: 468) sees this as ‘the revalorisation, re-keying or re-subjectivising – of linguistic forms being re-embedded in “new” environments’. He further notes how globalisation and forces associated with globalisation, including the other three he discusses, can give language varieties ‘new values as marketable commodities’ (ibid.: 467) (cf. Heller, 2003). The perceived value of language varieties can be seen to ‘reflect how they are positioned in global as well as local markets’ (Coupland, 2003: 467). This concept of language as ‘commodity’ (cf. Tan and Rubdy, 2008) is further illustrated in the current study as Facebook is translating its website to gain access to more markets and gain new users. Coupland (2010: 11) notes that some see the commodification of language as a ‘hallmark’ of linguistic globalisation.

Using the WWW as an example, Coupland (2003: 470) considers the paradoxical nature of globalisation. It demonstrates the positives of globalisation, ‘the potential openness and flexibility promised by fast new communication technologies – most obviously the worldwide web. “Languaging” is in some ways easier, and freer, as well as quicker, under globalisation’. However, the negatives of globalisation are also found in terms of who can access the free and open WWW as ‘it remains a resource mainly for the affluent communities and groups within them. Paradoxically, globalisation is itself a patchy, rather than a “global” experience around the world’ (ibid.) (cf. Section 3.3). The WWW, Coupland writes, is a space for ethnocentric propaganda, marketised communication (cf. the recent trend on Twitter for celebrities
‘tweets’ being sponsored by companies), junk culture and the knowledge economy alike.

In sociolinguistic terms, Blommaert (2010) believes the world has not become a village as predicted. Rather, he believes it has become ‘a tremendously complex web of villages, towns, neighbourhoods, settlements connected by material and symbolic ties in often unpredictable ways’ (*ibid.*: 1), and this complex web needs to be investigated and understood. Agreeing with Blommaert (2003), Coupland (2003: 270) notes it would be naïve to think that the ‘linguascape of globalised societies will be less unequal’; they will instead be more complex, and sociolinguistics must adapt to consider these critically (*ibid.*: 470). Later, Coupland (2010) wonders if we need more theory in the sociolinguistic framing of globalisation or if it is enough to widen the scope of existing theory. The challenge of globalisation for sociolinguistics, Blommaert (2010) writes, is to rethink the conceptual and analytic apparatuses we use. The added complexity of our current context is a positive effect of globalisation, in Blommaert’s view, as it ‘forces sociolinguistics to unthink its classic distinctions and biases and to rethink itself as a sociolinguistics of mobile resources, framed in terms of trans-contextual networks, flows and movements’ (*ibid.*: 1). The current study considers the complexity of the Facebook SNS and the Translations app with a view to reconsidering the dichotomy of ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ in language policy theory.

Blommaert (2010) sees two paradigms developing from the changes and developments in time, space and related elements due to globalisation: the developed ‘sociolinguistics of distribution’ and the emerging ‘sociolinguistics of mobility’. The ‘sociolinguistics of distribution’ views the ‘movement of language resources... as movement in a horizontal and stable space and in chronological time; within such spaces, vertical stratification can occur along lines of class, gender, age, social status etc.’ (*ibid.*: 5). The linguistically defined objects under study are however still a ‘snapshot’ of things in static place. The ‘sociolinguistics of mobility’, on the other hand, is concerned with language-in-motion, with various spatiotemporal frames or ‘scales’ interacting with each other (*ibid.*). This paradigm assumes that in the globalised context ‘language patterns must be understood as patterns that are organized on different, layered (i.e. vertical rather than horizontal) scale-levels’ (*ibid.*). The objects under study are concrete resources, speech and actual language resources used in various domains and in various contexts. The current study considers the extension of this notion of
language policy theory, where language policy occurs on multiple scales in a layered, not opposed or dichotomous sense.

In the ‘sociolinguistics of mobility’ the access to and control over scales are distributed unevenly, power and inequality are issues that must be considered in this paradigm. It is concerned with language-in-motion, ‘a sociolinguistics of “speech”, of actual language resources deployed in real sociocultural, historical and political contexts’ (ibid.). In the current study, the examination of language ideologies, beliefs and attitudes of Facebook and the Irish Translations community illustrates the context of the study. Space in this paradigm is seen as vertical: ‘layered and stratified’ as well as horizontal (ibid.). Within these space(s) distinctions occur on the basis of social, culture or political differences, which Blommaert terms ‘indexical distinctions’ (ibid.). These, he writes, ‘project minute linguistic differences onto stratified patterns of social, cultural and political value-attribution’ (ibid.), changing linguistic and semiotic differences into social inequalities which are the normative aspects of situated language use. Drawing on Foucault’s ‘orders of discourse’ Blommaert conceptualises ‘orders of indexicality’ (cf. Blommaert, 2005) which are the ‘stratified and ordered nature of... [these] indexical processes’ (Blommaert, 2010: 6). In other words, these ‘orders of indexicality’ are the inherent norms that mark language use as good/bad, appropriate/deviant, etc. In the current study, the Irish Translations community is a stratified space where issues of power and inequality arise within the community, as will be discussed in Sections 7.2.6 and 8.4. This community is a space where ‘orders of indexicality’ are found and influence the translations translators submit and therefore, influence the translated version of Facebook developed.

Block (2004: 32) believes that Voronov did ‘jump the gun when he predicted that English would [be] the language of the Internet to the exclusion of all others and that it would be necessary to be literate in English in order to participate in the new world social economic and technological order’. While Crystal (2011) believes that one day the Internet will represent the distribution of language presence in the offline world, he acknowledges that the current situation is a distance away from this. The future of the Internet is unknown but one thing we can be sure of is the need for language and Internet/new media research in relation to multilingualism. The Internet and the WWW are undoubtedly ‘the largest area of language development we have seen in our lifetimes’ (ibid.: 149). And as Herring (2001: 626) writes: ‘CMD is not just a
trend; it is here to stay. For as long as computer-mediated communication involves language in any form, there will be a need for computer-mediated discourse analysis’.

3.3 The Digital Divide

As the current study is concerned with minority languages, multilingualism and new media, the digital divide must be acknowledged as a limitation of this research, access to the Internet and WWW and membership of SNSs is restricted to the digital ‘haves’. We must not forget the digital divide in these discussions, as Crystal (2011: 78) writes, ‘the Internet offers a home to all languages - as soon as their communities have an electricity supply and a functioning computer technology’. This section will first consider the current Internet statistics for access to the Internet/WWW. Next, how the digital divide is conceptualised in current literature will be discussed and the role of the English language in this process outlined. This is followed by an examination of the digital divide and minority languages, and, finally, an overview of the digital divide today.

3.3.1 Internet Statistics

Any discussion of the Internet and languages must be ‘grounded in the realities of access and use’, access is not universal (Cunliffe, 2007: 133). Internet World Stats (2012c) report a total of 2,405,510,036 Internet users as of the 30th of June 2012 from 360,985,492 in 2000. The pie chart below, Figure 3.2, illustrates the uneven distribution of Internet users with the largest percentage from Asia with 44.8% and the least from Oceania/Australia with just 1% of the total Internet user population (ibid.).

![Image of Internet Users in the World Distribution by World Regions - 2012 Q2](source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm
Basis: 2,405,510,036 Internet users on June 30, 2012
Copyright © 2012, Miniwatts Marketing Group

Figure 3.2: Internet Users in the World – Distribution by World Region
Internet World Stats report that Asia has 1076.7 million Internet users, then Europe with 518.5 million, North American 273.8 million, Latin America/Caribbean with 255.0 million, Africa 167.3 million, the Middle East with 90.0 million and finally, the least from Oceania/Australia with just 24.3 million (ibid.).

North America has the highest percentage of its population online with 78.6% and Africa the least, with just 15.6% online. Of the total world population 34.3% are online (ibid.). The bar chart below, Figure 3.3, illustrates the percentage of each region’s population who are online.

World Internet Penetration Rates by Geographic Regions - 2012 Q2

Table 3.4 below illustrates the numbers behind the world Internet penetration rates above and also shows the growth in Internet users’ figures from 2000 to 2012 in each of the world regions. Although Africa has the third lowest percentage of users of the total Internet user population and the lowest Internet penetration of the total population, it has the highest increase in Internet users growing by 3,606.7% in the period 2000-12 (ibid.).
Table 3.4: World Internet Usage and Population Statistics (Internet World Stats, 2012c)

The top ten countries with the highest numbers of Internet users, as outlined in Table 3.5 below, are China, the USA, India, Japan, Brazil, Russia, Germany, Indonesia, the UK and France (Internet World Stats, 2012d).
### Table 3.5: Top 20 Countries with Highest Number of Internet Users (Internet World Stats, 2012d)

These top twenty countries account for 73.8% of the total Internet population (see Figure 3.4 below), again illustrating the uneven distribution of the Internet and its users (ibid.).
These results support the theory of the digital divide. As Pimienta et al. (2009: 39) write ‘Consideration of linguistic diversity online and the number of Internet users and page output by both country and region demonstrates the extent of the digital divide’.

3.3.2 Conceptualising the Digital Divide

As Hargittai (2004: 137) notes the anecdotal understanding of the term ‘digital divide’ is ‘the split between the “haves” and the “have-nots” of new media use ... the gap between those who have access to and use digital technologies, and those who do not’. Crystal (2001: 59) acknowledges that the ‘Internet is not as global a medium as it might at first appear to be’. Much has been made about the global possibilities of the Internet, but Crystal finds that in practice ‘the types of communication which take place are much more restricted and parochial. Most Internet interactions are not global in character’. Indeed, UNESCO (2005: 3) acknowledges that ‘90% of the world’s language are not substantially represented on the Internet’. As Castells (2002a: xxix) writes, the nature of the Internet is contradictory, meaning everything to some and excluding others:

While the digital divide is still a fundamental source of inequality on the planet, the Internet is rapidly becoming part of the fabric of our lives, not only in advanced societies but in the core activities and dominant social groups in most of the world.

Hargittai (2004) cautions against misunderstanding the term ‘digital divide’, as one-dimensional. She believes that divides ‘exist on multiple directions [including] – technological access, autonomy, social support, skill, types of uses’ (ibid.: 141), and
argues for the use of the term ‘digital inequality’ (DiMaggio and Hargittai, 2001) instead.

Castells (2002b) in his discussion of the Internet includes a chapter on the digital divide. He understands the ‘digital divide’ as those who are marginalised due to limited or no access to the Internet or those who cannot use it effectively. The Internet’s potential as a space for freedom, productivity and communication must also be considered in light of the digital divide, the inequalities of the Internet: ‘the promise of the Information Age and its bleak reality for many people’ (ibid.: 247). He wonders if it holds true that people or countries are excluded due to their disconnection from Internet-based networks or if ‘it is because of their connection that they become dependent on economies and cultures in which they have little chance of finding their own path of material well-being and cultural identity?’ (Castells, 2002b: 247).

Warschauer (2004) uses the digital divide to investigate the relationship between ICT and social inclusion. He finds the notion of a digital divide and its logical implication, ‘that social problems can be addressed through providing computers and Internet accounts’, quite problematic for a number of reasons (ibid.: 1). The digital divide should be conceptualised as the lack of physical access to computers and connectivity but also as the lack of access ‘to the additional resources that allow people to use technology well’ (ibid.: 6), such as training, education, etc. As Tawil-Souri (2009) notes having Internet facilities in disadvantaged areas does not necessarily empower the local communities, indeed they may lack the cultural and social capital needed to participate fully online or use a computer. Bikson and Panis (1997) describe an ‘information elite’, comprised of those with access to and knowledge about new media communicative technologies, such as computers and email. Warschauer (2004) mentions other issues which should be taken into consideration such as content, language, education, literacy, or community and social resources: ‘access to ICT is embedded in a complex array of factors encompassing physical, digital, human, and social resources and relationships. Content and language, literacy and education, and community and institutional structures’ (ibid.: 6).

Another issue Warschauer (2004) discusses in relation to the digital divide is the implication that it exists in a bipolar societal split. Drawing on Cisler (2000) Warschauer notes that in reality it occurs on a gradation of different degrees of access rather than simply a dichotomy of the have and have-nots. The binary divide notion is ‘inaccurate and can even be patronizing because it fails to value the social resources that
diverse groups bring to the table’ (Warschauer, 2004: 7). Cunliffe (2007) also acknowledges the many dimensions and levels of the digital divide. Drawing on Cawkell (2001) Cunliffe (2007) writes how it exists both between and within nations. Warschauer (2004: 7) also discusses how the conceptualisation of the ‘digital divide’ ‘implies a chain of causality: that lack of access (however defined) to computers and the Internet harms life choices’. This is true, but the reverse is also true, if already marginalised, people will have fewer opportunities for computer use and Internet access (Warschauer, 2004: 7). Warschauer notes the intertwined and con-constitutive relationship between technology and society, which he believes makes any assumption of causality, such as above, problematic.

Friedman (2006) describes a phenomenon of ‘the flat-world platform’ which enables, empowers and enjoins individuals and small groups to be the dynamic force of globalisation; to go global. This is evocative of Jenkins’s (2006) notion of ‘convergence culture’ and its emphasis on participatory culture, and collective intelligence. Friedman (2006) places developments in communication technology and the convergence of the Internet/WWW and the everyday at the heart of the ‘flat world platform’. Friedman defines it as the:

... product of the convergence of the personal computer (which allowed every individual suddenly to become the author of his or her own content in digital form) with fiber-optic cable (which suddenly allowed all those individuals to access more and more digital content around the world for next to nothing) with the rise of work flow software (which enabled individuals all over the world to collaborate on that same digital content from anywhere, regardless of the distances between them) (ibid.: 10-11).

Friedman describes globalisation 3.0 as almost occurring overnight and arriving with a realisation in peoples’ minds that they can go global themselves: ‘Where do I as an individual fit into the global competition and opportunities of the day, and how can I, on my own, collaborate with others globally?’ [emphasis in original] (ibid.: 11).

Friedman discusses the globalisation of the local and the cultural revolution this will bring. He acknowledges how globalisation was feared as a homogenising or Americanising force initially and that ‘the flat world’ can facilitate this. But he believes ‘the flat world’ has ‘an even greater potential to nourish diversity to a degree that the world has never seen before’ (ibid.: 478). He credits ‘uploading’, flattener number four in his theory of ten forces that have ‘flattened the world’, with facilitating ‘the globalisation of the local’ (ibid.). Friedman believes ‘the flat-world platform enables you to take your own local culture and upload it to the world’ (ibid.). This includes
creating content, text, audio, etc., in other languages and uploading it online with a potential audience in the billions. He also believes the flattening of the world will mean less economic/career migration which will enable people to remain in their local areas continuing to live in and contribute to their culture(s). Furthermore, the flat world enables migrants to stay in touch with and Friedman believes hold on to aspects of their culture despite their geographical location. In saying all of this Friedman does acknowledge that Americanisation can occur via globalisation, but he now feels it is no longer the only outcome of globalisation.

Luís Micó and Masip (2009) also acknowledge the paradoxical nature of globalisation, causing cultural standardisation/homogenisation via universal cultural symbols but also causing the revival of local cultural identities. As Castells (2006) noted in a lecture (cited in Luís Micó and Masip (2009: 112)) the age of globalisation is also the age of identity. While Hogan-Brun (2011: 325) also acknowledges the paradoxical nature of globalisation, involving cultural and linguistic homogenisation but also, cultural heterogenisation as people are identifying more with their own ‘language grouping’ as she puts it. Appadurai (1996) too believes that globalisation can be a localising process, it is not necessarily a homogenising or Americanising force, rather the materials of modernity can be appropriated by societies for their own processes, illustrated by the current study concerned with the localisation of Facebook into the Irish language. Indeed, Appadurai believes that the primary issue in global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenisation. He distinguishes between the globalisation of culture and homogenisation, arguing that they are not the same, although globalisation does use a number of mechanisms of homogenisation, including language hegemonies, the case of English on the WWW, as outlined in Section 3.2.2, being an example. Some of the effects of globalisation, Appadurai outlines, include the idea that it ‘has shrunk the distance between elites, shifted key relations between producers and consumers (cf. Web 2.0 ‘produsers’ (Bruns, 2008) as will be discussed further in Section 7.1), broken many links between labor and family life, obscured the lines between temporary locales and imaginary national attachments’ (ibid.: 9-10).

Blommaert and Dong (2010), Heller (2010b), and Kelly-Holmes (2010a) all discuss how new value systems in which language is involved are created due to globalisation, both new values for language use and for different language varieties (Coupland, 2010: 16). With minority languages there is a risk, Coupland notes, that they
can be seen as shortcuts to ‘cultural authenticity’ and their value in their own community disregarded (ibid.: 16) (cf. Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010). Heller (2010b) illustrates how language becomes commodified as a resource or market skill at the expense of being valued as a historical ‘way of speaking’. While Johnstone (2010) finds that in the context of globalisation some local linguistic forms and styles can be ‘resemioticized’ and acquire new ideological values and loadings as discussed previously. However, Ó Conchubhair (2008) cites greater access to language and language resources for Irish language diaspora as a benefit for and of globalisation.

An alternative perspective, is that of Wei and Kolko (2005: 206), who subscribe to the belief that globalisation leads to homogenisation and view the Internet as a ‘site of transnational capitalism’. In their study they consider how the Internet can be a space for cultural expression that opposes what they believe are the homogenising effects of globalisation. In particular they investigate resistance attempts by Internet users in Uzbekistan. They found that Russian, English and Uzbek are used online, many of those surveyed were Uzbek speakers however, when asked which language they used most when online, none chose Uzbek. This leads them to conclude that there are differences between online and offline culture, which ‘may be part of the effacement of local cultures by the globalization of the Internet and a portent that Uzbek is not appropriate for the Web’ (ibid.: 219). They point towards the potential use of the Uzbek language online as a resistance to globalisation and as illustrating the possibility of the Internet as a space for less common languages: ‘so these language can resist and survive globalisation’ (ibid.).

3.3.3 The Role of the English Language

Although carried out a number of years ago in terms of Internet research, Wolk (2004: 176) considers the effect of the dominance of English language online on the digital divide, hypothesising that ‘the level of English language adoption in a country is related to the degree of Internet usage’. He investigates the relationship between the English language, Internet usage patterns and infrastructure in 189 countries, developed (38) and developing (151). The developed countries are categorised in terms of whether they are English or non-English-speaking, the developing in terms of whether English is an official language of the state or English-speaking and the countries that are not English-speaking or do not have it as a official language. Wolk compares these sub-divisions of the countries with figures for the number of ISPs per one million of the population and
the percentage of the total population that are Internet users. The results demonstrate that ‘evidence of English language dominance in global E-commerce has created a *de facto* protocol for the growth of the Internet’ (*ibid.*: 177). English language websites rarely had other language options but many foreign sites have an option for English, however, ongoing developments in software by *Microsoft* may counter this issue (as considered in Sections 3.2.6 and 3.2.10). He concludes that developed English-speaking countries do have a competitive advantage, and while other factors such as culture, infrastructure, etc., can be considered overall English fluency could be the strongest factor in the digital divide. Developing countries that ‘adopt’ English as an official language may have an advantage.

### 3.3.4 The Digital Divide and Minority Languages

In relation to minority languages and the digital divide Cunliffe (2007), also Cunliffe and Herring (2005), discuss the importance of the notions of ‘information rich’ and ‘information poor’ when considering online content and services available in different languages (Cunliffe, 2007: 139). Oftentimes although content is available online in a minority language, it has been developed, created and hosted via a majority language software thus ‘implicitly reinforcing the dominant status of these languages’ (*ibid.*). Furthermore, Cunliffe and Herring (2005) acknowledge that the lack of content or a service online in a particular language could lead to increased use of the majority language or English, contributing to language shift. Kelly-Holmes and Milani (2011) consider the consequences of the absence of a language, due to digital divide or the lack of commercial potential of certain languages, etc. Are websites, as they term it, caught in ‘multilingual deadlock’? Damned if they do and damned if they don’t, as some language(s) will always be excluded for a multitude of reasons.

Greater diversity of languages online, Block (2004: 35) cautions, does not mean that all languages in use online are equal: ‘bigger is still better in the pecking order of world languages’. The languages that are catching up with English are other large languages such as Chinese, French, etc. Minority language communities that are already socially excluded are likely to be digitally excluded also: ‘digital exclusion tends to follow existing patterns of social exclusion’ (Cunliffe, 2007: 133). Also, within minority language communities there may be digital divides, as Cunliffe and Herring (2005) write, website production can be led by language activists or dominated by a particular social group such as young males and may not respond to community need(s).
Warschauer (2004) argues that the stereotype of ‘disconnected minority groups’ could promote social stratification as employers or current providers may be discouraged from including those groups. In their study of language shift, online language practices and young Welsh speakers, Cunliffe et al. (2013) find that English is still perceived by young Welsh speakers to be the language of IT, both in terms of availability of content/services and in actual IT use. This leads them to raise the question of whether the Welsh language is restricted to the social domain of IT and not establishing itself across the variety of IT domains available, other than the social domain.

3.3.5 The Digital Divide Today

Castells (2002b) discusses the digital divide in the USA, noting the different access figures across different social groups. Differences in income, education, ethnicity, age, geography, disability and family status all affect who has access to the Internet. He notes how US figures illustrate a general closing of the gap regarding Internet access, except on the basis of ethnicity where the gap is widening. Different ethnicities appear to have different opportunities for access (at home, at school, etc.) which affect the numbers of different ethnicities going online, as Castells notes: ‘the ethnic digital divide... the Information Age is not blind to color...’ (ibid.: 249). Castells also considers the global digital divide and discusses how ‘the rapid diffusion of the Internet is proceeding unevenly through-out the planet’ (ibid.: 260). Furthermore, he believes that ‘the conditions under which the Internet is diffusing in most countries are creating a deeper digital divide. Key urban centres, globalized activities, and the higher-educated social groups are being included in the Internet-based global networks, while most regions and most people are switched off’. In South Africa Internet access is growing but the majority of those who have access are under 25 and from a high-income social group. The differential use of the Internet in developing countries is, Castells writes, driven by the gap in telecommunications infrastructure, ISPs and Internet content providers. Castells acknowledges that correlation is not causality and that the social and environmental issues he discusses are not resulting from globalisation and the current context of Internet-led economic development, ‘it could be, but it’s not’ (ibid.: 265). The paradoxical nature of the globalised world and the Internet as being ‘at the heart of the new socio-technical pattern of organization’ come together to create the global process of uneven development, which Castells writes is ‘the most dramatic expression of the digital divide’ (ibid.). The current research, although concerned with minority
languages online, acknowledges the unequal nature of access of the Internet/WWW in particular for minority language speakers and communities.

This chapter considered the context of the current study; new media, multilingualism and minority languages online, and, the digital divide. It situates the domain of this study, the Facebook SNS, in current conceptualisations of new media as new, converging, commodifying, mundane context, with the potential to be socially shaping with social consequences (Lievrouw and Livingstone, 2006). As the discussion of the Internet and multilingualism demonstrates, globalised contexts, such as Facebook, impact the language practices and context of many minority language speakers and communities and also current sociolinguistic theory. The next chapter will outline the research methodology used to consider the language policy of the Facebook SNS and the Irish Translations community.
CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Howard (2002: 553) espouses qualitative ethnographic methods for investigating a community online as they ‘expose how people build culture from the bottom-up’. This is particularly applicable in the current study as it is interested in how the Irish language Translations community and their translation of Facebook into Irish has developed from the ‘bottom-up’ and how it could be understood in terms of the dichotomy of ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ language policy theoretically. Hine (1998) acknowledges that the Internet is not something we know how to use innately and that its uses are not fixed. Technical skills must be learned but she notes that we must also learn what we can use it for, how to interpret what we encounter, and how to engage with others for the most part via written means, etc. The Internet must be considered in its context of use and how it transforms, or not, its context of use. The Internet is also a medium of communication and must be considered as a social context. Hine uses ethnography as a ‘device for [... some] puzzlement’; in other words to problematise the Internet, to consider its sensibility as this is not inherent but acquired in use (ibid.: 4).

This chapter will consider the research methodology of the current study. Firstly, a number of related research methods often employed in new media and language studies will be discussed briefly. Secondly, the chosen method for the current research, virtual ethnography using Hine’s (2000) approach and its related practices and issues will be outlined. In particular, the current study applies Hine’s virtual ethnographic practices and principles and those developed by others in related studies in the approach the research took during her collection of data and subsequent analysis of the Facebook SNS.

4.1 Related Research Methods

This section will consider a number of methodologies related to the research method used in the current study, virtual ethnography. Firstly, ethnography will be briefly introduced, next, its use in studies investigating language policy or policies is considered, and finally, Discourse Centred Online Ethnography (DCOE), which involves the use of ethnographic methods in online research, is briefly outlined.
4.1.1 Ethnography

Hine (2009: 6) defines the key idea of ethnography as the immersion of the ethnographer in the social situation, and the researcher would add context, being investigated and use of this experience to ‘try to learn how life is lived there, rather than coming in with a particular pre-formed research question or assumptions about the issues that will be of interest’. In the current study, the researcher approached the WWW with the intention of investigating language policy in this new domain with a particular focus on the relationship between ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ language policy and minority languages, but with an open mind regarding what would be studied, where the data of the study would be and what would be found. Thus the current study began with the broad research title of new media, minority languages and language policy and collected data from a number of domains and entities such as Twitter, Google in your language, and some online Irish language campaigns before focusing this research on the Facebook SNS and its Translations app for a period of three years. As boyd (2009: 29) writes, ‘ethnography is about participant observation or deep hanging out…’.

Markham (2008) discusses two uses of the term ‘ethnography’ to describe research. Firstly, she believes that some studies claiming to be ethnographic would be better labelled as ‘interview study, case study, phenomenology, grounded theory, narrative analysis, biography or life history, and so forth… [ethnography] seems to be a term that is applied by scholars who do not know what else to call their work’ (ibid.: 255). Secondly, she acknowledges use of the term by those whose studies broaden what is considered ethnography. Drawing on Cooper and Woolgar (1996), Hine (2005a: 8) states that by ‘claiming the method [of a study] as ethnographic an author is making a performance of community… which is either accepted or rejected by audiences to the performance’. For example, Campbell (2004) defines his study as ethnography as he played an active role/part in the social phenomenon he was researching.

Ethnography, Hine (2008) believes, has become acknowledged in academia as an appropriate method to investigate how users make sense of the Internet and its possibilities. As O’Reilly (2009) acknowledges, ethnography has moved on from its earlier field sites which were distant and bounded cultures and is now concerned with ethnography ‘at home’ or in multiple locations. The potential for on-line ethnography is bolstered by the development of multi-sited ethnography, connective ethnography, the ethnography of organisations, the use of discourse and network analysis, and narrative
(Davies, 2008). Davies (2008: 52-3) considers ethnographic knowledge and the Internet, how ethnographic research online produces knowledge that ‘makes validity claims on grounds that are very similar if not identical to those used by more conventional ethnographic methods’. Ethnography allows the researcher to move beyond viewing ICTs as functional devices only, emphasising the sociocultural dimensions of the Internet rendering it ‘as a series of dynamic cultures, practices and rituals’ (Hjorth, 2011: 61).

4.1.2 Ethnography and Language Policy

Ethnography and ethnographic approaches have been used previously in language policy research. Canagarajah (2006) considers how ethnography can contribute to investigating the effect, reception or adaptation of ‘top-down’ or official language policy by the language community. However, as in the current study, as Canagarajah writes, ethnography also allows us to consider language policy ‘... as it is practiced in localized contexts... the community’s own point of view... the micro-level of interpersonal relationships, conversation, and everyday life... ethnography unravels the largely unconscious “lived culture” of a community’ (ibid.: 153). It moves the focus of LPP research from: ‘how things “ought to be”... [to] about what “is”’ (ibid.). Johnson (2009) outlines the ‘ethnography of language policy’ (Hornberger and Johnson, 2007), in relation to research on language policy interpretation and appropriation. This is a methodology that ‘compares critical discourse analyses of language policy texts [and discourses] with ethnographic data’ collected in a local context (Johnson, 2009: 140). The ethnographic data should give an insight into how language policy texts and the discourses surrounding these are ‘interpreted and appropriated’ by grass-roots stakeholders. He proposes a methodological heuristic, which includes five fluid categories to guide data collection: agents, goals, processes, discourses which prompt and maintain the policy, and the social and historical contexts the language policy exists in. Hornberger and Johnson (2011: 273) believe the ethnography of language policy began in the 1980s and has ‘gathered significant momentum’ in the 2000s. They outline three contributions the ethnography of language policy can contribute to the field,

(1) illuminate and inform the development of LPP in its various types – status, corpus, and acquisition – and across the various processes of the LPP cycle – creation, interpretation, and appropriation; (2) shed light on how official top-down LPP plays out in particular contexts, including its interaction with bottom-up LPP; and (3) uncover the indistinct voices, covert motivations, embedded ideologies, invisible instances, or unintended consequences of LPP.
They also describe the ethnography of language policy as a method ‘uniquely situated to explore the connections (or lack thereof) between top-down and bottom-up’ LPP (Hornberger and Johnson, 2011: 278). The current research uncovers the many levels of language policy ongoing in the Facebook context.

Contributors to McCarty’s (2011b) volume use ethnography as their way to access language policy processes, in order to ‘critically analyze how these implicit, de facto language policies emerge and work in the course of everyday interaction’ (McCarty, 2011a: 3). The current study uses virtual ethnography to consider the language policy processes of the Facebook SNS and Irish Translations app. They also consider these interactions in terms of larger policy discourses, going beneath the surface of official language policy texts to examine the power relationships which create and naturalise them. They investigate language policy ‘as a practice of power that operates at multiple, intersecting levels: the micro level of individuals in face-to-face interaction, the meso level of local communities of practice, and the macro level of nation-states and larger global forces’ (ibid.). The studies in the volume gather data via participant observation, in-depth interviews, document analysis and also supplement these ethnographic methods with other methods of data collection such as sociolinguistic surveys and student achievement data (ibid.). The contributions to Hornberger and McCarty’s special issue of the International Multilingual Research Journal also use an ethnography of language policy approach to their contexts, involving long term engagement and ethnographic methods. McCarty (2011a: 3), quoting Stritikus and Wiese (2006: 21), believes this method can ‘uncover the “situated logic” of implicit and explicit policy-making, offering insights into “why practice takes shape the way it does”’. Indeed, Gilmore (2011: 125) calls for more ‘first-hand systematic participant observation data that captures actual language practices in everyday use’.

Jaffe (1999b: 271) also espouses the use of ethnography in language policy studies, noting that ‘whether we are concerned with the nitty gritty of “what works,” or conceptualizing social processes, ethnography is critical if we are to understand the social and cultural repercussions of language policy’. Jaffe also believes that how minority language communities respond to linguistic, cultural and ideological domination can only be uncovered ethnographically. Ethnographic research can be used as the ‘foundation of a comparative study of minority language revitalization’ (ibid.: 284). In the Corsican context, Jaffe acknowledges the link between any future language
legislation or policy and the ‘culturally-embedded notions about human motivation, agency and autonomy as well as influenced by ambient ideological formations’ (ibid.). Furthermore, Jaffe believes that ethnography is paramount to understanding the subject of our research, the minority language itself as oftentimes there is public struggle over language which centres on the definition of what is Corsican in Jaffe’s case and Irish in the current research. She espouses an approach that ‘examines, through the study of language practice, the social and ideological processes by which language identity and legitimacy are accomplished and (potentially) modified’ (ibid.: 285).

Georgakopoulou (2006: 551) is pleased to see that ethnography, which she describes as ‘the champion of irreducibility of lived experience and of situated understandings’ (ibid.), is a popular research method for CMC. Georgakopoulou believes that CMC is in a good place to contribute to the current debates in ethnography, on topics such as the role of the researcher, the emphasis on exotic cultures as objects of research and working with dynamic definitions of community (cf. Rampton, et al., 2004). She points to Androustopoulos (2006b), del-Teso-Cravitto (2006) and Kelly-Holmes (2006b) as examples of how ‘emic understanding’ can be achieved from systematic observation by the researcher as ‘guerrilla’ (Yang, 2003), i.e. that may not involve participation, as in the current study. These studies are more or less invisible to the participants and seize ‘the opportunity to make the most of the exigencies of the mediated activities under study’ (Georgakopoulou, 2006: 551).

Georgakopoulou sees ‘online ethnography’ as a method for contributing to our understanding of ‘the roles of CMC in the (re)formation of micro-cultures and shared interactional histories not just in purely online communities but also in existing social relations’ (ibid.: 552). This method allows researchers to investigate the technologically rich sites of new media technologies where users/social actors embed traditional and new media technologies into their everyday lives for many reasons and with many participants, ‘in ways that can shed light on which characteristics of each medium are called upon in what kinds of social practices’ (ibid.). This, Georgakopoulou notes, will lead to greater contextualisation, i.e. making connections between the ‘communicative events on CMC and the medium as integrally connected with larger economic, political and historical processes’ (ibid.). Online ethnography, as Georgakopoulou drawing on Bauman (2001) writes, also allows a shift in the focus of CMC research from early taxonomic and textualist approaches to genres of CMC to practice-based perspectives where genres are ‘orienting frameworks of conventionalised
expectations and routine ways of speaking and (inter)acting in specific sites and for specific purposes’ (Georgakopoulou, 2006: 552). To achieve this shift, Georgakopoulou (2006: 552) calls for an ethnography of CMC spaces that will unravel connections between what is being done with the “site of engagement” to echo Scollon and Scollon (2004: 28): the space as a socio-cultural sphere for semiotic activity in real time that is not necessarily homogeneous and uni-dimensional but multi-functional and polycentric (Blommaert et al., 2005: 207).

The current study uses virtual ethnography to consider the impact of new media language practices and policies, and the ideologies which influence these, of both commercial and community aspects of this domain, on language policy theory.

4.1.3 Discourse-Centred Online Ethnography

Androutsopoulos (2008) believes that ethnography on the Internet is a multifaceted research area and is demonstrative of the attempt to transfer ethnographic principles and techniques to CMC contexts. However, he believes that ‘research based exclusively on log data is not ideally positioned to examine participants’ discourse practices and perspectives or to relate these practices and perspectives to observable patterns of language use’, rather research must ‘go beyond the screen’ (ibid.: 1-2).

Androutsopoulos, thus proposes ‘discourse-centred online ethnography’ as a method of investigating people’s motivations for the use of particular linguistic resources online and the meanings they attach to those resources; people’s awareness and evaluation of linguistic diversity online; their knowledge about the origin and circulation of linguistic innovations in CMC; and the relationship between participants’ and researchers’ interpretations (ibid.: 2).

Androutsopoulos believes ethnography connects language research to other CMC research trends. Ethnography can be used to investigate ‘the local and situated character of Internet practices, to reconstruct the emergence of virtual communities, and to chart the unfolding of online activities in relation to offline events’ (ibid.: 3).

Androutsopoulos uses the term ‘online ethnography’ and acknowledges two versions of online ethnography. The first version is concerned with the Internet in everyday life, in particular how new communications technologies are integrated in the life and culture of a community, and emphasises blended, online and offline, ethnography. The focus of the second approach is on everyday life on the Internet, viewing the Internet as a place where culture and community develop. Androutsopoulos views Hine (2000) as an attempt to ‘bridge the gap’ between the Internet as culture and the Internet as cultural artefact. He situates the DCOE method in the second approach to online ethnography,
influenced by Hine (2000), and building on two of his German based research projects (Androutsopoulos, 2003; 2007a; 2007b).

DCOE is a combination of methods which involves ‘the systematic observation of selected sites of online discourse with direct contact with its social actors’ (Androutsopoulos, 2008: 2). It uses insights gathered ethnographically to influence the selection, analysis and interpretation of log data to investigate the relationship between digital texts and their production/reception practices. The background to his approach is the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1996; Saville-Troike, 2003) and socially-oriented linguistics that uses ethnography (cf. Eckert, 2000; Rampton, 2006), which are concerned with the patterns of communication and the social relationships of communities and groups occurring through language (Androutsopoulos, 2008). He outlines twelve practice-derived guidelines for DCOE, based on the two pillars of this approach: systematic observation and contact with Internet actors. Systematic observation assumes that ‘the continuous monitoring of given sites of discourse affords insights into discourse practices and patterns of language use ... its targets are sets of relationships on two levels, i.e. within a particular site of discourse as well as across a set of such sites’ (ibid.: 4). The six guidelines for the first pillar advise the researcher to: ‘examine relationships and processes rather than isolated artefacts, move from core to periphery of a field, repeat observation, maintain openness, use all available technology and use observation insights as guidance for further sampling’ (ibid.: 5). The second pillar draws on and uses insights from the observation and log-based analysis of CMD of the first pillar. The six guidelines advise the following: ‘contacts should be limited, non-random, and include various participation formats, pay attention to the initial contact, formulate and customise interview guidelines, confront participants with (their own) material, seek repeated and prolonged contacts and make use of alternative techniques wherever possible’ (ibid.).

There are three primary benefits of ethnography for Androutsopoulos’ research on sociolinguistic style and variability in CMC, reconstructing: fields of CMD, literacy practices and participants’ lay sociolinguistics. Androutsopoulos uses ethnography and the insights gained from it to frame the linguistic analysis of log data collected, to contextualise it, aid interpretation and to influence the research questions asked. His approach uses an ethnographic perspective and elements of ethnographic method(s). However, Androutsopoulos and Beißwenger (2008: 1) consider a number of methodological issues with CMD research including: ‘the size and representativeness of
data samples, data processing techniques, the delimitation of genres, and the kind and amount of contextual information that is necessary, as well as to ethical issues such as anonymity and privacy protection’. CMD research methods and concepts draw on research in linguistics, from different areas such as sociolinguistics, as in the current study (ibid.). However, Androutsopoulos and Beißwenger believe there is a lack of critical reflection on the issues that arise when these offline research traditions are applied to the new CMD environment. Androutsopoulos and Beißwenger note a number of research questions and related issues in CMD research including ‘ways of doing “online” or “virtual” ethnography as a contextually rich window into the study of online activities and online communities’ (ibid.: 2). One of the future directions of CMDA research, Androutsopoulos and Beißwenger note, is research on Web 2.0 platforms, such as those for social networking, as they term it, like Facebook. Furthermore, they note that the implications of these new CMD spaces for methodology and data collection must be considered.

4.2 **Virtual Ethnography**

Virtual ethnography is the method of investigation of the current research study. As a method it involves looking at CMC in online networks and communities, analysing the language content and observing the online interactions at the level of the users. It is a suitable method to analyse the kind of new media forms the current research is concerned with; here virtual ethnography is used to observe and investigate the *de facto* language policies on the Facebook SNS and the language ideological debates around the development and implementation of these policies. In this section, virtual ethnography as a research method will be considered. Firstly, the terminology used to discuss ‘virtual ethnography’ is outlined. Next, ‘virtual ethnography’ is introduced and discussed, including its relationship to ethnography, some practices of the virtual ethnographic approach, Hine’s (2000) approach, and her ten principles of ‘virtual ethnography’. Then, the use of this method to consider the Internet as both culture and cultural artefact is considered, followed by a brief discussion on whether ‘virtual ethnography’ is virtual ethnography or an ethnography of the virtual and some critiques of virtual ethnography are briefly addressed. Finally, a number of related studies concerned with minority languages online and SNSs, which use virtual ethnography as a method of data collection, are considered.
4.2.1 Terminology and Associated Approaches

There are many terms in use to describe an ethnographic approach in research concerned with the Internet or the WWW including: ‘guerilla ethnography’ (McCreery, 2000), ‘cyberethnography’ (Teli et al., 2007), ‘digital ethnography’ (Murthy, 2008), ‘Internet ethnography’ (Park, 2004) and ‘online ethnography’ (Markham, 2008) to name a few. Some researchers use these terms interchangeably: for example, Fay (2007) uses ‘virtual ethnography’ and ‘cyberethnography’ interchangeably, while Hine (2008) herself uses the terms ‘virtual ethnography’ and ‘online ethnography’ interchangeably.

It must be acknowledged that some terminological distinctions are also methodological distinctions, and the use of different terms oftentimes signals a change in approach or emphasis on a particular aspect of the research/ethnography. Table 4.1 below, outlines some of the primary terms in use, researchers who subscribe to these and their definition/approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virtual ethnography</td>
<td>Hine (1998)</td>
<td>She uses ‘virtual’ metaphorically to emphasise ‘the uncertainty in relation to time, location and presence’ in the field of research and also in its pre-IT sense as ‘something which is almost’ (ibid.: 5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual ethnography</td>
<td>Hjorth (2011)</td>
<td>Distinguishes between ‘virtual ethnography’ and ‘digital ethnography’. Conceptualises virtual ethnography as studying the Internet as culture and digital ethnography as ‘studying the social and new media surrounding the Internet, as exemplified by YouTube studies’ (ibid.: 31).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyberethnography</td>
<td>Pearce (2009)</td>
<td>Uses this term to avoid the prescriptive nature of the ‘virtual’ in ‘virtual ethnography’ (ibid.: 55).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyberethnography</td>
<td>Teli et al. (2007)</td>
<td>‘Cyborg-inspired’ practices are at the heart of their ‘cyberethnography’. They do not perceive the ‘virtual’ as the opposite of reality as per popular anecdotal discourse;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyberethnography</td>
<td>Ward (1999)</td>
<td>Distinguishes cyber-ethnography from ethnography on its stance towards community, it ‘allows the participants to take the lead role in establishing the reality, status and principles of the group’ ( \text{(ibid.: 96)} ). This guards against the application of an inaccurate framework onto the virtual community by the ethnographer unfamiliar with the social context and processes of the community. Cyber-ethnography here is based on the ‘premise of a diologic process between the cyber-ethnographer’ [emphasis in original] ( \text{(ibid.: 100)} ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyberethnography</td>
<td>Rybas and Gajjala (2007)</td>
<td>Based on an epistemology of doing, stressing the ‘doing of technology, building of cyberspatial environments, sustained interaction, and “being” online’ to allow for an understanding of the mundane practices of the context ( \text{(ibid.: 17)} ). They advocate ‘living within technology’ or living/lived ethnography ( \text{(ibid.: 7)} ), ‘doing’ technology and constructing the technospatial environment. Meaning making here does not just come from textual analysis but from the ‘subjective experience of participating, building, and living the digitally meditated environments’ ( \text{(ibid.: 17)} ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netnography</td>
<td>Kozinets (2010)</td>
<td>He defines it as ‘a specialized form of ethnography adapted to the unique computer-mediated contingencies of today’s “virtually” is one of multiple ways of living in a context’ ( \text{(ibid.: 5)} ).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
social worlds’ (*ibid.*: 1). Developed as an approach in the marketing and consumer research area, with ethnography as its ‘older sibling’ (*ibid.*). He argues that netnography is different to ethnography as ‘online social experiences are significantly different from face-to-face social experiences, and the experience of ethnographically studying them is meaningfully different’ (*ibid.*: 5). In terms of approach, netnography is ‘promiscuous’, incorporating many other approaches and is usable with a number of different research approaches and techniques. A particular advantage of netnography, as Kozinets writes, is that like traditional ethnography it is a naturalistic approach.

Table 4.1: Ethnographic Approaches to the Internet/WWW

4.2.2 Introducing Virtual Ethnography

Virtual ethnography ‘transfers the ethnographic tradition of the researcher as embodied research instrument to the social spaces of the Internet’ (Hine, 2008: 257). Ducheneaut (2010: 202) describes virtual ethnography as ‘an ethnography that treats cyberspace as the ethnographic reality’. Wouters (2005), draws on Hine’s (2000) tradition, defining virtual ethnography as extending ‘the notions of field and ethnographic observation from the exclusive study of co-present and face to face interactions, to a focus on mediated and distributed ones’ (Wouters, 2005: 10). As Wouters notes, virtual ethnography ‘aims to change the notion of the fieldsite from a localised space into a network of interlinked mediated settings’ (*ibid.*). Wouters considers what differentiates virtual ethnography from website content analysis, although sharing some commonalities such as qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate websites, discourse online, etc., the distinguishing feature of virtual ethnography is the goal of ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1983) from the participants’ perspective (Ward, 1999; Slater, 2002; Wouters, 2005).
Virtual ethnography was developed as a research method by Hine in her (2000) publication of the same name. Hine (2008) traces the beginnings of applying ethnographic methods to the online context in the 1990s. As Hine notes, early research using ethnography online investigated how rich and socially patterned interactions on the Internet were. An early definition by Cavanagh (1999: 1) outlines virtual ethnography as a:

variant of traditional ethnomethodological techniques, utilizing a spectrum of observational and other qualitative methods to examine the ways in which meaning is constructed in online environments and gleans much of its analytical framework from derivations of conversation analysis

Domínguez et al. (2007: 1) describe it as ‘a broad range of methodological approaches aimed at answering the complexities of the object of research and the different ways in which this object has been constructed’. At it simplest, ethnographic research on the Internet involves ‘learning how to live in cyberspace and how to account for events there over time’ (Carter, 2005: 150).

Virtual ethnography is used in many disciplines including anthropology, sociology, economics, psychology (Domínguez et al., 2007) and, as in the current study, sociolinguistics. Hine (1994: 1) espouses the development of virtual ethnography as a research method ‘as a response to the need to study communities in which the use of electronic communications such as provided by computer networks are routine’. Catterall and Maclaran (2001), for example, consider how ethnographic research methods can be adapted and used in marketing to get insights from virtual communities. However, Hine (1994) argues for the development of virtual ethnography not to replace old methods but to focus on the assumptions underlying ethnography and also on the features of new technologies that are perceived as different or ‘special’. As Murthy (2008: 838) writes, when ‘ethnography goes digital, its epistemological remit remains much the same. Ethnography is about telling social stories... With the introduction of new technologies, the stories have remained vivid, but the ways they were told have changed’.

4.2.3 Virtual Ethnography and Ethnography

As Domínguez et al. (2007) write, there are two main perspectives on virtual ethnography in the literature: those who consider virtual ethnography a distinct methodological approach and those who do not. The latter believe that Internet research compels us to reflect on the assumptions and concepts of ethnography in light of the
Internet. Hine (2005a) acknowledges that her virtual ethnographic approach polarises opinions leading it to be considered by some as the same as ethnography in face to face contexts, while others believe it to be so different it is not ethnography. Domínguez et al. (2007) identify a number of different approaches in the ethnographic study of the Internet such as digital ethnography, ethnography on/of/through the Internet, connective ethnography, networked ethnography and cyberethnography. They see each of these as separate approaches related to traditional ethnography but in different ways, while Beaulieu (2004) finds that, although promised, there have not been any radical transformations in ethnographic principles resulting from virtual ethnography.

Hine (2008) believes online/virtual ethnography has developed in dialogue with the principles of ethnography in other domains. Klenke (2008: 202) sees virtual ethnography as a development in the field of ethnography, believing it ‘attempts to maintain the values of traditional ethnography by providing a “thick” description through the immersion of the researcher in the lives of their informants’. Klenke does not conceptualise virtual ethnography as a new method to replace older forms, rather it is ‘a way of bringing into focus both the assumptions on which ethnography is based and the features which are specific to the technologies involved’ (ibid.). Park (2004) believes that Internet ethnography fits well within the wider field of ethnography in the current self-reflexive phase. However, O’Reilly (2009: 216) acknowledges that some virtual ethnographers ‘feel the methodology is being stretched beyond recognition, to a virtual (not quite real) ethnography rather than simply an ethnography of the virtual’. But to O’Reilly, virtual ethnography is not a distinct method of ethnography but another aspect of it. Hine (2008: 258) acknowledges that a major challenge for ethnography in general is to develop ‘forms of ethnography that take seriously the social reality of online settings, whilst also exploring their embedding within everyday life’. She concludes by considering whether virtual ethnography will continue as a demarked type of ethnography or be subsumed into the field of ethnography as one approach of many.

4.2.4 The Practices of Virtual Ethnography
Greenhow (2011) notes that virtual ethnography is a mixed methods approach; as Fay (2007) outlines it can involve a number of methodological characteristics, including: participant observation and observing participation, immersion in a group/community, and fieldnotes. Virtual ethnography is labour intensive, it ‘requires inductive, interactive, and recursive data collection and analysis (Greenhow, 2011: 78). Hine
(2000) notes that the moving of ethnography to the online domain has involved the re-examination of what this methodology involves. Some issues Hine considers are: ‘how can you live in an online setting? So you have to be logged on 24 hours a day, or can you visiting the setting at periodic intervals? Can you analyse newsgroup archives without participating and call that ethnography?’ (ibid.: 21). As Hine writes, the ethnographer cannot be every user and recreate their circumstances of use of a particular website, chat room, etc., but the ethnographer can ‘experience what it is like to be a user’ from their reflexive understandings (ibid.: 23). Park (2004: 23) argues that contextuality is ‘the most crucial quality that an/the ethnographic approach’ can contribute to Internet research. One of the ways contextuality can be achieved, Park notes, is to create methods that take both the online and offline contexts into consideration. Through this approach, Park believes Internet ethnography can ‘gain understanding of the Internet deeper than being a mythical medium of “virtuality” or “cyberspace”’ (sic) (ibid.: 24).

Hine (2000: 13) believes that ‘ethnography is strengthened by the lack of recipes for doing it’. Furthermore, she believes that as a method, it is a ‘lived craft rather than a protocol which can be separated from the particular study or the person carrying it out’ (ibid.). Gajjala (2006: 283) writes of cyberethnography ‘unfolding’ as a research method as she progresses in her study and continuing to do so ‘as a process of understanding cross-contextual Internet mediated/enabled communication’. Some researchers are more prescriptive, with both Abdelnour Nocera (2002) and Mann (2006) outlining four and five stage frameworks, respectively, for carrying out virtual ethnographic studies. Ethnographic immersion must be acknowledged as a key component of virtual ethnography, albeit an intermittent immersion, as will be discussed below as Hine’s sixth principle (Section 4.2.5). Howard (2002: 559) expects the virtual ethnographer ‘to be immersed in the activities of the community, learning languages or jargon and engaging at as many levels as possible in the lives of the subjects’. While Carter (2005: 150) believes the virtual ethnographer must also learn to ‘account for events there over time’, and in her own research on Cybercity, she varies her visiting times to broaden her ethnographic view. For Madge and O’Connor (2005) ethnographic immersion involves becoming familiar with Internet language to replace visual communication nuances.
Hine (2005a) does not acknowledge any essential criteria to judge whether a particular study of an online context is ethnographic or not. Instead Hine (2000: 4-5) outlines her understanding of ethnography as involving the following:

a researcher spending an extended period of time immersed in a field setting, taking account of the relationships, activities and understandings of those in the setting and participating in those processes. The aim is to make explicit the taken-for-granted and often tacit ways in which people make sense of their lives.

The place of the ethnographer is in ‘a kind of in-between world, simultaneously native and stranger’ (ibid.: 5). They must, as Hine notes, ‘become close enough to the culture being studied to understand how it works, and yet be able to detach from it sufficiently to be able to report on it’ (ibid.).

4.2.5 Hine’s Virtual Ethnography Principles

Hine (2000) does outline ten principles of her approach to ‘virtual ethnography’. These principles should not been seen as rules for virtual ethnography, as Hine notes, ethnography has always been an adaptive methodology with no rules or guidelines for the perfect ethnographic research: ‘defining the fundamental components of the ethnographic approach is unhelpful. The focus of ethnography on dwelling within a culture demands adaptation and the possibility of overturning prior assumptions’ (ibid.: 65-6). The adaptation of virtual ethnography to suit the particular research in fact raises the issues which Hine’s principles 1-9 attempt to address (ibid.: 66).

Firstly, virtual ethnography views the Internet as problematic; the Internet becomes meaningful in its everyday use. In other words, the everyday uses of the Internet as a medium of communication, an object in people’s lives and as a site of online community, necessitate interpretation and reinterpretation of the status of the Internet. Next, virtual ethnography must consider the Internet, and other interactive media, as both culture and cultural artefact, since to neglect either would result in an ‘impoverished view’ (ibid.: 64). Thirdly, virtual ethnography is a mediated ethnography that is mobile, not multi-sited; it is not located in one or many places but consists of mediated interactions. Consequently, the fourth principle is that the object of research of virtual ethnography is concerned with flow and connectivity, rather than traditional ethnography’s focus on location and boundary. The notion of the field-site must therefore be reconceptualised. This focus highlights the challenge of virtual ethnography, the fifth principle, to explore boundaries and connections, especially in regard to the ‘virtual’ and the ‘real’, and to not assume them a priori (ibid.: 64). This
discards the ideal of a ‘whole ethnography’, as the virtual ethnographer will most likely have to decide an endpoint of the boundary-less ethnography, which involves a pragmatic decision (*ibid.*).

The sixth principle notes that immersion in virtual ethnography is intermittent; both virtual ethnographer and Internet users fit the Internet around their lives. From this principle comes the seventh: virtual ethnography is a partial ethnography, based on just the research undertaken and is not a total representation of an objective reality. Hine’s eight principle calls for virtual ethnography as requiring engagement by the ethnographer with mediated interaction, as she believes it allows an indispensable insight. The virtual ethnographer must be reflexive and draw on their own experiences to inform their research, they can be a reflexive informant. The ninth principle acknowledges that a virtual ethnography is shaped by the technologies of the Internet and that this is the site of the ethnography. It is, Hine notes, an ‘ethnography in, of and through the virtual’ [emphasis in original] (*ibid.*: 65). Hine’s tenth and final principle is that virtual ethnography is an adaptive ethnography; it is a suitable research method for investigating mediated communication. Virtual ethnography is not methodologically inferior in dealing with the virtual, virtual does not mean ‘not quite’ real, rather, the virtual is real in a disembodied space (*ibid.*).

4.3.6 The Internet as Culture and/or Cultural Artefact

Ethnography can be employed to ‘develop an enriched sense of the meanings of the technology and the cultures which enable it and are enabled by it’ (Hine, 2000: 8). Therefore, virtual ethnography can allow the researcher to understand the Internet as both culture and cultural artefact. Hine (2000) discusses these two views of the Internet, firstly, as culture, as a place ‘where culture is formed and reformed’ (*ibid.*: 9). Hine notes that ethnographic research of online spaces contributed to the establishment of the perception of the Internet ‘as a culture where the uses people make of the technology available to them could be studied’ (*ibid.*). Secondly, drawing on Woolgar (1996), Hine (2000: 9) writes that the Internet can be viewed as a cultural artefact which ‘is a product of culture: a technology that was produced by particular people with contextually situated goals and priorities’. It is a technology shaped by how it is marketed, taught, used, etc. Viewing the Internet as a cultural artefact proposes that it may have been otherwise, ‘that what it is and what it does are the product of culturally produced
understanding(s) that can vary’ (ibid.). This approach allows ethnographers to investigate local contexts of interpretation and use. However, this distinction, Hine states, is a heuristic device for considering the indeterminacy of the Internet; it is not a way of distinguishing what is real in the experience(s) of Internet users or as a reflection of the online/offline boundary. This distinction is an ‘incentive to finding an ethnographic approach to the Internet which takes both aspects into account and explores the connections between them’ (ibid.: 39). Considering the Internet as a cultural artefact ‘interrogates the assumptions which view the Internet as a site for culture entails, and highlights, the status of the Internet as itself a cultural achievement based on particular understandings of the technology’ (ibid.). Studies of CMC have moved on from viewing the Internet as a poor medium of communication to now seeing it as a rich communication medium, which aids the development of cultures. The current research will look at the Internet and CMC as developing online (language) culture(s) and therefore forming language policies and attitudes in relation to minority languages. The site of this research, the Facebook SNS and its Translations app, is examined to illustrate the ways de facto language policies are formed and reformed with respect to current language policy theory.

Hine (2005a: 8) suggests that a methodological shift in the field of Internet research ‘the claiming of the online context as an ethnographic field site’ was paramount to the development of the status of Internet communication as culture. Ethnographic methods allow researchers to demonstrate the cultural richness of the new media domain. Hine goes further, believing our understanding of the Internet as a cultural context is intertwined with the application of ethnography to this domain, that the method and the phenomenon are in a mutually dependant relationship and define each other through this relationship. Ethnography is a method for investigating culture and by demonstrating that ethnography can be applied to the online context, the Internet is then delineated as a cultural context.

4.2.7 ‘Virtual’ Ethnography or ‘Ethnography’ of Virtuality?
Park (2004) questions whether Internet ethnography is ‘virtual’ ethnography or is ‘ethnography’ of virtuality. She reviews a number of studies which fall under the tradition of ethnographic research of/on the Internet and considers how these studies are ethnographic or constitute ethnography, and what methods are used for ethnographic research of the Internet. Firstly, she believes Internet ethnography must move beyond
Geertz (1973) and his conceptualisation of ‘thick description’, instead arguing for the adoption of recent approaches from anthropology and related disciplines that are more reflexive and innovative. Furthermore, Geertz’s emphasis on ‘being there’, Park (2004) notes, could lead to dismissals of innovative ways of doing online ethnography by not acknowledging the differences between the virtual and the real in both interactions and forms of existence. The notion of space must be considered to develop a form of Internet ethnography. As Park writes, Internet communication needs a shift in theoretical consideration from material space to cyber- or virtual space. Online interactions occur in a unique space and locality, both of which must be conceptualised differently. Park believes moving beyond traditional conceptualisations of ‘field’ and ‘fieldwork’ as in post-colonial anthropology would be useful. Internet interaction(s) also require a new focus on mediated communication and interaction, as, in traditional settings the focus was limited to face-to-face interactions between the ethnographer and ethnographic subjects. Finally, she calls for Internet ethnography not to be equated to any qualitative methods: ‘it should not lose the crucial component that makes ethnography distinctive from other qualitative methodologies’, which she believes is the focus of ethnography on contextuality (ibid.: 20). In saying this, Park notes the importance of not underestimating the connections between the virtual and the ‘real’ as this reduces the complexity of Internet practice.

4.2.8 Critiquing Virtual Ethnography

Some researchers are not satisfied with Hine’s (2000) or other’s approaches to ‘virtual ethnography’ or the idea of carrying out ethnography in the online context only. Catterall and Maclaran (2001: 234) define representation as ‘how the researcher constructs a meaningful account of the phenomena observed’ and then wonder what an ethnography of a virtual community can actually represent: membership can be transient, the identities of participants unknown/unverifiable, interactions online have a private/public nature, and research online is opportunistic in nature. Beaulieu (2004) has a similar concern given the ease of the Internet as a field and site of research, as it is ‘all there’, i.e. nothing is missed due to archives, etc., and the text is already there, not mediated by transcription. This leads her to ask what the ethnographer then offers? Teli et al. (2007) discuss the move from ethnography to virtual ethnography and in this identify a ‘main mistake’ of the virtual ethnographic approach: ethnography, and thus virtual ethnography, is a holistic approach and should not focus on online practice(s)
only; rather it should overlap with the offline context and offline practices. Teli et al. argue for the ethnography of online groups to include ‘online and related off-line situations… human and non-human actors in both types of field. It should be hybrid, like a cyborg… it should be cyberethnography’ (ibid.: 2). Also, Wittel (2000: 7) believes virtual ethnography is to a certain extent devoid of context, and that it ‘cannot rely on external forms of structuration’. Wittel considers that one of the core objectives of ethnography is to reveal complexity and that traditional and virtual forms of ethnography must integrate the context. In particular, in virtual ethnographic studies, Wittel warns how the connections between online and offline spaces can be underestimated; he believes the lack of the offline environment reduces the complexity of such studies.

4.2.9 New Media Virtual Ethnographic Studies
One of the earliest studies which used ethnographic methods online is Markham (1998). In this study she considers cyberspace, as she terms it, as an ‘evolving cultural form’ in which users create social networks, groups and communities through electronic messages and she is interested in the consequences of these social contexts (ibid.: 16). Markham investigates what cyberspace means to extensive Internet users and how it affects or changes their lives. In particular, she is interested in how users make sense of their online experiences: do they shift between the offline physical world and the online context, where they can re-create their bodies or leave them behind? Markham chose a number of contexts for her observations. Firstly, she considers the common metaphors used to refer to online interaction(s) in online conversations, in magazines, on television and in books. Secondly, she assumes the role of a ‘lurker’ in an online community and analyses an eight month conversation from this context. Also, from this community she considers how they organise the community’s boundaries and norms through conversation. Finally, she interviews a hacker to discuss how they made sense of identity online. Markham views this approach as three case studies, and chose to structure her research in this manner to allow her to consider her research question across three contexts. Three months into the first stage of her research, Markham realised that she, the ethnographer, was missing from her research. Thus, in order to fully examine and analyse how users experience new online cultural contexts and make sense of them she participates in the online context.
Early virtual ethnographic studies were descriptive in nature, so much so that Lukács (2010: 187-8) urges virtual ethnography scholarship to now embed its research ‘within the existing economical, political, and cultural system that produced and in turn is being produced by online culture’. A number of the contributions to the special issue of *Language and Communication* on ‘Jewish Languages in the Age of the Internet’, edited by Sarah Bunin Benor and Tsvi Sadan, use ethnographic methods on the Internet. Brink-Danan (2010) investigates a Ladino email list, *Ladinokomunita*, looking at the relationship between vernacularity and postvernacularity. She discovers that community boundaries are constructed through metalinguistic discourse, for example orthographic standards and lexical purity are enforced. Furthermore, discussions about the name of the language illustrate the multiple ‘language ideologies’ the email list participants have about this language. Brink-Danan’s study demonstrates how the Internet is involved in language maintenance for endangered languages such as Ladino.

Other studies which use virtual ethnographic methods and are concerned with the Irish language include: Kelly-Holmes (2006a) who uses an approach which she later terms ‘virtual ethnography lite’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2010b) to investigate the experience of using the WWW in Irish. This study begins with the Irish language version of *google.ie* and through searches for Irish language terms gives a snapshot of the experience of ‘surfing’ the web as an Irish language speaker and user. Her data are mostly static texts of websites and webpages, gathered from the links and connections generated by the initial 50 results from the search engine using the five keywords. Kelly-Holmes (2006b) also uses ‘virtual ethnography lite’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2010b) in her study of commercial language practices on the WWW. Again this study examines static websites and pages, in this case the websites of ten brands included in the *Business Week/Interbrand Corp* ‘100 Top Brands’ rankings from 2004. She looks at the languages used on the global homepages of the brands and also on their county/region and language specific websites, a total of 548 websites. Based on these results she also distributes a questionnaire about language issues and multilingualism to the brand managers of the organisations studied, none of which were completed.

Virtual ethnographic research on SNSs includes Fernández and Gil-Rodríguez (2011) which is concerned with *Facebook* as a collaborative platform in higher education and uses virtual ethnography to investigate the interaction(s) on forums. Rybas and Gajjala (2007) investigate the construction of racial identity on
SNSs, or social network systems as they term them, using virtual ethnographic research methods grounded in epistemologies of doing. boyd and Heer (2006) use ethnography in conjunction with visualisation to study profiles and social identity on the then SNS Friendster (it is now marketed as a social gaming site). They gather data via participant observation over a nine month period in 2003 which included interviews, qualitative surveys and focus groups. 1.5 million user profiles were collected from three source Profiles. Informed by this ethnographic data they develop an ‘egocentric interactive visualization’ to explore and analyse the collected profiles (ibid.: 3). Virtual ethnography is used in the current study to examine language policy. The approach here is a holistic one, involving ethnographic experience and insights from the Translations community/translator perspective and also analysis of corporate texts to gain an insight into Facebook’s approach to translation and languages. The next chapter will give an overview of the methodological approach of the current study.
CHAPTER 5
OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH:
VIRTUAL ETHNOGRAPHY

This chapter will present an overview of the methodological approach of the current research. Firstly, it will give an overview of the data collection processes of this study. This includes how data were defined, the ethnographer’s arrival story and the low level of participation the ethnographer engaged in. Next, it will consider a number of methodological issues that arose during the course of the current study, such as the role of the ethnographer, the online only context of this research, the ever-changing nature of the new media field and how to define the end of the data collection process. Finally, it will discuss the ethical considerations of this research. The ethical approach taken during this study will be outlined, along with its particular approach to issues such as overt/covert research, the anonymity of participants and the institutional ethics the current study was subject to.

5.1 Data Collection
This section will focus on the data collection process of the current study. Firstly, it considers how data were defined and contextualised, then how the field was defined and entered and also how data were collected primarily via a fieldwork diary. Next, it discusses which data were gathered and what data collection involved, the role of the ethnographer herself and finally, the ethnographer’s participation in the Translations app.

5.1.1 Defining and Contextualising Data
The researcher’s influence on the ethnography presented here began with the decision to choose Facebook as the topic/field of study (Hine, 2000). Markham (2008: 260) discusses how the researcher determines what are ‘data’ from all the information collected as no researcher can pay attention to everything, ‘our analytical lens is limited by what we are drawn to, what we are trained to attend to, and what we want to find’. Drawing on Goffman (1959), Markham (2008) acknowledges that the understanding we develop is determined by the frames of reference we use as well as the frames found in the context. She considers her own case study of an interaction in a MOO (Multi-User Domain (MUD) Object Oriented.) where she made a mistake in her categorisation of ‘meaningful’ and ‘nonessential’ data, which shifted her overall interpretation. The
overall research question(s) and goal, Markham believes, will guide the researcher’s choice in what are data and what are not, what is form and what is context. Hine (2009: 6) notes that:

... within ethnography the commitment to ongoing methodological flexibility and to the adaptation of methods to the circumstances in which ethnographers find themselves produces a particular consciousness that research design is an ongoing concern and that what counts as data has constantly to be re-evaluated.

Davies (2008) considers two ways in which ethnographic research on the Internet can be contextualised: consideration and examination of the offline context in which Internet usage occurs; and/or by considering the Internet as a cultural product itself. The ethnographer should ‘cultivate a reflexive awareness of their own Internet usage, both how they engage with it and the effect of their offline-circumstances on their usage’ (ibid.: 165). Considering Hine’s (2000) reflective account of her offline activities and context when the judgement on the Louise Woodward case was due, Davies likens Hine’s rhetoric to the ethnographer’s arrival story from classical ethnography. It ‘establishes the ethnographer’s authority by demonstrating that she has really “been there”’ (Davies, 2008: 165). As Davies writes, the ethnographer ‘cannot claim that all users have similar experiences at this interface, the reflexive awareness of their own observations can increase sensitivity to the existence of these effects and guide enquiries about how the interface may be experienced by their informants’ (ibid.: 166).

Davies calls for ethnographers to develop a ‘critical awareness of the assumptions and the particular interests that lie behind the way this technology [the Internet] has been developed and promoted’ (ibid.). For example, as the current study is concerned with new media and minority languages, consideration must be given to issues of access and the digital divide (as discussed in Section 3.3) which means that some minority language communities will always have restricted or no access to new media for technological, economical, skills set or other reasons. Technology, Davies writes, is not neutral, socially, culturally or politically. Attention must also be paid by the ethnographer to wider discourses around the Internet, its social context and effects, Davies singles out its involvement in processes of globalisation as a particular aspect to be considered (Sections 3.2.9 and 3.2.16). As Davies writes, Internet research and ethnography, like all good ethnographic research, must be reflexive on all levels:
from individual sensitivity to the effects of their on-line presence on their data and the inclusion of researcher’s experiences in the data to the more general level of examining both the Internet itself as context and ways the broader social context affects the current uses and developmental direction of this technology (ibid.: 167).

5.1.2 The Field
Drawing on her earlier work, Markham (2003), Markham (2008: 258) notes how online ethnography leads to a shift in focus from place to interaction, that the communities and cultures being investigated are not bounded entities before the ethnographer enters the field as in traditional ethnography, but are ‘created as part of the ethnographic process’. However, in virtual ethnographic research ‘finding the field becomes as much part of the research project as any data collection which is done once the field is found’ (Hine, 1994: 15) and defining ‘sensible’ boundaries, as Markham (2008) puts it, around the field can be complicated. The Internet opens up new possibilities to researchers, it is a global domain and participants can be in any or many geographic locations, it can be ‘unbound from the restrictions of proximity or geography’ (ibid.: 258). There is also the possibility of involving participants that have been previously unavailable, although the digital divide and unequal access must be acknowledged when considering the possibilities of online research (cf. Section 3.3). Bryman (2008: 635) notes that:

a virtual ethnography requires getting away from the idea that an ethnography is in or of a place in any traditional sense. It is also an ethnography of a domain that infiltrates other spaces and times of its participants so that its boundedness is problematic to participants, and analysts alike...

Hine (2000) believes the researcher’s notion of cultural boundary must be reconsidered, with Markham (2008) arguing for the use of discourse patterns to find boundaries. Attention must be paid and acknowledgement given to the impact of mundane research decisions and choices, such as how data sites are found, what search engine is used, etc., as these are the criteria used to create boundaries around the field, unconsciously or consciously. Furthermore, Markham acknowledges that computer-mediated cultural contexts and, by extension, online fields of research are shifting contexts. Membership of a website, group, community etc., and participation in these can be transient. As she notes in earlier work, Markham (1998), interacting online involves a shift from observer to participant and from archivist to accomplice. This leads her to conclude that ‘as one participates in the context, one co-constructs the spaces under investigation. Interactions… are organizing elements of these spaces’ (Markham, 2008: 259). Boundaries here, she finds, are determined by interaction and not by location.
It is important to consider the construction and delineation of boundaries in virtual ethnographic research as the boundaries of the field are a ‘matter of choice’ which is not found in traditional ethnographic research (ibid.). This is especially applicable to cultural environments where the researcher is involved in the construction of the object of analysis. This, as Markham notes, leads to the question of ‘should I participate or observe?’ in the research study and further issues which affect the research design and complicate the conceptualisation of media functioning socially (ibid.). Markham goes further, arguing that in the act of choosing a website or a number of websites to study, the researcher ‘creates an audience that previously did not exist and indicate[s] to the larger academic community that this context is meaningful’ (ibid.). She does not conceptualise the choice of field as a neutral act, rather it is a ‘politically charged process’ influenced by the ethicality of the researchers decisions (ibid.).

Kendall (2009) categorises three different spheres of influence on boundary choices: analytical, ethical and personal. The analytical sphere of influence refers to the theoretical and analytical decisions the researcher makes about project boundaries, the ethical sphere covers the boundary decisions made due to ethical concerns and the personal sphere considers how the researcher’s background may influence the choice of project boundaries. The boundaries of the Translations app are defined by Facebook: each language has a distinct Translations app and community of translators. At the beginning of this ethnography translators could switch between Translations apps for different languages by changing the language from a drop down menu of the languages available. However, since 2011 Facebook has defined the boundaries and membership of the Translations app by only allowing Facebook users to change the language they use Facebook in every 30 days (see also Section 6.1.2.2). Also, translators within the Irish language Translations app socially create boundaries within the community of translators via the Discussions element of the app (see Section 7.2.5.3). The current study is bounded in the sense that it focuses on the Facebook SNS and the Irish language Translations app, but it is boundless when it comes to data collection as the ethnography includes data from outside the SNS and follows interesting developments regardless of whether they occur ‘inside’. At all stages of this ethnography, the ethnographer, like Hine (2000), uses her ethnographic sensitivity to follow up leads and data sources, regarding the app, that could be interesting whether there are within the boundaries of the Facebook site or not.
5.1.3 The Arrival Story

Virtual ethnographers have their own version of an arrival story, discussing how they negotiated access, observed online interactions, communicated with Internet users, etc (Hine, 2000). For Markham (1998) her arrival story is what it took for her to ‘get connected’ and what can be described as her entry story into the cyber-field. Markham describes going online as taking a long time and

… involved far more than turning on the computer, tapping out words on the keyboard, and pressing the send/enter button. It was more like entering a strange new world where the very metaphysics defied my comprehension of how worlds should work. To even begin to understand what was happening online, or to communicate with other users, I had to learn how to move, see, and talk. Until I learnt these basic rules, I was paralyzed in the dark, isolated from that world as much as I would be if I were a mind without a body on the planet Earth (or so I believe) (ibid.: 23).

The arrival story of this ethnography is two-fold, the first part being how the researcher first came across the Facebook Translations app and selected this as the field for this ethnography and secondly, when the researcher began the ethnography in January 2009.

The researcher first encountered the Translations app when she read an email newsletter Cogar from Gaelport, an Irish language organisation, which contained a brief article on it in January 2009 (Gaelport, 2009). The app’s ties with language policy and ideologies were illustrated in the initial Gaelport article which tied it to Irish language dialects and noted that although Facebook was now available in Irish, undoubtedly a positive new domain of use for the language, they ‘are looking forward to the day when the various dialects of Munster Irish, Connemara Irish and Donegal Irish are available on the site!’ (ibid.). Furthermore, the article situated this development into some of the discourses around the Irish language and acknowledged the possibilities of this development for the future of the language (see Section 8.5.3). This immediately sparked the researcher’s interest, leading the researcher to log into Facebook and add the Translations app to their personal Facebook Profile. After a brief look at the app and the Irish community of translators, its possibilities for study and investigation in light of the research aims were recognisable. The Cogar article mistakenly writes that the translation of Facebook is Feidhmchláir, this is actually the translation of the term ‘application’, and reports that 278 people are translators and that over 10,000 terms had been translated.

This ethnography began in January 2009 and the researcher’s timing was lucky in that observation began when the Irish Translations app was in stage two and had an active and growing community of translators and also, when Facebook was
working on and developing both the app and its approach to multilingualism. This ethnographic luck allowed the researcher to watch as Facebook, the app itself, and the Irish translation progressed in real time. The researcher was in the same time zone and country of the majority of the Irish language translators and as discussions on the Discussions board are asynchronous the researcher was able to experience their communications as the translators do themselves. The researcher was able to track the many changes to the Facebook site and the Translations app that occurred over this period which affected the context of the field and the activities of the translators within it. As time went on the pace of change and development of the app slowed down and it seemed to lose its popularity with users, with the number of active Irish and other language translators decreasing, and indeed, with Facebook itself as queries went unanswered and there were no developments for long periods. This demonstrates the benefit of long-term virtual ethnographic engagement, the possibility to observe these changes.

5.1.4 Fieldwork Diary

Lindlof and Taylor (2002: 160) acknowledge that there is no consensus on what fieldnotes are meant to describe, however, they do conclude that ‘the fieldnote becomes the event’ [emphasis in original] as these notes are the record and verification of events happening. They should record all details of the ethnography and should be kept in chronological order as ‘adhering to a chronology ensures that the record will reflect unfolding changes in the participants’ individual and group lives, and the twists and turns of researchers’ decision making’ (ibid.: 161). The researcher’s fieldwork diary begins on the 13th of January 2009; at this point the researcher was not aware of the Translations app and the research goal at this time was to consider language policy, minority languages and new media. The very initial stages of this ethnography began broadly with Irish language Discussion Board, blogs, chat rooms and the Irish version of Wikipedia (Vicipéid), all of which were created and driven by individuals and communities.

On the 26th of January 2009 the researcher recorded the first observations of the Irish language version of the Translations app, noting some of the basics, i.e. that it was a three step translation process, that there were 278 translators involved, with 10,000 translations submitted and 17,253 untranslated phrases. These observations were accompanied by screenshots the next day of the various elements of the Translations
homepage and the Irish *Translations* app. At the beginning the researcher was a stranger and, as Hine (2000: 116) writes, ‘experienced… the disorientation of not knowing (socially) where I was’. Hine (2005b) acknowledges that a learning process involving the development of new sociability skills is to be expected in online research, in particular, the researcher would add, in the early stages of the ethnography. The researcher’s first notes attempt to make sense of the app and how it works. It must be acknowledged that my fieldwork diary is comprised of two elements, a diary with handwritten notes (see example as Appendix 2) and the screenshots taken of the Facebook SNS, *Translations* app (see example as Appendix 3) and other data sources encountered. Data were also recorded by printing and downloading in the case of audio/video. With screenshots and printed copies of webpages, the researcher often annotated these with notes or highlighting important aspects. All audio and video defined as data were transcribed by the researcher.

The first view of the Irish language *Translations* app on the 27th of January 2009 is given in Figure 5.1 below:

![Translations App January 2009](image-url)

**Figure 5.1: Translations App January 2009**
As Lindlof and Taylor (2002: 161) write,

the first order of business is to inductively develop a working grasp of key elements of the scene: the temporal organization of activities, the location and function of artifacts, the identities of key actors, the significance of their activities, the implicit codes of cultural knowledge, and so on.

At this early stage, researcher’s fieldnotes outlined the various aspects of the app itself and how it worked, and asked further questions as they arose to follow up on, e.g. ‘How are languages added to the app and opened for translation? Who decides this?’. The researcher then broadened her observations, to the Translations app for other languages, Facebook Groups regarding language on the SNS, and coming across data sources such as The Facebook Blog which had a number of Posts discussing the translation of Facebook. As Utz (2010: 97) notes ‘observation begins from the moment the researcher enters the online group’. It is usually unfocused at the beginning and the primary goal is to simply get familiar with the online setting. Next, the researcher will turn to specific topics or areas of interest (ibid.: 99).

At the beginning, large amounts of data were gathered, anything that the ethnographer considered as being of relevance were collected, as in the early stages, ‘nothing is too trivial or too obvious to be noticed and documented’ (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002: 162). In the first months of this ethnography, observations and developments regarding other new media developments concerning the Irish language and other minority languages were also recorded. As the months went on the changes and developments in the community and the app gave the researcher more data, information and a greater understanding of what was being observed. What was not provided by Facebook, which consisted primarily of discussions or explanations of updates, changes and how the app worked, a recurring question in this research was how the percentage by which the Irish Translations app was completed went backwards at times were all recorded. The researcher also noted any issues or bugs with Facebook, the app itself or any of its elements.

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) espouse asking many questions when writing fieldnotes, from the simple who, when, where, how and eventually why, to further questions such as what is going on here? What are people’s roles and relationships to each other? What is the activity they are performing? How, when and where is it performed? What artefacts are usually involved? Who uses these artefacts and how is their use determined? The researcher’s notes included questions on how the app worked, who was involved, how much they knew about the workings of the app,
hypotheses about the future of the app. For example, when it was closed (see below) the researcher initially thought this coupled with the lack of explanation from Facebook as to why it was closed, meant a change was coming, etc. As Lindlof and Taylor note, after time, the researcher writes their fieldnotes more selectively and intensively, dealing with the ‘why’ questions. As the period of the ethnography developed, the researcher’s fieldnotes became shorter and almost patterned, looking for changes in the app and noting the stats of the numbers of translators involved, translations submitted, etc. Also, as Kozinets (2010) writes, data collection does not occur independently from data analysis, describing them as intertwined, and the researcher’s notes reflect this with basic analysis and conclusions noted.

5.1.5 Collecting Data
Hine (2000) acknowledges that at the beginning of her ethnography she did not have a methodology set out, a set idea of what form her data would take or what data she would collect, and the same is true of this ethnography. In the early stages of this ethnography, interviews with Irish language translators and possibly the Facebook developers who created it were planned. However, over the course of the ethnography it became apparent that observation alone was generating sufficient amounts of data to give an insight into multilingualism on Facebook both in terms of how Facebook manages multilingualism via the app and how the Irish community of translators negotiated the development of the Irish version. The translators as a community did not meet in person; given that Ireland is such a small place the researcher does not categorically state that individuals never met in person or knew each other offline, judging from their online interactions it appeared that a few did know each other offline but not the majority. The interactions of translators, and how they negotiated and created the Irish version are all recorded online and the researcher does not believe interviews would have added to this. In other words, this research is interested in how the community functions online in the confines of the Translations app, how they work with each other here, how they discuss the issues on the Discussion Board, and so their offline context or prompted reflective offline thoughts after the event were not the researcher’s concern at this time.

Data were collected primarily via screenshots of the Facebook Translations app. Screenshots are “photographs/snapshots” of a single screen displaying one page of a website’ (Beaulieu, 2004: 152) (see Appendix 3). Beaulieu (2004) acknowledges the
advantages of using screenshots for analysis and presentation of research results as they allow the object of inquiry to be stable and allow readers to view/read the object as it was when encountered by the ethnographer. The primary data sources included the Translations app, including the overall Translations page (including Topics on its Discussion Board), the Translations apps of a number of languages including Catalan, English (UK) and Northern Sámi, the Terms Applicable to Translations and a longitudinal study of the Irish language Translations app and its community of translators. This ethnography involved a number of different data sources, from Facebook and other sources, such as Facebook publications:

- Facebook press releases (cf. Facebook, 2008a; 2008b; 2008c)
- Facebook Factsheet (Facebook, 2012a)
- Facebook Company timeline (Facebook, 2012b)
- Facebook Product overview (Facebook, 2012d)
- The Facebook Blog (cf. Wong, 2008; Haddad, 2009)
- Facebook careers publications: an Employee Story (Vera, 2009) and a Life @ Facebook careers video (Facebook, 2009a)
- Facebook’s terms and conditions which include the documents: Terms Applicable to Translate Facebook (Facebook, 2009c), Statement of Rights and Responsibilities (Facebook, 2011a), the Facebook Principles (Facebook, 2012c) and the Facebook Site Governance Page (Facebook, 2009d).
- Facebook Job adverts for their Growth and Internationalisation division which sought language specialists, in Turkish and Italian in their Dublin office (Facebook, 2009e; Facebook, 2009f).
- Facebook Developer Blog (Rush, 2008; Olivan, 2009)

The researcher also noted when the Facebook governing documentation was translated into other languages and when submissions from users regarding bugs, feedback and other issues with the SNS could be sent in languages other than English. Other sources of data include Facebook Groups about the Irish language and the Translations app. Furthermore, data were sourced through a note on the Facebook Engineering Page (Ellis, 2009a) which outlined in-house research by Facebook on the Translations app in terms of computational linguistics. This note led to a further two articles/conference presentations by Facebook’s in-house researcher David Ellis on the app (Ellis, 2009b; 2009c).
As referred to above, Facebook’s own governance documents were also examined in the early stages of the research and when they were updated throughout the ethnography to consider Facebook’s rules for membership, governing research (as will be discussed below) and in their approach to multilingualism and languages. These included the Facebook Principles, Facebook’s Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, their Privacy Policy, and the Facebook Site Governance page on this site which allowed discussion of any proposed changes to these and other Facebook documents. The Terms Applicable to Translations, were also examined. Other areas of Facebook where the researcher initially gathered data from but chose not to continue observing included Facebook Groups based on language, languages or the Translations app and the Discussions element of the general Translations app homepage.

Also in the first months of this ethnography, data were gathered from the Northern Sámi Translations app. A comparison with the Irish Translations app was considered but a few months into the current research it was decided to focus on the Irish Translations app and community given the complex situation of Northern Sámi, which the ethnographer as an outsider of this language community would not have knowledge of or be admitted to. Furthermore, the researcher observed languages in other stages of the three step translation process to see if these operated differently from the Irish app which was in stage two at this time. Looking at Malayalam in stage one provided the researcher with a view of how a ‘new’ app looks and the point where the community must start from. It also added to the researcher’s knowledge about the app as it outlined in the Style Guide Wiki element that this was open to editing by the top 20 translators on the Leaderboard and that the default language of the app was English (US). The language observed in step three was Español (Colombia), which allowed the researcher to see the role of translators in this final, as was thought then, stage of the process. In this stage translators could only vote on the translations previously submitted and could not submit their own translations, although the app reported 10,266 phrases as untranslated. The completed language and app the researcher examined was the English (UK) app which gave the researcher an insight into what happened when the translation process was completed and how the app changed. When the language was deemed completed the community could translate new features of the SNS, continue voting, report ‘poor’ translations and review submitted translations. Finally, the researcher was casually observing other languages’ apps when the Pirate English app in step four of the translation process (Section 6.3.3.3) was first encountered. Other
languages *Translations* apps observed included: Catalan, Northern Sámi, Portuguese (Portugal), English (US), English (UK), Malayan, Spanish (Colombia), Pirate English and many more.

To ascertain what information *Facebook* made available on their SNS regarding the *Translations* and to learn as much as possible about it the researcher carried out a *Google* search of the *Facebook* domain using their advanced search option on a number of occasions periodically. The first search of this kind generated 3550 results, which the researcher searched through for relevant information and data. This led to many of the *Facebook* publications and *Facebook Groups* gathered as data for this study. The researcher also carried out wider *Google* searches looking for information and perspectives on the app outside of the *Facebook* domain as she saw necessary. Referring to her own case study Hine (1998) emphasises how although the ethnography may need to follow different connections as discussed previously, the heart of the ethnography must always be on what one has identified as ‘the field’ and the interactions within it.

Hine notes that ‘If events are no longer bounded in particular places, then ethnography can usefully attempt to follow’ (*ibid.*: 4). This ethnographic practice, took the researcher outside of the context of the study, outside of *Facebook* to websites and blogs discussing and studying *Facebook* and the *Translations* app, to the number of patent apps *Facebook* lodged with the US Patents office concerning the *Translations* app or elements of its design. Outside sources include information from online sources such as blogs discussing *Facebook* and the app, e.g.: *InsideFacebook.com*, *Internet World Stats for Facebook* statistics and various blogs which discussed the ‘hack’ of the *Translations* app. Traditional media sources were also included such as the *Sunday Times* article on the Irish version of the app and an interview on *RTÉ Radio One* with an Irish language translator about the app. The researcher also investigated if other SNSs undertook to translate and internationalise their websites in the same or similar fashion. The *SocialTimes* website reported that another SNS *hi5*, ‘launches answer to Facebook’s Translation app’ (O’Neill, 2008). Data were gathered from this SNS and also *Google in your Language* which, like *Facebook*, looks to individual users to translate the site for free but these did not take off to the same extent as *Facebook*’s *Translations* and it was decided to focus on the *Facebook* context.

This ethnography, as Hine’s (2000) principle six outlines, was carried out interstitially. In the researcher’s personal life, *Facebook* is accessed on a daily basis and
the researcher’s usage has increased given the growth of the researcher’s Friend connections on the site and the introduction of a Facebook app for smart phones. In the researcher’s role as virtual ethnographer the Translations app and its related Facebook pages, documents, etc., were accessed primarily during normal working hours but at times outside of these as the researcher engaged with Facebook in her personal life, on the researcher’s PC in the university or at home when working from there. Given the accessibility of the WWW and Facebook the researcher often gathered data when travelling for work purposes on her netbook and recently when on the move from her smart phone. At the beginning of the ethnography in January 2009 the researcher logged onto Facebook and viewed the Translations app on a daily or weekly basis, adapting access to the field as the researcher’s other research/teaching commitments allowed and as the researcher needed to learn about the app. The beginning of this ethnography as Hine describes it ‘was a breathless race to capture as much as possible’ (ibid.: 72) and to learn as much as possible about Facebook and multilingualism, how the app worked and was designed, and about the Irish language community on Facebook, their social norms and practices.

Like the majority of the translators the researcher is a young Irish person who came to Facebook for personal use and communication with those they deemed their Friends on the site and added this app to their Profile. Individual translators’ use of the app is, like the researcher’s data collection, intermittent; it is part of their overall use of the Facebook SNS whose primary function is communication and interaction with Friends. Their use of the Facebook SNS is also intermittent; they access and use the site in-between their daily commitments to work, study, family, sleep, etc. Hine also notes the possibility of Internet use and data collection that is occurring simultaneously with other activities; in the same way as some of the translators, the researcher collected data as she translated a word while primarily working, surfing the WWW for another purpose, engaging in a Skype conversation, etc.

In 2010/11, when the researcher had become deeply familiar with the app and Facebook’s approach to multilingualism, the researcher’s visits to the SNS as an ethnographer decreased to weekly or monthly until the end of the study in 2012, when the researcher accessed the site more frequently again to be as up to date as possible with the current situation when writing this ethnography. It was only after the initial ethnographic observation and gathering all the data the researcher could using this method that the researcher participated in the Irish Translations app by voting on and
translating a number of phrases. Participation was necessary to ascertain what information was available to translators as they translated and voted and to ascertain how much they knew about how the app actually worked, i.e. issues such as: when did a vote become a winning translation, could they see who voted for their translations, could they see the number of votes they received, where they notified of other translations being submitted, could they vote on their own translations, etc.

In May 2010, an initial analysis of the 96 Topics on the Discussions element of the Irish Translations app was undertaken. Each of the Topics on the Discussion Board at this time was examined for evidence of language ideological themes. The large number of Topics gives the impression that the community of translators as an entity regard themselves as knowledgeable about the language and its translation, with repeat contributors possibly seeing themselves as more ‘senior translators’ and/or serving as gatekeepers in the translation process (see Section 7.2.5.1). In particular, this analysis focused on four Topics which discussed the translation of the term ‘mobile phone’, the words/phrases which included the term ‘mobile phone’ which was open for voting at this time, the translated words/phrases including ‘mobile phone’ and the glossary term for ‘mobile phone’ (Section 7.2.6).

5.1.6 The Ethnographer

As Hine (2008) notes, prior knowledge of the field can vary amongst ethnographers and can shape their entry into the field. The researcher first encountered Facebook in 2008 and joined the SNS on the 2nd of October 2008, two months into her PhD. Previously, the researcher was a member of the SNS Bebo, which she joined in March 2006, and whose popularity in Ireland decreased as Facebook’s increased. The researcher’s profile on Bebo still exists but she accesses it incredibly rarely, the last update being in early 2009; from looking at this profile the researcher’s social network moved to Facebook in mid 2009 where it has remained to present day. Therefore, before beginning data collection the researcher was a Facebook user and familiar with most aspects of the SNS but not the Translations app. On recollection Facebook did at one point ask the researcher ‘Do you speak Gaeilge?’ but the researcher did not click this link, which presumably led to the Translations app and invited the user to join and translate.

Fay (2007) describes her research on an academic group she was a member of as requiring a ‘re-positioning’ of herself towards the academic project, the participants and her research aims. From this Fay has personal experiences to reflect
critically on as a resource. As the researcher was not part of the community of translators prior to this research beginning the researcher did not have to reorient or announce their new role to the community (Baym, 2000 in Hine, 2008). But, the researcher did draw back and critically reflect on her use of Facebook, how this would impact this research and the fact that Facebook would no longer be a SNS for personal use only. The researcher’s own use of Facebook prior to, during and after this study does not directly affect the current research; it did mean that they were familiar with how the SNS worked in general but not with how Facebook managed multilingualism. However, as the researcher realised that the Translations app was going to be the primary field for the current study, the researcher had to consider the impact of the research on her Friends on Facebook. If the researcher participated in the Irish language Translations app or made contact with individual translators via the researcher’s Facebook account, they would have access to the researcher’s Friends list and could contact them. For this reason, and to illustrate the researcher’s reliability as a researcher, as interviews were still planned at this time, the researcher created a second Facebook Profile as a researcher with a university email account on the 14th of April 2009. This was distinct from the researcher’s personal Profile, ‘Aoife Len’, and contained information about the researcher’s academic background, interests, etc., the current research, its aims, theoretical framework, what interviews would involve, arrangements re confidentiality etc. The researcher had also planned on approaching and contacting translators using this Profile and not her personal one to present herself as an ethnographer as distinct to a 20-something year old Irish woman. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 below are of the Facebook Profile created for the ethnography.
When the researcher rejoined Facebook in the role of an ethnographer, the researcher noted all the steps and stages new membership required and how a user started to develop their account and Profile on the SNS. The ethnographer’s Profile allowed the researcher to isolate and receive updates from Facebook and from the app in real time as they occurred. It allowed the researcher ascertain and record the level of knowledge and information about how the app worked which the translators had. The researcher was in the privileged position of knowing more about the app than the translators involved but the researcher could also experience the app as a translator. The ethnographer’s Profile also allowed the researcher to receive emails and updates.
from Facebook in relation to the Translations app and other Facebook issues in various languages.

Confusion did occur between the researcher’s personal Facebook Profile and ethnographer Profile set up for the purposes of this research, with the researcher’s personal Profile appearing in the Gaeilge Translators aspect of the Translations Dashboard (Figure 5.4) and a few days later in the Monthly Leaderboard (Figure 5.5). The researcher therefore removed the app from the researcher’s personal Facebook Profile to counteract this and keep the researcher’s participation in the app via the one Profile.

![Facebook Translations App Dashboard](image1.png)

![Monthly Leaderboard](image2.png)
This confusion did however lead to more information on the changes ongoing in the app, as it was found that a *translator* could no longer opt out of appearing on the *Leaderboard* and consequently this part of the *Dashboard* that displays the names and *Profile* photos of random *translators*. Also in February 2009 when using the researcher’s personal *Facebook* account, a notification appeared from *Facebook* regarding a recent update to their terms of use. It was at this time that the researcher’s own personal use of the *Facebook* SNS fed into the researcher’s role as ethnographer as the researcher read through this statement and the changes with a view to if/how these affected language(s) on the site.

In August 2010 *Facebook’s Statement of Rights and Responsibilities* changed and then prohibited the creation of more than one personal *Profile* on the site. At this point interviews had been decided against and the researcher *Profile* was deleted in line with *Facebook’s* policy.

### 5.1.7 Becoming a Translator

As Kozinets (2010: 75) acknowledges there is a spectrum of participation which ethnographers grapple with in their fieldwork; however, he believes that if the participative role is removed from netnography this ‘also removes the opportunity to experience embedded cultural understanding’. Approximately six months into this ethnography it became clear that some level of participation was needed to give a true insight into how the app worked and how it worked at the level or perspective of the *translators*. The researcher was aware that participation was needed to answer some of the questions arising in the research. Firstly, the researcher decided to participate as a *translator* by voting on a translation. As the researcher did not want to impact or change the field too much, the researcher searched for a translation that was already open for voting and that had a possibly more definitive/accepted or standard translation rather than one which could be translated differently in different Irish dialects. It was therefore decided to vote on the translation of the phrase ‘City/Town’ which was translated as ‘*Cathair/Baile*’ and the phrase ‘ZIP/Postal Code’ the translation of which was ‘*Cód Poist*’. The researcher voted ‘*Cathair/Baile*’ up (Figure 5.6) and ‘*Cód Poist*’ down (Figure 5.7).
Participating at this point also allowed the researcher to test theories as to how the app worked and further the researcher’s understanding. In June 2009 the researcher noted a warning accompanying some words/phrases in the *Vote on Phrases* element; having tried a number of avenues to get an explanation of this warning the researcher voted on one of these translated phrases to see if *Facebook* explained these warnings to *translators* after voting since they did not before. The researcher’s vote was simply registered and no information was provided on the accompanying warning. The researcher later learnt that these warnings appeared when a word/phrase was included in the *Review* element for further translation and voting (see Appendix 1).

The next step in participating as a *translator* in the *Translations* app was to translate a word/phrase. For this the researcher translated the word ‘Pending’ as ‘*ar
"feitheamh’, as seen in Figure 5.8. The researcher sourced this translation from focal.ie, the National Terminology Database for the Irish language (focal.ie, 2012b).

Figure 5.8: Researcher Translation

However, submitting this translation was not successful as the researcher had not kept all the text in brackets and a pop-up appeared detailing this, as seen in Figure 5.9 below.

Figure 5.9: Unsuccessful Translation II
The researcher tried again, repeating what she had done and including the text in the curly brackets as is, not translating it also as the researcher had done. This time a warning popped up that the researcher was too new to translate, a common bug the researcher had read numerous complaints about on the Discussion Board of the overall Translations app Profile. The researcher attempted another translation, this time a place name of a town in Ireland, ‘Navan’ as ‘An Uaimh’, this time was successful and the outcome of submitting a translation was visible (Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10: Successful Translation

From this participation the researcher learned more about how the app worked, what submitting a translation involved, the information Facebook provided about the voting on your translations, and the fact that translators could vote for their own submissions etc. Figure 5.11 below is of the researcher’s My Translations element after participating as described here.
Also, when considering the debates on the Irish app’s Discussion Board about the translation of the term ‘mobile phone’ (see Section 7.2.6) the researcher voted ‘up’ each of the translations open for the word ‘mobile phone’ to view the number of votes each translation had. To reduce the researcher’s impact on the field when this data were gathered, the researcher voted all the translations ‘down’ to negate the previous voting. The researcher does acknowledge that this is not a 100% naturalistic ethnography, as Markham (1998: 18) outlines the ethnographer impacts on the study in

... every action I made that influenced the project became a text that engaged and interacted with a multiplicity of other texts. In the process of organizing and doing this study, I was taking part in the organization of that which was to be the study.

Each new piece of information gave the researcher new insights into how Facebook designed and oversaw the app and how the community worked. New understandings gave the researcher new insights, new questions to ask and new areas to consider. An example of this was when the researcher found that the Style Guide Wiki element was designed to be editable by the top 20 translators of the Leaderboard, as discussed above. This, the researcher noted, added new importance and rights, ‘editing rights’ as Facebook terms it, to the Leaderboard and the top 20 translators. By designing the app in this manner, the researcher concluded that, Facebook created and encouraged the formation of a senior community of translators within the community of translators. This led the researcher to focus more on the top 20 translators as per the Leaderboard and their involvement in debates on the Discussion Board.

5.2 Methodological Issues

As Hine notes, the decisions taken throughout the research shaped the current ethnography as described here and this section will consider the methodological issues
and decisions made over the course of the study. It is however important to note that virtual ethnography does not necessarily have different dilemmas or issues from traditional ethnography (Hine, 2008). This section considers some of the methodological issues that had to be considered and decided on before and during this ethnographic study, including the role of the ethnographer, the ethnographic presence of the ethnographer and defining the scope of the research in online/offline terms. Next, issues with authenticity and truthfulness with online data, the ever changing nature of the field site and the effect of ‘lurkers’ in the community of translators on the ethnographic project are outlined. Finally, it discusses the issues with defining the end of the virtual ethnographic data collection.

5.2.1 The Role of the Ethnographer

For the majority of this ethnography the researcher assumed the role of a ‘lurker’, who is ‘someone who reads messages posed to a public forum such as a newsgroup but does not respond to the group (Hine, 2000: 160). In other words, the researcher observed the development of the Facebook Translations app and the Irish Translations community in a non-participatory ethnographic manner. The researcher was an invisible onlooker to the changes in the app and the discussions of the community of translators, observing the online interactions at the user level. In the current study, although intended initially as an entirely observational study, a small level of participation, at the level of the translator, was needed to simply figure out how the Translations app worked and to ascertain how much about the workings of the app the translators were privy to, as discussed above. There are many opinions in the new media ethnographic field as to whether the ethnographer should gather data by lurking covertly, whether they should participate or not, or indeed, if research can be called ethnography without some form of participation. Virtual ethnographic studies can, as Madge (2010) notes, range from passive observation studies to participative studies where the researcher is an engaged member of the community.

Davies (2008: 156) sees ‘lurkers’ as a ‘widely recognized category among Internet users’ and therefore, ‘a possible role for an ethnographer’. There are, however, some drawbacks to being a lurker, as Davies acknowledges: they cannot ask for clarification on interpretations or understandings of the situation in the field, nor can they move discussions in a direction that interests them. Furthermore, in-depth relationships with individuals from the field cannot be developed or used to gather data.
Hine (2008) considers covert virtual ethnography carried out by ‘lurking’; using this method cultures and communities can be studied without the ethnographer impacting on the field in any way (Paccagnella, 1997). While Beaulieu (2004) simply believes that lurking, which implies not engaging and perhaps the inability for in-depth understanding, is not ethnography. A different perspective is given by Catterall and Maclaran (2001: 231) who believe that ‘lurking’ is a ‘key step in cultural entrée to an online community as a form of non-participant observation’. Lurking, they believe, is an important stage in virtual ethnography, as the ethnographer learns the rules and norms of the community of study. It is ‘a process of learning and earning a place in the community’ and allows the researcher time to develop an entry strategy. Hine (2008) also acknowledges that lurking can be useful to allow for cultural familiarisation before active engagement and also in communities where members engage in lurking.

Utz (2010) outlines a number of levels of participation the researcher can assume in online research: they can be a novice and post occasionally, or a regular poster on a discussion board; in online gaming they can play occasionally or work their way up through the ranks of the game. As Utz notes, active participation does not necessarily change or impact the field negatively, ‘a researcher who plays World of Warcraft and advances several levels will probably not destroy the natural order’ (ibid.: 95). The correct degree of participation by the researcher also depends on the research question (ibid.). For example if the research is concerned with a subgroup of a virtual world, the researcher may need to participate and move up the levels in the world to gain access to this subgroup. In studying a discussion group, as in the current study, Utz notes that active participation ‘is not inevitably necessary to understand the occurring processes’ (ibid.). The current study defines itself as a virtual ethnography as it involves direct observation at the level of the users. Utz considers how close to real life the observation is, noting that online studies can examine documents such as postings, etc., as they are posted online, and the resulting interactions, or analyse the documents after the thread is posted. Direct observation, she notes, allows the researcher to experience the discussion group as the other members do, in real time ‘feeling the dynamic’ (ibid.: 96). These direct observations can then be complemented and furthered with the analysis of documents as in the current study.

Utz notes a difference between online and offline participant observation as participation in online groups/spaces is for most just a part of their everyday lives and thus has a different meaning. There is less action for the researcher to engage in, ‘the
main activity is communication, and it is often possible to understand this as a distanced observer’ (*ibid.*: 94). As Utz writes, the role of the researcher, participatory/non-participatory, depends on the group being studied. Utz defines the participatory researcher as contributing ‘to the group discussion or engages in other ways in the activities of the virtual group (e.g. plays the game in World of Warcraft, creates objects in Second Life)’ (*ibid.*). If the researcher creates or needs a profile/avatar to access the community, the research is participatory. While Hewson *et al.* (2003) believe all Internet observation is indirect as the researcher cannot observe behaviour in real time and in close proximity but only observe traces of behaviour, such as archived postings. They go further, believing that the researcher does not need to be there during the data-generation phase given the existence of archives for Internet communication. As the primary form of communication online is language-based, Hewson *et al.* conclude the WWW is an ideal space for linguistic observation studies.

O’Reilly (2009: 216) considers how can researchers ‘engage with Internet use in the field, as it occurs, when there is no single place to be?’. The researcher cannot be everywhere, all of the time; also Internet users are not everywhere all of the time. She notes that archives of messages, sites, etc., can be accessed but ‘this will not give you access to the culture of use and construction of the Internet’ (*ibid.*). To understand the experience of the Internet, O’Reilly writes, the researcher should consider how users use it, by asking questions such as do users access newsgroups as messages are posted or access them later? This approach impacts how the ethnographer conceptualises their study: ‘instead of thinking in terms of places or locations, an Internet ethnographer looks to connections between things… they may start in one “place” then follow leads and networks to other places and spaces’ (*ibid.*: 217). Hine (2008) acknowledges that passive data collection can be carried out online but she espouses active engagement, noting that online social life must be understood in its own right, not considered in comparison with offline interactions and perceived as deficient.

In her study, Markham (1998: 24) explains her participation as follows: ‘I wanted to understand how people used and made sense of communication technology... I would have to participate online to collect discourse toward this goal’. For her study, Markham gathers data from ‘behind a glass screen, acting as an anonymous, distanced observer of “Other’’ (*ibid.*: 25). Markham acknowledges that by participating online, by conversing, building relationships, etc., online, she became part of the field: ‘I went online to find a cultural context to study. I ended up creating one of countless cultural
contexts through my own choices, movements, and encounters’ (ibid.: 225). Another approach is Bell (2001: 197), who considers whether ethnography can be done solely online and argues that the researcher’s level of involvement in the online space should be the same as participants, ‘in some respects, this distinction should disappear’. The virtual ethnographer can simply observe the field from a distanced perspective; however, Hine (2000: 23) believes in a more active engagement with the field as a participant as it allows for ‘a deeper sense of understanding of meaning creation’. Hine promotes this approach because of her view that since virtual ethnography is not a definitive and complete view of the field, the researcher cannot map all users’ experiences, but being a participant in the field allows the virtual ethnographer to ‘experience what it is to be a user’ (sic) (ibid.).

5.2.2 Ethnographic Presence
One of the first issues in virtual ethnography, Hine (2008) notes, is the presence of the ethnographer in the field (as was discussed above). Hine, drawing on Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), notes there is a spectrum of ethnographic presence from full participant to full observer. The level of ethnographic presence is something each ethnographer must negotiate given the particularities of their own field (Hine, 2008). Hine (2000; 2008) espouses some level of participation in the field by the ethnographer, as it ‘allows developing conceptualisations to be tested through experience and exposed to critique by members of the culture being studied’ (Hine, 2008: 261). However, the aim of this approach is not that the ethnographer should become a full member of the community, as they are always marked as different, an outsider, set apart or may need to withdraw and engage in reflective observation if investigating a culture they were previously a member of. Wherever the ethnographer situates themselves on this spectrum, they must ‘do careful work on their assumptions,’ as full participation could lead to the sharing of assumptions or full observation to perceptions of the culture as bizarre and to not taking it seriously. Even when undertaking full observation, as in the current study, Hine notes how virtual ethnographers are participants to some degree as they use computer mediation for their observation. Hine (2000; 2008) and Markham (1998) espouse a reflexive approach to ethnography as they use ‘the same medium to interact with subjects as forms the topic of the research’ (Hine, 2008: 262). As Hine (2000: 65) outlines virtual ethnography is ‘ethnography in, of and through the virtual’ [emphasis in original].
Bell (2001) also discusses how participation in the online field, indeed any social setting, inevitable transforms it. He calls for ethnographers to recognise the effect(s) they have on the field, just by being there. Markham (2008) argues that absenting the researcher from the field does not remove the researcher from the process and the product, rather the perspective from which the researcher is interpreting the culture affects the interpretation. Markham does not argue for online ethnographic participation or observation as being ‘better’ rather, acknowledging that whatever role the ethnographer assumes the resulting interpretation ‘will present a particular reality of the object of analysis’ which is influenced by the researcher’s identity and participation or observation (ibid.: 260). While Ducheneaut (2010: 202) considers participation as a methodological challenge of virtual ethnography, as he notes, the virtual ethnographic approach is based on the ethnographer ‘being there’ in the field observing, but in the virtual field ‘being there’ is nebulous.

5.2.3 Online Only

Much has been written about whether virtual ethnography should involve offline data collection, and/or is weakened by a lack of offline contextualisation, accompaniment (both as discussed above) or qualification of the authenticity of data (as will be discussed below). Davies (2008) acknowledges both the advantages and complications of including an offline element in Internet based research, but does not argue that it must be part of all Internet research. Kozinets (2010) believes that when undertaking research on online communities, netnography can be used as a stand alone method, a ‘pure’ netnography based on online interactions alone. Furthermore, Kozinets does not believe the distinction between online social life and real life social worlds is a useful distinction, ‘the two have blended into one world: the world of real life, as people live it. It is a world that included the use of technology to communicate, to commune, to socialize, to express, and to understand’ (ibid.: 2). While Hine (2005b) does not believe the online/offline distinction should be used as a research strategy and notes that some research questions can be answered by online research relationships alone.

When Boellstorff (2008) carries out a virtual ethnographic study of the virtual world Second Life, using an avatar ‘Tom Bukowski’, he conducts his research within this world. He does not interact with Second Life residents in the real world, other than accidentally, nor correspond or meet with the company that owns it, other than as his avatar or on occasion at conferences in real life. Furthermore, he
acknowledges that he was not concerned with the offline identity of residents, as most Second Life residents would not have this information when involved in the world. Boellstorff argues that virtual worlds are legitimate sites of culture, they are themselves contexts and therefore it is not always necessary to accompany virtual research with real life research or confirmation. When investigating collective meaning and virtual worlds as collectives found only online, Boellstorff espouses ‘studying them in their own terms’ (ibid.: 61). Also, as Hine (2000) notes, the fact that in online settings where participants do not meet face-to-face but the ethnographer does meet participants face-to-face would put the ethnographers in an ‘asymmetric position’ as they would be using different means of communication to understand the community than members/users use (ibid.: 48). Face-to-face meetings can allow for the triangulation of research results and findings but can also threaten the ‘experiential authority’ of understanding the culture/world/community/domain/etc., the way it is for participants (ibid.: 49). Hine reminds us that face-to-face meetings or communication are not inherently better.

As Kozinets (2010) writes, deciding when a netnography based on online data alone is sufficient, its partiality is dependent on the research focus and the research questions the ethnographer posed and investigated. He considers three aspects of a research question to aid the researcher in deciding whether a pure netnography, pure ethnography or blended ethnography/netnography is appropriate. Firstly, ‘integration vs. separation of social world’; here Kozinets questions how related the behaviours of interest online and those in face-to-face social situations are (ibid.: 66). They are either directly related or distinct separate behaviours. In the current research, the offline social worlds of the translators are not relevant to the research focus, the primary focus of this research is people’s language practices on Facebook in light of existing offline language policy theory. Although some demographic information is gathered on Irish translators to demonstrate the backgrounds, histories and possible influences of those involved. Secondly, ‘observation vs. verbalization of relevant data’; in this instance, Kozinets notes that it is important to ask ‘how important is the repeated observation of physically manifest rather than verbally articulated behaviours?’ (ibid.). Again, the current study is concerned only with the online interactions of the community of translators and what Facebook do regarding languages on its website. The influence of the offline world is considered in the discussion of language ideologies. Finally, Kozinets recommends considering ‘identification vs. performance of members’, which questions the significance of the further identification of individual members of the culture, their
demographics to the study (ibid.). The identity of the translators is not a primary concern of the current study, rather only the demographics/personal information these translators allow other Facebook users to see are used as this is the only indication other community members have of their identity and offline context. The aim of the research is to consider how they act as a community online in the translation of an Irish version of Facebook.

5.2.4 Authenticity and Truthfulness
There are issues with authenticity when undertaking virtual ethnography, particularly issues with the authenticity of a user’s identity (Hine, 2000; Madge and O’Connor, 2005). As Hine (2000) acknowledges, participants could simply give false information, false answers, or fabricate their online identity. This vulnerability of virtual ethnography arises because the ethnographer can never be completely contextually immersed in the diverse field(s) of the Internet (Section 4.2.5). Hine advises normal caution in treating participants’ responses and verification through the ethnographic process and relationships with the participants (ibid.: 76-7). These issues with authenticity it must be noted, are not exclusive to virtual ethnography (Madge and O’Connor, 2005). Madge and O’Connor do not feel it is required of the virtual ethnography to verify the participant’s offline identity. Hine (2000) in her own research was satisfied that the identities she encountered were plausible for the purpose of her study. At the end of the day the virtual ethnographer must for the most part take the participants at face value and in good faith (Flicker et al., 2004: 128). Others such as Carter (2005) meet their participants’ offline to ‘backup’ the truthfulness and authenticity of their online identity.

Flicker et al. (2004) also consider issues of authenticity and truthfulness in information gathered in their research; their stance was to take the information provided by participants at face value. Flicker et al. outline two methods of verifying information given by participants. Firstly, by asking for the same information in different formats and checking for discrepancies, e.g. by asking for user’s date of birth and then asking them their age and, secondly, to independently verify the personal information provided by participants. While Davies (2008: 155) believes the best way to ensure the validity of observational data is to ‘evaluate internal evidence regarding the consistency and credibility of their presentation of self on-line’. However, as the aim of the current research is to consider the online setting of Facebook in its own right as discussed above, the offline identities of the translators do not need to be questioned.
Identity play, although perceived as the norm in some online settings and in many online contexts in the early days of the WWW (Hine, 2000), is not the norm on the Facebook SNS. In the Facebook context users do not assume a persona around a self selected screen-name. Facebook’s Statement of Rights and Responsibilities (Facebook, 2011a) outlines that users must use their ‘real names and information’. Furthermore, part four ‘Registration and Account Security’ of this statement defines what is expected from Facebook users regarding their account and identity on the SNS:

‘1. You will not provide any false personal information on Facebook, or create an account for anyone other than yourself without permission... You will not create more than one personal Profile.’ (ibid.).

Facebook users can have a screen-name for the SNS but the norm is to use their real name. In the same part of the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities Facebook outlines the rule governing the use of usernames: ‘If you select a username for your account we reserve the right to remove or reclaim it if we believe appropriate’ (ibid.). As Kralik et al. (2005) note, the participants have a moral responsibility themselves to be truthful.

5.2.5 The Ever-Changing Field

As discussed above, the ever changing nature of the new media context can lead to methodological and other issues over the course of a longitudinal ethnography, such as the current study. Fay (2007) discusses the uncertain nature, due to financial issues of her field of study, while Baron (2008: ix) notes the difficulty and frustration on her part in trying to study and write about ‘a phenomenon in flux’. Crystal (2011: 138) considers another risk in new media and language research, the risk of ‘Internet language death’, which he outlines as occurring when studying a language found on a particular website and the website closes down mid-study. This analogy with language death he acknowledges may be ‘perhaps a little far-fetched’ but Crystal believes it is at the least a death of a variety in these cases (ibid.). There were a number of methodological issues in researching the ‘shifting ethnographic site’ (Markham, 1998: 61) of Facebook.

In the current study the researcher was confident that due to its popularity Facebook itself would not cease to exist but the researcher was always aware that the Translations app and other documentation on the site could be changed, taken down or - as the app was on three occasions over the data collection period - redesigned. To guard against this the researcher collected data primarily as screenshots (.jpeg) files (which
were backed up in a number of locations), printed textual data, downloaded video documentation and carefully documented in the researcher’s fieldwork diary when, what and why this was done, etc., ... most of the time. On one occasion in September 2009 the Discussion Board of the Irish Translations app was unavailable, as demonstrated in Figure 5.12, without explanation.

Figure 5.12: App Unavailable September 2009

Due to the volume of Topics and Posts in the Discussion Board the researcher had not taken screenshots or printed them, the majority of the data had been lost due to the researcher’s taking for granted the availability and accessibility of the Translations app. Thankfully the app was reopened and fully reported a few weeks later but the researcher then ensured all data were collected in both paper and screenshot formats. From then on most data sources were backed up by printing screenshots and storing them in a folder.

Fay (2007: 13) notes another issue that points to the precariousness of online research as at one point her field was ‘attacked and destroyed and had to be reconstructed almost from scratch’. During the current research study the Facebook Translations app was the target of subversion by two groups who realised the potential for play or malicious interfering with, whichever your standpoint, of the app that July. This ‘hack’, as many blogs described it (cf. Read, 2010; The Armenian Observer Blog, 2010), led to Facebook suspending and then closing the Translations app until the end of August 2010. (The ‘hacking’ of the Translations App is discussed in Section 7.2.3.8.1).

5.2.6 Lurkers

‘Lurking’ is ‘a refusal to communicate’ while ‘lurkers’ are ‘people who access a chatgroup and read its messages but do not contribute to the discussion’ (Crystal, 2001: 53). The motives for ‘lurking’ include ‘newbie reluctance to be involved, academic curiosity... or voyeurism’ (ibid.). Crystal acknowledges that some consider lurking simply as spying. Lurkers, as Hine (2000) acknowledges, raise issues for the ethnographer, in terms of how to account for the experience(s) of lurkers who do not
participate and are not seen to the online community/participants. In the current study, a large number of the translators included in the community are not active on a daily, weekly or monthly basis and there are great disparities in the number of translators on the Weekly and Monthly Leaderboards in comparison with the overall Leaderboard which counts aprox 500 members. The Translations app allows for lurkers, as it is possible to access the app and look at all aspects of it whether a user has voted or not.

Furthermore, Facebook gives the translators the option of hiding their actions on the app from the community, meaning their participation and involvement are invisible to the other members of the community, as they do not appear on any of the Leaderboards as illustrated in Figures 5.13 and 5.14.

![Figure 5.13: Leaderboard Hide Option](image)

![Figure 5.14: Preference Options](image)

This ethnographer considers the Translations app community as is, that is as the translators encounter it. Therefore the existence of lurkers who do not participate at all and invisible translators who opt out of the leaderboard but do translate and vote in the
community must be acknowledged, and their activities can still be considered in this ethnography.

5.2.7 The End?
Ethnography can be ‘an indefinite project’ as Hine (1998) acknowledges, indefinite in the sense of what the boundaries of the field are, given its scope to follow the data and also as to when the ethnography concludes. Catterall and Maclaran (2001: 233) believe ‘the “field” is ever present for the online researcher, who may still be participating in the online community during the final stages of the research’. Rutter and Smith (2005: 88) for example note that after the fieldwork period of their study (a year) ended their visibility on the ISP reduced but they ‘do not consider that we have left the field yet’. They still interact with their contacts from the ISP and they still have the tools they used to enter the RumCom environment, i.e. their computers, they had no sense of closure as they were never really sure where they were.

When to stop data collection was a question raised and considered at many points during this ethnography. In August 2010 when the Translations app was closed due to ‘hacking’ (Section 7.2.3.8.1), this was considered as a ‘natural’ end point of the ethnography, but when it re-emerged and continued as normal it was decided to continue observing. During the ethnography the researcher hoped to complete the research when the Irish Translations app was completed or was in stage four of the translation process. However, as the ethnography continued the researcher had to wonder if the Irish version would ever be completed given the ever-evolving nature of the SNS and the new terminology/elements these changes brought that would need to be translated. Therefore when the ‘new’ Translations app was launched in October 2011 (Appendix 1) the researcher saw it as a somewhat ‘natural’ end to the ethnography as the community aspect of the app had been changed and reformulated, with the Discussions and other aspects of the ‘old’ Translations app removed or changed. Figure 5.15 below is of the homepage of the ‘new’ Irish language Translations app in November 2011. At this point there were 117 Topics on the Irish language Translations app Discussions board. For a number of days the new and the old Translations apps were available while the new one was being tested and feedback was sought from users/translators.
Still, the endpoint of this research is hard to pinpoint, although ‘officially’ the researcher stopped collecting data in October 2011, as the Translations app is added to the researcher’s personal Profile she occasionally looks the app to see if there were any interesting developments. Markham (1998) acknowledges that her ethnography is situated in time, occurring over a number of months but ‘stewing’ for a number of years, leading her to conclude that she is not sure when it began. This leads her to consider when her understanding of how people engage and live with technology began; was it when she started analysing the conversations she had with users, or when talking with them, or when ‘I was a child, sitting on the hard wooden floor of the local library, pulling science fiction books off the shelves, drifting to other times and places, imagining other ways of being and knowing?’ (ibid.: 226).

5.3 Ethical Considerations
This section will firstly discuss the ethical approach of the current research, drawing on previous research. It will then consider the approach here in terms of current discourse around ethics and ethnographic research including: the public/private nature of new media, overt/covert research, informed consent and the anonymity of participants. These
topics are not exhaustive nor are they the totality of the debates ongoing around new media research and ethical issues/concerns, but are deemed to be the main issues relevant to the current study. Finally, the AoIR ethical guidelines and the University of Limerick institutional ethics procedure and application process are considered.

5.3.1 Overview and the Approach Here

Early cyber and Internet studies did not focus a lot of their attention on ethical concerns and issues when gathering, analysing and presenting data. However, with the development of Internet studies and new media fields across many disciplines ethical concerns have become a central issue and point of discussion and IRE (Internet Research Ethics) is now an established field of interest and research. Buchanan (2009) points to it as beginning in the early 2000’s with the AoIR (Association of Internet Researchers) Ethics Working Group and their subsequent recommendations and a number of publications concerned with IRE at this time (cf. Thorseth, 2003; Buchanan, 2004; Johns et al., 2004). Difficulties arise, as Mann and Steward (2000) acknowledge, due to the fact that the Internet is a space with many customary rules as opposed to legally supported laws. Ethical issues also arise, as Lindlof and Taylor (2002: 271) write, given the largely unregulated nature of the Internet ‘the dilemmas posed by conducting research in a dynamic context that currently lacks universal regulation. This condition, in which barriers to access and norms of conduct vary locally, is ethically ambiguous’. As Hine (2005a: 5) notes, online research is currently ‘marked as a special category in which the institutionalized understandings of the ethics of research must be re-examined’. However, as Mann and Steward (2000) warn, the risks of CMC research must not be exaggerated as users are becoming accustomed to its norms and how to protect themselves online.

Cavanagh (1999) considers ethics in online ethnography using Goffman’s (1963, 1971) research on social relationships, social order and public life with particular emphasis on the relationship between the public and the private. While Markham (2008: 251) describes ‘every method decision [as]… an ethics decision’, as every methods decision has consequences not only for research design but also for the identity of research participants, the research outcomes and the character of the knowledge that emerges from the research. Hine (2005a), however, simply hopes to offer precedents to researchers undertaking work on mediated online interactions, to aid them in developing solutions to their methodological issues and to foster methodological imagination. As
Hine writes ‘the only real way to learn to be a researcher is by experience’ (ibid.: 2). When considering issues and ethnographic methods online, Bell (2001: 200) concludes that the choice of methods and ethical framework must be context-specific, it must be ‘in tune with the field site’ and it must be accountable.

Androutsopoulos (2008) acknowledges that ethical issues around Internet observation are complicated, as the Internet observer may be invisible and participants unaware they are being observed, as in the current study. In his own research, Androutsopoulos anonymises the personal information, screen-names, etc., of the participants he observes and amateur homepages he examines, but did not anonymise the name of commercial and large websites and entities. Furthermore, he sought permission from users of restricted access networks or what he considers private exchanges such as mailing lists and text messages, but treated logs/communication on publicly accessible boards, websites, etc., as public domain data. Androutsopoulos did contact some webmasters, primarily to conduct interviews with them, but he does not feel obtaining everyone’s permission was feasible. In conclusion, Androutsopoulos writes that ‘if a minimum standard of privacy protection (such as anonymisation) is maintained, flexible case-by-case decisions may be tailored to the specific conditions of each project’ noting that different research aims and sites of research need different degrees of privacy protection and ethical considerations (ibid.: 8).

Facebook has a guideline for gathering information from users in the Protecting Other People’s Rights part of their Statement of Rights and Responsibilities:

If you collect information from users, you will: obtain their consent, make it clear you (and not Facebook) are the one collecting their information, and post a privacy policy explaining what information you collect and how you will use it.' (Facebook, 2011a).

Stern (2009) and Sveningsson Elm (2009) are in agreement when it comes to ethics and new media research that ‘it depends’. As Hine (2005a: 1) notes in relation to the case studies in her volume, the best approach to ethical concerns is for the researcher to figure out a ‘situated response’ that is methodologically suitable given their particular research question and research context. From the researcher’s experience to date the researcher believes, as Kralik et al. (2005: 539) write, that best practice for the virtual ethnographer is to simply be ‘ethically informed and sensitive about the norms, values and regulations that may come into play in the cyberspace research context’. As ethnographic and general research literature espouses, the researcher undertakes this
research with the guiding principle of ‘do no harm’. The following discussion outlines the approach of the current study towards these ethical issues and concerns.

5.3.2 Defining Space: Public or Private?

Much has been written about whether information/communication on the Internet is public or private? Flicker et al. (2004) acknowledge both views: some users feel it is totally public in nature and therefore open to researchers without consent, others view areas of the Internet (such as chat rooms) as private. Once someone has joined Facebook the discussions of the translators are accessible and visible to them, but do the translators of the community of translators in this research view their communications on the Facebook Translations app as public or private? Cavanagh (1999) considers the notion of text in the public/private nature of Internet communication debate. If online text and communication are perceived as texts, then issues of intellectual property rights must be considered. However, if they are perceived as interaction, a ‘product not of individual agency but of social ritual’ (ibid.) informed consent is not needed as the communication is not peculiar to a particular individual. Cavanagh also compares online research to research carried out in a public place in sociological ethics. If taking this stance, that online research is research in a public place, informed consent is not needed. However, as Cavanagh, drawing on Homan (1991), notes, whether a space, online or offline, is public or private is ‘relative to the definitions of those who occupy it’. Cavanagh (1999) also acknowledges than within public spaces online there can be areas perceived of as private to specific members or the community. Hewson et al. (2003: 53) believe ‘the crucial question is whether the researcher is ethically justified in using publicly available information as data for a research study’. They argue that communication(s) that are deliberately and voluntary on the public Internet are usable by researchers once anonymised.

Sveningsson Elm (2009) considers this issue and the AoIR’s categorisation of sensitive and not sensitive content (Ess and AoIR Ethics Working Committee, 2002). This, she writes, assumes that ‘people in general would not speak about sensitive matters of their lives in public, whereas they would share with the whole world those matters that they consider not sensitive’ (Sveningsson Elm, 2009: 80-1). These concepts are not entirely unproblematic either, since perhaps sensitive issues are not perceived as more private than nonsensitive given recent developments in audience generated content such as reality TV programming, docudramas, etc and the advent of personal
WWW content such as Blogs, SNSs, etc. (ibid.). Sveningsson Elm points to her own study, Sveningsson (2005), which found that Internet users did not perceive their personal profile, diary and photo album as private. She concludes that ‘not only do users seem to be aware of the risk of having their material observed by others but also the attention from others is often what they seek’ (Sveningsson Elm, 2009: 82).

Sveningsson Elm concludes that media-literate Swedish people are aware that what they do online could be instantaneously known by many others. This awareness, she writes, has led to the re-conceptualisation of our notions of the public/private divide, Sveningsson Elm goes further noting that ‘we may have just resigned ourselves to think of everything and anything as potentially public. We may have become so accustomed to being exposed and seeing others exposing themselves that we may not even expect or care for any privacy online anymore’ (ibid.: 84).

Sveningsson Elm considers the public/private distinction in new media research, asking ‘how can we as researchers make sense of the variables “private” and “public” to better judge the appropriateness and ethical soundness of our studies?’ (ibid.: 70). When considering whether an online research context is public/private Sveningsson Elm outlines a number of possible questions to ask to gain a deeper understanding of the context of interest.

- How exclusive is the environment? Is it possible for anyone to access the content, or is any form of membership required? If so, is membership available for anyone, or are there any formal requirements or restrictions as to who and how many are allowed to become members?
- Is it not even possible to become a member, and is the content restricted to those with an invitation and/or a personal relationship with the creator of the content? (ibid.: 74).

The answers to these questions, Sveningsson Elm believes, will provide the researcher with information on how public or open the context is which they can then use as guidelines for how to act and carry out their study. These questions are particularly applicable to the current study given that its context is Facebook, a site which anecdotally yields polarised opinions on whether is it a public or private domain.

Whether the context of the current research is public/private is further complicated given the aspect of Facebook the current study is concerned with, namely the Translations app. Much is written (cf. Light and McGrath, 2010; Zimmer, 2010) on ethical considerations for research on an individual user’s Facebook Profile, which involves a presentation of oneself and which although within the same website, Facebook, is a completely different context to that of the community space of the Translations app in the current study.
To consider Sveningsson Elm’s (2009) questions in terms of the current research context, *Facebook* is not an exclusive environment; its most recent figures record a user-ship of one billion monthly active users (Zuckerberg, 2012), with the website available in more than 70 languages (Facebook, 2012a). Membership is required to use *Facebook*, users must sign up with some personal details: first and last names, email address, gender and DOB, create a *Profile* and password but membership is available to anyone with an email address over the age of 13 and not a convicted sex offender, as per their terms of service (Facebook, 2011a). *Facebook’s* privacy policy at the time of writing (2012) places the onus on individual *Facebook* users to decide who can see their *Profile*, their *Posts*, if their *Profile* can be found by other users using the search facility, if they can be tagged in photos, etc. (Facebook, 2012e). Sveningsson Elm (2009: 76) describes this as an ‘individual-controlled’ website. Typically there are three privacy settings open to *Facebook* users: public, which ‘means that anyone, including people off of Facebook, will be able to see or access it’; *Facebook Friends* which means only those accepted as *Friends* on the SNS can see it; and, finally, the user can choose to ‘customize your [their] audience’, which allows them to include/exclude particular *Facebook Friends* from their *Post*, aspects of their *Profile*, etc., (Facebook, 2012e).

When the current ethnographic study began, privacy settings on *Facebook* were a lot simpler, as they were ‘site-controlled’ (Sveningsson Elm, 2009: 76) by *Facebook* and all users had the same privacy settings. At that time anything a user posted on their *Profile* was seen by their *Facebook Friends* or any users who were part of the same *Network*. In terms of the specific context of the study, the *Facebook Translations* app, when the researcher first began observing, it was the case that if a user added the app to their *Profile* and participated by translating, voting, or posting in the *Discussion Board* their actions were visible to the other members of that language’s *Translations* app community and their actions recorded and visible on the *Leaderboard* aspect of the app. However, *Facebook* then allowed *translators* to choose not to be included on the *Leaderboard* towards the end of data collection and gave *translators* the option of hiding their activity from the community (discussed above).

These questions and the comparisons between environments they allow for lead Sveningsson Elm to conclude that rather than the public/private nature of communication having a dichotomous relationship, they are instead on a continuum ‘in which several different positions are possible between the variables, private and public’
Sveningsson Elm believes there are a number of degrees of private and public and develops a more nuanced categorisation of contexts as: ‘public, semi-public, semi-private and private’ (ibid.). To develop and delineate these categorisations she uses the same variables as Patton (1990) who describes the different degrees of openness in participant observation (open, partly-open and hidden). [For the definition of Sveningsson Elm’s categories as above see (2009)]. Applying these categories to the current research context, the Facebook SNS and the Translations app would be defined as a semi-public environment, which Sveningsson Elm (2009: 75) defines as an environment ‘that is available for most people. It is in principle accessible to anyone, but it first requires membership and registration’, in this category she notes are ‘most web communities and social network sites such as … www.myspace.com [another SNS]’.

Conceptualising public/private as a continuum using this categorisation does not, as Sveningsson Elm (2009) acknowledges, solve all our ethical dilemmas, and it may in fact make them more difficult. Online environments may not fit completely into one of these categories and as current ethics guidelines, rules, committees, etc., are still using the distinction public/private, their recommendations may be hard to follow if the research is neither (ibid.). We must realise that ‘in practice or design, the online environment in question may not be only public or private but something in between’ (ibid.: 76). Sveningsson Elm places discussion boards at the public end of the public/private continuum.

5.3.3 Overt/Covert Research
A related issue to the definition of online spaces as public or private communication is that of overt and covert research. Virtual ethnography as a method is involved in issues about overt and covert research: does the virtual ethnographer self-present or not? Utz (2010) acknowledges that in online research it is easier to assume the role of a complete observer, because the nature of the Internet allows for collecting data unobserved and unbeknownst to Internet users (cf. Sveningsson, 2004). Paccagnella (1997) acknowledges that naturalistic analysis, such as participant observation, where the presence of the researcher is not obvious, has the advantage of reducing the risk of distorting data and participant behaviour. While Murthy (2008) believes that much digital ethnographic work is covert research. However, this new opportunity for naturalistic data collection also leads to new concerns in research ethics. Sveningsson
(2004: 47) asks ‘what happens to the privacy and integrity of the people we study? How should we consider the opportunity for collecting data unobserved?’ There are also ethical issues around the publication of information gleaned from online spaces and around the privacy of users (Paccagnella, 1997).

Sanders (2005) discusses her ten month ethnographic study of the social organisation of the sex industry in the UK which involves observing sex industry websites, both for workers in the industry and those for potential clients. Her primary site of virtual ethnography is the adult website Punternet. Her research had both online and offline ethnographic elements. Sanders’ research involves the cataloguing and content analysis of sex industry websites and being a lurker, observing the interactions on the Punternet discussion boards. She did not disclose her identity to participants for a number of reasons: it could alter the participants behaviour, influence the dynamics of the shared community and possibly lead to hostility. Furthermore, from her observations, she determines that users were aware that ‘outsiders’, police, researchers, etc., could be observing and monitoring their interactions. She took the stance that ‘the web is a public domain and those who post information realize that it is not private in the traditional sense of a personal conversation but accessible for anyone to read’ (ibid.: 71-2). Like Sanders, this researcher did not disclose their identity overtly to the translators by posting that the researcher was watching them, as the researcher believes it would have seriously altered their behaviour, their language practices as individuals, the dynamics and reality of the community and how the app worked, all of which are the focus of the current research study. However, as discussed above, the researcher had a second translator Profile in the role of academic/ethnographer for a time and any of the Irish language translators had access to this while it was live as it was publicly accessible, as the researcher defined in its privacy settings. The researcher also has a WordPress blog outlining the research, contact details, credentials, etc., which anyone can access, so this study is semi-covert.

5.3.4 Informed Consent

The matter of informed consent within ethical issues is another much debated area in virtual ethnography and indeed, online research in general. Flicker et al. (2004) consider if consent is needed to analyse information online that they perceive as being in the public domain. Berry (2004: 327) notes there are many issues around the notion of permission and online ethics, such as whether individuals whose communications/texts
are should examined be asked? or the community as an entity? Or ‘are online communities “texts” to which standard copyright restrictions and the principles of fair rights apply, therefore removing the need for permission seeking at all?’ The AoIR (Ess and AoIR Ethics Working Committee, 2002: 6) ethics guidelines advise approaching potential participants at the beginning of the research, but acknowledge that this is context-dependant on the research itself, while the medium of contact should be the medium that ‘best protects both the subject(s) and their project’. As Greenhow (2011: 79) acknowledges, getting informed consent from all the individual users in online SNS who are ‘writing, reading, chatting online, and invited into the site, impacting the dynamic content under study’ can be an impossible task. Carter (2005) considers international legislation related to Internet privacy, in particular regarding minors and those under 13 who cannot give informed consent. For her study she asked those under 13 not to participate and got/gave assurances of adhering to US legislation and European recommendations regarding children and Internet privacy. In the current study collecting data from those under 13 was not an issue as to join Facebook one must be over 13 years of age, although it must be acknowledged that undoubtedly some under 13s do join Facebook. However, the majority of those involved in the Irish Translations app appear to be students or young professionals in their late teens to thirties (for more on the demographics of the Irish community see Section 7.1). While Sveningsson Elm (2009: 71) concludes that it must be acknowledged that some ‘research may be unethical even though performed with informed consent … sometimes research may not be unethical even though performed without informed consent’.

Sveningsson Elm acknowledges that informed consent is not always required, if the environment under study is public in nature. She draws on her own online research experiences of chat rooms to illustrate the difficulties with obtaining informed consent in these synchronous environments. There can be too many users in a context to ask them all individually and users can log on and off quickly which does not give the researcher time to provide them with information on the study firstly and then obtain consent. If the researcher posted public messages with information, asking for consent every time a new user joined or posted, these can perceived as spam and the researcher asked to leave the environment or could this cause users to leave. Finally, little time is left for observing if the researcher attempts to write and send messages about the research to all the users of a particular context. Furthermore, in some contexts contributions can be anonymous or made using pseudonyms, and it is thus impossible
for the researcher to contact users. Sveningsson Elm calls for researchers to instead consider a different question regarding their ethical obligations ‘is the environment public enough for us to study it without getting informed consent?’ [emphasis in original] (ibid.: 76) When the research environment is categorised as semi-public, as the current study is, Sveningsson Elm acknowledges that it is still not clear cut whether informed consent is needed or not. She attributes this to the nature of Internet environments: ‘being on the one hand open and accessible for anyone or to some, but on the other hand first requiring membership and/or registration... [and how they are] are multi-faceted and where several different communication modes and arenas aimed at interaction coexist at the same’ (ibid.).

Sveningsson Elm also compares her continuum categories with their equivalent offline contexts to further consider the issue of informed consent. She likens the semi-public environment to libraries and schools and finds that ‘here, it is more difficult to draw lines between what is acceptable and not acceptable to study, because different parts of the environments often have different characteristics’ (ibid.: 78). As she writes, research in a public area of a school, such as a cafeteria does not call for informed consent, however, classroom research would warrant informed consent. This is particularly applicable to the context of the current study since although informed consent would definitely be required for research on individual Facebook Profiles, the Translations app is very much a public space within this domain, albeit with a community audience of 500 aprox translators that one billion people have access to. It is also interesting to note that, as discussed previously, the researcher first encountered the Translations app from an article in a weekly bulletin email compiled and published by an Irish language organisation. The article also notes the discussion of the app in the Irish language blogosphere and its impact on wider issues of Irish language translation and cost, the role of professional translators, the voice of the Irish language community, etc. so, presumably this article led to some of the email recipients users becoming Irish language translators and they were aware that others in the Irish language community were aware of and discussing this development. Furthermore, the researcher conducted a general search of the WWW for information on the Irish language Translations app and found that a number of blogs were discussing it as well as a national newspaper, the Sunday Times, and the national broadcaster during primetime on RTÉ Radio One. The newspaper article was carried in the print and online versions of the paper and included a brief interview with the number one translator at that time, and the radio piece was
primarily an interview with the same translator. The link to the newspaper article was posted as a distinct Topic in the Discussion Board element of the app and a number of Posts discussed it and the researcher believes this would have also led translators to be aware that this was a public space as it was the topic of a national media and at least one translator had been contacted and spoken to by journalists. Thus, informed consent was not sought from translators for the analysis of the debates from the Discussion Board element of the app.

Kozinets (2010) also considers informed consent and online methods, in particular relating to his method ‘netnography’, but from a different perspective. He does not believe that archival research and downloading of materials, Hine’s (2000) approach, strictly qualifies as research on human subjects. Rather, he believes it is only when there is interaction or intervention that informed consent is needed. Considering US federal regulations, he finds that most netnographic research would be perceived as of minimal risk of harm and no unusual procedures, and thus written consent would not be required. Kozinets (2010: 151) concludes that even when interacting in an online community and this interaction is ‘normal… that is, as she interacts as other members do on the site but also takes fieldnotes of her experiences’, informed consent does not need to be sought. In particular, when it comes to asynchronous, persistent communication found on bulletin boards or discussion boards, Kozinets believes this information can be quoted subject to a number of guidelines he outlines, as will be discussed below. However, with synchronous, real-time communication such as chat rooms or conversations in virtual worlds/games, he believes the researcher should never record these interactions without the permissions of the users involved.

5.3.5 Participants: Anonymity and Quoting
Mann and Steward (2000) note that anonymity arises on a number of levels in online research, such as email addresses, user names, real names, domain names, signatures, ISPs, forum name, etc. Kozinets (2010: 153) outlines three ethical considerations the researcher must consider when deciding when to use anonyms and when to cite participants:

1. the need to protect vulnerable human participants who may be put at risk from the exposure of a research study;
2. the accessible and “semi-published” qualities of much of what is shared on the Internet; and
3. the rights of individual community and culture members to receive credit for their creative and intellectual work.
Kozinets also notes that the topic(s) of the community must be considered as well as the risk of their identities becoming public on their personal privacy, life, etc. This is particularly relevant to the studies he describes which involve stockbrokers and illegal transactions, drug use, etc., and other vulnerable groups. In the current study the community is based on a shared desire to translate an Irish language version of Facebook, the translators are not a vulnerable group nor is their purpose and the topics of conversation do not involve anything illegal, inflammatory, reprehensible, etc. However, since their perspectives on language are personal opinions and to protect their individual privacy, as they are not public figures, the translators discussed in the current study are cited anonymously and their names and Profile photos removed from screenshots used in this thesis. In terms of Facebook privacy provisions relating to app content submitted by users, Facebook (2009c) simply notes that when using apps on the SNS, such as the Translations app, users ‘content and information is shared with the app’.

Hine (2008) discusses the issues around using direct quotes from the field of research given the availability of search engines with the ability to search for pieces of text. This makes it easy for anyone to find the site and the participant: ‘the very public and searchable nature of the Internet breaks down the compartmentalisations upon which many of our ethical practices habitually rely’ (ibid.: 266). In the current study quotations are used for a number of reasons. Firstly, given the Translations app itself is not a typical genre of the WWW and the design of the app is considered in the analysis, this research could not be presented or discussed completely anonymously. Also, when discussing the interactions of the translators on the Discussion Board aspect of the app, even if not quoting directly, the source of the data was identifiable as Facebook has over one billion users who could simply add the app to their Profile and see the Irish language app’s Discussion Board. However, if one was not a holder of a Facebook account the Discussion Board could not be accessed by search engines or indeed, even by direct link, which was not provided by the researcher. Finally, due to the recent redesign of the Translations app in October 2011 (Appendix 1), the Topics and Posts of the Discussion Board as discussed here no longer exist, they were not carried over to new version of the app and can never again be accessed by the public.
5.3.6 AoIR Research Ethics Guidelines
The AoIR is an academic association for those involved in the Internet studies field. It is perceived as a cross-disciplinary group, ‘working across academic borders’ and is international in its audience (AoIR, 2012). One of its primary functions is the production of information relevant to researchers in this field including the AoIR Guide on Ethical Online Research (Ess and AoIR Ethics Working Committee, 2002). This was developed by its Ethics Working Group, which was approved by the AoIR membership and published in 2002. This discusses ethical issues in Internet studies such as the private/public divide, informed consent, the legalities of online data, the risks to participants, etc. In 2011 the AoIR began a review of its ethical guidelines, the goal of the Ethics Working Committee being to ‘augment’ as opposed to replace the 2002 publication (Markham, et al., 2011). Draft documentation was produced for review and comment by all members, both online and at the annual AoIR conference in late 2011, followed by approval by the Ethics Committee and the Executive Committee (ibid.). The final draft, Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research: Version 2.0 (Markham, et al., 2012), was approved by the majority of the general membership in early 2013. Markham (2013) notes that the ‘2012 document does not replace the 2002 guidelines, but lives alongside and builds from it’. Hine (2005a: 5) considers the AoIR Ethics Working Group developments from 2002 and she believes the decision to frame their advice as questions to ask of the particular research project, marks and illustrates how the application of ethical principles is ‘always situated and the diverse and contingent situations that CMC provides’. This leads Hine to conclude that there is no prospect of developing a singular position on the ethics of Internet based research.

5.3.7 Institutional Ethics
Ethical approval for the Facebook study for the purposes of a conference paper was applied for in June 2009 to the University of Limerick Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics (FAHSS) Committee. For this application a standard university form developed by this committee, was completed with the researcher’s PhD supervisor. Questions concerned the demographics of the prospective informants to access their vulnerability and risk, such as if they were under 18, if they had physiological or psychological impairments, learning difficulties, etc. Further questions were asked on how the potential informants would be approached to participate, protect their anonymity/confidentiality, if the researcher could access the particular
vulnerability of potential informants, how they would make informants aware of their right to refuse to participate or withdraw during the research, whether any safety issues arose with this study and how the researcher planned to store the collected data.

An Information Sheet and Consent Form also had to be developed and submitted. The Information Sheet contained an overview of the research, its title, purpose, method of research, the participants’ rights to refuse or withdraw participation and anonymity and what the information gathered would be used for. The Consent Form outlined the informant’s agreement that they had been briefed about the research and their role in it, the nature of their participation and what the data would be used for, that their participation would be recorded (audio or video), their right to ask the recording to be stopped at any time and to received copies of same, that there is no obligation on them to participate and they can withdraw their participation at any time during the research and their right to full confidentiality. This provided the informants with the contact details of the researcher, PhD supervisor and the FAHSS Committee if they had any queries or concerns about the research. Finally, a list of potential interview or survey questions, as these methods of data collection were still planned at this point, were submitted. Approval was granted in July 2009. As the research progressed and it became clear that the virtual ethnography of the Facebook Translations app would form the primary case study of the researcher’s PhD study, the researcher contacted the chair of the ethics committee in February 2010. She confirmed satisfaction with using the research for this purpose as previously submitted at that time. [Appendix 4 contains the ethics application documents, including the FAHSS ethics form, the Information and Consent form and potential questions as outlined.]

In conclusion, as Kozinets (2010: 62) writes ‘there is no really real ethnography, no de facto perfect ethnography that would satisfy every methodological purist’ [emphasis in original]. The current ethnography is, as Hine (2000) acknowledges, a partial ethnography shaped by the researcher’s decisions and the resulting omissions these choices rendered. The researcher’s choice of field, level of ethnographic engagement, the search engine used, the period this ethnography was undertaken for, etc., all highlight the partial nature of this account. Like the primary method of data collection here, the screen-shot, this ethnography is a snapshot of a period of Facebook’s existence considered using theoretical frameworks from language policy. The researcher’s thoughts and findings come from and are specific to this context over the time period of the research as it was experienced. This ethnography is
about the interactions, management and de facto language policies of Facebook and the Irish language community of translators and how this new media language reality relates to existing language policy theory.

Online research methods are developed and delineated constantly. Further to the approaches discussed above, Mason and Dicks (1999) discuss ‘the digital ethnographer’ and ‘hypermedia ethnography’, which describes the convergence of post-paradigm ethnography with the potential of new media for ‘ethnographic authoring’. Another approach is Mann (2006: 442) who brings virtual ethnography and discourse analysis together to consider the online conversations found on discussion boards, news groups and chat rooms: ‘the analysis of typed messages is called “discourse analysis.”’ While Grenfell (2006), discusses ‘critical virtual ethnography’, which brings critical theory and ethnography together and uses them to consider virtual communities in cyberspace. As Hine (2000) notes, methodological innovation, development, extension and adaption are necessary to answer future research questions in the then context of the WWW/online domains. Virtual ethnography could be subsumed as Hine (2008) writes, into broader ethnographic methods used to consider contemporary culture and, as technologies develop and innovate new methods, may and probably will develop or virtual ethnography may evolve and reinvent itself. In terms of methodology, this study is one approach towards ‘virtual ethnography’, drawing primarily on Hine’s (2000) methodological practices and principles, but influenced by many more, as discussed above, and is a contribution towards considering language and language policy online using virtual ethnography. The next chapter considers the findings of this study in relation to Facebook as an entity and SNS.
CHAPTER 6
FINDINGS 1 - FACEBOOK

Facebook as an organisation do not have an explicit language policy document or statement; however, from looking at documentation from Facebook sources, comment can be made on its implicit/covert language policy. Indeed, the very act of creating and developing the Translations app itself to internationalise the site can be seen as a language policy. Facebook uses the Translations app as a mechanism of language policy (Shohamy, 2006), managing its multilingual users and implementing its language policy through the app. Facebook decided to have the Translations app open to all Facebook users once they have added it to their Profile and to have over 100 languages open for translation (as of February 2013), making the SNS and consequently the WWW more multilingual, as will be discussed in Section 8.1. Much of Facebook’s language policy is driven by commercial concerns. For example, the term ‘Facebook’ is not open for translation; it is defined as in a language’s Glossary as: ‘... the proper noun referring to the Facebook website and all affiliated products. The term “Facebook” should not be translated’. Facebook’s website content and later its practices are to be internationalised, but the name of the company is not to be translated for commercial and brand reasons. Facebook’s approach to languages and language policy, as discussed here, is primarily driven by commercial concerns.

Somewhat hidden in the background, but shaping everything, are the language ideologies of Facebook itself. The new media are both producers of media texts, e.g. websites, online newspapers, etc., and also facilitators of user-generated content such as discussion boards, blogs, etc. In the current study, the language ideologies of Facebook are reflected in the metalinguistic discourse(s) of Facebook and must be taken into account. Facebook is just as implicated in replicating ideologies of endangerment (Duchêne and Heller, 2007), purism (Thomas, 1991), parallel monolingualism (Heller, 2007a) and, of course, multilingualism, fake (Kelly-Holmes, 2005) or not. Facebook’s ideologies are found throughout the SNS and various company publications. They are identifiable on the Facebook Developer Blog, which is part of the secondary Facebook website created for developers of Facebook apps and websites which use the Facebook Platform (http://developers.facebook.com). There are some differences between the blog posts here and The Facebook Blog posts found on the primary Facebook site. The Facebook Developer Wiki, comprised of 11 pages of
information on the Translations app, also demonstrates Facebook’s thoughts on language and translation matters. A Facebook Blog post although presented as being written by the top French Canadian translator features an approach found in other Facebook employee authored publications (as will be discussed below in Section 7.1.3), namely referring to the language he speaks as ‘my own language’, as the languages others speak as ‘people’s native languages’ and discussing the role of the community in the translation effort as ‘... a team effort...’ (Lavoie, 2009).

This chapter will consider the practices and ideology of Facebook, to identify and describe its de facto policy as studied via the virtual ethnography. Firstly, it will discuss Facebook’s approach to language and languages and how Facebook discusses and manage multilingualism. Then it will review Facebook’s practices and ideology in relation to translation, how it discusses the Translations app and this method of translation and also, how Facebook creates and fosters community through its language use and the design of the Translations app. Finally, it examines how Facebook acts in a ‘top-down’ manner overseeing the app and influencing how the translators use it. References to data gathered ethnographically from the Facebook SNS, Facebook publications and other publications, are included here in italic font.

6.1 Policies, Practices and Ideologies: Language(s)
This section will examine Facebook’s’s approach to language(s) and multilingualism. Firstly, the sub-section on language will consider Facebook’s’s practices and ideologies around language, how it discusses ‘dialects’ and standards and its own language use. Next, it illustrates how Facebook’s’s approach to language and languages demonstrates the commercialisation of languages and the territoriality principle. Finally, it considers how Facebook present its SNS as playing a role in language revitalisation, reversing/preventing and language learning. The second sub-section focuses on multilingualism and considers the goal of the Translations app, Facebook’s’s notion of inclusivity and its inclusion of minority and lesser-used languages. Next, it investigates how the notions of parallel monolingualism and language competition are demonstrated in Facebook’s’s approach to multilingualism. Finally, it will examine how multilingual Facebook actually is in practice and discuss how the default language of the Facebook SNS is English.
6.1.1 Language
Throughout the SNS, Facebook refers to user’s language using the personal pronouns: ‘my’, ‘their own’ and ‘your’. On the overall Translations app Page in 2009, Facebook called on users/translators to add the app and ‘make Facebook available in your language’, referring to ‘your language’ five times throughout the 108 word paragraph. This demonstrates how Facebook conceptualises language at an individual’s level, almost as a personal possession. This ideology is widely distributed and coherent throughout the corporation. For example, in a Facebook Careers publication a Facebook employee involved in the Translations app echoes Facebook’s view of language as a personal attribute, referring to users as experiencing the site in ‘their own language’ (Vera, 2009). On the Facebook Developer Blog Facebook again displays its view of language as occurring on a personal level, writing about the languages users speak as ‘their’ languages. The use of these personal pronouns also demonstrates that Facebook assumes a monolingual norm, that each user has only one language. Users must choose one language as their primary language to use Facebook in regardless of their bi- or multi-lingual capabilities.

Facebook also subscribe to an ideology of individual human rights (cf. Phillipson et al., 1995) as language use is aligned with individual choice. In October 2009, Facebook users could set their ‘primary language’ in their My Account section, this allowed them to ‘browse Facebook in the language of your choice’ as illustrated in Figure 6.1 below.

![Figure 6.1: Primary Language Settings](image)

At one point Facebook also describes the languages people speak as ‘the languages that feel most comfortable to them’ (Kwan, 2009a) again focussing on language use as an individual issue.
Facebook describes languages in two ways across the SNS. Firstly, *Facebook* refers to language(s) as ‘locale(s)’, for example, in the Help section of the *Translations* app *Facebook* tells its users ‘... to view all translations in your locale’. *Facebook* defines ‘locale’ as a user’s language preference (Ellis, 2009c: 239) and this term is typically in use in the computing/technology and localisation domains. Esselink (2003: 67) notes that the term ‘localisation’ is derived from the word ‘locale’, which he defines as ‘all the characteristics of the combination of a language and a region or country... a locale defines all regional stands supported by a software product, such as date/time formats, sorting standards, currencies, and character sets’. Here we can see *Facebook* viewing language and languages as an element of localisation processes/practices and not as an aspect of culture, identity or bound up in issues of knowledge (cf. Coupland, 2010).

Secondly, *Facebook* refers to its user’s languages simply as ‘languages’, with a number of different pronouns and accompanying descriptions such as ‘local languages’ (Facebook, 2008a). By calling a ‘way of speaking’ (Hymes, 1974), such as Pirate English, or language variety, such as Portuguese (Brazil), a ‘language’ and including it in the languages available for translation, *Facebook* provides it with ‘symbolic capital’ (Bourdieu, 1994), authenticating it as a ‘language’. The top Canadian translator and the Irish *Translations* app community (see Section 7.1.3) acknowledge this function of the *Translations* app. The opposite however is also true, by *Facebook* referring to a language variety as a ‘dialect’ or descriptor other than as a ‘language’, for example ‘African dialects (Zulu, Xhosa), regional varieties (British English, Canadian French) and even rarely spoken languages, such as Latin and Esperanto’ (Little, 2008a), *Facebook* impact its ‘symbolic capital’.

*Facebook*’s policy when it comes to referring to languages by name is to do so in that particular language, for example the Irish *Translations* app is ‘Translations in Gaeilge’ on the Dashboard of the app. However, *Facebook* also literally ‘other’ the languages available on their site not referring to them by name or other description. When the researcher’s account was set to English (UK) in her *My Account* section, the other languages Facebook is available in, over 70 at that time (October 2009), are simply referred to as ‘others’. This demonstrates that English is again at the centre of the Facebook SNS, the norm against which deviation is measured.

*Facebook* also term languages such as Arabic and Hebrew ‘right-to-left languages’ (Haddad, 2009) as the directionality is from the right to the left. In doing so,
Facebook mark these languages as being different to other languages, in other words, different to the norm of Western languages that have left to right script directionality (as will be discussed in Section 6.1.2.1.2). This description of languages according to their writing system and script also illustrates Facebook’s equation of language with writing. This ideology is also seen in Facebook’s discussion of the Latin version of the Translations app (see Section 6.1.1.5) and also its use of a written standard as an inclusion/exclusion criterion. As will be discussed further in Section 6.1.2.1.1, one of Facebook’s criteria for including a language in the Translations app and opening it up for translation on their SNS is ‘the base of people known to be capable of writing the language’ (Leszczenski, 2010a, 2010b). Facebook conceptualise language in its written form, not acknowledging oral languages and excluding them from the Translations app.

6.1.1.1 Dialects and Standards

Facebook discusses the notion of ‘dialect(s)’, language varieties in sociolinguistic terms (cf. Section 2.1.12.1.2), and its approach to these throughout the SNS. Facebook describes ‘dialects’ as the result of the ‘the constant evolution of language’ (Haddad, 2009) and as belonging to a particular language. However, Facebook also notes that in the case of Arabic ‘… the dialects can seem so different that they border on being completely separate languages’ (ibid.). Facebook also considers the many standards and varieties/‘dialects’ of Arabic in use. It acknowledges that Facebook uses the ‘One common form of Arabic… Modern Standard’, the only written form and official ‘top-down’ standard of the Arabic language (ibid.). Facebook justifies its choice to use this standard as it is the standard used in official and other media (ibid.). Clyne’s (1992) notion of ‘pluricentric languages’ may give us an insight into why Facebook acknowledges national/regional variants of certain languages, such as French (Canada), but not other languages, for example Arabic. ‘Pluricentric languages’ are ‘languages with several intersecting centres, each providing a national variety with at least some of its own (codified) norms’ (ibid.: 1). In other words, they are languages with several varieties each of which has their own norms and linguistic variables. Facebook subscribes to the norm that Canadian French, or French (Canada) as they term it, and the Modern Standard variety of Arabic are of a higher prestige/value than the other language varieties of Arabic. Facebook thus exclude certain language varieties from inclusion in the app due to their perceived normative value or ‘symbolic capital’ (Bourdieu, 1994).
Facebook briefly considers the possibility of language re-use ‘in cases of related languages or dialects (e.g., Spanish from Spain versus Latin America, Catal’a, Portuguese (Brazil and Portugal)’ (Ellis, 2009c). Facebook notes it has ‘experimented with shallow machine translation’ but conclude that the quality is not good enough yet to allow language re-use in these cases (ibid.: 243). It is interesting to see Facebook considering language re-use on the one hand which is something that simplifies language, when on other it constantly acknowledges the complexity of language issues in some of its publications. Previously, on the Facebook Blog Losse (2008b), discussed issues around developing ‘culturally appropriate terms’ on Facebook, acknowledging that how ‘terms like "cousin" and "aunt" are defined differently from culture to culture’. Furthermore, in the same post, Losse acknowledges some differences between Brazilian Portuguese and the Portuguese spoken in Portugal:

For example, while Portuguese is spoken in both Portugal and Brazil, there are a lot of linguistic and cultural differences between the two countries. The word "poke" was translated differently-- "toque" in Iberian Portuguese and "cutucada" in Brazilian Portuguese. There are also a lot of similarities--the "Wall" is "mural" in both; and this translation is very similar to that of other Romance languages-- "muro" in Spanish and "mur" in French. (ibid.).

6.1.1.2 Facebook’s Terminology

Facebook discusses its own language use on the SNS. It acknowledges that some of the text of the SNS interface ‘like Poke or News Feed are our own idioms’; Facebook is thus involved in corpus planning, developing its own terms for the SNS. It is for this reason, Facebook writes, that the internationalisation of their site ‘... wasn’t a straight up translation we could hand over to someone to translate’. This new media entity and new multilingual context needed a new approach to translation to internationalise and manage its multilingual users and markets. Facebook describes its SNS specific terms as ‘Facebook-coined terms’ (Facebook, 2008a). Facebook coins/creates its own terms for some aspects of the SNS, for example ‘themself’ (as in your friend ‘tagged themself in a photo’), in lieu of herself/himself. However, it is interesting to note that it describes its use of ‘themself’ as ‘not even a real word’ (Gleit, 2008), perceiving the language of the SNS as not a ‘real’ language and down-playing its role as a language broker (Blommaert, 1999a). Facebook describes the SNS specific terms it created such as ‘poke’ as its ‘own idiom’ (Facebook, 2009a), perhaps deliberately, relegating its
language creativity to the lower level of idioms within a language and its contribution to many languages, where Facebook terms have been borrowed.

6.1.1.3 Language and the Market

Across the Facebook SNS we can see how languages and this method of translation are monetised, commercialised (cf. Kelly-Holmes and Mautner, 2010) and commodified (Heller, 2010a) in this globalised era and domain. Duchêne and Heller (2012: 371) define language as a commodity as the view that ‘languages are things that become useful in order to both produce resources and enter the globalized market’ [emphasis in original], in Spolsky’s (2004) terms, a language ideology/belief. We see this firstly when Facebook acknowledges the role the Translations app played in the creation of new markets for its SNS, thanking translators for their contribution and role in the expansion of Facebook internationally, noting that

In just a couple of days we have seen a significant growth in the number of users that have joined Facebook from countries in España and America Latina, including Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela (Vera, 2008)

Its international growth has ‘skyrocketed’ (Ellis, 2009c) because of the app: ‘Since the first translation, we’ve grown to more than 350 million users on Facebook, with 70 percent of them now outside of the United States’ (Kwan, 2009a). Facebook also notes that it tied the opening of the Translations app to new languages with new country launches (Vera, 2009), again illustrating the ties Facebook constructs between language(s) and territories, as will be discussed further below (see Section 6.1.1.3 next).

A Facebook video introducing advertising on Facebook discusses how advertisers can use language as a ‘keyword criterion’ for identifying their target audience (Sandberg, 2010). In other words, ads can be targeted at particular users who have identified they speak a particular language in their Account Settings (ibid.). In doing so, Facebook commodifies (Heller, 2010a) language and languages, creating markets and audiences for advertisers on the basis of the language(s) Facebook users speak. Also, the two Language Specialist job ads examined during this study (as will be discussed further in Sections 6.1.2.4.1 and 6.3.5) are part of the Growth and Internationalization division of Facebook, which is responsible for the localisation of the SNS. Facebook Careers describe the function of this division as to ‘grow Facebook’s user base and advertising business across the world... We’re the people that make sure that your marketing dollars get a great return’ (Facebook, 2009c; 2009d).
This statement again illustrates the role of the *Translations* app and languages in general in the commercial side of *Facebook*, gaining it new markets and allowing advertisers to market their products to specific language communities.

*Facebook* also encourages its users to play a role in the expansion and marketing of its SNS via language. The *Language* element of a user’s *My Account* section contains a link to an email which users could send to their non-*Facebook* friends to invite them to join *Facebook*, to ‘*Let your friends know that Facebook is available in other languages*’. While the *Invite Friends* element of the *Translations* app also allows users to send invitations to others to join the SNS and the *Translations* app in a number of languages: ‘*select a language for sending invites*...’ (Vera, 2008). Both of these elements of the *Facebook* SNS again illustrate that *Facebook* aligns the identification and provision of languages and linguistic data about users with new markets and as a selling point through which to recruit new *Facebook* users.

### 6.1.1.4 Language and Territoriality

*Facebook* perceives its users as speaking a language or variety corresponding to the country they live in (Linder, 2009). This is an ideology that echoes the territoriality principle in language planning which perceives that ‘one language is the official language of a specific territory’ (Wright, 1995: 48). *Facebook* classifies Malaysian and Vietnamese as Asian languages, Zulu and Xhosa as ‘*African dialects*’ and British English and Canadian French as ‘*regional varieties*’ (Little, 2008a). Throughout its publications *Facebook* equates Spanish with Latin America (Vera, 2008; Leszczenski, 2009). Also, *Facebook* announced its inclusion of Persian in the *Translations* app with reference to the political situation in Iran in June 2009 (Kwan, 2009b), again identifying a language with a geographical area. *Facebook*’s subscription to the territoriality principle is further evidenced in a *Facebook Blog* post about the app which writes that ‘Beginning on Monday, Feb 11, any person who goes to www.facebook.com from a Spanish-speaking country will see the site in Spanish’ (Facebook, 2008a) and later the same from German-speaking countries (Facebook, 2008c). This blog post does not give *Facebook* users in particular territories a choice to opt to use Spanish/German rather Spanish/German is set as the respective default language due to the region they access *Facebook* from.

The territoriality principle is also seen in *Facebook*’s practices and design. In a user’s *Account Settings* the currency displayed in the *Payments* section
defaults/localises differently according to the language they are using Facebook in. For example, when using Facebook in the Irish language the Payments element displays the country as Éire and the currency as Euro, as in Figure 6.2 below.

![Figure 6.2: Payments Default Country - Eire](image1)

However, when using Facebook in the English (UK) language setting, the country default displayed is the United Kingdom and the currency is Pounds as illustrated in Figure 6.3.

![Figure 6.3: Payments Default Country – United Kingdom](image2)

Here we can see again that Facebook correlates particular language(s) with particular territorial/geographic areas.

In August 2011 Facebook began to describe and categorise the languages the SNS was available as below in Figure 6.4.
Figure 6.4: Language Selection

As Figure 6.4 highlights, Facebook categorises languages according to the geographical area of the world they are mostly spoken in, again illustrating the territoriality principle. The geographical categories Facebook uses are interesting, it does not go by continent, instead using descriptors such as the Middle East and Asia-Pacific, terms which are used more in business and political domains, all through English.

Facebook brings this notion of territoriality online as a means of promoting membership of the communities created by the Translations app, by asking users ‘Do you speak x Language?’ as illustrated in Figure 6.5 below, do you speak English (UK)?). It suggests a language based on the geographical area the user’s IP address is from.

Figure 6.5: Do you Speak English (UK)? (Blanquart, 2009)
However, this also serves its corporate agenda of multinational branding (cf. Heller, 2003; Thurlow and Jaworski, 2003; Kelly-Holmes, 2005) as a global, inclusive SNS, as will be discussed further in Section 6.1.2.1. To follow Thurlow and Aiello’s (2007) critique, what looks like the servicing of national pride is often really about the shoring up of global capital.

6.1.1.5 Language Revitalisation, Endangerment and Learning

Facebook presents its SNS as playing a role in language revitalisation, a post about Latin being titled: ‘Latin Becomes a Living Language on Facebook’ (Linder, 2009). This title implies that by opening the Translations app to Latin, Facebook plays an active role in its revitalisation. Duchêne and Heller (2007) consider and critique ‘discourses of endangerment’, which are discourses concerned about the disappearance of languages, typically minority or small languages, in the near future. Facebook certainly appears to take up or tap into this discourse; through the Translations app Facebook is ‘saving’ language(s) from extinction or, in the case of Latin, bringing it back from the dead. The Facebook Blog post further proclaims that ‘beginning today, Latin – the staid and reliable language – springs to life on Facebook’ (Linder, 2009). The same post also refers to Latin as a ‘venerable language’ and talks about students of ‘living languages’. The Latin translators have, we are told...

... meticulously translated the site into a “dead” language. Cobwebs may accumulate on the stones that bear Latin phrases, but they will never conceal its distinguished past, nor stand in the way of people’s desire to keep the language alive - even on the web (ibid.)

Facebook is subscribing to a kind of linguistic diversity that aligns with biodiversity, whereby the preservation of languages is seen as good for the global cultural environment, evocative of the ecolinguistics approach. These languages are of course also the gateway to new markets for Facebook, as discussed previously (see Section 6.1.1.3).

Furthermore, Facebook presents its SNS as playing a role in language learning, that Facebook in Latin: ‘may be just what’s needed to narrow the distance between themselves [students of Latin] and the venerable language’ (Linder, 2009). In the case of Latin, it notes that students read classical texts like Caesar and Virgil, readings described as ‘having an air of detachment about them’, as opposed to taking part in group conversations or engaging with newer media forms as ‘living languages’ students do (ibid.). Facebook espouses learning by using a language as being better than
studying the grammar: ‘recognizing verb stems and identifying vocabulary roots just somehow aren’t quite the same as ordering off a menu or asking for directions’ (ibid.). Having Latin, or indeed, Irish or other minority languages, on Facebook will give it symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1994; 2001) in the eyes of its language learners, making it more relevant to the everyday modern world, motivating them to learn it and in Facebook’s view, making it easier to learn.

6.1.2 Multilingualism

Facebook do not use the terms multilingual or multilingualism in its publications or website when discussing the Translations app, instead using the terms internationalisation and localisation to refer to the translation of the website into many languages. Facebook writes that it developed the app in response to users’ desire for the site in ‘multiple languages’ (Wong, 2008) and describe itself as an ‘international product’ (Facebook, 2009a). Also, at no time do Facebook refer to users being bi- or multi-lingual, instead asking users if they ‘know multiple languages’ on The Facebook Blog (Kwan, 2009a). Only on the Facebook Developer Blog do Facebook discuss its users as being ‘bilingual’ (Rush, 2008). In terms of practices on the website, Facebook do provide for bi- or multi-lingual users. Ellis (2009a) mentions that multilingual Facebook users have several ‘models’ and users can have their name on their Profile in multiple languages (Huang, 2009). Also, in December 2010 Facebook changed the layout and design of the user’s Profile (see Appendix 1); it now includes a language section at the top where users can display the languages they speak and their level of proficiency in each.

Facebook also discusses multilingualism in an indirect way as an issue in business, describing translating, internationalising and localising one’s website and content as a ‘problem’ since it can be ‘expensive, time consuming, and complicated’ amongst other issues (Lee, 2009), echoing Kelly-Holmes (2010a). Furthermore, the same blog post announces the Translations app and the app for Facebook Connect (see Appendix 1) as helping to ‘solve’ these issues and as simplifying ‘the process of translating a website... [or] application’ (ibid.). Multilingualism and cultural differences are presented by Facebook as a problem that must be overcome by businesses and new media entities to reach new markets.
6.1.2.1 The Goal of the Translations App

When Facebook discusses the eventual goal of the Translations app, its stated aim is: ‘to eventually translate Facebook into every language in the world’ (Facebook, 2009e) and ‘to support Facebook in the native language of all our users and people who want to use the site’ (Little, 2008a) (see Section 6.2.1.5 for a discussion of Facebook’s idealisation of native speakers and languages). These are comprehensive statements, implying that Facebook is all inclusive, a space for all peoples and all languages. Indeed, an outcome of crowd-sourcing translations in this way is that Facebook is able to offer a large number of crowd-sourced translations of the site/content (Wong, 2010a).

Facebook explicitly expresses its inclusive ideology (as will be discussed in Section 6.1.2.1.1 below), in a number of ways. On The Facebook Blog, writing that ‘Facebook has always been about expanding who could use the site...’ and concludes the post with the sentence ‘... as we continue to make Facebook available to everyone, everywhere, in all languages’ (Vera, 2008). The latter half of this sentence appears to be a Facebook mantra of sorts, repeated throughout its publications, for example: ‘Kate is excited about making Facebook available to everyone, in every language’ (Losse, 2008b) and ‘... make Facebook available to everyone, everywhere, in all languages’ (Vera, 2009).

Facebook do not appear to consider the digital divide, as discussed here in Section 3.3, in this stated goal. Facebook describes its website as ‘grow[ing] in other languages’ (Gleit, 2008), we must remember that every language is ultimately another market with consumers and monetary gain for Facebook (see Section 6.1.1.3 above).

Principle ten of the Facebook Principles is the ‘One World’ principle and this outlines that ‘The Facebook Service should transcend geographic and national boundaries and be available to everyone in the world’ (Facebook, 2012c). In stating this principle, Facebook appears to subscribe to the ideology that languages create boundaries. This notion of Facebook transcending boundaries, specifically the boundaries or barriers language(s) create, is found in Facebook discussions about the Translations app. The Terms Applicable to Translate Facebook outlines that the purpose of the Translations app is to allow: ‘users whose participation is currently limited by language to more fully participate’ (Facebook, 2009f). Here Facebook presents languages as limiting, restricting potential and actual Facebook users from being involved in the Facebook SNS fully. The Translations app is part of how Facebook aspires to ‘reduce the barriers’ so that ‘everyone’ can use its website,
describing the app as another step in the opening up of the website to the wider WWW community (Intruders TV, 2008).

Facebook presents its site as moving beyond language barriers, ‘Facebook around the world’ (Wong, 2008) and being ‘... used in every language across the world’ (Little, 2008a), evocative of Friedman’s (2006) notion of the flat world. These statements of intent illustrate that Facebook constructs its site as having - and the Translations app as opening the site up to - a world-wide audience. Facebook also titles a video about the Translations app ‘Connecting the World’ (Facebook, 2009a). Indeed, the Help element of the Translations app includes a graphic of a map of the world as seen in Figure 6.6:

![Figure 6.6: Translations Application Guide – World Map](image)

A map of the world is also used on the left hand side of the Facebook homepage (Figure 6.7 below), the graphic here also includes dashed curves which appear to connect representations of people/users across the world.
The inclusion of these maps of the world on the SNS and especially on the homepage of the site, demonstrate that Facebook presents itself as a global entity and that it envisions its users as being from around the world. Also, in 2009 Facebook began to use a new logo for the site as seen in Figure 6.8 below.

This logo continues the global theme as the ‘f’ of Facebook is superimposed on the globe, constructing Facebook as a global, worldwide SNS and entity.

Facebook presents the SNS as building a worldwide community despite language barriers, writing that ‘Facebook is bringing people together from cities, towns, and villages that span the globe’ (Losse, 2008b). This quotation evokes Appadurai’s (1996) notion of global cultural flows as Facebook portrays its website as being global and as moving beyond and across national boundaries involving persons and groups.
from around the globe. Twice on the Facebook Developer Blog, Facebook expresses its ideology of global flows, firstly telling developers as individuals they ‘... can connect with anyone or anything you care about, anywhere you choose and now in many different languages’ and secondly, that as developers they can ‘... connect people with one another wherever they are in the world, and wherever they are on the Web’ (Lee, 2009). The use of the terms ‘anywhere’ and ‘wherever’ portray a boundless and borderless world of global flows.

Facebook takes this ideology of its SNS as transcending boundaries and being a global entity with a global audience even further, claiming the site and the Translations app can lead to a barrier-less world. Chamath Palihipitiya, Facebook’s vice president of growth in 2008, explicitly states that Facebook envisions the website as going beyond language barriers: ‘With no language barriers to break through...’ (Facebook, 2008b). The Translations app is perceived of as enabling this move beyond language barriers, with Facebook telling developers it allows them to get their app/website: ‘in front of users, no matter where they live or what language they speak’ (ibid.). Facebook also describes the website as a ‘great equaliser’ as ‘now that its available in so many different languages, no matter who you are, where you are in the world, you can use Facebook to share your message’ (Facebook, 2009a), a place that can break down barriers, linguistic and other, to allow users to communicate. Also, when a Facebook user complains about the Translations app, as he believes it will mean ‘everyone for his own language’ and that Facebook will no longer be a global communication means, Facebook replies stating that is not are ‘not building separations between languages’, it is opening the site up to non-English-speakers and ending with the motto ‘One Facebook, any language’ (Little, 2008b). This response again demonstrates Facebook’s ideology of a world without language barriers, the flat world, but united or, indeed, homogenised through Facebook.

6.1.2.1.1 Inclusivity

As briefly discussed previously, Facebook appears very ‘bottom-up’ and inclusive when it comes to including languages, particularly minority languages in the Translations app. Although the app was first open to larger languages such as Spanish and French, from the outset Facebook stated its intentions as wanting to have the site available to users in their ‘local languages and dialects’ (Facebook, 2008a), which with millions of users involves many languages. Facebook again highlights its inclusion of minority
or smaller languages in the app, writing that: ‘Some of these are languages that millions of people speak across the globe. Others are dialects that specific communities use in select geographical areas’ (Linder, 2009), promoting the SNS as an inclusive website and community. Furthermore, Facebook acknowledges that it does not discriminate or exclude languages on the basis of small speaker numbers, writing that it includes languages in the app ‘no matter how big or small a community speaks a language or dialect’ (Kwan, 2009a). The inclusive ideology even extends to those languages not available via the app, with Facebook telling users that if their language is not yet available it is not because it has decided against it, rather it is because: ‘we’re probably still working on its translation’ (Losse, 2008b).

Facebook do not outline anywhere on the website the criteria it uses or how it decides to include languages in the app and open them for translation. The only mention of this issue is given in a post, from March 2012, on the Facebook Translations Team Page which acknowledged that languages are added ‘at various intervals, due to many considerations (there are many languages all over the world and we simply need time to roll them out)’ (Facebook, 2012f). However, on the website Quora James Leszczenski, who is a Facebook employee involved in the app (cf. Leszczenski, 2009), answers two questions from users on this site on opening up Jamaican Patois and Hawaiian for translation. Here, he gives both queries the same reply, which outlines a number of criteria for including languages in the app:

We open the site for translation in any language in which we think there is a large enough translator community to provide sufficient and continuing support. This is determined based on a number of factors, including the base of people known to be capable of writing the language, the number of speakers worldwide, as well as the number of requests we've received for a particular language. The latter can be submitted at https://www.facebook.com/help/contact/?id=250065385056183

In short, if we receive enough official interest in the language through the channel above, we’d be more than happy to open it for translation. (Leszczenski, 2010a, 2010b)

The link from this quotation redirects to a ‘Your Feedback about the Translations App’ comment form. From this quote we can see that Facebook favours those languages which have large speaker communities, are written languages, and languages Facebook users request to be included, responding to consumer need. It is unclear however what constitutes a ‘large enough translator community’ or how many speakers, written language users, or user requests are needed to be added to the app. A Quora user, who comments on Leszczenski’s post, does not see Jamaican Patois being added to the app in light of these criteria, writing: ‘i.e. never because Patois is not a “written” language’
Facebook presents itself as inclusive in its discourse around the Translations app, but when considering which languages varieties to add to the app and thus open for translation, it has a number of criteria which that language variety must have. However, it must be acknowledged that Facebook users do play a role in which languages are open for translation, through ‘bottom-up’ campaigning, as will be discussed in Section 7.2.3.5. Facebook promotes an explicit, open policy and approach to multilingualism here, however, its practice, as will be discussed below in Section 6.1.2.4, is more restricted.

6.1.2.1.2 Minority and Lesser-Used Languages
Minoritised languages, language varieties, ‘dialects’ (Linder, 2009) and ‘right-to-left languages’ (Haddad, 2009) are all open for translation via the app. As an organisation Facebook again appears ‘bottom-up’ in the ideology underpinning the Translations app, including in relation to minority languages and communities: ‘we’re always looking to add new languages to help even the smallest cultures connect with everyone around them’ (Little, 2008c). Facebook call attention to its inclusion of ‘right-to-left languages’, highlighting the languages imminent arrival or presence across the app on the Translations app homepage ‘... we will be supporting translation for these right-to-left languages: Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, Yiddish and Divehi’ and on The Facebook Blog, with one post dedicated entirely to this topic. In this post Facebook discusses the ‘extra challenges’ ‘right-to-left languages’ bring and the author, an employee with over 20 years experience in localisation, notes that few of the other projects he has worked on have included ‘right-to-left languages’ (Haddad, 2009). Facebook highlights its inclusive language policy in this blog post, drawing attention to its inclusive approach to languages, despite the ‘technical, cultural and linguistic challenges’ ‘right-to-left languages’ bring (ibid.). However, it is interesting to note that by calling attention to its inclusion of ‘right-to-left languages’, Facebook participates in marking these languages as different to the norm, i.e. Western left-to-right languages and calling attention to the norms of communication on the Web.

Facebook notes that from the initial launch of the Translations app in 2008 there was a demand from small or minority language communities, with highly motivated populations, such as the Basque community, for the Translations app to be available in their language(s) (Wong, 2010a). Indeed, Facebook writes that if ‘underrepresented languages’ have motivated enough communities they can produce a
quality translation that can rival the larger language versions (ibid.). Facebook made a conscious decision to include speakers of ‘commonly ignored languages’ for a number of reasons, including to increase the reach of the SNS (Ellis, 2009c: 239), which echoes the previous discussion (see Section 6.1.1.3 above) of how Facebook’s practices are driven by commercial gain. Also, having Facebook available in smaller languages with motivated translation communities, has a symbolic effect, Facebook acknowledges that the inclusion of these languages helped the SNS to gain a ‘loyal following’ from these language communities (Wong, 2010a).

6.1.2.2 Parallel Monolingualism

Facebook can be seen to employ an ideology of parallel monolingualism (Heller, 2007a), as discussed in Section 2.1.17, whereby multilingualism is viewed as multiple, co-existing but bounded languages, in the design of the app. The languages open for translation via the Translations app are separated from each other as each language has its own app where translations and discussions remain distinct from other languages. The users of Facebook may well be bi- or multi-lingual but Facebook structure and promote each language as a separate entity and categorises users accordingly. It is hard to conclude if Facebook translators conformed to this separation of languages or if multilingual users participate in a number of Translations apps as the focus of this study was not on the actions of individual translators but rather on Facebook, the Irish Translations app and its community. However, in August 2011 Facebook altered the settings for how often translators could change the language they were translating from undefined and thus unlimited time wise, to once every 30 days, in the Preferences element (see Appendix 1). Therefore, from then on the design of the app restricted translators who could no longer be a member of a number of communities of translators at one time. Facebook do not allow for bi- or multi-lingual translators who wish to act as translators for a number of languages. Furthermore, Facebook has since also specified that users can only change the language of their account on the site from an undefined number times to once every 30 days. Again, Facebook do not provide for multilingual users competent in and happy to use Facebook in a number of languages, instead asking users to choose one language they want to use/translate for a 30 day period. Through the design of the Translations app and the website, Facebook’s ideology of parallel monolingualism is clear. However, in September 2009 Pirate English was added to the app, with Facebook telling users/translators to ‘Turn ye
Facebook language settings ’onto Pirate fer some fun. Arrr!’. Here we can see a different approach to multilingualism by Facebook where in this case it acknowledges that users have bi- and multi-lingual capabilities and can switch between languages; this Facebook Blog post even encourages users to change their language preference to Pirate English on the site, simply for fun. Facebook continues what Kelly-Holmes (2012) believes more traditional media began, conceiving multilingualism as parallel monolingualisms (Heller, 2007a).

6.1.2.3 Languages (in) Competition

Facebook discusses and categorises languages as being ‘commonly ignored languages’ and ‘more popular languages’ (Ellis, 2009c: 238-9), these descriptions conceptualise languages as if on a popularity scale or in competition with each other. Wardhaugh (1987: vii) believes that language competition is ‘to be expected’ when geographical territories encroach on each other. This offline phenomenon, coming from language spread and/or dominance, is now found online where many languages and their communities are vying for a presence and space on the WWW (cf. Kelly-Holmes, 2006b). This notion of ‘languages in competition’ is further demonstrated by the All Languages Leaderboard element of the Translations app. This compared the progression of some languages through the translation process visually on a bar chart and with an accompanying completion percentage, according to which of the three steps they were in (Figures 6.9 – 6.11). It demonstrates Yuming’s (2003: 2) belief that we are in the era of ‘language competition of the information age’ which he believes developed due to ‘the fast development of new information technology which brings out the digital gap around the world... [which] produces greater inequality among languages and threaten the survival of many’.
### Languages in Step 1: Translate the Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suomi (koe)</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basa Jawa</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongol</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakh</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limburgs</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malagasy fiteny</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marathi</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongol</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantsch</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanskrit</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbek</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xhosa</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmer</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajik</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syriac</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guarani</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quechua</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aymara</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6.9:** All Languages Leaderboard Step 1
### Figure 6.10: All Languages Leaderboard Step 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Español (Venezuela)</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leet Speak</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shqip</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shqip</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>azerbaycan dili</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarussian</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nederlands (Belgie)</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esperanto</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Føroyskt</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ქართული</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>हिन्दी</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaeilge</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lingua letme</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latviešu</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malti</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>नेपाली</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ਪੰਜਾਬੀ</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>தமிழ்</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>العربية</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اردو</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>فارسی</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davvisámegiello</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 6.11: All Languages Leaderboard Step 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Español (Chile)</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Español (Colombia)</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Español (México)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galego - BETA</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norsk (nynorsk) - BETA</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenčina</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosanski</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eesti</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Français (Canada)</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslenska</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lietuvių</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Македонските</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Українська</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>עברית - BETA</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In having the *All Languages Leaderboard* element as part of the app, *Facebook* harnesses the inequality amongst languages online to foster a notion of competition amongst the communities involved in the *Translation* apps. It does so to motivate the *translators* and communities to keep translating and voting via the app, to progress through the three step translation process and ultimately create more markets (Section 6.1.1.3).

How *Facebook* prioritises which languages appear on the homepage of the SNS is evocative of ‘language competition’ and also of de Swaan’s (2001) notion of a ‘world language system’, which he uses to describe the patterns of multilingualism worldwide. In August 2009 the *Facebook* homepage contained links to ten languages, including English (UK) and English (US), Irish, which was there presumably based on the researcher’s IP address as she had used *Facebook* in Irish previously, Spanish, Portuguese (Brazil), French (France), Dutch, Italian, Arabic and Hindi (see Figure 6.12 below). All of these languages, except Irish, can be described either as ‘supercentral’ or ‘central’ (*ibid.*) languages with relatively large language communities. The other languages *Facebook* is available in are relegated to being available by further clicking on the ‘>>’ icon (see Figure 6.12 below), which has the alternative text description of ‘show more languages’, and are then displayed on a popup.

Figure 6.12: Languages Facebook Available In

Clearly we can see that *Facebook*, as *Wikipedia* do in Ensslin’s (2011) study (Section 3.2.14), prioritise the more popular or larger languages on its homepage, this prioritisation or hierarchical approach is driven by the ‘communicative value’ (de Swaan, 2001) of these languages as *Facebook* provides for larger languages with more speakers and thus more potential *Facebook* users first.

**6.1.2.4 How Multilingual is *Facebook***?

With all of the above considerations of *Facebook*’s metalanguage and approach to languages and multilingualism, it is also apt to question and consider how multilingual *Facebook* as a company is. Firstly, as will be discussed further in Section 6.1.2.4.1 next, the *Translations* app is only available in English. However, as languages progress through the translation process the interface of the app is gradually translated into that language, giving the app, and indeed, other aspects of the *Facebook* SNS, a ‘code-
mixed’ appearance, as evidenced in Figure 6.13 below, challenging the parallel monolinguist ideology of Facebook as highlighted above.

Figure 6.13: Overall Translations Page – Code Switching

Although Facebook ran a competition in 2008/09 to find ‘engaging’ apps for French and Spanish speaking Facebook users, to encourage app creation in these languages (Olivan, 2009), in February 2009 the Facebook Developers Wiki (Facebook, 2009g) instructs app developers to use English as the language of their app/content as the Translations app can only translate from English. This has an exclusionary effect, excluding all apps developed in and with content in languages other than English from using the Translations app to internationalise. However, since 2010 developers who use the Facebook Translations app for Facebook Connect (Appendix 1) are able to have the
app/content they register for translation in a language other than English, they can specify the ‘native language’ of the content (Facebook, 2010b).

In August 2011 Facebook began to describe and categorise the languages in which the SNS was available. At this time 111 languages were open for translation, with 76 listed as available in the All Languages section. The Facebook-defined geographical area with the most languages available was Western Europe with 30 languages, followed by Asia-Pacific with 21 languages, Eastern Europe with 13 languages, then Africa and Middle East with eight languages and finally, the Americas with four. These figures illustrate that Facebook is most multilingual in European languages and that the available languages are not evenly distributed in geographical terms (cf. Kelly-Holmes, 2006b).

As the current research progressed, more and more Facebook publications appeared in languages other than English. A number of Facebook Blog posts about the Translations app are written in languages other than English, including Spanish (Losse, 2008b), Arabic and Hebrew (Haddad, 2009) and Canadian French (Lavoie, 2009). However, all of these posts are accompanied by English versions after (Losse, 2008b; Lavoie, 2009) or in-between (Haddad, 2009) the posts in non-English languages. In December 2009 the announcement, including the accompanying images, of the Translator Awards on the overall Translations app Page’s Wall, to all the translators involved in the many Translations apps, was made in five different languages, in the following order: English, Chinese, French, Spanish and German. However, The Facebook Blog, which first announced the Translator Awards the day before these posts on the Translations app Page, is in English only. In 2011 a number of Facebook Videos were available in languages other than English. However, it must be noted in all these cases that the publications were about the Translations app which has a multilingual user base and thus a multilingual audience is expected, while the day to day posts on The Facebook Blog and other Facebook publications are primarily in English.

Comment can also be made on Facebook’s multilingual language use in its publications, in particular when a Facebook publication chooses to code-switch between two languages. The second Facebook Blog post on the Translations app, which discusses the Spanish translation of the site, code-switches between English/Spanish throughout. It does so to build rapport with Spanish speakers and readers, (cf. Huerta-Macías and Quintero, 1992 in the classroom context) the expected audience of the piece. The author of this post identifies and positions himself as a native
‘hispanohablante and ingeniero’ (sic) [native Spanish speaker and engineer] (Vera, 2008) implying that I am one of you, that he is a Spanish speaker like Spanish speaking Facebook users. Two of the Facebook Developer Blog posts code-switch, the first one opening with the Spanish language greeting ‘Hola!’ (Rush, 2008), signalling that Facebook is becoming more international with the launching of the Translations app in February 2008. The second post signs off with a sentence in French accompanied by an English translation for functional purposes, to demonstrate the capabilities of the app to the developer audience:

Cat, de l’équipe Facebook Connect, a traduit cette phrase avec la nouvelle application de traduction.
(Cat, who is on the Facebook Connect team, translated this sentence using the new translations application.) (Lee, 2009)

Initially, communication to Facebook by users was to be in English only; however, as the current study progressed Facebook began to support communication in more languages. In January 2010 translators were able to report bugs with the Translations app to Facebook in six supported languages: English, Spanish, French, German, Japanese and Chinese, all of which can be termed ‘supercentral’ languages, with English being a ‘hypercentral’ language also (de Swaan, 2001). At this time, as the researcher was using Facebook in Irish, the text of the bug reporting form appeared in Irish but a user could not have completed it and expected a reply had they done so in Irish. Facebook also began supporting communication in more languages in other aspects of the site, such as its Help Centre. In July 2010 the Facebook Help Centre was available in 23 languages, including Danish, Polish, Portuguese, Swedish, Norwegian, etc., as illustrated in Figure 6.14. Again, it must be acknowledged that the majority of the languages available here are ‘supercentral’ and ‘central’ languages (de Swaan, 2001).
All of this initially appears positive and Facebook as a company seems truly multilingual, being able to communicate with users in 23 languages. When accessing the Help Centre while using Facebook in Irish the sample question, instructions and other text was in Irish, see Figure 6.15 below, leading the researcher to conclude that the answers to these questions were also available in Irish.
However, when the researcher carried out a search using the sample question in Irish above, although accompanying text had been translated the search results were displayed in other languages (Figure 6.16 below), demonstrating the surface or ‘fake’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2005) nature of Facebook’s multilingualism. Facebook is only multilingual to a point.

Figure 6.16: Help Centre - Answers

Given the many aspects of the Facebook SNS that were examined over the course of this study, it was concluded that Facebook’s multilingual language policy is not consistent throughout the SNS. For example, the Facebook Toolbar is only
available in 18 languages, as of August 2012, all of which were ‘supercentral’ and ‘central’ (de Swaan, 2001) languages: Arabic, Chinese (simple and traditional), Danish, Dutch, German, Spanish (Spain and international), French, Hebrew, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese (Brazilian), Swedish and Turkish (Wong, 2010b). Also, in relation to the Facebook Toolbar, Facebook’s inconsistent language policy is again seen; when it was first launched in multiple languages there were only two Spanish language options: Spanish (Spain) and Spanish (International) (ibid.), contrasting to the Translations app which had a number of varieties of Spanish open for translation at that time.

In October 2012 Facebook announced that ‘there are more than one billion people using Facebook actively each month’ (Zuckerberg, 2012). One cannot help but wonder if Facebook will be available in languages like Walmajarri, Huitotot, Livonian or Inupiaq. For all of its self-proclaimed rhetoric Facebook is a long way from its aspiration, to make it ‘available to everyone, everywhere, in all languages’, just as the ‘multilingual internet’ (cf. Danet and Herring, 2007b) is yet to realise itself as a truly universal network. The language practices and policies of Facebook, and the ideologies underpinning, them are rooted in complex geopolitical realities and historical inequalities.

6.1.2.4.1 English Default

Throughout the Facebook SNS and over the course of this research it became clear that although Facebook was internationalising its website and becoming a more multilingual entity, the default language of Facebook is English. Firstly, the Translations app is only available in English; translations must be made from the original US English. Although unlikely to be a problem for most Irish-speakers, as discussed in Section 2.1.12.1, since there are no monolingual Irish-speakers remaining, this has the effect of excluding any non-English-speakers from being translators and from the translation effort. The English default of the Facebook website is also illustrated by the Translations app for English (US) which does exist but no words are phrases are open for translation, instead it only has a Dashboard, Help, and About sections. The introduction of the Preferences element (Appendix 1) to the app does allow for non-English-speakers, as translators can have the Translations app in a language other than the language which they browse Facebook in. However, this is only viable in the later steps of the translation process when the app itself is translated from the original English. The default US English of
the Facebook SNS is also seen in the instructions given to Facebook Developers about using the Translations app to translate their app/content. Facebook tells developers that ‘Facebook Connect defaults to the en_US (English/United States) locale’ if they do not append the language(s) they want in the script of the workings of the Translations app for Facebook Connect and describe English as the ‘original’ language of the site (Leszczenski, 2009).

English is the working language of Facebook as the Language Specialist ads note that the ideal individual must have the language of the community they are responsible for and English (Facebook, 2009c; 2009d). In August 2010 any job applications to Facebook were to be in English only. However, the Language Specialist ads do note that having languages additional to the two required is ‘desirable’ (ibid.).

The default English of Facebook as a company is also demonstrated by the Facebook terms and conditions documents. These are available in languages other than English, however, if you are using Facebook in a language that these documents are not available in, the page(s) revert to the English version. Furthermore, the Facebook Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, Facebook’s main terms and conditions document, notes that the English language version of this document ‘controls’ if any of the other language versions ‘conflicts with the English version’ (Facebook, 2011a).

The default or original English of the Facebook SNS is also illustrated in more subtle ways throughout the SNS, such as in the alternative text when a user hovers over the list of languages available, although listed in that language and its script, the alternative text is in English, as seen in Figure 6.17 below.

Figure 6.17: Alternative Text in English

Furthermore, the English (US) option, and for a time the English (UK) link, of the Select Your Language popup on the Facebook homepage were highlighted in yellow, see Figure 6.18 below, which sets these languages apart as being different from the other languages available: these are the default language(s) of the SNS.
The All Languages Leaderboard also demonstrates the default English of the Facebook SNS as the languages are listed by name in their own language, e.g. Gaeilge (as in Figure 6.19 below), on the left hand side but also in English on the right hand side.

At the beginning of this study, when communicating with Facebook, even in relation to translation issues, Facebook only wanted communication in English and highlighted this visually by having ‘in English’ in bold font: ‘Please provide additional information in English’. Facebook engages in language management (Spolsky, 2009) through observable efforts to influence the language practices of Facebook users. This is also a further example of how Facebook’s translation project can be considered as another example of Kelly-Holmes’ (2005) ‘fake multilingualism’ as discussed previously in Section 6.1.2.4. Facebook is multilingual in 111 languages, but only on the face of it – or, the case of new media, on the interface of it. Otherwise English is
primarily the working and original language of the SNS. From this we can infer that multilingualism is something of a marketing strategy for Facebook.

The original English of Facebook also causes some translation issues, both for Facebook and for the individual translators/the communities who use the Translations app. Facebook acknowledges some of the difficulties with the app arising from the original English of the SNS (Gleit, 2008). These include adapting the interface to fit translated words that are longer in length than the original English and grammar issues with gender. Facebook users did not have to define their gender on their Profile and this led to issues with attributing activities on the site to him/her in languages other than English. The default English (US) of Facebook adds complications for those using the Translations app as some terms that are not relevant for other languages are open for translation, an example being ‘zip code’ in the Irish context, since there are no zip or postcodes in the Republic of Ireland.

6.2 Policies, Practices and Ideologies: Translation
This section of the chapter will investigate Facebook’s policies and practices around translation and the ideologies around these. Firstly, it considers its approach to the Translations app, including its development, how Facebook discusses this method of translation and translation in general. Next, it looks at how Facebook outlines the role of individual translators in the app and its idealisation of native language(s) and speakers. Then, it examines how Facebook places community at the heart of the Translations app. New media and the ideology of community found in this context and the role of community and the Translations app will be discussed. Finally, how Facebook promotes community through its language use and also the design of the app will be considered.

6.2.1 The Translations Application
Facebook again (see Section 6.1.1) adapts its language use according to the audience of the two blogs when discussing the Translations app. On The Facebook Blog it refers to ‘translation(s)’ 31 times, only mentioning ‘internationalization’ five times over the 11 blog posts. The Facebook Developer Blog posts refer to ‘translation(s)’ eight times, ‘internationalization’ twice, including the title of the post which announces the Translations app as ‘Platform Internationalization’ (Rush, 2008) and another post which discusses ‘localizing’ content (ibid.). ‘Internationalization’ is referred to at least
once on every page on the Facebook Developer Wiki as the title of that section of the wiki is ‘Internationalization’. Here we can see that Facebook uses the terms ‘translation’ and ‘internationalization’, and their variants, to refer to the app and the process it involves. The Facebook Blog posts refer primarily to ‘translation’ as its expected audience may not be familiar with the jargon term ‘internationalization’, however, the Facebook Developer publications use ‘internationalization’ more.

6.2.1.1 Developing the Translations App

Facebook appears ‘bottom-up’ up in the ideology expressed behind developing the app, writing that the Translations app was developed in response to two potential user language problems. First of all, Facebook users may not understand information from their fellow users/Friends in other languages, and this may lead to a reduction in the ‘range of useful connections’ that they could make with other users (Wong et al., 2008). While, secondly Facebook users may not understand the language of the SNS itself (ibid.). Facebook created and developed the app in response to non-English-speaking users and potential users’ needs and not at the bequest of a ‘top-down’ or official language policy. It acknowledged the difficulties faced by non-English-speakers in using the SNS before the app: ‘... if you didn’t speak English it was hard for you to sign up and use the site’ (Facebook, 2009a).

However, it must always be acknowledged that Facebook’s approach to multilingualism, the Translations app, its language policy and practices are driven by commercial reasoning. Ellis (2009c) notes the cost advantages of crowd-sourced translations as a motivation for developing the app. He acknowledges that although it appears Facebook is getting translations for free, that it is only cost effective through having unsupported languages (see Section 6.3.5.3 below), process automation and prioritising text (see Sections 6.3.3.1 and 6.3.3.2 below).

6.2.1.2 Discussing the Translations App

Facebook describes the Translations app as belonging to the area of social natural language processing (Ellis, 2009a) and as amongst ‘other computer-aided translation tools’ (Facebook, 2009c; 2009d). However, when Facebook discusses the Translations app on its website, two other apparent motivations emerge, one which sees the app as building on existing translation methods, and the other which sees it as something completely new, set apart from other methods of internationalisation/translation. In an
interview with a Facebook employee, it is acknowledged that its approach to translation is not new, but has not been done on this scale before given the size of the Facebook SNS (Intruders TV, 2008). While on The Facebook Blog, Wong (2008), although describing its approach as ‘quite non-traditional’, acknowledges its inspiration from other sites such as Reddit: ‘we implemented a Reddit-like voting system’ and Wikipedia: ‘As you may have guessed, we’re pretty big fans of sites like Wikipedia and Reddit’. Furthermore, he notes how Facebook anticipated issues with the app by looking at Wikipedia and its method of crowdsourcing information:

Everyone’s familiar with the possibility of vandalism on Wikipedia, so we wondered if the same might happen on Facebook – that’s why we implemented the voting system (ibid.).

The other opposing point of view on Facebook about the Translations app is that Facebook perceives its method of internationalisation as ‘remarkable’ and distinctive as ‘the site was translated by the Facebook community’ (Vera, 2008). It acknowledges that collaborative efforts like this have been done before but believe that ‘the dynamic nature of the site, and the variety and richness of the content, made this project all the more challenging’ (ibid.). Facebook describes its approach to internationalisation as ‘innovative’ and the Translations app as ‘a unique infrastructure and a dedicated user community to keep our interface up-to-date in translation’ (Ellis, 2009a; 2009c). Furthermore, the Inline Translation feature of the app is discussed as something that is ‘completely new, that hasn’t been done before’ (Facebook, 2009a). Facebook set its translation process apart from others, describing it as an ‘innovative approach’, combining ‘the passion of Facebook users with technologies that are systematic and manageable’ (Facebook, 2008b). Evidence of Facebook’s distinctive approach is also found in its video about the app, with one employee noting that ‘it wasn’t a straight up translation that we could just hand over to someone to translate’ (Facebook, 2009a) and another writing, that the site is so ‘dynamic’ it could not ‘just hire linguists and ask them to translate everything’ (Vera, 2009). Again Facebook is differentiating the Translations app and its method of translation from other translation/internationalisation processes.

From this point of view, Facebook also approaches the Translations app and participating in it, as being part of something very important and making an impact. In The Facebook Blog post announcing the Translator Awards, Facebook thanks and recognise translators’ contributions to the apps and the translated versions of Facebook (Kwan, 2009a). At the end of the post it goes further, telling translators that their
‘contributions are making a big difference’ (ibid.), implying that translators are making a big difference by contributing as they are ‘helping’ people to connect. Furthermore, this is also espoused by a number of employees during a Facebook Video on the Translations app (Facebook, 2009a). Here the Facebook employees describe the app and Facebook as ‘something huge’, believing that they are ‘part of something that’s so much bigger than us, that you can’t really, you can’t really comprehend it’ and that it is ‘almost humbling to work here’ (ibid.). Facebook presents its website and the Translations app as improving communication possibilities for people and having effects beyond the remit of www.facebook.com.

6.2.1.3 Facebook on Translation

Facebook is aware of cultural issues and translating, writing that it aims for ‘idiomatic... culturally appropriate’ translations and realise that some terms are ‘defined differently from culture to culture’ (Losse, 2008b); thus it sees language and culture as having a relationship. However, Facebook do not fully consider the complexities and many issues involved in translation, instead having defined criteria for determining a ‘good’ translation, viewing translations in a good/bad dichotomy and as something which can be judged in these black/white criteria and as a competitive activity. Facebook deem a translation ‘high quality’ based on three criteria:

1. Accurately conveys the original meaning of its source.
2. Does not sound like a translation, but a native phrase or document
3. Results in clear and unambiguous text (Ellis, 2009c: 237).

Facebook do consider the standard of translations that the Translations app and the communities involved are developing. Facebook presents the app as a source of ‘high-quality’ translations (Facebook, 2008b) and that crowd-sourced translation efforts when accompanied by appropriate technology can produce quality translations (Ellis, 2009c). Furthermore, it notes that this was in fact a motivation for developing the app (ibid.). Discussing the first Translations app which was opened in Spanish, Wong (2010a) writes that the translations produced were very good and in some cases had ‘quality superior to professional translation’. In terms of the second trial of the app with the French Translations app, Wong notes that the quality was not as good as the Spanish version initially but that the design of the app solved this issue as the ‘system allowed successive refinements to be submitted by users’ (ibid.). Facebook advocates the view that anyone, not just professional translators, can be a translator and develop
translations for the Facebook SNS. Indeed, it believes that non-professional translators can develop translations superior to the efforts of professionals (see Section 6.2.1.5 also). This approach to translation and attitude towards professional translators is in line with the declining role of and trust in professional authority in contemporary society, which Coupland (2010) notes is a feature of contemporary globalisation.

Comment can also be made on the ideological inferences found in the design of the Translations app. The Inline Reporting mode (Figure 6.20 below) makes reference to ‘bad’ translations.

![Figure 6.20: Inline Reporting](image)

Also, when reporting a translation bug, Facebook again refers to translations as ‘poor’ and also as being ‘hard to correct’ in Figure 6.21, implying that translations can be very wrong.

![Figure 6.21: Report a Translation Bug](image)

Both of these examples illustrate how Facebook presents translations as occurring in a dichotomy of right/wrong. This ideology is also seen on the Facebook Developer Wiki, where references are made to ‘correct translation decisions’ (Facebook, 2010c) or variants of this phrase, three times on the wiki. This is in contrast to other entries on the wiki, where Facebook addresses and considers the nuances involved in translation, acknowledging the many issues bound up in translation processes.

In the Vote element of the Translations app, the design here (see Appendix 1) appears at first glance to be ideologically neutral; in February 2009 when a translator clicked the ‘up’ arrow it became blue in colour. However, by July 2009 when the ‘up’ button was clicked it appeared green. Throughout the research, when clicked, the
‘down’ arrow became red in colour. By designing the voting mechanism in this manner we can comment that Facebook presents ‘up’ as a positive vote aligning it with the colour green which in Western cultures traditionally infers positivity and/or go, and ‘down’ with negativity as it traditionally infers danger and/or stop. This also reinforces the up/down metaphor. Furthermore, in the instructions to translators on the app, Facebook tells them to ‘Assure high quality by voting up good translations and voting down poor translations’. On the new Translations app (see Appendix 1) voting is now via tick √, or X buttons, as in Figure 6.22 below.

**Figure 6.22: Vote**

In designing the app in way, Facebook encourages translators to perceive and vote on translations submitted as correct/right by clicking the tick, or wrong by clicking the X. Facebook constructs translations to be viewed in only two ways, either right/correct or wrong/incorrect. The existence of the Poorly Translated element of the app, as seen in Figure 6.23 below, further adds to this dichotomous judgement of translations.

**Figure 6.23: Poorly Translated**

Judging translations in this dichotomy also makes code-mixed translations and the variety of everyday language practices automatically ‘wrong’ as on Facebook there must only be one way to say something, the words and phrases of the SNS have exact meanings and one permitted translation each. It must be noted however, that this is a standard principle of systems of translation technology like the Translations app and not unique to Facebook alone.

Briefly in January 2012, a number of tabs, including one called Suspicious Translations, were included in the Preferences section that was added at that time, as in Figure 6.24 below.
At this time these tabs did not lead anywhere, redirecting to the Dashboard of the app when selected and the Suspicious Translations element never came into existence and was removed from the app in March 2012. The use of ‘suspicious’ by Facebook when referring to translations, like ‘poorly’ as discussed above, passes judgement on translations that are in this element of the app and marks them as needing further consideration by the community, perhaps influencing how they approach them. The Automatic Approval tab gives us an insight into the workings of the app behind the scenes and how Facebook tries to control the practices/activities of the translators, to protect against ‘vandalism’ (see Section 7.2.3.8.1) and the mixing of different languages.

The inclusion of the Leaderboard element (Figure 6.25 below) in the Translations app also demonstrates Facebook’s ideology around translation. Having this element makes translation a competitive activity with translators ranked on the translations they submit.

Furthermore, in the early days of the app, this element described translations as having won if they are used, again bringing a discourse of competition to translation as discussed previously in Section 6.1.2.3. In May 2009, Facebook removed the ‘winning’ term from the Leaderboard of translators, instead just presenting numbers of words, votes and phrases. The existence of the Vote element also makes this translation process a competitive process, but alludes to democracy as each translator can vote on translations.
6.2.1.4 The Role of the Individual Translator

Facebook refers to the users of the Translations app as translators throughout The Facebook Blog and other publications examined over the course of this research (cf. Facebook, 2008a; Gleit, 2008; Little, 2008a; 2008c; Vera, 2008; Kwan, 2009a; Lavoie, 2009), and also on the Translations app itself, referring to them as translators from the outset: ‘your fellow translators’. This has the effect of assigning them a role and a status within this translation effort; they are placed at the heart of this translation process as the translators. Facebook describes each new user who joins the SNS but is not able to use it in their language as ‘another potentially motivated translator’ (Ellis, 2009c: 236). In referring to the Facebook users involved in the app, in fact all language speakers as ‘translators’, Facebook is again demonstrating its belief that the role of translator is not to be claimed by professional translators alone, that any individual can be a translator on the SNS.

However, Facebook discusses the users of the Translations app on the Facebook Developer Blog differently to The Facebook Blog. Throughout the Facebook Developer Blog, Facebook refers to the users of the app as ‘users’ and not translators: ‘Facebook is available in more than 65 languages, all translated by our users using the Translations application’ (Lee, 2009). Only once in these three blog posts are Facebook users referred to as translators (ibid.). On the Facebook Developers Wiki users of the app are titled both as ‘users’ and translators, with translators referred to 16 times and ‘users’ of the app mentioned 10 times throughout the wiki; while, Ellis (2009c: 238-9) defines translators involved in the app as ‘normal users and contracted professionals’. We can see here that to the Facebook user audience who read The Facebook Blog and other publications, the users of the app are Facebook users/translators, however, when writing documentation for developers which would not typically be read by Facebook users, those involved in the apps are both ‘users’ and translators. Facebook tailors its language use according to the expected audience of the publication, altering its approach towards the role of the app’s users accordingly, claiming the role of ‘translator’ for any individual on The Facebook Blog, but in other technical publications for professional readership hedging its approach as to who is involved in translation.

A number of elements or aspects of the Translations app outline the contribution of the individual translators to the translation effort. Firstly, on the Dashboard of each app, the contribution of each individual translator is outlined to
them as the total number of translations they have submitted are recorded as ‘Translated By you’ (2009), as in Figure 6.26 below, or later as ‘Translations You’ve Submitted’ (2011) in the statistics section.

![Statistics](image)

Figure 6.26: Statistics from Translations Dashboard

The Leaderboard section of the app shows individual Facebook user’s translators’ names and Profile Photos, along with the number of ‘Winning’ words/phrases and ‘Total Votes’ and their numerical ranking, as illustrated in Figure 6.27. In 2009 the translator’s primary Network was also displayed (see Section 7.1.1.1 for a discussion of translators’ Networks).

![6](image)

Figure 6.27: Translations Profile on Leaderboard - Snapshot

These Leaderboards add to the motivation to translate, giving translators symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1994) as their influence and role, and by extension their knowledge and language proficiency, are visible to the other translators.

The My Translations element and in 2011 the My Awards element, gives information to the translator on their activities on the app and an overview of what Awards they have won (Appendix 1). The three levels of awards vary based on the frequency and accuracy of translators’ contributions to translation activities in three categories: ‘Voting Participation... Translations Published... Words Published’ (Kwan, 2009a). Within these the levels of awards are Mayor, Senator and President; Typesetter, Bookbinder and Publisher and Blogger, Journalist and Novelist. As Facebook note: ‘These new awards complement the leaderboard previously in place in the app to publicly spotlight top translators’ (ibid.). The My Translations/My Awards elements of the app highlight the role of the individual in the activities of the app and their impact on the community translation process. The Translator Awards are designed to motivate
the translator to continue translating and voting to collect more awards; also these awards are visible to the other translators of the community which allows the translators to have their contribution and language/translation knowledge and competence recognised. The translators gain symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1994; 2001) from the Translator Awards. The three translator Leaderboards of the app also recognise the contributions of individual translators and demonstrate their contribution and status in the community to the other translators of the language community.

In August 2011 a new section Your Ranking, as seen in Figure 6.28 below, was added to the Leaderboard element; this outlines to translators where they are in the three Leaderboards and what they can do to improve their ranking.

Figure 6.28: Your Ranking

Again, this new section not only demonstrates to translators their impact and place in the community of translators but also, for the first time how they can improve their position and status in the community. Facebook also gives recognition to translators on the Dashboard of each languages app. Here the names and Profile Photos of six random Active Translators are shown and the names and ranking of the top ten translators of the Monthly or other Leaderboard given. On the new Translations app (Appendix 1) the top ten translators of the Weekly Leaderboard are displayed on all pages of the app in addition to the Leaderboard element. These translators gain further recognition in the new app with their weekly contribution visible to all translators throughout the app.

Facebook also recognises the contribution and role the translators play in the app in its publications. On The Facebook Blog they are thanked for their contribution in two posts:

...we would never have accomplished so much so quickly without the help of all of you who have contributed to translating Facebook (Kwan, 2009a)

We could not have made this happen so quickly without the more than 400 Persian speakers who submitted thousands of individual translations of the site. Thanks to everyone who has contributed so far (Kwan, 2009b)

Facebook ‘appreciate the hard work...’ the translators do via the app (ibid.). While in another blog post the thanking of the translators takes on a more personal form, with one Facebook employee passing on her individual gratitude to Latin translators: ‘I’m
grateful to all of the people on Facebook who meticulously translated the site into a “dead” language’ (Linder, 2009). At the end of all of Ellis’ (2009a; 2009b; 2009c) publications on the app discussed here, he acknowledges the work of the Facebook i8n (internationalisation) Team and also the international users/translators of the SNS. Also, a French Canadian translator authors one of The Facebook Blog posts about the app (Lavoie, 2009), stating that in doing so Facebook is demonstrating the importance of the translators to the translation process and to the SNS in general.

The contribution to and impact of individual translators on the translations produced is acknowledged by Facebook. It notes that ‘The leading Spanish translator was responsible for 1,284 of the winning sentences, almost 3 percent of the entire site’ (Facebook, 2008a), and the ‘leading German translator was responsible for more that 1000 of the winning sentences, and over 40 contributors translated 100 sentences or more’ (Facebook, 2008c), while the top French Canadian translator (in April 2009) contributed 56,000 winning words and 8,000 winning translations to that Facebook translation. All of these individual translators contributed hugely to the Translations app they were involved in and these figures demonstrate the influence one translator can have on the translated version of Facebook. Therefore, we can see that an individual’s own language ideologies and practices can have a huge effect on the language policy of the community and on the translation produced, as will be discussed further in Sections 8.4 and 8.5.3.

In a number of publications examined, Facebook states its belief that the Translations app ‘empowers’ its users (cf. Facebook, 2008c). It believes the app ‘empowers them to make the product [Facebook] look and feel the way they want’ (Intruders TV, 2008), allowing users to be a part of Facebook. The app empowers users to have their ‘local languages’ included in this translation effort (Facebook, 2008a). Facebook empowers language speakers to be the best translators, as discussed previously, positioning and telling them that ‘you know best how Facebook should be translated’ on the Dashboard of all the Translations apps. Facebook appears very ‘bottom-up’ in this ideology of empowering its users; it did not have to give or position its users in this role of active contributors/translators to the Facebook SNS. This empowering of individual Facebook users as translators is evocative of Friedman’s (2006) ‘globalisation of the individual’, where the empowered individual is now the driving force of globalisation (see Section 3.3.2). Furthermore, it subscribes to Coupland’s (2010) belief that projects of the self and a focus on the individual are key
features of contemporary globalisation. Technological globalisation is redefining the impact of the individual on many issues and areas, including language policy and language practices, as will be discussed in Chapter 8.

6.2.1.5 Native Language(s) and Speakers
When discussing the Translations app Facebook refers to ‘native’ language(s) and ‘native’ speakers throughout its publications and website. In the press release first announcing the Translations app, Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg states that the ultimate goal is for users to use the site in their ‘native’ language (Facebook, 2008c). Facebook describes the languages in translation as their user’s ‘native’ languages (or in Pirate English a user’s ‘native tongue’ (Little, 2008c)) and to describe languages, writing that Persian as ‘... the native language of Iran’ (Kwan, 2009b). On the Facebook Developer Blog, Facebook points to ‘their [users] native language’ twice (Rush, 2008; Lee, 2009) and on the Facebook Developer Wiki ‘native’ language(s) are mentioned three times (Facebook, 2012d).

Facebook places ‘native’ translations and ‘native’ speakers at the heart of the Translations app as the goal of translation and best translators respectively. The Facebook Blog outlines that native-like translations are the ultimate goal of translation: ‘Quality is very high - as though the site had been written natively in Spanish’ (Wong, 2008). Similarly, the second of Facebook’s criteria for considering if translations are ‘high quality’ outlines that they must: ‘… not sound like a translation, but a native phrase or document’ (Ellis, 2009c: 237). Facebook espouses the idea of native speakers as translators, writing that ‘Now native speakers can use our Translations application to translate Facebook...’ (Little, 2008a). The Facebook Blog positions native speakers, not professional translators, as the source of the best translations:

Have you ever been on a site where they've translated the content into your language but it still sounds horribly awkward? Sometimes I am, and I think to myself, “Wow, why didn‘t they just have a native speaker do a quick review of this stuff?...” We wanted to arrange things so you could do exactly that. (Wong, 2008)

This idealisation, or as Pokorn (2005) terms it the ‘mystification’, of ‘native’ speakers by Facebook demonstrates the ideology that native language speakers and users are the best translators, echoing Phillipson’s (1992) ‘native speaker fallacy’, which promotes the idea that native speakers are the ideal language teachers. The quotation above also demonstrates the ‘... widely accepted hypothesis in linguistics that every native speaker is able to rapidly detect any non-member of his/her linguistic community’ (Pokorn,
The welcome paragraph on the Dashboard of every language’s Translations app tells users that Facebook has: ‘... opened the translation process up to the community because you know best how Facebook should be translated into your language’. The Facebook Developer Blog describes Facebook users as ‘the people who understood Facebook and their languages best’ (Lee, 2009). Wong (2010a) points to the development of the Translations app as arising from engaging with content that although has been professionally translated is not quite right (as previously mentioned above in Wong (2008)) leading Facebook to conclude: ‘... why not build in a mechanism for users to continually suggest and refine translations on Facebook itself?’ (Wong, 2010a). Facebook espouse language speakers as the ‘best connoisseurs of their local culture, language’ (Intruders TV, 2008) and therefore the best translators, essentialising the link between language and culture.

We can also see Facebook’s idealisation of ‘native’ speakers and ‘native’ like language proficiency in the Language Specialist ads. The requirements in the ads state the successful individual must have ‘Native fluency in Italian language and near-native fluency in English’ (Facebook, 2009c; 2009d). Furthermore, authors of a number of Facebook Blog posts position their language capabilities in ‘native’ terms, for example, as a native English speaker (Linder, 2009) and a ‘native right-to-left language speaker myself, having grown up speaking Arabic and studying Farsi and Hebrew, in addition to French, English and German’ (Haddad, 2009). Why do Facebook idealise language speakers as ideal translators and use the terms ‘native’ language(s), ‘native’ speakers, etc., in its website and documents. One possibility is that Facebook conceptualises ‘native’ and actual language speakers as the most ‘authentic’ source of ‘authentic’ translations. This is evocative of Myhill’s (2003: 79) notion of a ‘hierarchy of authenticity’ which conceptualises that ‘some ethnic groups are perceived as generally more “authentic” than others’. Facebook perceives native speakers as a group who are more ‘authentic’ speakers/translation as Facebook presents native speakers as having a claim to ownership over the language they speak and have the ‘right to control their [the language] production’ (Heller, 2010a: 110). In doing so, Facebook also maintains an ideology of community, as will be discussed further next.

### 6.2.2 Creating and Fostering Community

The Translations app can be seen to be based on a type of gift economy, like Wikipedia, where philanthropy is the main motivation for contributing knowledge as opposed to
monetary gain (Gentle, 2009: 101). In this case, the translators as ‘language brokers’ (Blommaert, 1999a) gain ‘symbolic capital’ (Bourdieu, 1994; 2001) via their submitted translations and involvement in the discussions on the Translations app. They are presenting their knowledge of the Irish language for the rest of the community to see, thereby gaining prestige in the community (cf. Section 7.1.3). In the design of the app, Facebook fosters the creation of a community of senior translators, which shall be discussed below. Facebook draws on the ‘gift economy’ to create and foster an ideology of community which benefits the brand commercially. As will be discussed below, the metaphor of community is seen as at the centre of the Internet currently, but let us not forget that the Internet, in particular SNSs, are primarily economically driven businesses. This has led, it could be argued, to a commercialised ‘ideology of community’.

6.2.2.1  New Media and the Ideology of Community

New technologies of every kind, from the automobile, to the telephone, to the Internet have been feared as signalling the end of community, the very concept which the Facebook SNS is founded upon. Television at its inception was believed to be detrimental to community life, the concern being that people would spend more time at home watching it at the expense of engaging in social activity (Putnam, 2000). New media too were initially considered to be the start of the end of community, early research believing they would initiate movement away from people’s informal public life to spending time at home alone, leading ultimately to the collapse of community (Watkins, 2009: 51). This is in fact one of the main differences between ‘traditional’ and new media, as Watkins writes: ‘unlike “old” media, we go online for the sole purpose of connecting with others’ (ibid.: xix).

Facebook has responded to Putnam’s concerns that technology has led to people becoming disconnected from their friends and family. The Facebook Blog post notes that his volume: ‘... was published well before the advent of online social networking, and Facebook aims to reduce that very isolation Putnam laments by facilitating sharing with the people we care the most about’ (Burke, 2010). Watkins (2009: 52) views the Internet as the ‘world’s greatest tool for connecting people to information’, but notes that it is also ‘the world’s greatest tool for connecting people to people’. This is the world of social networking sites and Web 2.0. New media technologies, especially those of Web 2.0, are undoubtedly involved in the creation of
communities, from wikis to blogs to chat rooms to social networking sites, these technologies work on the premise of establishing communities (Cunliffe, 2007).

The creator of another SNS, *MySpace*, Chris De Wolf, believes that the ‘holy grail’ of the Internet is community (in Watkins, 2009: xii). Social networking sites are cashing in on the Internet as the ideal space for connecting people to each other (*ibid.*). Community and networks are fundamental to *Facebook*; at its inception, *Facebook* was based around university *Networks* and expanded to include more universities, then workplaces, and finally any *Networks*, as is now the case. When a user was part of a network on *Facebook*, their *Profile* is visible to the other members of the network, their *Facebook Friends*, thus creating communities.

There are many publications dealing with the creation of online communities for business and economic purposes, such as *The Art of Community* (Bacon, 2009) from which the heading quotation is taken. Another is *Community building on the Web* (Kim, 2000), which is centred on nine design strategies that are believed to characterise successful and sustainable online communities. These nine design strategies are based on perceived characteristics of offline or ‘traditional’ communities. Kim also discusses three basic community design principles to employ when designing for the development of online communities. *Facebook* promotes community formation by the *Share* option throughout the site, which enables users to share photos, *Groups* and apps of interest with their *Facebook Friends* (for discussion of this in relation to the *Translations* app see Section 6.2.2.4).

In their study of Web 2.0, Vossen and Hagermann (2007) describe ‘the community model’, citing its existence as a result of movements such as open-source software development. It consists of ‘a community of developers, users, or both, providing its members with some free product or service and building upon user loyalty, since contributors typically invest quite a bit of their time and skills’ (*ibid.*: 250), similar to a ‘community of practice’ (CoP) (Wenger, 2006) as will be discussed below. In combination with advertisements or subscriptions ‘the community model’ is a business model, gaining a company monetary reward. Vossen and Hagermann (2007) note that the Internet is the place for community business models, as communities formed around a particular topic or purpose are an excellent target audience. It is described as the ‘major model for the future of the Web’, and they believe it may outperform advertising in the medium to long-run as a business model (*ibid.*). They also use the term ‘community manager’ which is interesting to note in light of *Facebook* advertising for
two positions of *Language Specialist* a role which involves responsibility of overseeing *Translations* apps and the communities in the relevant language speciality (Facebook, 2009c; 2009d), in effect a type of language community manager.

6.2.2.2  *Considering Community and the Translations App*

New communication technologies and the new media they bring have caused us to rethink the notion of community (Watkins, 2009). When considering *Facebook’s* ideology of community and the *community of translators* they have created and facilitated and the policies and associated language ideologies, it first had to be decided what type of community was being investigated. Below a number of community types relevant to the *community of translators* shall be discussed. Rheingold (2000: 5) in one of the earliest definitions, views virtual communities as: ‘social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on... public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace’.

Vossen and Hagemann (2007: 59), in more sober form, define Internet communities as ‘groups of people with common interests who interact through the Internet and the Web’. In these definitions Rheingold places human feeling and personal relationships at the centre of online communities, while Vossen and Hagemann see all those interacting online as online communities. Herring (2004) goes further and sets out a number of conditions she believes must be satisfied to term a group of Internet users a community. These include: regular interaction around a shared interest or purpose; the development of social roles, hierarchies and shared norms; a sense of common history; and an awareness of difference from other groups. From a sociolinguistic standpoint Rheingold importantly describes them as ‘computer-mediated social groups’ (Rheingold, 2000: xv). They are communities primarily based on and through language (Herring, 2004); since although the Internet is becoming more multimodal, but, as Herring points out, textual communication is the primary communication/interactional tool online, and will be for the foreseeable future.

Satisfied that the *community of translators* are an online community on the basis of their interactions for the shared purpose of translating *Facebook* to the Irish language, this brings us to the issue of a ‘language community’. A ‘language community’ is defined as ‘a group of people who regard themselves as using the same language’ (Fishman, 1968: 140). Although using different dialects of the Irish language, the *community of translators* can be seen as a ‘language community’, all translating into
the Irish language although with varying approaches to language and translation. Significantly, Facebook considers these users and translators a ‘language community’ and designates this status to them, in a sense bringing them into being by so doing.

What then of the concept of a ‘speech community’ used in sociolinguistic research - is this possible in an online textually based context? Internet discourse is often considered as written or textualised speech. A ‘speech community’ is ‘any group of people who share a set of language practices and beliefs’ (Spolsky, 2004: 9). They are governed by norms and rules of language and have ideologies relating to language practices (ibid.: 14), and we can certainly see this occurring in the Irish Translations app (see Section 7.2). Danet and Herring (2007a) see Internet users as being members of one or more ‘speech communities’, with each member bringing their own linguistic knowledge, values and expectations to the online context. Thus, we can argue that Facebook translators are a type of ‘speech community’.

As with a nation, the members of online communities, and indeed, other communities as discussed here will never know or interact with the majority of the other members, but they all, and we all, know they exist (Anderson, 1993). We know we are one in one billion (Zuckerberg, 2012) each time we log onto Facebook, an ‘imagined community’. The many communities of translators created by the Translations app can be categorised as ‘imagined communities’ on the basis of language. Language, in this case languages, are used to create community membership, and classify and ‘categorize’ (Heller, 2007a) users into the community of the language they are translating. Facebook involves the individual translators in the ‘game of categorization’ (ibid.: 14) in this case the construction of an identity as an Irish language Facebook translator. Anderson sees the spread of a standard language via the media as crucial to the notion of ‘imagined community’; by standardising language practices and norms in Facebook, the users are creating an ‘imagined community’.

Originating in learning theory, a CoP ‘involves groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly’ (Wenger, 2006). Although first applied by Lave and Wenger (1991) to describe how an apprentice learns, CoP theory can be applied to online communities (cf. Johnson, 2001; Ardichvili et al., 2003; Wenger, 2006). As Wenger points out, the Internet and other new media technologies have extended interactions beyond geographically limited ‘traditional’ communities, but do not obliter ate the need for community (Wenger, 2006). Rather they have expanded the possibilities of community
and created new kinds of communities due to the shared practice nature of the Internet (ibid.). The community of translators can be categorised as a ‘community of practice’, working towards the common goal of producing different language versions of Facebook, with ‘senior’ members (Section 7.2.5.1), rules, norms (Sections 7.2.2.1 and 7.2.2.2), opinions (Section 7.2.2) and a space to discuss and negotiate same (Section 7.2.6).

6.2.2.3 The Metalanguage of Community
Throughout the Facebook SNS and all the associated corporate publications, Facebook points to those who use the app as a ‘community’. On the Info page of the Translations app Facebook calls on users to join their community of translators. Those involved in the app of a particular language are titled the ‘community of translators’ (Vera, 2008) or as the ‘Xish community’, such as the ‘Pirate community’ (Little, 2008c). Facebook delineates between the community of translators and the wider group of Facebook SNS users, describing these as ‘the community’ (Vera, 2008). When addressing translators and the community of translators directly, Facebook describes other users involved in the same Translation app as ‘Your Peers...’ and ‘your fellow translators’, fostering a sense of community through their vocabulary and personal pronoun use. Facebook also attempts to foster a sense of community through translators Status Updates on their Profiles, asking translators to tag their updates on the site with Translations tag ‘@translations’.

On the Dashboard of each Translations app, Facebook’s description of how the app works positions the community as reviewers or quality controllers of the translations individuals submit: ‘... their [the translations] quality has been verified by the community’. Facebook credits the community of translators as ‘the most important factor’ in the translation process and credit them as ‘hardworking communities’ (Little, 2008a). It acknowledges that the app would not work without the community involvement: ‘Without them, this process would be much more difficult’ (ibid.) and ‘It is the community, working together with each other through the Translations application we developed, that has made Facebook’s translation possible’ (Losse, 2008c).

6.2.2.4 Community and the Design of the App
A number of aspects of the design, structure and elements of the Translations app promote and foster the development of a community of translators using the app and,
also, a community of ‘senior translators’ within that language community (see also Section 7.2.5.1). The primary function of the homepage, later Dashboard, of the Translations app is to demonstrate the role the community of translators are playing in the translation process. The progress bars and statistics on the Dashboard, as seen in Figure 6.29 below, outline the progress of the language through the three step translation process, clearly illustrating how the community are progressing, what they have done and what they have left to do, together. Facebook displays these statistics ‘as a way of marking progress and keeping participants focused on the tasks at hand’ (DePalma and Kelly, 2011: 287).

Figure 6.29: Translations App Dashboard - Snapshot

The inclusion of the Discussion Board element in the design of the app demonstrates the community, co-operative nature of the app. Here any translator can began a Topic on any issue and post replies on other Topics started by their fellow translators. The interactions of the Irish Translations community on the Discussion Board will be discussed in Section 7.2.

Facebook provides a number of ways for translators to recruit new translators for the Translations app they are involved in. In August 2009 an Invite Friends section was added to the app; this enabled users to select Friends to be invited to add the app to their Profile and thus become a translator. Translators could also
Share the app by posting a link to it on their Wall or emailing their Friends this link by selecting the Share option on the Translations app’s Facebook Page. In May 2011 this Share link was replaced by a Share this App link, which posted a thumbnail of the app’s logo, information on what the app did and a link to it on a user’s Profile Wall, a Group’s Wall, a Friend’s Wall or sent via private message to their Friends. Both of these elements helps translators recruit and raise awareness of the app and the language they are translating. Because of these features, Friends of existing translators can become translators and members of the community themselves; these Friends may speak the same variety or subscribe to the same language ideologies. Thus the Share and Invite Friends elements and the new translators they bring can affect the language policy of the community, as Friends can support each others’ translations. Also, on the overall Translations app Page translators could also see who of their Friends was using the app by going to the Friends Who Have Added This Application Element (2009) or the You and Translations (2011, see Figure 6.30 below) elements of the Page.

Figure 6.30: Translations Page – You and Translations
These features again build a sense of community as they highlight which of a translators’ Friends, the people they know, are involved in the app already.

In August 2011 Facebook divided the menu layout of the Translations app, on the left-hand side in Figure 6.31 below, into three sections titled: My Contributions, Community and Translation App.
In the *My Contributions* section *Facebook* grouped the *Translate*, *Vote* and *Review* elements of the app into a new category entitled *Lend a Hand*. It also added a new element to this section called *My Awards* (see Appendix 1). Both of these changes illustrate the role of individual *translators* involved (as discussed previously in Section 6.2.1.4). The community elements of the app are clearly identifiable as they are grouped together under the new *Community* section which incorporates the *Dashboard*, *Leaderboard* and a new sub-heading, *Guidance*, which includes the *Style* (previously the *Style Guide Wiki*), *Glossary* and *Help* elements. Having the *Guidance* section delineated and titled in this manner adds to the importance of the *Style* and *Glossary* elements, which the ‘senior translators’ of the community use to oversee their peers (as will be discussed below in Section 7.2.5.1). These changes are primarily aesthetic and structural but the titling and grouping allow *Facebook* to highlight the role of the individual and build a sense of community between the *translators* involved.

Through the design of the app *Facebook* creates what the researcher has termed a community of ‘senior translators’ within the *community of translators* (Section 7.2.5.1), which leads to dominant ‘language ideologies’ emerging and ‘language ideological debates’ between competing ‘language brokers’ (Blommaert, 1999a) (cf.
Section 7.2.6). The first element of the Translations app which creates and fosters a community of ‘senior translators’ within the community of that app is the translator Leaderboards. These create a community of ‘senior translators’ as out of the large numbers involved, there were approximately 200-400 translators in the Irish community of translators; over the course of this research, these ‘senior translators’ are in the top ten or top twenty over any given time period. Secondly, there is the Leaderboards and the Style Guide Wiki/Style element. By designing the wiki to be editable by these translators alone, Facebook is facilitating and encouraging the creation of a community of senior translators who oversee the translation effort of the community. Via the Style Guide Wiki these translators can stipulate how they want certain words/phrases translated, how style issues should be resolved, etc. Facebook adds to the importance of the Style Guide Wiki by telling translators on the Dashboard of each app to ‘Use the Style guide for your language’ and in the information Facebook provides on the function and parameters of the Style Guide Wiki when a Translations app is first opened to a language. In these it describes the wiki as ‘a place where style rules decided by the [language] translation community can be codified, so that translators are aware of these rules prior to and during their translation activities’. Facebook encourages the formation of style rules and their codification in explicit written form through these instructions. Furthermore, Facebook adds to the significance of the Style Guide by telling translators they must adhere to the rules outlined here, as illustrated in Figure 6.32, a sample screenshot of the Style Guide Wiki of a recently opened Translations app.

Figure 6.32: Style Guide Wiki

Facebook do encourage all the community to be involved in the formation of the Style Guide Wiki, but those outside of the top 20 of the All Time Leaderboard do not have editing rights and can only contribute ‘by posting their ideas for the style guide to the discussion forum’. Making the Style Guide Wiki editable by the top 20 translators also adds importance and significance to the Leaderboards of the app.
An even more senior role for translators in the community and Translations app of their language is alluded to in Facebook documentation. The Facebook Developer Wiki on the Translations app tells developers they can ‘give specific individuals the ability to manage the translation of your application for you’ (Facebook, 2010d). These can be ordinary Facebook users and these ‘Language Managers’, Facebook’s term, can ‘view, add, and remove translations’ (Facebook, 2010b).

The new Translations app (Appendix 1) has the community aspect of the app as a Facebook Group. Now translators must opt into participating in the Translations app community by clicking on a Participate link on the homepage of the app. This brings them to the Translation Community, as in Figure 6.33 below, and they must then ask to join the group by clicking the Ask to Join Group link as highlighted below. Presumably these requests to join the Translator Community Facebook Group for all the languages involved in the app go to the Facebook Translations Team for approval, as they are the first member of each of these groups. Facebook now decides who can become members of this Facebook Group and, therefore, who can participate in the Group discussions around translation issues.

Figure 6.33: Translator Community for Irish

In this Translator Community For Gaeilge Facebook Group, Figure 6.34, translators can discuss translation issues and now also share photos and documents. Facebook has changed its approach to developing a community via the Translations apps in the new version of the app, and Facebook users must now choose to be a member of that language’s Translations community and to participate in the discussions. This may lead to reduced participation in the community aspects of the app, as translators must now explicitly opt-in to participate in the community after adding the app to their Facebook
Profile, an additional step not required in the old version of the app. Furthermore, in developing a new version of the Translations app and redesigning the community aspect of the app as discussed, Facebook removed the previous discussions of the Irish Translations community (see Section 5.3.5) which could potentially have the effect of de-motivating many of the translators involved as their previous thoughts and agreements were removed without notice.

6.3 The ‘Top-Down’ Translations App
The decisions Facebook makes about language can be seen to represent a mixture of both an explicit and implicit/covert language policy, affecting the language behaviour and practices of the wider users of Facebook and the translators within the Translations app(s). This section investigates the ‘top-down’ Translations App. Firstly, it considers Facebook’s role in the app, its engagement with translators and the communities of translators and also the development of the first Translations community. Then, it discusses the design of the app, including the ‘top-down’ elements and rules/systems of the app, and step four of the translation process. Next, it considers the ‘top-down’ decisions Facebook made over the course of this research and the Facebook i8n/Translations Team. On this the demographics of some team members, the role of professional translators in the app and ‘unsupported’ languages will be outlined. Finally, it considers how ‘top-down’ the Translations app is for content/apps using the app via Facebook Connect and how the developers oversee these apps in a ‘top-down’ manner.

6.3.1 Facebook’s Role in the Translations App
Facebook do not explicitly discuss the ‘top-down’ role it plays in the Translations app. For example, when Facebook outlines the three step translation process on the Dashboard of each language’s app it does not mention the role it plays in the process (see Appendix 1). In the Help element of the app, Facebook’s role in the app is not mentioned; instead the process is outlined as a two step process, involving submitting and voting on translations which are both done by the community: ‘The translation process consists of two steps: submitting translations and voting for translations’ (sic). Furthermore, Facebook tells translators that ‘Your votes will determine which translations are published on Facebook’, again not mentioning its role in the Translations app. Instead Facebook’s ‘top-down’ role and involvement in the Translations app is briefly mentioned but not elaborated on, almost hinted at, on the app
itself and in its publications. Some time after engaging with the app and submitting a translation for voting, see Section 5.1.7, the researcher received notification that this translation had been ‘approved’. Neither on the app nor the accompanying documentation Facebook do not make reference to anyone approving the translations. The use of the term ‘approve’ implies that someone is monitoring/controlling the translations submitted, as the term ‘won’ was not used, which is used in other aspects of the app. It is clear that Facebook approves the translations submitted, either by the design of the app and its rules/systems or by an individual/number of Facebook employees overseeing the app. When a language has completed the three step translation process, Facebook provides brief further instructions for translators and give the community an insight into its ‘top-down’ involvement in the app as demonstrated in Figure 6.34 below.

Figure 6.34: Translations Homepage – Translation Complete

In the section on ‘Use Report Mode’, Facebook writes that translators can report mistakes to Facebook, which implies that Facebook plays a supervisory role or oversees the quality of the translations submitted. It is not explained to the translators when a submitted translation is deemed to have received enough votes or won the process and whether the translation to be used. Facebook’s ‘top-down’ involvement through the design of the app is only briefly acknowledged in a careers video which notes the app has a ‘voting mechanism and reputation system’ (Facebook, 2009a). Only one Facebook Blog post explicitly acknowledges the ‘top-down’ role Facebook assumes in the app, approving and controlling the translations used, writing that: ‘And of course, we don’t publish the translated versions until we do a quick check of the winning translations ourselves’ (Wong, 2008). Facebook did provide more information on the app, how it works and its future plans by linking to Ellis (2009a), but this link was posted on the
overall Translations app Page which many translators did not have to access or perhaps even know existed.

A Facebook employee describes its role as simply to ‘enable the platform and the technology’ and factoring in the votes (Intruders TV, 2008). He continues that it is ‘ultimately the users who decide’ on the translations produced, that the translations used are based on the votes submitted, and that the votes indicate to Facebook that this is what the community deemed the best translation (ibid.). Here the Facebook employee describes the Translations app and the translation process as a democracy (ibid.). Losse (2008c) acknowledges that Facebook provides ‘light editorial support’ to the communities involved. However, she states that this is when the technology, the app, cannot as yet handle these issues and furthermore, that it is Facebook’s ‘goal to develop the technology to the point that the community can adjudicate the translation process entirely on its own’ (ibid.). This statement infers that Facebook aspires to have the Translations app functioning in an entirely ‘bottom-up’ manner, however, the Translations app can never be entirely ‘bottom-up’ given Facebook’s involvement in the process, directly and via the design of the app, as discussed here.

It is interesting to note how Facebook describes its role and the role of translators here, implying that it is a joint effort, and that they are working together for the goal of having Facebook in multiple languages. This is continued on The Facebook Blog where Facebook asks its users for their ‘help’ in translating the SNS into multiple languages: ‘if you’d like to help keep Pirate speak shipshape, visit http://facebook.com/translations and join the other translators’ (Little, 2008c) and ‘you can help as well by using the Translations application’ (Kwan, 2009b). Here Facebook reaches out to users, calling them to action and acknowledging they are needed for Facebook in many languages to be realised. Also, the Bug Reporting and Suggestions? elements of the Translations app, as seen in Figure 6.35 below, again demonstrate the communal effort of the Translations app and the translation process.
Facebook needs the translators’ feedback to improve or fix the app and their translations to translate Facebook. However, in the Help element of the Translations app Facebook writes that the app ‘allows translators all over the world to translate Facebook...’’. Furthermore, in a press release on the Translations app Facebook ‘enable users to participate’ and those who added the app ‘were allowed to submit translations’ (Facebook, 2008a). The use of terms like ‘allow’, ‘permit’ and ‘enable’ implies that Facebook is almost doing the translators involved a favour in opening the app and allows them to participate, an interesting tone to take when receiving translations for free. Referring to the translators’ participation in this way also demonstrates that Facebook presents itself as gatekeeping or overseeing the app in a ‘top-down’ manner; it is in charge of the process and are allowing/facilitating the involvement of the translators and communities of the Translations apps.

6.3.1.1 Engagement with Translators and the Communities of Translators

It can be said that Facebook’s active and explicit engagement with the translators and communities of the Translations app is sporadic. By not engaging with translators, Facebook’s role was unknown to those involved in the Translations app. Throughout this study the researcher had many questions about how the app worked as Facebook did not explicitly state to translators how some aspects, such as the Leaderboards, were worked out. In the first year of this research the percentage of the Irish version completed as outlined on the Dashboard of the app often went backwards with no explanation. Also, when Facebook and the Translations app were ‘hacked’ (as will be discussed in Section 7.2.3.8.1) Facebook did not comment, instead closing the app without explanation. Facebook was also not forthcoming with information when it made changes to the design or workings of the app which affected the app, its individuals and communities. The design and aspects of the Translations app changed a number of times during this research (see Appendix 1), and in the majority of these Facebook did not give notice that it was going to change or provide information about why it changed, etc. When introducing the Translator Awards, Facebook did not provide information on how translators could achieve any of the awards on offer. A few weeks later a Status Update on the overall Translations app informed translators that ‘it only takes 50 good votes’ to get the Mayor Voting Award. However, Facebook did not elaborate on what was deemed as ‘good’ votes or how to achieve the other awards available. Many Facebook users/translators acknowledge their frustration at not
receiving replies from Facebook to their translation/Translations app queries and requests.

In 2008, Facebook staff did seek out user reports of bugs with the app by creating a Topic on the overall Translations app Discussion Board and Facebook did respond to some user/translator issues. At this time a lot of the posts were addressed to the Facebook employee involved on a first name basis and referred to the involvement of other staff/linguists in the app. Facebook was so engaged with the translators involved that personal relationships appeared to have been created, although these could be synthetic. Also, initially there were Suggestions? and Contact the Developer links on the Dashboard of every language’s Translations and the overall Translations app via which translators could offer suggestions and comments on the app, but by May 2011 the Contact Developer link had been removed. When Facebook announced the Translator Awards (Appendix 1), a number of translators commented on this post with further queries, for example, how to achieve the awards available, whether Facebook would be adding new awards, etc. Facebook did respond to one query/comment on the Status Update but no more. However, it does appear that although Facebook do not reply to user/translator comment/feedback, it does still read it and take it into account. When introducing the Translator Awards on The Facebook Blog it acknowledges that Facebook reads and adapts to users, writing that it may add more translator awards ‘depending on the feedback we receive’ (Kwan, 2009a).

Facebook’s engagement with its translators and communities occurs in swings and roundabouts and for example, in October 2011 when Facebook introduced the new Translations app, it engaged with users/translators. At the time, Facebook actively sought translator feedback while building the app:

Try the new Translation App. We are building a new Translation App and we would like to get your feedback on how to make it better.

A link to the new app from the existing Translations app Dashboard was provided. Furthermore, a feedback section was included on the right hand side of the new app, again soliciting feedback from users. With the introduction of this new version of the app, the existence of a Facebook Translations Team was acknowledged (as will be discussed further in Section 6.3.5 below) and Facebook engaged more with the translators of the app, with members of the Facebook Translations Team responding to feedback and queries from translators. Here Facebook is a lot more dialogic in
approach, seeking, encouraging and adapting to the needs of the Translations communities.

6.3.2 Development of the First Translations Community
A data source that gives us insight into the development of the Facebook Translations app is a question on the website Quora answered by Yishan Wong, who was involved in the development and implementation of the Translations app (cf. Wong, 2007; 2008; 2010b; Wong et al., 2008). Here Wong (2010a) gives a view of the initial development of the app and the role Facebook played in the translation of the first languages opened to the Translations app. He notes that Facebook actually ‘seeded’ the community of translators for the Spanish, German and French apps, advertising in Stanford University for international students who spoke these languages (ibid.). Facebook sought these participants for the app for two main reasons: firstly, as international students were more likely to be bilingual and have connections in their home country, which meant more translators for the app of that language and they would spread the word that Facebook would be in their language soon (ibid.). Secondly, Facebook sought out student involvement as it perceived students as being more ‘... inclined to procrastinate their schoolwork in favor of translating Facebook’ (ibid.). By seeding the initial Translations communities involved, Facebook influenced the membership and development of the communities; these language communities therefore did not develop purely from the ‘bottom-up’, but were in fact set up by Facebook.

6.3.3 The Design of the Translations App
Over the course of the current research the Preferences element (see Appendix 1) is the only way translators can change or adjust the design/working of the app. However, those aspects of the Translations app that are adaptable by the user/translator are within parameters that Facebook has set down. Facebook’s design of the app is quite rigorous - it influences translators to translate in a certain way and the design of the app influences both how the communities use it and what they produce. Facebook’s influence and role in the app are both explicit and implicit: it acts as a ‘top-down’ authority in the app overtly, when making translation decisions and implementing changes; and covertly, through the various elements of the app and the rules/systems behind it.
How words/phrases and translations are presented to translators demonstrates the covert ‘top-down’ role Facebook plays in the Translations app and translation process. Firstly, Facebook prioritises which content to present for translation, i.e. which content to have open for translation via the app (DePalma and Kelly, 2011). Secondly, Facebook influences the practices of the communities, the words/phrases they translate and vote on by prioritising the words/phrases that appear in the Translate and Vote elements of the app (Ellis, 2009c). It does so to ensure they are not missed, e.g. the lesser seen sign-up information and automated emails, and are voted on enough to ensure their quality (ibid.). Facebook also moves words/phrases that have enough proposed translations and votes, in its view, to ensure that other words/phrases with less proposed translations and votes are given attention by the community of translators (Wong, 2010a). In the Vote element, the total number of votes, both up and down, which a translation receives is only shown to translators after they vote, which encourages the community to translate, ensuring that translations are not put through without being voted on. This again shows how Facebook is influencing the practices of translators through the design of the app.

With the new version of the Translations app (Appendix 1) translations appear to translators when they are using Facebook, on the right hand side of their browser screen as in Figure 6.36, and not when they have gone to the app. It is the researcher’s belief that this feature was introduced to increase the translations submitted and votes cast for particular terms that Facebook perceives could be missed, as discussed above, to ensure that these terms are given attention by the community and that the quality of the translation produced is high.

Figure 6.36: Translation option While Using Facebook
This new feature influences when translators translate, getting them to translate as they use Facebook without asking or notifying them, something translators could only have
done previously if they had selected to have the *Inline Translation* mode on. Furthermore, it is *Facebook* who decides what translations appear here for translation, voting or review, again impacting the practices of *translators* by having them translate and vote on phrases *Facebook* has selected to display and not words/phrases the *translator* has chosen to translate, vote on or review.

6.3.3.1 The Role of Technology in ‘Top-Down’ Policy

A number of elements in the app are included to influence how *translators* use and translate via the app. Ellis (2009a) considers the *Glossary* element, which he notes was included in the app to ‘ensure consistent vocabulary for frequently occurring (and often critical) terms’, while the *Style Guide* element of the app, although user generated, is there as part of *Facebook*’s efforts to ensure quality translations are produced (Ellis, 2009c). In the new *Translations* app (see Appendix 1) translation and voting are the same as in the previous version, although they are presented differently to *translators*. Now the *Glossary* is not a distinct element of the app, rather it is included in the *Vote* and *Translate* elements underneath the word/phrase to be translated or voted on, as seen in Figure 6.37 below. Indeed, the *translator* is able to click on the *Glossary* term underneath and it then appears in the *Translate* text box.

![Figure 6.37: Translate – New App](image)

This reminds *translators* of the *Glossary* term decided upon previously and was designed in this way by *Facebook* presumably to encourage consistency in translation with the *Glossary* terms as decided previously.
This change in the naming/design of the Poorly Translated to the Needs Review element gave the community of translators and the researcher an insight into Facebook’s role in the translation process. Previously, as the Poorly Translated section, there were no entries in the Irish Translations app, meaning no translator had reported a translation as needing particular consideration by the community. However, in the new Needs Review element there were 327 terms/phrases, three of these were termed ‘reports by users’ and the other 324 as ‘auto-detected errors’. This mention of ‘auto-detected errors’ led the researcher to believe this was Facebook checking up on the translations, which Ellis (2009a) confirmed. Facebook added an auto-detection aspect to the app which checks the translations submitted against the translations agreed in the Glossary. In doing so, Facebook is intervening in the ‘bottom-up’ language policy of the community of translators to report or not to report translations. The community must now review translations that otherwise may not have been questioned or put up for review. Facebook facilitates the use of the Translations app as a ‘bottom-up’ mechanism of language policy but within its parameters and ultimately makes the ‘top-down’ decisions. Furthermore, Ellis also notes that the auto-detection is done ‘before accepting it [the translation]’, which demonstrates that Facebook approves/checks translations before they are used on the website, another ‘top-down’ role of the app.

The existence of the Report a Translations bug element is another aspect of the ‘top-down’ app, as translators cannot deal with certain translation issues and must instead report these to Facebook, as the ‘top-down’ authority, to deal with. Indeed, in the Help element of the app, Facebook notes that ‘translations that are reported may be removed from the voting page’. Facebook here manages the app in a ‘top-down’ manner, having the community come to them with issues and decide what to do, including the possible exclusion of particular translations. Furthermore, when reporting translations, translators must select a reason from a Facebook defined list of eight reasons. Seven of these options are specific translation issues, e.g. ‘Text description missing or unclear... Token value changes depending on context’ and the eighth allows for ‘Other’ issues. Thus Facebook influences why translators report translations to them.

6.3.3.2 Rules/Systems of the App
Ellis’ (2009a; 2009b; 2009c) publications, give an insight into the workings, rules and system, behind the Translations app. These systems ‘facilitate quality and enable
correct translations, requiring minimal effort from translators’ (Ellis, 2009a). Here we can see that Facebook engages in quality control of the translations and translated versions of the SNS and that the role of community translators in the process is perhaps not as great as perceived. Ellis (2009c) discusses two systems Facebook has in the app to ensure ‘correct’ translations: dynamic explosion and phonological rules. The ‘dynamic explosion’ aspect of the design ‘separate[s] translation of a single phrase into variants that depend on features of token value’, such as gender (Ellis, 2009a; 2009c).

This feature does involve the translators of the app as it is based on translator feedback that Facebook splits strings and present voting on translations for each case (ibid.), so it is not an entirely ‘top-down’ system.

The linguistic rules behind the app are there to handle the inflection(s) of variable text(s), for example user’s names (ibid.). Facebook is aware of the differing orthographical or phonological rules of various languages, the design of the app incorporates these rules and then applies these rules automatically when translations are submitted (ibid.). Here Facebook is automatically changing translations submitted if they do not subscribe to the language rules Facebook is using for that language. As will be discussed in Section 7.2.6, there is more than one way to translate a term such as ‘mobile phone’ and there are many issues and points of view bound up in translation. By subscribing to the particular language rules, presumably the official standard, and changing the translations submitted to agree with these, Facebook is acting in a ‘top-down’ manner. Furthermore, Ellis (2009c: 242) believes the absence of this framework would be detrimental to the quality of the translations:

Without this framework for handling dynamic content in a linguistically sound manner, many users would see the site as having worse than a 3-year-old’s comprehension of their language.

It is also interesting to see here the little faith Ellis seems to have in the Facebook translators, emphasising instead the role and importance of the systems and design of the app over their contributions, in contrast to the Facebook publications which position translators at the core of the Translations app (see Section 6.2.1.4).

Ellis (2009c) also acknowledges the existence of in-tool warnings for inconsistent publication and to guard against the submission of identical translations. Indeed, many aspects of the Translations app are automated, including quality assurance which takes place ‘in our tool’ (ibid.: 238). Vera (2009) also gives an insight into the systems behind the Translations app. He notes that extra weight is given to the translations submitted by translators who are perceived to have ‘provided the most
accurate translations’, i.e. the translators whose translations have received the most votes/won (ibid.). Facebook writes that this ‘make[s] it easier for the best work to surface quickly’ (ibid.). This element of the background design of the app affects the translation created as it means that most of the translations used are those submitted by the most successful translators. Thus the app is not as democratic as it first appears, with Facebook again influencing the activities of the communities in a ‘top-down’ way.

6.3.3.3 Step Four of the Translation Process

Facebook acknowledges that it does a ‘quick check’ of the translations that win the translation process, as discussed in Section 6.3.1. This check of the translations appears as stage four of the translation process which is titled ‘Verification by Facebook’, described by Facebook as follows:

We are getting close! Once our staff verified all the translations and tested all the functionalities, this language will be launched

A language enters this stage before it is ‘launched’ and available for use by all Facebook users. The existence of step four of the translation process was never acknowledged by Facebook in any of its publications or material supporting the Translations app. When a language has completed the previous three translation steps, step four then appears on the Dashboard of that language as in Figure 6.38.
Translators

Welcome to Translations in English (Pirate)

We’ve opened the translation process up to the community because you know best how Facebook should be translated into your language. Please participate as much as you like in translating, voting, and discussion with your fellow translators.

Step 1: Translate the Glossary
Discuss, translate and vote to decide translations for core Facebook terms. Voting will help complete this step faster.

Step 2: Translate Facebook
Translate all of Facebook into English (Pirate). Assure high quality by voting up good translations and voting down poor translations.

Step 3: Voting and Verification
Inline voting mode is now available, use it to vote on more translations. Test and confirm that all parts of Facebook work well in English (Pirate). Review and verify important pages, emails, and workflows.

Step 4: Verification by Facebook
We are getting close! Once our staff verified all the translations and tested all the functionalities, this language will be launched.

Figure 6.38: Translation Step 4
Here we can see that although the community has created the translations and gone through the Facebook-defined three step translation process, Facebook acts as a ‘top-down’ reviewer and controller of the translations and translated versions developed by the community. It is Facebook and its staff who ‘verify’ and ‘test’ the translations submitted and choose whether or not they are suitable to be used. It is not definitively known what happens if translation(s) are not deemed suitable to be used during this stage. Presumably, the language would go back a step to step three and the unsuitable translation(s) would be reopened for translation and voting, as occurred in the Irish Translations app when the language went back to step one a number of times (see Section 7.2.3.1) to translate further Glossary terms. Furthermore, in having this stage, Facebook decides when to launch a language and make it available to the rest of the Facebook user base, a ‘top-down’ decision made with no input from the community.
6.3.4 Facebook’s ‘Top-down’ Decisions

Facebook makes a number of decisions about the Translations app in a ‘top-down’ manner, without consulting the communities involved yet impacting on their activities. In December 2010 an English (India) option was included on the list of languages available, however, its Translations app was closed a few weeks later. This also occurred with the Georgian language in September 2009 and Facebook users complained on the overall Translations app Discussion Board but to no avail. Facebook initially decided to include these languages in the Translations app but acted in a ‘top-down’ manner by closing their Translations apps and removing them from the list of available languages. Facebook also made changes to the app in a ‘top-down’ manner, implementing the changes, which affected the community but doing so without any input from the community. For example, in September 2009 Facebook made changes to the Leaderboards of translators which resulted in a new Irish language translator being the number one All Time translator. Finally, Facebook decided to exclude Facebook users from the Translations app if they are new to the SNS, a ‘top-down’ decision, telling them that Facebook

... required users to have joined Facebook for a certain amount of time before they can participate in the Translation Application. Please come back again later.

This is in contrast to the inclusive nature of some Facebook publications, as discussed in Section 6.2.1.1 and 6.1.2.2.2, which encourage all users to join the app and translate Facebook.

Facebook also acted in a ‘top-down’ way when it changed the design and structure of the Translations app in October 2011 (Appendix 1). It did so with some notice, however, it did not tell translators when the ‘old’ or first version of the Translations app would cease to exist. Also, the Discussion Board and Leaderboards of the old app did not carry over to this new version, although the Style Guide and translations submitted did eventually. This had the effect of getting rid of the positions and identities some of the translators built up over the course of the translation effort via the old app. Facebook’s decision to develop and introduce a new app affected the translators and communities involved in a ‘top-down’ manner; they did not have a choice in switching over to the new version of the app; they were required to. This new version of the Translations app has now restarted but the change has led to a change in those involved and who the more senior members of this translation are. In August 2012
the Translator Community for Gaeilge had 30 members, but no figures were available for the total number of translators involved in the app.

It is Facebook who decide when the community of translators have enough of the SNS translated and publish it for use by all Facebook users. This is termed the ‘finalization’ phase of the translation process (Wong, 2010a). Facebook may even decide to publish a translated version before all of the words/phrases have been translated (ibid.). This unfinished version of Facebook displayed to users is termed the ‘translation mode’ and displays words/phrases in English if no translation exists or the top-voted translation of the word/phrase has not been decided. This means that only the least viewable aspects of the SNS are untranslated, 1-2%, and Facebook deems this as ‘acceptable from a user experience perspective’ (ibid.). Facebook is again acting in a ‘top-down’ manner, deciding when a language should be launched, what level of a translation should be completed before launch and how much of the site needs to be translated for use by non-English users.

6.3.5 The Facebook i8n/Translations Team

The internationalisation team is first mentioned in The Facebook Blog when the author, Facebook employee Nico Vera, identifies himself as a member of this team (Vera, 2008). Little (2008a) also acknowledges the existence of the internationalisation team, describing the app as a joint effort: ‘... the internationalization team and its community translators have been busy translating’. Facebook’s involvement and the team behind the app gradually became apparent as the researcher observed the Translations app in real time. In September 2009 a Translation Auto-Approver appeared on the All Time Leaderboard of the Irish app (Figure 6.39).

![Figure 6.39: Leaderboard – Translation Auto-Approver](image-url)
A month later the *Translations Auto-Approver* was joined on the *All Time Leaderboard* by the *i8n Auto Translator*, (Figure 6.40) and both appeared to be *Facebook* translations tools that were being tested.

**Figure 6.40: Leaderboard – i8n Auto Translator**

The *i8n Auto Translator* here linked to a *Facebook Profile*, Figure 6.41, which did not provide any information about it other than it was ‘*Test1*’.

**Figure 6.41: i8n Auto Translator Profile**

Comment can be made on the presence and role of the *Facebook i8n Team* from the ads for two *Language Specialists* (Facebook, 2009c; 2009d) posted on the overall *Translations app Page*. It is interesting that *Facebook* terms these jobs *Language Specialists*, differentiating them from translators and tying language to markets and audiences as they will be ‘involved in ensuring that we deliver a great user experience to our international audience’ (ibid.). The role these *Language Specialists* will assume is ‘top-down’, overseeing the *Translations app*, acting as the ‘company’s representative for the overall quality of the language on our site’ (ibid.). This demonstrates that the *Language Specialist* and not the *community of translators* is responsible for the overall quality of *Facebook* in languages other than English. *Facebook* describes its role as ‘supporting’ the stakeholders involved in the *Translations app*: ‘our community of volunteer translators, vendors, and internal
groups within the community’ (ibid.). However, this ‘supporting’ role appears very ‘top-down’ when Facebook describes how this is carried out by:

reviewing and approving community-supplied translations ... [and] ... maintenance of the glossaries and style guides and performing various translation tasks, especially for highly sensitive content (ibid.).

The Language Specialists will act in a ‘top-down’ manner reviewing the community translations, deciding what translations to approve or not and generally overseeing the app in a ‘top-down’ sense, they have authority over the app they are overseeing. Their presence and ‘support’ will impact on how translations are carried out as they are involved in the Glossary and Style Guide Wiki of languages which influence the community’s translation practices. Furthermore, they and not the community of translators will provide some of the translations used. These descriptions of the role of the Language Specialists also illustrate the impact one individual can have on the language policy of the community of translators, as discussed in Section 6.2.1.4 from the translators’ perspective, and also in a broader sense on a large commercial entity, its multilingual interface and ultimately on how multilingualism develops on the WWW.

The new Translations app (Appendix 1) first introduced community translators to the Facebook Translations Team. This was the first time Facebook overtly presented the team and people working on the app to the translators and communities involved, other than as authors of occasional Facebook Blog posts and only implying its role in the app in some of its publications (cf. Wong, 2008). Now the Facebook Translations Team are an entity with their own Facebook Page (see Figures 6.42 and 6.43 below) which users/translators can Like, and the Facebook Translations Team are a member of each of the new Translations app groups.
The *Info* section of their *Facebook Page* outlines that there is a ‘*Facebook Language Management Team*’ and that they are involved in the *Discussion Boards* of the various *Translations* apps: ‘to communicate and post on the various translations discussion boards’. This illustrates how *Facebook* acts in a ‘top-down’ manner, acting as the authority overseeing all the *Translations* apps and actively engaging in language management of the app.

### 6.3.5.1 Demographics of Team Members

Some basic information on the demographics of members of the *Facebook i8n/Translations Team* was gathered during this study. Over the duration of this
research the Facebook i8n/Translations Team was comprised of engineers, language managers, interns and others (Ellis, 2009a). One member David Ellis is a researcher, both in academia and industry, with a background in computational linguistics (*ibid.*). His research area is natural language processing and he considers the Translations app, its development, design and working in a number of publications (Ellis, 2009a; 2009b; 2009c). Another member of the Facebook Translations Team is from a product marketing background (Intruders TV, 2008). Many of the members blog on The Facebook Blog about the Translations app and present themselves as bi- or multilingual language users (see Section 6.1.2.4). While others such as Wong (2008) and Haddad (2009) acknowledge that they have worked on internationalisation projects before.

6.3.5.2 Professional Translators and the App

A number of posts on The Facebook Blog acknowledge the role professional translators, who are not Facebook staff or members of the Facebook i8n/Translations Team, play in the Translations app and also how they assist the Facebook i8n/Translations Team. DePalma and Kelly (2011: 388) note that commercial language service providers (LSPs) are still responsible for translating more than half of Facebook’s content into supported languages. In the early days of the app, Facebook used professional translators to assist the community translators and for the eventually that the Translations app and the translations produced did not work out as planned:

> to help them [the translators] out, we hired professional translators to provide glossaries, style guides, and other materials to support our community translators. And of course we don’t publish the translated versions until we do a quick check of the winning translations ourselves. We even shipped off all the strings to paid translators to have it done professionally just in case.

(Wong, 2008)

Indeed, Vera (2009) calls the Translations app a ‘hybrid model’, implying that the community translators, professional translators and Facebook all work together on the Translations app.

Wong (2010a) discusses the role professional translators play in the Translations app, outlining that ‘One myth is that Facebook doesn’t use professional translators at all’ whereas he notes that ‘in fact, it does’ throughout the translation process. Facebook uses professional translators to ‘adjudicate’ when translation inconsistencies arise, such as when two or more acceptable translations for a word/phrase have been submitted but one is more consistent or applicable to the
Facebook content, for example photo/picture/image (ibid.). Professional translators are also involved in the finalisation stage of the translation process, they spot check translations for ‘reasonableness’ (ibid.). Also, during this stage, professional translators, especially when no-one in Facebook speaks that language, help the team behind the app to decide when a language is sufficiently translated and can be published (ibid.). As Facebook engages in a ‘rapid-and-often launch schedule’ when it comes to new features of the SNS, Wong notes that professional translators are called in as ‘rapid-response teams’ to translate content that needs to be immediately translated for high-profile fast launch (ibid.). Sometimes this information on new features is commercially sensitive before launched and professional translators are needed to translate it without disclosing it. Finally, professional translators oftentimes translate large paragraphs and pages of text that community translators don’t find worthwhile to translate, an example of which he notes is the Help Centre words/phrases.

6.3.5.3 Unsupported Languages

‘Unsupported’ languages are languages open for translation via the app whose quality is not professionally assured (Ellis, 2009c), i.e. they are not reviewed in a ‘top-down’ manner by the Facebook i18n/Translations Team or professional translators. Wong (2010a) notes that Facebook only has support for approximately 20 major languages, all of which are ‘supercentral’ or ‘central’ (de Swaan, 2001) languages including French, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and German (Ellis, 2009c). The Welsh Translations app was the first ‘unsupported’ language/app Facebook opened for translation, it was chosen, Facebook writes, as it has ‘low visibility and small adoption’ (ibid.: 238). Pirate (English) is another ‘unsupported’ language. DePalma and Kelly (2011) claim that languages designated as ‘beta’ are languages which do not go through step four of the translation process, i.e. they are not reviewed by professional translators before being ‘launched’; they are ‘unsupported’ languages. In July 2009 Irish, along with English (Pirate), Esperanto, Kiswahili and Norsk (nynorsk) to name a few, were designated as beta versions on the Facebook homepage as shown as Figure 6.44 below.
It was not possible to definitely ascertain if Irish is an ‘unsupported’ language from Facebook sources, however, given that most ‘unsupported’ languages in new media crowd-sourced translations efforts such as Google (Vořechovská, 2012) and Twitter (Arend, 2012) are minority or ‘long-tail’ languages, as these entities categorise them, it is probable that the Irish language/app on Facebook is ‘unsupported’. Indeed, Facebook notes that it plans on opening ‘many more [languages] in the long tail’ (Ellis, 2009c) for translation via the app. In these languages/apps the ‘finalization’ process comes down to percentages, in other words, that ‘once a certain percentage of strings have been translated, Facebook publishes it’ (ibid.). The existence of these ‘unsupported’ apps demonstrates that there are varying levels of Facebook involvement and influence in the various Translations app, with some being overseen by the Facebook Translations Team and some not.

6.3.6 The ‘Top-Down’ Facebook Developers

In opening up the Translations app to developers, such as LivingSocial or Tripadvisor via Facebook Connect (see Appendix 1), Facebook acts in a ‘top-down’ manner as developers must come to them to open up or create the Translations app for the developer’s content. Once the app is created, the developer is then the authority in charge of the app; they ‘oversee’ the translation process and the translations generated (Facebook, 2010c). This is a ‘top-down’ role, as they have ‘complete control over every aspect of the translation process’ (Lee, 2009). They decide which language or languages they want their Facebook Connect features or content translated and
presented in (Leszczenski, 2009), they can query, edit and approve the translations submitted (Facebook, 2010b; 2010e) and can even ‘disable the translatability’ of their app (Facebook, 2010d), i.e. stop or remove their contents from the translation process. They can also directly change/alter the translations open for voting; as Facebook terms it they can ‘enable or disable the availability of any existing translations’ (ibid.). Furthermore, the app or content are not published to all Facebook users until the developer decides that the translations submitted are satisfactory (Facebook, 2010b). All of these decisions are taken in a ‘top-down’ manner by the developer behind the app.

Developers firstly decide how the translation is undertaken in one of three ways: they can solicit community translations as Facebook do, translate their content themselves or make a ‘specific person the administrator of the process’ (Lee, 2009). With the Facebook Translations app for Facebook Connect, an individual can contribute the entire translation of the content, either the developer themselves or someone, possibly a translator from the Facebook translation of that language, again illustrating the impact and influence an individual can have in the translation process. Indeed, developers can even decide what level of ‘top-down’ authority they can have over their content being translated, with Facebook offering two levels of administration over the translation process: high-level and low-level. At high-level administration, the developer has complete control ‘at the granularity of an entire language’, while low-level administration allows developers to search for and examine translations submitted (Facebook, 2010d). Facebook Connect and the decisions developers make about languages as part of it can affect the language practices of Facebook users, as Facebook outline:

*When a user first connects to your site, or publishes something back to Facebook, the Facebook Connect content will appear in the language you [the developer] specify (Leszczenski, 2009)*

*Facebook also offer developers some ‘best practices’ advice (Facebook, 2010f) when using Facebook Translations app for Facebook Connect ‘so that the translations are as best they can be’ (Facebook, 2010c). These practices include reusing common text and descriptions, avoiding long pieces of text and not hard coding punctuation, i.e. let the translators include relevant punctuation in their translations to guard against culturally specific punctuation issues (Facebook, 2010f). They also advise developers to avoid translating mark-up as this will allow translators to ‘mess with your markup and the results may not be what you expect’ and to break long paragraphs into a number of smaller paragraphs as this will allow translators to point out any translation*
issues more easily (ibid.). Facebook encourages the developers to present content in a particular way to influence how it is translated, affecting the practices and translations of the translators and community of translators involved.

In conclusion, this chapter considered explicit policy as well as practices, implicit policy and the ideologies underpinning these of the new media company Facebook. Firstly, it examined Facebook’s approach to language and to multilingualism, including how it talks about language(s), its own language use and how multilingual the Facebook SNS is. Secondly, it investigated Facebook’s practices and ideology in relation to translation, such as the development of the Translations app, its idealisation of native speakers and how it creates and fosters a notion of community to sustain the Translations apps. Finally, it discussed the ‘top-down’ aspects and elements of the Translations app, interrogating Facebook’s role in the Translations app, the purpose of the various elements of the app and the Facebook i18n/Translations Team working behind the scenes on the app. Having looked at the ‘top-down’ language policy and ideology of Facebook, the next chapter will consider the ‘bottom-up’ language policy and underlying ideology of the Irish language Translations app community.
CHAPTER 7
FINDINGS 2
THE IRISH TRANSLATIONS APPLICATION COMMUNITY

Having discussed the language and translation ideologies, practices and policy of Facebook, this chapter will consider the language policies, practices and underlying ideologies of the Irish Translations community. First, it will present some brief demographic information on translators involved, both from the Irish Translations app and other language communities briefly examined. Secondly, the chapter will discuss the practices and ideologies of the Irish language community on the Translations app, grouped under the topics and issues translators discuss. These topics include their practices on the app; their discussions on the Discussion Board grouped thematically, their perceptions of Facebook and the Translations app and also of official language policy efforts. Next, it will outline how some of the translators form a sub-community within the Irish Translations community of ‘senior translators’. Finally, the case of the translation of the term ‘mobile phone’ will be considered. As in the previous chapter data gathered from the Irish Translations app and related information on the translators involved are presented in italic font.

7.1 Demographic Data on Translators

Unlike most other bureaucratic sites or processes of translation the Facebook translators are not experts chosen by a ‘top-down’ authority to oversee a language according to certain parameters; instead they come from many different backgrounds as students, academics, public representatives and, indeed, professional translators, as will be discussed below. They constitute a formal and informal mixture of what Thurlow (2007) calls ‘language workers’; they are ‘ordinary’ users of many ages and backgrounds who contribute to the common goal of having an Irish language version of Facebook. From the offline world they bring a combination of expert and lay knowledge about language and about the language they are translating. They also come with their own histories, priorities and attitudes. Translators are self-appointed in their role; as mentioned above, anyone adding the app to their Profile becomes a translator. No experience or qualifications are required and no one is vetted based on any grounds; linguistic competence in the language is not tested or queried. Only in the debates of the Discussion Board are translations and individual votes questioned, and this is done by other self-appointed translators.
In user-led creative contexts, such as the Facebook Translations app, the ‘collected, collective intelligence of all participants’ is harnessed to make an impact (Bruns, 2008: 1), as Jenkins (2006) outlines in his notion of convergence culture (Section 3.2.14.1). To consider this redefined, active role of individual media users and audience members in media production, de Kerckhove (1995) and Bruns (2008) use the term ‘produsers’. De Kerckhove (1995: 59), at his time of writing, believes the possibilities of the Internet point to the advent of the consumer as producer or “produser”: ‘ordinary people, even “couch potatoes” will have to contribute to content themselves… interactivity will turn many info-consumers into info-providers and create a flurry of special interest markets and attendant transnational communities’. Brun (2008), writing 13 years later, finds that this predication has come true and he defines ‘produsers’ as users who are also ‘producers of the shared knowledge base, regardless of whether they are aware of this role’ (ibid.: 2).

The translators involved in the Facebook Translations apps can also be described as ‘produsers’, producing a shared knowledge base while and by translating Facebook into many languages. Bruns uses this term as he believes the term production is no longer appropriate to describe the ‘creative, collaborative, and ad hoc engagement with content for user-led spaces such as the Wikipedia’ (ibid.: 1). Furthermore, he does not think concepts of ‘user-led production,’ ‘commons-based peer production’ or other adjective/qualifiers attached to ‘production’ are appropriate; his issue is with ‘the very noun itself’ (ibid.: 2). Bruns points to his concept of ‘produsage’ to overcome these technological issues:

... it highlights that within the communities which engage in the collaborative creation and extension of information and knowledge… the role of “consumer” and even that of “end user” have disappeared, and the distinctions between producers and users of content have faded into comparative insignificance (ibid.):

Bruns believes that communities of ‘produsers’ operate without an ‘all-controlling, coordinating hierarchy – operate along lines which are fluid, flexible, hierarchical, and organised ad hoc as required by the ongoing process of development’ (ibid.: 1). As is the case with the Irish Translations community, they are self-regulating, with hierarchies emerging and with members of the community positioning themselves as more ‘senior translators’, as will be discussed (Section 7.2.5.1). However, Facebook do oversee the activities of translators to a certain extent and do influence the translation produced, as will be outlined below (Section 6.3). Also, Bruns warns that ‘the continuing tendency towards harvesting the outputs of produsage communities for
commercial gain…will serve to fundamentally undermine participant enthusiasm for taking place in produsage projects’ (ibid.: 6). This opposition to aiding entities seeking commercial gain through ‘produser’-driven efforts is illustrated by some Facebook users, as will be discussed in Section 7.2.3.7.

The members of Irish mediascape have their own thoughts as to who is involved in the Translations app, with the e-zine of the statutory Irish language organisation Foras na Gaeilge (Gaelpost, 2009) describing those involved as ‘ordinary internet users’, while Coyle (2009), writing in a national newspaper, describes the translators as ‘... Irish language enthusiasts’. This section will give an overview of the demographics of some the translators involved in the Translations app, in particular the top ten Irish translators from July 2009, the countries the Irish translators are from/resident in, the Irish translators’ language practices and involvement in language activism. It also considers how the Irish translators position themselves as Irish language speakers and some translators’, Irish and others, motivations for participating in the app.

7.1.1 Sample Translator Profiles
Data on the top ten Irish language translator’s demographics and their sociolinguistic backgrounds were gathered in July 2009 from the publicly viewable information on their Facebook Profiles. This information is self reported and Facebook users choose what and how much to display on their Profile. The data already collected were examined and the researcher concluded that the same 10-15 individuals took up the top ten places in the Leaderboard and were among the most prolific contributors to the debates on the Discussion Board, therefore, the top ten translators from the Leaderboard on the 2nd of July were chosen as the sample for profiling. Throughout this ethnography the Leaderboards and Discussion Board of the Irish language app have been dominated by male translators and at the time of this sampling, nine of the top ten translators were men. The Facebook Profiles of the top-ten translators were examined, these ranged in public accessibility from entirely public, showing all Profile content, to being entirely private, to showing only their name and not linking from the Leaderboard to their Profile.

Translator A is a male university student at Dublin University TCD (Trinity College Dublin), expecting to graduate in 2012 and a member of the Ireland Regional Network. Translator B is also a male TCD student, expecting to graduate in 2009 (at the
time of data collection), member of the Ireland Regional Network and was 22 years of age in 2009. He gives Dublin as his Hometown and is a fan of Leinster rugby, which is one of the four Irish provincial teams. This translator posted on his Profile Wall in English and Irish and his Friends replied and posted also in English and Irish. In the Notes element of his Profile, this translator posts information about his offline activities including An Cumann Gaelach, the Irish language society of TCD, their meetings, activities and involvement in Seachtain na Gaeilge 2009. Translator C, also a male, has an American background or is based in USA at this time, being a graduate of MIT and is also a member of the St. Louis Teaching Staff Network. Translator D is a male member of the Ireland Regional Network, while Translator E is a male with an American background, being a graduate of Syracuse in 2007 and a member of the Orange County, CA Network. At that time Translator E was a postgraduate student at Oxford University. Translator F is the only female in the top ten at this time and is a secondary school student in Dublin, appearing to be in her third year of second level education, approx 14-16 years of age.

Translator G is a male graduate of DCU (Dublin City University) and of the Linz University in Austria. He is also a member of corporate Networks for IBM and BMW and also has a background or is currently based abroad, being a member of the Germany Regional Network. Translator H is a male graduate of UCC (University College Cork) in 2007, his third level educational background being in mathematics and finance. At this time he was 26 years of age and a member of two Networks, the Ireland Regional Network and the Halifax corporate Network. He lists Dublin as his Hometown, however, in his Profile photo he is wearing a Munster jersey and the tagline of his Profile is ‘Irish by birth, Munster by the grace of God’ (Extract 7.1). This leads the researcher to conclude he is perhaps based in Dublin currently but is originally from the Munster province of Ireland. He describes his political views as ‘liberal’ and his religious views as ‘Christian - Catholic’ (Extract 7.2). Translator I is a male who’s Profile could not be accessed and Translator J is a male graduate of UCD (University College Dublin) in 2008. He has spent some time in Spain, being a member of the International College Spain Network.

It was also interesting to note that seven of the translators’ names were in English, with three translator’s names in Irish. The translators with Irish language names could be native speakers or also non-native/learners who have made the choice to identify themselves as Irish language speakers by using the Irish version of their name.
None of the **translators** sampled above identified as being from or living in any of the *Gaeltacht* regions in the Republic of Ireland. The gender, geographical and educational spread of these Irish **translators** is summarised in Table 7.1 below. This illustrates the dominance of male, university educated individuals in the Irish **Translations** app community. This is in contrast to the dominance of female users in the Irish context, as discussed in Appendix 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Language of Name</th>
<th>Membership of Networks</th>
<th>Hometown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translator A</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>TCD 2012 Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator B</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>TCD 2009</td>
<td>Dublin, Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator C</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>MIT Graduate St. Louis Teaching Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator D</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator E</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Postgraduate Oxford University Syracuse Graduate 2007 Orange County, CA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator F</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Mount Temple Comprehensive School 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator G</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Germany IBM Graduate DCU 2006 Graduate University Linz 2005 BMW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator H</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Graduate UCC 2006 Ireland Hallifax</td>
<td>Dublin, Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator I</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>International College Spain UCD Ireland 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1: Gender, Geographical and Educational Spread of Translators

In January 2009 the number one Irish language **translator** in the *All Time Leaderboard* at that time and Translator A above, Gabriel Beecham, was interviewed on national radio station *RTÉ Radio One* (Beecham, 2009) and in a national Sunday newspaper *The Sunday Times* (Coyle, 2009). Throughout these interviews we gain an insight into Translator A’s demographical background. He is a male second year medical student in TCD and therefore, is presumably in his late teens/early 20s.
(Beecham, 2009) at this time. He also describes himself as ‘an advocate of minority languages’ (Coyle, 2009).

In August 2009 further demographic information on the top ten translators, as above, was gathered by carrying out a search of their names on the WWW via Google. These data are included here as this information was publicly accessible via Google at that time and in the case of Translator H, the link to his webpage was included on his Facebook Profile. It was not possible to gather information on Translator E or Translator I as two celebrities had the same names as these translators. Translator A is a contributor to the Irish language version of Wikipedia, Vicipéid and his profile on this site says ‘hello’ in 11 languages, the first being ‘haigh’ a modern way of saying ‘hello’ in Irish and the third the more traditional Irish ‘hello’ form of ‘Dia duit’. Translator B is a member of another SNS popular in Ireland at that time Bebo, a user of Windows Live, where he lists his address in Irish ‘Cill Iníon Léinín, Co Átha Cliath’ (Extract 7.3) and an active Twitter user. Of the 20 tweets in total on his Twitter page, six are in Irish. He is also involved in the translation of getmiro.com into Irish. Translator C is an academic at Saint Louis University. He is involved in, presents and publishes widely on the area of natural language processing, including a number of presentations/papers on the Irish language, machine translation, corpus linguistics and other related topics. He has also developed and maintains ‘a number of open source software packages in support of minority languages and other languages with limited computational resources’ (Extract 7.4), including a number of ‘human translation’ programmes including GNU/Linux, OpenOffice.org, Mozilla and KDE, all of which involve their translation into Irish. He is also a contributor to the Irish language version of Wikipedia, Vicipéid, with his profile page here noting that ‘I’m mainly contributing to the Irish language Wikipedia (Vicipéid)...’ (Extract 7.5) and outlining his language proficiencies as firstly, a native English speaker, then ‘léibhéal meánach’ [medium level] in Irish, an elementary ‘niveau élémentaire’ level of French and ‘labhairt bunaiteach’ [basic level] Scots Gaelic. This profile also outlines that he has a website (as discussed previously), is a mathematician, academic, attends/attended MIT, a track runner, plays ultimate (an online game), contributes using GNU/Linux and Vim, and is an expert C++ and Perl programmer.

Translator D is running for election for the Irish Green Party. His profile on the party website lists his address in Irish as ‘Baile an Phiarsaigh, Dun Boinne, Co na Mí’ and describes him as ‘a native of Dunboyne’ (Extract 7.6). Furthermore, it notes
that he attended a *Gaelscoil* (Irish medium school) in Dublin, studied Irish and History at NUI Maynooth and currently works as a freelance Irish translator. It also lists his seven year service to the *Green Party* and his stance on a number of local/Irish issues. An article in the local newspaper *The Meath Chronicle* also contains of profile of Translator D which notes that he is the ‘chairperson of the establishing committee of Ratoath Gaelscoil, which plans to open its doors in 2010’ and that he believes in ‘fostering education through the Irish language’ (Extract 7.7). Translator F is an active *Twitter* user, her biography here is in Irish and lists her location as Dublin. Of the 20 tweets visible on her page, one tweet is in Irish and another is in French and she is campaigning to be ‘Miss Twitter Ireland’ in August 2009. She also has a blog, which is entirely in Irish and as she notes in one post, was the fourth top *Wordpress* blog on the 30th of July 2009.

Translator G is a member of professional SNS *LinkedIn*, his profile on this states that he is a software engineer at BMW in Munich, Germany. His previous experience includes posts at IBM, as a software developer and intern and he attended DCU where he did a BSc in Computer Applications, Software Engineering. He lists his interests as snowboarding and sailing and links to his blog and *Flickr* account. His *Twitter* page contains 12 tweets, one of which contains a three word Irish phrase, where it appears to be providing a translation for ‘swine flu’ to two contacts on *Twitter*. He has a blog, and the latest post, at that time, considers the Irish language version of a banking form which he describes as ‘... resembled more the level of Irish of the average 8-year-old’ (Extract 7.8). The third post of this blog also discusses the Irish language. This post reproduces a letter to the editor of the Irish national newspaper *The Irish Times* in February 2009 in response to a previous letter by an Irish teacher who described the Irish language as dead. In this letter he disagrees with their assertion that Irish language funding must be stopped. On his *xing.com* profile, another professional SNS, Translator G outlines his language proficiency, listing English as his first language, that he is fluent in German, has a ‘good knowledge’ (Extract 7.9) of French and Spanish, and also has Irish. His level of proficiency in Irish is not outlined; however, this could be due to the design of the *xing.com* website.

No information could be gathered on Translator H other than a ‘no-nonsense guides’ website. Furthermore, the link to his homepage as outlined on his *Facebook Profile* did not work as the website did not exist. Translator I appears to be an avid chess player with a profile on an online chess game website. This outlines that he is 27,
his city is London, UK but his country is Ireland. This profile also outlines his strong religious beliefs and that the first part of his surname ‘is an old Gaelic word for “love”’ (Extract 7.10). He concludes this profile with a trilingual saying: ‘**OMNIA VINCIT AMOR... Beir bua, le Grá, go deo... Love Conquers All**’ (Extract 7.11). He also has a **Blogger** profile, which describes his location as London, United Kingdom and has two blogs, neither of which discuss the Irish language. Finally, Translator I was involved in **An Cumann Gaelach**, the Irish language society of Irish university UCD, where he was the **reachtaire**, the administrator of the society.

**Facebook Groups** can also be a **translator**, use the app and feature on its **Leaderboards**. In April 2009, history society **Cumann Staire** and Irish language magazine **An Timire** both appeared on the Irish **All Time Leaderboard** at numbers 89 and 259 respectively. **An Timire** also contributed to the **Discussion Board** as did **Tomhaltoirí Gaeilge** an Irish language organisation, which lobbies on behalf of consumers (Cumann na dTomhaltóirí Gaeilge, 2012), and the Irish language online magazine **Nós**. Thus it can be noted that a language group or organisation can play a role in the community and influence the language policy and ultimately the translation created.

**7.1.1.1 Language and Nation**

The **Networks** which the **translators** are members of give a further insight into the individuals who comprise the Irish **Translations** community; they give an idea of their ages, where **translators** are originally from and where they are currently resident. Two **translators** were members of the Northern Ireland **Network**, two were members of the London city **Network** and a further five each were members of the Bristol city **Network**, the Wales, Germany, Finland and Switzerland country networks respectively. This illustrates the number of internationally based members which the Irish **Translations** community had at this time. A further seven **translators** were members of **Networks** from the USA including: Nassau County, NY, Springfield, MA, Providence, RI, Shenandoah County, VA, Central Jersey, NJ, Phoenix, AZ and Wilmington, NC.

In total 21 **translators** were members of Irish and international university **Networks** including five from TCD, four from NUI Galway, three from UCD, and one each from NUI Maynooth and UCC. International universities included QUB (Queens University Belfast), Aberystwyth (Wales), Oxford (United Kingdom) and American university’s MIT, Notre Dame and Beloit, a liberal arts college in Wisconsin. From this
we can infer that they were students or graduates of these universities in their late teens to perhaps late twenties. Six translators were members of secondary school Networks including schools in the Dublin, Galway and Limerick regions of Ireland, in Derry in Northern Ireland, and an international second level school in Spain, again inferring that they were current students of these schools and therefore between the ages of 12-19. Furthermore, a number of translators comment in their posts on the Discussion Board above where they are from. Translator 62 identifies as being from Gaoth Dobhair, a Gaeltacht area in the Donegal region of Ireland, when discussing translation issues, and notes his preference for translations from the Donegal dialect of Irish. Translator 125 is an international translator, introducing herself as being from Long Island in New York and Translator 75 identifies himself as being Welsh.

Seven of the top ten Irish translators in July 2009 had an Irish background or were based in Ireland judging by their membership of Facebook Networks. However, two of the translators had American backgrounds and appeared to be currently based in USA and the UK, not appearing to have any ties to Ireland through their membership of Facebook Networks. Some of the translators with an Irish background appeared to be based abroad at this time, for example in Germany, but were still contributing frequently to the Irish Translations app. The majority of the top ten translators lived in Ireland but there were also translators based outside of the country and possibly non-Irish national translators involved in the app.

7.1.1.2 Language Practices and Activism

Of the top ten Irish translators in July 2009, only Translator B’s Profile, including his Wall, Notes and other elements, was fully publicly accessible. His Profile was examined to ascertain his and his Friends language practices. The language use ranged from monolingual English only to monolingual Irish and bilingual Irish/English. Translator B used Irish language tags such as #gael and #gaeilge to identify the content as about or in the Irish language, in his Facebook Status Updates and referenced his Twitter account where he also used these Irish language tags. Translator B appears to be involved in Irish language activities and activism in the offline context, as Irish language events such as Seachtain na Gaeilge (Irish language week) and Irish language websites such as cumann.ie are mentioned on his Wall. He also appears to be greatly involved in the TCD Irish language society An Cumann Gaelach as his Notes section contained information on their activities, all of which are written in Irish only.
Comment can also be made on some of the Irish language translators’ involvement in Irish language activities and activism in the offline context given their choice of Profile Photo, which we can see in Figure 7.1 which is a screenshot of the Monthly Leaderboard from February 2010.

Two translators have replaced their Profile Photos with a ‘No Béarla’ (No English) logo. This logo represents a campaign as part of the 2009 and 2010 Seachtain na Gaeilge (Irish language week) which encouraged fluent Irish-speakers to ‘speak exclusively through Irish for the entire week, while Thursday 11\textsuperscript{th} [of February 2010] will be the designated “No Béarla” day for everyone else’ (The University Observer, 2010). This campaign was particularly popular in a number of Irish universities, with UCD reporting that in 2010 ‘a thousand students abstained from speaking English, committing to speaking only Irish on campus’ (Ni Mhuiri, 2011). Also, as will be discussed below, see Section 7.2.3.5, individual translators in the Irish community post advertisements for offline Irish language activities on the Discussion Board of the app, Translator 151 is even a DJ at one of these events, demonstrating their involvement in and support for offline Irish language activities and activism. Furthermore, another Irish translator writes on the Discussion Board how she wishes to use Facebook, as a ‘bottom-up’ mechanism of language policy (Shohamy, 2006), to encourage others to use Irish, by posting on their Friends Walls in Irish. This translator is involved in new media language activism.

During the radio interview, as mentioned earlier, Translator A acknowledges his involvement in other translation efforts in new media contexts, noting that he is interested in ‘translating things online’ (Beecham, 2009). Also, as outlined
above, three of the translators are involved in creating or translating other online content into Irish and in developing open source software programmes to support minority languages online. Furthermore, as will be discussed below in Section 7.2.3.5, some of the Irish translators appear to be involved in the translation/creation of the Irish Wikipedia, Vicipéid. We can see here the existence of an Irish language community online and a community of Irish language translators, willing to translate new media content/domains into Irish, implementing/acting as agents of a ‘bottom-up’ language policy.

### 7.1.2 How Translators Position Themselves as Irish Language Speakers

The first question the top Irish translator in January 2009 Translator A was asked during his radio interview is ‘are you a Gaeilgeoir?’ [are you an Irish speaker?] (Beecham, 2009). As Atkinson and Kelly-Holmes (2011: 253) write this ‘literally means “(fluent) speaker of Irish” but in practice often has connotations of being an Irish language enthusiast’. Translator A positions himself as a Gaeilgeoir albeit somewhat reluctantly saying, ‘I suppose I would be a Gaeilgeoir yes…’, but qualifies this immediately by continuing ‘…I’m not a native speaker’, explaining his interest in the Irish language as something he ‘took to’ after the first set of state exams in second level school, so at age 15-16 approximately (Beecham, 2009). It is also interesting that during the interview, the interviewer, Ryan Tubridy, positions his Irish language capability: ‘…somebody who who wouldn’t be great at the Irish…’ (ibid.) (cf. Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson, 2007a)

During the course of the debates on the Discussion Board a number of translators position themselves as Irish language speakers, having a range of different language levels and capabilities. On the Discussion Board only one translator, Translator 137 identifies Irish as his first language, he is a ‘fíor gaeilgeoir’ [true Irish speaker] (Extract 7.12), as will be discussed below (Section 7.2.2.4). Translator 5, a Welsh language translator, and Translator 77 identify themselves as having a ‘cúpla focal’ (Extract 7.13) of Irish, which literally translates as just having ‘a few words’, a low level of Irish language competence. A number of Irish translators are language learners. Translator 125 identifies that she is/was a student of Scoil Gaeilge Ghéaróid Toibín [the Gerry Tobin Irish language school] in Long Island, New York (Extract 7.14). Translator 76 identifies himself as a language learner and asks for the community’s patience: ‘Learning the language… so bear with me’ (Extract 7.15).
It is also interesting to note that translators identify as not being a particular type of Irish speaker, in these examples, not a native speaker or not a Gaeilgeoir, as discussed above. Translator 27 identifies herself as not as a fluent speaker: ‘nil gailge liofa agam, agus ni feidir liom litru i gceart fresin, ach is brea liom mo tenga’ (sic) [I’m not a fluent Irish speaker and I’m not able to spell correctly but I love my language] (Extract 7.16). Translator 53 also comments that he is not a native speaker when he is discussing what translation he would use for ‘(name) is now single’:

‘n’headar an úsáidtear an nath cainte sin “Ta se aonarach anois” chun a thaispint gur duine aonair ata ann.
Ta dealramh ar an sceal gur aistriuchain direach on mBearla e, ach ni cainteoir o dhucas me.’
(sic)
[I wonder if the phrase “He is now single” could be used to show it is a person on their own. Apparently that is a direction translation from English, but I’m not a native speaker.] (Extract 7.17)

This translator does not assert this authority in the discussion as he is not a native speaker. Translator 22 describes himself as not a Gaeilgeoir, while Translator 51 describes his Irish as not perfect. When the Irish language is the topic of discussion the ‘language brokers’ (Blommaert, 1999a) involved, often position their Irish language proficiency and capability. In doing so, the translators bring an ideology of language ownership and authenticity (cf. Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson, 2007a) into the debate, tying their authority to speak on language matters with their language proficiency and ownership of Irish. This is contrasting to Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson (2007a) and McCubbin (2010: 461) whose study finds that ‘Members of both Gaelic and non-Gaelic ethnocultures... may claim ownership of Irish and authority to speak on matters of language policy irrespective of their actual language use or, critically, their ethnic identification’.

7.1.3 Translators Motivation(s) for Involvement
The Terms Applicable to Translate Facebook state that participation in the Translations app as a community translator is ‘voluntary’ and without ‘monetary or other compensation’ (Facebook, 2009f). The Translations app can be seen to be based on a type of ‘gift economy’ ideology, where philanthropy is apparently the main motivation for contributing knowledge as opposed to monetary gain (Gentle, 2009: 101), as in the case of collaborative communities involved in wikis like Wikipedia. The Terms Applicable to Translate Facebook outline that the participation of translators in the app is simply ‘for the benefit of the Facebook user community’ (Facebook, 2009f). Via the
Translations app, Facebook fosters the creation of a language community of translators (see Section 6.2.2), and draws on the ‘gift economy’ to create and foster a community, which also of course benefits Facebook commercially.

O’Keeffe (2009: 78) notes the role of ‘national pride’ as motivation to contribute in relation to minority languages on Facebook. The translators are quite passionate about the Irish language and committed to realising the translation. Facebook themselves acknowledges that translators can be motivated by ‘... the impact of their contributions to making the site available to millions who speak their language’ (Facebook, 2008a). Another motivating force is how the translators as ‘language brokers’ gain ‘symbolic capital’ (Bourdieu, 1994) by submitting their translations and their involvement in the discussions on the Translations app. They are presenting their knowledge for the rest of the community to see, thereby gaining prestige in the community due to their knowledge about the language. Another possible motivation for contributing to the app is the love and passion individuals have for the language they speak. Facebook acknowledges this motivation for translating, writing that ‘... Facebook users are incredibly passionate about finding just the right wording to express Facebook in their own language’ (Wong, 2008).

In The Sunday Times article Translator A outlines his belief that: ‘translating Facebook would help to present Irish as a “modern working language”’, and that the Translations app can be a mechanism of language maintenance, as it is a ‘very effective way of generating interest in, and helping to preserve, them’ (Coyle, 2009). The Facebook SNS is significant as Translator A notes ‘it’s hard to find someone nowadays who doesn’t eh use Facebook or or one of these social network sites, eh, and that’s why I really took to the idea of eh helping to translate Facebook into Irish’ (sic) (Beecham, 2009). Furthermore, he is interested in translating the app as this is using ‘the language in a modern way’ (ibid.). In these comments we get an insight into his motivations for participating in the Translations app, he associates the presence of Irish on Facebook with modernity and status as a language relevant to today’s world, a common motivation for minority language activism. Facebook in Irish gives the language symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1994). He also sees new media as playing a role in language maintenance and revitalisation, saying in the radio interview ‘the language come[s] alive’ (Beecham, 2009) on the app. This notion of new media keeping languages alive subscribes to Duchêne and Heller’s (2007) discourses of endangerment, as will be discussed further below (see Section 7.2.2.5). On the Irish Translations app
Discussion Board a Welsh translator demonstrates the particular importance of having Facebook in minority languages such as Welsh and Irish, noting that ‘We have ours in our language and have 741 translator... i would love to see Facebook working in Irish’ (sic) and encouraging the Irish community writing that: ‘We as Welsh back you in every way, Good old friends, Come on...’ (Extract 7.18).

Translator A believes the Translations app and the Discussion Board element of it in particular, shows the passion that people have for Irish: ‘You just have to look at the lively debate on the discussion forum to see the passion that people have for the language’ (Coyle, 2009). However, he does call for more involvement saying: ‘We need more people to get involved. All the translations are user-generated, so it’s up to those interested in the Irish language to contribute’ (ibid.). Facebook itself acknowledges the challenge of keeping users interested, engaged and motivated and in having enough translators available to complete languages, especially in the case of ‘unsupported’ languages (Ellis, 2009c) (see Section 6.3.5.3).

A Facebook Blog post (Lavoie, 2009) by the top French Canadian translator at that time, Jimmy Lavoie, also gives an insight into his motivation to be part of this community translation. He acknowledges that it is ‘hard work’ but states that he was involved as he likes French and is ‘especially proud’ of Canadian/Québec French (ibid.). Furthermore, he writes that as an individual he tries to ‘protect it [Canadian French], on the Internet and in real life’ and that in ‘Québec, we strive to keep our language alive’ (ibid.). From these statements we can infer that he is involved in other translation and language maintenance efforts both online and off. His goal in translating was to ‘help create a site that feels natural and comfortable to French Canadians’ (ibid.). When discussing the Canadian French translation of Facebook, Jimmy thinks it is important to have the language represented on Facebook as people in Canada and Québec spend a lot of time on it (ibid.). Having Facebook in a particular language gains symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1994) for that language and in the French Canadian context it highlights that it is different to European French.

7.2 Irish Translations Community – Policies, Practices and Ideologies

This section will consider the practices and ideologies of the Irish community of translators. Firstly, it outlines the translators’ language and translation practices on the app. Secondly, the discussions of the Irish community will be considered thematically and then, their perceptions of Facebook, translation and the app considered. The fourth
section discusses the Irish translator’s perceptions of ‘official’ ‘top-down’ language policy and language practices. The fifth section will consider the development of a sub-community of ‘senior translators’ within the Irish app, the ‘othering’ of some translators and the exclusion of others from the community. Finally, this chapter concludes with the case of the translation of the term ‘fón póca’ and whether it is ‘bottom-up’ or ‘top-down’ in language policy terms.

7.2.1 Translators Practices on the App

The Topics and Posts on the Irish Translations Discussion Board considered here range from June 2008, the month it opened, to August 2011. A total of 108 Topics and 632 Posts were analysed thematically, with common and related beliefs, attitudes and discourses identified. The length of the Topic threads varied widely from 1 post with no replies to longer discussions comprised of multiple posts and participants with up to 20 posts. The Discussion Board was most active in 2008 and 2009, with 32.8% and 32.6%, respectively, of the total posts analysed, added in these years. In 2010 participation decreased to 28.8% and in 2011 was as low as 5.9% up to October 2011 when the ‘new’ Translations app was introduced. As discussed previously, see Section 7.1.1, the majority of the Irish Translations top ten in July 2009 were men, this trend extends to the overall Translations community and the participants in the Irish Translations app Discussion Board. The total number of translators who contributed to the Discussion Board was 153, 109 of these were male translators, while 41 were female and three were organisations. In November 2011 there were 108 Topics on the Irish Translations app Discussion Board which contained a total of 632 posts. The male translators contributed a total of 533 posts, 84.3% of the overall Discussion Board, and the female translators a total of 76 posts, 12.03% of overall content. Organisations contributed 4 posts, 0.63% of overall Discussion Board (19 posts, 3.01%, of the Discussion Board posts had been deleted). The top female contributor only had 11 posts, while the top ten contributors were all male. The top translator contributed 98 posts, 15.5% of the overall Discussion Board, more than the total contributions of the second, third and fourth contributors. This section will consider the language practices and translation practices of the Irish Translations community. The Discussion Board posts quoted here are only dated as per the year they were submitted as Facebook do not give exact dates for each post, instead only dating them as ‘posted 3 months ago’, ‘about an hour ago’ etc.
7.2.1.1 **Language Practices**

The research classified the languages used in *Posts* on the *Discussion Board* according to whether there were in Irish only, English only, code-switched between Irish/English with the majority in Irish, code-switched between English/Irish with the majority in English and other languages (cf. Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson, 2007a). In this study, code-switching is defined as when at least one word is in another language from that of the rest of the post, this does not include words in other languages when referring to a word open for translation, words lists in two languages, giving an example, the use of brand-names, etc. Posts that begin with salutations or discourse markers in English where the rest of the post is in Irish are categorised as code-switching. The majority of the posts on the *Discussion Board* are in Irish only, 65.8%, followed by English only at 19.1%, then code-switching Irish/English at 7.6%, code-switching English/Irish at 1.4% and used Irish and English equally at 0.3%. Other languages accounted for 0.6% of the posts, with one post written in Persian, another in Welsh and two which used English, Welsh and Irish. Finally, 5.1% of the posts were not counted as they had been deleted or did not contain communication for other *translators*, for example, some posts were simply phrases/sentences to be translated, links to websites, lists of translations (with no accompanying explanation) or non-linguistic content such as emoticons and exclamation marks.

The only other fully user-generated aspect of the *Translations* app is the *Style Guide Wiki*. Over the course of the current research two contributions were made to it, in February 2009 and April 2011. The first entry was 75 words long and written in English other than the use of examples in Irish to demonstrate a point; with the second contribution 36 words long and fully in Irish. The use of English and Irish here demonstrates that the *translators* who contribute to discussions are happy to use both, but perhaps post information in English to ensure that everyone involved, including those who are not fluent, can understand this information and thus, not go against the community language policy.

7.2.1.2 **Translation Practices**

The Irish community *Translators* appear to have developed their own *de facto* translation practices or steps that the community must undertake when translating, which are not specified by *Facebook*. *Translators* post on the *Discussion Board* to clarify translations of terms, particularly new media or *Facebook* related terminology,
seemingly before submitting the translation for voting. For example, Translator 126 checks two translations of ‘check in’ he thinks could be used, one that he thinks may be a *Béarlachas*, an Anglicism (as will be discussed further in Section 7.2.2.6 below) and another that is also possible. He actively seeks feedback and opinions from those involved in the *Discussion Board* and replies to their comments. The *translators* here do not just translate and vote, but discuss then translate and vote.

Throughout the *Discussion Board* there is a perception that the translations decided from step one of the translation process, the *Glossary* terms, are final and cannot be changed: ‘*chinneamar ar “fón” sa Glossary agus sin sin*’ [we decided on ‘fon’ in the Glossary and that’s that] (Extract 7.19). However, there seems to be another procedure whereby if something in the *Glossary* is to be changed then it must be discussed on the *Discussion Board* first. Translators 145 and 151 explicitly state this *de facto* procedure to other *translators* writing that ‘*Now that Facebook seem to have started locking translations in, it is particularly important that contributors talk out translation difficulties here first*’ (Extract 7.20) and ‘*People... PLEASE! Glossary is final unless there’s been discussion here about it!*’ (Extract 7.21).

*Translators* also post on the *Discussion Board* to judge and discuss translations that other *translators* in the community have submitted. Translator 151 starts a *Topic* on a translation submitted, quoting the translation and then saying ‘*Magadh atá tú?!*’ [Are you joking me?!] (Extract 7.22), portraying his annoyance at what other *translators* are doing. Translator 152, who has the second most comments on the *Discussion Board* echoes his annoyance saying ‘*Ar an drochuair, ní dóigh liom go bhfuil. Níl aon leigheas air ach vótáil ina choinne*’ [Unfortunately, I’m not. There’s no solution but to vote against it] (Extract 7.23) and then posting a link to the *Vote* element for that translation.

Some *translators* look to other languages and how they translate particular terms when discussing the Irish language translations. Translator 142 looks to how the Welsh *Translations* community translate the *Facebook Status* prompt, ‘What are you doing now?’, when discussing how it should be translated in Irish and Translator 63 how it is translated in Scots Gaelic. Translator 86 also looks to other languages, such as Spanish, and how they translate the term ‘attending’. However, Translator 153 tells the *translators* to be careful when translating directly from the English language: ‘*Bígí cúramach i gcónaí gan aistriú díreach a dhéanamh ón Béarla. Níl gach rud sa Béarla oiriúnach don Ghaeilge* ’ [Always be careful when translating directly from English.
Not everything in English is suitable for Irish] (Extract 7.24), advocating a distancing of the Irish language from English, as will be discussed further below (Section 7.2.2.5).

7.2.2 Translator Discussions

The Irish Translations community discussed a wide range of language, translation and other issues over the course of the current research. This section will first consider how a normative language policy is formed on the Discussion Board of the app. Next, it will consider how translators view translation in a number of dichotomies. This is followed by the Irish translators’ debates on the current situation and future of the Irish language are outlined, followed by an overview of a discussion on the notion of the ‘true’ Irish speaker. Then, the translators’ approach to the relationship between the Irish and English languages will be considered and finally, the issue of Béarlachas in Irish translation examined.

7.2.2.1 Normative Language Policy

With multiple translations available for voting and discussion encouraged, different normative frameworks are visible in the community of translators (cf. Leppänen and Piirainen-Marsh, 2009). These norms are visible in the Discussion Board and Style Guide Wiki elements of the app. Norms surrounding lexical items are the clearest on the Facebook Translations app, others include what standard of Irish to use (see Section 7.2.4.5), whether translations are too like the English version (see Section 7.2.2.6), etc. The competing frameworks, in the truest sense given the voting aspect of the app, can lead to tensions at times. Norms are not only operating, but written down and can be enforced, which can be seen in the Discussion Board and voting, as Itkonen (2008: 283) writes ‘Rules or norms do not just lie inertly there; rather, they only exist as rules or norms of acting’ [emphasis in original]. We can see that the Irish Translations community perceived language norms as competing, since a number of Topics on the Discussion Board were titled as term one ‘vs’ term two, for example ‘Fón Vs. Guthán ... again’ and ‘Balla vs Bhalla’. Translators see the norms within the community as competing since ultimately only one translation or version of a translation can be used on Facebook.
7.2.2.2 Dichotomy of Translation

Translators discuss the standard of translations submitted to the Translations app in terms of a dichotomy of good or bad translations, as Facebook espouses throughout the Translations element as discussed above (Section 6.2.1.3). Translators discuss the notion of good and bad, ‘ceart’ [right] (Extract 7.25) or ‘nìl sé ceart’ [not right] (Extract 7.26) translations. Translations are referred to negatively as ‘plain wrong...’, ‘droch-aistriúcháin’ [bad translations] (Extract 7.27), ‘salach’ [rotten] (Extract 7.28), ‘árdnósach’ [snobby] (Extract 7.29) and there is even a Topic titled ‘Aistriúchán Uafásach’ [awful translations] (Extract 7.30). Translations are referred to positively in discussions mostly as ‘correct’, but also as ‘natural’ and ‘cruinn’, meaning accurate.

Translator 151 initiates a language ideological debate on this issue by airing his concerns about the standard of Irish on Facebook, the translation process and what this means for the future of the Irish language. He believes the translation effort is failing, that ‘drochGhaeilge’ [bad Irish] (Extract 7.31) is everywhere on the site and that more time needs to be spent on getting correct translations.

At one point however, translators do question this categorisation when Translator 146 brands the use of ‘guthán’ [phone] as ‘crite’ [correct] (Extract 7.32). This opens up a discussion on whether translations can be judged as correct or better than other translations. The translation of ‘phone’, here ‘mobile phone’ is a particular flash point for translators in a number of ways and will be discussed in depth below (see Section 7.2.6). Translator 151 responds in an angry tone saying that that is ‘truaflais’ [rubbish], that no word can be more correct than any other word (Extract 7.33), in contrast to many translators approach, as discussed above, and the approach Facebook espouse.

Translators also discuss their conceptualisation of what is or is not an Irish word. In one case, Translator 118 believes ‘There is no such word as “siblín” [for the term ‘siblings’] in Irish. What is wrong with “deartháracha agus deirfiúracha”? [brothers and sisters] (Extract 7.34). Traditionally when referring to ones siblings in Irish, mo deartháracha agus deirfiúracha [my brothers and sisters] would be used, as there is no traditional corresponding Irish term such as the English term ‘siblings’. However, Translator 151 believes ‘siblín’ is an Irish term, although agreeing that he prefers mo deartháracha agus deirfiúracha in this case, only using ‘siblín’ for its use in the computer science field. Translator 118 does not believe ‘siblín’ is an Irish word, saying he did not come across it in any Irish language books or the Irish Dictionary.
although acknowledging its use in the computer science context. Translators 1, 92 and 104 define ‘siblín’ as a béarlachas, with Translator 104 noting he only uses it when discussing technical issues. The term béarlachas is used to describe Irish words that are seen to be too influenced by the English language; in other words, Anglicisms (Béarla is the Irish word for English). Translator 89 quotes another source focal.ie, the online national terminology database - the official terminology database, which translates ‘siblín’ as sibling, but agrees that it is a béarlachas, preferring the more traditional form. This discussion evokes Whorf’s principle of linguistic relativity (Whorf, 1956), with translators considering how they conceptualise the notions of siblings/their brothers and sisters and describe these in Irish.

The community also consider their approach to translation in terms of a dichotomy of simple or complex translations and the related issue of the accessibility of the translations to a wide demographic. Translator 19 believes that the Irish translations used must be simple and understandable, noting that most people, himself included, cannot understand Facebook in Irish at times. Translator 120 agrees with this alignment of simple translations with maximum comprehensibility but notes that some of the phrases that need to be translated do not have basic Irish translations, acknowledging the complex nature of translation. Translator 142 wants the Irish used on Facebook to be ‘simple and intelligible’ and to be accessible to ‘“an cainteoir dúchais” and “an foghlaimeoir” alike’ [“native speakers” and “learners” alike] (Extract 7.35). Translator 142’s stance is evocative of Watson (2007) who acknowledges the difficult and unique position Irish language media are in, they must try and accommodate two distinct groups of language speakers; fluent Irish speakers and language learners (Section 2.1.16.1). In a discussion concerned with the amount of English language terms and phrases still visible on the site (this notion of the distancing of the Irish and English languages will be discussed further below) the issue of the accessibility of translations is seen again. Translator 151 does not see the presence of English on the SNS as a problem, instead relating this to the issue of comprehensibility. The English words/phrases are understandable to all those who use Facebook in Irish, however, some of the Irish translations are ‘un-understandable’ (Extract 7.36). The Irish Translations community must develop a translation of Facebook that is accessible and understandable to a demographic that includes language learners, those with various levels of Irish language skills/knowledge and native speakers, some would say a herculean task.
The Current Situation and Future of the Irish Language

It is interesting to note that issues not considered in any great depth by the Irish Translations community are the current situation and the future of the Irish language. Instead, when Topics or Posts related to these issues are submitted to the Discussion Board, no or little responses are made and those that do point out that this is not their job or role here. For example, Translator 46 wants to use the old Irish script, cló Gaelach, the Gaelic script, which is available using Unicode, instead of the current cló Rómhánach, the Roman script. He wants to because: ‘tá sé in am duit an Ghaeilge a dhéanaimh níos mó gaelach ar Facebook’ [It is time for us to make the Irish on Facebook more Irish] as this would present Irish in a ‘nicer’ way and in a more culture specific way, demarcating it from other languages (Extract 7.37). However, his fellow translators do not agree, noting that individuals can change the settings on their own computers to achieve this and they move onto discussing other issues.

Translator 84 begins a Topic asking why the Irish nation does not speak their own language, Irish, and how this can be changed. However, this discussion does not develop, as Translator 151 posts a reply telling him that ‘we are’ not trying to fix the future of Irish, the goal here is to have a good translation of Facebook in Irish:

‘??? Seo clár plé faoin aistriú Gaeilge... nílimid ag irraidh thodhchaí na teanga a shocrú nó a chinnitiú. An t-aon chuspóir amháin atá againne ná aistriúchán cruinn agus ceart a bhaint amach’ (sic)
[This is a discussion board about Irish translation.. We are not trying to fix or ensure the future of the language. Our sole purpose is to develop accurate and correction translations]
(Extract 7.38)

After this post, no more are contributed, although in a later Topic Translator 151 aligns the Facebook translation effort as being part of the future of the Irish language. The Irish Translations community clearly delineate their role and function in relation to the Irish language, it is to develop an Irish translation of Facebook and that is all. This is interesting given the ties of many translators to Irish language maintenance efforts and activities (see Sections 7.1.1.2 and 7.2.3.5) and their willingness to discuss their views on the teaching of Irish (Section 7.2.4.1), the offline Irish language policy (Section 7.2.4.2), etc.

Questioning the True Irish Speaker

Translators also consider the notion of what it means to be an Irish-speaker and different types of Irish-speakers on the Discussion Board. Translator 122 discusses
Dublin Irish-speakers, who he believes do not have a dialect of their own and if they want to have good Irish must adopt one of the established territorially defined dialects or the official standard. He believes that oftentimes Dublin Irish-speakers excuse their bad Irish, as he sees it, as ‘chanúint na cathrach’ [city dialect] (Extract 7.39). This statement has echoes of neo-Whorfianism with regard to place and language; here the city is not the place for the Irish language. When discussing the Irish translation to be used for ‘phone’, as will be discussed further below (see Section 7.2.6), Translator 137 describes ‘guthán’ as the right Irish term:

\[Is\text{ }salach\text{ }an\text{ }focal\text{ }‘fon’\text{ },\text{ }pé\text{ }duine\text{ }a\text{ }cheapann\text{ }gur\text{ }choir\text{ }an\text{ }focal\text{ }seo\text{ }a\text{ }úsáid\text{ }in\text{ }ionad\text{ }an\text{ }ghaeilge\text{ }ceart\text{ }\left(\text{guthán}\right)\text{ }ní\text{ }fíor\text{ }gaeilgeoir\text{ }iad\text{ },\text{ }agus\text{ }cuireann\text{ }sibh\text{ }náire\text{ }ar\text{ }bhur\text{ }gcultúr\text{ }le\text{ }truailliú\text{ }lofa\text{ }a\text{ }dhéanamh\text{ }ar\text{ }bhur\text{ }teanga\\]

[The word “fon” is awful, anyone who thinks it’s ok to use this team instead of the correct Irish (guthán) is not a true Irish speaker and they bring shame on our culture by polluting our language] (Extract 7.40)

To Translator 137 anyone who uses ‘fón’ over ‘guthán’ ‘ní fíor gaeilgeoir iad’ [is not a true Irish speaker] and they dishonour Irish culture by using an Anglicised term (Extract 7.41). Translator 151 responds, ridiculing Translator 137 and his notion of a fíor gaeilgeoir [true Irish speaker] by commenting on the translator’s use of grammar in the post, aligning his competency in Irish grammar with his stance on a true Irish speaker.

\[Fíor\text{-}ghaeilgeoir?\text{ }Bíodh\text{ }ciall\text{ }agat,\text{ }a\text{ }mhac.\text{ }B’fhéidr\text{ }go\text{ }mha\text{ }choir\text{ }duit\text{ }snas\text{ }a\text{ }chur\text{ }ar\text{ }do\text{ }ghraithear\text{ }sula\text{ }dúsaíonn\text{ }tá\text{ }a\text{ }bheith\text{ }ag\text{ }iarriadh\text{ }teanga\text{ }an\text{ }lao\text{ }inniú\text{ }a\text{ }aithriú.\text{ }\left(sic\right)\]

[A true Irish speaker? Have sense. Maybe you should brush up on your own grammar before you start trying to change the Irish of today] (Extract 7.42)

In response, Translator 137 discusses what kind of Irish speaker Translator 151 is, noting that his name on Facebook is in English, not Irish, aligning names and naming with the notion of a true Irish speaker.

These comments firstly illustrate that language ideological debates are not always about language alone (Paffey, 2007). They also demonstrate how, as O’Rourke and Ramallo (2011: 140) write, ‘Adjectives such as ‘authentic,’ ‘pure’ and ‘innate’ [and ‘true’ as used here] are often associated with the traits of native speakers’. Therefore, this exchange can be also seen as an ideological debate around the notion of the native or L1 Irish-speakers and how they are conceptualised as a different entity or community to L2 Irish-speakers. As O’Rourke and Ramallo (2011: 139) find, in some minority languages such as Irish, instead of being a unified speech community, ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ or L2 speakers of the language see themselves as separate speech communities and as ‘being socially and linguistically incompatible’ with each other, although they are mutually intelligible (cf. Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson, 2007a; Kelly-Holmes, 2011).
The Relationship between the Irish and English Languages

The Irish and English languages have a tense diglossic relationship in many domains in today’s Ireland, as considered in Section 2.1.12.1, – a relationship that is often a topic of discussion on the Translations Discussion Board. Typically, translators express a dislike for the English language and advocate a move away from a reliance on and use of the English language as a starting point for translation. Evocative of the early Irish language revitalisation efforts, which sought to replace the English language in Ireland with Irish, a common response of nationalist movements during their period of nation building (Spolsky, 1998). Translator 91 states:

_Caithfidh muid an nGaeilge a leathnu. is teanga álainn e . is fuath liom na sasanaigh gur scrios siad ár teanga duchas. is teanga i bhfad nios deise i an Gaeilge ná Bearla_ (sic)

[We must revive the Irish language, it’s a lovely language. I hate the English as they destroyed our native language. Irish is a much better language than English] (Extract 7.43)

Here she describes her hatred for the British Empire and its colonisation efforts as ‘they’ ruined the Irish’s native language. She describes Irish as a lovely language and believes that Irish is a much ‘better’ language than English, although she does not elaborate on her reasoning behind this statement. This statement sees the Irish language anthropomorphised, with attributes attached to it such as ‘lovely’. In another Topic, Translator 96 believes the English language as lesser to Irish, as it is only a language of communication. This discourse is found in much discussion about the English language today with the English language not viewed as a language with cultural significance, rather as a global tool of communication. House (2003: 559) categorises English as a ‘language of communication’, describing it is ‘a useful instrument for making oneself understood in international encounters’. Drawing on Kramsch (2002), House acknowledges the distinction between using a language for communicative purposes, such as English, and using a language for identificatory purposes. For Translator 96 when it comes to speaking there is no choice between English and Irish, as when Irish is spoken well he is able to express his thoughts accurately.

In both these discussions we see a superiority, chauvinistic approach and view of the Irish language as ‘better’ than the ‘lesser’ English language. At one point Translator 146 writes:

_... ach déanaim iarracht teanga na ngall a ghlanadh as mo inchinn a luathte agus is féidir, is i ngaill air sin taim tar éis dearad a dhéanamh!_

[I try to clean/rid the English language from my mind as soon as I can, it is because of this that I am after forgetting to do this!] (Extract 7.44)

Again we can see Whorfian (1956), essentialist notions at play here, with the Irish language being described as the language of the speaker’s heart and/or soul, and also
linguistic purism (Thomas, 1991). Furthermore, this notion of removing the English language from one’s mind is evocative of the title of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s (1986) *Decolonising the Mind*. Here Ngũgĩ considers his decision to write in his mother tongue, Gikuyu as opposed to English, which he does not want to use, viewing it as the historical colonial language of Kenya.

*Translators* also discuss mistakes they come across in the original English terms/phrases of the SNS, such as *Incorrect password* (sic), saying they hope the Irish version will be better than this. They make fun of these mistakes, saying that ‘tá Gaeilge cliste ach tá an Béarla briste’ [Irish is clever but English is broken] (Extract 7.45), which is a play on the common anecdote: ‘is fearr Gaeilge briste na Bearla cliste’ [broken Irish is better than clever English]. This also illustrates the sense of community within the *Discussion Board* of the Irish Translations app, where the shared knowledge allows for humour (Herring, 1999).

Another translator speaks about how Irish should look to other languages when dealing with new technology terminology rather than simply trying to replicate the English term. Translator 143 wishes to look to how other languages translate new terms like ‘Inbox’: ‘Bíonn sé i gcónaí úsáideach agus cabhrach féachaint ar theangacha éile chun na bealaí difriúla a scrúdú’ [It is always useful and helpful to look at other languages to examine different ways] (Extract 7.46). He also posts the French, German and Czech translations of ‘Inbox’ on the *Discussion Board*. Translator 150, shares this point of view on the ‘distancing’ of Irish from English. He comments that English terminology does not have to be literally translated into a number of Irish words if the meaning is clear by using one Irish word: ‘An gá aithris iomlán a dhéanamh ar an mbéarla, má léirítear an chiall go soiléir le focal amhain i ngaeilge?’ [Is there a need to fully emulate the English, if the meaning is clearly indicated by a single word in Irish?] (Extract 7.47). These moments illustrate how an ideology of ‘parallel monolingualism’ (Heller, 2007a) is also at play – the idea that Irish and English should coexist as separate, equal, bounded entities. This marks a clear overlap with the previous ‘endangerment’ ideology, insofar as code-mixing and switching are seen as a threat to a minoritised language and evidence of its imminent demise (see Duchêne and Heller, 2007).

A final example of the language ideologies around the English language in the *community of translators* is the debate over the translators’ choice of language to write in on the *Discussion Board*. The majority of the *Topics* and *Posts* here are in Irish.
but there are some in English (as discussed above in Section 7.2.1.1), with code-switching also evident. On one occasion, Translator 137 took exception to a Topic written in English and challenged other translators about their use of English instead of Irish on a page discussing the Irish language:

\[Cén fáth go mísáideann síb béarla ar an leathanach seo? Cuireann séointas orm go ndéanfaidh síb an oiread sin iarracht a chairt i Facebook a aistriú go gaeilge, ach ní bhainfidh síb úsáid as an ngaeilge agus síb ar leathanach plé Facebook gaeilge. Mo náire síb.\]

[Why do you use English on this page? It surprises me that you make such an effort to translate Facebook into Irish but you do not use Irish and you on a Facebook Irish discussion board. Shame on you.] (Extract 7.47)

This purist ideology is a clear attempt at policing the boundaries of translation and of language (cf. Blommaert et al., 2009). Translator 151 responds and appears to position himself as responding on behalf of the Discussion Board community by his use of ‘we’ throughout.

\[Blah blah blah blah. Níl aon náire orainn – Tá Gaeilge againn agus tá Béarla againn, níl aon rud mícheart leis an mBéarla agus is féidir linn é a úsáid pé am ag a bhfuil fonn orainn. Táimid ag déanamh an aistriúcháin seo mar gheall ar an oiread sin grá atá again don teanga, ní chiallíonn sé sin gur fuath linn an Béarla.\]

[Blah blah blah blah. We’re not ashamed – We have Irish and English, there is nothing wrong with English and we can use it whenever we want. We are doing this translation because of the love we have for the language, this does not mean that we hate English.] (Extract 7.48)

Language policing clearly takes place in the community but not without contestation.

### 7.2.2.6 Béarlachas/Borrowing and the Irish Language

A related ideology expressed in relation to the influence of the English on Irish translations, is béarlachas, as discussed above (Section 7.2.2.6), although, as Translator 149 makes it clear, the term ‘Anglicism’ is itself not without polemic. He defines it as:

“béarlachas” (the modern translation of which is “Anglicism”, while “bastardisation” (the process of corruption or evolution of the meaning of linguistic terms) would be more accurate...

(Extract 7.49)

He does so to challenge how others conceptualise and use the term Béarlachas. In his view they use it in a benign sense to refer to words that are like the English version and do not consider the repercussions of Anglicised words for the Irish language.

Ultimately, what is at stake here is an ideology of ‘linguistic purism’ (Thomas, 1991) by which, in this case, translators seek to ‘clear’ or clean up the Irish language of any English influence. Béarlachas is the most frequently occurring issue in discussions. The issue arises in particular during discussions about new technological terminology, such
as ‘mobile phone’, as will be discussed below (see Section 7.2.6) which sparked an explicit ‘language ideological debate’ (Blommaert, 1999b).

Translator 149 believes that the use of Anglicised words in Irish, like móibíleach [mobile] and próifíl [profile] ‘are what makes Irish a laughing stock of languages’ and they are ‘one of the many reasons why Irish opponents of the Irish language... would rather the language “died a peaceful death”’ (Extract 7.50). He feels so strongly, that he would prefer that the Irish language went this way rather ‘than the painful death that we are providing it with by accepting such bastardizations into the language’ (Extract 7.51). Translator 149 sees borrowings, especially from the English languages as diluting the Irish language, in line with Dorian (1981, 1989) who sees code-switching as a sign of language attrition. Translator 151 then discusses how all languages are influenced by others and that Irish has many words originally from Latin, especially old-Irish and that they cannot exclude these now. Translator 137 acknowledges that this is the case but likens it to weakening, withering and decay, again illustrating Duchêne an’d Heller’s (2007) discourses of endangerment.

Other translators do not share this perspective. Translator 151 deems the purist, anti-borrowing translators on the app as being involved in ‘béarlachas crusades’. Translator 27 does not like béarlachas terms but at the same time:

… ba mhaith liom a feicail muintir na hÉireann a bain usaid as a chuid gailge, b’feidir le cupla focail béarla sa abairt mar is teanga deacair é. Nach bhfuil aon iarracht rud maith? [I’d like to see people use the Irish they have, perhaps using a few English words as it is a hard language. Isn’t any attempt a good thing?] (Extract 7.52)

Translator 27 would like to see Irish people use the Irish they have, even if this involves using the odd English word. She wonders if any attempt to speak Irish a good thing. Kelly-Holmes (2011) terms this approach the “‘try a little Irish” or performance discourse’ and believes that it has been promoted in recent years by official, ‘top-down’ Irish language policy (Section 2.1.16.1). Translator 93 believes that if we accept that Irish is a ‘living language’ then it will borrow words from other languages: ‘má ghlacaimid leis gur teanga beo í seo ata again, caithfimid glacadh leis go mbeidh muid ag goid tearchaí ó theangaí asachta ó am go chéile. Is í sin mar a fhógraíonn teanga beo’ [If we accept that we have a living language, we have to accept that we will take terms from foreign languages occasionally. This is how living languages develop] (Extract 7.53). If there is a word used in everyday language, even if it is an English word, he does not have a problem with using it. However, if there is a better word, also commonly used and it is easily understood in Irish then it should be used:
This statement invokes a neo-Whorfian discourse (Jaffe, 2007c). In saying that, he does not want to lose the richness of the language by using words like móibíleach, very like the English term ‘mobile’. Translator 142 believes that a translation totally separate from the English language, a ‘fíorGhaelach’ [true Irish] (Extract 7.55) translation here would not succeed and does not have a problem with Béarlachas as long as these words subscribe to the rules of the Irish language. In another Topic, Translator 151 believes that ‘we’ the community must let go of the béarlachas attitude when an Irish word is like its English counterpart.

When discussing béarlachas and borrowing words from other languages, translators often delve into the etymology of words. Translator 151 discusses the origin of the word ‘phone’, writing that it is a Greek word that was adopted into the English language and that therefore it cannot be described as béarlachas. Translator 146 does not agree:

– tagann fomhór na bhfocal sa Bhéarla ó fhoinsí eile pé scéal ach de bharr go bhfuil an Béarla níos treise ná an Ghréigis, agus go dtagann an focal fón mar atá i roinnt teangacha ó fhoinse an Bhéarla. Lagú, deo agus feo a bheadh i gceist. Tá de dhulgas orainn bheith airdeallach, agus iarraidh an teanga a choineadh soar an oiread is féidir ó thionchar an tSacsBhéarla. (sic) [– the majority of words in English come from other sources but as the English language is stronger than the Greek language and the word fón in a lot of languages comes from the English. What is in question is weakening, dilution and withering. We must be vigilant and keep our language free as much as we can from the influence of English] (Extract 7.56)

Here he notes that a lot of words in the English language come from other languages but that he wants the community to keep Irish free of English influence, describing their role as to be vigilant or watchful. In this quote, Translator 146 anthropomorphises the Irish language as something that can be protected. Translator 146 is a ‘language broker’ (Blommaert, 1999a), acting as and calling on others to be gatekeepers of the Irish language and of the translations used on Facebook.

7.2.3 Translators’ Perceptions of Facebook, Translation and the App
This section will consider the translators perceptions of Facebook, translation and the app. This includes their thoughts on Facebook’s role, their own role and the Irish community’s progress on the app. Next, their opinions on the design and working of the...
app are outlined. Then, how some of the Irish translators negotiate with the app and how some communities/individuals do not participate in the apps are outlined. This is followed by a consideration of some of the viewpoints which oppose the Translations app found on the Facebook SNS. This section concludes by illustrating some of the attempts to subvert some of the Translations apps over the course of this research and presents the ‘hack’ of the app in July 2010. These discussions and debates can be seen as the ‘set of stories and cases’ through which the Irish Translations community have developed their ‘shared repertoire for their practice’ as a community of practice (Wenger, 2006).

Overall, the Irish language translators herald the app’s existence as positive. Translator 141 thinks the Translations app and the community are great to see: ‘is iontach an rud é seo a fheicí ‘ [it is great to see this] and that he hopes it succeeds: ‘tá siúil agam go n-oibríonn sé’ [I hope this works/succeeds] (Extract 7.57). Translator 14 thinks the translators here are doing a great job, commends them and encourages them to continue and Translator 42 posts to thank those involved, ‘buichos le na daoine ag obair...’ (sic) [thanks to the people doing the work] (Extract 7.58). Translator 77 also adopts a rallying or supportive discourse, saying ‘keep it up lads’ and that its ‘go hiontach’ [great] (Extract 7.59). During the radio interview, Translator A (Beecham, 2009) is positive about the app, saying that ‘Facebook have been very good about the way they’ve emm, gone about structuring the process’, praising the design of the app, in particular the Inline Translation mode.

7.2.3.1 The Role of Facebook
The translators’ perceptions of Facebook and the role it plays in the Translations app are seen during the debates of the Discussion Board. From their discourse it is clear that the Irish translators perceive Facebook as the ‘top-down’ entity in this context. When discussing a bug with the app, Translator 97 asks if there are moderators, presumably so they could contact them about this issue. As Leppänen and Peuronen (2012) note, moderators on Internet sites can act as a ‘regulatory mechanism’, influencing users’ language choice and use online. Here the translators are seeking out a regulatory and assistive entity. In response to Translator 97, Translator 151 notes that Facebook is doing something to the app and that it will be ok in a few days, accepting Facebook’s role as the ‘top-down’ authority of this domain. Translators also address Facebook directly as the ‘top-down’ entity of this domain when discussing translation bugs and
seeking a solution or answers. When other translators discuss how to solve the bug, Translator 144 asks how they know that Facebook is reading their suggestions and that there is a good chance Facebook do not understand Irish. He then posts in English directly addressing Facebook ‘Facebook: Please see this threads recommendations for your what are you doing now area of profiles’ (sic) (Extract 7.60). At another time Translator 126 posts a private message he sent to Facebook, which he also wrote in English. It is interesting to note that in order to communicate with Facebook itself, the Irish translators uses English, subscribing to their English only default and language policy at that time (Section 6.1.2.4.1).

Translators do try to work around the ‘top-down’ influence of Facebook, for example, as Facebook is an American company the app defaults to the American date order and clock formats. Translator 135 went to the English UK, French and German apps to see which date order format was in use, European or American and also created a Topic on the English (UK) Translations app Discussion Board to ask how that community changed it. In conclusion, he notes that he emailed Facebook about it on a number of occasions and that ‘Hopefully this time they’ll actually do something. If its something only they can change, they should have already, if it’s not, they should make it more obvious how users can’ (Extract 7.61). Facebook users can contact Facebook and lobby from the ‘bottom-up’ (as will be discussed below) but it is up to Facebook when and if it solves issues translators have.

Translators perceive themselves as being at the mercy of Facebook’s ‘top-down’ decisions. For example, a Welsh language translator encourages the Irish language community to get more involved and get it completed ‘before Facebook decides to close it down’ (Extract 7.62), acknowledging the power Facebook have in this domain. Also, during the early months of the Irish Translations app Facebook moved the language from step two, translate Facebook, back to step one, translate the Glossary, a number of times. Some translators reacted angrily to these ‘top-down’ decisions by Facebook, Translator 145 calling it a ‘rude little glossary interruption’ (Extract 7.63) and Translator 151 expressing his frustration writing: ‘aaaagh! Back to glossary terms again! Vote this one up please people!’ (Extract 7.64). However, Translator 151 seems to accept Facebook’s ‘top-down’ authority and prerogative to put Irish back a step, noting that ‘Every now and again they add new items to the glossary that need to be translated. Until they’re decided the translations stage is locked” (Extract 7.65). The majority appear to be frustrated by Facebook’s decision and
subsequent wait for the language to return to step two of the process. Translator 148 asked ‘why are we STILL stuck in Glossary voting? One term has clearly won out...’ (Extract 7.66). Ultimately the Irish translators are happy when Facebook allows the Irish app to enter step two again: ‘Good to see we’re once again past the glossary stage though!!! Get translating again!’ (Translator 151, Extract 7.67) and ‘Amen to that!’ (Translator 135, Extract 7.68). In the Translations app, translators perceive Facebook as the ‘language managers’, as Spolsky (2004, 2009) terms them, of this context, overseeing the Irish translation process.

7.2.3.2 The Role of Translators

There are not many comments on the Discussion Board as to what role the translators perceive themselves as having. Translator A (Beecham, 2009) during a radio interview, describes the translator’s role as deciding on appropriate translations for new terms into Irish and also dealing with...

... terms that might have been coined in dictionaries or in databases and so on but have never actually have been used in real life so we’re in a lot of cases ironing out some of the problems with those phrases (Extract 7.69)

There does appear to be tension between the role of the individual and the role of the community on the app which is teased out on the Discussion Board of the app.

Translators do call on their individual views and attitudes when posting, with Translator 151 writing from a personal perspective, using the personal pronoun ‘I’ twice: ‘I therefore hope people will vote up “Siopa Bhronntanais Facebook” as I think it is more correct’ [Facebook Giftshop] (Extract 7.70). Translator 150 does acknowledge that individual translators vote on translations, but that it is the community who make the final decision. Translator 148 calls on individual users to put aside their views and translate and vote in line with the community’s decision:

I thought we had settled this, but there are several people voting down usages of “fón” in favour of “guthán”. It has been decided we were to use “fón”. You personally may prefer “guthán”, but in this glossary we are using “fón” and resisting it only slows down translation. Be following the glossary and guidelines we have tried to establish so that we can get through this faster. (sic) (Extract 7.71)

Although a community effort, translators’ personal preferences for translations must not get in the way of the overall progression of the translation. Indeed, Translator 151 notes that in the early discussions about ‘fón’ and ‘guthán’ (see Section 7.2.6) he preferred ‘guthán’ but the majority of the community did not, this was the decision made and he then translated/voted according to the community or majority decision.
Compromise much be reached in order for the community to move along and fulfil their goal of having *Facebook* in Irish. At one time when the Irish app is put back to the *Glossary* stage Translator 151 asked whether a ‘*compromise*’ (Extract 7.72) be reached as only one translation needs to be decided and they can then return to step two of the process. Translator 148 also discusses consistency and translations, noting that two versions of ‘to tag’ are being submitted, they have the same meaning but one is not the *Glossary* term. He explicitly asks the community for consistency, only Translator 151 replies disagreeing with the version Translator 148 prefers. Translator 148 accepts this call writing ‘*That’s fair. Consistency is the most important thing, so cureadh clib [to tag] it is!*’ (Extract 7.73). This promotion of consistency, consistency and adherence to the community’s decision are in line with Wenger’s (2006) notion of the development of ‘shared practice’ in a community of practice (see Section 6.2.2.1). They develop a way of ‘addressing recurring problems’ (Wenger, 2006) or translation issues in this case.

7.2.3.2.1 The Impact of Individual Translators

It must be acknowledged that Individual Irish *translators* can have a sizeable impact on the translations developed via the *Translations* app, despite the promotion of the community’s shared practice, as discussed above. Scannell (2012b: 2) notes that at his time of writing, the top 100 most active Irish language *translators* had (with multiple translations of the same messages permitted) contributed almost 61,000 translations. In August 2011, the time of final data collection from the Irish *Translations Leaderboard*, as illustrated in Table 7.2, the top ten *translators* had each contributed:
Table 7.2: Top Ten Irish Translators – August 2011

This table illustrates both the impact of the top ten translators, the ‘senior translators’ of the community, and of individual translators on the Irish translation produced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translator i</td>
<td>114,962</td>
<td>15,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator ii</td>
<td>39,122</td>
<td>5688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator iii</td>
<td>38,329</td>
<td>4505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator iv</td>
<td>34,283</td>
<td>3951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator v</td>
<td>15,545</td>
<td>2608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator vi</td>
<td>15,252</td>
<td>2922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator vii</td>
<td>11,782</td>
<td>1551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator viii</td>
<td>6559</td>
<td>798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator ix</td>
<td>4156</td>
<td>946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator x</td>
<td>2682</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.3.3 The Community’s Progress

A translator from the Welsh Translations app, comments on the progress of the Irish Translations app. He thinks a ‘great effort’ is needed to get more involved and that more numbers are needed to complete the Irish version of Facebook: ‘At this rate you won’t succeed. Try and get more to translate or it would be a great shame to you’ (sic) (Extract 7.74). The Welsh translator is calling on the Irish community to become more active in both the translation effort itself and in recruiting more translators. The Irish translators themselves also consider the size of community needed to translate Facebook and their progress. Translator 148 notes that in December 2008 they only had 240 translators, while the Welsh had over 700, which Translator 135 attributes to the higher number of Facebook users from the UK. Translator 35 doesn’t think there are enough people on Facebook or enough with the interest to translate Facebook: ‘All of my Irish-speaking friends are either too old or disinterested’ (Extract 7.75). Translator 142 also believes that more people/translators are needed for the Irish app and that the Welsh version was completed faster as it ‘started off a lot earlier (mainly because the Welsh are a LOT more militant and enthusiastic about their language than are the majority of Irish)’ (Extract 7.76). He attributes the success of the Welsh version of Facebook, which was fully translated before this study began, to its active offline...
community that demands change/involvement from the ‘bottom-up’. These sentiments remind us of the potential of the Internet for minority language speakers to play a more active role in their language in the new media context (cf. Cunliffe, 2007; Cunliffe and Herring, 2005). Translator 151 thinks they can succeed

*I think we are succeeding. I know more people being involved would be a boon - but how is that gonna stop us? It hasn’t been all that long since the open translation stage started for us; and we’re making great progress...* (Extract 7.77)

We can see also here the sense of community, through the use of ‘we’ and ‘us’, and the common goal of the Irish *Translations* app, one of Herring’s (2004) conditions for terming a group of Internet users a community.

The influence of the design of the *Facebook Translations* app on the discourses and practices of the translators is seen on the *Discussion Board*. Translator 150 begins a *Topic* comparing the progress of the Irish language through the translation process with other lesser spoken languages: ‘... *scrúdaigh mé feidhmchlár aistriúchán a bhaineann le teangacha áirithe éile, le fáil amach cén chaoi a bhfuil ag éirí leo i gcomparáid leis an nGaeilge anseo*’ [I examined the *Translations* apps for certain other languages, to find out how they were getting on in comparison with Irish] (Extract 7.78). He compares Irish to languages such as Catalan, Latin, Basque and Cherokee. He outlines the number of untranslated phrases these different languages have, in order of least untranslated to most, Irish is the fourth ‘best’ language on this list. Translator 150 concludes by noting that Irish is more progressed than languages such as Norwegian, Basque and Romanian. Here we can see Translator 150 comparing the progression of the languages open for translation as the *All Languages Leaderboard* does. The notion of ‘language competition’ which *Facebook* espouses via the *All Languages Leaderboard*, as discussed above (Section 6.1.2.3), influences the discussions about and potentially the translators conceptualisations of minority languages and multilingualism online.

### 7.2.3.4 The Design/Working of the App

From time to time translators do briefly discuss the app and translation process, primarily asking questions about how it works, when a translation is deemed to have won, etc. Translator 141 wonders how long the *Translations* app is around, how many votes does a word/phrase need in order to be accepted, and how do they complete the Irish version, and Translator 135 queries ‘... when is a phrase counted as “finalised” for
the glossary? (i.e. what has to happen with “Facebook Gift Shop” in order to go back to stage 2?)’ (Extract 7.79). Translators can only guess as to when a translation is used, with Translator 145 replying that ‘I presume that what is needed is for one translation to get an obvious voting lead over others, so as to show that there is consensus’ (Extract 7.80). It is interesting to note the absence of sustained questioning of the systems and rules behind the app/translation process and the role Facebook play in these. Facebook translators and users do however; negotiate with the app, choose not to participate in Facebook Connect apps, oppose the existence of the crowd-sourced translation effort, subvert and hack the app, as will be discussed next.

7.2.3.5 Negotiation of the App

Across theTranslations apps, the translators, Translations communities, and Facebook users interact with Facebook in a ‘bottom-up’ manner. Facebook controls which languages are available for translation, however, Facebook users’ campaign for and request the inclusion of their language(s) in a ‘bottom-up’ manner. They do so by contacting or messaging Facebook frequently, for example by posting on the Discussion Board and Wall of the overall Translations app Page repeatedly. This study defines ‘Campaigns for languages’ as a number of Topics, Posts and Comments seeking the addition of a language. An example of this is the campaign by Kurdish speakers in August 2009, with nine Topics on the overall Translations app Discussion Board about opening the app to their language. Many of these Topics contained just one Post and appeared to have been created in this way to maximise the visibility of this campaign on the list of Topics open on the Discussion Board. Some language communities and speakers are using the new media context, here Facebook, as a domain of more active involvement in language matters (cf. Eisenlohr, 2004). Facebook users also formed Facebook Groups to campaign and lobby for the inclusion of a particular language in the Translations app in a ‘bottom-up’ manner, e.g. ‘Make Facebook available to be translated into Scots and Gàidhlig’, ‘Black Country Version’ with 27,219 members and ‘Give us an English (Canada) Translation’. A Facebook Group ‘All those in favour of facebook as Gaeilge’ sought the addition of Irish to the Translations app. In September 2009 it had 877 members, interestingly a larger community than the Irish Translations app had at this time with 497 translators. Other language communities who sought inclusion in the Translations app included minority languages such as Breton and Scottish Gaelic, traditionally oral languages such as Luxembourghish and Jamaican
Creole, language varieties such as Argentinean Spanish, English (Canada), English (Black Country), and others including American Indian, Cebuano, Visayan, LOL speak, Swahili, Scots, Punjab, Frisan, Ebonics, Tamil, 1337 Speak, Venetian, Bahasa Indonesia, Asturian, and Urdu. *Facebook* acknowledges when opening up Spanish locales for translation that it does so *‘based on your feedback’* (Leszczenski, 2010a; 2010b). This illustrates the effectiveness of the ‘bottom-up’ campaigning by users, *Facebook* and its language policy can be influenced from the ‘bottom-up’. Indeed, a recent post on the *Facebook Translations Team Page* thanked users for requesting the addition of other languages such as Breton and Tamazight, noting that these along with others are on their list of languages they are considering for the app (Facebook, 2012f). Furthermore, the post noted that *Facebook* value these languages, but asked for patience from their communities (*ibid.*). *Facebook* users, language speakers and language communities therefore can employ the *Translations* app as a mechanism of language policy (Shohamy, 2006).

This campaigning also extends to when *translators* want *Facebook* to change an aspect of the translation or respond to an issue or bug quicker. When the Irish *Translations* app is sent back to the *Glossary*, as discussed above (Section 6.3.1), Translator 151 wants the community to deal with it quickly:

> Right, is lèir go bhfuil focal nua le n-aistriú sa Glossary. An féidir le gach éinne dul chuig an glossary agus vóta a chaitheamh ar an téarma atá ann. Ansin, tá siúl a’n go mbeidhimid in ann ár n-aistriúchán a thosnú aríst ’(sic)

[Right, there must be new words to translate in the Glossary, can everyone go to the glossary and vote on the terms there. Then I think we’ll be able to translate again] (Extract 7.81)

Here the community are acting together in a ‘bottom-up’ up manner against *Facebook*’s ‘top-down’ decision and get the Irish app back into stage two as soon as possible. On the *Discussion Board* a number of *translators* encourage the community to contact *Facebook* complaining about bug issues, as *Facebook* may fix these issues more quickly the more complaints it receives. *Translators* then discuss the issue further, posting email replies from *Facebook* on the *Discussion Board* to keep their peers informed and involved. The Irish *translators* take their campaign about this issue beyond the Irish *Translations* app, with Translator 150 posting his complaint on the *Discussion Board* of the overall *Translations* app page and a link to another *Topic* here from another *Translations* community on the same issue. Again we can see the Irish language community and the wider *Translations* app community waging a campaign from the ‘bottom-up’ to get what they want, in this instance to get the bugs fixed. *Facebook*
again appears to respond to these ‘bottom-up’ campaigns, in another Topic Translator 150 notes that the date order is now in the European format, as discussed above (Section 6.3.1) and that it looks like Facebook listened to the translators requests. The Irish Translations community and other language communities on Facebook engage in ‘joint activities’ (Wenger, 2006) to further their shared goal, an Irish or other language version of Facebook.

Translators also try to get around bugs in the app by developing their own ‘bottom-up’ solutions. For example, two common bugs during the course of this research were the app tells them that they are too new to submit a translation or that there is some issue with the translation they have written even though there is not. Translators then posted the translation(s) they were trying to submit or vote on to the Discussion Board and asks others to submit or vote on them instead, subverting the translation process. The translators develop their own ‘bottom-up’ solutions to some technological issues, working around them. At another time, Translator 151 tries to get around the design of the app, which requests all variables to be used when submitting a translation, by using HTML and CSS (Cascading Style Sheets). This ‘bottom-up’ effort to get around the app does not succeed, and he concedes that they will have to contact Facebook about it to fix it from the ‘top-down’, acknowledging the limitations of their role and ‘bottom-up’ efforts in this Facebook context.

Translators also use the Translations app for purposes outside of its translation remit, a negotiation of Facebook’s internationalisation method. Posts seeking translations of a term/phrase from and to a number of languages, including from Irish to English, from English into Irish and from other languages, including Persian and Scots Gaelic to English are seen on the Discussion Board a number of times. Facebook developers also use the Translations app for purposes other than translation. At one point a ‘Translation Manager’ job for the app/game Early Freedom was posted on the Discussion Board of the Irish Translations app.

Translators also post on the Discussion Board to promote and encourage involvement in a number of Irish language activities, in the offline and online contexts. Activities promoted include: events for Irish language week in TCD, Lá Twitter na Gaeilge [Irish on Twitter Day] for Seachtain na Gaeilge [Irish language week] and membership of the Facebook Group ‘All those in favour of facebook as Gaeilge’, as discussed above. Translator 91 posts about wanting to run a campaign on Facebook (Section 7.2.2.5) to increase the use of the Irish language. She wants people to post on
their Friend’s Profiles to highlight the Irish language and encourage/inspire more people to use Irish. Translator 146 posts about the Irish language version of Wikipedia, Vicipéid, and efforts to have ten million pages in Irish on Vicipéid. He calls for any translators who are tired of translating Facebook or interested in helping to get involved. The online Irish language activities and community-driven efforts promoted here, illustrate the active role the Irish community is playing the development of the Irish language new-mediascape (Appadurai, 1996).

7.2.3.6 No Participation/Translation

A number of Facebook apps and Pages on the Facebook Platform were open for translation into Irish via the Translations app during the course of this research (Appendix 1). Figure 7.2 is of the Irish Translations app for the ‘Where I’ve Been’ app.

Figure 7.2: Irish Translations App for ‘Where I’ve Been’ App

At no time did any of these translation efforts take off, no translators got involved in the translation of these entities. Here the Irish language Translations community acted in a ‘bottom-up’ manner, deciding not to engage with these translation efforts. Furthermore, it illustrates the other side of the active engaged new media language community (Cunliffe, 2005; Honeycutt and Cunliffe, 2010), the un-active language community. New media and social media in particular allow for individual and community involvement in language matters, but this does not necessarily mean they will participate. As Cunliffe (2007) notes, some minority languages and their speakers may chose not to transition to the Internet and the effects of this context on minority languages is not yet clear or certain.
7.2.3.7  Opposition to the Translations App

Not all Facebook users are ‘fans’, to use a Facebook term, of the Translations app. On a regular basis over the course of this study, Topics and Posts on the overall Translations app Page were posted in opposition to the app and its method of translation. This sentiment is also seen on the Irish Translations app Discussion Board. While discussing his and others’ translations on the app, Translator 86 acknowledges his dislike of the app and its crowd-sourced translations method:

Facebook’s democratic approach to the glossary makes difficult the translation process for a lesser spoken language like the Irish. All for each person’s individual choice I am... (Extract 7.82)

The opposition discussions often involve professional translators. A professional translator started a Topic on the overall Translations app Discussion Board titled: ‘DO NOT TRANSLATE FACEBOOK!!!’ (sic) (Extract 7.83), discussing why people should not support this app. She equates free translations with ‘offering free medical services, only the people treating you may or may not have studied medicine in any shape or form’ (Extract 7.84), noting the potential effects of incorrect translations such as negative face, and misunderstandings (Plaistow, 2009). Another Topic here, again started by a professional translator, is titled ‘A translators frustration’ (Extract 7.85) and complains about the mistakes and inaccurate translations submitted on the Spanish app. A Facebook employee did respond to this complaint, writing that all translations are reviewed by professionals (presumably professional translators), that no-one is perfect and to report problem phrases as this will flag them for further reviewing. A significant number of Facebook users, 8,780, were members of a Facebook Group titled ‘Leave translation to translators’. Some Facebook users, in particular professional translators, do not support Facebook’s idealisation of the native speaker as the best translators, as discussed previously (Section 7.2.3.7).

There is also a Facebook Group called ‘facebook language translation application is taking away your rights’ (sic), as illustrated in Figure 7.3 below, which discusses the IP rights around the Translations app and the role of professional translators in translation.
Figure 7.3: Translations App Opposition Group

This group had 35 members in February 2009 but no longer existed in August 2012. Some members of this group are professional translators and query why they would translate for free ‘...for a multi million-dollar business’ (Extract 7.86). Furthermore, the same contributor criticises how Facebook owns any submissions made to the Translations app by users and how it phrases this in the terms and conditions of the app as Facebook ‘permitting’ users to take part: ‘Facebook is doing me such a favour that I will sign away my rights? I don’t think so!’ (Extract 7.87). Here we can see Facebook users opposing the notion of the gift economy (Gentle, 2009), which the crowd-sourced Translations app is based on.

7.2.3.8 Subversion of the App

Translators also subvert the Translations app in a ‘bottom-up’ manner by submitting translations in languages other than the language open for translation. In the Irish Translations app, one of the translations open for voting was in Chinese script. The researcher concluded that these are a form of interfering with or objecting to the translation and the Translations app. It was also observed in the English (UK) and Northern Sámi apps on a number of occasions. In the Northern Sámi app, English words and phrases were submitted over an extended period as seen in Figures 7.4 and 7.5 below.
As it continued over a period of months, the researcher concluded that this was a sustained campaign of interference with the app. Subverting the app like this impacts on the number of translations submitted, the figures for that language and generally annoys the other translators involved. In the Irish app, those who submitted translations in languages other than Irish were deemed ‘brightspark’, a colloquial derogatory term sarcastically implying that someone is not intelligent (Translator 151, Extract 7.88), an ‘eejet [who] thought they were being clever or something’ (an ‘eejet’ being a vernacular, derogatory term meaning silly or stupid) (Translator 135, Extract 7.89) and their efforts as ‘SO ANNOYING’ (sic) (Translator 148, Extract 7.90). One motivation for this subversion of the app is to get a language noticed by Facebook and subsequently opened for translation. Breton language speakers and Facebook users discuss this tactic of inserting Breton into the English Translations app, to draw attention to their campaign for inclusion in the app, as discussed previously, a subversion of the app in a ‘bottom-up’ manner.

7.2.3.8.1 Hacking the App
In August 2010 the Irish Translations app was closed for a few weeks due to what the online media termed a ‘hack’ of the app. Figure 7.6 illustrates the initial closure of the
app where the app elements were still accessible but not working, with a notice posted on the **Dashboard** of each language.

![Facebook](https://example.com/facebook.png)

**Figure 7.6: Translations App Closed**

Figure 7.6 is of the app a few days later where the **Dashboard**, **Translate**, **Vote**, **Review** and other elements have been removed.

![Facebook](https://example.com/facebook.png)

**Figure 7.7: Translations App Closed II**

The Armenian version of Facebook was ‘hacked’ in early July 2010 by a group calling themselves ‘AzPatriot’ and at least four translators of the Armenian Translations app were involved (The Armenian Observer Blog, 2010). This appears to have been motivated by political reasons, instead of seeing the translated versions of the phrases **Edit My Profile**, **Top News** and **Most Recent**, users who had their language preference set to Armenian saw messages about the Armenian Azerbaijani conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh (*ibid.*). Then in late July 2010 Facebook was again ‘hacked’ when the Spanish (Latin America) translation of the site displayed ‘fuck you bitches’ in place of ‘Birthdays Today’ on a user’s **News Feed**, along with other vulgar phrases in Spanish throughout the site (O’Neill, 2010). This ‘hack’ was by a Turkish anarchist movement INCI. Furthermore, because they replaced the translation of ‘Be the First to Like This’, which displays beside content after the Facebook Like button, the vulgar translations spread outside the confines of the Facebook SNS and onto external websites (Read, 2010). The ‘hack’ by INCI involved the members of its Internet forum (Constantin, 2010), so presumably a considerable number in order to surpass the number of votes.
needed. These ‘hacks’ illustrates the role of the globalised new media domain as a social field where political and other issues are contested (Fairclough, 2006) and given the status of Facebook in this context (Section 7.2.3.8.1), the Translations app is implicated in these efforts.

Finally, In January 2011 the Français (France) version of Facebook was interfered with. When reporting or blocking someone on the SNS, Facebook present a list of reasons and the user must select one. At this time the French version of Facebook displayed ‘Dylan Zéroosix’s little brother insulted me in instant messenger’ (sic) in French instead of one of these reasons (Chowdhry, 2011). This was seen more as a prank that the French translators went along with as they thought it was funny (Chowdhry, 2011; Toor, 2011). A number of explanations for these hacks/pranks were offered by new media sources. One blog attributed them to ‘a flaw in the Facebook Translations application, if enough people vote on an incorrect translation, that phrase will be replace what was previously a legitimate phrase’ (sic) (O’Neill, 2010). With another blog reporting that the ‘flaw’ with the Translations app is in the reporting aspect of it: ‘Essentially, if enough people flag certain Facebook terms in a given language as incorrect and suggest a different - rude - phrase, Facebook will automatically change it’ (Read, 2010). Either way, as Constantin (2010) writes this so called ‘hack’ ‘leveraged the power of crowdsourcing to vote the automatic approval of rogue changes’, in language policy terms, subverting the design and purpose of the Translations app in a ‘bottom-up’ way.

### 7.2.4 Perceptions of ‘Official’ Language Policy and Language Practices

Translators use a number of resources when translating Facebook into Irish, which bring their own language rules and norms with them. Translator 128 begins a Topic describing focal.ie as a first class resource. Other translators add their own online translation resources including: an English/ Irish dictionary www.englishirishdictionary.com, grammar tools www.csis.ul.ie/focloir and http://borel.slu.edu/gramadoir/foirm.html, the place names database of Ireland www.logainm.ie and dictionary/terminology lists www.achmain.ie. These websites are a mixture of official, ‘top-down’, and community developed, ‘bottom-up’, resources. From translators’ discussions around these resources and offline official ‘top-down’ language policy, we can see how the Translations app acts as a mechanism of corpus planning. This can either work together with ‘top-down’ corpus planning outside web
environments or can challenge this in a ‘bottom-up’ way, with users opting for their own versions (cf. Wright, 2006), or a hybrid model can emerge. In the Irish Translations app the majority of translators involved and the sub-community of ‘senior translators’ (as will be discussed below, see Section 7.2.5.1) use the terms and translations developed by Foras na Gaeilge the offline ‘top-down’ corpus planning body and do not create new terms as will be discussed below.

This section will outline the Irish Translations community’s perceptions of official language policy and language practices. Firstly, translators’ discourse on the Irish State’s education policy and syllabus with regard to the Irish language will be discussed. Secondly, their discourse on official terminology policy shall be considered, followed by the related issue of modern or purist approaches to corpus policy. Then, their adherence to existing language practiced investigated and finally, their approach to the official standard and Irish dialects examined.

7.2.4.1 The Irish State Education Policy

The Irish translators discuss and share their opinions on the Irish State’s approach to language maintenance tied up with the State approach to the teaching of and syllabus for the Irish language. Translator 131 thinks it is ‘awesome’ that people use Irish more on Facebook and the WWW, but believes that its current situation (see Section 2.1.12) is the fault of the Government and the awful Irish syllabus, believing it should be taught like the German language is in Irish schools:

\[ It is awesome that it is used more now on Facebook than prior to the Internet, but this is the fault of the government and the awful Irish syllabus. It should be taught like German or at least the syllabus should be changed.\] (Extract 7.91)

He notes that students get 13 years of Irish language classes and that most students are not fluent at the end of this, however, people only study German for five years and in that time students are able to converse and be fluent. If that was the case for the Irish language then when students are in 4th/5th class in primary school they should be fluent. Translator 133 also believes that not a lot of time is spent on Irish in English medium schools. Translator 124 agrees with Translator 131 about the syllabus, noting that he learned off pages and pages of Irish notes instead of speaking Irish and that after school he was unable to hold a conversation in Irish. However, Translator 133 does not agree:

\[ Níl aon rud mícheart leis an siollabas. Is cuma faoin taobh sin de ba cheart rudai \]
There is nothing wrong with the syllabus. That side of things does not matter, fun things should be done like Rith 2010 that was on in March (Extract 7.92). He believes there is nothing wrong with the syllabus and that it does not matter how it is taught as long as the students are enjoying it. He does note, however, that more fun activities around the Irish language, like Rith 2010, an Irish language marathon and festival, should be done.

Also in this discussion, Translator 133 notes his belief that older people can learn better. In contrast Translator 124 believes that it is easier to learn languages when you are young: ‘... nach deirtear go bhfuil sé i bhfad níos éasca teanga a fhoghlaím nuair atá tú níos óga?? bionn d’intinn oscailte do teangaí nua agus is foghlaim níos nádúrtha é...’ (sic) [Is it not said that it is easier to learn a language when you are younger?? Your mind is open to new languages and you learn it naturally] (Extract 7.93). He does note that he attended a Gaeltacht course as an adult and learnt more there than in the 14 years in school as he spoke Irish there all the time. He believes more emphasis should be put on the Irish oral exam if the Government want more people to speak our national language. Translator 131 welcomes Translator 124’s views and asks if anyone could develop a new syllabus what would they do? He doesn’t think Irish in school is perceived as modern but in the Gaeltacht areas the language is still alive: ‘...níl cuma nua aimseartha le sonrú i ndáiríre maidir leis an nGaolainn ar scoil. Ach sna Gaeltachtaí tá an teanga beo gan aon agó’ [There is not a modern feel to the Irish in schools. But in the Gaeltacht areas the language is undoubtedly alive] (Extract 7.94).

Furthermore, he believes that people don’t know that Irish has a new side and that the Government isn’t doing anything to update it, that they are killing it. Translator 133 also agrees with Translator 124, but notes his belief that when people are older they make more of an effort when learning a language and that children learn languages when they speak them, like in the Gaeltacht. However, the classroom is a different context:

Ach dá mbeadh tú i seomra ranga ceithre uair sa Seachtain ag iarraidh Gaeilge amháin a labhairt, rachfaidh cuid mhaith daoine a chodladh... Ceapaim an fadh ann leis an Ghaeilge ná go bhfuil easpa grá dí... [But if you are in the class room four times a week trying to only speak Irish, most people would go to sleep... I think the problem with Irish is that people do not love it] (Extract 7.95)

Translator 133 believes the issue is that people do not love Irish. The Translators both agree and disagree with the Irish State’s ‘top-down’ policy for the Irish language education system, attributing the current minoritised situation of the Irish language to a number of factors and reasons.
7.2.4.2 **Official Terminology Policy**

When discussing the translation of terms, particularly new terms, *translators* often make reference to translations that have been decided by the offline ‘top-down’ corpus planning board of *An Coiste Téarmaíochta* [the Terminology Committee] and the *Fiontar* element of Irish University DCU, which is involved in the development and publication of some Irish language terminology resources and dictionaries. *Translators* agree and disagree with the translations of these ‘top-down’ corpus planning authorities.

The majority of references by *translators* to official ‘top-down’ corpus planning are to the *focal.ie* website to support their argument for a particular term. For example, when discussing the *Facebook* term ‘check in’, Translator 151 notes that the term ‘*seiceáil isteach*’ is in use already and posts a link to its entry on *focal.ie*, to further advocate the use of that translation: ‘*Tá “Seiceáil Isteach” foirfe. Tá sé in úsáid go forleathan, agus ceart*’ ['*Check In’ is perfect. It is right and widely in use*] (Extract 7.96). Indeed, Translator 87 notes that she checks translations on *focal.ie* before submitting them for voting: ‘*I even checked the term on Focal.ie, and out of some bad habit, added the seimhiu* [lenition]’ (Extract 7.97). Other official sources that *translators* refer to include *Foclóir Uí Dhónaill* (1977), the third Irish/English dictionary published by *An Gúm*, the statutory Irish language publishing company, and the *Foclóir Parlaiminte/Dictionary of Parliamentary Terms* (2001) also from *An Gúm* and produced by the European Language Initiative.

Translator 110 creates a *Topic* asking if there is an Irish translation for ‘Pop Up’ already or if she should create and submit her own: ‘*An bhfuil Gaeilge ar “pop up” nó an gcuirfidh mé an aistriúcháin direct “brúigh suas”?* [Is there an Irish version of “pop up” or will I use the direct translation “pop up”?] (Extract 7.98). In response, Translator 150 directs her to the official terminology available on *Focal.ie*: ‘*Gheobhaidh tú go leor de na téarmaí ríomhairéacha atá uait ag focal.ie*’ [You can get a lot of the computer terms you need here] (Extract 7.99). In response, Translator 110 thanks Translator 150, accepting his advice and the official translation. Here there is no negotiation or disagreement with the official ‘top-down’ Irish language corpus planning.

Translator 127 also wants to use the terms decided by the *Coiste Téarmaíochta*. In particular for ‘mobile communication’, ‘mobile phone’ and ‘mobile commerce’, but he does present his own translation for ‘mobile device’ as ‘*gléas móibíleach*’. He believes professional translators should comply with the official terms of the *Coiste*
**Téarmaíochta** [the Terminology Committee] and that the translation of *Facebook* must do the same:

*Cloíonn aistritheoirí gairmiúla leis na téarmaí Oifigiúla a chruthaíonn an Coiste Téarmaíochta. Cé gur tionscadai deonach é an tionscadal aistriúcháin Facebook, caithfidh muid caithsmeadh leis mar thionscadal gairmiúil.*

[Professional translators comply with the official terms the Terminology Committee develop. Even though the Facebook translation is voluntary, we should treat it as a professional project](Extract 7.100)

Translator 127 supports the use of the official ‘top-down’ translations on the Irish *Translations* app.

However, Translator 143 disagrees with the *focal.ie*, [i.e. the official ‘top-down’ policy], translation of ‘Inbox’ as ‘*Bosca Isteach’*, which literally translates as ‘Box In’. He does not want ‘Postbox’ to be translated as ‘*Bosca poist isteach’*, literally translated as ‘Box Post In’ meaning Post Box In, or ‘*the likes*’. But he concludes that they should use the official terminology for now:

*Is dóigh gur cóir dúinn dul le focal.ie faoi láthair, agus géaráin a sheoladh chucu, más gá.*

[We should go with focal.ie at the moment and if necessary, send them an email](Extract 7.101)

*Focal.ie* does allow individuals to submit their own translations, via their *Foisraithe Téarmaíochta/Terminology Enquiry Form: ‘Má tá moladh agat don leagan Gaeilge den téarma, luaigh anseo é’/*If you’d like to recommend an Irish version for the term, mention it here* (focal.ie, 2012a). This is a ‘bottom-up’ aspect of the ‘top-down’ terminology database, although this is a different ideology of ‘bottom-up’ compared to the *Translations* app. Language speakers can submit a form, an application to *focal.ie* but the *Translations* app allows them to submit and vote on translations in a democratic way. *Focal.ie* can simply reject any suggestions submitted outright but the *Vote* element of the app allows all translations submitted to be considered and voted on by the community, although *Facebook* do influence this process as discussed previously (see Section 6.3).

In three distinct *Topics*, Translator 149 challenges the terminology he credits DCU, i.e. *Fiontar*, with developing:

... go bhfuil an éagóir déanta ag DCU don teanga insna foiseacháin úd acu “Foclóir Riomhaireachta is Teicneolaíochta Faisnéise/Dictionary of Computing and Information Technology” (2004), agus “Foclóir Fiontar/Fiontar Dictionary of Terminology (2004)”.

[DCU have done an injustice to the language in their publications “Foclóir Riomhaireachta is Teicneolaíochta Faisnéise/Dictionary of Computing and Information Technology” (2004), and “Foclóir Fiontar/Fiontar Dictionary of Terminology (2004)]]

(Extract 7.102)
He believes DCU have done the Irish language an ‘injustice’ by the translations they developed and published, in particular their translation of ‘mobile’ as ‘móibíleach’, describing it as a ‘béarlachas uáfásach’ [terrible Anglicism].

Ach cén rogha atá againn ach glacadh leis? Is focal é seo atá cumtha acu toisc gur soiléir go bhfuil an iomad bealaí difriúla gur gá an téarma “mobile” a aistriú. Is trua go bhfuil rian na Bhéarla air, go deimhin, ach an raibh móráin rogha acu? An fadhb ná go bhfuil focal cruthaithe acu anois nach bhfuil aon chiall leis, ach go nglactar leis mar aistriúchán údarásach!

[But what choice do we have but accept it? This is a fictional word they have invented as it is clear there are many different ways that the term ‘mobile’ can be translated. It is unfortunate that it has traces of English, but did they have a choice? The problem is they have developed a word that has no meaning, but it is accepted as the authoritative translation!]

(Extract 7.103)

He asks what choice do ‘we’, the Irish language community, have but to accept it? The problem, Translator 149 believes, is that Fiontar have created a word that has no meaning/common sense and that it has been accepted as the official translation. He complains that ‘móibíleach’ is widely in use, but is not the ‘right’ word at all. Translator 149 wants DCU to change the translation: ‘...táim ar thóir DCU an focal déistineach sin “móibíleach” a scrios!’ [I want DCU to delete that disgusting word]

(Extract 7.104). He prefers the use of ‘cellular’ to describe ‘mobile’ technologies in British English (this will be discussed further in Section 7.2.6).

In another Topic, again discussing the translation of ‘mobile’, Translator 28 notes he contacted Foras na Gaeilge, about this translation previously and that they said ‘móibíleach’ was the translation to be used. However, Translator 149 does not believe that the ‘top-down’ language policy authority is always correct: ‘Ar smaoinigh tú riabh a [name] nach bhfuil Foras na Gaeilge i gcónaí ceart?!’ [Have you ever thought (name) that Foras na Gaeilge are not always right?!]. Translator 149 clearly expresses his opinion of the corpus planning undertaken by Fiontar at DCU, writing that:

...the translation according to DCU Fiontar’s dictionary published in 2004, would be “móibíleach”. However, that then begs the question of their laziness, as this “word” is clearly not Gaeilge, but rather a newly composed term to get around the problem of “soghluaiste”. Had DCU used “cellular”... (Extract 7.105)

Here Translator 149 is again challenging the authority and translations of the ‘top-down’ language policy entity.

Translator 149 also takes issue with other translations he credits DCU with creating, such as ‘suirfeáil’ for ‘surfing’ and ‘brabhsáil’ for ‘browse’, noting that they created these terms in their 2004 publications (as above) and that the traditional Irish dictionary, Foclóir Uí Dhomhnaill, would translate it as ‘mearspleáchadh’ from which he creates ‘browser = mearspleáchán’ (Extract 7.106). He describes ‘suirfeáil’ for
‘surfing’ as a fictional word that DCU created from the English: ‘...tá “scimeáil” ag luch DCU ar “surf” nó “surfing” i leith na hidirlíne. Ach arís is focal cumtha acu as a focal Béarla “skim” é seo, “sciorrú” a mholfainse’. [DCU use “scimeáil” for “surf” or “surfing” in respect of the Internet. But again they invented a word from the English word “skim”, I would propose “sciorrú”] (Extract 7.107). He clearly disagrees with the modern Irish language ‘top-down’ policy agency Fiontar and prefers the more traditional terms, referencing the dictionary from 1977, Foclóir Uí Dhónaill.

Translator 153 discusses the development of translations for new English language terms and the role of the language community in this: ‘Níl na focail go léir atá oiriúnach don ríomhaireacht socraíthe fós mar sin caithfear iad a thriail agus léirmheas a fháil ó daoine [Not all the words that are needed for computers are decided yet, so they should trial them and get reviews from people] (Extract 7.108). He notes that many new technology/computer terms have not been decided yet, presumably he referring to the ‘top-down’ corpus planning terminology committee. Translator 153 wants the language community to play a role in the development of new terminology, for their opinions to be sought and included in the terminology development.

These discussions also involve the issue of creating or developing new terms, thus terminology planning. Translator A (Beecham, 2009) discusses the possibility of creating new terms via the app:

well for example there’s been eh, one of the debates that we had was about the right word for profile eh some people eh thought that profil would be the best word, almost like a translation eh of the English, ah and other people were in favour of breathaismín which is eh little biography eh [Tubridy: ya] but I suppose you could say that that’s not really the same thing as a profile so maybe a new word is needed

Translator 29 also wants to create a new term via the app: ‘Cheapaim ba cheart “blaig” a athrú chuig “gloga”. Ó: gréasán agus loga’ [I think ‘blaig’ should be changed to ‘gloga’. From gréasán and loga] (Extract 7.109). She wants to change the translation for Blog ‘Blaig’ to her coinage ‘Gloga’, which she created from gréasán [network] and loga [log]. However, Translators 150 and 151, both of whom are part of the ‘senior translators’ sub-community within the Irish app, comment that this is not possible as the term Blag is widely in use already and because of this they cannot change it:

Eh... tá “blag” in ísáid fhorleathan agus mar sin nil aon rogha ann. Ní fèidir leat do fhocail féin a chruthú toisc nach maith leat an focal atá i nGaeilge cheana’
[Eh... Blag is in widespread use and therefore we have no choice. You cannot create your own word because you do not the current Irish word] (Extract 7.110)

Aontaím le {ainm}. Tá “blag” ró-choitianta sa chaint le hathrú a dhéanamh air Facebook.
[I agree with {name}. Blag is too commonly used in speech to change it on Facebook] (Extract 7.111)

In their view, she cannot just create new terms because she does not like the existing translations. Although language creativity and play was expected to be widespread on the WWW and new media (cf. Danet and Herring, 2007a) here we can see adherence to the ‘top-down’ policy and de facto normalisation of terms.

7.2.4.3 Modern/Purist Approaches to Corpus Policy

Another common discourse around minority or endangered languages is whether to create new, more modern translations or to use/build on traditional terminology. Translator 149 believes the main point of departure between the translators involved is ‘The modern usage of the Irish language vs maintaining the heritage of the language’ (Extract 7.112). Discussion of these issues also leads to consideration and debate about puritan (Thomas, 1991) approaches to language and translation. Translators even identify and classify themselves and others as purist or conservative translators.

Translator 142 describes the other translators involved in the app as conservative and ‘puritans’ (Extract 7.113), writing that he will never be a translator as he could not be as conservative as those working on this translation. Translator 149 on the other hand, identifies himself as a conservative translator, but does acknowledge that new words will need to be created from time to time. In the radio interview Translator A (Beecham, 2009) also acknowledges the purist/modernity discourse, however he wishes to see a balance between these:

I don’t like to eh classify people who like traditional words as being you know puritans or you know emm hard core y you know extremists, but its it’s a matter of striking a balance and eh taking the, trying to take eh traditional Irish the eh the ah the real language and eh equipping it with eh the tools to deal with the 21st century (Extract 7.114)

Translator 149 thinks purist attitudes are needed when it comes to language, especially when it comes to the use of English words and borrowings:

Nor do I believe that it is wrong to adopt a puritan stance in the matter of language, in particular in light of the apparently recently-dropped historical effort to avoid adopting words from English when there is no word available in Irish’ (Extract 7.115)

However, Translator 142 creates a Topic titled “‘Beatháisnéin” - Puritan Attitudes’ in which he argues against purist ideologies and attitudes: ‘To whoever created this ridiculous word for “profile” - please, no purist attitudes on Facebook when it
comes to Irish - this one is seriously going too far’ (Extract 7.116). Translator 38 is of the same mindset, calling on the community to be practical and says that Peadar Ó Doirnín, an 18th century Irish poet, is not in charge of the translation, i.e. that the Irish language is in the 21st century now. In response to discussions about modern/traditional Irish translations Translator 142 proposes the creation of two different forms of Irish, like Norwegian Bokmål and Nynorsk, Gaeilge [Irish] and Nua-Gaeilge [New-Irish]. He proposes this to satisfy purists who want to keep Irish pure and modernists who have no problem with bringing new words into the language.

7.2.4.4 Language Practices: Usage and Authoring
Translators also discuss what translations are already in use, i.e. people’s language practices, when considering which translation to use and also encourage their peers to use translations they prefer, an example of language management (Spolsky, 2012a). Some translators view the terms already in use by Irish-speakers as a de facto policy that should not be challenged, while others disagree with this and seek to change what is in use. Translators also refer to what is in use in a number of media entities when discussing new technological terms such as ‘Back’ and ‘Tag’, including the Internet programme Firefox, Irish language apps, the Irish language radio station RnaG and the Irish language television station TG4. In response to Translator 113’s translation of ‘Uploads/downloads’, Translator 147 tells them to put the word into Google and to look at what people are using online: ‘Cuir sin [“uaslódálaí”] agus “Uaslódálacha” isteach i ngoogle i ndiaidh a chéile agus féach ar na torthaí’ [Put “uaslódálaí” and “Uaslódálacha” into google one after another and look at the results] (Extract 7.117). He notes that he found Translator 113’s preferred term on the WWW only once: ‘Níl ach sampla amháin de sin ann ar an Idirlíon.’ [There is only one example of that on the Internet] (Extract 7.118). Translator 147 uses the WWW as a corpus of translations/terms in use. He reinforces his disagreement with Translator 113’s translation by referencing the practices and de facto policy of the Irish language community online. Here we can see translators enforcing the existing language norms created through normalisation, processes of their language use and practices on the app, in the same way as Leppänen and Plirainen-Marshal’s (2009) find new media gaming participants do.
Another Topic on the Discussion Board considers the term ‘Phostáil’ [Post], with Translator 148 judging it as a béarlachas (Extract 7.119). Translator 145 notes that it is used widely online including on the BBC Northern Ireland Irish language pages, the discussion board of the association supporting Irish language teachers in second level and in online Irish language magazine Beo, appealing to the perceived authority of these domains. Translator 139 agrees that it is a béarlachas but that it would be hard to change it as it is used widely. Translator 148 thinks they should not use ‘bad’ translations just because they are used widely:

*Thuigim thú, ach creidim nach ceart dúinn úsáid a bhaint as focal dona mar tá sé in úsáid choiteann. Is sinne na haistritheoir agus anseo a bhfuil deis agaimh chul dul i gcion ar fhorás na teangacha. Ní ciall maith é an úsáid choiteann. Is féidir linn rud éigin nóis fearr a chruthú.*

[I understand, but I do not think we have to use a bad word like that just because its in use widely. We are the translators and here we have a chance to influence the evolution of the language. Common usage is not a good reason. We can develop something better.] (Extract 7.120)

He states that they, the individuals and community of the app, are the translators, they have a chance to develop a better translation and therefore, go against this de facto policy. Translator 148 is himself, and asking others to, act as guardians or gatekeepers of the language. Some translators are not sure what to do as there are no traditional terms like ‘post’; while others do not like it but they feel there is choice, there is nothing else that can be used. Some translators do not think the de facto language policy of the Irish language community, their language practices, can be challenged.

Translators also consider the preferred translations and terminology of authority figures. Translator 149 considers the views of Irish language scholar and translator in his discussion of the translations of the term ‘mobile’: ‘D’ár leis an t-ollamh Nicholas Williams...’ [According to Prof. Nicholas Williams] (Extract 7.121). This Facebook translator is appealing to the perceived authority of this scholar and translator to strengthen his argument for a particular term. He agrees with Prof. Williams’ usage of the term ‘soghluaiste’ [mobile/movable] in certain situations but disagrees with Williams’ preferred term ‘fón póca’ [pocket phone/mobile phone], wanting to use ‘guthán’ [telephone] instead of ‘fón’ [phone]. The translation of the term ‘mobile phone’ will be discussed further in Section 7.2.6.

### 7.2.4.5 Official and Dialect Standard(s)

Another locus of discussions emerges around concerns over which variety of Irish should be used: *an Chaighdeáin Oifigiúil* [The Official Standard], or a dialect of Irish
and, if in the case of the second, which dialect. This discourse is so common the Gaelport/Cogar email, in which the researcher first encountered the Translations app (see Section 5.1.3), acknowledges this issue and the design of the app which encourages the use of a consistent standard, writing that ‘It is not known at this point whether any arguments concerning Standard Irish on Facebook have resulted in the breakdown in ‘Cairdeas’ or friendships’ (Gaelport, 2009). Furthermore, as discussed previously (Section 5.1.3), Gaelport notes that they are looking forward to the inclusion of all the Irish dialects in the Translations app.

The content of the Irish language Style Guide Wiki/Style discusses the use of the official standard and dialects on Facebook. The Irish Style Guide Wiki only had two entries by the end of data collection and the authors of these are unknown, as the contributions are not attributed to any individual translator. In the first entry the translator outlines their wish to use the official standard of Irish, An Cháighdeán Oifigiúil, in this translation and that there is a de facto Facebook standard. The translator notes that the Facebook standard is like the more standard Munster/Connemara dialects of Irish, demonstrating their own preference for these dialects and the official standard as opposed to the other Irish dialect, Ulster/Donegal Irish.

Prepositions + Article: According to the Official Standard both lenition & nasalisation are acceptable after preposition + article, ie. ar an mbord or ar an bhord [on the table]. In Facebook, the defacto standard has become the more standard Munster/Connemara way, ie. ar an mbord. Please use this standard in all translations. Please also note that DENTALS apply to nasalisation – ar an ndeasc ar an dtraein, [on the desk on the train] etc are NOT correct.
(Extract 7.122)

This translator instructs others not to translate according to the other dialects; the translator is imposing their belief on which standard to use on the community of Irish translators, illustrating the relations of power ongoing within the Irish community.

The second contribution to the Irish Style Guide Wiki is concerned with the same issue:

Réamhfhocail + Alt: “ar an mbord” amháin atá inghlachta anois ar Facebook ní “ar an bhord”

Ba cheart “ar an deasc” is “ar an traein”, a bheith ann in áit “ar an ndeasc ar an dtraein”

[Prepositions + Article: only [Munster/Connemara dialect version of] ‘on the table’ is acceptable on Facebook not [Donegal dialect version of] ‘on the table’ ‘on the desk’ and ‘on the train’, should be used instead of [no nasalisation applied]’on the desk on the train’ ]
(Extract 7.123)

This translator agrees with the first contribution in using the official standard which is based on the Munster/Connemara dialects, again the Irish-speakers who want to
translate according to the Ulster/Donegal dialect are excluded from this translation effort.

The notion of standard and standardness is also discussed on the Discussion Board of the Irish Translations app. In one Topic, Translator 151 states how the translation of ‘I am’ should follow An Chaighdeáin Oifigiúil.

Tuigim go maith go bhfuil “tá mé” sa chaint anseo i gConamara, ach ní chiallaíonn sé sin go nglacar de réir an Chaighdeáin é agus ní cóir dánmne a leithéid a ghlacdh anseo... Nuair a focaigh a tháitíonn na hainmheachtaí ar an aí n-áistriúchán, níl tú ach ag milleadh leathanachas an tsuíomh. Ansin, caithfidh duit a úsáidh daoine éile a n-áth a chaitheamh ag ceartú d’oibre agus ní siad sin in ann n-áistriúchán féin a dheanamh!

[I understand that I am is used in the Connamara dialect but that does not mean it is accepted in accordance with the standard and should not be accepted by us here... When you use non-standard words and grammar, all you are destroying the continuity of the site. Then, other people have to spend their time correcting other people’s work and they are not able to do their own translations.] (Extract 7.124)

Translator 151 does not believe that just because something is in use in different dialects or regional language varieties that it should be used on Facebook. He describes Irish language dialects as non-standard and that their use on Facebook leads to more translation work for other translators to fix them, which takes them away from submitting their own translations. Translator 151 also tells other translators to read the translator guidelines from An Gúm (the statutory Irish language publisher), quoting from and linking to the section which outlines that spoken and written Irish are not the same. Translator 141 agrees, noting that An Chaighdeáin Oifigiúil is used in the community driven Irish version of Wikipedia, Vicipéid, even though the contributors are from different regions with different dialects.

However, in this discussion Translator 12 points out how an Chaighdeáin Oifigiúil says to say/write ‘I am’ is according to the Munster dialect of Irish and that those using Connacht and Ulster/Donegal dialects of Irish do not use or write ‘I am’ in the same way. Translator 122 points out that An Chaighdeáin Oifigiúil says that anything in use in the dialects is right:

Deir an Caighdeán go bhfuil rud ar bith a úsáidtear i gcaint na gcanúintí ceart... tá go leor rudai atá a n-úsáid timpeall na tire atá difriúil ón gcaighdeán. Ní féidir lom a mhuintir Thír Chonaill atá ar gá “ar a’ bhord” leis na cianta agus a rá leo go bhfuil siad micheart agus go gcaithfidh siad “ar an mbord” a rá

[The standard says that anything in use in the dialects is right... There are many things being used around the country that are different from the standard. We cannot tell Donegal people that are using “ar a’ bhord” for centuries that they are wrong and they should use “ar an mbord”]

(Extract 7.125)

He notes that there are many differences between the standard and the dialects and that dialect speakers cannot be asked to change their usage/practices. Translator 121 believes
that both versions are correct and questions who said that An Chaighdeán Oifigiúil had to be the standard used on Facebook:

_Cé a dúirt gur cheart dúinn an chaighdeán Oifigiúil a úsáid anseo ar Facebook?... Tá difríocht soléir ann idir gaeilge ceart agus cruinn agus gaeilge caighdeánach. Is cuma ma úsaideann tú do chanúint anseo nó áit ar bith éile. Má tá do chanuint ceart, is cuma faoin chaighdéan. Tá caighdeán again do choisaint na gaeilge agus d’eagraíochtaí oifigiúla._

[Who said that we have to use the standard on Facebook? There is a clear difference between correct and true Irish and standard Irish. It does not matter if you use your dialect here or anywhere else. If your dialect is right, the standard does not matter. We have a standard to protect Irish and for official purposes] (Extract 7.126)

He believes there is a difference between true and correct Irish and standard Irish and that if your canúint [dialect] is right the standard does not matter. He sees the standard as existing just to protect the Irish language and for official purposes. These discussions illustrate the familiar tensions in endangerment discourses between preserving linguistic diversity in the form of the different dialects and the need to adopt monolingualism, in the form of one official standard (cf. Ó hIfearnáin, 2008), in order to bring a minoritised language to a new mode of use, that of new media.

7.2.5 The Power Relations within the Translations Community

This penultimate section will investigate the sub-community within the Irish Translations community who act in a gate-keeping or supervision manner. Firstly, the ‘senior translators’ sub-community, facilitated and supported via the design of the app, will be outlined. Secondly, the ‘othering’ of translators who are not perceived as being part of this sub-community, are not involved in the Discussion Board of the app or are deemed not to be submitting correct translations, will be discussed. Finally, the exclusion of some translators, such as Irish language learners, from the app by their peers shall be outlined.

7.2.5.1 Senior Translators

Policy decisions are reached by consensus, as the design of the Translations app promotes and encourages, but there is also a group or sub-community within the community who position themselves as ‘senior’ members. These translators rank highly in all three of the app’s Leaderboards and are the most prolific posters on the Discussion Board. They act in a supervisory manner, instructing and influencing other translators on the Discussion Board to get the translations and version of Irish they want used on Facebook. The ‘senior translators’ also form agreements amongst themselves on translations and translation issues, such as which version of Irish to use,
the official standard or a dialect, which affect the community and direction of the overall translation. Translator 151 in particular, acts as a ‘senior’ member of the community throughout the Topics of the Discussion Board, starting 14 Topics, 12.9% of the total Topics, and contributing 98 posts across many Topics, 15.5% of the total posts. In these the translator puts his views across on the Irish language, the standard of Irish on the app, and instructs fellow translators on how to vote and translate. He also seeks support for translations he favours:

[posts a link to a translation open for voting]
Tá duine éigean tar éis saighead Up a chliceáil ar an abairt nasctha thuas...?!?! An féidir na daoine anseo an saighead “Down” a chliceáil. Táim tinn tuirseach den abairt truaílithe seo
[Someone is after clicking the Up arrow on the word linked to above ...?!?! Can people click the arrow “Down” .. I am sick and tired of this troublesome word] (Extract 7.127)

Interestingly Translator 151 is perceived as being part of this ‘senior translators’ sub-community by the other community translators. He replies to the above post later, thanking the seven translators who voted up as requested. The Translations community vote as he asked them to, the language policy of the ‘senior translators’ is accepted and acted upon. Translator 150 also acts as a ‘senior translator’, posting a paragraph explaining the grammatical consequences of ‘Facebook’ as a proper noun for Irish. This explanation is instructive in nature using direct language such as ‘you must’, ‘you are also not allowed’ and ‘you must write’ (Extract 7.127). Throughout the Topics and Posts on the Discussion Board a number of translators position themselves and act as more knowledgeable, ‘senior’ members of the Irish Translations community.

These ‘senior translators’ also take on the role of acting as reviewers and moderators of translations others submit. For example, Translator 132 posts examples of what he deems is ‘wrong’ with certain translations and Translator 86 also comments on the quality of translations submitted and reviews others’ work, outlining a list of ‘glitches’ he found: ‘... but I’ve made a short list explaining in English the grammatical and semantic glitches I happened to spot for some of the more promising votes’ (Extract 7.128). Translators 145 and 151 tell other translators to act as reviewers and correct mistakes if they see them: ‘Facebook prompts you to double-check the capitalisation, but it won’t stop you saving capitalised version if you’re sure, so go ahead and correct these if you see them’ (sic) (Extract 7.129) and ‘We’ll just have to try and weed them out – fix them if you notice them I guess’ (Extract 7.130). The latter quote from Translator 151 illustrates that the translators involved in the Discussion Board are perceived of as another community within the Irish community of translators who can assume the roles
of quality reviewer and corrector. Indeed, Translator 146 wishes Translator 150 luck with the monitoring of others’ translations: ‘Go n-eirí leis an monatóireacht!’ [Good luck with the monitoring!] (Extract 7.131).

There does appear to be one rule for the ‘senior translators’ or Discussion Board sub-community and one rule for the rest of the Irish app’s community. Translator 136, who is not a ‘senior translator’, asks for others to submit translations he posts in the Discussion Board, as he is locked out of the voting (a bug with the app at the time).

Meas tú cén fáth nach féidir liom aistriúcháin a chur suas – deir sé nach bhfuil mé i mo bhall sách fada! Cuirfidh mé roinnt aistriúcháin anseo, más mian le duine ar bith iad a chur suas dom!! [Why do you think I cannot submit translations – it says I am too new! I will put some translations here, if anyone wants to submit them for me!] (Extract 7.132)

However, Translator 151, a ‘senior translator’, comments that if someone else submits his translations this will mess up the voting process: ‘Bheadh fadhb leis an vótáil má chuireann duine éigin eile do chuid aistriúcháin leis thar do cheannsa’ [There will be a problem if someone else submits the translation on your behalf] (Extract 7.133). He does so despite engaging in vote seeking actions himself as discussed previously (Section 7.2.3.1).

The ‘senior translators’ involved also position themselves as more knowledgeable based on their language competency and their experience both in terms of how long they have been involved in the app and their translation/localisation experience outside of the app. Translator 106 positions himself as knowledgeable about translation efforts, posting that ‘In my previous job I had a bit of exposure to translation/globalization enablement at IBM and the practice there was_never_to have a sentence contain translatable variables...’ (sic) (Extract 7.134). Translator 151 and many others, in arguing for a particular version of a term, refer to what was decided in the Glossary stage, demonstrating their lengthy involvement in the translation process and the app.

7.2.5.2 Othering
Schieffelin and Doucet (1998) acknowledge that language ideologies are often the location of images of ‘self/other’ or ‘us/them’. One of Cooke and Simpson’s (2012: 122) three dominant discourses about linguistic diversity is ‘othering’, which positions ‘users of languages that are not the dominant language, or of non-standard varieties of the dominant language... as “other”’. They define ‘othering’ as ‘the creation in discourse of in-groups and out-groups (“we” and “they”)...’ (ibid.). ‘Othering’ occurs on the Irish
Translations app Discussion Board, with translators bemoaning unknown ‘others’ contributions/translations and positioning them as different to the knowledgeable translators engaged in the Discussion Board. Translator 151 refers to a translator who has submitted a translation he does not agree with as ‘someone’ and refers to the ‘senior translators’ sub-community, those involved in the Discussion Board, as ‘na daoine anseo’ [the people here] (Extract 7.135), while Translator 132 discusses the mistakes ‘someone’ is making on the app (Extract 7.136). Translator 151 explicitly addresses these ‘others’, writing that:

Postáil (as verb) is being voted down by people. To those people: just because you don’t like the verb doesn’t mean it’s wrong. Postáil has been discussed here and accepted, so don’t go on your own crack pot “béarlachas” crusades (Extract 7.137)

Here again those going against the majority wishes are othered and referred to as ‘those people’. The community of the Discussion Board is referred to as a separate entity and the authority they have assumed: ‘... discussed here and accepted’ (Extract 7.138). Translator 148 also expresses the attitude that those involved in the Discussion Board are more knowledgeable and are another community within the community of translators when he notes that ‘I’m probably barking up the wrong tree...the people that read the discussion board probably aren’t the ones making these mistakes...’ (Extract 7.139). It is interesting to see here that Translator 151 describes these ‘others’ actions as being done on purpose, as if to sabotage the translation, writing that ‘I think there are a lot of people that just drop in and out to vote up dodgy translations without ever looking at the discussion board...’ (Extract 7.140). He later writes: ‘hear hear. Total disaster. I have a funny feeling that some people don’t even bother looking here before they set off on their journey of destruction’ (Extract 7.141).

7.2.5.3 Exclusion of Translators
Profile is another Facebook term which is discussed across a number of Topics on the Discussion Board and here illustrates how some translators are actually excluded from the translation effort, subscribing to the us/them or ‘othering’ discourse, as discussed above. Translator 100 posts to the Discussion Board saying she has never heard of the term ‘Próifíl’ for Facebook ‘Profile’, asking what about using the term ‘portráid’ instead as she found this in a dictionary: ‘Níor chualas a leithéid riamh. Cad fé ‘portráid” mar atá sé san fhoclóir. Is annamh a fheitear “óí” le chéile mae sin’ [I have not heard the likes of this before. What about “portráid” as it is in the dictionary. ‘Óí’
are rarely seen together like that] (Extract 7.142). Translator 151 posts a reply stating that ‘Próifíl’ was the translation decided on in step one of the process here; that they cannot change the Glossary terms now:

_Beartaíodh ar “Próifíl” ag túis an phróisis seo. Ní féidir tearchaí na ghluaise a athrú anois agus dá n-athrúimís é anois, bheadh fiorfhadh agam leis na abairtí atá aistrithe cheana féin. Níl aon rud cearr leis an bhfocal “Próifíl” ach oiread. ‘S é an focal atá molta sa Bhunchar Téarmaíochta agus is é an focal is oiriúnaí sa chás seo._

[We decided on “Próifíl” at the start of this process. We cannot change the Glossary terms now and if we were to change it now, we would have a real problem with the sentences already translated. There is nothing wrong with the word “Próifíl”. It is the word the Bhunchar Téarmaíochta uses and is the most suitable term here.] (Extract 7.143)

Furthermore, he believes that there is nothing wrong with ‘Próifíl’, and that it is the term used in the Irish language terminology database. Translator 100 replies saying that she is interested in language and that she knows the processes involved in language(s), presumably the processes of corpus planning and terminology development.

_Tá spéis fé leith agam i gcúrsaí teangan agus tuigim go feillemhaith próiséas na dteangacha. Muna bhfheadh é a athrú bheidh mar a thá. Nior roghneóinn an focal ach is cume anois mar tá sé déanta. Tá éacht a dhéanamh agaibh bail ó Dhia oraibh más féidir aon ní a dhéanamh te i dteangháil liom ar {roimhpost}._

[I have an interest in language matters and I understand well the processes involved in languages. If you are unable to change it, that is it. I would not choose that word but it does not matter as it is done. What you are doing is an achievement, good luck, if I can do anything contact me at {email}]. (Extract 7.144)

Translator 100 would not choose that term but it does not matter now as it is done. Furthermore, she adds that if she can do anything for this translation process they can contact her and she gives her email address. Translator 100’s proposal is not accepted; she sees that she has missed part of this translation process, step one, and thus she does not see herself as one of the Translations community. She hails their, not her, achievement in translating Facebook and appears to take her leave of the community, telling them to contact her if she can contribute anything, acknowledging that there is a ‘senior translators’ sub-community who, by the fact they have been here since the start, are the ones in charge of the translation. The wish to exclude translators from the Irish Translations app is explicitly discussed a number of times on the Discussion Board. Translator 151 writes that ‘certain people need to be banned from this, they are ruining the hard work of others’ (Extract 7.145), while Translator 151 wishes there was ‘... an admin feature and the ability to ban people. Argh’ (Extract 7.146). There is most definitely a sub-community within the Irish Translations community who perceive themselves as being in charge of this translation process as discussed above. Furthermore, this group wishes they had additional gatekeeping powers, the ability to
ban those they deem not working with them from the app altogether. These ‘senior translators’ want to develop their own translation of Facebook from the ‘bottom-up’ but they also want to impose their translations and approach on others in a supervisory way.

Further evidence of this is seen when translators who are language learners or improvers are discussed, as some translators believe the Translations app is not a place for Irish learners or improvers. Translator 151 posts a message for Irish translators who are perhaps learners or not fluent, telling them that ‘...if your Irish isn’t up to scratch please don’t just submit any old thing; it makes everyone’s life tougher! Cheers!’ (Extract 7.147). Furthermore, a few days later he complains about someone who he describes as not able to spell correctly and that he cannot continue translating himself if he’s correcting others mistakes all the time. He repeats himself in a more forceful tone:

_Aris a dheirim..._ [I say again] if your Irish isn’t up to scratch please stop! This isn’t a practice ground for your Irish; we’re trying to get a good translation of Facebook off the ground

(Extract 7.148)

He uses English to state this, as if to ensure that those who are not fluent in Irish can understand this post and to exclude them from the discussions in Irish which are meant for other more fluent translators. However, Translator 55, who identifies himself as a language learner or someone who sees his Irish as needing improvement, disagrees saying ‘Ní aontaim liom [I don’t agree] – surely this should be somewhere I could try and improve my irish? rather than be put down for trying to use it?’ (sic) (Extract 7.149). He is quickly dismissed by Translators 41 and 144 who agree with Translator 151 that the Irish Translations app is not the place for people to practise their Irish, with Translator 41 prioritising the standard of Irish on Facebook over learner/improver’s involvement: ‘I think it’s a better idea to get a clean, accurate Irish version of Facebook on the go!’ (Extract 7.150). Translator 144 is however somewhat sensitive to learners and improvers, commending Translator 55 on his effort and reminding the other translators that this is why Facebook provided a Vote element, telling them not to be too hard on learners/improvers. He does still advise Translator 55 to go to other websites, listing some suggestions that are more suitable for Irish language learners/improvers. A year later, Translator 151 references this Topic, quoting Translator 55’s comment ‘surely this is a place...’, as above, when discussing the translation of the term ‘Current City’.
Here Translator 151 likens some contributions and translators to terrorists of translation, complaining that even that if you know anything about correct grammar you can only vote a translation up once. Here he states that the standard of Irish on Facebook is shocking and appears to blame this on those who are not fluent in Irish, language learners and improvers.

However, this approach to language learners is not universal on the Discussion Board. In the early days of the app, Translator 125 posted a comment introducing herself as an Irish language learner, where she is from, etc. Here we find a different attitude with Translator 144 commending her, and telling her to stick with the Irish reading and speaking. Indeed, Translator 149 acknowledges the role those less fluent can play in the Translations app and, furthermore, the role they play in the app with fluent speakers. He believes that

*Those who are highly-learned in the language will hopefully be able to educate those who are less fluent. However, it is only with the help of those less fluent and with a desire to improve their Irish that we can be aware of instances where the “pure” translation is perhaps outdated and may need to be revised.*

Although he acknowledges the role and place of those less fluent in the app, which is positive in contrast to the comments referred to above, he sees the ‘highly-learned’ (Extract 7.153) and fluent speakers as in charge of this translation process, having authority in the process and being more ‘senior translators’ in the community.

### 7.2.6 The Case of Fón Póca: ‘Bottom-Up’ or ‘Top-Down’?

This chapter concludes with the case of the translation of the term ‘mobile phone’ and the language practices of the Irish translators resulting from this discussion, as will be considered in Section 7.2.6.1 below. ‘Mobile phone’ is the most discussed term on the Irish language Translations app Discussion Board, appearing in four separate Topics and the related translation of the term ‘phone’ in another. Anecdotally there is an ongoing debate about the Irish language term for ‘mobile phone’. The online version of the Irish language national terminology database, the ‘top-down’ language policy, gives two translations: teileafón póca and fón póca (focal.ie, 2010) and the terms guthán...
soghluaiste and guthán póca are also in use. This multiplicity of terms is evident in Ireland’s political and legal systems with both fón póca and teileafón soghluaiste used in the naming of government committees and laws passed (ibid.). Guthán soghluaiste is seen as more ‘traditional’ coming from the Irish for ‘telephone’ guthán, while fón póca is generally perceived as a ‘modern’ term, but it is also seen by some as too Anglicised. Even the Sunday Times article about the Irish Translations app, acknowledges the debate about ‘mobile phone’, writing that

On the site’s discussion forum, translators debate whether modern or traditional Irish words should be used. While some favour the more modern “fon poca” for “mobile phone”, others argued for “guthan poca” to be the official translation (Coyle, 2009)

On the Discussion Board four versions of ‘mobile phone’ are discussed: fón póca (pocket phone), guthán póca (pocket telephone), guthán soghluaiste (mobile/movable telephone) and guthán ceallach (cell telephone). Fón póca, the translation to be used as per the Irish app’s Glossary, appears to be the term favoured by the majority of the translators, nevertheless others have different opinions.

One issue associated with the translation of fón póca and discussed here is béarlachas as discussed above. The use of fón is thought to be too close to the English ‘phone’ or ‘fon’ as used in colloquial English. An example of this from one translator is the post:

mobile phone should either be guthán soghluaiste or guthán póca (I would argue that “fón póca” is a straight-up english calque and should be avoided in this case) (sic)
(Translator 6, Extract 7.153)

The translation of mobile phone as guthán soghluaiste is regarded as more ‘traditional’ as it uses the official Irish word for telephone, guthán. This is framed as a clear statement of the individual’s beliefs which operate as a sort of personal language policy (Spolsky, 2004; 2012a) implemented through their practice, i.e. translating and voting, and is a definite attempt to influence other translators. In a sense the translator is acting as a ‘language broker’. This illustrates the power relations within the Irish community, as the translator is challenging the majority decision of the community (in this case the use of fón póca) in favour of their own preferred choice (guthán soghluaiste or guthán póca) (Androutsopoulos, 2009).

A Topic in favour of fón póca, the translation chosen during stage one of the translation process, was started in reaction to other translations being submitted. The translator here reinforces the community’s consensual beliefs associated with this translation, i.e. the community language policy (Spolsky, 2009):
Can we decide once and for all that we are using the term Fón Póca for mobile phone, as was decided at the glossary stage. The point of the glossary is to stop people translating one thing seven different ways. If we’re not consistent then this will be the worst translation ever. Regardless of whether guthán póca, etc. is “more correct” - Fón Póca was chosen in the first stage - will people stop using terms other than those from the glossary.

(Translator 151, Extract 7.154)

This example again illustrates a statement of language policy by means of a reaction to other translators language practices in submitting and voting for other translations of ‘mobile phone’. The statement here attempts to enforce the community’s language policy. The use of ‘we’ is interesting to note, as it can be seen as an attempt to create solidarity with other translators and increase cohesion among them. But the use of ‘people’ illustrates that some of the community are seen as ‘others’ and are excluded. Relations of power connected to different levels of language policy are thus occurring within the community of translators. Furthermore, we can see that language policy is an ongoing process, rather than the endpoint of a process such as this: Translator 151 is not willing to let this translation be decided by the voting process of the app, rather he re-iterates the community policy and instructs his peers to follow this.

The individual translator with the most posts on this subject, Translator 149, wants yet another translation of ‘mobile phone’ guthán ceallach [cell phone] to be used:

D’ar leis an tOllamh Nicholas Williams (COBÁC), gur cóir “guthán póca” a úsáid, cé go ndéarfainse “guthán ceallach” a bheith i bhfad níos fearr.

[According to Prof. Nicholas Williams (UCD) [University College Dublin], guthán póca should be used; however, I think guthán ceallach is a lot better] (Extract 7.154)

Again Translator 149 is appealing to an authority figure to support his argument to use a particular translation. Throughout the discussions Translator 149 expresses the belief that guthán ceallach should be used, as he dislikes the use of the word ‘mobile’ in the English language and prefers ‘cellular’. Here Translator 149 is also going against the community’s language policy but this translator’s language policy is also different from the level of Translator 6, as discussed above, to use guthán soghluaiste or guthán póca. However, they are the only translators to favour this term and do not garner support from others:

Aontaím leat i slí a [aínn], ach, tá roimnt den grí [bhri] cáilte nuair a úsáidear an focal ceallach. b'hfhearr liom guthán póca mar shampla.

[I do agree with you in a way [name], but some of the meaning is lost when you use the word cellular, for example, I prefer guthán póca] (Translator 144, Extract 7.155).

As this example shows, any translator can post to the Discussion Board, participate in this process and go against the dominant discourse(s) (Lo Bianco, 2010); however, their
views can be excluded from the community language policy by not gaining support from the wider community, particularly the ‘senior translator’ community.

As discussed previously (see Appendix 1) translators could at different times throughout this study use the app without appearing on the Leaderboards for that language. At one point in the study, October 2009, Facebook changed the design of the app to not allow translators to opt out of the Leaderboard of the app, although this was changed back a few months later. The ‘new’ Translations app also has an option for translators to hide their activity from the community as seen in Figure 7.8 below.

Figure 7.8: Translation App Settings

It must be acknowledged that these hidden translators are another level of language policy not found in the Discussion Board but only in their practices. Thus another aspect of language policy are those translators who chose not to be on the Leaderboards or take part in the debates of the Discussion Board.

7.2.6.1 Language Practices: Translations Submitted

To supplement the findings from the above ‘mobile phone’ discussion data, the phrases that were open for voting (at the time of these discussions) that contained the term ‘mobile phone’ were examined. This was carried out to ascertain what translations individual translators were submitting and voting on in practice, to consider the performative actions of the translators (Lo Bianco, 2010). A total of 20 phrases were examined (with 6 irrelevant results disregarded) including ‘mobile phone’ as in one’s mobile phone number, a ‘mobile phone’ link to the Facebook mobile hub, the privacy option for a user’s ‘mobile phone’ number and the final term was ‘mobile phone’ with no description of its use given.
There were four versions of the phrase ‘mobile phone number’ open for voting, displayed in order of most votes first: fón póca, guthán póca, uimhir (number) guthán póca and uimhir (number) guthán soghluaiste. This illustrates that the translation of ‘mobile phone’ had not been resolved despite the beliefs, practices and management (Spolsky, 2012a), and therefore, language policy(ies), as discussed above. The translation favoured by Translator 149 above, guthán ceallach, has not been submitted for voting, again illustrating the exclusion of translators and translations which do not subscribe to the more dominant discourses (Lo Bianco, 2010) or the approval of the ‘senior translators’. Fón póca the language policy of the majority of the community had the most votes, but the submission of the other two translations demonstrates that some translators are acting according to their own beliefs within the community. The above three terms are also submitted for the term ‘privacy option for mobile phone number’, but here guthán póca had the most number of votes with fón póca second. However, only fón póca is submitted for voting in the other two phrases. Thus we can see that the language policy processes and power relations around the translation of ‘mobile phone’ were ongoing and not adhering to the community language policy. The case of ‘mobile phone’ demonstrates that ‘bottom-up’ language policy is facilitated in that anyone can submit the translation they want, but translations must be supported by the wider community, especially the ‘senior translators’, to win the voting process, illustrating the social nature of this language policy (Spolsky, 2009) and the different levels of language policy occurring within this ‘bottom-up’ effort.

In conclusion, this chapter presents the translators involved in the app and also discusses the practices and ideology of the Irish Translations app community. The data gives an overview of the individuals and their histories that the communities of translators are comprised of. It is not meant to categorise or classify the individuals involved in the Translations app, rather it is included to illustrate some aspects of who the individuals are, who will potentially shape the Irish language and its language policy in the new media domain, as will be discussed further in the next chapter. The practices and ideologies of the Irish community of translators demonstrate the de facto language policy they have developed through their interactions and practices on the app. The next chapter shall consider the implications of these findings about Facebook and the Irish community of translators for current and future conceptualisations of language policy.
CHAPTER 8
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS
LANGUAGE POLICY AND NEW MEDIA

Having presented the data of the current study to identify and consider the language policy of Facebook and the Irish Translations community, this chapter will return to the research questions, paying particular attention to the wider theoretical implications of this study for language policy research, both current and future. The primary research question of this thesis (see Section 1.1) is: what impact do new media have on language policy, in particular with regard to minority languages? To consider language policy, new media and minority languages, this central question is broken down into three sub-questions. Firstly, how do new media technologies change or challenge language policy and the language ideologies underpinning these? Secondly, what role do language ideologies play in language policy processes in new media environments? Thirdly, in this technologically globalised context, is the future of language policy, in relation to minority languages, going to be driven by non-official entities?

This research is situated in the critical/post-modern era (Ricento, 2000a) (see Section 2.1.4), as it is concerned with ideology and agency, in particular, the role of ideology and ideologies in language policy and the role of both individuals and communities in processes of language use and policies. It follows the approach of Blommaert et al. (2009) (see Section 2.1.17), by focusing on the multiplicity of actors and actions in a globalised language policy context and not on dichotomies or continua. It considers the corporate entity Facebook, the Irish Translator community and individual translators as language policy actors and their language practices and ideologies as actions in the de facto language policy of the Facebook SNS context. The current study draws on Shohamy’s (2009) view of language policy (see Section 2.1.10), as an experience, both ongoing and personal, to identify language policy in the online language practices, attitudes, beliefs and ideologies of a corporate entity, Facebook, and individual language speakers, the Irish Translations community. It contributes to a refocusing of language policy research to the human, personal level of language policy and on individual users/speakers (cf. Ricento, 2000a).

The chapter begins by considering Facebook as a language policy actor and secondly, the Irish Translations community as language policy actors in the new media context. It then turns to the three conclusions of this research, firstly, how new media changes and challenges existing notions of language policy. Then, it will consider the
primary role of language ideologies in the language policy processes of this context. Next, it considers how the future of language policy will be ‘produser’ (Bruns, 2008) and X driven given the changing role of commercial entities and language speakers and communities in language policy, as this study demonstrates. Finally, this chapter will conclude by offering some directions for future research. As with the previous chapters, quotations from data sources are presented in italic font.

8.1 Facebook as a Language Policy Actor
In contrast to previous research on the role of media in language policy (see Section 2.1.16), in the current study, the language policy of the media, here Facebook, is not just the language policy of a commercial entity but the language policy of a global communication domain/medium with over a billion users (Zuckerberg, 2012). Given this user figure and its position as the second most visited website on the WWW (Appendix 1), Facebook’s language policy and approach to internationalisation/translation, as considered in Chapter 6, will have very real effects on the multilingual WWW. Facebook itself acknowledges, when discussing the Translations app, that ‘Everything here has such a huge impact for so many millions of people’ (Facebook, 2009a). This section will consider the role of Facebook as a language policy actor (Kelly-Holmes, 2012) in the new media context and its wider impact on the multilingual Web.

In internationalising its website to increase its market share, through glocalisation (Section 3.2.7), Facebook impacted, probably unwittingly, on the de facto language policy and multilingual nature of the Web by having a multilingual website when not specifically required to do so by a ‘top-down’ language policy. Given Facebook’s status it acts as an ‘agent of language ideology’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012), with its approach to internationalisation, multilingualism and minority languages influencing other commercial entities, individual users and the wider WWW. Facebook influences the language diversity of new media, providing a space of use for minority language communities and perhaps influencing other social and new media entities to do so also. Furthermore, Facebook’s approach has also impacted the mobile Web as the Translations app and the language versions it develops are available to users who access the site through mobile devices (Facebook, 2008a). In August 2009, Facebook announced that the two Facebook mobile sites, a mobile browser and touch screen version, had been translated from the original English into other languages (Moissinac,
Facebook also acts as an ‘agent of corpus policy’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012), by using ‘official’ or standard varieties of language(s) as the language version on the site (Section 6.1.1.1). Again, the status of Facebook could lead to the adoption and use of official standards of languages by other new media entities and their users online.

Facebook is an ‘agent of status policy’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012) on the Web. In developing the Translations app, minority and other less powerful languages gained a new domain of use, a space for their language speakers/communities and also status, in Bourdieu’s (1994) term, ‘linguistic capital’. Also, when a language has completed the translation process, it is ‘launched’ as part of the main Facebook site (Appendix 1), giving it a place amongst the other languages available, a sort of online status and commercial value. This new domain of use gives minority languages symbolic value (Bourdieu, 1994) as viable, modern and everyday languages, to their language community, non-speakers and the wider online community, resulting in ‘a transformation of the ideological valuations of the language so that the lesser-used language is viewed as part of the contemporary world and as relevant for the future’ (Eisenlohr, 2004: 24). The inclusion of minority languages in the Translations app also has the effect of commodifying minority languages (Heller, 2010a) as they are valued as a commercial unit, market and audience (see Section 3.2.16).

Facebook and Facebook Developers could act as ‘agents of corpus policy’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012), disseminating terminology and translations. As the Terms Applicable to Translate Facebook outline, in using the app, translators assign Facebook all rights to the translations and other submissions (comments, emails, etc.) they make via the app (Facebook, 2009f). Furthermore, they allow Facebook the ‘unrestricted use and dissemination’ of their ‘submissions for any purpose, commercial or otherwise’ and Facebook can ‘sublicense, to use, reproduce, display, perform, create derivative works of, distribute and otherwise exploit the Submissions in any manner’ (ibid.). Facebook has access to, owns and has the right to sell, distribute, etc., all of the translations submitted via the over 100 Translations apps. Facebook notes that it plans on offering inline statistical machine translation (SMT) of Facebook user’s content on the site (Ellis, 2009b). This SMT will include features from the ‘translations corpus’ of the language pair selected (ibid.: 2). Also, developers who use the Facebook Translations apps for Facebook Connect have full use, control and storage of the translations and other related data they receive from the app and its translators (Facebook, 2010b).

These examples demonstrate the possible further lifespan and impact of translations
from the app beyond the context of the Facebook SNS. Ellis (2009a) reports that Facebook has a parallel corpus of over 4 million phrases in more than 90 languages, which was ‘growing daily’ at that time. The Translations app could affect how multilingualism develops online both in terms of a language’s presence and also the new media specific terms in use online, as Facebook have terms/translations that other new media entities could adopt. Furthermore, the fact that Facebook could sell the translations submitted via the app is further evidence of Facebook’s commercialisation of language, as considered throughout this research (e.g. Sections 6.1.1.3).

Facebook presents itself as playing a role in language learning and revitalisation (see Section 6.1.1.5) and it operates as an ‘agent of language diffusion’ and ‘agent of language learning’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012). New media and the technologies they bring can aid language maintenance and revitalisation as they offer ‘inexpensive and effective ways of recording linguistic practice’ (Eisenlohr, 2004: 24), aid the teaching of endangered languages, provide ‘easier and less costly ways of creating and disseminating teaching materials’, and instruction is no longer tied to a particular place or location (ibid.). In the case of the Irish language, Facebook participates in language learning as bilingual Irish/English flashcards, tests and games are available online which use some of the translations from the Irish app (Lindsey, 2009). However, as discussed in the findings (Section 7.2.5.3) some of the Irish translators discourage language learners from using the app to improve or practice their Irish, in contrast to Facebook’s espousing of the Translations app for language learners (Section 6.1.1.5). This discussion illustrates a new dimension in language policy, the central role of commercial entities and technology in the language policy of the new media domain.

8.2 The Irish Translations Community as Language Policy Actors

The debates of the Irish Translations community examined here, as Blommaert (1999a) notes (Section 2.2.5), demonstrate the language attitudes and beliefs which influence the formation of the community’s language policy. The explicit efforts to influence the language practices of the translators can be considered language planning/management under Spolsky’s (2004) tripartite model (Section 2.1.2). However, this study also acknowledges the impact of implicit or normative efforts on the language policy of the Irish Translations community. Drawing on Blackledge and Creese’s (2010) discussion of micro-ethnography and the construction of social interactions/rules (Section 2.1.10),
we can see the Irish Translations community construct their own language norms, rules, community and, also, language policy. This section will discuss the role of the Irish Translations community and its individual translators as ‘language policy actors’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012) in the Facebook context and their wider impact on the Irish language and multilingual Web.

Although there are more female than male users of Facebook in Ireland (see Appendix 1) the Irish Translations community is predominately male (Section 7.1). Also, the sub-community of ‘senior translators’, at the time of demographic data collection (Section 7.1.1), was 90% male. The male domination of the Irish Translations app community and the translation developed via it supports Labov’s (1990) study where he finds that females were more likely to be the innovators of language change. Although the Irish Translations community is innovative in the sense of using Irish in a new domain, in this community the male translators act as language ideological brokers wanting to preserve and protect the language, favouring the ‘top-down’, more traditional approach to terminology and corpus policy (see Section 7.2.4).

The Irish Translations community are ‘agents of language policy’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012) in a number of ways. Firstly, the community act as ‘agents of corpus policy’ (ibid.). Minority languages involved in the app are given new functions as previously un-translated words and phrases are translated, discussed and decided upon by the language community - a form of new media corpus planning (cf. Ó hIfearnáin, 2000). The new Facebook genre, has led to the development of some new lexical items in Irish. For example, the Facebook activity of ‘Poke’[ing] someone on the SNS, has been translated as ‘Tabhair Sonc’. The Irish Translations community also act as ‘agents of corpus policy’ in their development of a translation of Facebook, deciding which terminology/translations to use over others (cf. Section 7.2.5.1). In doing so, they also disseminate existing terms, acting as ‘agents of language diffusion’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012). The language and translation activities of the Irish community lead to the development of a de facto language standard (see Section 7.2.4.5) of this domain and given the status of the Facebook SNS online contribute towards a (new) standard of Irish for new media/online use.

The terminology developed by the community via the Translations app may aid the uptake of minority languages by other new media entities and users as it provides terminology relating to the online world. In this way, the community are ‘agents of language diffusion’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012). This could consequently increase
the ‘language footprint’ of minority languages, making them more visible and their communities gain new space(s) and opportunity to use the language in other new media domains (Eisenlohr, 2004). These potential developments help minority languages to survive as an everyday language in use (ibid.). The translation of Facebook into non-English languages also guards against Honeycutt and Cunliffe’s (2010) fear (see Section 3.2.13) that the non-availability of the interface of websites in other languages could lead to the adoption of English/majority language terms into the minority language.

The Irish Translations community also act as ‘agents of acquisition policy’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012), whether some translators mean to or not, as they create a new space of use for their language. By translating the Facebook SNS, language learners gain a space of use and communication; they can experience and interact in minority languages via the site, as mentioned above. The Irish and other language communities on the site act as ‘agents of status policy’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012) in their campaigns for inclusion in the app (Section 7.2.3.5). In doing so, these language communities, including minority language communities, gain prestige for their language by its inclusion in the second largest website worldwide. In getting the Translations app opened to their language, the community normalise the use of their language in new media domains (cf. Honeycutt and Cunliffe, 2010). The minority language communities also act as ‘agents of status policy’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012) by participating in the app, signalling their respective minority language(s) as a modern language, usable in the new media domain (see Section 7.1.3).

8.3 **New Media and Language Policy: Change and Challenge**

The current study evaluates current conceptualisations of language policy, with regard to new media. As acknowledged in the literature review (Section 2.1.17), studies on language policy and new media represent a new area of interest, with not a lot of published research available, although the number of studies has increased since this research began in 2008. Spolsky’s (2012a) volume heralds itself as the ‘first Handbook to deal with language policy as a whole’ and as ‘the definitive guide to the subject’ (Spolsky, 2012c: i). Furthermore, it proclaims itself as a ‘complete “state-of-the-field” survey’ (ibid.), covering a wider range of issues, such as language practices and beliefs, in a number of different domains, levels and cases. However, none of the chapters in the volume consider language policy and new media, with the related issue of ‘digital
literacies’ only briefly considered in the area of ‘transnationalism, migration and language education policy’ (Kendall and Rambow, 2012).

The current study demonstrates how new media technologies change and challenge our understanding of language policy. In this research, ‘official’ language policy efforts are challenged, in line with Androutsopoulos (2009) assertions about the potential of new media context and Shohamy’s (2009) finding that language policies originating in practices, are typically opposed to the ‘top-down’ policies of entities. However, in the current study ‘official’ language policy is also reinforced and supported by the Irish Translations community (see Section 7.2.4). Also, the Facebook SNS is used as a mechanism of language policy (Shohamy, 2006), both by those with authority, in this case Facebook, and other societal groups, here the Irish language community. Facebook use the app to internationalise their site, gaining new markets and users, while the Irish community use the app to gain a new space of use and terminology for the Irish language. This challenges Shohamy’s assertion that mechanisms are typically used by those with official or designated authority.

New media, in the current study, are not just a space for negotiation or challenging of offline ‘top-down’ language policy; rather, they are a space where language policy as a concept is changed. This section will focus on how new media change existing conceptualisations of language policy in two ways. Firstly, this context challenges the dichotomy of ‘top-down’/’bottom-up’ in language policy and secondly, it demonstrates that rather than being a fixed, defined concept, here language policy is an ongoing, fluid process, developed discursively and via the practices of commercial entities, language speakers and communities. Existing theories conceptualise language policy as discursively constructed (Blommaert et al., 2009) through normative discourses (Leppänen and Piirainen-Marsh, 2009) and through performative actions (Lo Bianco, 2010). The current study brings these three conceptualisations together to account for the language policy of the Facebook SNS, developed via Facebook’s publications and the debates of the Irish translators, and, critically, also created through their actions and practices.

As acknowledged in Chapter 1, from initial observations the researcher was of the belief that this was a ‘bottom-up’ mechanism of language policy (Shohamy, 2006), that the power to translate and have those translations used was in the hands of the Translations community. However, as uncovered during the course of this ethnographic study (Section 6.3) Facebook intervenes in the translation process,
actively influencing the crowd-sourced translation of its site. It does so in two ways, directly through its ‘top-down’ involvement in the app (Sections 6.3.1, 6.3.4 and 6.3.5), and indirectly via its approach to language/translation and the development and design of the app (Sections 6.3.2 and 6.3.3). The practices and ideologies of Facebook in relation to language(s), multilingualism, minority languages, etc., (see Section 6.1) can be seen to represent a mixture of explicit and implicit/covert language policy. All of these language practices, language ideologies and ultimately language policy affect the language behaviour and practices of the wider users of Facebook and the translators within the Translations app(s). Facebook decided to have the translation as a three/four step process (Section 6.3.3.3) and to carry out translation and voting in this manner. By designing the app to foster and harness community effort (see Section 6.2.2) Facebook encourages the democratic nature of the translation; if a translation from the community is to be used, it must have been voted on positively by a majority of translators. Although there may be different language beliefs and practices amongst individual translators, only one translation for each Facebook word or phrase is to be used in the final version. In the case of ‘mobile phone’ (Section 7.2.6), Facebook do not choose which version it prefers, but nevertheless influences the translation that is finally used. Even though this influence is indirect, in doing so, Facebook acts in a ‘top-down’ manner, taking total control away from the language community.

In other aspects, however, Facebook acts in a ‘bottom-up’ language policy manner. As discussed above (Section 6.1.2.1), in developing the Translations app, Facebook acted in a ‘bottom-up’ sense as it was not required to have non-English versions of the site available by a ‘top-down’ authority. It also acted in a ‘bottom-up’ way in its inclusive approach to minority languages and other ‘ways of speaking’ (Hymes, 1974) in the app and through its empowerment, albeit limited, of individual language speakers and communities in the translation process (Section 6.2.1.4). Depending on the context, applying the traditional dichotomy, Facebook acts in both in ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ ways in the current study.

The Irish Translations community is not a unified ‘bottom-up’ language policy effort as first appears, but a space of language negotiation (Shohamy, 2006). The Translations communities do act in traditional ‘bottom-up’ manner vs. and opposed to Facebook’s ‘top-down’ influence and overseeing of the app, in trying to get things changed (Section 7.2.3.1) or in trying to get a language included in the app itself (Section 7.2.3.5). As the current study demonstrates, within the communities of the
Translations apps the co-production of the translations leads to numerous beliefs, practices, etc., about language on every level, being expressed, practiced and implemented. This creates many levels of language policy within the community effort itself as translators/members translate, vote, discuss and decide on the terms to be used. Hierarchies are formed within the community with translators acting as language brokers (Blommaert, 1999a) and communities of gatekeepers/senior translators’ emerging who include/exclude other members of the community due to their conflicting attitudes and beliefs (Section 7.2.5). Many levels language policy occur within the Irish Translations community.

Employing an expanded view of language policy (Schiffrin, 1996; Shohamy, 2006), the language practices and beliefs of the stakeholders in this translation process are influenced by many ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ levels of language policy. As outlined, both Facebook and the ‘the Irish Translations community as language policy actors in this context, use many aspects of the Translations app to act in both ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ manners. The current research demonstrates that the assumed dichotomy of ‘bottom-up’ forces as opposed to ‘top down’ forces in language policy theory is not always in evidence. Here, Facebook is a microcosm of language policy, with many levels of ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ language policy occurring. This study argues that language policy must be defined contextually (cf. Pennycook, 2000) situated in relation to its particular de facto language reality and its accompanying language policy actors. Language policy in the new media context, as this study demonstrates, is now realised as not just unidirectional, but found in ‘multiple discursive relations’ (Androutsopoulos, 2009) and cannot be separated from the shared norms and normative discourses of language communities (Leppänen and Piirainen-Marsh, 2009). An expanded view of language policy (Section 2.1.9) is necessary for such new contexts, one that challenges these accepted dichotomies and fixed definitions of language policy, since the objects of its study, the new media context and language itself (cf. Shohamy, 2006) are ever changing, fluid and dynamic.

When considering the translation of the term ‘mobile phone’ (Section 7.2.6), the notion of levels of language policy were used to describe and reconsider the language policy and power process occurring here. However, levels suggest bounded categories and hierarchies, such as micro/meso/macro, and are not so distant from the notion of ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ policy. Kaplan (1994: 5), when considering language policy in an expanded sense, acknowledges that language policy cannot be
contained, it is broad and that ‘any underlying theory that attempts to explain/predict
events related to language planning must also be fairly broad’. Facebook itself describes
the Translations app as a ‘hybrid’ translation effort (Vera, 2009), but this does not
capture the complexity of the situation discussed here, instead inferring a cooperation of
‘top’ and ‘bottom’ elements rather than a multifaceted situation. Martin-Jones et al.
(2012b: 12) recognise that many are concerned with overcoming the macro/micro
divide in sociolinguistics, with a number of concepts in use such as flows and
circulation (Heller, 2011), in her discussion of language, identity and post-nationalism,
and chains (Agha and Wortham, 2005), when considering how connectivity across
events of discourse is created by features of discourse.

The Facebook SNS is a ‘snapshot’ (Blommaert, 2010) of language policy
processes in the new media domain, a context of actual language resources, over an
extended period. Thus, we can employ and expand Blommaert’s concept of the
‘sociolinguistics of mobility’ here. This conceptualises language-in-motion as occurring
on multiple ‘scale-levels’ in a layered, rather than an opposed or dichotomous sense,
(see Section 3.2.16). The language policy of the current study can be described as
happening on multiple ‘scale-levels’ rather than in a ‘top-down’/‘bottom-up’
dichotomous manner, with Facebook, the communities of the Translations app and
individual translators all participating in the language policy of this domain.
Furthermore, in applying Blommaert’s ‘sociolinguistics of mobility’ to the current
study, the uneven distribution of power, authority and access to ‘scales’ in the new
media context and its use communities is acknowledged. Facebook as the media
producer of this context retains more access to power than the communities and
individuals involved in the app and unequal power relations are found within the Irish
Translations community itself, as discussed previously. The Facebook SNS is a space
where the ‘orders of indexicality’, the inherent language norms (ibid.) of Facebook
itself and of the Irish Translations app community here (Section 7.2.2) influence the
translations submitted, voting and, therefore, the translated version of Facebook.

The case of ‘mobile phone’ (Section 7.2.6) also illustrates how the language
policy of the Facebook SNS, Facebook itself and the Irish Translations community, are
created over a period of time via the discourses and practices of the language policy
actors involved. The Translations app and its Discussion Board allow translators to
explicitly express their views, attitudes and beliefs on language, translation and other
associated matters to their peers. The Translations app and the Irish language
community are a scale-level of Lo Bianco’s (2010) ‘discursive’ language policy; in other words, their regular language practices aim to affect language change. The Translations app can therefore be seen as a site of ‘discursive action’, where language policy is formulated, contested and enacted, in line with Leppänen and Piirainen-Marsh (2009). Language policy here is not explicit or decided upon at the start of the translation process, rather it is discussed, negotiated, practiced and developed over time but still enforced. This is particularly evident in the Irish Translations community. Step one of the translation process, the Glossary stage, appears to be the main period of explicit language policy formation by the Irish Translations community. As discussed previously, once a translation has been decided on in this stage, the language community encourage consistency in discussions, despite their own personal views, and call on their peers to adhere to this policy in their translation and voting practices (Section 7.2.1.2).

Drawing on Milani and Johnson’s (2010) notion of ‘social mechanisms’ where particular ideas or beliefs about linguistic practices are produced, circulated and/or challenged through meaning-making activities, here the translation process (Section 2.3.2), the current study concludes that language policy in this domain must be conceptualised as an activity or process, involving the ongoing production, circulation and/or challenging of policy. Language policy is created in two ways on Facebook – discursively via Facebook’s publications and the Discussion Board of the language community, and also via the practices of Facebook and its many translators. The current study concludes that language policy, as McCarty (2011b: 2) writes, should not be conceptualised as ‘is’, in contrast to existing language policy approaches in this manner (cf. Ricento, 2006; Spolsky, 2012b), but rather as ‘does’. Language policy cannot be a static, fixed concept in the new media domain, rather, it is a fluid, discursive and ever changing one, contextually defined and situated.

8.4 The Role of Language Ideologies in Language Policy Processes
Spolsky (2004) believes that language ideologies and beliefs are the basis for language management in his model of language policy (see Section 2.3.1). In the new media context of the current study, language ideologies, beliefs and attitudes are also the basis of language policy; however, they play a more central role in policy here. The language ideologies of both Facebook and the Irish Translations community (Chapters 6 and 7) define the de facto language policy of the context, as will be discussed below. Spolsky
(2004) also notes that the shared beliefs of speech communities lead to a consensual ideology, however, he does not consider how this consensus is researched and the processes of power and authority involved in this. This section will demonstrate how language attitudes and beliefs are bound up in processes of power and exclusion within the Irish Translations community as they develop their consensual ideology and language policy. Secondly, this section will argue how in the new media context, language ideologies do not just impact language policy as Jaffe (1999b) acknowledges from the Corsican context, and language policy is not just situated in an ideological context as Pennycook (2000) notes in his research on colonial language policies, rather, language ideologies are the basis for and drive the language policy of these entities.

Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) view language ideologies as a form of social analysis (Section 2.2.4), highlighting the power relations and roles of entities in a given setting or context. In this study, language ideologies involve the construction and legitimation of power and the development of social relations (Spitulnik, 1998). Blommaert’s (1999a) concept of ‘language ideological debates’ illustrate the various language policy processes, as discussed above (Section 8.3) and also the power processes occurring within the language community. Power relations occur within the language community, on the basis of language attitudes and beliefs, before a somewhat ‘consensual’ ideology and consequently policy, albeit fluid and ongoing as discussed above, is reached. This ‘consensus’ is in turn imposed by the ‘senior translators’ (Section 7.2.5.1) of the Irish Translations community and becomes the imposed language policy of the community. As discussed earlier, Translator 149 in the case of ‘mobile phone’ and Translator 100 in the example of ‘Profile’ (Section 7.2.5.3) are excluded by the ‘senior translators’ of the community as their beliefs and attitudes do not align with the wider community’s. The enforcement of the language policy of the Irish Translations community (Section 7.2.6) demonstrates the struggle for authority which is part of discursive language policy processes. Power is distributed and exercised within the Irish Translations community on the basis of individuals’ attitudes and beliefs on language and translation issues. New media, as the current study demonstrates, represent a crucial site for the discursive construction of language policy.

Drawing on Woolard (1998), this study uses language ideologies to consider the public discourses of Facebook and the Irish Translations community on language and related issues. Chapter 6 examined the language ideology and practices of Facebook in relation to language, multilingualism, minority languages, translation and
the app itself, to identify and describe its *de facto* language policy. *Facebook*’s language policy is defined by its language ideologies espoused in its corporate publications. The language beliefs and attitudes of the Irish *Translations* community with regard to translation, the Irish language, the app and *Facebook* were discussed in Chapter 7 to uncover and consider their *de facto* language policy. These findings illustrate how language ideologies influence the practices, opinions, assumptions and outcomes of the Irish language community on *Facebook* (see Section 8.2). Hornberger and Johnson (2011) (see Section 2.3.3) believe that official language policy can be trumped by dominant language ideologies. However, in the current study, the language policy of the Irish language community are influenced by and correlate to the dominant language attitudes and beliefs of some of the individuals, the ‘senior translators’, in the community. Language ideologies in this context define and drive the language policy of the *Facebook* SNS, as where there is no explicit language policy there are explicit language ideologies influencing the language practices of new media stakeholders.

Language ideologies are applied in the current study (Section 1.1) to explain both the verbalised and implicit assumptions (Gal, 1998) of *Facebook* and the Irish *Translations* community which form their respective language policies. Lo Bianco (2010) considers the ‘performative action’ of language use and how everyday language practices reflect the taken for granted standards, norms and rules of a given speech community, which are implicitly ideological (see Section 2.1.11). However, in the current study the language policy of the *Facebook* SNS can be considered by looking at the explicit language ideologies found in the discourse(s) of both *Facebook* and the Irish *Translations* community. These ideologies in turn affect the language practices of *Facebook* and the Irish translators but the language policy of this domain is not as implicit as initially perceived. The field of study of this research, the *Translations* app only existed due to *Facebook*’s language ideology which commodifies and commercialises languages. In other words, *Facebook* driven by market forces and commercial concerns internationalised its site to gain goodwill and primarily, an increase in user numbers (Section 6.1.2.1.2). *Facebook*’s language policy is shaped and developed by its language ideologies, its approach to translation, internationalisation, multilingualism and minority languages. The *de facto* language policy of the new media domain, its multilingual-ness, is primarily defined by the language ideologies of commercial entities. The implications of this for the future of language policy, will be considered next.
8.5 The Convergence of Language Policy

New media and technological globalisation have caused us to rethink who are the primary language policy actors of the new media context (Sections 8.1 and 8.2) and current conceptualisations of language policy, as discussed here (Sections 8.3 and 8.4). These conclusions consequently have implications for the future of language policy. The language policy of the Facebook SNS is the summation of the language ideologies and practice of a commercial entity, its technology in use, and individual language speakers. These are not just new agents of, actors in or the ‘folk’ (Niedzielski and Preston, 2000) aspect of the language policy in this domain and new media producers and consumers do not occupy separate roles in the language policy of this domain. Rather, in today’s ‘convergence culture’ (Jenkins, 2006) of media convergence, participatory culture and collective intelligence (Section 3.2.14.1), both Facebook and its users/translators are participants in the creation of language policy here, actively using language(s) online and creating, producing language policy, whether they mean to do so or not (see Section 8.1).

This section will discuss how technological globalisation, new media and ‘convergence culture’ (Jenkins, 2006) provide a space for commercial entities and language speakers to create their own translation and language policy as in the current study. The involvement of language speakers in media production efforts, Eisenlohr (2004: 35) notes, promotes the “ownership” of revitalisation efforts by the speakers themselves (ibid: 35), and in the current study, this extends to ownership and development of the language policy as ‘produsers’ (Bruns, 2008) of the efforts. This section will consider if the future of language policy is in the hands of commercial entities and language speakers. Language policy on Facebook is both ‘a top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer-driven process’ (Jenkins, 2006: 18) and one of the key contributions of new media to this area of research is the possibilities for language policy to be created and produced by these participants interacting together in a convergent manner.

8.5.1 Going Global and Convergent

A number of studies consider language policy and globalisation (see Section 2.1.14) and as languages go global on the Web, expanding across the virtual world, so too is the concept of language policy. In the current study, language policy occurs on a global level, alive and well on the global SNS Facebook, affecting and influencing over one
billion users and the numerous language communities they identify with. However, language policy also occurs on the local level, in turn affecting and influencing the language practices of individual Facebook users. Facebook presents its site as a global entity, moving across state and country borders and even language barriers, a home for all language speakers and language communities no matter how small (Section 6.1.2.1). Facebook’s worldwide user-base, resulting from globalising processes, can be understood as a transnational community, a diverse linguistic community where language policy processes are ongoing as users interact and use the SNS (see Section 8.3). We are in the global era of language policy, where the nation-state or government is not the primary source of language policy efforts (cf. Blommaert et al., 2009), rather the convergence culture of global media, their technologies, and local language users and communities are, as in the current study.

Blommaert (2010) and Coupland (2003) note (Section 3.2.16) that globalisation has made language related phenomena ‘complex’ and this assertion can be extended to language policy as a sociolinguistic concept. Technological globalisation, ‘convergence culture’ and new media such as Web 2.0 contexts challenge traditional understandings of concepts such as ‘boundaries’, ‘location’, ‘language communities’, and in the current study, as discussed previously, ‘language policy’, ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’. The case of the Facebook SNS illustrates the complexity of the notion of language policy with multiple levels of ‘top’ and ‘bottom’ language policy occurring and interacting within one site of language negotiation (see Sections 7.2.6 and 8.3). Facebook, the media producer and the translators, the media consumers, are both participants in this fluid, convergence context. Language policy is now situated in heterogenic, post-modern conditions, which modernist language policy aims of uniformity, stability, homogeneity try to respond to but ultimately cannot (Blommaert et al., 2009). Language policy must be reconceptualised in this new context, particularly with the growing consensus that languages are ‘flexible tools’ (Pennycook, 2000: 64) and cannot be adequately defined in fixed, delineated categories (Section 2.3.2).

Technological globalisation and convergence has led to the development of SNSs and their worldwide user-bases but not to a unified, homogenous community. In this case from the ‘bottom-up’ in Hornberger and McCarty’s (2012) sense (Section 2.1.8), change in technological and media production has led to the creation of this new space, ideological and implementational, for languages and their speakers. Applying Hornberger and McCarty (2012) to the current study, we can see how technological
globalisation has not led to the diminishing of the role of minority language speakers; rather, it has led to the transformation of minority language speakers and users into active consumers (Jenkins, 2006), media ‘produsers’ (Bruns, 2008), translators, policy makers and implementers (see Sections 8.1 and 8.2). In globalisation research, Friedman (2006) and also Appadurai (1996) point to the empowerment, impact, and role of individuals in Friedman’s (2006) conceptualisation of the current Globalisation 3.0 era. In other words, there is a cultural shift from passive spectatorship of media (Jenkins, 2006) and in this study, of language policy efforts to an active language policy ‘produser’ role, which also utilises the collective intelligence of the language community.

It must be acknowledged, however, that caution is still needed when considering language policy, minority languages and new media, in line with Thurlow and Mroczek (2011b) (see Section 3.2.15). While this research considers the fluid, boundless nature of global convergence media and global language policy, this does not mean that the digital divide is no more, and that global policy and opportunities do not mean there are issues with global access or availability. In the current study, it is Facebook who decides which languages are opened for translation. Language communities and individual speakers can only campaign Facebook for their language to be involved (Section 7.2.3.5). As Jenkins (2006) notes, not all those involved in the current participatory culture are equal, corporate media still exert greater power than the individuals or collective groups involved. Furthermore, some individuals and communities do not have the opportunity or abilities to participate in this convergence culture at all.

8.5.2 Technological Developments and Commercial Entities

Technological developments, by new media entities such as Facebook in contemporary ‘convergence culture’, are one of the main influences on language policy online. Facebook has applied for a number of patents to the US Patent and Trademark Office for the method of translation developed via the Translations app (Wong, 2007; Wong et al., 2008) and similar translation efforts are popular online, with both Google and Twitter crowdsourcing the localised versions of their sites. Given its status as the second most visited website today and the widespread use of Facebook Connect by other websites, Facebook’s approach to localisation/translation and the extension of the Translations app via Facebook Connect, will impact how other new media entities
engage in localisation. In other words, Facebook’s approach to and technologies of localisation will shape the future of language policy in the new media context.

The extension of the Translations app to Facebook Connect in the current study (Appendix 1) demonstrates the major implications technological developments by commercial entities will have on ‘the multilingual Internet’ (Danet and Herring, 2007b). Facebook Connect enables users to bring their language setting on Facebook, i.e. the language they have chosen to access Facebook in, to any domain on the WWW on the Facebook Platform ‘where the translated interface is generated using our process’ (Ellis, 2009c: 240). In other words, the content is automatically presented in different languages based on the users’ Facebook language setting, negating the need for a language selection process or language gateway site (typically presented as a popup where a WWW user must select the language they want to use a website in before accessing that site). This has implications for how multilingualism develops online, as the websites which use Facebook Connect can now offer their content in over 100 languages, a huge number of language options, can do so automatically and for no additional costs. Facebook itself considers what the opening up of the Translations app for Facebook Connect could lead to in terms of the multilingual WWW:

‘... country tourist boards or travel sites that want to attract foreign visitors on holiday can use this framework to translate their sites and automatically present the content to users in their native language after they log in with Facebook Connect’ (Lee, 2009).

As Inside Facebook (Smith, 2009) acknowledges this development will aid non-English web users in particular and will increase the presence of languages online. This extension of a user’s language settings will have wide resonance online. According to Facebook’s latest figures (2010) over 15,000 websites and apps used Facebook Connect, including American media such CNN, CBS and YouTube (Facebook, 2010h).

This method of localisation and the opening of the Translations app to Facebook Connect will also have implications at the micro level of new media users/consumers, as Chamath Palihapitiya writes ‘users will have access to even more great applications than ever before built by the world’s best developers’ (ibid.). In other words, WWW users will have access to more new media domains available in more languages other than English. The Translations app and Facebook Connect will change the multilingual-ness of the WWW, as discussed above, and the representation of language communities, speakers and cultures online. Furthermore, it will give users more opportunities to use and engage with media their language in this context.

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Facebook promoted this extension of the Translations app as benefiting developers in three ways: ‘1) more traffic through shared content, 2) increased engagement through social context, 3) improved registration conversion rates’ (Smith, 2009). In opening up the Translations app to the whole WWW potentially, Facebook is further commercialising languages and translation (cf. Section 6.1.1.3), using the Translations app for Facebook Connect to gain more users of the Facebook Platform. Inside Facebook (Smith, 2009) considers if this extension of the Translations app will lead to ‘... Facebook becoming an increasingly popular translation layer for Connect-enabled websites?’ (Smith, 2009). In opening up the Translations app to the wider WWW, Facebook positions itself as a major player in the online localisation industry (ibid.) and as a major participant in and influence on the language policy of the WWW. A Facebook Developer Blog outlines how Facebook’s approach is contributing to the future of the WWW, writing that:

“We’re excited to see what you can do with this tool. As a technology and platform company, we believe services like this can serve as building blocks for a Web driven by people, where you can connect with anyone or anything you care about, anywhere you choose and now in many different languages (Lee, 2009).

Both technological innovations and commercial concerns are driving the multilingual-ness of the WWW today and shaping its future. Also, the expansion of the Translations app to Facebook Connect illustrates the impact of Facebook’s own language policy beyond its SNS, with their approach to language(s), multilingualism and related matters (see Section 8.1) influencing the language practices, ideologies and policy of other new media entities.

A number of globalisation researchers (Giddens, 2002; Friedman, 2006) point to the role of globalisation in the inclusion and re-evaluation of local cultures and languages. An example of this is the concept of ‘long tail’ languages, which entities such as Facebook, Google and Twitter term minority or smaller languages (Section 6.3.5.3). This illustrates that there is a perception that these languages are markets, niche markets - but markets none the less, for their products. In Facebook’s case the availability of the Facebook Translations app in a number of minority languages, including Irish, demonstrates this well. The notion of ‘long-tail’ languages are further evidence of the commercialisation of minority languages (cf. Heller, 2010a), as new media entities correspond languages directly with markets and increasing user numbers (see Section 6.1.1.3). In can be argued that, Facebook is just dividing ‘up the market into speakers of different languages and create[ing] glocalized marketing and
advertising materials for these language groups’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2012: 336). As Robertson (1994) notes, ‘diversity sells’, and for Facebook, localisation and the Translations app are just another marketing method. As Coupland (2010) notes, this re-evaluation of minority languages in particular, does come with the risk that these languages are simply seen as shortcuts to authenticity, goodwill and commercial gain and not valued as aspect of people’s culture.

Facebook also promotes the idea that the Translations app will allow developers to get their content/application in front of users ‘...much faster than ever before...’ (Facebook, 2008b). This quote acknowledges the implications and effects of this method of translation: faster localisation and therefore faster and greater international reach for new media products. As Facebook’s VP of Growth at that time Chamath Palihapitiya, writes that ‘developers can take the stage with an even larger audience of users from all over the world’ (ibid.). Facebook presents the Translations app for Facebook Connect as having implications beyond the Facebook SNS and for the future of the WWW, as contributing to a more connected and boundless Web as it does throughout its publications concerned with the Translations app and its localisation effort (see Section 6.1.2.1). Again languages are commercialised by their alignment with more markets of users and commercial gain for new media entities. The speeding up of localisation efforts does also benefit multilingualism online as more new media entities are likely to localise their websites/content if its perceived as fast and a relatively simply process.

The discussions here illustrate that the marketing strategies, business activities and technological developments of commercial entities such as Facebook in the current study, are the primary influence on language policy on the Web, both currently, as discussed above (Section 8.1), and for the foreseeable future. The current study illustrates a new dimension of language policy, with huge potential effects. In this era of ‘postnational’ language policy (Wright, 2004a) and convergence culture, the language policy of the Web is produced and created by commercial entities, technological developments and also by individual speakers, as will be discussed next.

8.5.3 Globalised Individuals
The influence and involvement of ‘language mavens’ (Cameron, 1996) in many language matters is nothing new (cf. Section 2.1.10), however, the current research demonstrates the influence of this individual level of language policy on the
development of the global multilingual Web. As discussed above (Section 8.2), the current research demonstrates the active, creative role language speakers and communities play in the language policy of the Web. Individual Irish translators within the ‘senior translators’ sub-community have a major impact on the rest of the community, as discussed in the findings (Sections 7.2.3.2.1 and 7.2.5.1) and the translation/language policy. This section argues that language speakers and communities are not just agents of language policy, but are active ‘produsers’ of and participants in language policy online.

The influence of individual translators on the translation developed is replicated in other apps; DePalma and Kelly (2011: 287) note that in the Spanish Translations community:

One volunteer, Fernando Pérez Chercoles, dominated the leader board for the first six months of the Spanish for Spain project with his translation of 36,824 winning words. This means that Señor Pérez provided approximately one word in eight of the total community-translated output during that period.

Individuals can also have sizable impact via the discussions of the community, as highlighted in the findings of this study (Section 7.2.6). For example, Translator 151 is responsible for a sizeable amount of the content on the Irish Discussion Board; he created 13% of the Topics and 15.5% of the total Posts analysed in this study. Therefore, Translator 151 played a major role in the language beliefs, attitudes and discourses espoused on the Discussion Board and the language policy developed by the Irish Translations community. Individual translators can play a major role in the development of and language policy of the new media context.

The impact and role of individual translators as ‘produsers’ is also demonstrated by the expansion of the Translations app to developers via Facebook Connect (Appendix 1). When developers use the Translations app to translate their content into a certain language, the Glossary, Style Guide Wiki, and Leaderboards from that language’s app are transferred over. Thus, the influence of the translators involved in the Glossary stage of the translation process, the translators who have access to the Style Guide Wiki and the ‘senior translators’ of the community can go beyond the Facebook site to other apps/websites and content on the WWW. Also, the impact of individual translators must be acknowledged if Facebook reuses/sells the translations submitted via the app to other entities in the offline context, which is a possibility given the terms and conditions that accompany the app (see Section 8.1). The influence of the language speakers/community on the development of their language, its presence online
and as language policy actors, in the era of technological globalisation, is unbounded. This is in contrast to official language policy efforts where only these agents held power in language policy matters. The current study demonstrates the transfer and convergence of power in language policy matters from official agents to commercial, individual and community agents.

Scannell (2012b) considers how Facebook, at his time of writing, had not added any languages to the app in over a year. In response, he, in collaboration with Neskie Manuel, developed software to overcome this issue. This software allows the user to translate the Facebook SNS: ‘without the need for Facebook’s approval or cooperation’ (ibid.: 1) or use of the app. It enables the user to ‘install a script in his or her web browser that is activated upon visiting facebook.com, and which acts as an “overlay” in the language of choice’ (ibid.: 2). He acknowledges that ‘At one level, this can be viewed as a simple technical trick or a “hack”’ (ibid.). However, in language policy terms, Scannell and Manuel are acting as language policy ‘produsers’, influencing the multilingualness of Facebook from the ‘bottom-up’. Furthermore, Scannell believes this development can have implications beyond the Facebook SNS, writing that on ‘another level I believe this can be a game-changing idea for indigenous language groups wanting to use their languages online’ (ibid.). He reports that 29 languages have partially translated versions that can be used and that a further 25 languages have begun translation on this software. Of these 54 languages involved, 35 are included in the UNESCO Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger, with eight designated as ‘vulnerable’, 13 as ‘definitely endangered’, seven ‘severely endangered’ and seven as ‘critically endangered’ (Scannell, 2012b: 4). [For more on this software see Scannell (2012b)]. In this case, two developers created their own software to overcome a language issue for numerous language communities, not reliant on any official language policy efforts or commercial entity. This again demonstrates how convergence culture and technological developments in this case are changing the power dynamics of language policy, giving minority language speakers a primary role in the development of their language’s presence online, via crowdsourced translation in the current study or software development in Scannell’s (2012b) case.

Shouhui and Baldauf (2012: 18) acknowledge the potential of the Internet for individual language enthusiasts and language policy actors to gain them greater involvement in language policy, noting that ‘internet use provides public empowerment in domains that were previously monopolized by official bodies’. New media and Web
2.0 in particular, contribute to the importance and role of the globalised, empowered individual in today’s convergence culture. The Cogar email, via which the researcher first encountered the Translations app (Section 5.1.3), considers what this means in terms of official translation efforts asking: ‘Do projects such as this restore a voice to Irish speakers and Irish Readers which is often lost in official translation?’ (Gaelport, 2009). Efforts like the Translations app, involving participatory culture and collective intelligence, place Irish speakers, individuals, at the heart of language policy, which was previously not the case. Individuals take on the role of ‘language mavens’, folk linguists (Niedzielski and Preston, 2000) and as the current study demonstrates language policy ‘produsers’. Technological globalisation has led to the convergence of the academic/professional and non-academic/professional barriers; the ““us” versus “them” position’ (Niedzielski and Preston, 2000: 1) is no more, with commercial entities, language professionals, academics, localisation experts and so-called ordinary language users (Section 8.1) working side by side to translate Facebook into over 100 languages. It must be acknowledged, however, that the use of the Internet by language mavens and language communities is a source of unequal power relations and exclusion, as the current study also shows (see Sections 7.2.6 and 7.2.5.3).

New media entities such as Facebook create a new social space where any person can write a blog which is read by millions, position themselves as a ‘citizen journalist’, start a website in a minority language, become a member of a virtual language community or become a Facebook translator implementing their own individual language policy with wide resonance (see Section 7.2.3.2.1). Like Wright (2006) (Section 3.2.12) the current study demonstrates that much publishing, writing, translating and responsibility for minority language content still lies with individual web users. In this study it is individual Facebook users, the translators, of ‘unsupported’ minority languages who are charged with translating the site with no input from Facebook, its Translations Team or professional translators. Facebook position individual language speakers at the heart of the Translations app, with technological globalisation (cf. Friedman, 2006) and today’s convergence culture redefining the role and impact of the individual in many issues, including language matters. New technologies and the new communicative contexts they bring (Johnson and Ensslin, 2007a) illustrate the need to rethink the role of individuals and communities in language policy. The current study demonstrates how the globalised language speaker and community and participate more fully in and act as language policy ‘produsers’.
The other side of the globalised, active language community is the language community and its members who remain inactive and do not engage with new media crowd-sourced or community-driven language efforts. This is illustrated in the current study by the lack of participation in the Irish Translations apps for non-Facebook content, apps and websites (Section 7.2.3.6). In October 2010 the Where I’ve Been app, an app Facebook can users add to their Profile to display on a map places they have travelled to was opened for translation into Irish, as illustrated in Figure 8.1 below.

![Figure 8.1: Where I’ve Been Translations App](image)

Later, two other Pages, RTÉ News 3G and Coca-Cola IE Authentication, were also opened for translation by the Irish community via their own Translations apps. However, at no point over the course of the current study did any Irish translators engage with these apps, no translations were ever submitted via them, leading to their eventual removal when the new Translations app (Appendix 1) was introduced in October 2011. Bruns (2008) warns that the proliferation of produsage and community-driven participatory projects by commercial entities may lead to a lack of enthusiasm and engagement with these efforts by individuals.

We can conclude from this research that commercial entities are the primary language policy participants of the new media domain given their power in this domain (see Section 8.1). However, this study also illustrates the impact and role of language speakers and communities as language policy ‘produsers’ in the participatory culture and collective intelligence-driven new media domain. Postnational (Wright 2004a),
globalised language policy is the language policy of this convergence, and not of official, ‘top-down’ authorities.

8.5.4 Future of Language Policy: Commercial, Technology and Individual

In both new media and globalisation literature, the current convergence culture is espoused as an opportunity for individuals and communities to become active media producers and consumers. Cunliffe and Herring (2005) acknowledge a particular potential of the Internet for minority languages is for the language community to be actively involved in the creation of media for their community and to shape the technology itself by developing their own tools, apps, etc. In terms of language diversity and the Internet, Leppänen and Peuronen (2012: 398) believe, that ‘no top-down, globally applicable Internet language policy is possible’ and that ‘therefore, a more bottom-up approach to policy is usually recommended’ (ibid.). Friedman’s (2006) notion of the ‘flat world’ speaks of the collaborative possibilities opened up by the globalised context in line with Jenkins’s (2006) convergence culture. Over a decade ago, Ó hIfearnáin (2000) (see Section 2.1.12.3), noted that in the Irish context the language community were being given more power and responsibility in language matters, within the parameters and processes of state efforts. Evidence of collaborative language policy is already in existence; Irish speakers are involved in ‘top-down’ policy, with the ability to submit their own translations of terms via the focal.ie website and to participate in consultation meetings and events with government officials, as discussed above. As considered in the literature review (Section 2.1.9), Ricento (2006a) acknowledges that language speakers, language communities, commercial entities, indeed, everyone, has a stake in language policies. However, in the current study, Facebook and the Irish Translations community are the participants of this convergence context, as discussed above, actively creating and developing the language policy together, not just playing a role in or influencing official language policy efforts from the ‘bottom-up’ as was the case previously.

What the globalised individual and ‘produser’ driven language policy means for current and future ‘top-down’ language policy in the offline context, is not fully apparent from this study due to its focus on the online context only. Although a number of Irish translators are involved in language activism, maintenance, revitalisation and community translation efforts both online and offline (see Section 7.1.1.2) it is not clear if the Irish language community here want to play a role in official language policy
efforts. Only one translator, Translator 153, over the course of this virtual ethnography, explicitly states their desire on the Discussion Board for the language community to play an active role in the creation of new terminology for Irish (see Section 7.2.4.2). Jenkins’s (2006) convergence culture accounts for today’s contemporary developments where grassroots and corporate media intersect, as in the case of the Facebook Translations app. The findings of this study do point to the potential convergence of language policy efforts in the offline context also, with official, commercial and individual language speakers participating in language policy efforts and not occupying separate, distinct roles, as in previous conceptualisations of language policy.

From the demographics of the translators (Section 8.1) and of the Facebook staff involved in the app (Section 6.3.5.1) we can see that few involved are professional linguists or translators, although a number of Facebook’s staff have an internationalisation/localisation background. Furthermore, the impact of these individuals and communities on the translation and the Irish language goes beyond the SNS, potentially influencing the development of the multilingual Internet (see Section 8.2). It appears that the language policy of new media will continue to be developed by commercial entities, new media technologies and language speakers. It will be a domain of convergence language policy developed by commercial entities and individual users/language speakers, unregulated by official ‘top-down’ language policy.

Cogar (Gaelport, 2009), the digital news service for Irish language radio, takes the implications of the Facebook crowd-sourced translation effort further, acknowledging the potential effects of this method of translation beyond the new media domain to official language policy efforts, which they note has already been considered on a number of Irish language blogs (cf. iGaeilge, 2009; kensei, 2009). As Cogar (Gaelport, 2009) writes: ‘the main question being - is there a need for translators and spending money on translation official documents when the Irish speaking public is happy to do the work in projects such as this’. The impact of the Facebook Translations app and similar convergence efforts could have wider implications for minority languages and language policy. Will the convergence nature of language policy online, lead to commercial and ‘produser’ driven efforts in offline or previously, official language policy contexts? This is particularly applicable given the current economic context with funding for the Irish language and other minority languages being reduced and even cut (cf. McDonnell, 2012). In other words, given the success of crowdsourcing and localisation driven by commercial concerns and technology in today’s convergence
culture, will the future of languages and language policy be in the hands of technocapitalism and individual practices.

8.6 **Directions for Future Research**

The current study examined the Facebook SNS and its Translations app, the Irish app in particular, and current conceptualisations of language policy. It focussed on the role of Facebook and the Irish community as language policy actors and specifically on whether the new media context changes or challenges existing notions of language policy, the role of language ideologies in language policy processes and the ‘produser’ driven future of language policy. However, this research has also raised a number of further questions and issues, which may be directions for future research, and also the value of virtual ethnography for investigating language policy.

The approach to virtual ethnography of the current study, demonstrates that it is an effective methodology for considering language policy as a dynamic, discursive process in the domain of new media and for future research. One of the strengths of virtual ethnography lies in its longitudinal approach; it gives the researcher a sustained insight into the language policy and language policy development over a period of time. It also allows for a sustained examination of the complexity of the language policy processes in new media. Another advantage of this approach lies in how it allows the researcher to experience what is like to be ‘a’ language policy actor in this context (Hine, 2000), in the current study, a translator. Also, virtual ethnography, as a mixed methods approach, allows the use of a number of approaches and a tailored methodology to consider the language policy of a domain. In the current study, the researcher sought out and pieced together Facebook’s approach and policy from many different Facebook sources and publications, and from their practices over a sustained period. Likewise, it examined the development and negotiation of the Irish Translations community’s policy over time; it captured the dynamic, dialogic nature of language policy in this context.

As the current study concluded above (Section 8.5), the future of language policy appears to be ‘produser’ driven rather than the task of official authorities alone as was previously the case. Thus, further research is needed, in both the online and offline contexts, to see if the influence and role of these new developers of language policy identified in this research continue. Will the importance of the nation-state, as agent of language policy, be undone as predicted (Hourigan, 2004; Wright, 2004a). The
globalised produser driven language policy identified in this study, also raises the related question if language policy can be managed in an explicit interventionist manner at all, as Schiffman (1996) (see Section 2.1.9) posed previously. Future research must examine if language(s) and language policy have moved beyond ‘management’ and ‘top-down’ official efforts such as legislative planning by governments in geographically defined nation-states. As many have acknowledged previously (cf. Spolsky, 2004), just because a language policy is explicitly stated in law or a constitution does not necessarily mean it is implemented or that its effect is as planned, effective or consistent. Further research, using content or discourse analysis of official efforts and legislate documents, over an extended period of time could investigate if the state and official authorities become secondary agents in or have exited totally from language policy efforts and if minority language policy should instead focus on ‘produser’ policy.

As acknowledged earlier (Section 3.2.14), although increasing, the number of studies concerned with minority languages, multilingualism and crowd-based or sourced information generation is still small. The current study demonstrates the need for further research on crowd-sourced translation and other speaker/community-driven language efforts online. It illustrates the complexity of the everyday online language reality for commercial entities and language speakers alike, the primary role of ‘produsers’ in this domain and how this new context changes and challenges existing conceptualisations of language policy. Thus, further research must consider language policy and other language related issues in this domain of use, and the wider implications of this global domain. Furthermore, the current study was confined to the context of the Facebook SNS, continuing research is needed to consider language policy in other areas of new media and also in the currently developing mobile new media domain (mobile web, smart phones, tablets, etc).

The findings of the current study with regard to minority languages and multilingualism raise a number of directions for future research on the commercial aspect of new media, long-tail or niche marketing and minority languages. Further research must examine what the commercialisation of minority languages, the advent of the ‘long tail’ market and the conceptualisation of languages online as being in competition (see Section 6.1.2.3) will mean for minority languages. In this domain, will the value of minority languages be reduced (cf. Coupland, 2010) to simply a niche market/audience and will only the most commercial viable minority languages survive
online. Also, in lieu of official language policy efforts in this context, further research is needed to examine if the commercialisation of languages and the advent of the ‘long tail’ market, by new media corporate entities such as Facebook, and technological globalisation will aid linguistic diversity efforts. Also, future research could incorporate the collection of data using other methods, such as interviews with those involved in commercial entities and users of new media, to compare and consider their reported ideologies, beliefs and attitudes towards language(s) and multilingualism in contrast with the lived reality of the current virtually ethnographically identified language policy.
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This appendix presents an overview of the Facebook SNS and the Translations app. First, some statistics in relation to the Facebook SNS are presented and secondly, the Facebook site itself introduced. Next, the Translations app and its various elements outlined. This section also includes an overview of the ‘new’ version of the app introduced in October 2011 and some related research on the app. Then, Facebook Connect is discussed and finally, some of the major changes that occurred in the design and function of the Translations app over the course of the current research presented.

A1.1 Facebook Statistics

Facebook describes itself as a ‘social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and coworkers’, drawing on the user’s social graph and mapping their ‘real-world social connections’ online (Facebook, 2009b). According to Facebook’s own statistics it has more than 1 billion active users (Zuckerberg, 2012), which it defines as ‘users who have returned to the site in the last 30 days’ (Facebook, 2011b). As the Independent notes, this is ‘the equivalent of about one in seven of the world’s population’ and if ‘Facebook were a country it would now be the third largest in the world, behind China’s 1.34 billion people and India which has a population of 1.2 billion’ (Williams, 2012). In terms of activity on Facebook, in 2011, there were more than 900 million objects (Pages, Groups, events, etc.) that users could interact with, and the average user at this time was connected to 80 of these (ibid.). After the localisation of Facebook into French, German and Spanish, Facebook’s visitor number increased from 52 million to 124 million (Britton and McGonegal, 2007; Eskelsen et al., 2008).

Google’s ‘double click ad planner’ outlines the 1000 most visited sites on the WWW, the data discussed are from July 2011 (Google, 2012a). At this time Facebook was the most visited website with 880,000,000 unique visitors/users, which is defined as ‘the estimated, unduplicated number of people who visit a site over a specific month.’ (Google, 2011a). Furthermore, it notes Facebook’s page views at 1,000,000,000,000 (Google, 2012a), which are the ‘total estimated number of times pages on a site have been accessed by users’ (Google, 2011b). However, it must be noted that this listing ‘excludes adult sites, ad networks, domains that don’t have publicly visible content or don't load properly, and certain Google sites.’ (Google,
mostpopularwebsites.net/, which lists the most popular website of the day, reports that Google is the most popular website online with Facebook the second most popular (mostpopularwebsites, 2012).

Internet World Stats report that the most Facebook users are in Europe with 232,835,740 as of the 31st of March 2012, as outlined in Table A1.1 (Internet World Stats, 2012a). They calculate the ‘Facebook penetration’ rate to illustrate ‘the ratio of Facebook users in relation to the total number of estimated population in each world region, expressed as a percentage’ (ibid.). North America has the highest Facebook penetration rate of 49.9% as of the 31st of March 2012 (ibid.).

Table A1.1: Facebook Subscriber Growth between 2011 and 2012 (Internet World Stats, 2012a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>200,260,360</td>
<td>200,907,040</td>
<td>214,988,320</td>
<td>223,376,640</td>
<td>232,835,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>131,556,800</td>
<td>152,957,480</td>
<td>169,392,060</td>
<td>183,963,780</td>
<td>195,034,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>69,594,760</td>
<td>82,207,800</td>
<td>92,049,480</td>
<td>103,294,940</td>
<td>112,531,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central America</td>
<td>28,050,240</td>
<td>33,081,140</td>
<td>36,333,060</td>
<td>38,317,280</td>
<td>41,332,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>21,414,240</td>
<td>30,660,460</td>
<td>34,796,940</td>
<td>37,738,380</td>
<td>40,265,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>15,779,440</td>
<td>16,125,180</td>
<td>17,326,520</td>
<td>18,241,080</td>
<td>20,247,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania / Australia</td>
<td>12,333,780</td>
<td>12,881,560</td>
<td>13,177,360</td>
<td>13,353,420</td>
<td>13,597,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean, the</td>
<td>5,362,600</td>
<td>5,903,520</td>
<td>6,182,080</td>
<td>6,218,960</td>
<td>6,355,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Total</td>
<td>664,032,460</td>
<td>710,728,720</td>
<td>756,884,780</td>
<td>799,092,160</td>
<td>835,525,280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: (1) Facebook (FB) Users (Subscribers) Growth in the World from March 31, 2011 to March 31, 2012, according to the official Facebook number of subscribers (users) reported in 210 individual countries and/or territories. (2) The "Facebook Penetration" corresponds to the ratio of Facebook users in relation to the total number of estimated population in each world region, expressed as a percentage. (3) World Demographic (Population) numbers are based on mid-year 2011 data from the US Census Bureau. (4) For definitions, disclaimers, and navigation help, please refer to the Site Surfing Guide. (6) Information in this site may be cited, giving the due credit to www.internetworldstats.com. Copyright © 2012, Miniv Watts Marketing Group. All rights reserved worldwide.

In the Irish context, Socialbakers reports that there are 2,275,320 Facebook users as of October 2012, which makes it number 59 in their ranking of all Facebook user statistics by country from a total of 213 countries (Socialbakers, 2012a). They report a Facebook penetration in Ireland of 49.22% of the total population and of 74.78% of total Irish Internet users (ibid.). In the last six months, at the time of writing, October 2012, Irish Facebook users have grown considerably by 163,300 from July to September that year, as the graph below, Figure A1.1, illustrates:
The largest age group on Facebook in Ireland is the 25-34 range, with 728,102 users. The pie chart overleaf, Figure A1.2, illustrates the age distribution of Irish Facebook users.
Finally, there are more female users, 53%, than male users, 47%, in Ireland. This is total contrast to the Irish Translations app, where the community is predominantly male, as will be discussed further in Sections 7.1 and 7.2.1. This statistic varies widely from country to country, with 54% of Facebook users from the USA, the country with the largest number of Facebook users, being female, but only 26% of Indian users, the country with the second largest number of Facebook users, being female (Socialbakers, 2012b).

A1.2 The Facebook Site
The subject matter of this ethnography ‘is a topic and not a location’ (Hine, 2000: 67); it is concerned with the language practices of individual Internet users and online corporate entities, in other words the language reality of the Internet and how this relates to current language policy theory, as outlined previously (Section 1.1). It must be acknowledged however, that the study of this topic is grounded in a particular location, given the infinite nature of the Internet/new media. Facebook was chosen as the field of the current study due to its popularity with the researcher’s generation, rapid growth and assimilation to and role in popular culture. It is a phenomenon growing from a Harvard
based computer network in 2004 based in a dorm room available in English only, to an international website in 2012 with a billion monthly active users (Facebook, 2012a; Facebook, 2012b; Zuckerberg, 2012). Searching for ‘Facebook’ via Google returns ‘About 21,270,000,000 results [in] (0.12 seconds)’ (Google, 2012b).

Each Facebook user has a personal Profile which consists of a Timeline on which their recent activities are shown, their Friends can write, it also has a cover photo, a Profile picture, some of their personal details such as age, gender, current occupation, relationship status, etc., and a number of other sections. These sections include: an About section about the user; a Friends list of their connections on the SNS; a Photos section which contains any photos they have uploaded or been tagged in by their Friends; a Map section which shows places they have checked in at or been checked in by a Friend; a section on websites/online apps they Like; a list of the people or Pages on the SNS they subscribe to in Subscriptions and a Notes section where the user can write and publish notes their Friends can see. Figures A1.3 and A1.4 below are screenshots of the researcher’s personal Facebook Timeline as of April 2012.

![Figure A1.3: Facebook Timeline](image-url)
Facebook users can add apps to their *Profile*, now *Timeline*, which *Facebook* or outside parties develop. These apps ‘allow users to personalize their *Profiles* and perform other tasks, such as compare movie preferences and chart travel histories’ (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 7), the *Translations* app is an app of this kind. *Networks* are an integral part of *Facebook*; as a SNS it consists of many networks, and in the early years of the site, *Networks* were based around a workplace, school, country, etc. However, now a *Facebook* user’s network consists of the *Friends* they accept on the site, the importance of *Networks* on the site has been phased out. When a user accepts a *Friend* request this gives that *Facebook* user permission to view their *Profile*/*Timeline*, etc., and connect with them. Thus SNSs can be seen to constitute virtual language communities (as will be discussed in Section 6.2.2), necessitating the need for some kind of policy formation about which languages to use, how to use them and other language related issues (cf. Leppänen and Piirainen-Marsh, 2009).

Although this is a new media context, there is regulation, management and ‘top-down’ policy on *Facebook*. It is governed by the *Facebook Principles* (Facebook, 2012c) and the *Facebook Statement of Rights and Responsibilities* (Facebook, 2012a) documents, along with other specific policy documents. While *Facebook* do not have an explicit language management/language policy document or statement, it should be noted that the above documents are available in five language versions: English, which is the default, along with translated versions in French, Italian, German and Spanish.
Facebook is a democracy of sorts, having a ‘town hall process of notice and comment and a system of voting to encourage input and discourse’ on amendments to its key documents (Facebook, 2012c).

A1.3 The Facebook Translations Application

Facebook estimates that approximately 81% of its monthly active users are from outside the USA (Facebook, 2013). However, it was only available in English until February 2008, when it announced the localisation of Facebook into the languages of its users. Facebook did not employ professional translators on its staff, but rather developers who created the Translations app, which enables Facebook users to translate the site themselves. DePalma and Kelly (2011) note that in late 2009 Facebook had identified nearly half a million translatable words on the site; 250,000 from the interface of the site, 200,000 from legal and help content, and the remaining 50,000 aprox for miscellaneous content. The Translations app was launched in Spanish first, then French, with German following in March and extended to another 21 languages that April. The Translations app has continued to be ‘released’ to more languages and as of October 2012 is available in 110 languages. This includes some minority or regional languages, such as Irish and Welsh; language varieties, for example English US and English UK; and others such as Leet Speak, Esperanto and English Pirate. Facebook reports that over 300,000 of their users are involved in the Translations app (Facebook, 2010a; 2011b).

Once a Facebook user adds the Translations app to their Profile they become a translator and join the community of translators for the language they choose. The Translations app works through individual translators submitting translations, which the wider language community then approve via a voting system. In piloting the system, Facebook was translated into Spanish by 1500 translators in less than a month (Facebook, 2008a). The Irish language community translating Facebook is comprised of more than 500 individual translators. The exact date the Irish Translations app went live is not known, however, the first Post on the Translations app Discussion Board was on the 22nd of June 2008.

Translation of the Facebook SNS occurs in a three step process, as outlined on the homepage/Dashboard of each app:

Step 1: Translate the glossary. Discuss, translate and vote to decide translations for core Facebook terms. Voting will help complete this step faster
Step 2: Translate Facebook. Translate all of Facebook into Gaeilge. Assure high quality by voting up good translations and voting down poor translations
Step 3: Voting and Verification. Inline voting mode is enabled in this step, use it to vote on more translations. Test and confirm that all parts of Facebook work well in Gaeilge. Review and verify important pages, emails, and workflows.

All languages open for translation must complete these three steps sequentially to be fully translated and launched for use by all Facebook users. While the translation is ongoing, only translators who have added the app to their Profile can use that language option on the SNS.

Figure A1.5 shows the homepage, later Dashboard, of the Translations app on Facebook in the early stages of the ethnography (January 2009). It directed Facebook users to the app to add it to their Profile, published updates from Facebook about the app, allowed users to become a Fan of and rate the app, and a Discussion Board and Wall where translators could discuss issues concerning the app, request an app to be opened for a language, etc.

Figure A1.5: Facebook Translations App Homepage 2009

The format and design of this Translations app homepage changed a number of times over the ethnography and in 2011 was visible, as Figure A1.6 below.

Other elements of this page at this time included photos of random translators from all the languages involved, the option to recommend the app to your Facebook Friends, a Photos section, Notes section, a Boxes section, which links to the Discussion Board element, and information on how many of your Friends use it.
The design and layout of the Translations app has changed a number of times over the course of this ethnography, as will be discussed below, the design discussed here is the ‘old’ app, which was the design of the app, with some changes, for the majority of this ethnography. The ‘new’ Translations app will also be briefly introduced. (Elements of the ‘new’ design introduced in October 2011, at which point this ethnography ended, are discussed in comparison with the design considered here in below). Every language open for translation has its own Translations app comprised of a number of elements, and Figure A1.7 below is the homepage or Dashboard of the Irish language app. This contains information on what step of the translation process the language is at, an overview of the number of translators involved and related information as discussed in Chapter 6, the three latest Topics on the Discussions board as well as links and navigation text to the other components of the app.
Figure A1.7: Irish Translations App Dashboard

In the Translate element (Figure A1.8), words/phrases that are open for voting and translation are displayed, users click on the Translate button beside them to submit a translation and/or the Vote button to vote.
The Review component, as seen in Figure A1.9, is where translations that have been reported by individual translators or auto-checked by Facebook (see Section 6.3.3.1) are sent, for being perceived as ‘bad’ translations by the community, for not using Glossary terms as decided in step one, for using profanities, etc. The reasons for their review are outlined under them to allow translators to vote further on them.

In the Vote section (Figure A1.10), the translations that have been submitted are visible and multiple translations of one term can be open for voting. In this case
translations are displayed in the order of most votes received first; voting is by selection of ‘up’ or ‘down’ arrow buttons beside the translation.

Figure A1.10: Vote

The My Awards aspect, as illustrated in Figure A1.11, outlines when the translator submitted their first translation, first vote, the number of votes submitted, when they last translated and last voted. It also outlines the Awards that the translator has received, or in the researcher’s case not!

Figure A1.11: My Awards
This was introduced in August 2011 to display all the awards that a translator has won independently of their translation stats which are in the My Translations element.

The My Translations (Figure A1.12), element displays the actual translations the user has submitted and whether they have been accepted as the translation to use. It also allows the translator to edit the translations they have submitted, this does however reset the votes that have already been cast.

Figure A1.12: My Translations

The Preferences element, Figure A1.13, is where individual translators are able to set preferences in relation to how they see and use the app.

Figure A1.13: Preferences
The **Leaderboard** section shows the *translators* in three time-specified leaderboards: **Weekly**, **Monthly** and **All Time** (Figure A1.14), which can be seen as adding to the motivation to translate and creating a sub-community of ‘senior translators’ (cf. Section 7.2.5.1). *Facebook* do not outline how it determines translators’ rank, only noting that they ‘take in account both the quality and based on the community feedback’ [presumably the post votes their translations receive], *the quality of your contribution*. DePalma and Kelly (2011: 287) note that the **Leaderboard** displays ‘the total number of winning words and phrases they have submitted and the number of votes they have received’.

Figure A1.14: Leaderboard

To improve one’s rank on the **Leaderboard**, *Facebook* simply encourages users to vote and translate more, to use **Inline Translation** and participate in the community **translators** group (*ibid.*). **Inline Translation** is when words or phrases in need of translation are marked by green underlines as the **translator** uses *Facebook*. To translate, the **translator** hovers over the word or phrase and right-clicks it (when in this mode they use left-clicks to navigate the site). In the later stages of the translation, **Inline Voting** and **Inline Reporting** were available in the same manner: right-click to vote or report and left-click to navigate. Figure A1.15 below is of the researcher’s **Home** screen in August 2010 with **Inline Reporting** turned on.
Figure A1.15: Inline Translation

The *Guidance* aspect is comprised of a *Style* (Figure A1.16) element, an editable wiki.

Figure A1.16: Style Guide

The *Glossary* page, as outlined in Figure A1.17, contains a list of the glossary terms that were translated, voted on, and decided in step one of the translation process.
The *Help* aspect (Figure A1.18) outlines how to translate, vote, review, view your translations, links to further help from *Facebook* and to submit feedback. It also contains the link to the *Terms Applicable to Translate Facebook* as in Figure A1.19.
The last section on the Translations app navigation bar is the About link which redirects the user to the overall Translations app Page.

The default language of the Translations app is English US; as this ethnography and the Irish language translation progressed, more of the Irish app’s interface was available in Irish, as is illustrated in Figure A1.20 below.
DePalma and Kelly (2011: 388) acknowledge the criticism Facebook received for using this method of translation, primarily as people perceived it ‘as a form of doing translation on the cheap’. They note, that Facebook ‘realized minimal or no cost savings’ by translating their site in this way due to its investment in technology to facilitate this translation. However, they do note that Facebook gained is financial benefit from having unsupported languages, automating the localisation process and prioritising content to be translated, as this allows localised content/sites to be used sooner (ibid.).

A1.3.1 The New Translations Application
The ‘new’ Translations app was introduced in October 2011. Initially translators could view and use both versions of the app and Facebook sought feedback on the ‘new’ app from translators. The ‘new’ Translations app, as seen in Figure A1.21 below, has significantly less elements than the ‘old’ app. The Vote and Translate elements are a joint element on the homepage of the app, with the translator selecting the Vote or Translate button under the translations open for translation/voting and the selected option then appears below.
Figure A1.21: The New Translations App

The Translations app’s Settings, Terms of Service and the Translations overall Page are accessible via links on the homepage of the app. Also, the Translation Community is accessible on the right-hand-side of the homepage and is now a Facebook Group (this different approach to community is discussed in Section 6.2.2.4). The Discussion Board aspect of the app is now part of this Translation Community Facebook Group, although none of the existing Posts and Topics were not carried over.

A translator’s progress, ‘Your Progress’, is displayed on the homepage of the new app, outlining the number of translations submitted and votes received. The My Translations (Figure A1.22) element is accessed now by clicking on the number of translations submitted here.
The Leaderboard (Figure A1.23) still features as an element of the app and is still available in Week, Month and All Time timeframes.

In November 2011 the Style Guide Wiki, Figure A1.24, from the ‘old’ app was carried over to the new app and appeared as another element of the app.
A1.3.2 Facebook Translations App: Related Studies

Lewis et al. (2009) discuss the Facebook Translations app and the functions of its various elements, as described above, from the perspective of localisation studies. The translations submitted by the community form a ‘translation memory’, which is ‘incrementally built and made use of by the community’ (Lewis et al., 2009: 30). The voting, reporting function and Discussion Board elements of the Translations app act as ‘quality control’ (ibid.). Lewis et al. note the existence of the fourth step in the translation process, pointing out that in the final stage the translations ‘pass through an internal review stage before being approved’ which occurs after the ‘winning translations are determined’ (ibid.: 31). They categorise the Facebook Translations app as having high community involvement - ‘full involvement in the translation of glossary and the translation and review of product’ - and high interaction within the community via the discussions and rate/reporting function (ibid.). The Leaderboards ‘publicise and reward’ the user translations, while the voting mechanism eliminates ‘bad’ translations. (For discussion of the language ideological aspects of Facebook’s approach to translation see Section 6.2.1.3). The Translations app is also considered in a natural
language processing study (Scannell, 2012b). Scannell describes the app as ‘an innovative and powerful system’ and that the Inline Translation feature ‘provides a measure of instant gratification that is unavailable in most traditional software translation contexts,’ (ibid.: 2). He acknowledges the role of the ‘reputation system’ (Facebook, 2009b), which will be discussed further (see Section 6.3.3.2), behind the app, outlining that ‘A translator’s influence is measured in terms of both quantity of translations and their quality, as measured by the voting system’ (Scannell, 2012b: 2).

A1.4 Facebook Connect

In September 2009, Facebook expanded the Translations app via Facebook Connect. This ‘allows users to bring their Facebook account information, friends and privacy to any third party website, desktop app or device’ (Facebook, 2008b). Any website or app that uses Facebook Connect now has access to the Facebook Translations app and its ‘language communities’ in order to translate its website or app. Figure A1.25 below is the Where I’ve Been app which was open for translation into Irish at various times in 2010 and 2011. Once the content of the website or app is registered for translation, the connected Facebook users can translate the site content. Facebook Connect is open to all web developers via the Facebook Platform, potentially the entire WWW, which could have major implications for how multilingualism develops on the Web (see Section 8.5.2).

Figure A1.25: Where I’ve Been App
The *Translations* app, it can be argued, is the manifestation of *Facebook*’s language management/language planning; it is how *Facebook* implements its language policy, (Spolsky, 2004) (cf. Chapter 6).

A1.5 **The Changing Translations Application**

Over the course of this ethnography the *Translations* app, its design, layout and its components were removed, updated, redesigned and new elements added. An example of this occurred in June 2009, when there was a change in the layout and navigation menu of the *Translations* app as seen in Figure A1.26:

![Figure A1.26: Translations App Dashboard June 2009](image)

While in October 2009, the navigation layout of the app was changed again and the names of the elements of the app also changed (Figure A1.27):

![Figure A1.27: Translations App Dashboard October 2009](image)

Also, in September 2009, the Leaderboard expanded from an overall *Leaderboard* to a *Weekly*, *Monthly* and *All Time* distinct *Leaderboards*. 

468
In August 2009, the Poorly Translated section was renamed and redesigned as a Needs Review section and then illustrated why a translation needed review below the actual translation submitted, as highlighted in Figure A1.28 below. This change is discussed further in Section 6.3.3.1.

Figure A1.28: Needs Review

An example of the removal of elements from the app is the case of the All Languages Leaderboard of all the languages open for translation via the Translations app, which was removed in late 2009. Another major change in the app over the period of this ethnography was the introduction of the Translator Awards in the My Translations element in December 2009. At other times, new options were added to the app as it developed. For example in the Go Vote/Vote on Phrases section, new viewing options were introduced which allowed translators to see words open for voting according to a number of categories: ‘Frequently Used…Random…Least Voted…Recently Added’.
APPENDIX 2
FIELDWORK DIARY

6th February 2009

- How to decide to add new language to TA?  Somebody else?
- Creation of the TA? read/pick?
- Influence of FB interaction on the TA? is there all these steps? keep an eye on going check before find interaction end?
- Can interaction end?
- Discussion section of long TA's to long ideological debates?
- To include stories?
- To comment? ?
- The style guide is e- with (have the George etc) to create/arguments?

6th February 2009

- glossary? (from step 1 presumably)
- Facebook is not to be translated.
- Repeat this phrase in particular in the? 
- Transition only in Eng to Eng is a nonsense be a nonsense (only translate from Eng)
- see how "my transition" works
e: I want you to do
- Yes to up/down nor right/wrong
- to this method
- implications
- multiple transitions
- disagreements/discrepencies.
24th April 2009

Aug 17th again

 Becoming a Transcriber!

word & finding
source from RealE
wasn't sure about incl [word] in translation
App & should have
hence popped up (in Eng) saying
should have kept all info in footers
second attempt, got the 30 new
in PB. Wearing (is this as I have no
friends on research profile?)
Enjoy a permit profile...

* need nothing 'Wason', same as above
* transcribe 'Wason' & success!!
* can edit Wason & reword as.
* My transcribers' names on list up &
down
Style Guide will still not edit &
not in yellow.
APPENDIX 3
RAW SCREENSHOTS

12th May 2009

30th June 2009
The planned interviews were not carried out as the researcher decided they were beyond the scope of this research.
Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee
Ethical Consideration of Research Project Form
(for Final Year Projects/Taught MA dissertations/PhD/Faculty Research)

This form should be jointly completed and signed by supervisor(s) and student and included in the bound copy of the FYP/MA dissertation/PhD thesis when submitted.

Name: Aoife Lenihan
ID Number: 0447498
Type of Project (e.g. FYP, MA dissertation, PhD, faculty): Conference Paper
Working title of project: Facebook – An example of ‘bottom-up’ language policy in the new media?
Supervisor (if applicable): Dr. Helen Kelly-Holmes

Does the proposed research involve human subjects? Yes X No ___
If No, please sign the form and submit with your project/dissertation/thesis etc.

If Yes, does the proposed research involve? (Tick as appropriate)

- Adult/child (<18) patients ___
- Adults/children (<18) with physiological and/or psychological impairments ___
- Adults/children (<18) with learning difficulties ___
- Adults/children (<18) under the protection/control/influence of others (e.g. in care/prison) ___
- Relatives of sick people (e.g. parents of sick children) ___
- People who may only have a basic knowledge of English ___

Please answer the questions on page 2 of this form. You can contact the FAHSS Ethics representative for your department for advice on completing this form (Brendan Halpin Sociology); Michael Griffin (LCS); Tom Lodge (Politics); Angus Mitchell (History); Jennifer Schweppe (Law)). You should draw up and attach an Information sheet AND a separate Consent form (or alternative) when returning this form to the Chair of the Committee, Jennifer Schweppe, as well as any questionnaire or questions you have developed for a structured interview or other relevant material.

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________

Supervisor signature (if applicable): __________________ Date: __________________
These questions are to be answered by individual planning research that involves human subjects. Please answer briefly.

- How do you plan to gain access to / contact / approach potential informants?
  Potential informants will be identified from their use of Facebook translations application / Facebook Blog and approached via Facebook email.

- What arrangements have you made for anonymity and confidentiality?
  Personal details will only be collected to assess the informant’s experience of developing and/or using Facebook’s translation application. This information will be kept confidential; informants will be made aware of this via the study’s consent form. The findings of the interview(s) will be reported anonymously.

- Can you assess the particular vulnerability of your informants?
  All informants will be over 18 and not vulnerable as personal information will not be reported as detailed above.

- What arrangements are in place to ensure that informants know the purpose of the research and what they are going to inform about?
  An information sheet (attached) and consent form (attached) will be given to potential informants. The information sheet will outline the title of the project, the site of interest and purpose of the research, what data collection method will be used, what their information will be used for and the contact details of the researcher, researchers supervisor and the UL Ethics Committee. The consent form will outline that they understand the nature of the research and have had the opportunity to ask questions prior to participation, that they are aware the interview will be recorded, their right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the research at any time, that their information and participation will be kept confidential, reported anonymously, kept in a secure location for the duration of the project. The participant and researcher will keep copies of the information sheet and consent form.

- How will you ensure that informants are aware of their right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time?
  The initial approach email will outline the potential informants right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time. Further, the consent form for the project will also outline their right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at anytime.

- What are the safety issues (if any) arising from this research, and how will you deal with them?
  N/A

- How do you propose to store the information?
  Data collected will be stored on a password protected computer and any hard copies of data will be kept for the duration of the project in a secure location in the University of Limerick. I will not destroy any data and will keep the data for 7 years.
Information and Consent Form

Information Section
The working title of the project is: ‘Facebook – An example of ‘bottom up’ language policy in the new media?’
The purpose of the research is to investigate Facebook’s ‘translations application’ to ascertain if it is an example of a ‘bottom-up’ language policy in the new media.

The method of research is by interview, either virtual interview or traditional interview
The interview consists of X questions, takes X minutes to complete and is arranged at a place and time that suit the interviewee.

Participants in the survey have the right to refuse to answer questions and withdraw their participation at any time.
Participant’s anonymity is ensured as they are not asked to provide personal information and findings shall be reported anonymously.
The information collected will be used for the sole purpose of this project.

Participants also have the right to contact the FAHSS UL Research Ethics Committee if they have any concerns about the research.

The researcher is Aoife Lenihan: Aoife.Lenihan@ul.ie

PhD Supervisor Dr Helen Kelly-Holmes: Helen.Kelly.Holmes@ul.ie

The chair of FAHSS is Jennifer Schweppe: Jennifer.Schweppe@ul.ie
The chair of the ULREC is Dr Kevin Kelleher c/o Anne O’Dwyer: Anne.Odwyer@ul.ie
Consent Section:
I, the undersigned, declare that I am willing to take part in this research project.

Title of Study: Facebook – An example of ‘bottom-up’ language policy in the new media?

- I declare that I have been fully briefed on the nature of this study and my role in it and have been given the opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate.
- The nature of my participation has been explained to me and I have full knowledge of how the information collected will be used.
- I am also aware that my participation in this study will be recorded (video/audio) and I agree to this. However, should I feel uncomfortable at any time I can request that the recording equipment be switched off. I am entitled to copies of all recordings made and am fully informed as to what will happen to these recordings once the study is completed.
- I fully understand that there is no obligation on me to participate in this study and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without having to explain or give a reason.
- I am also entitled to full confidentiality in terms of my participation and personal details.

______________________________________         __________________________
Signature of participant                                               Date
Possible Questions

Translators

Background
- What age are you? (Exclusion question, under 18 not followed up).
- How would you describe your level of Irish overall? Written Irish? Spoken Irish?
- Which Facebook network(s) do you belong to?
- How long are you a member of Facebook?
- How long are you using the Translations Application?
- How did you find out about the Translations Application?
- Are you Facebook friends with any of the other translators?
- Are you (offline) friends with any of the other translators?
- If so, did you become friends via using the Translations Application?
- Do you use Irish in any other online / new media forms?
- If so, details.

Usage
- How often do you use Facebook?
- How often do you translate via the Translations Application?
- Do you check your position on the translations leaderboard?
- If so, how often? Why?
- What is your current number of words / votes on the leaderboard?
- Describe your role in the translation of Facebook into Irish as you see yourself.
- Are you involved in the translation of Facebook into other languages?
- If so, which languages?
- What stage did you join the translation of Facebook into Irish?
- Do you participate in the discussion board of the Irish translations application?
- Have you edited the Irish Translations Application Wiki?

Other
- Are you familiar with any Irish language legislation / provision in the offline world?
- Why did you get involved in the Irish Translations Application?
- Are you involved in language activism in the offline world?
- What is the potential of the Translations Application in your opinion?
Do you have any issues with the design or method of the Translations Application?

What do you think of the voting design of the Translations Application?

Have you heard of Google in Your Language? Vicipéid (Wikipedia as Gaeilge)?

Are you involved in the Irish translation of these websites?

Developer

Stats of usage for Translations Application? Active users? Lurkers?

How is a language added to the Translations Application? Who decides? What are the criteria?

Are there any plans for the Translations Application itself to be available in any other languages (current – English).

Has the Translations Application been reported?

How did the development of the Translations Application come about? Was there a need / push for FB in other languages?

Are professional translators used in step four of the Translations Application?

Can the translations end? Limit to number of languages?

How was the Glossary formulated? Choice of works, US English.


Leaderboard of translators and languages – why?

How does the leaderboard work?

Is there ever a final winner?

Are there any poorly translated in any language? (I can’t find)

What languages are to be added next?

Are there any issues with different language scripts?

IP issues with the translations – where will the words go?

How is the percentage translated worked out?

What is the future of the Translations Application?

Only open to Beta users?

Future updates planned?

Why change in look of translators leaderboard?

Start of May percentage of language translation completed went backwards, why?

How is the Style Guide Wiki changed?