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LANGUAGE DEATH: THE LIFE CYCLE OF A SCOTTISH GAELIC DIALECT


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Irish is a Celtic language, closely related to Scottish Gaelic and Manx which are really dialects of Irish and have had a distinct literary form only since the seventeenth century. (Dillon & Ó Crónáin 1961, ix) ”Cha robh na maraichean a”smuaineachadh air a”bhà Ghà idhlig ac” mar a” dualchainnt.” Bha iad a”smuaineachadh air mar chainnt. The fisherfolk didn”t think of their Gaelic as a dialect. They thought of it as a language. 1961. Teach yourself Irish, Teach yourself books. London. — Dorian, Nancy C. 1981. Language death: the life cycle of a Scottish Gaelic dialect. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. — Lamb, William. 1999. "A diachronic account of Gaelic News-speak: The development and expansion of a register." Scottish Gaelic Studies no. Scottish Gaelic is not an official language of either the European Union or the United Kingdom. However, it is classed as an indigenous language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which the British government has ratified, and the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 established a language development body, Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Records of their speech show that Irish and Scottish Gaelic existed in a dialect chain with no clear language boundary. Out of a total of 871 civil parishes in Scotland, the proportion of Gaelic speakers exceeds 50% in 7 parishes, exceeds 25% in 14 parishes, and exceeds 10% in 35 parishes. Decline in traditional areas has recently been balanced by growth in the Scottish Lowlands. Dorian, N. C. 1973. Grammatical change in a dying dialect. Language 49. 413-438. Dorian, N. C. 1977. The problems of the semi-speaker in language death. Linguistics 191. 23-32.