

## LANGUAGE DEATH AND REVIVAL: CORNISH AS A MINORITY LANGUAGE IN UK

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**Abstract.** The paper introduces the worldwide phenomenon of language death, and briefly elaborates on the arguments for saving endangered languages. The main focus of the paper is revived Cornish. Cornish is a Celtic language that was spoken in Cornwall, UK between the 7th and 16th century. Due to Anglicisation, it became gradually endangered and finally died out as a community language during the 18th century. The revival of Cornish started with the publication of Henry Jenner's *Handbook of the Cornish Language* in 1904. Today Cornish is recognised by UNESCO as a 'critically endangered' language. The paper presents an analysis of revived Cornish along Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS).

**Keywords:** endangered languages, minority languages, language death, language revival, GIDS, Cornish

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### 1. Introduction: language death

“Languages have died off throughout history, but never have we faced the massive extinction that is threatening the world right now. As language professionals, we are faced with a stark reality: Much of what we study will not be available for future generations. The cultural heritage of many peoples is crumbling while we look on. Are we willing to shoulder the blame for having stood by and done nothing?” (Crystal 2000: vii). The rate at which languages disappear today has no precedence in human history (Harrison 2008: 7). On the basis of the most frequent estimates of the number of existing languages, there are between 6,000 and 7,000 languages in the world today (Crystal 2000: 8, Nettle and Romaine 2002: 32, Harrison 2008: 13). As more than half of today's languages are expected to disappear by the end of the current century, one can claim the world is facing a linguistic disaster (Nettle and Romaine 2002: ix, Harrison 2008: 3).

In the present paper, I deal with the notions of language death, revival and maintenance with regard to a revived language, Cornish. The article presents the findings of an analysis of the state of Cornish in Cornwall carried out within the framework of Fishman's Graded

Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) in 2008 and 2012. The questions that triggered my research are the following: Can the changing state of an endangered language be described through the rather static stages of the GIDS? If yes, can it be confined to one single stage on the GIDS? If so, at what stage is Cornish today? Nevertheless, before turning to my example, I examine the problem from a wider perspective.

## **2. The reasons for language death**

The process that results with the death of a language is very often induced by political or social discrimination (Harrison 2008: 8). There are numerous examples of how political and social discrimination can affect language use negatively. One of the examples is that of Irish, a Celtic language. Among the various causes of the language shift that occurred in Ireland during the 18th and 19th century are the exclusion of Irish from the National School system reinforced through penalties, the attitudes and policies of the Catholic Church and the introduction of English as the language of politics (Filppula 1999: 9).

According to Nettle and Romaine (2002: 90) languages disappear either due to population loss or language shift. Population loss was the reason for the vanishing of some of the Native American languages during the European colonisation of the Americas. Nettle and Romaine (2002: 90–92) distinguish two types of language shift: forced shift and voluntary shift. Forced shift denotes the scenario when a dominant language group forces a minority group to abandon its language. Voluntary shift occurs when a language community presumes that it would benefit more from speaking the dominant language than its own ancestral one.

## **3. Arguments for saving endangered languages**

There are many arguments for engaging in the prevention of language deterioration. I will present four reasons and briefly elaborate on each one. The first and possibly the strongest argument for protecting endangered languages is related to the role of language as an identity marker (Tsunoda 2005: 141). When people lose their mother tongue, they also lose a crucial part of their identity. Tsunoda (2005: 135–145) describes how language, people, land, identity and cultural knowledge are interwoven. Regarding the language revival movement in Cornwall, Philip Payton claims that the basic revivalist assumption

is that the Cornish language acts as the principal symbol of Cornish identity (Payton 1997: 105).

Nettle and Romaine (2002: 13) present another argument for protecting endangered languages and their argument is connected to the earth's ecosystems. Territories with the highest linguistic diversity also encompass high biological diversity. Nettle and Romaine (2002: 13) claim that the correlation between linguistic and biological extinction is not accidental as linguistic and biological diversity have common locations, common causes and even face common threats. Thus, protecting dying languages in terms of the affected language groups will contribute to the well-being of their environment due to the fundamental relationship between human cultures, languages and ecosystems (Nettle and Romaine 2002: 32–49). Although the issue remains contentious, several scholars (among them Maffi 2007: 270, Mufwene 2004: 211 and Harrison 2008: 59) have researched and endorsed the idea of the fundamental relationship between human cultures, languages and ecosystems.

The third argument for protecting endangered languages is based on the notion that each language contains invaluable wisdom due to observations made by generations of people about the natural world, plants, animals, weather, soil and much more (Harrison 2008: 17). According to estimates, there are about 10 to 12 million species in the world, of which only 1.75 million are described by taxonomists (Barthlott, Lisenmair and Porembski 2009: 4–5). About 87 percent of the world's species, excluding tiny microbes, are yet to be identified, named, described or classified by the modern scientific world. However, a great section of this vast knowledge gap can be filled in by data collected by indigenous people over millennia (Harrison 2008: 15). Most of the traditional knowledge gathered by generations of people is unwritten and only passed on orally from one generation to the next. This means that with the rapid extinction of the world's languages, we lose invaluable information about the natural world (Harrison 2008: 15).

The last argument I wish to present here refers to linguistic diversity, a prerequisite for understanding the various possibilities in human language and the cognitive models that trigger them (Harrison 2008: 18). Diversity is directly dependent on the number of languages; the higher the number of existing languages, the more substantial the diversity. Each new finding about language tells us more about how the human brain produces language. The loss of a language that has unique characteristics may forever take away the possibility of fully understanding human cognitive capacity (Harrison 2008: 19). Linguists make new discoveries about languages still today, and as

threatened languages are among the least studied languages, they could provide the scholarly world with new findings.

#### **4. The Cornish language and language shift in Cornwall**

Cornish is a member of the P-Celtic (Brythonic) language group together with Breton and Welsh, while Irish, Manx and Scottish Gaelic form the Q-Celtic (Goidelic) branch of the Celtic language family (Hinton and Hale 2008: 299). MacKinnon (2000: 5) claims that the Britons of Wales and the Britons of Cornwall were separated by the Saxons at the end of the 6th century. The separation of the southwest Britons led to the development of the Cornish language in Cornwall and the Welsh language in Wales. Cornwall was eventually brought under English rule in 931 (Halliday 1959: 94).

During the 10th century the Cornish chiefs were replaced by Englishmen, who also took over the local government of Cornwall (Halliday 1959: 95). The English occupation was most present in the eastern part of the county and it was in the town of Bodmin where English began to compete with Cornish (Halliday 1959: 101). The subsequent centuries witnessed the retreat of Cornish to the western part of the county and by the 17th century the language was confined to the far end of the Cornish peninsula.

One of the specific events that led to the deterioration of the Cornish language was the introduction of the English Prayer Book in 1549. The Cornish refused the English Prayer Book, which led to the Prayer Book Rebellion (Halliday 1959: 181–184). The rebellion resulted in Cornish rebels being massacred by the King's army and the introduction of the English language for church services. Another event which was detrimental for the Cornish language was the Civil War during which Cornwall lost a great deal of its Cornish speaking population (Halliday 1959: 238).

An additional factor that contributed to language shift from Cornish to English was the negative attitude towards the minority language both inside and outside of the Cornish-speaking community. By the time of the Stuarts, English became the language of commerce, the rich and the ruling society, while Cornish was the language of the poor and the illiterate (Halliday 1959: 184–185). Cornish died eventually as a community language by the end of the 18th century. Stoye (2011) claims that Cornish was last used as a technical, ship-board vocabulary by Cornish shipmen during the late 18th century.

The 20th century saw the revival of Cornish. Today Cornish is one of the minority languages of the UK. It was specified under Part II of

the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional and Minority Languages by the government of the United Kingdom in 2002 (Sayers 2012: 101). According to the official website of the Cornish Language Partnership, hereafter MAGA, in December 2010, UNESCO announced that it changed its categorisation of Cornish from an 'extinct' to a 'critically endangered' language.

## 5. The GIDS and its 8 stages

Fishman's GIDS (Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) is a well-elaborated scale that can be used to define the degree to which a language is endangered. It consists of eight stages, where each stage has its own criteria to be fulfilled. The GIDS takes into account several factors that interact and affect the condition of a language. *Stage 8* represents the worst possible scenario for a language, while *Stage 1* describes the highest achievement in language revitalisation. The idea of stages is based on the assumption that a language should secure its foundations before aiming at and proceeding to the more advanced stages. Fishman not only describes the criteria of each stage in detail but also gives clear and practical instructions about the language planning process related to that particular stage (Fishman 1991: 88–114). The two main purposes of the GIDS are to set focus and priorities for Reversing Language Shift (RLS) efforts and establish linkage of higher stages to the fulcrum of the GIDS, which is generally represented by *Stage 6*, the focus of which is intergenerational mother tongue transmission (Fishman 2001: 465–467).

*Stage 8* describes a very severe situation for a threatened language. This stage represents a case where only a few members of the older generation are able to speak the language. These last speakers are scattered throughout the minority community and there is no interaction between them. In these cases the speakers of Xish<sup>1</sup> sometimes use their language to address their pets, photos or other personal belongings with special meaning to them but the language is not used as a means of communication any more (Fishman 1991: 88).

For languages at *Stage 8*, the most important task for a linguist is language documentation, together with the collection of folk-tales, songs, sayings, etc. of the language in question (Fishman 1991: 88–89). This work is essential for the reconstruction of the language. Language documentation proved to be very useful for the revival of e.g. Kaurna in South Australia and Cornish in Cornwall (Crystal 2000:

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1 Fishman uses Xish for denoting the minority language while Yish stands for the dominant language.

163). As part of the RLS efforts at this stage Fishman suggests the introduction of language courses for the adult members of the Xish community.

According to Fishman (1991: 90), at *Stage 7* Xish is still used on a daily basis but only by elderly speakers beyond child-bearing age. The children and grandchildren of these Xish-speaking people have already abandoned their traditional language and are Yish-speaking. Fishman (1991: 91) suggests that in these cases language planning efforts should focus on spreading the language as a second language among the young, who would then be able to pass it on to their children and bring alive the Xmen-via-Xish phenomenon. It is essential for the RLS movement to differentiate between RLS-means and RLS-ends. As the goal of the RLS-efforts is to re-establish the intergenerational transmission of Xish, all RLS-activities that do not support this goal should be viewed as a failure from the point of view of the revival movement. The minority community should engage in establishing young people's associations, young parent groups and residential communities or neighbourhoods that use Xish (Fishman 1991: 92).

At the next stage, *Stage 6*, Xish is used in informal communication among all three generations of the minority community. This stage is the most crucial in language revitalisation since when its prerequisites are fulfilled, the threat of immediate language death is not present and the language in question will continue to survive. It is also a stage that has to be properly secured; otherwise it is premature to seek success at the more advanced stages. (Fishman 1991: 95)

Fishman claims (1991: 92) that in order for a threatened language to proceed from *Stage 7* to *Stage 6* it is necessary that the younger generation implements some sociolinguistic changes in its way of living so that the intergenerational transmission of Xish becomes secured. Such a goal can only be attained through the establishment of *Stage 7* institutions in neighbourhoods with higher numbers of Xish speakers or “at least, frequently scheduled, and cognitively/emotionally gripping, briefer concentrations for outings and vacations” (Fishman 1991: 92). For minority language communities where there is no demographic concentration of Xish speakers Fishman suggests scheduled visits, the use of regular telephone conferences, amateur or local radios, the exchange of various language learning material such as games, songs, stories, letters and the establishment of parents associations (Fishman 1991: 94–95). In order to facilitate RLS-activities, families raising their children in Xish should be supported by RLS family centres. These centres could be established by organisations like UNESCO or by the expansion of the services of EBLUL (European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages) and IRCB (Inter-

national Research Centre on Bilingualism) (Fishman 1991: 94 and 118).

The primary focus of the next stage, *Stage 5*, is literacy (Fishman 1991: 96–98). At this stage literacy appears in the home, at school and within various community networks. The benefits of introducing literacy to the revival movement are vast. Literacy leads to the broadening of the already achieved functional domains of Xish through the usage of newspapers, magazines, books, brochures, etc. It elevates the image and prestige of the minority language through visibility and connects geographically distant families through aiding interpersonal and inter-communal communication.

Fishman (1991: 98) suggests the attainment of literacy at this stage at home or in a local Xish literacy centre without the establishment of educational institutions. The advantage of acquiring literacy in this way is that the process remains completely under Xish control without much influence of Yish. “For Fishman (1991), *Stages 8 to 5* constitute the minimum basis of reversing language shift. The activities at these stages rely solely on the efforts of the language community itself. Such stages reflect a diglossic situation where the minority language has separate functions from the majority language.” (Baker 2001: 79)

*Stage 4* of the GIDS represents a courageous step for the Xish community through which the minority language community gains partial control of the primary level of education. Fishman (1991: 99–101) distinguishes two types of schools at this phase of the revival. Type 4a represents a school system that follows the Yish authority’s requirements as to what is adequate and expected in education, but which is primarily financed and supported by the minority community. 4b type schools are different in that they are funded entirely out of the general tax funds and the Yish authorities restrain their own control over the requirements of education and let the minority community’s preferences prevail in these schools. Both 4a and 4b type of schools are mainly attended by Xish children and the education is partly carried out in Xish.

The requirements of *Stage 3* are fulfilled when Xish is used in work spheres outside the Xish neighbourhood/community. According to Fishman (1991: 103), Xish is already present at work places situated within the minority community at earlier stages, but at this stage it leaves the protective ethnocultural and ethnolinguistic boundaries of the minority group. In relation to *Stage 3*, Fishman differentiates between two types of enterprises. The main differences between types 3a and 3b are that 3a enterprises are mainly Xish controlled and staffed enterprises seeking to fulfil the needs of the Yish market, while 3b ones are to a great extent under Yish control serving the Xish market.

The RLS-aims regarding 3a enterprises are to maintain the Xish culture and language within the work place, while in case of a 3b enterprise, RLS-efforts should focus on achieving service in Xish (Fishman 1991: 104).

*Stage 2* represents a very advanced stage in language revitalisation. At this stage, the local governmental agencies offer substantially more support to the RLS-movement than at previous stages and facilitate the usage of Xish for instance by offering services in both Xish and Yish and also through bilingual forms available in their offices (Fishman 1991: 106). Another major criterion of *Stage 2* is that the minority language is represented in national radio and television stations through programmes broadcast in Xish or programmes that are dubbed in Xish. The programmes provided by these stations complete the already existing Xish-speaking local programmes.

Languages that have reached the final stage, *Stage 1*, are well represented in higher education and mass media and are widely used by social and governmental organisations, as well as in other services, offices and occupations. At this stage the Xish community has the power to monitor the usage of Xish and cultural autonomy is achieved (Fishman 1991: 107). However, arriving at *Stage 1* is not the end of the RLS endeavours. On the contrary, due to the political nature of this stage the Xish community must closely follow every action that influences the well-being of Xish. As Fishman explains “Eternal watchfulness is the price of RLS and that price must be paid at Stage 1 too” (Fishman 1991: 108).

## 6. Analysis of the present situation of Cornish<sup>2</sup> along the GIDS

The beginning of the Cornish language revival movement was marked by the publication of Henry Jenner's *Handbook of the Cornish Language* in 1904 (Williams 2006: vi). The book triggered great interest in the language. The first people who engaged in the reconstruction of Cornish were enthusiastic scholars, who very soon encountered problems regarding spelling, pronunciation and the creation of new words, as they had to decide which period of traditional Cornish they should take as the starting point for the language revival movement. As a result of various opinions, a long dispute began and four distinct forms of revived Cornish were created and used (Sayers 2012: 100).

In the beginning, Revived Cornish was mainly a written medium, used at ceremonial occasions by a few adults. Cornish speakers could

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2 The focus of the analysis is Revived Cornish and not the earlier forms of Cornish



meet only rarely due to poor communications and there was no or very little interaction between them (George and Broderick 1993: 644). Thus, early Revived Cornish resembled the description of *Stage 8* of the GIDS to a great extent. It was only after the 1970's that some families decided to raise their children in Cornish which in turn resulted in the appearance of the first generation of native Cornish speakers, 200 years after the language had died out (George and Broderick 1993: 644–645). Thus, Cornish passed *Stage 8* of the GIDS sometime in the early 1980's, when the first cases of successful intergenerational transmission of the language appeared and the language was used once more as a means of communication on a daily basis – even if only by very few people. The RLS-goals of this stage were achieved by the revival movement, as there is a wide range of possibilities to learn Cornish. Some of the organisations that provide language classes are *Kesva an Taves Kernewek* ('The Cornish Language Board'), *Cussel an Tavaz Kernuack* ('The Cornish Language Council'), *Agas Tavas* ('Our Language') and *Teer ha Tavas* ('Land and Language'). The website of MAGA offers a long list of organisations that teach or support the learning of Cornish.

The Cornish language has already passed *Stage 7* as well. In addition to adults, there are also young speakers and even children who use Cornish on a daily basis. The first native speakers of Revived Cornish appeared sometime during the 1980's, and some families lead their lives in Cornish as much as possible (George and Broderick 1993: 644–645). A report written by MacKinnon (2000: 20) concluded that there were 20 children claiming Cornish as their mother tongue and 85 children acquiring the language as a second language within the family. The same report also claimed that there were about 300 "effective" speakers of Cornish, defining "effective" speaking ability as "the ability to hold a general conversation at ordinary speed on everyday topics" (MacKinnon 2000: 19).

Considering that the Cornish revival movement has mainly been self-resourced (MacKinnon 2000: 39), the fact that there are Cornish speakers who can contribute to the intergenerational transmission of the language is a remarkable achievement. However, from the point of view of re-establishing Cornish as a vibrant community language, the number of effective speakers must be considered very low, especially when compared to its closest correlate, Manx. Manx, another revived Celtic language that lost its last native speaker in 1974 claimed 643 speakers in 1991 (MacKinnon 2000: 16). According to the report on *The Cornish Language Survey*, conducted by MAGA in 2008, the number of effective speakers within child-bearing age is even lower. There were 645 valid respondents to the survey, out of which 112

were defined as competent and frequent users of Cornish<sup>3</sup>. Out of the competent and frequent users, 87 speakers of Cornish are above the age of 45 and only 25 are between the ages of 16 and 44. On the basis of these numbers it can be claimed that *Stage 7* is only barely passed and more RLS-efforts are needed to secure this stage.

The RLS-efforts at *Stage 7* as described above would include the establishment of young people's associations, young parent groups and residential communities or neighbourhoods that use Cornish. Aiming at establishing Cornish-speaking residential communities or neighbourhoods would be too ambitious a leap for Cornish due to the small number of speakers, who are scattered throughout Cornwall (information via personal correspondence with language revivalist Tony Hak<sup>4</sup> in 2007). At this stage of the GIDS, the focus should be hobbies and youth clubs, where the young could use Cornish in a relaxed atmosphere. Today there are no such possibilities offered, and the revivalists are facing challenges with attracting young people to the language (information via personal correspondence with Tony Hak in November 2012).

There are a number of social and cultural events, such as the *Dydhwow Lowender* ('Fun Days') with all programmes in Cornish, the *Pennseythun Kernewek* ('Cornish Language Weekend') organised only once a year but attracting about 120 speakers and the *Lowender Peran* ('Festival of the Celts') a five days festival celebrating Cornwall's Celtic heritage through traditional music, dance, songs, storytelling (Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek 2013). At least one of these events, the *Pennseythun Kernewek*, is directed to Cornish speakers and learners of all age.

The main criterion for *Stage 6* to be fulfilled is that all three generations speak Xish within the family. As I did not find any reference as to whether there are families where all three generations are able to communicate in Cornish in the consulted literature, I turned to the Cornish-speaking community for answers. Tony Hak informed me in 2007 (and confirmed the data in November 2012) that there are about six families where all three generations use Cornish with each other in their everyday life. As the GIDS does not determine the number of cases needed for this stage to be passed, the existence of such families would mean that the criteria of *Stage 6* are fulfilled. However, in view of the nature of the crucial role that this criterion plays in Fishman's classification, the number of families that fulfil this criterion is very

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3 For the definition of competent and frequent users, see the survey.

4 Tony Hak is the Membership Secretary for Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek (The Cornish Language Fellowship). He is also a teacher of Cornish and Cornish-English translator. He translated among other works, parts of the Cornish version of the Bible (Diglot 2013, MAGA 2012).

low. Thus *Stage 6* is barely passed. Well-planned and executed RLS-activities have to take place for the Cornish language to secure the most crucial stage on the GIDS and not fall back to lower stages due to the lack of young speakers.

As Cornish speakers do not live in the same town the establishment of youth clubs in certain neighbourhoods is not a viable solution. Nevertheless, some RLS-efforts have been made in order to attract young families to Cornish events, such as reduced charges to events like the *Pennseythun Gernewek*. This same event will also have a whole day dedicated to families with young children in 2013 (information via personal correspondence with Tony Hak in 2012 and 2013). While having one day dedicated to young speakers is an essential step toward spreading Cornish among young families, it does not compensate for the regular get-togethers that Fishman describes as relevant at this stage. Especially so regarding teenagers, which is the most difficult age group to attract. One of the possibilities to involve teenagers in Cornish events, apart from the regular outings suggested by Fishman, is to arrange their hobbies partly or completely in Cornish. One way to achieve this is through language immersion programmes (where the target language is used solely) for leisure activities, which has been proven successful for a number of minority languages, such as the Acoma language (Hinton and Hale 2008: 70–71). Another way of involving the young with Cornish is through master-apprentice language learning programmes<sup>5</sup>, which has been successfully utilised in some Native American language communities (Karuk, Hupa, Yurok, Pomo, Wukchumne, Yowlumne, Paiute, Mojave and Chemehuevi languages) in California (Hinton and Hale 2008: 217–226). Language revivalists in Cornwall have considered these alternatives but without additional funding the costs of these programmes are too high for the Cornish community for the time being (information via personal correspondence with Maureen Pierce<sup>6</sup> and Tony Hak in 2013).

As an RLS-effort at this stage Fishman emphasises giving support to families that are willing to socialise their children into the Xish-speaking community. The revivalists in Cornwall have made progress during the last few years in this area. In 2008, there were no institutions providing support for young families and no day-care centres using Cornish in an organised way and on a regular basis<sup>7</sup> (Renkó-

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5 A native speaker and a young learner use the language while doing everyday activities together.

6 Maureen Pierce is a member and contact person for the Kesva an Taves Kernewek (Cornish Language Board) (Kesva an Taves Kernewek 2013)

7 There were a few day-care centres where some Cornish was used but only because the day-care teacher happened to be able to speak the language.

Michelsén 2008: 50). Today there exists a nursery schools movement called Movyans-Skolyow-Meythrin whose goals are defined as: “MSM aims to provide bilingual Cornish/English language educational opportunities for children of nursery school age (between the ages of 2 and 5 years). This is achieved through our MSM pre-school network...Part of our role is to provide advice to parents and carers who are thinking of bringing their children up bilingually” (Movyans-Skolyow-Meythrin 2012) In order to assess the achievements of the movement the matter needs to be revisited in a few year’s time.

The revival movement attained literacy in Cornish and thus secured *Stage 5* of the GIDS even before reaching lower stages. This was possible, because due to the lack of native speakers, the whole revival movement relied on literacy (written texts of traditional Cornish from various historical periods) in reconstructing the language and preparing the first language learning materials.

Today there is a wide range of written literature available to Cornish-speakers through different organisations such as *Kesva an Taves Kernewek*. Besides organising teaching and translation, *Kesva an Taves Kernewek* also engages in publishing technical and academic works, critical and historical works, dictionaries, grammar books and other learning material (Kesva an Taves Kernewek 2013). The biggest difference comparing the current situation to that of 2008 is that there are more written materials available for reading and purchase through the internet via various Cornish language websites. A list of these websites can be obtained from the website of MAGA. The growth in the number of publications is estimated to be about twenty percent (information via personal correspondence with Tony Hak in 2013). One of the reasons that fuelled the increase in publishing is the agreement of the representatives of different language groups on the Standard Written Form in May 2008, which in turn made way for much-desired funding (Sayers 2012: 110–111).

In addition to the above mentioned published materials various periodicals also appeared during the 20th century:

**Table 1.** Periodicals in Cornish during the 20th century (*Source:* George and Broderick 1993: 651)

Dates	Name	Editor	No. per year	Type
1934–6	<i>Kernow</i>	Smith	12	general interest magazine
1952–4	<i>An Lef</i>	Gendall	12	general interest magazine
1954–83	<i>An Lef Kernewek</i>	Hooper	4	literary and technical
1976–9	<i>Eythyn</i>	Snell	4	satirical magazine
1976–	<i>An Gannas</i>	Sandercock	12	general interest magazine
1982–7	<i>Len ha Lyw</i>	Sandercock	12	children's magazine
1984–	<i>An Kesskrifer</i>	Edwards	2	for correspondence students
1987–	<i>Bran Vras</i>	Hulme	2	for Cornish speakers in London

The criteria of *Stage 5* are also concerned with the existence of literacy at home, school and community networks. Cornish literacy is present in the homes of those who speak the language to some extent, as the majority of the Cornish speakers acquire the language through the use of written material. Concerning literacy in schools and community networks, there is still room for improvement in Cornwall (cf. also at *Stage 4* below). However, Cornish language activists have recognised the significance of promoting written Cornish within the community and put it forward in the *Strategy for the Cornish Language*, which can be read on MAGA's website.

The subsequent four stages of the GIDS have not yet been secured by Cornish. However, there has been RLS-type of work carried out by language activists in connection with all of these stages, which renders it essential to present and analyse the Cornish situation along the criteria of these advanced stages as well. At *Stage 4* of the GIDS, the minority language is present at the primary level of education. In 2008, there were no 4a and 4b type of schools in Cornwall (Renkó-Michelsén 2008: 58). However, Cornish was present in some schools in Cornwall already during earlier years. According to the MacKinnon Report (2000: 29–30) the primary schools at Wendron, Roskear, St Mawes, St Michael's, Helston, Ludgvan, Heamoor, Treyew, Weeth,

Coads Green, St Neot, Godolphin and Brunel engaged in teaching Cornish in some form. Furthermore, in the St Neot, St Mawes, Wendron and Treyew schools, the language was taught as part of the integral school curriculum. Four secondary schools also taught Cornish to their pupils.

Today there are still no schools where Cornish would be used as the language of instruction for other subjects (information via personal correspondence with Pol Hodge<sup>8</sup> and Mike Tresidder in November 2012). However, MAGA has been involved in introducing the language to primary schools throughout Cornwall. Among other things, MAGA has distributed language learning materials to all primary schools at different occasions and provided training for teachers on how to use the material (information via personal correspondence with Jenefer Lowe<sup>9</sup>).

The primary focus of *Stage 3* of the GIDS is introducing the minority language to enterprises outside the territory of the minority language community. Cornish is not yet used in the working sphere outside of Cornwall (information via personal correspondence with revivalists Tony Hak and Mike Tresidder in 2007 and 2012 respectively). Nevertheless, RLS-efforts have been made to spread Cornish in the work sphere within Cornwall. *Kesva an Taves Kernewek* uses Cornish as a working language and keeps all its records and meetings in Cornish (Kesva an Taves Kernewek 2013). MAGA also uses Cornish as its working language (MAGA 2012). Both organisations could serve as examples for others to follow.

The revival movement received considerable support from the central government during the last decade, which represents significant achievements in connection with *Stage 2*. As mentioned in section 4, in 2002, the UK government recognised Cornish as a minority language falling under Part II of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML)<sup>10</sup>. In order to ensure governmental funds for ECRML mandated RLS-activities *The Cornish Language Strategy* was compiled by an Advisory Group in 2004. The Strategy claimed that one of the priorities of the revival movement was to agree on a common written form of Cornish (CCC 2004: 17). According to Sayers (2012: 108) a joint local, central governmental and European funding package of £ 600,000 was granted to aid the consultation process that led to the agreement on the SWF<sup>11</sup> in 2008. The funding

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8 Both informants are educational officers at MAGA (information on the website of MAGA).

9 Jenefer Lowe is Development Manager at MAGA (information on the website of MAGA).

10 The signatories of the Charter are required to respect the geographical territory within which regional or minority languages are used, recognise these languages as an expression of cultural wealth and promote their usage (Council of Europe 1992).

11 Standard Written Form

also aided the establishment of MAGA, which was set up to oversee the implementation of the Strategy and to represent various local authorities, language and other organisations (Sayers 2012: 108).

Even though the criteria of *Stage 1* are not yet met in the case of the Cornish language, there have been efforts made in order to achieve political recognition for Cornwall. Following the example of other Celtic nations, a cross-party organisation named Cornish Constitutional Convention was formed in 2000 to campaign for a Cornish Assembly (*Senedh Kernow*). By December 2001 the organisation had collected 50,000 signatures from people in favour of a Cornish Assembly. The organisation does not seek any form of separatism or independence, and its main aim is to create a form of modern governance that would strengthen the role of Cornwall in the affairs of the United Kingdom (Cornish Constitutional Convention 2012). According to Hicks (2005: 22) there is also a need for Cornish to have its own language act, similar to that of the Welsh act, as it would confer equal status on Cornish with English within the territory of Cornwall.

## 7. Discussion

The analysis of Revived Cornish along the criteria of the GIDS has shown that the revitalisation process of Cornish has not followed the linear stages of the GIDS. Instead the revival movement has sought success at different stages simultaneously. More importantly, Revived Cornish has reached *Stage 5* before fulfilling the criteria of any other stage. This indicates that the order and focus of RLS-efforts and RLS-goals can be different for different types of endangered languages. For Cornish it was inevitable to secure *Stage 5* before aiming at other stages as it was a dead language that had to be reconstructed from written materials. Also, due to the fact that there were no speakers of the language, the first learning materials had to be in written form. Consequently, literacy has been present at all stages, strengthening RLS-efforts through written materials. Regarding living endangered languages *Stage 5* does not have to precede other stages (although it might do if the language is already a written one) as there are still speakers of the language that can contribute to spreading the language orally. Thus, I would argue that *Stage 5* does not have a fixed place in the order of stages. It is a 'mobile' stage that can precede all of the stages, accompany them, or follow *Stage 6* depending on the demands of the RLS-process in question.

According to Fishman, the stage that every revival movement has to properly secure is *Stage 6*. "It is an extremely crucial stage for Xish

because the lion's share of the world's intergenerationally continuous languages are at this very stage and they continue to survive and, in most cases, even to thrive, without going on to subsequent ('higher') stages" (Fishman 1991: 92). Fishman (1991: 95) also claims that without properly securing *Stage 6*, the fulcrum of the GIDS, seeking success at the more advanced stages will most certainly result in wasting already scarce RLS-resources. Revived Cornish has passed the four lower stages of the GIDS among which *Stage 6* is the least secured (see section 6). Thus, if we were to follow Fishman's model, at this phase of the Cornish revival movement, RLS-efforts should not focus too much on the criteria of the advanced stages (education, autonomy, legal protection, etc.). Instead, revivalists should use most of their resources for aiding informal oral interaction among the young and within the family in order to secure the most crucial factor of the survival of Cornish: intergenerational transmission.

## **8. Conclusion**

The study of the Cornish language along Fishman's GIDS has shown that it is indeed possible to analyse an endangered language in terms of the stages of the GIDS. The Cornish language has fulfilled the core requirements of *Stages 8, 7, 6* and *5*, while the criteria of the further stages have not or have only partly been achieved. This means that it is possible to define the current state of Cornish in terms of one single stage, and that is *Stage 5*. Comparing the situation to that of 2008, I would argue that the revival movement has moved forward and made progress regarding *Stages 6* and *5*.

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**Kokuvõte. Zsuzsanna Renkó-Michelsén: Keele surm ja elustamine: korni keel kui Suurbritannia vähemuskeel.** Maailm on keelekatastroofi äärel: 21. sajandi lõpuks on ilmselt välja surnud pooled umbes 7000 praegu kõneldavast keelest (Harrison 2008: 3). See artikkel käsitleb keelesurma ja ohustatud keelte päästmise küsimust, fookusega korni keelele. Korni keel on keldi keel, mida kõneldi Suurbritannias Cornwallis 7.–16. sajandil. Anglitseerimise tõttu vähenes selle kasutamine, kuni ta 18. sajandil lõplikult välja suri. Korni keele taaselustamine sai alguse Henry Jenneri “Korni keele käsiraamatu” ilmumisest 1904. aastal. Tänapäeval on korni keel UNESCO poolt tunnustatud kui kriitiliselt ohustatud keel. See artikkel esitab taaselustatud korni keele olukorra analüüsi Fishmani GIDS skaala järgi.

**Märksõnad:** ohustatud keeled, vähemuskeeled, keelesurm, keele taaselustamine, korni keel, GIDS