

**RESPONSE TO PROF. DR. ISTVÁN CSERNICSKÓ'S
EVALUATION
of Levente Nagy's PhD Dissertation
Contemporary Gaelic Language Revival Efforts in the
English-Speaking World**

Dear Prof. Dr. Csernicsekó,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your thorough, balanced, and highly constructive evaluation of my dissertation. I greatly appreciate your careful engagement with both the theoretical foundations and the empirical dimensions of the study, as well as your overall positive assessment of its academic quality and contribution. Your remarks provide valuable confirmation of the dissertation's core arguments and also highlight areas where conceptual clarity and scope alignment can be further strengthened in preparation for the defense.

On the central research question and the “trophy language” framework

Your summary accurately captures the central concern of the dissertation: whether Irish can still be described primarily as a symbolically valued “trophy language,” or whether recent developments justify speaking of a more substantive phase of revitalization. Based on the combined analysis of census data, survey evidence, and original questionnaire findings, my position is that Irish is best understood as occupying a transitional sociolinguistic phase. Symbolic prestige and ideological support remain dominant, but they are increasingly accompanied by diversified forms of social practice that extend beyond purely ceremonial or institutional contexts.

In particular, the growing visibility of Irish in education, media, and digital environments suggests not only top-down policy success but also the emergence of new, semi-informal domains of use. At the same time, as you rightly note, intergenerational transmission outside Gaeltacht areas remains fragile, and everyday interpersonal use is uneven. I therefore share your cautious optimism: the dissertation does not claim a completed reversal of language shift, but it does argue that the structural and ideological preconditions for such a shift are measurably stronger than in earlier periods.

On theoretical frameworks and their contemporary applicability

I am grateful for your positive assessment of the use of Fishman's GIDS and Spolsky's model of language policy as complementary analytical frameworks. One of my aims was precisely to demonstrate that these well-established models remain analytically productive when applied flexibly and in dialogue with contemporary sociolinguistic realities.

The dissertation treats GIDS not as a rigid classificatory tool but as a heuristic framework for identifying domain-specific strengths and weaknesses. Spolsky's tripartite distinction between practices, beliefs, and management proved especially useful in tracing how positive language ideologies and supportive policies do not automatically translate into habitual use, a gap that remains central to current revitalization debates.

On methodology and empirical scope

I appreciate your recognition of the coherence of the mixed-methods design and the value of triangulating institutional datasets with original survey data. As you correctly observe, the original questionnaire component is limited in scale and relies on convenience sampling. This limitation is explicitly acknowledged in the dissertation, and the data are interpreted as exploratory rather than representative.

On scope, comparability, and the focus on Irish

Your comment regarding the alignment between the plural reference to "Gaelic languages" in the title and the predominantly Irish-focused analysis is well taken. While the dissertation does include Scottish Gaelic and other varieties as comparative reference points, the empirical and analytical depth is clearly greatest for Irish. I agree that clearer signalling of this focus would strengthen conceptual transparency and will address this explicitly in the final revision.

Once again, I am very grateful for your careful reading, your encouraging overall assessment, and your constructive critical observations. I will incorporate your suggestions by refining the alignment between title and scope, sharpening the discussion of domain-specific language use, and further clarifying the limits and implications of the empirical findings. Your evaluation has been instrumental in helping me consolidate the dissertation's contributions ahead of the defense.

Veszprém, 03/01/2026

Levente Nagy