

SCOTLAND'S LANGUAGES IN SCOTLAND'S PARLIAMENT

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The new Scottish Parliament, to be established in Edinburgh in 1999 or 2000 following the resounding referendum result in September 1997, will immediately become the focal point of Scottish national life. This Parliament will differ in many respects from the familiar Westminster legislative model - there will be a single chamber rather than two, for example, and its members will be elected on the basis of proportional representation rather than first-past-the-post - and many have expressed hopes that these structural differences may help bring about a more constructive, consensualist ethos in the Parliament than has been the norm at Westminster. There has also been a widespread desire to establish the Parliament as a distinctively Scottish institution, firmly linked to Scotland's traditions and aspirations.

One important aspect of the new Parliament that has not yet received appropriate scrutiny and discussion is the role that Scotland's traditional languages, Gaelic and Scots, should play in its workings. Even less attention has been given to the other languages brought to Scotland by the immigrants of recent decades. The White Paper issued in advance of the referendum outlining the Government's proposals made no mention at all of any plans relating to language, although abbreviated versions of the White Paper were published in Gaelic and Scots. Notwithstanding this oversight, a number of commentators from outside government have made suggestions about the possible roles of Gaelic and Scots in the Parliament, many of them unrealistic or over-optimistic.

In this regard the Government's proposals for Scotland differ sharply from those announced for Wales, where the new Welsh Assembly is to operate as a fully bilingual entity, and the pre-referendum White Paper was careful to specify that Welsh and English would be treated on 'a basis of equality' in the Assembly (Welsh Office 1997). To a large extent, this difference of approach

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arises from the constraints of the law in Wales, where the Welsh Language Act 1993, using the same verbal formula as the White Paper, contains a general command that government treat Welsh and English on such 'a basis of equality'. Yet the contrast also reflects the long-standing and deep-rooted assumption that English is the natural language of government and power in Scotland, and thus the obviously appropriate exclusive language for Scotland's Parliament (McLeod 1997). This traditional assumption appears to be weakening somewhat - as shown by such developments as the Government's appointment of the first-ever Minister for Gaelic, the substantial funding of Gaelic-medium education and Gaelic television, and an apparently welcoming attitude towards efforts to secure official status for Gaelic - and giving way to a new vision of a Scotland closely connected to Europe and more open to bilingualism and multilingualism. The new Parliament is the most important forum where this new openness toward Scotland's languages can be institutionalised and developed.

At the same time, it is necessary to ensure that any language policy is practical and realistic; there should be no doubt that English must be the main working language of the Parliament. This article discusses the possible elements of a language policy for Scotland's Parliament, considering ways in which Scotland's languages, autochthonous and immigrant, can reasonably but meaningfully be put to use in its operation.

A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO LANGUAGE POLICY

The Scottish Parliament will be a complex institution, centred of course on the shaping and enactment of legislation by its members, but undertaking a very broad range of less prominent business as well. In assessing the possible ways in which Scotland's languages might be used, it is most useful to consider matters in functional terms, looking at the different things the Parliament will do and the ways in which Gaelic or Scots might be used in those specific contexts, rather than seeking to devise a general, blanket policy that might lead to unachievable objectives or misallocated resources. Guidelines for the use of Scotland's languages could then be incorporated into one or more of the Standing Orders that the Parliament is to set in place to regulate its processes (Scottish Office 1997, p.29, s.9.5).

Resources will obviously be an important factor in shaping a language policy. Translation can be an expensive proposition for government - it has been estimated, for example, that some 40% of the European Union's administrative budget is spent on maintaining its translation and interpreting services (Haarman 1991) - and the issue of value for money must always be

borne in mind, though not used as an excuse for an unduly restrictive approach. A policy that ensured reasonable use of Scotland's languages in its Parliament - as opposed to a policy of total bilingualism or trilingualism - would surely demand only a tiny share of the operating budget, estimated at some £20-30m per year (Scottish Office 1997, p.33, s.10.17).

At least with respect to Gaelic, however, the most significant problem is not financial but human resources: the Gaelic world simply does not have limitless numbers of highly qualified personnel who can be diverted to translation projects that may have little direct practical utility (Morgan 1997). In making a determination as to whether Gaelic should be used in any particular context, it is important to take into account whether appropriate personnel will be available, and whether putting them to use for such tasks might mean taking them away from work of more immediate importance to the Gaelic community.

The discussion below will focus principally on the possible roles for Gaelic. For a number of reasons, discussed in a later section, it may not be as easy to put Scots to use in the Parliament, and it need not be the case that its role should be identical to that of Gaelic. Immigrant languages, in turn, present entirely different issues, considered following the discussion of Scots. Insistence on rigid parallelism could lead to anomalies that would benefit no one, and it might well be wisest, as a starting point, to set out the Gaelic policy and the Scots policy in separate Standing Orders.

FLOOR DEBATES AND COMMITTEE WORK

The most obvious function of the Parliament is legislative debate. Given the overwhelmingly dominant role of English in Scottish society as a whole, it will certainly be the case that English will be the ordinary working language for this purpose, and that the use of any other language will be isolated and rare. Nevertheless, it is appropriate that any member should have the right to use Gaelic or Scots should he or she so choose.

Many parliaments around the world, both national legislatures in countries like Ireland, Switzerland, Canada and India, and devolved or federal institutions within larger states, like the parliaments of the Spanish regions such as Galicia and Catalunya, have adopted policies permitting the use of more than one language in legislative debate. When these different policies are examined closely, however, significant divergences can be seen between them; the most realistic approach for Scotland would seem to be a relatively weak approach to multilingualism that assumes a dominant role for English.

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Practice in the Canadian Parliament provides an example of a strong approach to bilingualism. Under Canada's Official Languages Act, members have the right to speak in English or in French, and all proceedings are simultaneously translated - that is, all remarks made in English are simultaneously translated and broadcast in French, and all remarks made in French are simultaneously translated and broadcast in English. This approach reflects a language situation in which there are significant concentrations of English and French monoglots both in the general population and among members of parliament. A more dramatic example perhaps is the European Parliament, where any of eleven official languages may be used, and full translation is provided between all of them (i.e. all remarks will be simultaneously translated into ten different languages) (Coulmas 1991, pp.6-7).

In Scotland, it would obviously be necessary to provide translation into English of remarks given in Gaelic, but it would be unreasonable to have remarks in English translated into Gaelic. (Scots presents certain special issues, considered separately below.) Even if the use of Gaelic in debates is to be freely permitted, its use will surely be extremely infrequent, given that only 1.3% of Scots speak Gaelic and almost all Gaelic speakers are thoroughly bilingual. A one-way translation process of this kind is comparable to the system set in place in Dáil Éireann, the Parliament of the Republic of Ireland, where both Irish and English may be used, but Irish is in fact used only rarely, so that remarks delivered in Irish are translated into English, but not vice-versa. The Parliament of India takes a somewhat similar approach, privileging the two official languages, English and Hindi, over the other twelve languages whose use is permitted.

Another feature of the Indian system would be useful in Scotland - the requirement that members planning to speak in a minority language provide advance notice of their intentions to do so. Since the use of Gaelic in the Scottish Parliament's debates would surely be rare, it might not be necessary to have a qualified translator present at all times in order to meet immediate demand. Requiring notice to the Presiding Officer (ideally somewhat more than the thirty minutes required in India) would appear to be a reasonable approach.

As a result of the Scottish Parliament's unicameral structure, it is expected that its committees will play a somewhat more important role than those at Westminster. Members' rights to use Gaelic or Scots upon reasonable notice should therefore extend to committee work as well, as is the practice in India.

Making qualified translators available for floor debates and committee work on an occasional basis would not involve significant financial burdens, especially if the translators would ordinarily be assigned to other work (e.g. translation of parliamentary documents). The larger expense would arise from the installation of simultaneous translation equipment, but the Scottish Secretary has already announced that such facilities will be a feature of the Parliament. In any event, provision of simultaneous translation facilities should be considered an unavoidable and essential operating cost for an important national institution like the Parliament, which should surely be equipped to receive addresses by foreign dignitaries speaking to members in languages other than English.

PUBLICATION OF PROCEEDINGS

Publication of parliamentary proceedings, in the Scottish version of Hansard, presents an entirely different issue. Bilingual publication is the rule for some parliaments, like Canada's, and some commentators have proposed that all printed reports be given in Gaelic as well as English, a proposal that would, as a practical matter, involve vastly more translation of English into Gaelic than vice-versa. Undertaking such translation would be an immense task - more immense even than simultaneous oral translation of English into Gaelic, since written translation tends to be more painstaking and time-consuming - and one of rather little practical benefit. Instead, it seems most reasonable that the Scottish Hansard should use English as its ordinary working language, so that all proceedings are reported in English, but should also print any remarks given in Gaelic or Scots in the original as well as in English translation. This would be a slight modification of the Irish approach, under which remarks are simply printed in the language in which they were delivered, without translation - with the practical consequence that English is used almost exclusively.

LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENTS

The use of languages other than English in formal legislative enactments presents additional complexities. The drafting of acts and statutory instruments is a task of the utmost importance, since these documents become the binding law of the land; precision of language is critical. Translating such texts requires at least as much skill and care as the original drafting, and is therefore an extremely time-consuming process; translation of all the Parliament's enactments into Gaelic would require a corps of outstanding

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translators - an expensive proposition in terms of the Parliament's budget and the limited human resources of the Gaelic community.

The issuance of legislative enactments in more than one language would also raise serious problems involving their relative validity. Any enactments of the Welsh Assembly - which will be limited to secondary legislation, unlike the primary legislation emanating from the Scottish Parliament - are to be issued in both English and Welsh, for example, unless doing so would be 'inappropriate or not reasonably practicable', and the two versions are to be treated 'as being of equal standing' (Government of Wales Bill, s.65(4), s.114(1)). This approach is superficially appealing, but a rule granting equal validity to Gaelic versions of Scottish laws might well amount to a full employment act for lawyers, who could be considered derelict in their duty if they failed to scour the Gaelic versions of legal texts for divergences and discrepancies that could benefit their clients. Significantly, discrepancies have sometimes been found between the versions of European enactments in one language as against another, despite the outstanding quality of EU translators and the immense investment the EU has made into assuring the quality of draftsmanship in general.

The situation in Ireland is not reassuring either. Laws must be issued in both English and Irish, but the Irish versions, which occasionally deviate from the English versions to one degree or another, often appear years after their enactment in English. The Irish Constitution, meanwhile, provides that in cases of conflict between the English and Irish versions - conflicts that have indeed arisen occasionally over the years - the Irish text is to prevail, even though the document was originally drafted in English and then translated into Irish (Kelly 1980, p.118).

Alternatively, legislative enactments could be issued bilingually or trilingually, but on the basis that the English version would be deemed to prevail in the event of a conflict. Such an approach might render the production of Gaelic or Scots versions a somewhat artificial exercise. It might be a worthwhile initiative, however, to issue certain specific enactments relating directly to Gaelic or Scots in bilingual or trilingual format, such as enactments dealing with the provision of Gaelic-medium education.

On balance, it seems most appropriate that the enactments of the Scottish Parliament should be produced in English only. Requiring the production of translated versions would be not only expensive but potentially dangerous. Moreover, as a practical matter, any Gaelic versions would go largely unread except by lawyers and litigants seeking to take advantage of translators'

errors. The use of languages other than English in this context would probably be an expensive indulgence.

OTHER PARLIAMENTARY DOCUMENTS

Notwithstanding the importance of using English for legislative enactments, it is critical that the Parliament make substantial use of Scotland's languages in documents other than formal legislative enactments. It is difficult to devise a workable general policy in this connection, however, given the very broad range of documents that will surely be produced, and the constant problem of translator resources. Existing practice in the Scottish Office can be looked to as a starting point: over the past decade and more, an increasingly broad range of documents has been produced bilingually, principally but by no means exclusively those bearing on Gaelic-medium education. The Scottish Parliament should follow a formal policy of actively promoting the use of Gaelic and Scots in its documents, especially (but by no means exclusively) those documents intended for distribution to the public, since any practical or symbolic value arising from the use of Scotland's languages will be more significant in documents that have wide public currency rather than circulation solely within the walls of Parliament. The best approach may be to create a presumption that public documents of this nature should be issued bilingually or trilingually, a presumption that could be overcome if the chief officer responsible for the production of a given document determines that translation would not be practicable under the circumstances. Additionally, the provision of certain parliamentary documents in immigrant languages might be necessary and important, as discussed below.

CONTACT WITH CONSTITUENTS

Another significant issue for consideration is whether constituents should be granted a right to use Gaelic or Scots in their dealings with Parliament and to expect the use of the language of their choice in reply. The European Parliament follows such a system with respect to its official languages, and this will very likely be the practice in Wales (Coulmas 1991, p.7). If such entitlements were recognised, an Edinburgh resident could, for example, write to her MSP in Gaelic and have the right to receive a reply in Gaelic. Granting rights of this kind would not be unreasonable or unworkable, especially since one could realistically expect that the flow of correspondence in languages other than English would be slight. Unless the member or the member's own staff knew Gaelic, it would of course be necessary to have translators available to translate the constituent letter into English and then

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translate the reply into Gaelic, but this could not be considered any great burden. Significantly, it should be made clear that citizens should have the right to receive replies to their Gaelic correspondence within a reasonable time - the translation process should not be allowed to become some sort of black hole, with Gaelic letters going unanswered for months and English letters receiving replies in short order.

THE PUBLIC FACE OF PARLIAMENT

One of the least complicated, yet most important, aspects of a language policy for Scotland's Parliament is to ensure that its public face makes use of all Scotland's languages, and thereby communicates a recognition and awareness of Scotland's linguistic diversity. Gaelic and Scots should be used as generally as possible on building signs, on stationery, on websites, on informational leaflets and brochures, and on press and public passes; and Parliament should maintain a policy of openness to all reasonable proposals for increasing the visibility of Scotland's languages. In addition, Parliament's various ceremonies, such as the initial opening in 1999 or 2000 and the opening of subsequent sessions, should make appropriate use of Gaelic and Scots.

PRACTICAL CONCERNS RELATING TO TRANSLATION

To develop and advance a viable use of Gaelic in the Parliament, it is essential that a staff of competent specialist translators be employed. Given the importance of the Parliament's business, it would not be sufficient to proceed on an ad hoc basis, with outside translators hired on to meet particular needs, like the translation of a single report, as has been the common practice up to now, even with the Gaelic version of the White Paper concerning the Parliament. Nor would it be appropriate temporarily to assign ordinary members of staff who happen to be Gaelic speakers to undertake sporadic translation work. Even if formal legislative enactments were to be kept in English only, parliamentary business of any kind is extremely important, and serious quality standards should be expected and enforced. The establishment of an institutionalised translation structure should, moreover, assist developing a corps of competent translators: career translators would deepen their expertise with experience, and universities might find it worthwhile to offer specialist courses leading to professional translation certification. This would, in turn, assist with the development of the Gaelic language generally, ensuring that it becomes a supple medium for

expressing the political and intellectual discourse of the 21st century (Lamb 1997; McLeod 1997).

SOME PROBLEMS SPECIFIC TO SCOTS

This article has focused principally on Gaelic rather than Scots, though it is essential that the Parliament put in place a meaningful policy for Scots, based on appropriate consultation and with the assistance of appropriate staff. This may not necessarily be easy, and the most realistic policy may well be a rather limited one.

At the outset, it is important, both for analysis in general and for any future policy development, to formulate a working concept of what Scots is. No universally agreed definition exists, although the existing vernacular, expressed in a range of related dialects such as those of Buchan and the Borders, is clearly rooted in the Middle Scots that flourished as the language of administration in Scotland during the late medieval period. In some respects Scots 'can only be a broad concept because of the linguistic diversity within the Scottish population' (Máté 1996, p.15). This uncertainty allows hostile commentators to continue to press shopworn arguments that Scots is no more than 'a minor dialect' of English without any legitimate existence as a language in its own right (Ferri 1998). Campaigners are presently urging the Government to include a question about Scots language abilities in the 2001 census in order to gather information about the present condition of the language in Scotland, and although it remains unclear what definition of 'Scots' would be most productive for this purpose, it is estimated that some 30% of the population would respond affirmatively 'to a question of the form "Can you speak Scots or a dialect of Scots?"' (Máté 1996, p.2).

Certainly, any Scots policy for the Scottish Parliament should be based on solid information about the current extent and condition of the language, so that Parliament can serve the language community and give meaningful assistance to the language's development. It may be that the most immediately important aspect of any Scots policy would be directed at fundamental matters like information-gathering and encouraging expansion of the language's use in education and the media. Progress on these fronts could then provide building blocks for an increased role within Parliament's own processes.

In terms of its present ability to function as a language of parliamentary business, however, Scots suffers the same disabilities as Gaelic, only more so, and sometimes much more so. There is 'no generally-accepted spelling or

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codified grammar' (McClure 1995a, p.15); words are lacking for many aspects of modern life, and upper-level registers are weak (McClure 1995b, p.197; Scots Language Resource Centre Association 1992, p.7). In contrast to Scots, Gaelic has long been the medium for religious and theological discussion, which has provided a useful currency for other kinds of intellectual discourse, and in recent years it has been used extensively in the media, perhaps most significantly for daily radio news programmes, currently in the range of three hours per day (Lamb 1997). As such, there is now little difficulty in using Gaelic in connection with public affairs in general; the same is not necessarily true of Scots, which at present is hardly used for any kind of non-literary writing (McClure 1995a, p.15).

Above and beyond these legacies of its weak sociolinguistic position in recent centuries, Scots also suffers the typical problems of an *Ausbau* language, a language closely related to a more powerful neighbour, here English: how to differentiate or 'build away' its forms from those of its sibling (Kloss 1967). Contemporary non-literary Scots texts tend to be lexically undifferentiated from English in critical respects, although a great deal of modern 'English' terminology need not be seen as distinctively 'English', being based on classical roots and shared by many other European languages (McClure 1980, p.27). As an alternative strategy, Scots prose can rely extensively on Scots words that have been 'invented, revived and extended', but such neologisms or semi-neologisms may not be generally understood (Corbett 1997, pp.15-16). These problems arise in expository prose of any kind but would be especially acute in formal texts relating to public affairs, which require a specialised vocabulary and idiom. Producing Scots versions of parliamentary documents will therefore be very difficult.

The *Ausbau* problem also arises in the context of oral translation, for it is not at all clear when English stops and Scots begins (McClure 1979; Máté 1996). It may be expected that the daily working vernacular of many MSPs could reasonably be described as 'Scots' under some definitions; it would certainly be closer to Scots as conventionally understood than to the speech of most of the world's native English speakers. Should the remarks of such MSPs then be 'translated' into Scottish Standard English or some other variety of Standard English? By the same token, many other MSPs would understand the arguably or certainly 'Scots' speech of their colleagues without the need for 'translation'.

A reasonable working compromise might be to provide translation of Scots into English only when the Scots-speaking member provides advance notice that Scots is to be used. The determination of whether the language being used is sufficiently distinct as 'Scots' would therefore fall upon the user, who

is as well positioned as anyone else to make the assessment. Of course, many members of the chamber might well understand a speech given in broad Doric without needing the translation, but this is not the point - just as Gaelic-speaking members would not need their headsets to understand a Gaelic speech from one of their colleagues.

There would obviously be a degree of artificiality to such a process of translation from Scots, and indeed a hostile observer could make similar arguments about the use of Gaelic. Almost all Scots, after all, speak and understand English. In the end, however, such crabbedly utilitarian arguments simply fail to understand the historic significance of the Scottish parliament as a quintessentially Scottish institution, standing at the centre of Scottish national life.

SCOTLAND'S IMMIGRANT LANGUAGES

Little attention has been given to possible roles for Scotland's various immigrant languages in the Scottish Parliament, or indeed in Scottish public life in general. There are several reasons for this: the relatively small size of the immigrant language communities, a common perception that autochthonous languages merit more recognition than immigrant languages, and a prevailing ambivalence toward multiculturalism in Scottish life.

Because the census does not ask questions about languages in Scotland other than Gaelic, no concrete information is available on the size of Scotland's immigrant language communities (MacKinnon 1995-6, p.104). The 1991 census does show some 149,000 of Scotland's 5m residents as having been born outside the UK, but this includes some 23,000 natives of the Irish Republic and 12,600 natives of the United States, surely almost all native English speakers, and excludes many native-born Scots having an immigrant language such as Punjabi as their mother tongue. Similarly, the census shows a total ethnic minority population of 63,000, 1.3% of the total, of whom 32,000 have origins in the Indian sub-continent; but this figure excludes 'non-ethnic' speakers of minority languages such as Polish.

Kenneth MacKinnon has scrutinised these two pools of census data and arrived at a 'very crude measure' of Scotland's immigrant language communities. He calculates that 104,000 Scots, some 2.11% of the total, are speakers of languages other than English, Scots or Gaelic - a figure that includes all languages, European as well as Asian. Of these speakers, the largest group is the speakers of Pakistani languages (principally Punjabi and

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Urdu), totalling some 21,000 people (0.43% of the population) (MacKinnon 1995-6, p.106).

By any yardstick, these numbers are not large, and the diversity of the immigrant languages is also significant; no one immigrant language is so preponderant as to call for particular recognition over the rest. It is also noteworthy that the ethnic minority communities in Scotland are far smaller both absolutely and relatively than those in England (2.91 million total, representing 6.2% of the population) (**Ethnic Minorities** 1997, p.8). As such, ethnic concerns, including linguistic concerns, tend to have a much lower profile in Scotland than in England or in other European countries like Germany or France.

The prevailing distinction between autochthonous and immigrant languages is arguably a questionable one. Gaelic and Scots were both brought to Scotland, albeit many centuries ago, by invading immigrant groups. More significantly, there are now many thousands of native-born Scots who have so-called immigrant languages as their mother tongue (Neighbourhood English Teaching Project 1982, p.19). Although used as a shorthand term of convenience in this article, the term 'immigrant languages' is therefore a less than ideal one; an alternative classification might describe all Scotland's languages other than English as 'minority heritage languages', all of which have suffered as a result of forceful pro-English policies (Verma 1995-6, p.126).

In other respects, however, the distinction between Gaelic and Scots on the one hand and all other languages on the other is a useful and appropriate one. Significantly, although the various community languages like Urdu are minority languages in Scotland, they 'are major languages in their countries of origin, with well-established communication and educational systems which can ... be drawn upon by the expatriate communities', whereas Gaelic and Scots to all intents and purpose exist only in Scotland and are entirely dependent on Scotland and Scottish resources for their survival (Campbell 1983, p.11).

In the final analysis, shaping a policy toward immigrant communities and their languages should be understood as a fundamentally political task; indeed this is one of the most pressing political problems facing Europe as a whole at this time. As noted above, the immigrant language communities in Scotland are not large, either individually or in aggregate; this is likely responsible for the relative lack of attention - and relative lack of acrimony - that questions of language policy have received here. Yet language policy in Scotland tends to be influenced by a European language policy framework and political

strategy developed by larger states, particularly Germany and France, whose attitudes toward multiculturalism and the assimilation of minorities reflect a population distribution entirely different from Scotland's, with an accompanying intensity or hostility. Thus, although it has an intrinsic or tactical appeal to many language activists, the distinction between autochthonous and immigrant languages manifested in European policy (e.g. the policies of the European Bureau for Regional or Minority Languages) is no absolute, but should be recognised as an essentially political creation, and as part of a generally hostile outlook on immigrants past, present, and future (Gomien 1994).

A language policy for Scotland's Parliament could certainly demonstrate a rather greater openness to immigrant languages than has been the European norm. Up to now, however, the prevailing approach in Scotland has been one of assimilationism, albeit implicit rather than explicit and forceful; there has certainly been no serious policy commitment to maintaining immigrant languages and minority cultures as an ongoing aspect of Scottish life. It remains to be seen whether and to what extent a political consensus might exist or emerge in support of such a policy. It does seem clear, however, that the crucial areas for policy development in this area in the short and medium term lie in education - both of children and of adults - rather than in opening up a significant role for immigrant languages in Scottish public life. The Parliament should certainly endeavour to consult with ethnic minority groups and other immigrant language groups in an attempt to develop meaningful, open policies that have the support of these communities and that satisfy their needs and aspirations.

Immigrant languages also differ from Gaelic and Scots in another important respect - many of their speakers are not competent in English. Reasonable provision should certainly be made to ensure that all citizens have the ability to participate in Parliament, so that, for example, all election materials and basic public documents concerning Parliament are available as needed to immigrant language speakers. Existing translation practices of local authorities and other branches of government should be used as a model here, although public consultation about policy development should also encompass these topics.

Finally, there remains the question of the role of immigrant languages in parliamentary proceedings. At a minimum, any member who is unable to use English effectively should certainly be permitted to use his or her mother tongue; but the election of such members seems unlikely. Parliament could, of course, place immigrant languages on the same footing as Gaelic and Scots and allow immigrant languages to be used at the discretion of the member

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irrespective of the member's ability to use English, but this would be a remarkable approach that would only seem appropriate as part of a wholesale abandonment of assimilationism and a much broader push toward multiculturalism in Scottish life.

CONCLUSION

Policies to ensure that Scotland's traditional, autochthonous languages survive and flourish in the new millennium are essential. Due attention and respect should also be paid to Scotland's more recently arrived languages. The opening of the new Parliament provides a historic opportunity to create a significant role for the national languages in the life of the nation. A flexible approach, at once open-minded and creative and realistic and practical, is required.

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