



Súil
Feasa

amárach[®]
research

Introducing **Súil Feasa**:
Irish Language Advertising Research
Taighde ar Fhógraíocht trí Ghaeilge

Key Findings from the Pilot Study
Feabhra 2026



Súil Feasa – Foreword



We are experiencing what many call a 'Ré Órga' for Irish. Popular culture has embraced the language through Kneecap and An Cailín Ciúin, our new president campaigned on its importance, and government investment in language planning has increased significantly.

Most notably, the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 has fundamentally altered the advertising landscape, requiring public bodies to allocate **20% of their budgets** to Irish language advertising. The result: €19 million spent on Irish language ads in 2024, a 34% increase on 2023.

For those obliged to allocate 20% of their advertising budget to Irish every year, a fundamental question arises: wouldn't it be helpful to know **how to make that investment actually work**? This is precisely where **Súil Feasa** comes in.

My experience has given me a front-row seat to a persistent challenge: whilst **we're exposed to more Irish language advertising than ever before**, much of it consists of complex, directly translated English that remains inaccessible to all but the most competent speakers.

Irish is widely seen as core to Irish culture and identity. The challenge people have with the language therefore isn't lack of motivation, but **confidence and opportunities** to use the language.

Súil Feasa's primary finding addresses this directly: **comprehension**. Given that only 1.4% of Ireland's population speaks Irish daily and 10% rate their fluency as 'very good', people's ability to understand Irish language advertising varies considerably, which significantly impacts **campaign performance**. However, this finding creates strategic opportunities. Creative approaches can **make content more accessible** to those with lower competency, focusing on fun everyday use rather than complex technical language.

Equally important is recognising that not all advertisements need to reach **all audiences**. There exists a **valuable opportunity** to connect meaningfully with competent Irish speakers, including cohorts such as women and younger audiences aged 18 to 24, many of whom have come through the very successful Gaelscoileanna system.

Súil Feasa provides practical, **evidence-based guidance** for making strategic choices about Irish language advertising: when to prioritise accessibility and when to embrace the opportunity to communicate authentically with Ireland's growing Irish language community.

We look forward to working with you to unlock the genuine opportunities that Irish language advertising presents.

Aoife Porter
Bua Marketing



Súil Feasa - Réamhrá



An bhfuil **Ré Órga** na Gaeilge linn? Tugtar le fios go bhfuil, i bhfianaise na hinfheistíochta, na hinfheictheachta agus an fhuinnimh chultúrtha nach bhfacthas riamh cheana. Tá an teanga le feiceáil is le cloisteáil go forleathan sa chultúr comhaimseartha idir cheol, scannáin agus meáin eile nach iad. Bhí an Ghaeilge i gcroílár fheachtasaíocht an Uachtaráin nua agus tá méadú suntasach tagtha ar infheistíocht an Rialtais i leith pleanála teanga.

Athraíodh an tírdhreach fógraíochta le hAcht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú), 2021 trí dhualgas a chur ar chomhlachtaí poiblí **20% dá mbuiséid fhógraíochta** a chaitheamh ar fhógraíocht trí Ghaeilge. Mar thoradh air sin, caitheadh €19 milliún ar fhógraíocht Ghaeilge in 2024, méadú 34% ar 2023.

Tagann ceist bhunúsach chun cinn dóibh siúd atá faoi dhualgas an Achta - nach mbeadh sé stuama cur amach a bheith acu ar chonas deiseanna na hinfheistíochta a thapú is a threisiú? Is í seo mórchuspóir **Shúil Feasa**.

Buíochas le mo thaithí i réimse na cumarsáide trí Ghaeilge tá tuiscint agam ar an dúshlán is suntasaí - **cé go bhfuil i bhfad níos mó fógraíochta le feiceáil anois**, is minic nach dtuigtear í. Is í an fhadhb ná go bhfuil sí aistrithe go díreach ón mBéarla. Is minic nach Gaeilge shimplí fheidhmiúil a úsáidtear ach Gaeilge chasta theicniúil nach n-úsáidtear i ngnáthchaint na ndaoine.

Glactar go forleathan le tábhacht na teanga dár gcultúr agus dár bhféiniúlacht. Dá réir, ní easpa méine atá mar bhac ar dhaoine an teanga a úsáid ach **easpa muiníne agus uireasa deiseanna** laethúla chun í a labhairt.

Tá léiriú ar an dúshlán seo freisin i bpríomhthorthaí Shúil Feasa. Is í an tuiscint ar an teanga an bac is suntasaí ó thaobh fógraíochta trí Ghaeilge. Tagann sé seo le staitisticí reatha maidir le cumas teanga go náisiúnta. Ní labhraíonn ach 1.4% de dhaonra na hÉireann an teanga go laethúil agus níl cumas “an-mhaith” ach ag 10% den daonra, dar leo féin. Bíonn tionchar suntasach ag an gcumas tuisceana sin ar fheidhmíocht fheachtais. Mar sin féin, is léir dá réir go bhfuil **deiseanna nua straitéiseacha** ann d’fhógróirí atá ábalta cur chuige cruthaitheach a úsáid. Má dhírítear ar úsáid laethúil spráúil ag seachaint teanga theicniúil chasta, is féidir dul i bhfeidhm orthu siúd ag a bhfuil leibhéal inniúlachta níos ísle acu, is é sin le rá formhór na tíre.

Is rílér go bhfuil an tábhacht chéanna le freastal ar chainteoirí líofa agus nach fíor ná cóir go mbeadh gach fógra in oiriúint **do chách**. Ní beag an deis dul i bhfeidhm ar chainteoirí inniúla, lena n-áirítear grúpaí ar nós mná agus daoine óga idir 18 agus 24 bliana d’aois, iarscoláirí na Gaelscolaíochta ar na mallaibh.

Le **Súil Feasa**, tá treoir phraiticiúil, bunaithe ar fhianaise, ar fáil chun roghanna straitéiseacha a dhéanamh maidir le fógraíocht trí Ghaeilge, ar nós cathain ar chóir inrochtaineacht a chur chun cinn agus cathain ar cheart leas a bhaint as an deis chumarsáide a dhéanamh le pobal na Gaeilge atá ag fás go náisiúnta.

Táim ag súil go mór le bheith ag obair libh amach anseo chun deiseanna nua maidir le fógraíocht trí Ghaeilge a thapú.

Aoife Porter
Bua Marketing

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Background Cúlra



Background to the Study



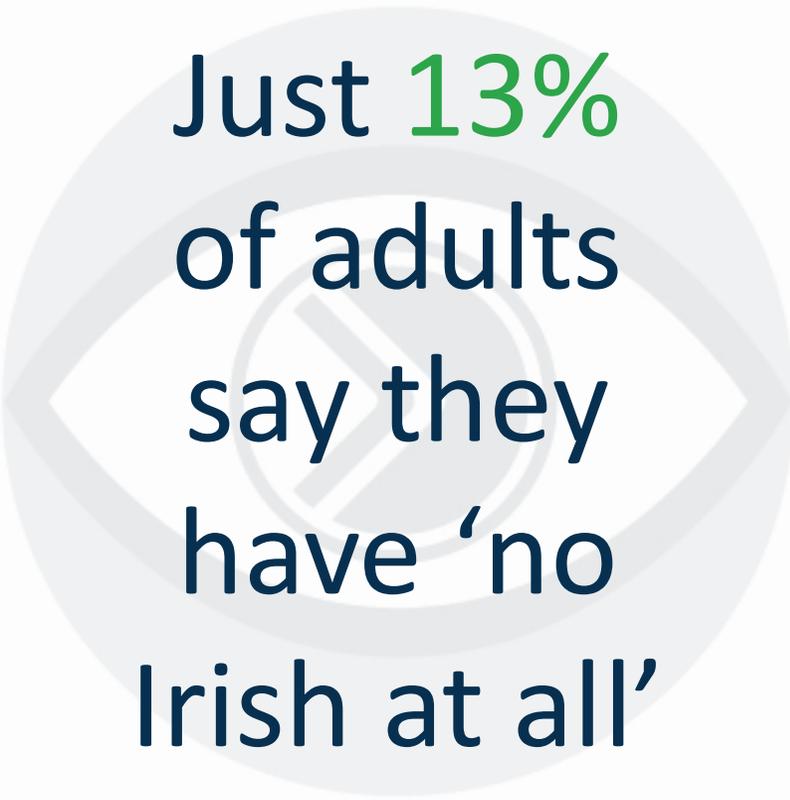
- The Irish language is enjoying a revival right now, and our research shows that Irish consumers welcome advertising in the Irish language. This comes at a time when the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 require that certain public information, messaging, and communications provided by public bodies must be available in Irish.
- Some public bodies must ensure that at least 20% of any advertising placed in any year is in the Irish language. Separately, of the money spent on advertising, at least 5% of the expenditure must be used on Irish-language media (i.e., media where at least 50% of the content is through Irish).
- Given the growth in Irish-language advertising driven by the 2021 Act, and the importance of compliance, there is an urgent need to understand how advertising expenditure in the Irish language is impacting on audiences, brands and marketing targets and goals.
- Amárach has developed a new research service – **Súil Feasa** ('wise eye') – in response to client demands to determine the impact of their Irish language advertising. Our research-based tracking and advisory service enables public bodies, other Irish-language advertisers and their agencies to measure progress and respond to stakeholder requirements.

Attitudes to Irish Language Advertising Dearcthaí i leith fógraíocht trí Ghaeilge



Attitudes to the Irish Language

- In recent years, Amárach has conducted several studies on attitudes to the Irish language and in particular Irish language advertising.
- Proficiency in the Irish language ranges from low to none for 13% of adults, to fluent or near fluent for 7% of adults: while **one in four say they can hold a simple conversation in Irish**, but the majority (56%) say their knowledge of Irish is limited to a few words or basic phrases.
- **Women and people aged 18-24** are more likely than others to claim some proficiency in Irish, with some calling it the 'Kneecap effect' as demand for language courses grows.



Just **13%**
of adults
say they
have 'no
Irish at all'



Paying Attention

- The recent surge in advertising in the Irish language has caught the attention of many people in Ireland.
- Indeed, half the adult population say **they actively pay more attention to an advert because it uses Irish**, while half don't. Nevertheless, it's an intriguing indicator of how Irish advertising can 'stand out' from English language equivalents, despite linguistic limits to proficiency.
- Again, it tends to be women and younger people who are more likely to pay more attention, **rising to three quarters for those who are fluent** or near fluent in Irish.



Over **50%**
pay more
attention
to ads in
Irish



Sharing is Caring

- We all know the importance of **sharing content for driving brand engagement and advertising effectiveness**: nearly one in four adults have discussed, shared or shown someone an advert specifically because it uses, Irish, though the majority have not.
- Men are **more likely to share Irish language content** than women, and unsurprisingly 18-24 year olds have the highest level of content sharing
- Sharing behaviour rises to a majority of those who are fluent and/or **live in the Gaeltacht**.



Nearly
1 in 4 have
shared an
ad in Irish
with others

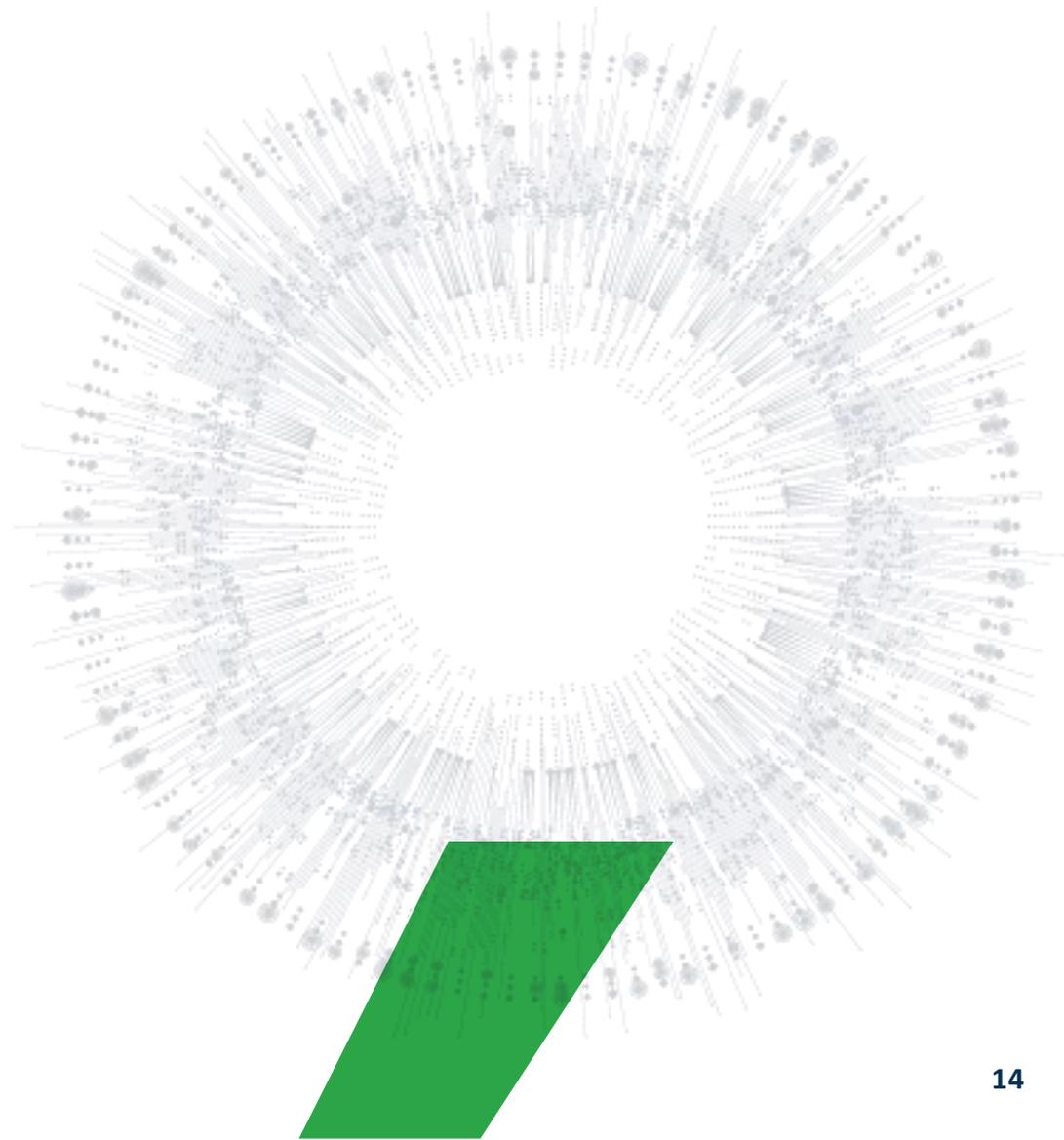


Support for Language Policies

- Given the relative recency of the National Language Act's requirements for advertising practices, there is already a **high level of awareness about the Act** and its impact.
- The **majority of people are aware** about legal obligations for public bodies to use Irish in their communications and advertising (4 in 10 are fully aware), with awareness highest among over 55s.
- Moreover, the **legal obligations for Irish language advertising** are supported by more than 3 in 4 people (78%), especially women and 18-24s.

Over **3 in 4**
support legal
obligations
to use Irish

Methodology Modheolaíocht



Methodology – I

- All advertising ultimately has the same intention: to influence the people seeing or hearing an advertisement so as to encourage or enable certain **desired behaviours** (do more, do less, start, stop) in the future.
- Amárach has extensive experience of measuring and tracking the impact of advertising on behaviour, especially using the **COM-B model** of behavioural change. The model, used by public and private sector organisations worldwide, frames desired Behaviour as a function of ‘**C**apability’, ‘**O**pportunity’, and ‘**M**otivation’. We measure each function to assess how well an advertisement influences desired behaviour.
- In addition to capturing the COM-B performance of each individual advertisement through a nationally representative, online survey sample, **Súil Feasa** also captures the following impact measures as well:
 - Advertising **Recall** (awareness)
 - Advertising **Relevance** (targeting)
 - Advertising **Creativity** (likeability)
 - Brand **Affinity** (closeness)
- These measures, combined with its COM-B score, enable us to **benchmark** each advert’s performance against peers and overall.

Methodology – II

- Every advertisement was shown to a **representative sample** of the population, by gender, age, social class and region and asked after each advert was viewed by respondents.
- Note: **none of the advertisements was strictly aimed at all adults**, so some differences in performance metrics may simply reflect the various sizes of actual target audiences and media buying preferences.
- For clarity, we asked the following questions **about each advertisement** (whether the English or Irish language versions) to capture the component parts of the COM-B Score:
 - **Capability:** Do you understand the message in this advertisement?
 - **Opportunity:** Could you do what this advertisement wants you to do?
 - **Motivation:** Would this advertisement persuade you to do what it wants you to do?
 - **COM-B:** The average across Capability, Opportunity and Motivation, indexed out of 100
- Note: the COM-B data in the later section on **Test Campaigns** refers only to the total population.

Methodology – III

- In addition to COM-B, we captured a range of **other performance metrics** for each advertisement.
- For clarity, we asked the following questions **about each advert** (whether the English or Irish language versions) to capture key performance variables:
 - **Ad Recall:** Have you seen this ad before today?
 - **Ad Relevance:** Is this ad relevant to you?
 - **Ad Creativity:** Would this ad catch your attention?
 - **Brand Affinity:**
Now you have seen this advertisement, do you feel closer to the organisation responsible for the ad?
- Again, note that the data in the later section on **Test Campaigns** refers only to the total population.

Important Caveats

- We would like to thank **Javelin Advertising** and the **HSE** for their help with this pilot study.
- There are a number of **important factors** to consider about the results of the study:
 1. Not all the campaigns we have analysed were **live at the time of the research**: some had finished on air, others had just begun: so we should be cautious comparing **advertising recall** across the campaigns.
 2. Most of the advertisements were **aimed at niche population segments** (parents, those with colds/flu etc): normally we analyse advertising performance by focusing on its impact on very specific target audiences, but for this pilot study we have simply compared campaigns across the total population: this will impact on perceived **advertising relevance**.
 3. We have not allowed for **media spend, campaign duration, omni-channel campaign crossover affects, nor the specific impact of different creative styles** and other factors: all of which we normally consider in evaluating the impact of an individual advertising campaign, and all of which varied considerably across the five campaigns we have evaluated in this pilot study.
- Nevertheless, we believe the demonstration of **the Súil Feasa methodology** in the next section provides important insights into the impact of Irish language advertising in general and opportunities to improve it.

Test Campaigns Feachtas Tástála



Test Campaigns

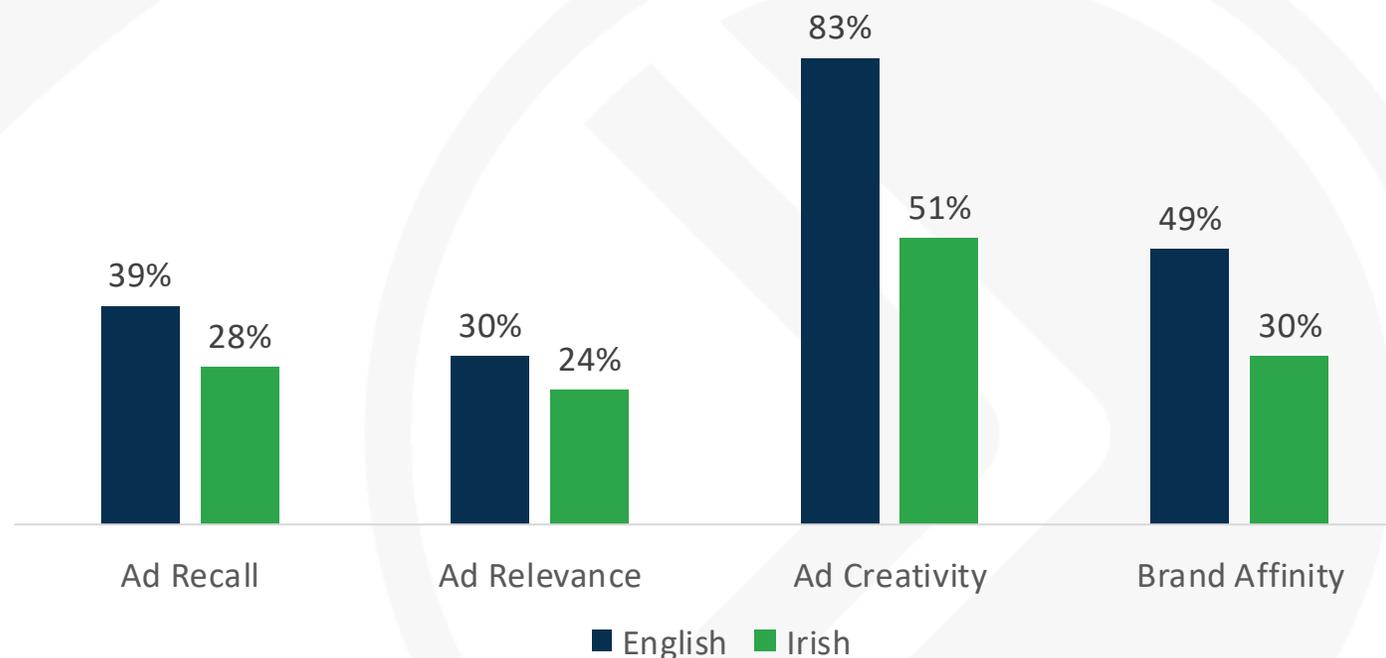
- For the pilot, we tested **four different advertisements** – each advert in both English language *and* Irish language formats – by splitting our sample so a random cohort only saw the English version, and a similar cohort only saw the Irish version. Survey participants watched each advert and then answered a set of questions about each ad.
- The campaigns we tested (in December 2025), were the following:
 1. An advertisement for Cuan addressing domestic, sexual, and **gender-based violence**
 2. A separate advertisement for Cuan raising awareness of the importance of **consent**
 3. An advertisement for Tusla on **children’s wellbeing**
 4. An advertisement for the HSE on **infection control**
- Note: all the advertisements ran in 2025, but the Tusla campaign ran for very short period, finishing **3 prior** to our survey.
- The following slides assess the performance of each advertisement on key metrics **for the total adult population** (the ads are illustrated with stills from the Irish language versions only).

Test Campaign 1: Cuan/Gender-Based Violence – I

- For each advertisement, we have summarised below how the advertisement performed in terms of ad recall, relevance, creativity and brand affinity (see questions used on slide 13) for a) the English language version and b) the Irish language version.
- The most significant difference is in terms of **Ad Creativity**:



Cuan/Violence: % of All Adults

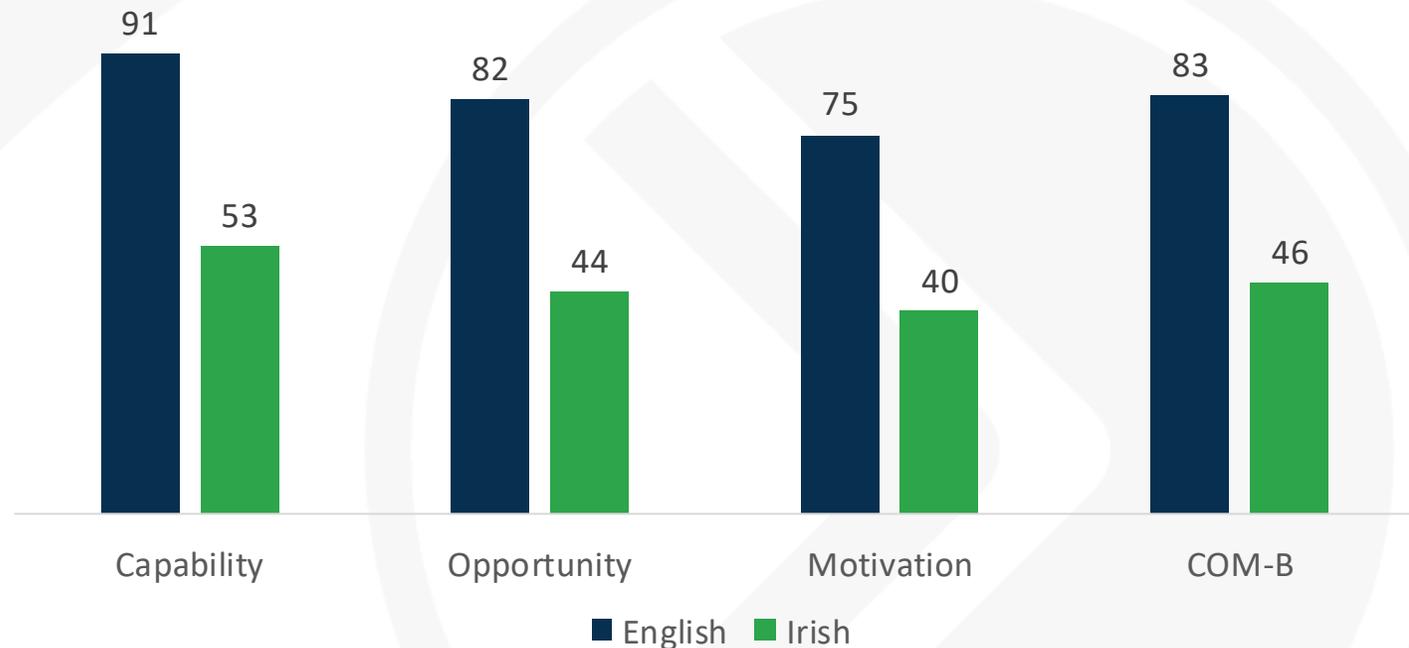


Test Campaign 1: Cuan/Gender-Based Violence – II

- Similarly, we show below how the advertisement performed in terms of the behavioural/COM-B impact for a) the English language version and b) the Irish language version.
- The English language version significantly **out-performs** the Irish language one on each metric:



Cuan/Violence – COM-B Performance: All Adults

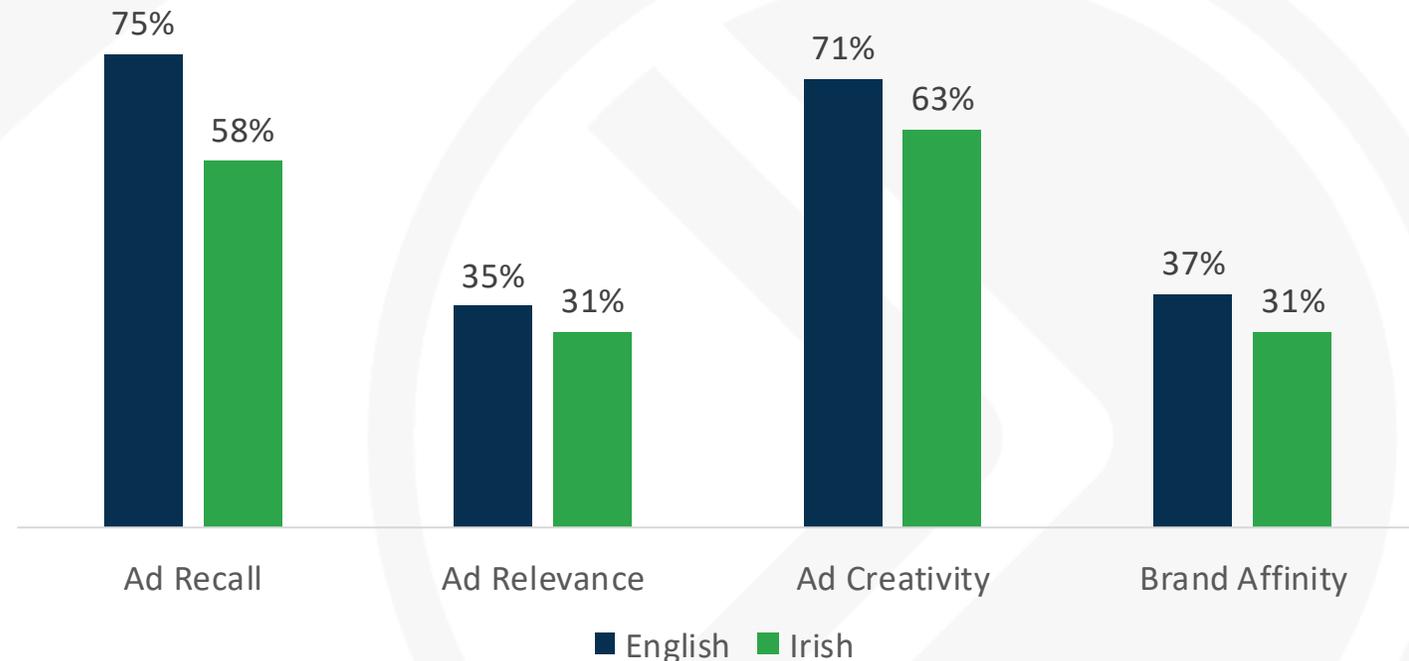


Test Campaign 2: Cuan/Consent – I

- We have summarised below how the advertisement performed in terms of ad recall, relevance, creativity and brand affinity (see questions used on slide 13) for a) the English language version and b) the Irish language version.
- The most significant difference is in terms of **Ad Recall**:



Cuan/Consent: % of All Adults

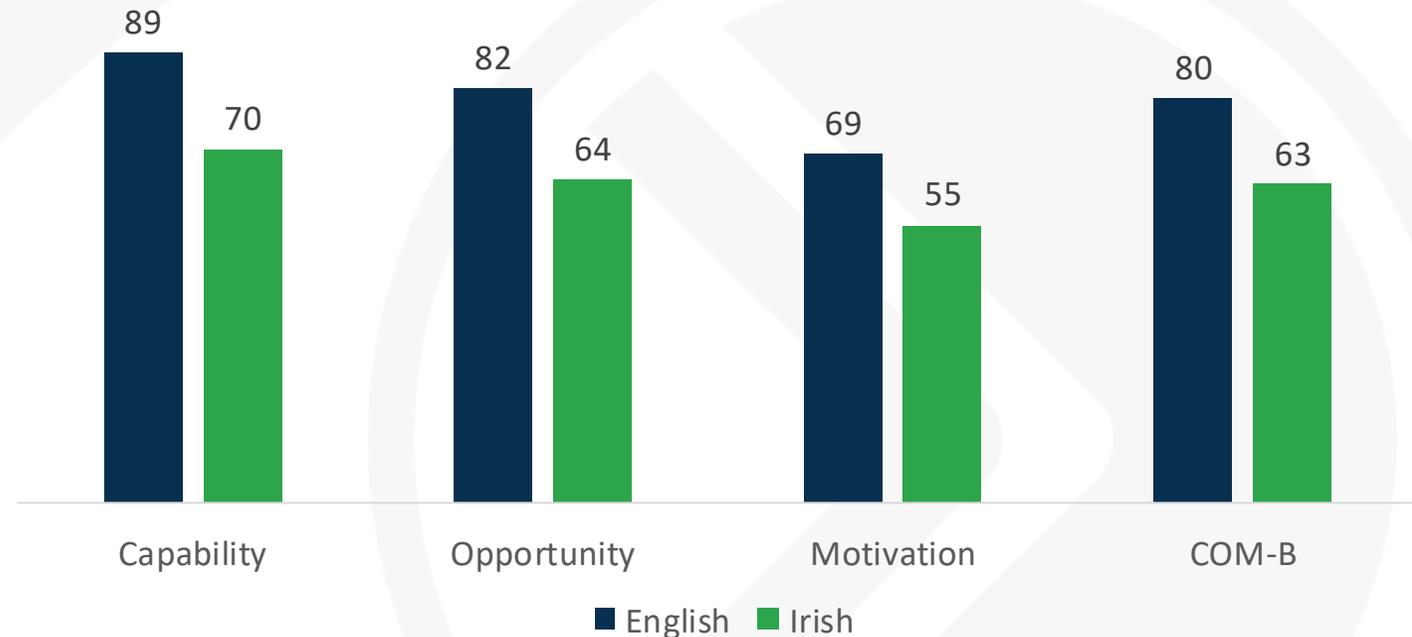


Test Campaign 2: Cuan/Consent – II

- Below, we see how the advertisement performed in terms of the behavioural/COM-B impact for a) the English language version and b) the Irish language version.
- The **COM-B language gap** is considerably smaller than for the first Cuan advertisement:



Cuan/Consent – COM-B Performance: All Adults

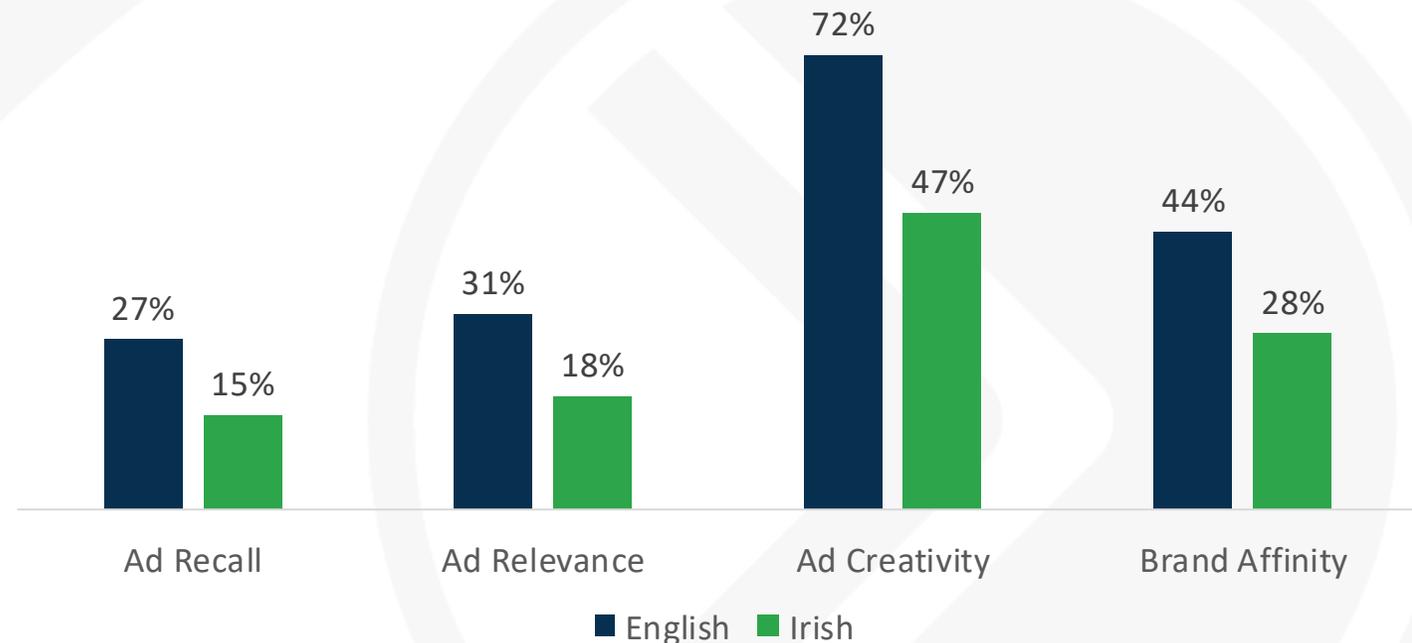


Test Campaign 3: Tusla/Children – I

- We have summarised below how the advertisement performed in terms of ad recall, relevance, creativity and brand affinity for a) the English language version and b) the Irish language version.
- Though **Ad Recall** is relatively low for both versions, **Ad Creativity** performed well:



Tusla/Children: % of All Adults

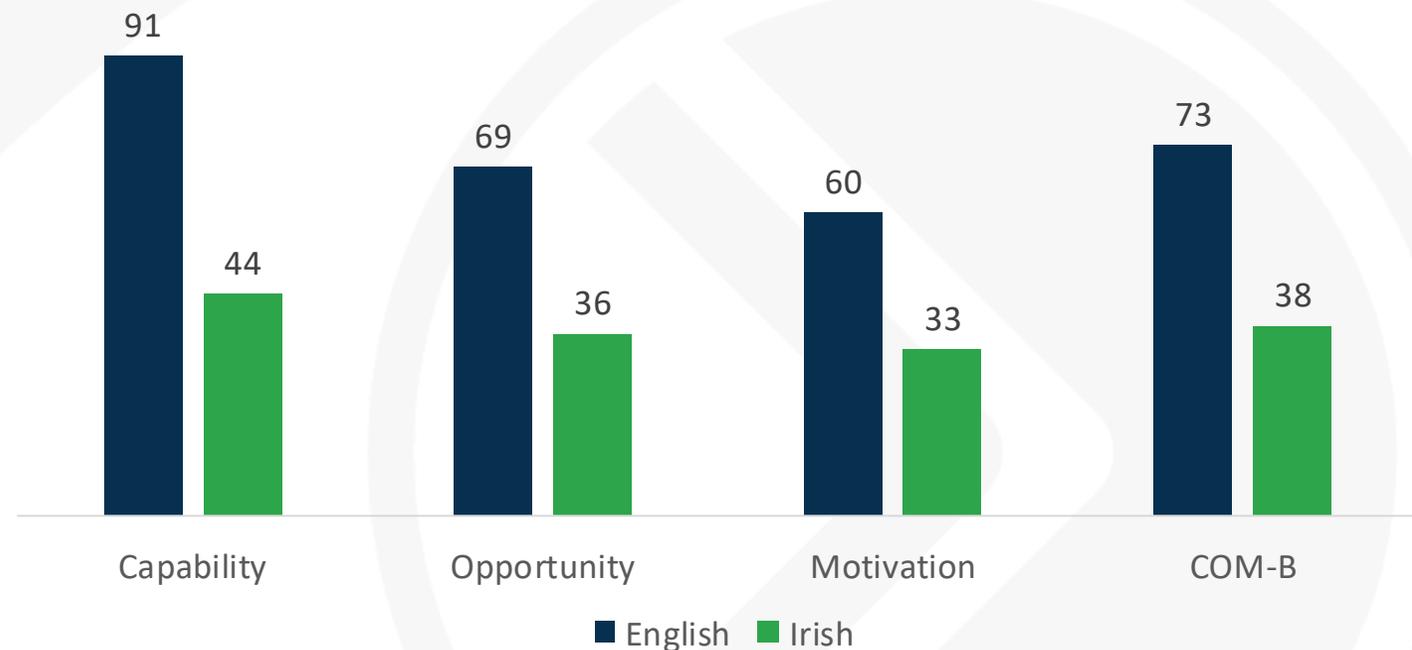


Test Campaign 3: Tusla/Children– II

- Below, we see how the advertisement performed in terms of the behavioural/COM-B impact for a) the English language version and b) the Irish language version.
- The COM-B gap is again largest for **Capability** – a measure of how well the ad is understood:



Tusla/Children – COM-B Performance: All Adults

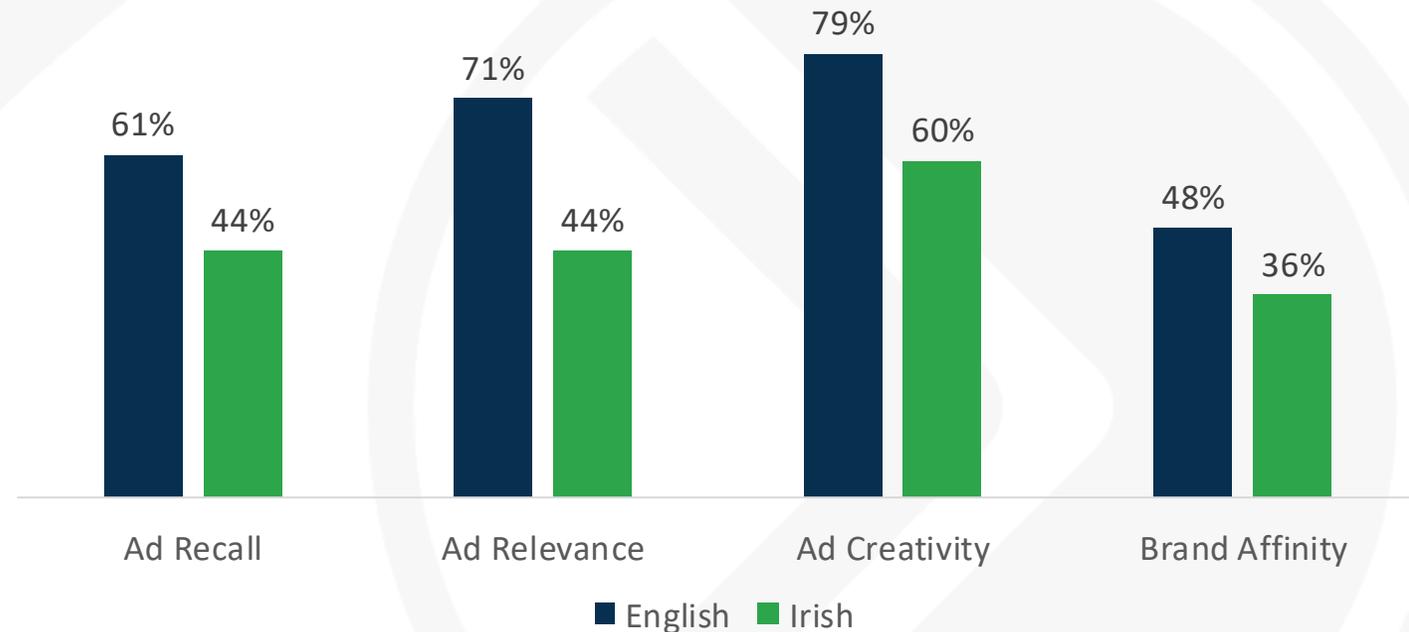


Test Campaign 4: HSE/Infection – I

- We have summarised below how the advertisement performed in terms of ad recall, relevance, creativity and brand affinity for a) the English language version and b) the Irish language version.
- **Ad Creativity** performed well in both versions, though there was a bigger gap in **Ad Relevance**:



HSE/Infection: % of All Adults

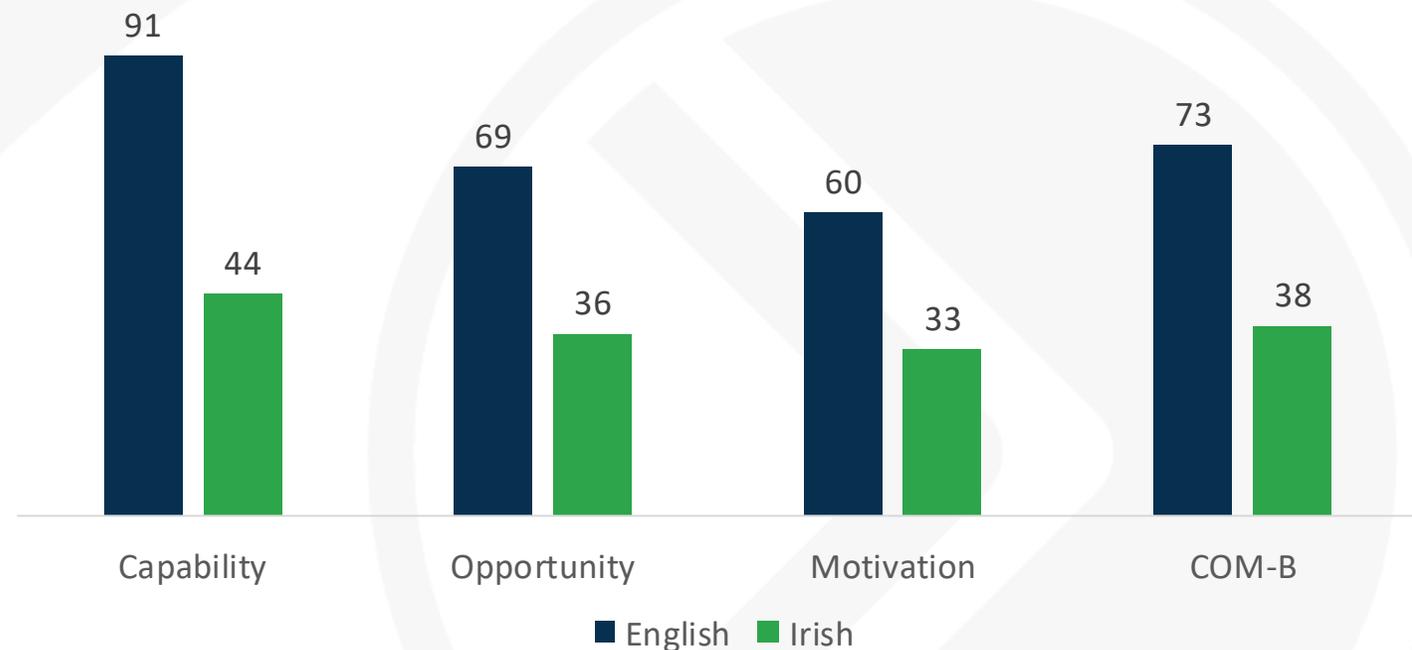


Test Campaign 4: HSE/Infection – II

- Below, we see how the advertisement performed in terms of the behavioural/COM-B impact for a) the English language version and b) the Irish language version.
- The COM-B gap is once again largest for **Capability** – a measure of how well the ad is understood:



HSE/Infection – COM-B Performance: All Adults



Campaign Comparisons

- It is important to stress that we have not differentiated between the behavioural impact of any individual advertisement on the general population vs **the intended target market**.
- The biggest driver of the COM-B gap between English and Irish is **Capability**:

	1. Violence	2. Consent	3. Children	4. Infection	<i>Average</i>
COM-B English	83	80	73	85	80
COM-B Irish	45	63	38	60	52
Difference (English vs Irish)	+38	+17	+35	+25	+28

- It should be noted that **the average COM-B score for all advertisements is 62** (from our database of over 200 adverts tested so far, almost all in English): therefore all the English versions and one of the Irish versions in the **Súil Feasa** pilot study performed **above average** for all advertisements.

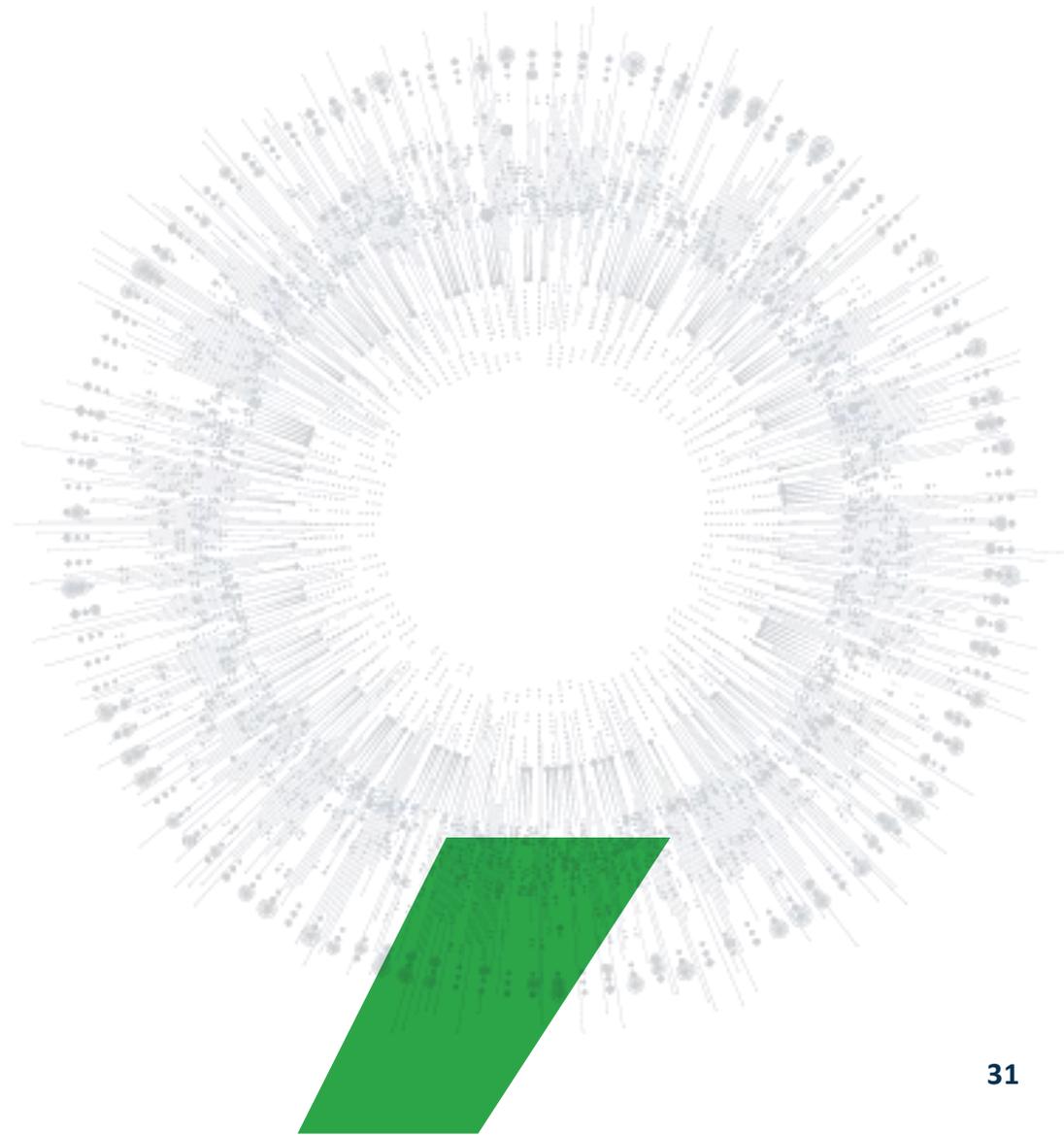
Wider Perspectives

- We should not forget that the legislation requires the use of Irish language media in campaigns, not just advertising in Irish. Therefore it is important to examine the role of fluency on advertising impact as well – hence the table below comparing average **behavioural impact by fluency** in Irish:

	All Adults	No Irish at all	A few words / basic phrases	I can hold a simple conversation	I am fluent or near fluent
COM-B English	80	70	78	83	91
COM-B Irish	52	32	45	67	80
Difference (English vs Irish)	+28	38	33	15	10

- Our research shows a huge decline in the COM-B gap between English/Irish ads when examined by fluency: suggesting that as people become more fluent then Irish language advertisements will – over time, other things equal – become more impactful, **closing the behavioural gap**.

Implications Impleachtaí



Implications

- The results of the **Súil Feasa** pilot study are encouraging for the use of Irish in advertising.
- Though the English language versions in our pilot outperformed their Irish language equivalents on the COM-B measure and other metrics, nevertheless some of the scores and measures were quite close **despite the limited fluency** in Irish of most people, and even smaller among more fluent speakers.
- However, the key issue remains comprehension as measured by our **Capability** question, which is important because *in all our other COM-B advertising* the biggest factor depressing behavioural outcomes is usually **Motivation**.
- This matters because it implies that if advertisers and their creative agencies can **overcome the comprehension barrier** then the behavioural impact of the most Irish language advertisements should level up to the impact of English language equivalents.
- The challenge with comprehension, of course, is that regulatory and compliance requirements to ensure **'exact' translations** of English advertising content into Irish can actually inhibit comprehension and undermine advertising performance.
- More flexible translation policies will be better at **unlocking the true potential** for Irish language advertising in the future.

Next Steps Céad Chéimeanna Eile





Next Steps/Céad Chéimeanna Eile

- The **Súil Feasa** service goes live in Q1 2026. The plan is to run half-yearly or quarterly advertising tracking research, depending on demand and campaign timings.
- Subscribers will have the option of signing up for just one wave or for a full year of several waves at a **bundled price**, payable in advance. More details [here](#).
- Amárach and **Bua Marketing** will also offer Irish-language communications consulting, advisory, workshop and qualitative research services to subscribers.
- These will be charged separately from the subscription service and are aimed at those who want to dive deeper into their Irish-language advertising impact and insights into improving campaign performance.



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