# Heritage, identity and language use in public spaces in Ireland

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## 1 Introduction

Ireland is unique among the anglophone countries of the world in that it experienced a nation-wide shift from its original heritage language (Irish) to that of the colonisers (English). In all other anglophone countries one of two situations pertained: (i) English was taken by settlers who came to dominate the new country and whose descendants continued native-speaker English – an example for this would be Australia or New Zealand or (ii) English was continued as a second language with local languages maintaining their status as first languages for the majority of the population.[i] Large ethnic divisions may also exist in a country, cf. the African American and Latinx population in the United States. But regarding language shift, one can confirm across the anglophone world that the population sizes involved in shift have been only a fraction of that of the countries in which they are or were located, e.g. Native Americans in the USA, First Nations peoples in Canada, Aborigines in Australia, Maori in New Zealand. The only exception is Ireland[ii] where the vast majority of the population partook in the historical language shift (Ó Tuathaigh 2015). The nearest comparison with Ireland is provided by South African Indian English where an entire population switched to English (Mesthrie 1992, Hickey 2020a). There are differences, however, the Indians in South Africa were labour immigrants in that country and spoke different languages such as Bhojpuri or Tamil and the language shift did not endanger the Indian languages in question as they show large native populations of speakers in India.

The present chapter is concerned with one particular aspect of the aftermath of the language shift from Irish to English in Ireland, namely the use of the Irish language in public spaces. The shift has resulted in a complex linguistic legacy for Ireland. The historically continuous dialect areas and their numbers of inhabitants are dwindling while general knowledge of Irish on the part of native speakers of Irish English fluctuates greatly. The use of Irish in public spaces reflects this varying knowledge of the language and also documents the manner in which it is manipulated to forge a specifically Irish identity within a largely English-speaking context.

## 1.1 Irish and English in Ireland

The situation of both the Irish and English language in Ireland today is a consequence of the language shift which has reverberated down through the centuries. The shift to English has meant adopting the language of the former colonisers which adds a further dimension to the issue. The obvious advantage of adopting the primary world language has meant that there was never a moment in recent history in which the reversal of the shift, i.e. back to Irish, was seriously considered by anything like a significant portion of the population of Ireland.

The Irish constitution of 1937 was drafted largely under the direction of the former president of Ireland, Eamonn de Valera (1882-1975). While it reflects in many respects attitudes and opinions of the time it remains the single binding legal document in Ireland and its pronouncements on language, found at the beginning, defines the status of Irish which still holds from the point of view of law.

> Article 8 of the Constitution of Ireland
>
> *1. Ós í an Ghaeilge an teanga náisiúnta is í an phríomhtheanga oifigiúil í. 2. Glactar leis an Sacs-Bhéarla mar theanga oifigiúil eile.*
>
> [1. Because Irish is the national language, it is the primary official language. 2. English is accepted as another official language. – translation, RH].

Despite this constitutional support, English is in effect the language of public life and around 99% of Ireland's native population speak it as a first language. Nonetheless, Irish has a special status in Ireland. The language looms large in the minds of the Irish as the carrier of their cultural heritage, given that it was the native language of the majority of the population up to the middle of the nineteenth century, just before the Great Famine (1845-8) (Ó Riagáin 1997). This has led to a non-linguistic use of the term 'native language': many people claim this is the case even though their knowledge of the language may be poor (Hickey 2009), i.e. they have not acquired Irish as their first language in early childhood.

The public presence of the Irish langauge is strengthened by the fact that government bodies usually have Irish names, signposts are bilingual, official letters often contain an opening and a salutation in Irish. Indeed a knowledge of Irish was a requirement for the civil service in Ireland until 1974.[iii]

Television announcers sprinkle a few words of Irish in their commentaries as do news broadcasters. Politicians may claim that Irish is their native language, reading a few words of Irish, usually with a pronunciation heavily influenced by English, as do the attendants on flights of the national air carrier

*Aer Lingus*. This practice is known as using the *cúpla focal* 'a couple of words' of Irish.

## 1.2 Irish and the government of Ireland

Given the primary status of Irish in the Constitution of Ireland the Irish government is formally committed to supporting and furthering the Irish language in all areas of society. The two government departments which are concerned most intensively with language questions are The Department of Education and Skills (*An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna*) and that for the Gaeltacht, the Irish term for Irish-speaking regions, taken collectively. The official title of the latter is now (2020) The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (*An Roinn Cultúir*, *Turasóireachta*, *Cultúir*, *Ealaíon*, *Gaeltachta*, *Spóirt agus Meán*), a name which followed on the previous title The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (*An Roinn Cultúir*, *Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta*). This government department is not exclusively responsible for the Gaeltacht but has a broader brief as its mission statement specifies: 'The department's mission is to support and promote the use of the Irish language and to facilitate the development of the Gaeltacht" (source: https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-tourism-culture-arts-gaeltacht-sport-and-media/, last accessed 15 January 2021).[iv]

In July 2003 the Official Languages Act (*Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla*) became law with an amendment in 2019 – The Official Languages Bill (*Bille na dTeangacha Oifigiúla*). This act was designed to provide a statutory framework for the provision of public services in the Irish language. It regulated a number of issues such as the use of Irish in official announcements and advertisements and specified the obligations of the government regarding the Irish language. The act also provided for *An Coimisinéir Teanga* 'The language commissioner', an independent official appointed by the President of Ireland and head of *Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla* 'The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages'. The task of the commissioner is to supervise the implementation of the official languages act and to protect language rights.

## 1.3 The Irish language in modern Ireland

Irish is a language with a long history and a considerable body of both fictional literature and language research connected with it. Although formerly the native language of several million people, it has been reduced now to some tens of thousands who use the language as their first means of communication in historically continuous communities, the districts which collectively form the Gaeltacht. In 1925, three years after the formation of the Irish Free State, the government commissioned the Irish police with the task of determining which electoral divisions of the country contained substantial numbers of Irish

speakers (Ní Bhrádaigh et al. 2007: 103). This resulted in a two-way classification of such areas: *Fíor-Ghaeltacht* 'true Irish-speaking region' (defined originally as one where a minimum of 80% of the population used Irish as the predominant everyday language) and *Breac-Ghaeltacht* 'intermittent Irish-speaking region'. These two categories together included large parts of Cos. Mayo, Galway, Kerry, Waterford (all counties still with Gaeltacht areas today) and even the western half of Co. Clare (see map in Ní Bhrádaigh et al. 2007: 102). A government act of 1929 then contained a list of electoral divisions designated as Irish-speaking. This excluded some of the districts surveyed in 1925 and labelled as Breac-Ghaeltacht then. For the purpose of housing improvement grants some other districts were added in Cos. Limerick, Cavan, Leitrim and Sligo, counties where no historically continuous communities survived into the twentieth century. A significant reduction in the geographical extent of the Gaeltacht came about with the Gaeltacht Areas Order of 1956 (with later amendments). Subsequently, only Cos. Waterford, Cork, Kerry, Galway, Mayo and Donegal contained officially recognised Irish-speaking districts and in all but Cos. Donegal, Galway and Kerry these were only a fraction of the size of the counties in question.

Outside the current Gaeltacht areas there are many people with a strong interest in the Irish language and its culture. Given that the latter group is numerically greater, it is probably their forms of Irish which will survive into the twenty first century (O'Rourke and Walsh 2015, Walsh 2020). Public support for the language, both within Ireland and through its official recognition by the European Union, is important in providing a social framework in which the language can prosper. Certain issues about the language seem intractable, such as the inconsistent orthography or the question of what dialect, if any, might be taken as standard. Whether the language will survive and perhaps even spread within Ireland is a question which ultimately rests on its perception as a medium fit for use on all levels in contemporary Irish society.

## 1.4 Irish, an endangered language?

Given the situation just described above it may be asked whether Irish fulfils the criteria for classification as an endangered language. The Linguistic Society of America defines an endangered language as 'one that is likely to become extinct in the near future' (www.linguisticsociety.org/content/what- endangered-language). According to this definition it would not be endangered though the question is what kind of Irish will survive.

The definition by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, which is particularly concerned with this question, is somewhat different: 'An endangered language is a language that is at risk of no longer being used, as its speakers shift to

another language or die out' (www.sil.org/sociolinguistics/endangered-languages). By that definition it is less clear whether Irish is endangered or not. But as a living, spoken language in a vibrant speech community Irish could very well be regarded as endangered.

## 2 Forging a contemporary identity

Given the contemporary and recent historical situation of Irish and English in Ireland (Crowley 2016) it may well be asked what language acts as the carrier of linguistic identity for today's Irish. The issue of identity is complex and multifaceted (see the contributions in Preece ed., 2016) and of increasing concern in the twenty-first century (Vihman and Praakli eds, 2014; Nortier and Svendsen eds, 2015). There are various kinds of identity, which can be recognised for any society, let alone one as historically and presently complex as that of Ireland (Kallen 2009, 2010). To render aspects and issues more recognisable one can distinguish separate types of identity to begin with, while bearing their interrelatedness in mind. As discussed in detail by Hickey and Amador-Moreno (2020), at the very least, eight types of identity, alongside linguistic identity, can be identified:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | National identity | 2) | Cultural identity |
| 3) | Regional identity | 4) | Class identity |
| 5) | Ethnic identity | 6) | Religious identity |
| 7) | Group identity | 8) | Personal identity |

When considering cultural identity in Ireland one sees that the Irish language looms large in the background and many individuals in Ireland are ready to claim that Irish is their native language in the sense that it is seen as central to their cultural identity as Irish people (Hickey 2009) but, importantly, are not in a position to use it in everyday conversation. This attitude can be detrimental to the use of Irish as a vernacular language: if a vague claim of identity with the language - without using it - is regarded as sufficient then people may feel that there is no need to speak the language or at least not as a fully functional mode of communication (Hickey and Amador-Moreno 2020). This attitude is often behind the use of the so-called *cúpla focal* 'couple of words' (see above) by many speakers of English to flavour their speech with words from Irish without actually switching to this language for any stretch of speech (Kallen 2013: 38-45).

Linguistic identity is a phenomenon which overlaps with other kinds of identity (Bucholtz and Hall 2010; Johnstone 2010). It is found on the largest level (national identity), on the smallest (personal identity) and on all levels in between. Identity can well be a source of tension. The countries, in which there

is least tension in this area, are those in which there is clear linguistic continuity so that the language people now speak and that of their forebears is the same, e.g. German for German people, Polish for Polish people, etc. However, it should not be imagined that present-day nation states have a one-to-one correspondence between national language and that of their populations.[v]

## 2.1 Aftermath of the language shift

The wholesale language shift of the later nineteenth century in Ireland led to a movement concerned with halting the complete Anglicisation of the country as a consequence. The most noticeable result of this concern was the founding of *Conradh na Gaeilge* 'The Gaelic League' in 1893 with Douglas Hyde, the later president of the Irish Free State as its leader. From a linguistic point of view this concern was well-motivated given that accents of English transmitted by the educational system in Ireland during the nineteenth century were clearly British in character. This can be seen in the early recordings of Irish people born during the later nineteenth century (Hickey 2017a, 2020b).

The appropriateness of English as a carrier of linguistic identity for the Irish would seem to have improved after Irish independence in 1922. The reason for this is that supraregional forms of Irish English (Hickey 2013) have continually moved away from language norms from England with the endonormative re-orientation which set in after independence (Hickey 2020b). More specifically Irish forms of English arose which then acted as vehicles for the projection of a particular Irish identity (see Amador-Moreno 2010: 129, 153; and Hickey and Amador-Moreno 2020: 21-22).

## 2.2 Language attitudes in post-shift Ireland

With the virtual completion of the language shift by the early twentieth century certain attitudes to the Irish language began to crystallise. The danger of the complete loss of the language became increasingly evident and the government of the new Irish Free State introduced regulations in education, such as compulsory Irish through to the end of secondary school, and in the civil service, such as an obligatory test in the Irish language (see above) to bolster the position of Irish (Coolahan 1981).

The effects of these measures were minimal, if not indeed counterproductive (Akenson 1975; Dowling 1971). Certainly in education this was the case where poor quality and unimaginative teaching resulted in negative attitudes to the Irish language which in turn reduced the chances to maintain the language at its then current level, let alone realise any kind of revival (Ó Buachalla 1988).

The situation in education improved from the 1970s onwards with the sudden expansion of Irish-medium schools, called *Gaeilscoileanna*.[vi] While there were less than 20 in the entire country in the early 1970s that figure rose to nearly 200 at present (2019). Various reasons have been put forward for this increase, some having to do with a genuine concern for the language, and some with the funding of the schools, the pupil-to-teacher ratios and the general lack of non-Irish children in classes. Despite the successes in continual exposure to Irish during education, the Irish censuses, as of 2006, show that the use of the Irish language outside education is minimal (a particular question in the census form has collected this information) so that there is no continuity of language use for pupils into their post-school lives. The hope that the *Gaeilscoileanna* would lead to widespread bilingualism was not realised.

## 2.3 Language-shift scenarios: the break in linguistic continuity

The upshot of the developments outlined above is that there is a break in linguistic continuity for the majority of Irish people. This has furthermore led to many supportive statements being made about the Irish language by individuals who do not necessarily speak it. The inherent contradiction in this stance is not always evident to such individuals. For instance, when the main national university in Dublin, University College Dublin, threatened to abolish the chair of Old Irish, a veritable storm of protest was unleashed (chiefly in the print media at the time, 2008). Among the most vociferous critics of the university leadership on this issue were English-speaking, English-writing individuals who protested the abandonment of 'our native language'.

The attachment to Irish has meant a corresponding unwillingness to afford the English language the academic recognition which it could be expected to have given its status as native language of the Irish today. There is no official or academic support for the English language in Ireland. To do that would be to highlight the language shift which took place but which is not discussed in public.

Given the Celtic cultural heritage of Ireland it would be natural to expect linguistic loyalty to the Irish language as an integral, indeed defining part of this heritage. However, practical loyalty would involve speaking Irish, a language which is typologically very different from English and hence difficult to acquire fluency in and which is only spoken natively by people in small pockets of farming and fishing communities along the western seaboard of Ireland with a very few in other isolated regions. Hence it is easy to understand why so many young people in Ireland wish to learn a much more widely spoken language, like Spanish, when confronted with a choice of second language. The outcome for the Irish language is that knowledge of it across broad sections of Irish society is

very poor and this fact is reflected in the use of the language in public spaces, the subject of the following section.

# 3 The public presence of Irish in Ireland

A small core vocabulary of Irish, used to refer to public figures and institutions, especially from the political domain, is commonly in use in present-day Ireland. The word *Dáil* 'assembly' is used for the Irish parliament. The *Taoiseach* 'chief, leader' is the prime minister. The *Tánaiste* lit. 'deputy of the chief' is usually the minister of foreign affairs. *Áras an Uachtaráin* means 'building/seat of the president'. *Seanad* is the Irish senate. Beyond such basic terms, use and knowledge diminishes rapidly, *Ceann Comhairle* 'head of the council' is the speaker in the Irish parliament; the term TD is used for a member of parliament and is an abbreviation of Irish *teachta dála* 'assembly delegate'; the term *aire* means minister, but is not used much in English-speaking media.

On all official signs in Ireland, e.g. on streets and motorways, on public buildings[vii] and on corporation and government offices, in airports and railway stations, names are required to be in Irish and English.[viii] Given the constitutional status of Irish as first language the Irish part must be above the English one and generally in italics.[ix] There can be a considerable discrepancy between the Irish and the English form of names, e.g. *Baile Átha Cliath / Dublin; Port Láirge / Waterford; Loch Garman / Wexford; An tInbhear Mór / Arklow*. This is often due to the differing linguistic backgrounds of the names, e.g. Irish versus Scandinavian / Anglo-Norman.

Names of government institutions, state-owned bodies and state-related agencies are very often in Irish, either directly in Irish, e.g. *Coillte* 'woods', the state-owned forestry agency, or via an acronym which happens to be a word in Irish. An example of the latter would be the employment agency *Fás* (1988-2013), lit. 'growth', < *An Foras Áiseanna Saothair* 'The labour facilities foundation' which was superseded by *Solas*, lit. 'light', < *An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna* 'The further education and skills service'. Some private firms have also used Irish names, e.g. *Bord Gáis* 'the gas board' (now *Gas Networks Ireland*), though this is not mandatory by law. It is perhaps not surprising in English-speaking Ireland that many of these names contain 'mistakes', e.g. the large dairy producer with the name *Glanbia*, lit. 'clean food'. In standard Irish this would be *Glanbhia* with <bh> indicating the compound-internal fricativisation of the initial <b> of the word for food, *bia*.

## 3.1 Irish phrases: enregisterment and commodification

Those cases where there is no legal obligation to use Irish, in names or signs, are of particular interest as they represent choices made by individuals to utilise the Irish language.

Irish ethnic identity in public spaces can be rendered using Irish names. The extent to which this is done is limited to some set phrases which are well known (see the detailed discussion in Thistlethwaite and Sebba 2015). An example would be the title *An Siopa Deas* 'The Nice Shop' (Image 1, Inset 4) which contain Irish words familiar to anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of the language. The name of a pub in Cork, *An Spailpín Fánach* 'The Wandering Farm Labourer', is actually a reference to a popular song which would be known to a wider audience given that it is part of the traditional Irish music repertoire.

Some sayings in Irish have become enregistered (Agha 2003) and are known to individuals who have no competence in the language. Two of these are the greeting *Céad míle fáilte*,[x] lit. 'a hundred thousand welcomes' and the salutation *Slán abhaile*, lit. 'goodbye home', the latter found increasingly at exits from car parks, service stations and the like (Image1, Inset 2).

The transition from enregisterment to commodification is easy to realise. Items for tourists are a prime source of such a development. An example from jewellery is claddagh rings, produced in many locations in Ireland but stemming originally from the village of Claddagh (< *cladach* 'seashore') near Galway city. On a jocular level many Irish and Irish English sayings and specific pronunciations are found on merchandise such as T-shirts, mugs, scarves, hats, caps, etc. An example such a pronunciation would *Norn Iron* for Northern Ireland (hinting at the deletion of the <th> and the strong rhoticity of an Ulster accent) found on T-shirts produced by a firm from Northern Ireland. The form *eejit* (often in phrases like *bloody eejit* or *buck eejit*) is common throughout Ireland and is a widespread rendering of a traditionally Irish pronunciation of the word 'idiot'. The ubiquitous use of the Irish word *craic* 'social enjoyment' (a borrowing from English *crack* with an independent semantic development) has led to it being used on billboards, pub facades, T-shirts, mugs and the like (Image 2, Inset 3).

## 3.2 Irish English on tourist merchandise

The enregisterment and commodification of language in present-day Ireland applies as much to English as it does to Irish. Merchandise for tourists is particularly prone to this (Kelly-Holmes 2019a, 2019c). On T-shirts, fridge magnets, mugs, postcards, teacloths and the like iconic Irish words and phrases can be found. The ubiquitous use of *grand* (Hickey 2017b) or the Irish expression *feck* (a mild version of the four-letter word, Image 2, Inset 1) are

found in merchandise prominently displayed in airport shops and gift shops on highs streets, places where tourists are likely to come by.

The inadvertent use of specifically Irish English features occurs seldomly given that the stretches of speech are too short for particular grammatical constructions to appear. However, there are occasional instances as with a sign at a car park near Ashleagh Falls in Co. Galway which reads 'Keep this area beautiful. Bring your litter home' showing the typical Irish confusion of the reciprocal verbs *bring* and *take* (Hickey 2007: 298), (Image 1, Inset 1).


Image 1. Insets are numbered from top left in clockwise direction.

## 3.3 Use of Irish personal names in an English environment

In nineteenth-century Ireland, speakers of Irish frequently chose to use English forms of their names. For instance, two important scholars of Irish, John Donovan and Eugene O'Curry, did not use the Irish forms of their names, Eoghan Ó Comhraí and Séan Ó Donnabháin respectively. The early nineteenth-century political leader Daniel O'Connell, a native speaker from Cahersiveen in Co. Kerry, never used the Irish form of his name, Dónall Ó Conaill.

In contemporary Ireland the situation is almost the reverse. The use of Irish versions of names is widespread and does not necessarily imply that an individual has a command of Irish. Rather it is a nod in the direction of their heritage language with a modicum of loyalty to the heritage language been reached by difference to English. For instance, *Sheila* is a common name in Ireland, an Anglicisation of Irish *Síle* which in turn derives from *Cecilia* through Anglo-Norman; *Seán* (the Irish form of *John*) has the anglicised form *Shawn* and the barely altered form *Sean*. Further examples are be *Diarmuid* for *Dermot*; *Muiris* for *Maurice*; *Aoife* for *Eve/Eva* or *Sinéad* (< *Janet*) Others are Irish names and hence have no English equivalent, e.g. *Orla*, *Úna* (anglicised as *Oonagh*), *Medhbh* (anglicised as *Maeve*). The less usual an Irish name, the clearer the message of Irishness it conveys, e.g. *Sadhbh*, *Sorcha*. Name like *Brian* or *Kevin* (anglicised from *Caoimhín*) do not have this effect as they are so common across the anglophone world.

Specific Irish ethnic identity can also be conveyed typographically, e.g. by using Celtic script for an English phrase as with a premises with a name in a Celtic font (Image 2, Inset 4).

A connection with an Irish language background can be reinforced by a use of older spelling, e.g. *Ó Murchdha* for *Ó Murchú* 'Murphy', *Ó Seagha* for *Ó Sé* 'O Shea' or the now obsolete use of a superscript dot on letters representing stops (Image 2, Inset 2) which have been weakened to fricatives.[xi]

## 3.4 Nature of Irish on public signage

There is an obvious presence of Irish in public spaces in Ireland. However, this does not necessarily imply that the words and phrases in Irish comply to the standard of the language. While it is true that the Irish language is undergoing constant change at present (Moriarty 2014), there is nonetheless a codified form of the written language which specifies what constitutes the official standard of the language (Government of Ireland 1958). In public spaces, especially on signs, a number of features can be observed which derive from an incomplete knowledge of the language.

1) Non-application of the initial mutations (grammatically relevant changes at the beginning of words)
   *Fan anseo ar dearg* > *Fan anseo ar dhearg* 'wait here for red'
   (Image 2, Inset 5).

2) Neglect of genitive case (use of nominative instead)
   *Deoch an fuinneamh* > *Deoch an fhuinnimh* 'drink of energy'
   *Scéim leictreachas* > *Scéim leictreachais* 'electricity scheme'
   *Ionad an tSláinte* > *Ionad na Sláinte* 'health unit'

3) Neglect of grammatical gender or incorrect gender
*Slí na h-Aiteann* > *Slí an Aitinn* 'gorseway'
(*aiteann* 'gorse' is masculine in Irish, not feminine)

4) Neglect of adjectival endings
*Seirbhisí éigeandál* > *Seirbhisí éigeandála* 'emergency services'
(plural of adjectives requires *-a* suffix)

5) Use of *c* /k/ for *ch* /x/
*Áit conntúrach cun snámh* > *Áit contúirteach chun snámh*
'dangerous place for swimming'
(Image 1, Inset 3).

6) General non-standard spellings; non-standard use of acute accent over vowels
*Tíomáin go cúramach* > *Tiomáin go cúramach* 'Drive carefully'
(acute accent not on second letter of first letter of phrase)


Image 2. Insets are number from top left in clockwise direction.

## 4 Conclusion

The language shift from Irish to English is an historical event which has left its mark on Irish society. The acquisition of English as the new first language was a boon for the Irish population and one which it was never going to undo or even wish to undo. Nonetheless, there is a lingering attachment to the Irish language which manifests itself in various ways, at least as an attachment to the culture and external aspects of the language and at most as the ability to speak the language colloquially in everyday situations.

The appearance of Irish in public spaces mirrors the spectrum of attitudes and competences which are characteristic of present-day Ireland. It betrays a linguistically fragile code, which is all-present but often represented incorrectly in the linguistic landscape of present-day Ireland.

The situation is characterised by stasis: official support for the language does provide scaffolding for its preservation but real progress towards a future as a living language would require a presence and acceptance of Irish as a language for everyday communication in public spaces, above all in the cities of Ireland. Whether that will ever happen remains to seen. The diminishing numbers of native speakers are reducing the vitality of the historical continuous

forms of the language in the Irish-speaking areas of the north, west and south of Ireland, i.e. in the Gaeltacht. This reduction has led, and continues to lead, to an acceptance of forms of the language in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, which are not well-formed according to previous standards of the language. In this respect the use of Irish in public spaces in contemporary Ireland reflects the relative health of the language, viewed from the vantage point of the traditional grammatical system. This is no longer strictly adhered to by the many second-language speakers of Irish. Indeed, as many scholars have pointed out, e.g. Walsh (2020), it may well be this second-language Irish which will survive into the twenty-first century.

Ireland shares with many post-colonial countries an altered linguistic identity due to the shift to English (Sandhu and Higgins 2016). It has succeeded in producing, through a long history (Hickey 2008), a variety constellation unique in the anglophone world, from most vernacular forms to more supraregional forms (White 2006; Hickey 2013). These serve as the carrier of its linguistic identity. Explicit, objective recognition of unique forms of English in Ireland has not been forthcoming, nor has any academic representation been introduced at Irish universities. This fact betrays the disloyalty associated, or perceived to be associated, with public acceptance of English as the de facto native language of practically the entire Irish-heritage population of present-day Ireland.

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[i] There are, of course, variations on these two scenarios. Canada and South Africa are countries with two major European languages, one of which, Dutch, developed into its own separate language.

[ii] For the present study the term 'Ireland' refers to the Republic of Ireland and deliberately excludes the six counties of Northern Ireland, a consituent part of the United Kingdom, which in turn has a complex linguistic landscape deriving from a Scots input and various English inputs (Kallen 1999; Corrigan 2010; Hickey 2011).

[iii] The study of Irish is compulsory in secondary schools for pupils of Irish heritage; however, it is not compulsory to take it as a subject for the Leaving Certificate (the final exam in secondary school).

[iv] The renaming and reorientation of this department is indicative of its shifting status within the Irish government.

[v] A brief look at some major European countries. e.g. Spain, shows that this is all too often not the case.

[vi] These schools are co-ordinated by *Gaeloideahas* 'Irish education' (from 1973 to 2014 *Gaelscoileanna Teo.*), an organisation funded by *Foras na Gaeilge*, the Irish language body of the Good Friday Agreement (1998). It is also connected to the state agency *An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta* 'Council for the Gaeltacht and Gaeilscoil Education' which offers council to government departments on matters concerned with the Irish language.

[vii] There are exceptions to this. The Irish Academy of Music in Westland Row, Dublin, has a brass plate outside its main entrance which is only in English.

[viii] Signs in the Gaeltacht (officially recognised Irish-speaking regions) are only in Irish, e.g. *Gaoth Dobhair* 'Gweedore' (North), *An Cheathrú Rua* 'Carraroe' (West), *Dún Chaoin* 'Dunquin' (South).

[ix] On the significance of language contact in linguistic landscapes, see the discussion in Bolton, Botha and Lee (2020, especially pp. 291-295. See also Kelly-Holmes (2019b).

[x] The National Tourism Development Authority of Ireland has the name *Fáilte Ireland*, lit. 'Welcome Ireland'.

[xi] The present-day practice involves using a following *h*, a change made official in a document *Litriú na Gaeilge: Lámhleabhar an Chaighdeáin Oifigiúil*, 'The spelling of Irish. A handbook of the official standard' published by the Irish government in 1945.