

The First Official Language? The status of the Irish language in Dublin.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Yu Ming is ainm dom ('my name is Yu Ming') is a short Irish-language film about a Chinese man who, having studied Irish for six months, leaves China and moves to Dublin. On arrival, however, he finds that only one person can understand him. This man explains that despite the bilingual signage visible across the city, Irish is not spoken there. Unable to communicate with the majority of the people he meets, Yu Ming moves to the Gaeltacht¹, where he finds employment and settles down.

This film makes an important statement about the status of the Irish language. Under Article 8 of the Constitution of Ireland, Irish is the first official language (English is a second official language), and yet, even in the capital city, it is very difficult to use it as a medium of communication. Furthermore, as Irish-language films are not the norm, the very act of producing a film in Irish highlights its position as the marked, atypical language.

This paper explores the status of Irish in Dublin, the Republic of Ireland's capital city. I argue that, despite over 100 years of revival attempts, English remains the dominant language and working bilingualism does not exist. Nevertheless, Irish retains an extremely important cultural value that must not be overlooked.

I have focused on Dublin because it is the home of the largest concentration of the state's native and L2 Irish speakers² (Central Statistics Office 2007). Moreover, as Ireland is highly centralized, both politically and economically, most large institutions are based in Dublin, and citizens country-wide are often required to carry out their dealings with Dublin-based

1 *Gaeltacht* is the term for those regions in which Irish is the majority language. *Gaeltacht* councils receive grants and subsidies from the government in order to maintain the use of Irish there. *Gaeltacht* and the plural *Gaeltachtaí* are treated in Irish-English as proper nouns, and as such, I will not italicize them throughout this paper. They have no English translation.

2 There are almost 1.7 million Irish speakers across the state. Of these, approximately 411,000 live in Dublin (Central Statistics Office 2007).

representatives.

This paper is structured as follows: the methodology for my study is presented in section 2. In section 3, I provide a brief overview of literature about emblematic language use. I present the results of surveys conducted on attitudes towards Irish in section 4. In section 5, I discuss recent interventions of the Irish government in Irish-language affairs. In section 6, I provide evidence that working bilingualism does not exist in Dublin. A discussion and conclusion are found in sections 7 and 8, respectively.

2. METHODOLOGY

Although bilingual Irish-English signage is common across Dublin, I wished to establish if the organizations that used it were genuinely interested in communicating with the public bilingually. Bilingual signs were examined, to ascertain the correctness of Irish translations. I also examined the websites of Dublin-based organizations, to see if they offered bilingual customer information. I established the Irish-language competence of staff working in organizations which display bilingual signage. Finally, I conducted a survey on the attitudes of Dubliners towards Irish.

3. EMBLEMATIC USE OF LANGUAGE

There is a close link between language and identity (cf. e.g., Crystal 2000; Fedor 1995). This is true whether the language in question is a society's dominant language, or a lesser-used one, such as Yiddish in the US (Shandler 2006) or Low German in East Frisia (Reershemius 2009). The communities that use these languages do so in an emblematic way, not purely as a means of communication, but also to make cultural and political statements. This may be done through, e.g. deliberate and self-conscious codeswitching , and use only in marked contexts. The very act of using the language may make an important statement, in which its symbolism comes to be valued as highly as, or even more highly than, its actual communicative value (Shandler 2006: 4). This use of language is what Shandler terms *postvernacular* (Ibid.). Postvernacular language use arises

when a language ceases to be spoken on a very large scale, but is nonetheless engaged with on other levels, e.g., as an object of study and discourse, as a vehicle for performance and as a cultural symbol.³ By these criteria, Irish has reached a postvernacular stage, as I will discuss.

Unlike Yiddish and Low German, Irish is recognized as an official state language. In this respect, it is somewhat similar to Belarusian. Both Irish and Belarusian are official languages, alongside another, dominant language - English in Ireland and Russian in Belarus (Zaprudnik & Fedor 2005). Belarusian continues to be used in education, reflecting government support of the language. But in the home and economic spheres, Russian is the functional language, while Belarusian plays an emblematic role (Brown 2008). Belarusians also feel that the language is an important part of their national identity (Brown 2005). Both languages, then, are used emblematically, but are state-supported and officially recognized. O'Rourke (2005) discovered similar links between Irish and Galician in northern Spain, although as with Irish and Belarusian, there are important differences in the political context of the languages.

Emblematic and postvernacular use of language, then, can be observed in different ways among many different language communities. Clearly, languages are important to their speakers for more than communicative value alone.

4. ATTITUDES TOWARDS IRISH

Many sociolinguistic studies have been conducted on the attitudes of Irish people towards Irish, e.g., Ó Riagáin 1997; Sweeney 2008; Mac Gréil 2009. Findings have consistently shown that Irish forms an important part of Irish identity. There have also been consistent findings that while ideological support for Irish is high, actual use is low, and that there is no correlation between actual language ability and its perceived value as an identity-marker. This is not always the case for other minority languages: Cajun speakers in Louisiana, for instance, are more likely to identify as Cajun if they speak the language well (Dubois & Melançon 2007).

3 Use of language in this way should be distinguished from, say, emblematic use of English in advertising in countries where English is neither a native nor official language (cf. Piller 2001; Hyde 2002).

To ascertain the attitudes of Dubliners towards Irish, I conducted a survey⁴, based on a questionnaire distributed to a small sample of adults who had grown up in Dublin and had completed full-time education.⁵ 54.2% of respondents reported some fluency in Irish, which ranged from being able to make small talk, to complete fluency.⁶ Only 19% of speakers spoke Irish three or more times per week, with the majority (42.9%) speaking Irish less than once a fortnight. 64% of my respondents believed that the government has a responsibility to promote the use of Irish in day-to-day life. 68% agreed that government documents should be available bilingually, and an overwhelming 92% believed that signs and notices in public places should be bilingual. 88% believed that the Irish language is a necessary part of Irish culture. 88% also believed that speaking Irish is a way of expressing Irishness. 75% believed that it is useful to be able to speak Irish, although this finding does not correspond to actual frequency of use.

Mac Gréil (2009) also asked respondents about their aspirations for Irish: 53% believed that Irish should only be preserved in the Gaeltachtaí, and revived elsewhere for cultural use. Only 33% of his respondents wished to see Ireland becoming bilingual, with English as the dominant language.

These results show that, despite ability, most people in Dublin do not speak Irish regularly, although they like to see Irish used in public and regard it as an important part of Irish culture and national identity. Mac Gréil's findings regarding the future of Irish are also significant, indicating that most people do not wish to see nationwide bilingualism, but rather, would prefer for Irish outside the Gaeltachtaí to serve only a cultural value. Irish people, then, are keen to preserve Irish in its emblematic, rather than practical, function.

⁴ See Appendix I for a copy of the survey. Additional results may be found in Appendix II.

⁵ This was not intended to be a representative sample of the population of Dublin – with over 500,000 people resident in Dublin city, and 1.2 million in Dublin county, this would have been beyond the scope of this study (Central Statistics Office 2007). However, my findings consistently generated the same patterns for Dublin as those found elsewhere in the course of larger surveys. I thus take my results to be a reasonably accurate reflection of attitudes on a wider scale across Dublin. My results are intended to give a broad impression of attitudes towards Irish, so no in-depth statistical analyses of data have been carried out.

⁶ These statistics are based on self-perceived competence. There are no objective data available on the Irish-language competence of adults outside of full-time education.

5. IRISH AND THE STATE

By the late 19th century, the majority of Irish people were monolingual English-speakers. The Irish language revival began in the 1870s, and since the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, Irish governments have made official efforts to promote the language. These have included establishing Irish as a compulsory subject at primary and secondary school, creating an official standard, *An Caighdeán Oifigiúil*, and ensuring the recognition of Irish as an official EU language (for a comprehensive treatment of the recent socio-political history of the Irish language and the state's involvement in Irish language affairs, cf. Ó Tuathaigh 2008; Ó Riagáin 2008). Government gestures towards Irish are typically based around an equality principle, where multilingualism, in this case Irish-English bilingualism, plays a part in national identity formation. Societies which operate an equality principle, like Canada, Belgium and Ireland, try to ensure that the relevant languages have equivalent uses within state institutions (Matras 2009: 55). The government department responsible for Irish is the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Two of the Department's key objectives are the reversal of the decline of Irish in the Gaeltachtaí, and the extension of the use of Irish throughout the whole island. To this end, two significant schemes were launched in the past decade: the Official Languages Act 2003 (OLA) and the *20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language*.

The primary objective of the OLA is to improve the availability and quality of public services through Irish (Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs 2003). It requires government departments and public bodies to deliver all services bilingually, although actual implementation of this requirement will be gradual. Private companies and semi-state bodies are excluded.

This year, the *20 Year Strategy* was launched, through which the government hopes to extend Irish-English bilingualism to as many citizens as possible. Further aims are to maximize the number of families throughout the state who use Irish daily, and to increase the visibility of Irish in society (Government of Ireland 2010). Throughout the strategy document, reference is made to the important cultural and symbolic role of Irish in modern Irish society. A distinction is

made between knowledge and use of a language, and as such, the Government seeks “to create positive circumstances” for the use of Irish (Ibid.: 56). It is telling that there is seen to be a need to create opportunities for the use of Irish; this highlights the fact that Irish is not considered, even by policy-makers, to be a language of ordinary communication. Outside the Gaeltachtaí, the only other specific region mentioned in the document is Dublin, where the symbolic value of Irish is again emphasized:

[The] presence of the Irish language in the capital city is of great symbolic importance, both to the people of Ireland and to visitors.... (Ibid.: 82)

It is noted in the document that parents may choose not to use Irish in the home because of a failure to understand its economic advantages, showing government awareness of the public attitude that Irish is valuable culturally, but not necessarily economically. A number of participants in my research similarly argued that until parents see an economic benefit of speaking Irish in the home, they will continue to speak English with their children.

6. PUBLIC BILINGUALISM

Irish is quite visible in Dublin: street names and road signs, notices on public transport, and signage in supermarkets are displayed bilingually, and pubs, bars and cafés across the city have Irish names, such as *Solas* 'light' and *Sin É* 'that's it'. However, on close inspection, it becomes clear that most organizations do not use bilingual signage, nor do they provide customer information in Irish. This is despite government funding for small and medium businesses to display bilingual signs. It appears that where Irish is used, it is because the organization in question is in some way government affiliated. Organizations that are free to choose, are more unlikely to make Irish-language versions of notices and websites available, as I will discuss.

Bilingual signage in Ireland has recently caused some controversy. In June 2009, Irish-language poet Seán Ó Healaí drew the Irish Language Commissioner's attention to 33 misspelt road signs across Ireland, arguing that similar spelling mistakes in English would never be tolerated. The Commissioner accepted this case and agreed to correct the errors. Online responses

to this story varied, with some praising Ó Healaí's initiative and the Commissioner's decision, while others decried the waste of financial resources at a time of austerity.

6.1 Signage and notices⁷

The OLA prescribes that where public bodies display bilingual signs, the Irish text must appear first and be no less visible than the English text, the lettering used must not be smaller than that used for the English, and both texts must communicate the same information (Government of Ireland 2008). However, the Irish text frequently appears after the English, is smaller, and by virtue of being italicized, is less legible.

Street-names must, by law, be displayed bilingually. The usual format is for the English name to be presented in capital letters, with the Irish above, in smaller font. Despite consistency in English street-names, the names in Irish often vary, even on the same street, e.g., *Leeson Street* is simultaneously translated as 'Sráid Líosan' and 'Sráid Cill Mochargán'. Different spellings of the street-names in Irish were also employed, e.g., *Sráid* <Annraoi>, *Sráid* <Hanrai> and *Sráid* <Anraí> for 'Henry Street' (all acceptable variants, but nevertheless, clearly quite different).

Dublin's commuter rail system, the DART, forms part of the national rail service, *Iarnród Éireann* (IÉ). As a state-owned organization, IÉ must display all notices and signs bilingually. On all station signs, the English text appears first. Notices in train carriages showed errors ranging from spelling mistakes and incorrect vocabulary, to total failure to translate, with certain information being displayed twice in English. When contacted, an IÉ spokesperson informed me that the organization was aware of these issues and was in the process of correcting some of them. However, it was made clear that unless there was a total failure to communicate the correct information in Irish, notices would not be changed, effectively acknowledging that spelling and lexical errors would remain uncorrected (Costello, p.c.). No errors were observed in the English versions of these signs.

Most other public bodies did display better bilingual signs, when they were used. Most

⁷ See Appendix III for photographic examples.

private organizations used only monolingual signs, with the exception of some supermarkets. However, even there, translations and Irish orthography were not always correct. Across the city, the only errors observed in English signage were misplaced apostrophes and the occasional misspelling. The extent of such errors was significantly less than that of errors in Irish.

6.2 Websites

The only large organizations, aside from government bodies, which have full Irish-language websites are those which are designed specifically for the use of Irish, such as TG4 (the Irish-language television station) and the website of Conradh na Gaeilge, a non-profit agency which promotes the Irish language.

Out of 62 government departments and bodies with websites, only 16 have complete websites in Irish. 19 have no Irish-language version. Three of the four local councils in Dublin have no Irish-language information available, while the fourth offers nothing more than an Irish-language homepage. No political party has an Irish-language version of its website, despite many having Irish names, e.g., *Fianna Fáil* 'Soldiers of Destiny', *Fine Gael* 'Tribe of the Irish' and *Sinn Féin* 'Ourselves'.

Although all of Dublin's universities display their names in English and Irish, none has an Irish-language website. Dublin tourist attractions generally offer monolingual, English-only websites; even the website of the Dublin tourist office is not available in Irish, although information in several other languages is available. Neither the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), nor Croke Park (where the GAA is headquartered) have Irish-language websites, despite their important relationship with Irish culture and the struggle for independence 100 years ago.

Other significant organizations which have no Irish-language website include Raidió Teilifís Éireann (the national broadcaster), An Post (the postal service), An Garda Síochána (the police force), and Bord Gáis (the main utilities provider). While a great many more could be added to this list, these in particular are significant, due to their Irish-language names, which do not accurately reflect the status of the language within those organizations.

6.3 Staff

The only institutions that had hired employees specifically to deal with customers through Irish were public organizations. Not all public bodies provided this service. Elsewhere, while certain employees did speak Irish fluently, this was down to coincidence, and not out of a desire by the organization to ensure effective communication with the Irish-speaking public. In the majority of organizations visited, no staff member could speak Irish. This was despite the presence of bilingual signage, or of the status of that organization as one that catered for the national interest, e.g., the National Wax Museum.

7. DISCUSSION

Irish is much less visible in Dublin than one might at first be inclined to think. Unless there is a state requirement, organizations are unlikely to use Irish to communicate with the public. That notices are displayed in Irish does not imply that staff can communicate through Irish. As an employee at one private museum informed me, “having the signs in Irish gives more credibility to the place” - bilingual communication, then, is not necessarily the motivation behind bilingual signage. The real motivation is based on the postvernacular value of Irish as a national symbol. Pubs in Dublin's tourist areas display signs promising *ceol agus craic* 'music and fun', even though staff members do not speak Irish, and British retailers such as Tesco display bilingual signs. Thus, these businesses give an impression of cultural authenticity and inherent Irishness.

This self-conscious use of Irish is not a recent phenomenon: the Irish-language revival was always crucial to the process of creating an Irish identity that was distinct from that of the British in Ireland (Watson 2008: 66). This has had a lasting impression, and those who champion the language and support its preservation have constantly had to challenge the attitude that Irish does not have any practical value (McKibben 2003: 38). Indicative of this attitude is the fact that, despite ability in, and positive attitudes towards, Irish, most people choose not to speak it regularly.

While public bodies are likely to provide at least some services through Irish, it is crucial to recognise that the use of Irish in this domain is *enforced*, and therefore, should not be taken to mean that Irish society in general is bilingual.⁸ Where services are available in Irish, they are poorly used; under 0.5% of visitors to state websites with full Irish-language versions made use of this facility last year (Cullen 2009). Purchases of Irish-language versions of official documents, translated at great cost, have also been slow (Deegan 2009). Further research is needed into why people choose not to avail of these resources in Irish, but for now, I suggest this is because of higher competence in English and the prevailing attitude that Irish is not a working language.

Despite this under-enthusiastic public response to the availability of services in Irish, governments continue to promote the language. This could be out of a real eagerness to spread bilingualism throughout the country, or simply out of a desire to honour the position of Irish as the first official language. But this kind of discourse is, in itself, symptomatic of the postvernacular status of Irish. Why should the government seek to change the perfectly functional language that people use on a daily basis? This must be because of the perceived ties between Irish language, culture and identity. The cultural importance of Irish also explains why there is not more public outcry about government expenditure on the provision of services that are not necessarily used. As Irish is associated with national identity, public money spent thus is not felt, by the majority, to be wasted (Watson 2008: 74).

Yiddish is no longer a vernacular, and is now used by many out of desire, rather than necessity (Shandler 2006: 24). The same is true for Irish: in Dublin, the primary language of communication is English, and under normal circumstances, there is no need to speak Irish. Therefore, when people do, it is by choice motivated by the desire to make a cultural statement.

8. CONCLUSION

In a recent ad for Carlsberg Lager, an Irish man, on holiday in a foreign country, is instructed to sing or dance, in a traditional Irish way. Finding himself unable to do either, he

⁸ Moreover, as recently as last year, six government departments, including the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht affairs were deemed to be in breach of legislation for the promotion of Irish (Siggins 2009).

dazzles his audience by performing a “poem” in Irish. The comedy lies in that what he actually says are simple sentences of the kind that children are taught in elementary school, such as *an bhfuil cead agam dul amach go dtí an leithris?* 'may I go to the toilet?'. This ad simultaneously acknowledges that most people do not have enough competence in Irish to speak spontaneously, and that the Irish language is as important a part of Irish culture as traditional music and dancing. State bodies will continue to provide services through Irish because the law requires them to do so. The legislated, as opposed to natural, use of the language is indicative of its postvernacular status. Private organizations and individuals will continue to use Irish because of its cultural appeal, and Irish used in this way is always self-conscious. This, together with the volume of discourse on Irish, and the government's engagement with it at a metadiscourse level, strengthens the case for Irish as a postvernacular.

If the goal of government really is to see working bilingualism in action, there must be less focus on the cultural value of Irish, and more on its pragmatic worth. On the other hand, it is perhaps the value of Irish as a cultural symbol that has helped it to survive. Legislation promoting Irish continues to be enacted because of the recognition of the language as a valuable cultural resource. If individuals and private companies choose not to use Irish in this way, the language will survive only in Gaeltachtaí (where numbers of speakers are steadily falling), government publications and among enthusiasts.

I have shown that working bilingualism does not exist in Dublin, and I have suggested that it will not unless people believe that it has a practical value. Nonetheless, the Irish language continues to survive, and is loved by many. Irish may have lost much of its real communicative value, but as a postvernacular language, it is perhaps more valuable than ever.

3,929 words

Appendix I - Survey

Section 1: Personal use of Irish

Question 4 requires a brief written response, for which spelling is unimportant. For all other questions in this section, please mark the relevant box.

1. Can you speak Irish?

- I can't speak Irish
- I know a few words
- I can say a few sentences
- I can make small talk in Irish
- I can hold a full conversation in Irish, about day-to-day matters
- I am a fluent speaker

2. If you know more than a few words, do you speak Irish:

- Every day?
- 2-3 times per week?
- Once a week?
- Once a fortnight?
- Less frequently?
- I never speak Irish.

3. When speaking English, do you ever use any of the following words or expressions? (Please choose as many as are applicable)

- slán
- cad é an scéal
- sláinte
- craic
- maith thú

4. Are there any other Irish words or expressions that you use when speaking English?

5. If you are not a fluent speaker, would you like to improve your Irish?

- Yes
- No

Section 2: Use of Irish in the public domain

To complete this section, please circle one of the options, “Agree”, “Neither agree nor disagree”, “Disagree”.

6. Irish should be a compulsory subject at primary school level:

- Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

7. Irish should be a compulsory subject at secondary school level:

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

8. Irish should be one of the official languages of Ireland:

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

9. The government should actively promote the use of Irish in day-to-day life:

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

10. Government documents should be available in both Irish and English:

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

11. Signs and notices in public places should be displayed in both Irish and English:

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

12. It is important for government documents to be correctly translated into Irish:

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

13. It is important for signs and notices in public places to display the correct Irish translation:

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

14. Government documents are probably correctly translated into Irish:

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

15. Signs and notices in public places probably display the correct Irish translation:

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

16. The Irish language is a necessary part of Irish culture:

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

17. It is useful to be able to speak Irish:

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

18. Speaking Irish is a way of expressing Irishness:

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

Section 3: Demographic Information

Are you:

Female

Male

What is your age bracket?

- 18-25
- 26-40
- 40-55
- 55 +

What level of education have you completed?

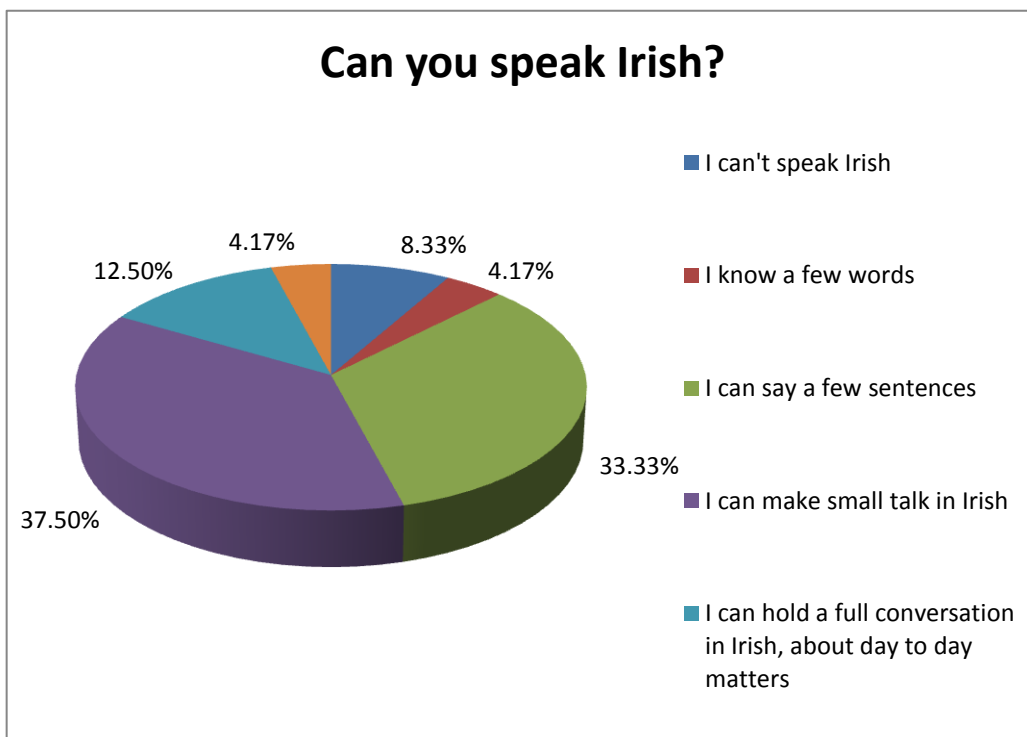
- Junior Certificate
- Leaving Certificate
- Post Leaving Cert qualification
- Third level qualification
- Master's Degree
- PhD

Appendix II – Results

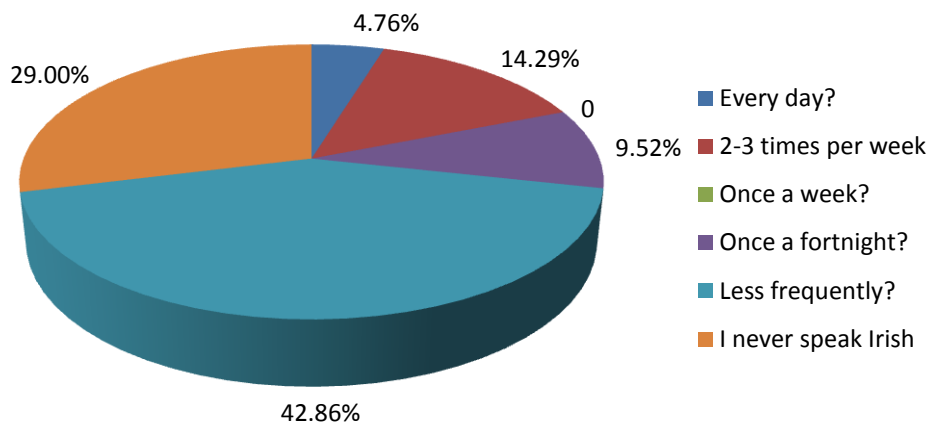
The results of the attitudinal survey are presented below. Data are included here that were not presented in the main body of this paper; due to space restrictions, the data in the main body are those considered most pertinent to the issue under discussion. While the data below are also interesting, and relevant, they were not included there as they did not directly affect the discussion.

In answer to question 4, the most common responses were:

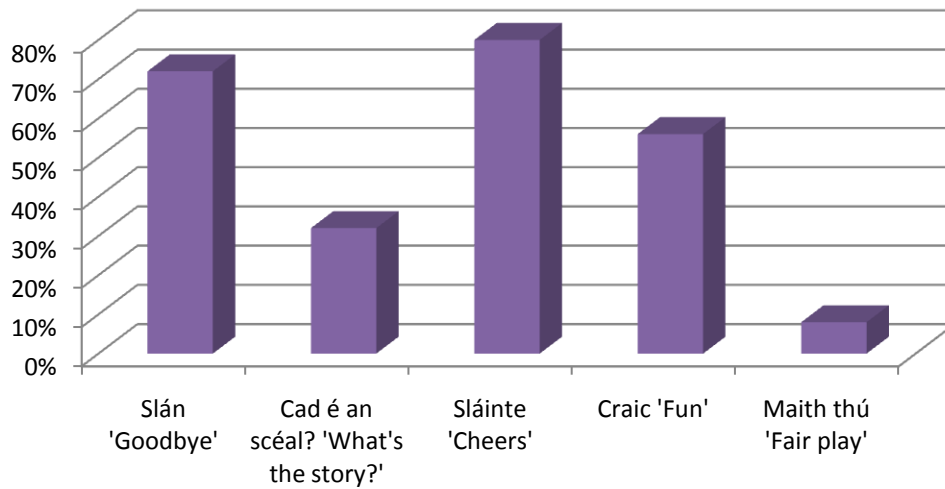
- *Tóg go bog é* ‘Take it easy’
- *Go h-iontach* ‘Brilliant’
- *Conas atá tú?* ‘How are you?’
- *Go raibh maith agat* ‘Thank you’



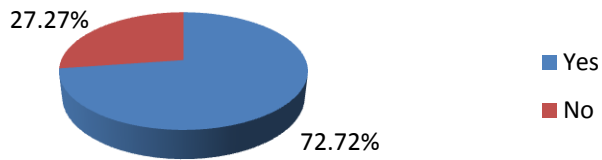
If you know more than a few words, do you speak Irish:



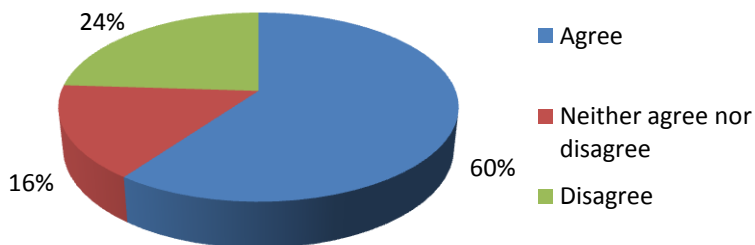
When speaking English, do you ever use any of the following words or expressions?



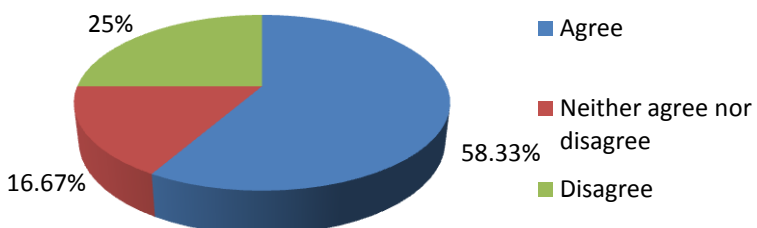
If you are not a fluent speaker, would you like to improve your Irish?



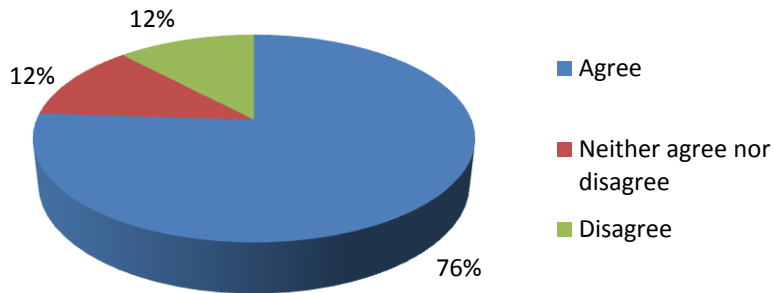
Irish should be a compulsory subject at primary school level



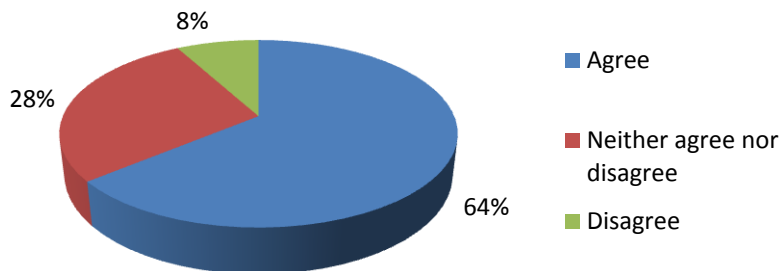
Irish should be a compulsory subject at secondary school level



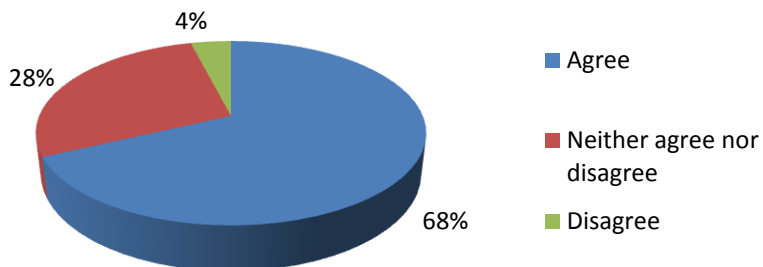
Irish should be one of the official languages of Ireland



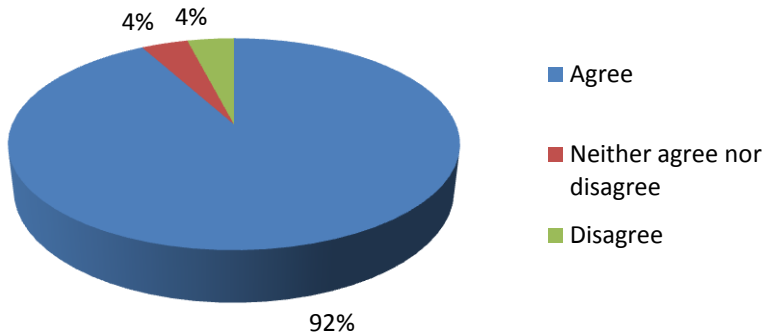
The government should actively promote the use of Irish in day-to-day life



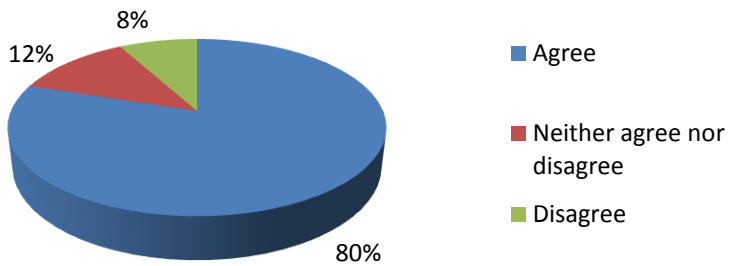
Government documents should be available in both Irish and English



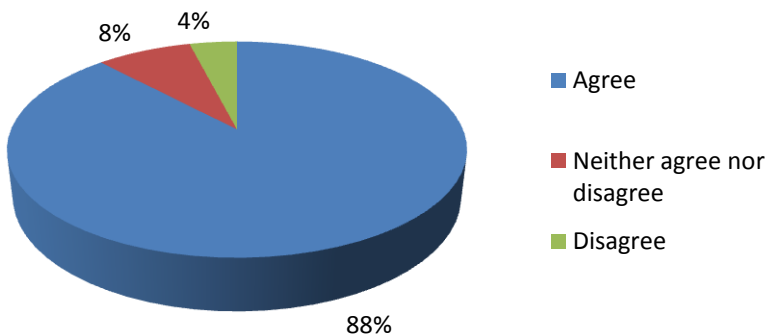
Signs and notices in public places should be displayed in both Irish and English



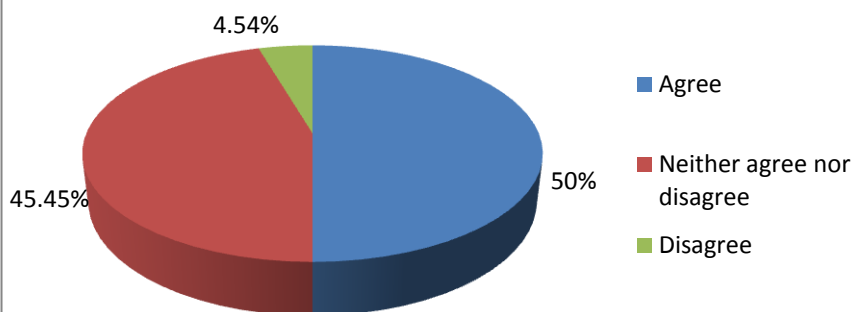
It is important for government documents to be correctly translated into Irish



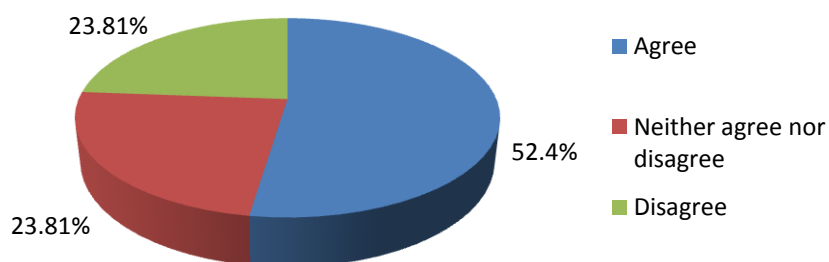
It is important for signs and notices in public places to display the correct Irish translation



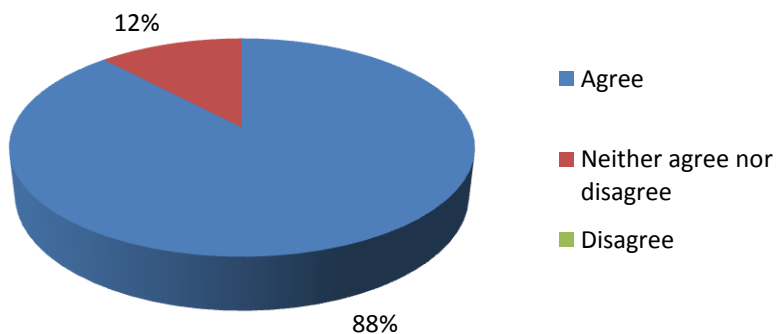
Government documents are probably correctly translated into Irish



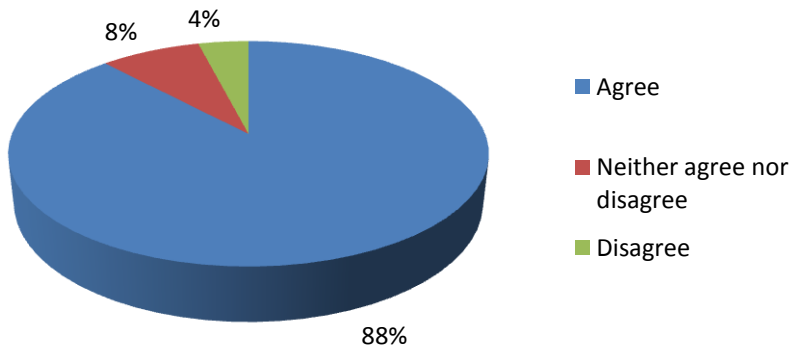
Signs and notices in public places probably display the correct Irish translation



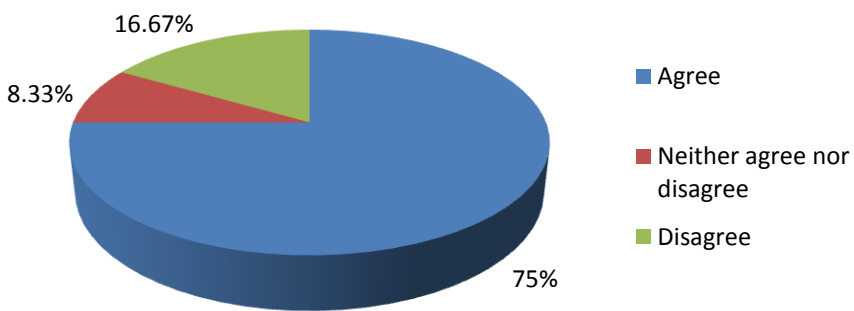
The Irish language is a necessary part of Irish culture



Speaking Irish is a way of expressing Irishness



It is useful to be able to speak Irish



Appendix III – Bilingual signs

The images below are a sample of those taken at different locations across Dublin, in which mismatches were noted between the Irish- and English-language information displayed on signs and notices. Where errors were noted, it is important to take into account that, although some, such as spelling, may seem only minor, no comparable error was observed in the equivalent English-language information.



Image 1 shows a motorway sign in County Dublin. Although all information is displayed in both English and Irish, the Irish is more difficult for motorists to read, by virtue of being smaller and italicized (Reil 2008). Furthermore, the translation of *airport* is misspelled: the correct spelling is <aerfort>.

Image 1

All signs at tram stations display the station name bilingually. No other information at stations is available in Irish.



a

Image 2



Image 3

A bilingual sign in Tesco. As Tesco is a private company, it is not required by law to display bilingual signage, and does so by choice. *Baby Accessories*, however, is translated incorrectly into Irish. *Bia Oiriúintí* roughly translates as 'Accessory Food'. The correct Irish translation would be *Oiriúintí Naíonán*.



Image 4a

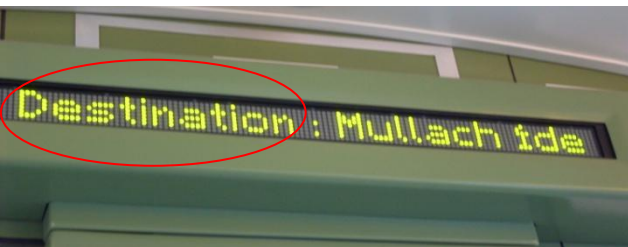


Image 4b



Image 4c

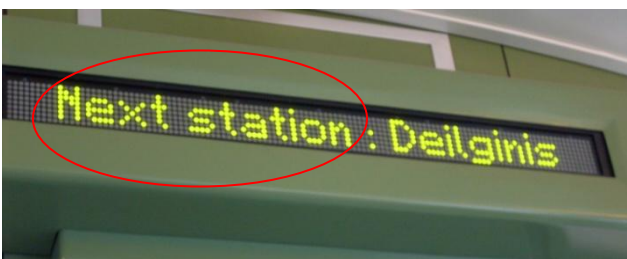


Image 4d

Electronic signs on the DART, informing commuters of the destination of the train and the next station. While care has been taken to translate all station names into Irish, no Irish equivalent of *destination* or *next station* is displayed. *Ceann scríbe* is the Irish for 'destination'. *Céad stáisiún eile* is the Irish for 'next station'.



Image 5a



Image 5b

English and Irish versions of a *No Smoking* sign on the DART. The word for *train* is misspelt in the Irish version, image 5b: the correct spelling is <traein>, not <traen>, as it is displayed in the second line of black text. Furthermore, while *illegal* is highlighted in the English version, image 5a, in 5b, only *aghaidh* 'against' is highlighted. It would be more appropriate to highlight *in aghaidh an dlí* 'against the law'; thus, the same information would be emphasized in both languages.

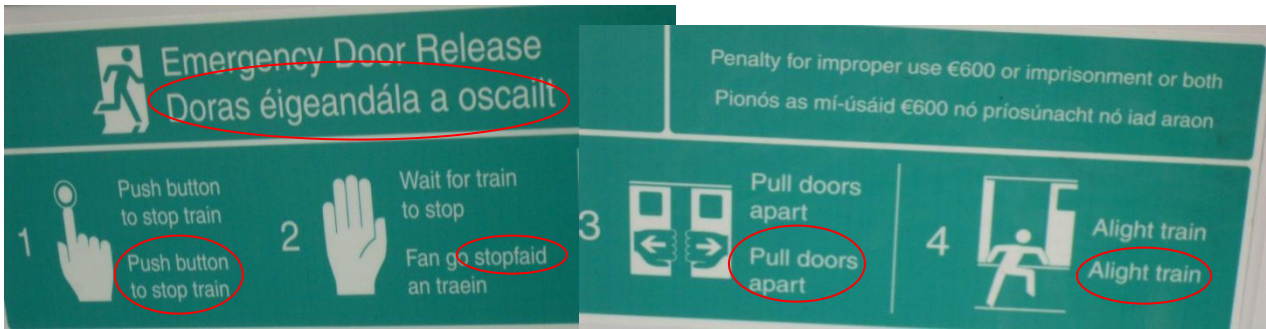


Image 6

Image 6 (taken in two halves) is a striking example of inaccurate translation. To begin with, as per the OLA, the Irish information should be displayed above the English. *Emergency Door Release* is incorrectly translated: the correct Irish translation for this expression is *Doras Éalaithe a Scaoileadh*. The translation provided, *Doras éigeandála a oscailt*, is a direct translation of the English *to open emergency door*. In Irish, this expression is meaningless. In point 2, English *Wait for train to stop*, there is an incorrect spelling in the Irish translation, where final *h* has been omitted from *stopfaidh*. Finally, in points 1,3 and 4, the English information is repeated, and no Irish translation is provided at all.



Image 7a



Image 7b

Street signs at different locations on Dublin's Grafton Street, the principle shopping street in the city. Image 7b displays the correct translation: *Sráid Grafton*. It is likely that the misspelling in image 7a <Ghrafton>, is due to the fact that when found in genitive case, as *Ghrafton* is here, Irish words undergo initial lenition. However, foreign words are exempt from this overt case-marking, and Dublin City Council recognizes only <Grafton> as the correct spelling in both English and Irish (Dublin City Council 2004).

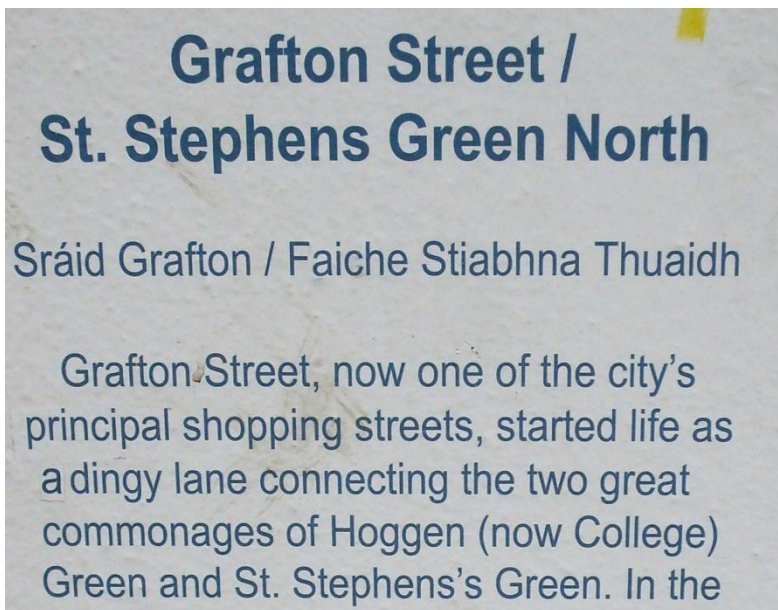


Image 8

Historical information displayed at this information point is available only in English.

Nevertheless, the name of the area, *Grafton Street/ St. Stephen's Green North* is displayed bilingually.



Image 9a



Image 9b

These two signs may be found directly opposite each other on Dublin's William Street South. The translation in 9b is correct. In 9a, the Irish translation reads *McWilliams Place South*.

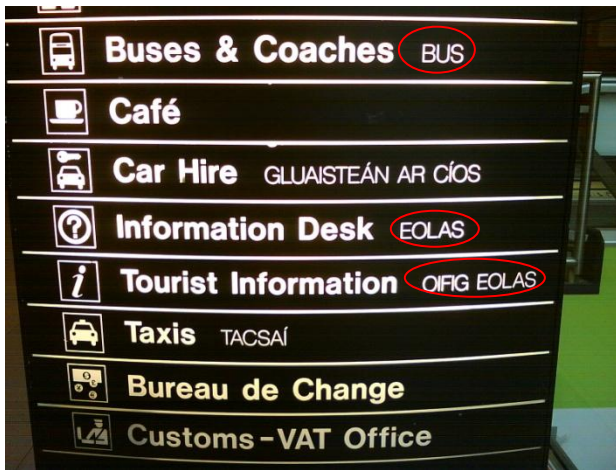


Image 10a



Image 10b



Image 10c

These three images are taken from one information point at Dublin Airport. Note that, in images 10b and 10c, *Mezzanine (This Floor)*, *Departures (Next Floor Down)* and *Arrivals (Two Floors Down)* are not translated into Irish. The errors in images 10a, b and c are reproduced, and corrected, below:

English	Irish translation displayed	Correct Irish translation
Buses & Coaches	Bus bus.SG 'Bus'	Bus-anna agus Cóist-í bus-PL and coach-PL 'Buses and Coaches'
Information Desk	Eolas-Ø information-NOM 'Information'	Deasc Eolais desk information.GEN 'Information desk'
Tourist Information	Oifig Eolas-Ø office information-NOM 'Information office'	Eolas-Ø Thurasóir-eachta information-NOM AGR\tourist-GEN 'Tourist information'
Restaurants	Bialann restaurant.SG 'Restaurant'	Bialann-a restaurant-PL 'Restaurants'
Shopping	Siopa shop.SG 'Shop'	Siopa-dóireacht shop-PROG 'Shopping'
Ticket Sales	Ticéid ticket.PL.GEN 'Of tickets'	Díolacháin Ticéid sale.PL ticket.PL.GEN 'Ticket sales'

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