

## Introduction

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Language and translation in Ireland appear to be in good form in the first decade of the twenty-first century. However, as they are both experiencing social and cultural changes on a vast scale, they have to exercise hard to keep in shape and maintain a graceful sinuosity. In a recent survey entitled *Language Use and Attitudes in Ireland* (2009), undertaken between 2006 and 2008 by the linguist Raymond Hickey, language, even if it is not a 'battlefield' of identity as it used to be in the previous centuries, however remains a powerful 'site of identity'.

Although the number of native speakers of Irish represents only a small fraction of the whole population of Ireland, Hickey has demonstrated that the Irish language continues to play a crucial role in determining attitudes to English in Ireland. The results of Hickey's survey reach some interesting conclusion from a sociolinguistic point of view. First, the great majority of Irish people still regard the language issue as central to the history and culture of Ireland. Second, there is a widespread concern about the Irish language and about the institutions that support it. This support is shown in the desire for concrete measures, especially that Irish must be studied as a compulsory subject in school. Finally, the Irish people "are aware of their own variety of the English language" as different from other varieties of English, revealing "their own linguistic identity which is unique to this country" (8).

Language and especially translation in their broader social, cultural and philosophical implications were the topics of an interview given by Michael Cronin to Cliona Ní Ríordáin in 2010. Michael Cronin, in *Translating Ireland. Translation, Languages, Culture* (1996), was among the first scholars, together with Maria Tymoczko in *The Irish 'Ulysses'* (1994) and *Translation in a Postcolonial Context* (1999) and Declan Kiberd in *Inventing Ireland* (1996), to focus attention on translation and postcolonialism in the specific Irish context. In discussing how the role of translation was crucial in the linguistic and political battle between the Irish and the English, Cronin maintained that Irish translators, at different times in Irish history, have served the interest of both coloniser and colonised. Thus, he revealed the importance of an 'internal colonialism' within Europe itself and demonstrated how the postcolonial power relations within translation do not only operate on the North-South or East-West divide of the world, as Jeremy Munday explains in *Introducing Translation Studies. Theories and Applications* (2012 [2001], 138).

However, Cronin makes clear that in the twenty-first century things have profoundly changed since the publication of *Translating Ireland*. After the strong wave of immigration during the Celtic Tiger era, linguistic diversity came to the

fore when Ireland started to be in contact with the new migrant communities. This new situation is characterised by what Cronin calls “intrinsic alterity”, the perception that language difference is at home in Ireland: “in the corner shop, the house next door, the person sitting beside you in the lecture theatre”. Intrinsic alterity is opposed to the old “extrinsic alterity” (Cronin, Ní Ríordáin 2010, 26), the peoples and languages the Irish migrant found in his new destinations.

This emphasis on multilingual reality has two pragmatic consequences but also implies an important philosophical viewpoint. First, the emergence of the need to deal with linguistic difference in terms of translating and interpreting services in the health service, in the education and in the legal systems. Second, the many languages spoken in Ireland today relativise of the position of English and Irish. Thus, English or Irish becomes only one language among many others. Most importantly, multilingualism and migration has also favoured the creation of transnational language communities in the country and the peculiarity of these communities is that they “bi-locate” (27), i.e., that they occupy both the physical space that they inhabit, and the virtual space on the Internet, where they are emailing, texting, skypeing and so on.

Cronin sees such consequences as the result of globalisation, which can have two types of response, one centripetally and the other centrifugally. The centripetal response is to be found in a typical Google interface, where you can have a literal translation of a text written in some ‘standard Anglophone syntax’ in any language. This basic tendency is always centripetal, aiming to standardisation and homogenisation. The centrifugal, which is driven by a search for identity in global settings, contemplates instead the use of technology to “contrast surface diversity of language substitution with content-driven diversity involving language difference” (28). According to the author, this may be facilitated, for example, by the use of Skype, which enables a transnational linguistic community to be constituted and it is of much more help than translating iPhone instructions into whatever languages are spoken by iPhone customers. It is interesting that the same two forces, one toward simplification, the other toward the complexity of diversity, may be detected even in academic translation programmes. Cronin highlights that undergraduate and graduate translation programmes have been established in Ireland since 1982. The first Master’s programme at the National Institute for Higher Education Dublin, which was to become DCU, was created in response to the translation needs of European Union membership and economic integration. The Master’s programme at NUI Galway and in Queen’s University Belfast, concentrated instead on English-Irish translation and responded to the translation needs resulting from the implementation of the Official Languages Act (2007).

Cronin warns us that translators must always remember that sometimes translation can endanger the specificity and otherness of languages. In fact, he claims that “translation like any other human phenomenon is multiple and contains genuinely creative and progressive forces but it also contains within it forces that are limiting and disabling” (31). For him, a tendency to explicitation and simplification, a use of a controlled language and a limited lexicon can lead to “the potential for universal banality” (31) and to an easy notion of translatability, according to the principle that “underneath every successful MacDo is the fact of translatability and translatedness” (32).

In order to resist banality and easy translatability, Cronin returns to the old archetype for translation as voyage. As he maintains in *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* (2000), the voyage involves the 'movement outwards', which broadens the space of the hero's experience through communication with the Other, and the 'movement inwards', which allows the hero to bring the foreign into his own native language and culture. However, when the hero, like Ulysses or Brian Friel's Owen in *Translations* gets back into the community, "he is aware that he has been unsettled by his wandering and that on his return he is an unsettling presence" (32). Nonetheless, when the hero comes back 'home', he brings something back through translation, which allows him to evolve and acquire wisdom, to enrich the life of the community after the trials and tribulations of his journey out. He can thus resist both the prejudices and the common places of where he came from, as well as those of the hosting place.

The nine contributions published in this volume represent a 'form of resistance' against the banality that might arise from any discussion on language and translation in Ireland. Each of them gives us original and challenging insights on various topics, ranging from the historical development of the varieties of English in Ireland, to corpus-based analyses of both divisive terminology in Northern Ireland and the representation of women in the Irish press; from the language of poetry in globalised Ireland and Irish poetry translation into Italian, to the adaptation/re-writing of classics in contemporary Irish drama.

Mariavita Cambria explores the case of Ireland as an *ante-litteram* postcolonial context. Within this context, her main concern is that of the relationship between language and identity. She deals in details with how identity is problematically renegotiated through language in the light of Spivak's and Stuart Hall's ideas of subalternity and of the speaker's position. Moreover, she shows how Irish English, the variety of English spoken in Ireland, enjoys a unique position within the constellation of world-wide English varieties. Irish English may have developed a resistance to the (contrasting) forces of colonialism and has been perceived as a different vehicle for communication when compared to received colonial English. Scholars now generally believe that Irish people, at a certain moment in time, decided to use a language which offered better possibilities for work. Via the analysis of some postcolonial issues, such as the linguistic crisis of the colonial subject, Cambria first illustrates the circumstances that led to the emergence of Irish English, and then outlines the main features of this variety.

In her essay Maureen Murray shows how in Northern Ireland terminology has become a veritable minefield due to its longstanding ethno-political conflict. Murray's corpus-based linguistic analysis conducted on various English-language publications from Nationalist/Republican, Unionist/Loyalist and explicitly non-sectarian political perspectives, aims at studying contentious terminology in Northern Ireland, focusing specifically on certain place names which, according to Mona Baker in *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (2005), can effectively be described as 'rival systems of naming'. The terms in Murray's study is limited to 'Londonderry', 'Northern Ireland', and 'the Republic of Ireland' and their variations. These variations include 'Derry', and 'Derry/Londonderry'; and 'Ulster', 'the Six Counties', 'the North (of Ireland)'; and 'Eire', 'the South (of Ireland)', 'Irish Republic', 'Free State', and 'the 26 Counties', respectively. Murray

views such terminological differences as linguistic aspects of the Northern Ireland conflict and supports the idea that language in Northern Ireland has become a war zone unto itself. Moreover, she wants to show how the use of geographical terminology pertaining to the Northern Ireland conflict has changed over time and across the ethno-political divide. Murray's final goal is in fact to determine if the relative peace throughout the last fifteen years has resulted in lesser use of politically charged place names among the main actors in the Northern Ireland conflict, namely the Republicans and Unionists within Northern Ireland itself. Her work is therefore interesting not only from an exclusively linguistic standpoint, but also for those involved in Peace and Conflict Studies, Sociolinguistics, and Critical Toponymies.

In "The Portrayal of Women's Contribution to Irish Society Through a Sample from the Irish Press", María Martínez Lirola conducts a very accomplished and original corpus-based analysis in an attempt to show how Corpus Linguistics (CL) can be a powerful complementary tool to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Her intention is to cover the representation of womanhood in the Irish press from 2006 to 2012 and her corpus comprises all the texts dealing with women, from January 1 to 31 December of four years within this time range, taken from one of the main Irish broadsheet newspapers: *The Irish Independent*. The research database she has employed to compile the corpus is LexisNexis Academic, and, for the purposes of this research, she has applied Teun van Leeuwen's social actor network model, proposed in *Discourse and Practice. New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis* (2008). Her conclusion is that equality between women and men both during the Celtic Tiger and in the post-Celtic Tiger period is far from being achieved in terms of power, visibility, salary, assumption of command, and so on. Therefore, according to Martínez Lirola, feminism must keep questioning the patriarchal system, which is responsible for women's condition in Ireland, and must denounce the unfair reality that surrounds women in the Emerald Isle.

Benjamin Keatinge's essay considers how contemporary Irish poets have responded to the changing socio-economic realities of Irish life since 1990. He states that several Irish poets have written persuasively about the dangers of consumerism and, in order to do so, they use the language of marketplace and the vocabulary of contemporaneity, which they usually satirise. According to Keatinge, political and social satire has enjoyed something of a revival in Irish poetry recently and one of the characteristics of good satire is to use the vocabulary of received ideas in order to mock those same ideas. At the same time, globalisation and the modern economy have led to profound transformations in lifestyles and these poets have had to find a language to describe new modes of existence, reflecting the globalised social reality in the twenty-first century. Through an examination of themes such as work, consumerism, the encroachment of cyber-space and changing urban lifestyles, Keatinge demonstrates how Irish poets have risen to the challenge of finding a language to capture what Zygmunt Bauman terms "liquid modernity". Therefore, the late Dennis O'Driscoll, Rita Ann Higgins, Peter Sirr, as well as Billy Ramsell, Kevin Higgins and Iggy McGovern, provide excellent examples of how poets can turn the language of globalisation into a critique of globalisation's economic hegemony.

In her analysis of a volume of Pearse Hutchinson's poetry translated into Italian and published by Trauben in 1999, *L'anima che baciò il corpo*, Debora Biancheri proposes what Lawrence Venuti in *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (1998) would call a "minoritising project" (11). While, on the one hand, the textual analysis of single poems reveals distinctive traits and peculiarities of each translation, on the other, it highlights translation norms which are typically used in relation to poetry as a genre. Biancheri observes that the translation strategy used in these poems is one that articulates a manifest 'mediation' of the source text. She aptly concludes that in the case of Irish poetry translation, in neat contrast to what happens within the domain of fiction, difference must be paradoxically accepted as a necessary step to create a condition of equality between two cultures, thus allowing difference and sameness to exist simultaneously.

Ciaran McDonough's contribution investigates the conflicted cultural identity of those Irish-speaking antiquarians working on translations of Old Irish texts. Giving voice to the translators, McDonough shows how these translators were frustrated in attempts to turn their knowledge into authority by being members of the Catholic Gaelic Irish in a country dominated by the Protestant Ascendancy. In particular, she focuses on the works of John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry, the greatest and most prolific scholars of Irish in the nineteenth century. They worked for the topographical department of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland founded in the early 1830s, and were responsible for an exceptionally large number of transcriptions and translations of Old Irish manuscripts. McDonough reveals how the translators felt when they were accused of carrying out the Anglicisation of Ireland's literary heritage. In fact, their translations into English for the Anglophone world were considered as a participation in the erasure of their own language, traditions and their ancient world.

In "Brian Friel as Linguist, Brian Friel as Drama Translator" Monica Randaccio demonstrates how linguistic and translation issues have always been Friel's main concerns. The language question in Ireland is investigated in its multi-faceted implications. In particular, she analyses Tom Paulin's *A New Look at the Language Question* (1985), one of the earliest pamphlets produced within the Field Day activities, as it deals with some language topics which Friel dramatises in *Translations* (1980). Randaccio then shows how Friel becomes a drama translator in his earliest Russian play, *Three Sisters* (1981). According to the drama translation theorist Sirkku Aaltonen in *Time-Sharing on Stage. Drama Translation in Theatre and Society* (2000), any theatre production is tied to the time and place of its audience, metaphorically described as "the time and place of the occupancy" (47). Thus, translation of a foreign dramatic text, as well as its production, represents a reaction to the Other when it is chosen for a performance in another culture. Randaccio analyses Friel's *Three Sisters* and the strategies adopted in his translation as the 'Irish reaction' to Chekhov's Russia.

Seamus Heaney's *The Cure at Troy* (1990) and *The Burial at Thebes* (2004), two adaptations of Sophocles's *Philoctetes* and *Antigone* are discussed in Emanuela Zirzotti's essay "Translating Tragedy: Seamus Heaney's Sophoclean Plays". These two plays are representative of contemporary Irish authors' interest in appropriating the Greek and Roman classical tradition both as a source of inspiration and as a means of redefining the nature of Irishness through a constant confrontation with 'Otherness'.

Zirzotti demonstrates that translation and adaptation are the favoured approaches to the ancient texts, which often become metaphors for the Northern Irish political situation. Thus, in the *Cure at Troy* Philoctes seems to share with Heaney himself that feeling of “in-betweenness”, of occupying a halfway position between the allegiance to his community and the loyalty to his role as a poet. In *The Burial at Thebes* Heaney’s necessity to give public expression to his involvement in certain dynamics of contemporary politics seems to be superseded by the urge to adhere to a greater textual strictness. Both plays, however, help to legitimise the poet’s private voice, i.e., to defend the originality of his art and to affirm his identity as a poet. Heaney’s approach to Greek tragedy therefore represents an essential element to understand his “composite” Irishness, an identity that transcends geographical boundaries and political ideology.

Loredana Salis in “The root of all evil”: Frank McGuinness’ Translations of Greek Drama” shows how Frank Guinness is also one of those Irish authors who have been attracted by the myths of ancient Greece either for political propagandistic reasons, or to bring back to life tales of heroes and heroines in order to make them distinctively local and contemporary. Field Day’s contributions undoubtedly represent a typical instance of the former approach to classics, whereas McGuinness’s use of Greek myths help the playwright to reflect upon questions that are not exclusively Irish. Salis convincingly locates McGuinness’s translations of Sophocles and Euripides at the crossroads between the local and the global and at the search for what he calls “the root of all evil” with special attention to his *Oedipus* (2008) and *Helen* (2009). In McGuinness’s plays, however, there is no condemnation of Oedipus because what happened to him may well happen to anyone and in *Helen* there is the unsettling discovery that gods are fooling with us. The playwright invites us to reflect on responsibility and trust and, though he has Northern Ireland in mind, his language, which articulates intolerance and a deeply-felt sense of racial superiority, does not pertain exclusively to the Greek or Northern Ireland contexts, but expresses discursive practices, which are seen in war contexts around the world.

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