Language Contact, Change of Language Status – 'Celtic' National Languages in the British Isles and Ireland

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> *Das Band der Zunge und des Ohrs knüpft ein Publikum. … Wer in derselben Sprache erzogen ward, wer sein Herz in sie schütten, seine Seele in ihr ausdrücken lernte, der gehört zum Volk dieser Sprache.*
>
> Johann Gottfried Herder

1. Introduction

In a short but comprehensive account of the Irish language from the middle of the past century we learn:

> The coming of the Normans in the twelfth century marked a new era in the history of the Irish language, for with it began a political struggle which has lasted all but eight hundred years and which has in effect changed the people of Ireland from being Gaelic-speaking to being English-speaking (Ó Cuív 1951: 8).

Although this quote already gives away a lot of what I would like to point out later, I am of the opinion that the given topic involves quite a number of presuppositions of which I take the liberty to elaborate on first of all. However, before embarking upon what I have been engaged with, I would like to offer a few disclaimers. First, I do not propose to give a comprehensive account of the history of contact between Celtic languages and the English language. Brief excursuses should suffice in order to highlight (socio-)linguistic developments and societal facts.

Second, a paper on 'Celtic' national languages can be a sensitive affair. Accordingly, it is not my intention to polemicise about Irish or any other Celtic language. Still, in all regions concerned we do find monoglot English speakers who nevertheless see themselves as Cornish, Irish, Manx, Scottish or Welsh. These

monoglots constitute considerably large groups upon whom a stark statement, such as e.g. Welsh and Welsh only is the national language of Wales, can certainly have an alienating effect. The fact that we find monoglots as largest group strongly shows that Anglicisation has taken place, about which has been said with respect to Ireland:

> Die Iren haben – und das ist historisch bedingt – eine gewisse Scheu zuzugeben, daß etwas in ihrer Kultur englisch ist, wobei jedoch jede Deanglisierungstendenz gerade englische Elemente in der irischen Kultur voraussetzt[1] (Rockel 1989: 10).

I believe Rockel's comment, which, by the way, supports my opinion that the given discussion can only be satisfactorily attempted by neutral bystanders, is not only true for Ireland, but could be generalised for every linguistic situation in which the outcome is one with major and minor languages/language use.

The third and last disclaimer is about what triggered my interest. Obviously, I wanted to tackle this subject because of personal observations, but in the end it was more my discontentment with how the notion of 'national language' is used in general as well as in linguistic contexts out of which this paper arose. According to these disclaimers, my paper will have the following scope. I will, first, introduce and discuss relevant notions, such as 'nation' and 'national language'. This brief summary is meant to throw some light on prominent interpretations and theses of the concepts mentioned, and it is hoped that this will provide further insights. After that I will give a short outline of the several situations that we find across Britain and Ireland. All of that which will follow thereafter tackles the national language question across the given regions, treating Ireland in most detail. Finally, I hope my conclusions are able to open up more prospective views than those which are enshrined in the following sayings:

> a) Bret.: *Hep brezhoneg, breizh ebet.* 'Without Breton, no Brittany.'
> b) Corn.: *Den heb tavas a-gollas a dyr.* 'A man without a language has lost his country.'
> c) IrG: *Tír gan teanga tír gan anam.* 'A nation without language is a nation without a soul.'
> d) MxG: *Gyn chengey, gyn cheer.* 'Without language, without country.'
> e) ScG: *Tir gun teanga, tir gun anam.* 'A nation without language is a nation without a soul.'
> f) W: *Cenedl heb iaith, cenedl heb galon.* 'A nation without a language is a nation without a heart' (adopted from Gregor 1980: v).

Their (quite hopelessly) retrogressive feel seems typical of Romanticist views, but does not appear to be of any help in the present era of globalisation, since this is the context within which we have to ask the question suggested by this paper's title. With globalisation advancing ever more, questioning about nations, about national language(s) does not even appear up-to-date any more: "[N]ationalism and nations have fulfilled their functions and are now becoming obsolete in an

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[1] "The Irish – and this is historically conditioned – have inhibitions about admitting that there is something English in their culture, but any deanglicising tendency obviously presupposes English elements in Irish culture" (translation G. Wolf).

era of globalization" (Smith 2001: 92). Yet, all sorts of transnational or international political as well as economical unions do not seem to make people forget about what history and will have made of them. Therefore, I believe globalisation as a fairly strong deregionalising and detraditionalising force does not equal emasculation of nations, of national identities, of national beliefs. Thus, the question I would like to raise is still valid. Although we are living in what is sometimes called 'global village,' we are still aware of who we are and where we belong to. More so, we still want to be who we are and where we are from. In this respect, nations give authenticity. They still appear to dominate political thinking. So it only seems natural to ask how Celtic nations could see themselves within a globalising world, how they could make themselves heard as nations in the literal meaning of the latter predicate. To say it again, as globalisation advances, national or regional or local identity seems more and more important, and it is noteworthy that, in my view, the contact of Celtic languages and English has resulted in, at least, potentially new forms that can provide Celtic identity. Before proceeding, I would like to add that this paper is somewhat a showcase of the paradox. Of course, any contact situation is by nature unique, yet, the situations we find with regards to Celtic languages are each paradoxically unique and uniquely paradoxical.

2. Conceptual Clarifications

Although the nation-language nexus has been called into question (cf. Hutchinson 1987: 9), there is a general (scholarly as well as lay) agreement about the importance of language for national identity. In his essential discussion about ambiguities and obscurities of the concepts 'dialect,' 'language' and 'nation,' Haugen came up with an almost chauvinistic imperative:

> Every self-respecting nation has to have a language. Not just a medium of communication, a 'vernacular' or a 'dialect,' but a fully developed language. Anything less marks it as underdeveloped (Haugen 1966: 927).

In a less demanding tone, Fishman also considers language "a defining characteristic of a nationality," but concedes that "[t]he ideological pinnacle of language nationalism is not reached until language is clearly pictured as *more* crucial than the other symbols and expressions of nationality" (Fishman 1972: 49). More recently and more generally, we read that "Nationalism is the doctrine that requires the congruence between the political and the cultural (ethnic) group. The motto of modernity is one state, one culture" (Llobera 2004: 84). Even if relevant terminology is well-rendered in the above statements, more conceptual aspects shall be taken up at this point because of the complexity of all involved conceptions and because of the complexity of each contact situation discussed here.

This paper takes the important idea of 'nation' for granted. This concept as well as related ideas have been subject of essential studies from a wide range of scholarly fields, such as anthropology, history, politics or, obviously, linguistics. As usual, if there is a large body of research on an issue, one cannot help noticing minor discrepancies and inconsistencies between single contributions which might prevent us from a straightforward application of ideas. On the other hand, specialist dictionaries, by nature, have to be concise and have to give us quick access to complex issues, and yet, their poignant observations leave out important signification oftentimes too rashly. If we, for instance, apply Trudgill's concept of a 'national language' – "A language which functions as the main language of a nation state" (2003: 91) –, this paper's discussion would have already come to its end. Thus, I should like to recapitulate a number of attempts to pin down terminology.

As a highly abstract unit, a nation is, first of all, in Anderson's terms, "imagined" (1991). It is imagined because of one simple truism:

> [T]he members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (*ibid*., 6).

Nations are not only imagined communities at one point in time, they are historically constituted communities, too. Therefore "[a] nation is by its nature a transgenerational entity" (Shils 1995: 100). This historicity of a nation confirms Hobsbawm's well-known postulate that "the real 'nation' can only be recognized *a posteriori*" (1990: 9; Hobsbawm's italics). Accordingly, Smith's summary will serve as a working definition for the time being:

> A nation can therefore be defined as a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members (1991: 14).

No matter what facet is stressed according to various contexts, I feel, it should not be underestimated that it is of importance to consider nations as aggregates of personal and communal will. Members of any nation have to have the will to imagine their national community, they have to have the will to accept their belonging to specific national territories, myths, histories, cultures, economical and legal units. This aspect is once again reinforced by Reichmann, who says:

> Betrachtet man Gegebenheiten des Typs 'Gemeinschaft,' 'Nationalsprache,' 'Volk' als genuin historisch, dann sind sie per definitionem Konstrukte, Entwürfe, Ideen, Bilder, Glaubensinhalte, Zielvorstellungen, Sinnstiftungen geschichtlich Handelnder; sie existieren nur, indem sie von einer Gruppe von Menschen als existent behauptet und behandelt werden[2] (Reichmann 2000: 420-421).

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[2]   "If one considers realities such as 'community,' 'national language,' 'people' as genuinely historical, these are *per definitionem* constructs, frameworks, ideas, images, beliefs, objectives,

To consider 'nationalism' is part and parcel of the discussion of 'nation,' since it is undisputed that the former created the latter (cf. e.g. Smith 2001: 92). What is more intriguing is to consider Fishman's distinction between 'nationalism' and 'nationism' (1968 b). By 'nationalism' or 'nationality-nationalism' Fishman understands "sociocultural integration" (*ibid.*, 40), i.e. a group is first and foremost constituted by a belief in ethnic, cultural and linguistic connections. By 'nationism' or 'nation-nationism' he means "politico-geographical integration" (*ibid.*, 41), i.e. a group attempts to form a collective identity though coming from disparate backgrounds. In an era of globalisation it seems sensible to stress the latter, because with increasing migratory movements even those regions, countries, states, which were once constituted by original nationalism will have to think about nationist strategies in order to be able to integrate new members into their national communities. Indirectly referring to this very problem, David Singleton voiced elsewhere that

> ... it seems that there may be up to 200,000 Poles, 100,000 Lithuanians and 85,000 Chinese currently living in Ireland. … There are, accordingly, almost certainly more native speakers of Polish in Ireland than native speakers of Irish. … Few of the immigrants in question, whether or not they intend to stay in Ireland, are likely to be interested in learning Irish as a second language. … The fact that significant numbers of individuals living and working in Ireland and in many cases identifying it as their home have no *entrée* into the Irish language or Gaelic culture is calling into question the traditional conceptualization of Irishness and the part played by the Irish language in that conceptualization (Singleton 2006).

Singleton's observation is met by the fact that at present one can download the 1916 Proclamation in Chinese and Polish from the Irish government's website, which all in all supports my objection here.

As mentioned above, I am discontent with how the term 'national language' or its German equivalent *Nationalsprache* are generally used and how their comprehensive definitions have been inaccurately applied outside scholarly discussions. In an authoritative handbook, we can read the following about *Nationalsprache*:

> a) *Standard* bzw. *Literatur-*, *Hoch-* oder *Schriftsprache* einer nationalen Sprach- und Kommunikationsgemeinschaft (unter Ausschluß von Dialekten und Soziolekten).
> b) Gesamtheit der historischen, regionalen, sozialen und funktionalen (situativen) *Varietäten* einer Sprache, die von einer Sprach- oder Kommunikationsgemeinschaft in der Epoche ihrer Herausbildung und Existenz als Nation gesprochen und geschrieben werden[3] (Ising 1987: 335).

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meaningful foundations of historically acting persons; these realities only exist, because people think of them as existing and treat them accordingly" (translation G. Wolf).

[3] "a) *Standard* or *literary language* of a national speech and communication community (excluding dialects and sociolects). b) Sum of all historical, regional, social and functional *varieties* of a language which are spoken and written by a speech and communication community during its stages of development and existence as a nation." (translation G. Wolf)

It is, above all, the notion of 'Kommunikationsgemeinschaft' that I would like to call attention to. It is with this accentuation that a national language has to be used habitually and extensively.

Approaching the term 'nationalist language,' which in my opinion should be strictly kept separate from 'national language,' a different authority establishes six sociolinguistic attributes for candidates of a 'nationalist' status:

  1) "symbol of national identity for a significant proportion of the population";
  2) "*widely* used for some *everyday* purposes";
  3) "*widely and fluently* spoken within the country";
  4) "no major alternative nationalist languages in the country";
  5) "*acceptable* as a symbol of authenticity";
  6) "link with the glorious past" (Fasold 1984: 77; my emphasis).

Even if more issues than those in italics are debatable – one could, for instance, ask who decides about acceptability and about wide usage –, these are meant to indicate that the matter will be taken up again later. For the time being, I would like to argue that I think all of the listed attributes to be attributes of languages with *national* status, since I prefer, as already stated, to distinguish between national and nationalist language. My slight criticism of Fasold is admittedly also triggered by another statement of his. In his 1988 publication, Fasold holds the opinion that "Irish seems to be serving the nation as a *national* language rather well" (1988: 184; Fasold's italics). Instantly, one familiar with Fasold's matrix would have to disagree: firstly, because with reference to the present state of Irish, a wide communication would not be possible; secondly, a statement such as this would exclude the majority of what has to be regarded the Irish nation. This cannot be denied because language and, in my opinion, a national language, *a fortiori*, has to serve as an "unverkennbares Band, welches alle Glieder einer Nation zu einer geistigen Gemeinschaft verknüpft"[4] (Böckh 1866: 304). My re-reading of Fasold's matrix is strengthened by the fact that Fasold's matrix is used to illustrate the *national* language function in another entry of the above-mentioned handbook (Ammon 1987: 256). The reason why I want to differentiate clearly between national languages and nationalist languages is their disparate connotational value. A language is a *nationalist* language, if it helps to support nationalist views, if it helps to implement nationalist concerns, if it helps to pursue nationality-nationalism. In anticipation of what I will come to later, the following quote is meant to illustrate further the argument just raised: "In a society which is fundamentally divided on political grounds, to learn or to speak Irish is perceived as an act which has political implications" (O'Reilly 2001: 83). It is precisely in this sense that a language has to be regarded nationalist. Contrariwise, the term 'national language' should be used neutrally to refer to that common language which is used habitually and natu-

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[4] Translation: "unmistakeable band which ties together all members of a nation into a spiritual and mental community" (G. Wolf).

rally as an all-purpose medium of communication by all members of a national community and which produces solidarity amongst those members and characterises those members as belonging to their national unit. This appeal to neutrality finds its corroboration in the following:

> It is always a mistake to treat languages in the way that certain nationalist ideologues treat them – as *emblems* of nation-ness, like flags, costumes, folk-dances, and the rest. Much the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect *particular solidarities* (Anderson 1991: 133; Anderson's italics).

And it is with this in mind that we have to read simple observations, such as the one given by Safran who rightly states that "for most Dubliners, life in the city is interpreted in English rather than Irish Gaelic" (1999: 87).

3. Contact Situations – a Brief Outline

Of course, there exists an extensive, albeit not exhaustive, body of research on language contact(s) in Britain and Ireland. As stated above, it is not my aim to contribute new data. Instead, I would like to provide readings of what we find in research literature with regard to the national language issue. One generalization which holds true for all regions in question is that nowhere English made inroads into Celtic areas as a language dominating with immediate effect. Everywhere single events decided about the overall outcome that the indigenous Celtic languages retreated in one way or another. On such historical, societal and other decisive event I will not hold forth, however. Anyone interested in getting to know these particular events is referred to the larger number of detailed studies whose help in forming ideas of the present paper is acknowledged. Another generalisation is that any language contact between Celtic languages and English has resulted in some form of bilingualism. If there are any monolinguals, they have been attested to be isolated elderly or children (e.g. MacKinnon 2000: 49). So in all cases, the (national) Celtic language is carried by bilingual minorities, which must be a serious drawback for any language and can surely become an insurmountable hurdle, if a language wants to be considered a national language. At this point, brief descriptions shall clarify under which conditions these bilingual minorities came into being.

In Cornwall, the story of language contact is one of clear decline, extinction and historically predictable revival (cf. Wakelin 1991: 200). Interestingly, the revival of Cornish is said to have been already "fairly predictable" when it was dying (*ibid.*). Linguistic outcomes are, for instance, mutual lexical influences (*ibid.*: 202) and, not to forget, the evident phonological interrelationship between the two languages upon whose grounds twentieth-century pronunciation of Western Cornwall English was considered a guide to that of Late Cornish (cf. Payton 2000: 117).

Ireland's history of language contact can be described by initially being unrivalled, loss of social standing, resurrection, weakening of standard, missing standardization tendencies, institutional polarization and collective shift (cf. Rockel 1989: 63-86). The recent situation up to the present has been dubbed one of "benign neglect" (O'Reilly 2001: 81). So, Ireland has, it seems, experienced the prototypical contact situation: a superior colonizing language dominates an inferior colonized language. Research, however, clearly shows that this has not been the case. Although English played no doubt a crucial role, it is no exaggeration to assume that up to 1700 Irish enjoyed superior standing (cf. Hickey 1995: 112). Irish was still dominant throughout the eighteenth century, "[a]s late as the year 1800 it is thought that more than half the population of Ireland still spoke Irish" (Mac Mathúna 1990 b: 65).

As is inevitable, language contact between Irish and English resulted in language shift. Language shift proceeded gradually and has been described as transition from Irish only via Irish and English, later English and Irish to English only (cf. Ó Cuív 1951: 27). I hold Ó Cuív's observation not only applicable as a model for the language shift of Ireland's speech community; a modified variation is also viable for Ireland's national language question, which I will expand on later. Relevant studies give us sufficient proof of the mutual influences between Irish and English. Some of them will be revisited in slight detail at a different point in this paper, in order to illustrate how Irish has shaped an English language complex which is, as I would like to show, another uniquely Irish language. This, by the way, might also prove that Kallen's line of thought that "while not everyone would enthusiastically endorse Irish as the 'national language,' no one vies a markedly Irish form of English as an alternative candidate" (Kallen 1997: 19) has lost some of its statement.

The history of language contact of Manx and English is one of "innerlinguistic confusion," "determined Anglicisation," "resilient *Abwehrkampf*," historically relatively recent decline, "language death," and meanwhile in its extension, language revival (Broderick 1991). Linguistic results of this contact are, for instance, simplifications of the phoneme system (*ibid.*: 81-86), English loans and the "Manxification" of some of them (*ibid.*: 87) and some adaption of English syntax (*ibid.*: 88) for Manx, and slight phonological influences not entirely due to Manx alone (Broderick 1997: 125-130), lexical borrowings from Manx (*ibid.*: 131-133) and some syntactical influences (*ibid.*: 133) for Manx English.

Language contact in Scotland is comparatively more complex than elsewhere. Of course, Cornwall, Ireland, the Isle of Man and Wales have also experienced contacts with languages other than English, as has Scotland, still, there the situation is inextricably complicated by the development of Scots. Yet, without taking the latter into further consideration, the history of the contact between Scottish Gaelic and English is characterised by comparably early retreat, severe institutional neglect and, in the past century, steady decline as well as hardly any upturns (cf. MacKinnon 2000: 45). It is suggested that mutual influences across all

linguistic levels exist, but "as Gaelic fades from an area, so also will the Celtic impact on the local English" (Clement 1997: 306).

Wales has experienced a chequered language contact career which is marked by collective language shift, Tudor – thus, paradoxically self-inflicted – Anglicisation, official suppression (*Act of Union* 1536), nonconformist resistance and institutional maintenance (Klein 1988: 45-55). Obviously, in Welsh English we find phonological, grammatical and lexical influences from Welsh (Thomas 1997: 68-82).

4. Under Scrutiny I: Cornwall, Isle of Man and Scotland

It does not necessarily come natural to subsume the given regions under one heading, but it seems obvious that Cornwall, the Isle of Man and Scotland are, linguistically, Celtic regions. Still, the reason that they are grouped together in this section is quite a different one: by all means they no longer house a national language that is a Celtic language or a Celticised English. One might even question whether they (are in the position to) house a national language at all. The reasons in turn for that, however, are different for all three tracts of land, and I would like to go into that matter on the basis of what has been said before.

The historically indigenous languages of Cornwall and Man, *Kernewek* and *Gaelg Manninagh*, can be said to be dead or living languages depending on one's point of view. It is a given fact that there are no more native speakers which relate to the historical, cross-generational speech community. In this sense, the bond to a historical national group is broken. Of course, both are also revived languages or languages that undergo the attempt of being revived. Probably both are living community languages of a sort (cf. George & Broderick 1993). Whether dead or revived, both attributes do not go hand in hand with the term 'national language'. Of course, the contact of both languages with English, which eventually led to language shift, has resulted in distinct varieties of English. Manx English is clearly shaped by the language contact. However as Broderick concludes, Manx English faces its twilight years and might experience the fate of its Celtic counterpart (1997: 134). Thus, also Manx English cannot take over a national function.

The situation with Cornish English seems similar, yet it is different. That Cornish English bears distinctive traits is best illustrated by the fact that it exerted a great influence on the revival of Cornish (cf. Payton 1997). With regards to the debates about and the revival of the indigenous Cornish language, it seems clear that, although Cornish English provides a natural identity, Cornish is much more ideologically charged and wins the "linguistic ideological contest" (Payton 1997: 100). Still, in Cornwall as well as in the Isle of Man, I believe, we would not be able to speak of national languages in any case because of one decisive reason: both regions are geographically, economically as well as politically too marginal in order to be considered nations. Yet, at least in Cornwall, we are at pre-

sent able to make out what Fishman termed 'contranational language' decades ago. If efforts to revive the language continue, so as to establish it as a truly used community language, Cornish will well be a "symbol of contranational ethnic-cultural identification on the part of smaller groups who, resisting fusion into the larger nationality, develop a localized nationality consciousness of their own" (Fishman 1968 a: 6). Referring to on-going revival tendencies in the Isle of Man, it is probably more appropriate to talk about *re*developing and *re*establishing a localized consciousness.

Even though sharing the marginalisation argument, Scotland is home of a very different, a very unique paradox when it comes to national language. Scotland hardly seems to define herself in terms of language (cf. Görlach 2000: 619-620) and, by no means, seems to do so through *Gaidhlig*. Scottish Gaelic nowadays is very clearly a regional language with hardly any official status and only very basic legal recognition, a language spoken by a very small minority and almost exclusively confined to private and intimate communication (cf. Robertson 2001: 83-86). Because Hebridean and Highland English are similarly restricted, Scotland's Celtic Englishes do not stand the chance to be national alternatives, either. Even Scots is said to be no candidate. Firstly, although not spoken by a minority, Scots tends to be seen as an important national factor only by a minority (Llobera 2004: 92). Secondly and more importantly, within the scope of this paper, Scots is, of course, not an issue, since it is no Celtic English (Macafee & Ó Baoill 1997). Finally, the paradoxical linguistic situation that appears to be typical of Scotland must, to my mind, be attributed to the sum of the following historical facts:

> a) [Scottish] identity relies much more on other markers such as the specificity of Scottish law, religion, history, etc. (Llobera 2004: 91).
> b) Most people do not see the need for a separate language for Scotland, even though they may express a strong sense of Scottish identity (Llobera 2004: 92).
> c) [T]here seems to have been no period in recorded history before the twentieth century in which Scotland had a clear majority of speakers of a single language (Barbour 2000: 30).
> d) [T]here has been a relentless fall in the number of Gaelic speakers over the past century and an analysis of the age profile of the Gaelic-speaking population suggests that this downward spiral is set to continue for some time yet (Robertson 2001: 99).

Therefore, with Scots being too discredited (Görlach 2000: 619), with a minor number of Scotswomen and Scotsmen who are Gaelic in language and culture (Robertson 2001: 83), and with Scottish Celtic Englishes being too regional (cf. Bird 1997) or about to be watered down (cf. Clement 1997), Scotland would have to make language an issue of national interest, before she might embark upon choosing which language would suit this function best.

Thus, language contact between Celtic languages and English has resulted in highly distinct as well as highly peculiar situations in Cornwall, in the Isle of Man and in Scotland. All three regions host a number of languages, all three host

at least one major variety of one of these languages. Still, all three do not possess a national language, as has just been shown.

5. *Under scrutiny II: Wales*

In Wales, we find the seemingly strongest, most vital Celtic language, and probably also the strongest linguistic loyalty. Because of that, Cymric might be close to national language status. Yet, I hesitate to call it primarily a national language, because Welsh is also not spoken by the majority and it also "faces severe difficulties in being recognised as an essential language even within its own national territory" (Williams 2001: 59). It seems ironical, though, that Welsh is more robust than its linguistic siblings,[5] because Wales obviously has been politically and institutionally most closely bound to England, and it seems likewise ironical that Welsh still has to struggle, since Welsh speakers neither had to leave their homeland nor their language, in order to merely survive (economically). Now, Welsh English is not nearly as legitimised (Penhallurick 1993: 31), and it is because of two other factors that we have to, at best, acknowledge two national languages in Wales:

> 1) The Welsh Language Act (1993) provided a statutory framework for the treatment of English and Welsh on the basis of equality and inaugurated a new era in language planning. (Williams 2001: 71)
> 2) It is perhaps justified to postulate two indigenous ethnic groups in Wales: English-speakers and bilinguals. (Barbour 1994: 329)

To support the argument of why Welsh English is a(nother) Welsh national language, I will give a substantial quote from Penhallurick's 1993 publication, which also strongly confirmed my interest in the matter:

> Any talk of 'Welsh English,' or of a 'system,' depends not on a linguistic analysis, not on linguistic factors, but on an acknowledgement of the nation, and its language: the only workable definition of Welsh English is that it is the English spoken by the Welsh and by those born-and-bred or bred in Wales. Even 'English in Wales' signifies the connection between, the interdependence of, nation and language. The 'linguistics' terms 'dialect' or 'variety' cannot be used: we know there is no (one) Welsh dialect, or variety. This leaves us with 'language' and Welsh English is only, solely, nothing more than a 'national' language, a language of the Welsh (Penhallurick 1993: 43).

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[5] Breton is clearly not within the realms of this paper, but it is certainly worthwhile investigating its language status, since Barbour hints at the fact that "speakers of Breton … identify much more strongly with local dialects than with a Breton language" (2002: 12). Whether this is due to, as Barbour goes on, "the absence of strong Breton nationalism" (*ibid.*) or to the fact that local dialects suffice to lend Breton identity would have to be investigated. What is more, as has been shown for Cornwall and the Isle of Man, Brittany is too marginal to develop stark national assertion.

Eventually, debates on national language in Wales could be debates about which language should be regarded as *primary* or *secondary* national language, and on which grounds.

6. Under Scrutiny III: Ireland – a Lengthy Discourse

Of course, the *Bunreacht na hÉireann* gives Irish Gaelic national status. However, this official classification does not seem to reflect the (socio)linguistic reality on display in Ireland, as Ó Murchú has already pointed out (cf. 1993: 471). In other places, Irish is given a multitude of labels: 'community language' (e.g. *Ráiteas i Leith na Gaeilge* 2006), 'endangered language' (e.g. Fennell 1981), 'lesser-used language' (e.g. Antonini, Corrigan & Li Wie 2002), 'minority language' (e.g. Ó Corráin & Mac Mathúna 1998), 'official language' (e.g. *Bunreacht na hEireann*), 'threatened language' (e.g. Ó Riagáin 2001), 'working language' (e.g. *Ráiteas i Leith na Gaeilge* 2006). That there is a grain of truth in all of these labels and that they reflect a number of very different angles from which Irish can be viewed, is too easy to see, but, taken literally, some of these labels appear to be mutually exclusive. As is indicated here, the language discourse on Irish is a complex one, and this again is evidence of yet more paradoxical realities. The constitution assigns national status to a language whose use as a community language is decreasing, but whose number of speakers who claim any type of knowledge is increasing as will be seen in what follows.

The language that is used (almost) everywhere and that is used undeniably habitually by the Irish, namely Hiberno-English, had, as already quoted above, been deemed unable to gain national status because "the relative lack of study of [Hiberno-English] owes something to its lack of a symbolic or unifying function in society" (Kallen 1997: 19). Now, it is a truism that there is a large and ever growing number of studies dedicated to Hiberno-English before and after the above statement had been made. Their results and quality is, as I am convinced by now, sufficient indication that, speaking in linguistic terms, Hiberno-English must be able to welcome the Irish people. To be precise, it gives them the opportunity to retain their linguistic identity, although no longer speaking Irish itself. Hiberno-English does provide them linguistically with Irish identity and nationality. A brief overview of comments which support this assumption shall be given hereafter. Since all remarks[6] stand for themselves, no longwinded annotations[7] are given:

> The influence of Irish … was not only active but cumulative (Bliss 1977: 12).

> Despite the fact that the vowel inventory of IrE is largely that of the imported variety of English of the 17th century there are nonetheless aspects of it where one can suspect, if not

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[6]   By necessity of some order, they are arranged according to their year of publication.

[7]   Of course, any consideration without given contexts can lead to false conclusions, but it is felt that all of the following remarks possess some kind of general validity.

demonstrate, connections between it and that of Irish (Hickey 1986: 2-3).

Irish English … allows for the marking of relations such as tense, mood, and aspect … in ways which differ significantly from the marking systems found in other dialects. These differences have been discussed with emphasis on the effects of bilingualism and contact between the Irish language and English, the retention in IrE of features which have been lost in mainstream English varieties, and on the reinforcing influences of these two dynamics … (Kallen 1989: 1).

The sentence patterns of Irish, its tendency to express itself negatively, and personally, its mosaic of lexical fields (involving directionality, the family, colour, and many others) arguably lend the Irish-speaking language community a characteristic distinctiveness, some measure of which has been inherited by speakers of Irish-English (Mac Mathúna 1990 a: 97).

The numerous examples and the close parallels [of Hiberno-English idioms] with idioms in Irish suggest strong cross-linguistic influence. Moreover, most of the idioms appear to be used only in Ireland so that there does not seem to be any other source besides Irish influence for most of them (Odlin 1991: 181).

Direct borrowings from the Irish language, some of them shared by most dialects, some of them peculiar to some dialects, some of them anglicised at least sometimes in some dialects, are numerous (Ó hÚrdail 1997: 198).

Irish people use and speak English in a distinctive way. In vocabulary, construction, idiom and pronunciation their speech is identifiable and marked. Its characteristics reflect the political, cultural and linguistic history of the two nations, Ireland and England. … It is a macaronic dialect, a mixture of Irish and English, sometimes in the same word … (Dolan 1998, xix).

[T]he grammar of [Hiberno-English] represents a unique combination of elements drawn from the two principal partners in the contact situation, English and Irish (Filppula 1999: 283).

We believe our preliminary investigation into code-switching, lexical borrowing, and grammatical transfer … to be sufficient to demonstrate the case for Celticity in Irish standard English (Kirk & Kallen 2006: 108).

Last but not least, popularized publications, such as e.g. O'Farrell's *How the Irish Speak English* (1980), are proof of the claim I want to pursue here.

Earlier in this paper, I mentioned and somewhat criticised Fasold's term of 'nationalist language' and its corresponding attributes. Now, whether or not one adopts my view that these rather describe the term 'national language,' we can easily apply the given properties to Irish to make out whether it is still a national language candidate. In order to respond to Fasold's matrix, I take the liberty to quote from authorities on Irish language matters.

Strictly speaking, Fasold's first criterion of a national language as a *symbol of national identity for a significant proportion of the population* should by all means be a safe bet for the Irish language. However, Croghan's comparison of Irish and English leaves the matter somewhat undecided:

> To propose that Irish is the true national language of Ireland would win one a deviancy tag of some kind in many circles in Ireland, but the proposal that Hiberno-English is the real national language would be generally greeted with incomprehension: some, including those who would not give any support to the national claim for Irish, might suspect a lack of patriotism (as cited in Kallen 1997: 19).

Although, it is neither a strong argument in favour or against Fasold's precondition, we are still able to see that opinions on symbolic identity are increasingly less pedantic, if a majority can be seen to be "happy with a linguistic identity focused on Irish varieties of English" (Ó Laoire as quoted in: Barbour 2000: 38) and if we can already find some people who "insist on calling their Hiberno-English 'Irish' as a means of highlighting their attitude to their culture and nationality" (Todd in: Prendergast 1998: 226).

Two of Fasold's criteria are strongly interrelated. The demands that a national language has to be *widely used for some everyday purposes* and that it has to be *widely and fluently spoken within the country* could be translated into one requirement: *a national language is one which is widely and fluently spoken in everyday communicative situations within the country*. While Irish, as we know, has to be learnt by supreme effort by the bulk of the Irish people, which beyond doubt is not exactly natural for a national language, we can learn from the spine of a recent dictionary of Hiberno-English that it is:

> a guide to the unofficial language of the 32 counties of Ireland, the language of the streets and pubs, but also of much of Irish literature from Swift to Roddy Doyle. It is the dictionary that lists and explains the words and phrases that Irish people actually use (Share 1997).

It goes without saying that the last sentence could also read "It is the dictionary *of the language* that Irish people actually use."

We can quickly dispose of the debate of the attribute of *no major alternative national(ist) languages in the country*. At present, it is still self-evident that only Irish can be the nationalist language, and this both despite and because of the following fact: "The Irish language is very much part of the nationalist programme in Northern Ireland, while the Republic has already moved into a post-nationalist phase" (Ó Riagáin 2001: 211).

The question whether Irish or Hiberno-English is acceptable as *a symbol of authenticity* again needs discussion. The Irish language is unmistakably authentic. Yet, this authenticity has to be called into question, if amongst its corresponding community language ability is low (cf. Ó hIfearnáin 1998: 211), and thus, members of this community do not have at their disposal the ability to be authentic in that language. In contrast to that, Hiberno-English has been attested adequate authenticity:

> [W]e point out that lexical and syntactic markers have more than referential or propositional value alone, since they serve both to point to wider cultural values associated with Ireland and the Irish people and to create solidarity between speakers who share these

values. Such Celtic features in discourse have the function of establishing and defining a speech community (Kirk & Kallen 2006: 108-9).

Recent works on language attitudes also confirm this view. In Zwickl's regionally restricted, but no less valid study, we learn about an informant who responds to the question whether local speech is not standard English: "Why should it be Standard English? We are Irish" (2002: 127). I believe this statement not only reflects the blindingly obvious fact that Hiberno-English has never been institutionally standardised – which I personally deem a desideratum for the field –, it also is a stalwart assertion of expressing self-confidence in being Irish by means of Hiberno-English. This observation is taken to extremes by the response of a different informant who claims that "Irish people speak the best English" (Zwickl 2002: 147).

The last claim to be discussed is that a national(ist) language should be *linked with the glorious past*. Irish surely is linked with both glorious and bleak historical images, but the "thing which we must remember is that it is *only* in the Gaeltacht that the Irish of today can be said to [have] an unbroken link with the past" at all (Ó Cuív 1951: 35; my emphasis). This issue is further transfigured in favour of Hiberno-English by four decisive statements which certainly refer to glorious moments in Irish history:

> 1) This new Irish nation and national consciousness [of the 18th and 19th centuries] were shaped by leaders and propagandists who used *English*. All the 'sacred documents' of Irish political and cultural nationalism, from the United Irishmen to the Revolution, were written in English (Fennell 1985: 252; Fennell's emphasis).

> 2) As the language of Irish nationalism from the 18th century onwards, English was gradually legitimised as a 'national language'. This legitimation has been greatly reinforced, since the end of 19th century, by the emergence of a great national literature in English, much of it of world importance (Yeats, Joyce, Synge, O'Casey, etc.) (Fennell 1985: 253).

> 3) It is interesting to observe that the language of dispute with the English over the future of Ireland was English even though many of the leaders had learned Irish and declared their intention to promote that language once their political objectives had been achieved. Those who favored Home Rule for Ireland spoke and wrote in English and those who supported them in Ireland unified through the medium of English (Wardhaugh 1987: 92).

> 4) Early Irish nationalists did not identify the Gaelic language with the Irish nation. A combined policy of secular harassment of the Irish language and the current appeal of English as a lingua franca made it unavoidable that the medium of nationalist expression would be English (Llobera 2004: 93).

Therefore, compared with Fasold's attributes, one can easily say that, at present, all criteria are better met by Hiberno-English than by Irish which, of course, does not constitute an imperative to alter the *Bunreacht*, nor does it, in my opin-

ion, call for immediate action. It probably only shows that Fennell's 1981 question is still waiting for an answer.

7. Conclusions, Interim and Otherwise

The aim of this concluding chapter is to offer (probably also conciliatory) ideas which might even advance the debate on national languages and standard languages within the field of Celtic as well as English studies.

With respect to all Celtic regions and the Englishes that have emerged in them, future studies will have to, to my mind, investigate whether it might be helpful to adopt an important argument which was put forward very early for what is dubbed 'New Englishes'. A random choice of two titles on Hiberno-English shall illustrate the point: the collection of Thomas Davies Lectures edited by Ó Muirithe is called *The English Language **in Ireland***; Filppula called his grammatical description *The Grammar of **Irish** English. Language **in Hibernian** style*. First of all, the two titles, the former from 1977, the latter from 1999, are meant to exemplify that the discourse on Irish and Hiberno-English has come a long way and we can say it has undergone some form of emancipation. Secondly, it is, of course, an entirely different approach, if one views a linguistic complex as a language of a certain place, instead of only in a certain place (cf. e.g. Kachru 1998 or Annamalai 2004). Although this again shows that, for Celtic languages in Britain and Ireland, language contact with English has resulted in sometimes more than regressive developments, the last statement has to be seen in a more positive light. It is the above line of thought which will bring to the public that the struggle of Celtic languages to survive and revive has given rise to Englishes which are well capable of asserting regional identities. What is more, these Englishes are, as has been, in my opinion, well proved by all contributions to the field, no longer Anglo-Englishes.

Inspite of the comparatively strong proof in chapter 6, the question still remains: what is Ireland's national language? It still remains because of all circumstantial complexities, because of historical as well as societal considerations. With Kloss, who sees endoglossic and exoglossic countries with reference to indigenous languages and imported languages (1968: 71), I wish to establish two terms that might be of help: *endoglossic national language* and *exoglossic national language*. If we combine these with Ó Cuív's observation which I introduced earlier, we are left with a model of development that is applicable to the Irish national language situation: at first Ireland started out with Irish as an unrivalled endoglossic national language; later after complex processes the nativized Hiberno-English became a formidable candidate for an exoglossic national language; by analogy with Ó Cuív's description, the two languages exchanged positions which could be referred to as primary and secondary national language. Historically as well as symbolically, there can be, of course, no doubt that Irish is Ireland's national language. Yet, there might come the day, when Hiberno-Eng-

lish will also take over the function of Ireland's symbolic national language, because:

> A symbol is something (usually spatio-temporal) which puts us in real contact with something else with which it is associated. … [A]n entire specific language system … or a variety within a system … can itself become a symbol by being associated with certain realities in society (Ó Huallacháin 1991: xiv-v).

With regards to actual language practice, Hiberno-English *is* Ireland's national language, while Irish can only fragmentarily fulfil this function, i.e. it is spoken and fully understood only by fragments of its corresponding population, and it is habitually only used in dialect fragments.

Having said all this, I should like to end with a remark which, cutting a long story short, was contributed to the above matter seemingly unnoticed, namely that "while Irish-English is certainly not Gaelic, the historically national language, it is most definitely Irish" (Gruenais 1986: 280).

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