Irish

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Contents

This book is dedicated to my parents

Preface

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Abbreviations and symbols

In the phonetic transcriptions, the IPA system is followed. Palatalisation is marked by the superscript ´. Stress is only marked when it is relevant.

Mutations are marked by means of the following superscripts:

L - leniting, e.g. ní^L
E - eclipsing, e.g. go^E
H - [h] insertion, e.g. na^H
T - [t] insertion, e.g. an^T

Dialects are marked by the following abbreviations:

C - Connemara
D - Donegal
K - Kerry

The following is a list of the other abbreviations used:

C	-	Consonant
Cl.	-	Clitic
Compar.	-	Comparative
Cop.	-	Copula
Dat.	-	Dative
Dep.	-	Dependent
Dim.	-	Diminutive
Gen.	-	Genitive
Imper.	-	Imperative
Impers.	-	Impersonal
Ind.	-	Independent
Interr.	-	Interrogative
N	-	Noun
Neg.	-	Negative
Nom.	-	Nominative
Non-rel.	-	Non-relative
NP	-	Noun Phrase
Pers.n.	-	Personal name
Pl.	-	Plural
PP	-	Prepositional Phrase
Prep.	-	Preposition
Pres.	-	Present tense
PRT	-	Particle
Rel.	-	Relative
Sg.	-	Singular
Sub.	-	Subjunctive
Subj.	-	Subject

V	-	Verb
Var.	-	Variant
VA	-	Verbal Adjective
VN	-	Verbal Noun
Vow.	-	Vowel

In the glosses, nouns and adjectives are in the nominative singular unless otherwise stated. The gloss represents the root of the verb, unless some other form is being quoted.

0. Introduction

0. 1. External history

Celtic languages are known to have been spoken on the Continent of Europe more than two thousand years ago, but substantial recorded evidence for such languages exists only from the fifth century A.D. onwards. The evidence for Continental Celtic is scant, consisting mostly of inscriptions and references in the writings of Classical authors. Three languages have been established for mainland Europe: Celtiberian, Gaulish and Lepontic; the exact relationship between these languages remains a matter of dispute (for a summary of current theories, see Russell 1995). The languages which survived into the medieval period can be divided into two groups: Goidelic and Brythonic. When exactly they became distinct cannot be determined, but it must have been some time before the earliest sources, which date from the late Roman Empire. Each of the two groups has three members. Goidelic comprises Irish, Scots Gaelic and Manx, while the Brythonic languages are Welsh, Cornish, and Breton. As early as the year 1000 the two sub-groups, although sharing many general features, had diverged considerably, and the relationship between them is only apparent when they are subjected to historical-comparative study. A thousand years later, there is no question of any degree of mutual intelligibility between e.g. Irish and Welsh.

There is a certain lack of agreement concerning the division of early Irish into epochs. The first attested form of Irish (500-700) is found on gravestones, engraved in a form of writing known as Ogam, which is akin in some respects to the Runic system. Russell (1995) calls this Archaic Irish, whereas Mac Eoin (1993) calls it Ogam Irish. Following certain developments such as the loss of final syllables, this gave way to what Russell calls Early Old Irish (700-800), followed by Classical Old Irish (800-900). Mac Eoin recognises an intervening stage - Archaic Irish - in the seventh century, and dates Old Irish to the eighth and ninth centuries. Despite this divergence of opinion, one can say that there are three distinct eras in the period c. 400 - c. 900, and that there exists a relative chronology for them; at any rate, nobody seems to challenge the view that the first sizeable body of data, from the period 800-900, is Old Irish. This is the language that the standard grammar of Old Irish, Thurneysen (1946), is based on.

Middle Irish is the language of the period 900-1200. In the fifth century Irish was imported to Scotland and the Isle of Man, and in the Middle Irish period these began to diverge from the parent language, eventually developing into Scots Gaelic and Manx. Nevertheless, the existence of a common standard language called Classical or Early Modern Irish (1200-1600) meant that until the 17th century one is still dealing with a more or less unified language displaying occasional regional differences.

The escalating encroachment of English on the Gaelic-speaking areas from the 17th century, coupled with the loss of the literary standard and the rise of regional identities based on non-linguistic factors, led to the emergence of three separate languages: Modern Irish, Scots Gaelic, and Manx (the last of these became extinct in the 20th century). In Ireland, Irish increasingly became the language of the rural poor, with English being used more and more for administration, trade, religion and education. By the beginning of the 19th century, although still widely spoken in the west of the country, Irish had virtually ceased to function

as a written language. These socio-linguistic conditions, coupled with the effects of the Great Famine (1845-1847) and the subsequent mass emigration to England, America and the colonies, led to the abandonment of Irish in most districts - by 1891 only 14% of the population is reported to have spoken it.

The Gaelic League was founded in 1893 with a view to checking this trend, and after 1921 the newly-founded Irish state lent its support to this endeavour. By that stage nothing short of a miracle could have restored Irish as the first language. Despite its status as the first official language, and the fact that it is compulsory in both primary and secondary schools, the decline has continued unabated. For propaganda reasons, government agencies tend to exaggerate the number of speakers wildly, and census reports are unreliable, as people with practically no command of the language return themselves as Irish speakers. Consequently, the figures quoted in many sources bear only a tenuous relation to reality. For a more sober and trustworthy account of the state of the language, the reader is referred to Hindley (1990).

Even at the most generous estimate, there are not more than 10,000 native speakers left, most of them over the age of forty. Modern communications and the suburbanisation of the last Irish-speaking districts, accompanied by a large influx of Anglophone holiday-home owners, mean that bilingualism is the order of the day. Irish can just about hold its own in the home, provided that parents make a determined effort to pass it on to their children. Even here, however, it is weakening considerably in the face of competition from the video, the internet, and the mobile phone, and it seems doomed to extinction within a few decades, at least as a language of everyday communication.

0.2. The modern language

One of the aims of the Gaelic League was to foster the writing of Irish, and to have it introduced as a school subject. A major obstacle to this was the fact that at the end of the 19th century there were very few people who could either read or write Irish. There existed an old literature, it is true, but for the most part this was in manuscript form. The last time that the orthography of Irish had been more or less consistently standardised was in the Early Modern Irish period (13th - 17th century). Since then, the spoken language had changed considerably, something which was not reflected in the spelling. For instance, the word for the Irish language, *Gaedhilge*, was originally pronounced [ge:ðil´g´e], but in the intervening centuries the intervocalic -*dh*- [ð] had been lost, so that the current pronunciation was [ge:l´g´i]. A further complication was the fact that a version of the Latin alphabet used in manuscripts, called the Gaelic script, was used for writing. For learners who were used to English, this made the task of acquiring literacy skills that much more difficult.

More serious than either the script or the orthography was the divergence of the written language from the spoken variety in terms of morphological and syntactic structure. To take but one example: in Early Modern Irish, synthetic forms of the verb are used for the most part, e.g. *sgríobh-as* 'I wrote', consisting of a stem *sgríobh* 'write' and an inflectional ending -*as*. In the modern dialects many of these synthetic verbal forms have been replaced by analytic ones, thus instead of *sgríobhas* we have *scríobh mé* 'wrote I', with a verb *scríobh* and a pronoun *mé* 'I', more or less like in English. The dilemma for the revivalists of the Gaelic League era was whether to continue to use the old orthography and grammar, or

whether to accept *caint na ndaoine* 'the vernacular'. In the end the adherents of the vernacular carried the day, except that for about fifty years books continued to be printed in the Gaelic script. Finally, in the 1940s a revised orthography was devised, and this is the spelling used in most publications since then.

The choice of the vernacular made a lot of sense, but there was one major stumbling block, namely, the fact that the dialects diverged widely from each other. Unlike languages where one dialect enjoyed a higher status than others and eventually became accepted as the standard, there was no Irish-speaking central authority capable of imposing its views on the speakers of other dialects. Beginning in the 1920s, attempts were made to devise a standard, but this met with fierce resistance on the part of the local populations, who felt that an artificial, bogus form of Irish was being foisted upon them by the central administration.

After the revision of the orthography, a standardised grammar was published in the 1950s (*Gramadach na Gaeilge*). However, this was confined exclusively to inflectional morphology, and no guidelines were provided concerning pronunciation or syntactic usage. Furthermore, the choice of lexis was left entirely to the discretion of individual authors of textbooks and teachers. To take a trivial example, children encountering Irish for the first time could have encountered the English expression *How are you?* in three variants:

(1)
a) Conas atá tú?
   [konəs tɑ: tu:]
b) Cén chaoi a bhfuil tú?
   [kʹe: xi: wilʹ tu:]
c) Goidé mar atá tú?
   [gədʹe: mərə ta: tu:]

Depending on the choice of textbook, it was not impossible that later on in their schooling they would come across one of the other variants, and if they went to an Irish-speaking district, they might hear yet another form. Needless to say, the lack of clear policy in this area was a severe obstacle as far as the revival of the language was concerned, and led to frustration and negative reactions on the part of the general populace towards Irish.

Graiméar Gaeilge na mBráithre Críostaí (1960) is a much more comprehensive work than *Gramadach na Gaeilge*, taking into account as it does the full range of syntactic structures found in the language; a greatly abridged version was published in English as the Christian Brothers (1980). A number of attempts were made in the 1960s and 1970s to produce a standard pronunciation (Ó Siadhail and Wigger 1975, Ó Murchú 1969). In 1986 a pocket dictionary with phonetic transcriptions of the headwords was published (*Foclóir Póca*), which went some way to making up for the dearth of guidelines in the area of pronunciation. There are two dictionaries of contemporary Irish available, both of which use the standard spelling. de Bhaldraithe (1959) is the main English-Irish dictionary, while Ó Dónaill (1977) is the most comprehensive Irish-English lexicon.

There are indications that a more regular kind of standard may be emerging which is to some extent independent of central planning. The dialect of Connemara in the west of the country has affinities with both the southern and northern dialects. For this reason, it is the obvious choice for a standard. Furthermore, it is the dialect most favoured by learners, who

are a much more influential group in the case of Irish than with more widely-spoken languages. Government schoolbooks use a sanitised form of this dialect, and the above-mentioned pocket dictionary takes it as the basis for its phonetic transcription. The most widely-used textbook for foreign learners, Ó Siadhail (1980), aims at teaching Connemara Irish. Finally, this dialect tends to dominate in broadcasting, especially since the foundation of the first Irish-language television service in 1996. Given that the future of Irish seems to be that of a second language, we can expect the Connemara dialect to become the norm in the 21st century.

0.3. The surviving dialects

Even as recently as the beginning of the 20th century, Irish speakers were to be found all over Ireland, even in such places as Antrim in the north-east, or the midlands. By the middle of the century, Irish survived as a living language in three remote, thinly-populated, economically underdeveloped regions. These were the north-west of county Donegal, the western part of county Galway - Connemara and the Aran Islands - and the tip of the Dingle peninsula in county Kerry. Elsewhere, dialectologists managed to collect information about the local varieties before the last speakers died out. The Swiss scholar Heinrich Wagner published the results of his fieldwork in the form of a dialect atlas (Wagner 1958-1969), and a number of phonetic descriptions of the speech of individual regions were issued by the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies (e.g. Ó Cuív 1944, de Bhaldraithe 1945). The best single account of the historical development of the dialects is O'Rahilly (1932). Ó Siadhail (1989) is a comparison of the various regional kinds of Irish, and includes chapters on morphology and syntax as well as phonology. Quite detailed descriptions of the three larger dialect areas - the northern, western and southern - are to be found in McCone et alii (1994).

When beginning this book, it was hoped that we would be able to adopt a pandialectal approach, but this proved impossible in practice. Hence, some forms are marked as dialectal by means of the following abbreviations:

C - Connemara

D - Donegal

K - Kerry

However, in the interests of simplicity, it was decided to use this convention sparingly. Pronunciation varies so much that one would have to mark every second word if one were to be completely consistent. Only when the distinction is important for the issue under discussion do we resort to this stratagem. For example, the sound [ɥ:] is unique to D, and hence is marked as such in the section on vowels. If a word with [ɥ:] appears elsewhere, we will not mark it as specifically confined to D.

1. The Sound System of Irish

1.1. Orthography and pronunciation

As mentioned in the introduction, a standardised orthography was introduced in the 1940s, and this is adhered to throughout this book, although it should be noted that many publications employ modified versions of this system, and there is still an extremely high degree of variation and inconsistency to be observed. For example, in one of the main handbooks for foreigners learning Irish, Ó Siadhail (1980), the author sometimes uses the standard spelling, while at others he uses a variant which is closer to the pronunciation of the dialect he bases his book on.

Because Irish orthography is notoriously non-phonetic, it seemed advisable to present some general guidelines at the outset on the relation between sound and spelling. It should be mentioned, though, that the following account is by no means exhaustive, and furthermore, that many modifications would be required for individual dialects. For further information on this issue see Doyle and Gussmann (1991) and Ó Siadhail (1980).

1.1.1. Vowel symbols
1.1.1.1. Single graphemes

Irish uses the five vowel symbols of English: *i, e, a, o, u* to indicate short vowels:

(1)   sin [ʃinʹ] 'that', te [tʹe] 'hot', cat [kɑt] 'cat', so [so] 'this', bun [bun] 'base'

When followed by certain consonants or consonant clusters, these simple graphemes are realised as long vowels or diphthongs:

(2)   binn [bʹi:nʹ] 'sweet', im [i:mʹ] 'butter', am [ɑ:m] 'time', ard [ɑ:rd] 'high', poll [paul] 'hole', domhan [daun] 'world', punt [pu:nt] 'pound', cumhra [ku:rə] 'fragrant'

In unstressed syllables, *e* is realised as [i], and *a,o*, and *u* as [ə], e.g.:

(3)   eile ['elʹi] 'other', tine ['tʹinʹi] 'fire', cara ['karə] 'friend', aduaidh [ə'duəgʹ] 'from the north', onóir [ə'no:rʹ] 'honour', cromán [krə'mɑ:n] 'hip', mullach [mə'lɑx] 'top', cupán [kə'pɑ:n] 'cup'

Irish has five further symbols consisting of the above vowel graphemes and a length mark: *í, é, á, ó, ú*. These represent long vowels:

(4)   sí [ʃi:] 'she', té [tʹe:] 'person', cá [kɑ:] 'where', bó [bo:] 'cow', cú [ku:] 'hound'

1.1.1.2. Sequences of two graphemes

Combinations of vowel symbols are troublesome, since the phonetic realisation varies greatly. There are two possibilities:

1. The grapheme merely marks palatalisation or non-palatalisation of an adjacent consonant. *e, i* indicate palatalisation, *a, o, u* velarisation. Only one of the vocalic symbols represents a phonetic vowel:

(5)   baile [bal´i] 'home', eile [el´i] 'other', coip [kip´] 'ferment', fuil [fil´] 'blood',
       cion [k´on] 'share', bean [b´an]'woman'

2. The grapheme sequence represents a long vowel or diphthong. There are two types
to be distinguished. In the first, the combination always corresponds to a long vowel or
diphthong:

(6)   saor [si:r] 'free', ceo [k´o:] 'fog', fia [f´iə] 'deer', rua [ruə] 'red'

In the second case, the lengthening or diphthongisation depends on the presence of certain
following consonants (cf. (2)):

(7)   caint [ka:n´t´] 'talk', aill [a:L´] 'cliff', coill [kaiL´] 'wood', foinn [fi:n´] 'tune-Gen.',
       puinn [pi:n´] 'much', Eibhlín [ail´i:n´] 'Pers. n.', greim [g´r´i:m´] 'bite', feall [f´aul]
       'treachery', cionn [k´u:n] 'head-Dat.'

In combinations where one vowel bears the length-mark, the sequence has the same
value as this vowel:

(8)   fíor [f´i:r] 'true', céill [k´e:l´] 'sense-Dat.', báid [ba:d´] 'boat-Pl.', oileán [əl´a:n]
       'island', bróin [bro:n´] 'sorrow-Gen.', crúigh [kru:] 'shoe (Verb)', iúl [u:l]
       'knowledge'

1.1.1.3. Sequences of three graphemes
aoi represents [i:]:

(9)   baoi [bi:] 'buoy', caoin [ki:n´] 'kind'

Otherwise, *i*, when combined with other sequences of two graphemes, merely marks
palatalisation. The value of the vocalic element is not altered:

(10)   ceoil [k´o:l´] 'music-Gen.', Sheáin [x´a:n´] 'Pers. n.-Gen.', iaigh [iəg´] 'close', fuair
       [fuər´] 'get-Past'

1.1.2. Consonants
1.1.2.1. Palatalisation and velarisation
Palatalisation is indicated in spelling by the presence of *i* and *e* before or after the
consonant:

(11)   beo [b´o:] 'alive', ceann [k´a:N] 'head', leor [l´o:r] 'sufficiency', síl [ʃi:l´] 'think',
       goib [gib´] 'beak-Gen.', fir [f´ir´] 'men-Pl.'

The presence of *a, o, u* before or after a consonant is a sign that the consonant is
velarised:

(12)   ann [aun] 'there', lon [lon] 'blackbird', bus [bus] 'bus', naoi [ne:] 'nine', lá
       [la:] 'day', suí [si:] 'sitting position'

For this reason, the graphemes flanking consonants must belong to one of two groups
- *i, e* or *a, o, u*. Below we give various possible and impossible spellings:

(13) eile 'other' *eila, coigil 'save' *cogil, ama 'time-Gen.' *ame, donais 'badness-Gen.'
      *donis, culaith 'suit' *celaith

1.1.2.2. Sequences of consonants

One of the main difficulties in relating written Irish to pronunciation arises from combinations of consonants. In some cases, sequences of graphemes represent phonetic clusters, e.g.:

(14) blas [blɑs] 'taste', cnoc [knok] 'hill', srac [srɑk] 'tear'

However, very often the phonetic result is different from what one would expect, as the following two subsections illustrate.

1.1.2.2.1. The grapheme *h*

Except in initial position, *h* is only found in combination with other consonants. The resulting combinations of graphemes may represent single sounds, e.g.:

(15) bhád [vaːd] 'boat', chat [xɑt] 'cat', caitheann [kahən] 'must-Pres.', dhá [ɣaː] 'two', phá [faː] 'pay', imigh [im´ig´] 'go'

Alternatively, they may be silent:

(16) domhan [daun] 'world', gabha [gau] 'smith', Tadhg [taig] 'Pers. n.', samhradh [saurə] 'summer', itheadh [ihuː] 'eat-Impers.-Past'

1.1.2.2.2. The orthographic representation of eclipsis

Due to the morphophonological effect of eclipsis (see 1.4.2.), certain initial consonants are altered. In spelling, both are represented, with the new sound preceding the original one. Only the first consonant is pronounced in such orthographic clusters:

(17) mbád [maːd] 'boat', gcat [gat] 'cat', ngad [ŋad] 'withe', bpá [baː] 'pay', bPáras 'Paris'

1.2. The phonetic system

Because phonetics is the area where the variation between dialects is most acute, we confine ourselves as far as possible to remarks which apply to all regions. For descriptions of the surviving individual dialects, see Sjoestedt (1931), de Bhaldraithe (1945), and Ó Baoill (1996). More general accounts, which include information on extinct dialects, can be found in Ua Súilleabháin (1994), Ó hUiginn (1994), and Hughes (1994).

1.2.1. Vocalic elements

1.2.1.1. Vowels

The principal vowel positions of Irish are as in Table 1:

Table 1

The above vowels are unrounded, except for [u], [o].

1.2.1.2. Vowel length

Irish has five vowels which can be either long or short:

Table 2

	Short	Long
[i]	bith [b´ih] 'world'	bí [b´i:] 'be'
[u]	bus [bus] 'bus'	bús [bu:s] 'noise'
[e]	leith [l´eh] 'half'	léi [l´e:] 'with-her'
[o]	posta [postə] 'post'	pósta [po:stə] 'married'
[ɑ]	bas [bɑs] 'hand'	bás [bɑ:s] 'death'

The unstressed vowel [ə] has no long equivalent.

In C, there are two long vowels with no short equivalents:

Table 3

a) [æ:]	cead [k´æ:d] 'permission'
b) [a:]	cas [ka:s] 'turn'

In D, there is a long-short pair not found in the other dialects:

Table 4

	Short	Long
[a]	teach [t´ax] 'house'	fathach [fa:x] 'giant'

The short vowel [a] appears also in K, but not its long equivalent:

(18)   fear [f´ar] 'man'

D also has a long vowel [ɰ:] not found elsewhere:

(19)   saol [sɰ:l] 'life'

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1.2.1.3. Diphthongs

Irish has the following diphthongs in all dialects:

Table 5

		Examples
a)	[iə]	ciall [k´iəl] 'sense', bliain [b´l´iən´] 'year'
b)	[uə]	fuar [fuər] 'cold', uain [uən´] 'occasion'
c)	[ai]	radharc [rairk] 'sight', saighdiúir [said´u:r´] 'soldier'
d)	[au]	amhras [aurəs] 'doubt', slabhra [slaurə] 'chain'

For developments in individual dialects see Ó Cuív (1944), de Bhaldraithe (1945), Wagner (1959).

1.2.2. Consonants

Most consonants in Irish have a palatalised and a velarised variant. We defer discussion of this to Section 1.3.5.

1.2.2.1. Place of articulation

The consonants can be grouped as follows according to place of articulation:

Table 6

Bilabials	p, p´, b, b´, f, f´, v, v´, m, m´ w (C,D)
Dentals	t, t´, d, d´, n, n´, l, l´
Alveolars	r, r´, s
Palato-alveolars	ʃ
Velars	k, k´, g, g´, x, x´, ɣ, ɣ´, ŋ, ŋ´
Glottals	h

1.2.2.2. Manner of articulation

Using the criterion of manner of articulation, we arrive at the following grouping:

Table 7

Plosives	p, b, k, g, t, d
Fricatives	f, v, s, ʃ, x, g, h, r´ (C,K)
Liquids	r, l
Nasals	m, n, ŋ
Affricates	tʃ, dʒ

In C and D there is a further distinction in the case of liquids and nasals. In these dialects, these consonants have so-called tense equivalents, this tenseness being manifested in length and area of contact:

Table 8

	C	D
Laterals	L, L´	L, L´
Vibrants		R
Nasals	N, N´	N, N´

1.3. Phonology and morphophonology

1.3.1. Syllabic structure

1.3.1.1. Onsets

Onsets in Irish contain a maximum of three consonants, the first of which must be a voiceless sibilant, the second a voiceless plosive, and the third a non-nasal sonorant:

(20)   spleách [spʹlʹɑ:x] 'dependent', spré [spʹrʹe:] 'dowry', stracadh [strakə] 'tearing', stríoc [stʹrʹi:k] 'streak', sclábhaí [sklɑ:vi:] 'slave', scléip [ʃkʹlʹe:pʹ] 'gaiety', scraith [skrɑh] 'layer', scríobh [ʃkʹrʹi:v] 'write'

Two-consonant onsets show a wider range of combinations:

Table 9

a)	**voiceless sibilant + plosive, sonorant**
	slí [ʃlʹi:] 'way', sneachta [ʃnʹaxtə] 'snow', sraith [srɑh] 'row', smaoin [smi:nʹ] 'think', spéir [spʹe:rʹ] 'sky', scéal [ʃkʹe:l] 'story', stop [stop] 'stop'
b)	**plosive + non-nasal sonorant**
	plé [pʹlʹe:] 'discussion', preab [pʹrʹab] 'jump', bladhm [blaim] 'blaze', brí [bʹrʹi:] 'meaning', tláith [tlɑ:h] 'mild', treabh [tʹrʹav] 'tribe', dlúth [dlu:h] 'thick', dreo [dʹrʹo:] 'decay-VN', clé [kʹlʹe:] 'left', cré [kʹrʹe:] 'earth', gleo [gʹlʹo:] 'noise', gruaim [gruəmʹ] 'gloom'
c)	**tn-, kn-, gn-**
	tnúth [tnu:h] 'expect', cnó [kno:] 'nut', gnó [gno:] 'business'
d)	**f + non-nasal sonorant**
	fliuch [fʹlʹux] 'wet', fraoch [fre:x] 'heather'
e)	**mn-, mr-**
	mná [mnɑ:] (K), mná [mrɑ:] (C, D) 'women'

[rʹ] is not allowed in onset position when it is alone or in combination with [s, ʃ], e.g. rí [ri:] 'king' *[rʹi:], sreabh [srav] 'stream' *[srʹav]. Certain other consonants, e.g. [v, x], are only found in initial position in mutating environments (see 1.4.).

1.3.1.2. Codas, medial clusters, and epenthesis

Codas can have a maximum of two consonants:

Table 10

a)	**sonorant + voiceless plosive**
	ailp [alʹpʹ] 'lump', alt [alt] 'joint', olc [olk] 'bad', plimp [pʹlʹi:mʹpʹ] 'crash', saint [sainʹtʹ] 'greed', sonc [su:ŋk] 'nudge', searc [ʃark] 'love', corp [korp] 'body', art [art] 'stone'
b)	**-rd,-ng**
	ard [a:rd] 'high', long [lu:ŋg] 'ship'
c)	**sibilant + t,k**
	post [post] 'post', poist [poʃtʹ] 'id.-Gen.', seasc [ʃask] 'barren', éisc [e:ʃkʹ] 'fish-Gen.'
d)	**-xt**
	céacht [kʹe:xt] 'plough'

Some descriptions of Irish (e.g. Ó Siadhail (1989), Mac Eoin (1993)) claim that the vowel in the final syllable in words like the following is epenthetic (for the sake of clarity we mark the vowels in question in bold in the transcription):

(21) seilbh [ʃelʹivʹ] 'possession', marbh [marəv] 'dead', ainm [anʹimʹ] 'name', gorm [gorəm] 'blue', dealg [dʹaləg] 'thorn', dearg [dʹarəg] 'red'

These descriptions assume that the words end in a cluster phonologically, and that a vowel is inserted to break them up, so that phonetically the cluster is never attested.

Such clusters are not found word-internally either, e.g. Albain [aləbinʹ] 'Scotland', carbad [karəbəd] 'chariot', leanbaí [lʹanəbi:] 'childish'. Thus, there seems to be a general process at work here. We propose the following rough-and-ready description of the phenomenon:

When preceded by a stressed short vowel, coronal sonorants are separated from certain non-homorganic consonants by an epenthetic vowel.

1.3.1.3 Optional epenthesis

Another kind of epenthesis is optional, and is mainly confined to K. The condition is similar to the one for obligatory epenthesis, namely, non-homorganicity between a coronal sonorant and some other consonant. This time though, the sonorant is the second member. We provide two transcriptions, one for K, one for C, so that the epenthesis is clearly visible:

Table 11

	K	C
a) imleacán 'navel'	[imʹilʹəka:n]	[imʹlʹəka:N]
b) iothlann 'field-Gen.'	[ihələn]	[oLəN]
c) aithris 'imitation'	[ahirʹiʃ]	[æ:rʹiʃ]
d) oibre 'work-Gen.'	[ebʹirʹi]	[aibʹrʹi]
e) eachtra 'adventure'	[axtərə]	[a:xtrə]
f) acra 'acre'	[akərə]	[a:krə]

Another difference is that the preceding vocalic element may be long:

Table 12

	K	C
a) sampla 'example'	[saumpələ]	[sɑ:mplə]
b) cúpla 'couple'	[ku:pələ]	[ku:plə]

For a detailed theoretical account of epenthesis see Ní Chíosáin (1999).

1.3.2. Syllable reduction

1.3.2.1. Intervocalic [h]

In C, intervocalic [h] is frequently lost. Because Irish does not allow hiatus, this leads to a reduction in the number of syllables compared to K and D. We illustrate this contrast with examples from K and C:

Table 13

	K	C
a) bóthar 'road'	[bo:hər]	[bo:r]
b) oíche 'night'	[i:hi]	[i:]
c) beithíoch 'cow'	[behi:x]	[beix]

1.3.2.2. Loss of short vowels

Short vowels are sometimes lost in the individual dialects, giving rise to a reduction in the number of syllables, which can be seen when we compare the same word as pronounced in different regions:

Table 14

a) salach 'dirty'	[slax] (K)	[sa:ləx] (C)
b) coláiste 'college'	[klɑ:ʃt'i] (K, C)	[kolaʃt'i] (D)
c) coróin 'crown'	[kro:n'] (K, C)	[koron'] (D)

1.3.3 Stress

In the northern and western dialects, apart from a few lexically-marked items, stress is word initial:

(22)   coileach [kol'əx] 'cock', scadán ['skudɑ:n] 'herring', báicéara ['bɑ:k'e:rə] 'baker'

In K, the situation is much more complex, in that the stress frequently falls on a syllable other than the first. The following is intended as a general description of the contexts in which this happens:

1. Stress on second syllable:

a) if it contains a long vowel or diphthong:

(23)   bádóir [bɑ:'do:r'] 'boatman', cailíní [kɑl'i:n'i:] 'girl-Pl.', cathaoir [kɑhi:r'] 'chair'

b) if the second syllable is [ax(t)], and the vowel in the first or third syllable is not long:

(24)   portach [pərˈtɑx] 'bog', beannacht [bʲiˈnˊaxt] 'blessing'

2. Stress on third syllable: if it contains a long vowel or diphthong, and the preceding vowels are short:

(25)   amadán [əməˈdɑːn] 'fool', tamaillín [taməˈlˊiːnˊ] 'while-Dim.'

For a thorough theoretical treatment the reader is referred to Gussmann (1997).

1.3.4. Vowels
1.3.4.1. Quality
1.3.4.1.1. Palatalisation and vowel quality

We can observe an asymmetry between short and long vowels with respect to the influence exerted upon them by palatalised and velarised consonants. The quality of short vowels is to a considerable extent determined by the value of the surrounding consonants with respect to palatalisation, in that front vowels tend to occur in the vicinity of palatalised consonants, and back ones in the neighbourhood of velarised ones. It should, however, be borne in mind that transcriptions vary greatly in those cases where both front and back vowels occur; one transcriber will hear a front vowel, while another will hear a back one. Thus, Sjoestedt-Jonval (1938) transcribes *cuid* 'portion' as [kʷidˊ], while Ó Cuív (1944) has [kudˊ]; as far as I can tell, the pronunciation is the same in the two sub-dialects in question. The reader is referred to Cyran (1997) for a theoretical presentation of this issue.

The following is a list of the main patterns:

Table 15

Consonant	Vowel	Examples
a) — Cˊ	front	in [inˊ] 'in', air [erˊ] 'on-him', ait [atˊ] 'strange'
b) — C	back	as [as] 'out of', ola [olə] 'oil', iomad [uməd] 'abundance'
c) Cˊ —	front	te [tˊe] 'hot', sea [ʃa] 'yes'
Exception	back	seo [ʃo] 'this'
d) C —	back	ba [bɑ] 'cow-Pl.', guth [guh] 'voice'
e) Cˊ — Cˊ	front	tine [tˊinˊi] 'fire', creid [kˊrˊedˊ] 'believe', meaig [mˊagˊ] 'magpie'
f) C — C	back	bac [bɑk] 'obstacle', poc [pok] 'he-goat', dubh [duv] 'black'
g) Cˊ — C	front	bior [bˊir] 'spike', bead [bˊed] 'be-1st Sg. Fut.', sean [ʃan] 'old'
	back	beag [bˊog] 'small', pioc [pˊuk] 'bit'
h) C — Cˊ	front	raibh [revˊ] 'be-Dep. Past' , coille [kilˊi] 'wood-Gen.'
	back	baile [balˊi] 'home', cois [koʃ] 'leg-Dat.', cuid [kudˊ] 'portion'

As can be seen, when the preceding and following consonant agree with respect to palatalisation, we find only front or only back vowels: the sequences Cˊ- back V - Cˊ and C - front V - C are not allowed.

With long vowels, the quality seems to be independent of the surrounding consonants, with both front and back vowels found in all kinds of environment:

Table 16

a) [i:]	im [i:m´] 'butter', lí [l´i:] 'colour', caol [ki:L] 'slender', iontach [i:Ntəx] 'wonderful', poill [pi:l´] 'hole-Gen.'
b) [e:]	cé [k´e:] 'who', éin [e:n´] 'bird-Gen.', lao [le:] 'calf', saol [se:l] 'life', Gaeil [ge:l´] 'Irishman-Gen.', séan [ʃe:n] 'luck'
c) [æ:] (C only)	aithne [æ:n´i] 'acquaintance', easpag [æ:spəg] 'bishop', ceas [k´æ:s] 'surfeit', ceaig [k´æ:g´] 'keg', tais [tæ:ʃ] 'damp'
d) [ɑ:]	áit [ɑ:t´] 'place', Sheáin [x´ɑ:n´] 'Pers. n.-Gen.', bád [bɑ:d] 'boat', ceann [k´ɑ:N] 'head', caill [kɑ:L´] 'lose'
e) [o:]	ól [o:l] 'drinking', óil [o:l´] 'id.-Gen.', bord [bo:rd] 'table', bróin [bro:n´] 'sorrow-Gen.', ceol [k´o:l] 'music', ceoil [k´o:l´] 'id.-Gen.'
f) [u:]	úll [u:l] 'apple', úill [u:l´] 'id.-Gen.', bonn [bu:n] 'sole', cúil [ku:l´] 'back-Gen.', fionn [f´u:n] 'fair', triúir [t´r´u:r´] 'trio-Gen.'

1.3.4.1.2. Alternations in quality

Vowel alternations are frequently exploited in Irish morphology to mark such inflectional categories as case or plurality, and also on the derivational level, in diminutives, for example. While some of these alternations are undoubtedly connected with the palatalisation of the surrounding consonants, it is not possible to predict the phonetic outcome of a given morphological operation. For this reason, we simply list the most common alternations. See Sjoestedt-Jonval (1938) and Ó Siadhail (1989) for more detailed accounts.

Table 17: Short vowels

		Nom. Sg.	Gen.Sg.
a)	[a] - [e]	speal [sp´al]	speile [sp´el´i] 'scythe'
b)	[a] - [i]	cearc [k´ark]	circe [k´ir´k´i] 'hen'
c)	[i] - [a]	fios [f´is]	feasa [f´asə] 'knowledge'
d)	[o] - [a]	cion [k´on]	ceana [k´anə] 'love'
e)	[o] - [e]	obair [obir´]	oibre [eb´ir´i] 'work'
f)	[ɑ] - [a]	arm [arəm]	airm [ar´im´] 'weapon'
g)	[ɑ] - [i]	lag [lɑg]	laig [lig´] 'weakling'
h)	[o] - [i]	cnoc [knok]	cnoic [knik´] 'hill'
i)	[i] - [o]	fuil [fil´]	fola [folə] 'blood'
j)	[u] - [i]	cur [kur]	cuir [kir´] 'sowing'

Table 18: Long vowels / diphthongs

		Nom. Sg.	Gen.Sg.
a)	[ɑ:]- [i:]	crann [krɑ:N]	crainn [kri:N´] 'tree'
b)	[au] - [i:]	ball [baul]	baill [bi:l´] 'member'
c)	[au] - [ai]	abhainn [auN´]	aibhne [aiv´N´i] 'river'
d)	[u:] - [i:]	fonn [fu:n]	foinn [fi:n´] 'desire'
e)	[iə] - [e:]	ciall [k´iəl]	céille [k´e:l´i] 'sense'

1.3.4.2. Length

As noted in Section 1.1, some vowels are always long, while with others length is conditioned by the consonantal environment. In this section we attempt to give a more systematic account of the phenomenon of vowel lengthening.

First of all, lengthening / diphthongisation only takes place in stressed syllables. The vowel in question must precede one of the sonorants [R]/[r], [N]/[n], [L]/[l], [m], and [ŋg]. If a vowel follows the sonorant, the lengthening / diphthongisation does not take place. Like with palatalisation / velarisation, this gives rise to morphophonological alternations, this time between long and short vowels:

Table 19

		Long	Short
a)	[R]/[r]	barr [bɑ:r] 'top'	barra [barə] 'id.-Var.'
b)	[N]/[n]	gleann [g´l´aun] 'glen'	gleanna [g´l´anə] 'id.-Gen.'
c)	[L]/[l]	aill [ail´] 'cliff'	aille [al´i] 'id.-Gen.'
d)	[m]	am [aum] 'time'	ama [amə] 'id.-Gen.'
e)	[ŋg]	long [lu:ŋg] 'ship'	loinge [liŋgi] 'id.-Gen.'

This process also comes into play before certain clusters whose first member is a sonorant:

Table 20

		Long	Short
a)	[rn]	foireann [fir´ən] 'crew'	foirne [fo:rn´i] 'id.-Gen.'
b)	[rd]	cara [karə] 'friend'	cairde [kɑ:rd´i] 'id.-Pl.'
c)	[nd]	sean- [ʃan] 'old	seanda [ʃaundə] 'id.'
d)	[nt]	cion [k´on] 'fault'	cionta [k´u:ntə] 'id.-Pl.'
e)	[ns]	inis [in´iʃ] 'tell'	inseacht [i:nʃəxt] 'id.-V.N.'
f)	[ls]	solas [soləs] 'light'	soilse [sailʃi] 'id.-Pl.'
g)	[mp]	uime [im´i] 'about-him'	uimpi [i:m´p´i] 'about-her'

In C, there is diphthongisation before [br], [vr]:

Table 21

	Short	Long
a) [br]	obair [obir´] 'work'	oibre [aib´r´i] 'id.-Gen.'
b) [vr]	saibhir [sev´ir´] 'rich'	saibhreas [saiv´r´əs] 'riches'

1.3.4.3. Stress-related alternations
1.3.4.3.1. Reduced vowels

In unstressed syllables, short vowels are reduced. The phonetic realisation of the reduced vowel is either [ə] or [i] depending on the environment: the former in the neighbourhood of non-palatalised, the latter in the neighbourhood of palatalised, consonants:

Table 22

a)	madra ['mɑdərə] 'dog', doras ['dorəs] 'door'
b)	file ['f´il´i] 'poet', dorais ['der´iʃ] 'door-Gen.'

In K, where the stress may occur on different syllables in a word, this gives rise to alternations between full vowels and reduced ones:

Table 23

		Full	Reduced
a)	[ɑ] - [ə]	bacaigh ['bɑkig´] 'tramp-Gen.'	bacach [bə'kɑx] 'id.-Nom.'
b)	[o] - [ə]	beag [b´og] 'small'	beagán [b´ə'gɑːn] 'small amount'
c)	[u] - [ə]	mullaigh ['mulig´] 'peak-Gen.'	mullach [mə'lɑx] 'id.-Nom.'

1.3.4.3.2. Shortened vowels

Long vowels are usually immune to the kind of process described in the previous section, since they receive secondary stress. Thus in C and K, a long vowel remains long even though it does not bear the main stress:

(26)   slánaitheoir ['slɑːnə₎hoːr´] 'saviour', údarás ['uːdərɑːs] 'authority'

In D, long vowels in unstressed syllables are shortened:

(27)   slánaitheoir ['slɑːnə₎hor´] 'saviour', údarás ['uːdə₎ras] 'authority'

1.3.5. Consonants
1.3.5.1. Palatalisation / velarisation

Palatalisation and velarisation are common devices in the morphological system of Irish. This gives rise to alternating pairs of consonants (frequently accompanied by vowel alternations, see 1.3.4.1.2):

26

Table 24

		Non-palatalised	Palatalised
a)	[b] - [b´]	gob [gob] 'beak'	goib [gib´] 'id.-Gen.'
b)	[k] - [k´]	poc [pok] 'he-goat'	poic [pik´] 'id.-Gen.'
c)	[d] - [d´]	gad [gɑd] 'withe'	gaid [gɑd´] 'id.-Gen.'
d)	[f] - [f´]	stuf [stuf] 'stuff'	stuif [stif´] 'id.-Var.'
e)	[g] - [g´]	bog [bog] 'soft'	boig [big´] 'id.-Gen.'
f)	[l] - [l´]	gol [gol] 'crying'	goil [gil´] 'id.-Gen.'
g)	[m]- [m´]	com [kaum] 'valley'	coim [ki:m´] 'id.-Gen.'
h)	[n] - [n´]	fonn [faun] 'desire'	foinn [fi:n´] 'id.-Gen.'
i)	[ŋ] - [ŋ´]	long [lu:ŋg] 'ship'	loing [li:ŋg´] 'id.-Dat.'
j)	[p] - [p´]	ceap [k´ap] 'block'	cip [k´ip´] 'id.-Gen.'
k)	[r] - [r´]	rothar [rohər] 'bicycle'	rothair [rohər´] 'id.-Gen.'
l)	[s] - [ʃ]	gas [gɑs] 'stem'	gais [gɑʃ] 'id.-Gen.'
m)	[t] - [t´]	cat [kɑt] 'cat'	cait [kit´] 'id.-Gen.'
n)	[v] - [v´]	ubh [uv] 'egg'	uibhe [iv´i] 'id.-Gen.'
o)	[x] - [x´]	cloch [klox] 'stone'	cloiche [klox´i] 'id.-Gen.'

The phonetic realisation of palatalisation is sometimes unpredictable. Thus, [s] alternates with [ʃ], and flapped [r] with fricative [r´]. The degree of palatalisation acoustically present in palatalised bilabials is minimal; thus, in the first example above, the burden of differentiating the nominative from the genitive falls on the vowel alternation.

With [h] there is no palatalised - velarised alternation:

(28)   rith [rih] 'running'   reatha [rahə] 'id.-Gen.'

Consonants in clusters normally share the same value for palatalisation, e.g. *beilt* [b´el´t´], *[b´elt´] 'belt'. However, [r] and [x] are never palatalised before dentals:

Table 25

a)	airne [ɑ:rn´i] 'sloe'
b)	boicht [boxt´] 'poor-Gen.'

1.3.5.2. Voice

Voiced stops can be devoiced by following voiceless consonants, such as the suffix **-tha** [hə] of the Verbal Adjective in K:

Table 26

	Stem	VA
a)	crom [kraum] 'bend'	cromtha [kraumhə]
b)	tóg [to:g] 'take'	tógtha [to:kə]

In the first example, [mh] represents a voiceless bilabial nasal. In the second example, the [h] of the suffix merges with the plosive, and we are left with voiceless [k].

1.3.5.3. The fricatives [v] and [x] in medial position

The phonetic realisation of these sounds varies considerably from dialect to dialect. In D, palatalised [x] is realised as [x´], in K as [h]. In C, it disappears and the flanking vowels are lengthened:

Table 27

	D	K	C
a) cloch 'stone'	[klox]	[klox]	[klox]
b) cloiche 'id.-Gen.'	[klox´i]	[klohi]	[klo:i:]

In K, medial [v] and [v´] are lost, with lengthening of the preceding vowel. This becomes apparent if we compare the pronunciation of these sounds in K and C:

Table 28

	K	C
dubh 'black'	[duv]	[duv]
dubha 'id.-Pl.'	[du:]	[duwə]
duibhe 'id.-Compar.'	[di:]	[div´i]

1.4. Initial mutations

Like in the other Celtic languages, initial sounds in Irish are mutated in certain morphologically and syntactically determined environments - see Grijzenhout (1995), Gussmann (1986).

The traditional grammars recognise two types of mutations: lenition and eclipsis. We begin with lenition.

1.4.1. Lenition

The overall tendency of this process is clear enough, i.e. the radical consonant is weakened, so that, for example, a plosive becomes a continuant. However, because the outcome is not always predictable, we provide a detailed table below illustrating the changes, accompanied by examples in orthography (O) and pronunciation (P):

Table 29

Non-lenited			Lenited		
O	P	Example	O	P	Example
p	[p]	pota [potə] 'pot'	ph	[f]	phota [fotə]
b	[b]	bord [bo:rd] 'table'	bh	[v]	bhord [vo:rd]
m	[m]	mór [mo:r] 'big'	mh	[v/w]	mhór [v/wo:r]
f	[f]	fear [f´ar] 'man'	fh	ø	fhear [ar]
t	[t]	teach [t´ax] 'house'	th	[h]	theach [hax]
d	[d]	dá [dɑ:] 'two'	dh	[ɣ]	dhá [ɣɑ:]
d	[d´]	dia [d´iə] 'god'	dh	[j]	dhia [jiə]
s	[s]	sá [sɑ:] 'push'	sh	[h]	shá [hɑ:]

s	[ʃ]	síol [ʃi:l] 'seed'	sh	[h]	shíol [hi:l]
s	[ʃ]	Seán [ʃɑ:n] 'Pers. n.'	sh	[x´]	Sheáin [x´ɑ:n´]
c	[k]	cos [kos] 'leg'	ch	[x]	chos [xos]
g	[g]	gob [gob] 'beak'	gh	[ɣ]	ghob [ɣob]
g	[g]	gé [g´e:] 'goose'	gh	[j]	ghé [je:]

Lenition is usually induced by particles:

Table 30

	Non-lenited	Lenited
a)	cuireann [kir´ən] put-Pres. 'puts'	ní chuireann [n´i: xir´ən] not put-Pres 'does not put'
b)	téann [t´e:n] go-Pres. 'goes'	a théann [ə he:n] that go-Pres. 'that goes'
c)	bean [b´an] 'woman'	an bhean [ən v´an] 'the woman'

[s] does not undergo lenition in the clusters [st], [sp], [sk]. In the first example below, lenition does not occur, even though the possessive *mo* 'mo' normally evokes this change, cf. the second example:

Table 31

	Non-lenited	Lenited
a)	speal [sp´al] 'scythe'	mo speal [mə sp´al] 'my scythe'
b)	soc [sok] 'snout'	mo shoc [mə hok] 'my snout'

In those dialects (C,D) which have a distinction between the tense and lax sonorants [N, n] and [L, l], the former appear in unlenited, and the latter in lenited contexts:

Table 32

	Non-lenited	Lenited
a)	neart [N´art] 'strength'	mo neart [mə n´art] 'my strength'
b)	líon [L´i:N] 'fill'	líon [l´i:N] 'id. Past'

Homorganic consonants resist lenition. Thus *aon* 'any' usually lenites, but not when the following word begins with [d], [t] or [s]:

Table 33

	Non-lenited		Lenited	
a)	bean [b´an]		aon	bhean [e:n v´an]
	'woman'		'any	woman'
b)	teach [t´ax]		aon	teach [e:n t´ax]
	'house'		'any	house'

1.4.2. Eclipsis

This involves the voicing of voiceless consonants, and the nasalisation of voiced ones (O = orthography, P = pronunciation):

Table 34

Non-eclipsed			Eclipsed		
O	P	Example	O	P	Example
p	[p]	pota [potə] 'pot'	bp	[b]	bpota [botə]
t	[t]	téann [t´e:n] 'go-Pres.'	dt	[d]	dtéann [d´e:n]
c	[k]	ceann [k´aun] 'head'	gc	[g]	gceann [g´aun]
f	[f]	fad [fɑd] 'distance'	bhf	[v/w]	bhfad [v/wɑd]
b	[b]	bata [batə] 'stick'	mb	[m]	mbata [matə]
d	[d]	doras [dorəs] 'door'	nd	[n]	ndoras [norəs]
g	[g]	gá [gɑ:] 'need'	ng	[ŋ]	ngá [ŋɑ:]

Vowels are eclipsed by the addition of [n]:

Table 35

Non-eclipsed	Eclipsed
éan [e:n] 'bird'	n-éan [n´e:n]

Like lenition, eclipsis is caused by various particles:

Table 36

	Non-eclipsed	Eclipsed
a)	bád [bɑ:d]	i mbád [ə mɑ:d]
		in boat
	'boat'	'in a boat'
b)	cat [kat]	na gcat [nə gat]
		the cat-Gen. Pl.
	'cat'	'of the cats'
c)	téann sí [t´e:n ʃi:]	an dtéann sí? [ən d´e:n ʃi:]
	go-Pres. she	Interr. go-Pres. she
	'she goes'	'does she go?'

As well as lenition and eclipsis, there are two other kinds of mutations which must be recognised.

1.4.3. [h] insertion

In grammatically determined environments, [h] is inserted word-initially between two vowels:

Table 37

Vowel	h+vowel	
é [e:]	ní	hé [ni:he:]
	Cop.-Neg.-Pres.	him
'him'	'it is not him'	

That this is grammatically determined is shown by the following example, where two vowels meet, and one is elided:

(29)　bata [batə] an [ən]　fhir　[ir´]　—> [batən´ir´]
　　　stick　　the　　man-Gen.
　　　'the man's stick'

1.4.4 [t] insertion

This affects nouns only, and is entirely dependent on morphological case. Following the article, [t] is inserted before vowels and lenited [s] ([h]) in a limited number of environments:

Table 38

	Non-mutated	Mutated
a)	athair [ahir´]	an　t-athair [ən tahir´]
	'father-Nom.'	'the　father-Nom.'
b)	súil [su:l´]	an　tsúil [ən tu:l´]
	'eye-Nom.'	'the　eye-Nom.'
c)	an　sagart [ən sagərt]	an　tsagairt [ən tagirt´]
	'the　priest-Nom.'	'the　priest-Gen.'

In the following chapters, mutations are marked by means of the following superscripts:

L - leniting, e.g. ní^L

E - eclipsing, e.g. an^E

H - [h] insertion, e.g. na^H

T - [t] insertion, e.g. an^T

2. Morphology

2.0. Introduction

There is also considerable interdialectal variation in the area of morphology. Overviews of the three regions are to be found in Ua Súilleabháin (1994), Ó hUiginn (1994), and Hughes (1994). For detailed descriptions of individual dialects see Sjoestedt-Jonval (1938), de Bhaldraithe (1953), and Wagner (1959).

As mentioned in the last section of the previous chapter, Irish exploits the system of initial mutations for various morphological and syntactic purposes. As well as this, it employs more familiar tools like affixation or vowel alternations in its morphology. In what follows, we will have occasion to refer to all three of these morphological exponents.

2.1. Inflectional morphology

2.1.1 The nominal complex

Because words which stand in a close syntactic relationship to each other exhibit morphological agreement, it is convenient to treat the noun, the definite article, and the attributive adjective all together.

2.1.1.1 The declensional system

In the 17th century, nouns were divided into five declensions, following the Latin model (Mac Aogáin 1968). This declensional system is based very much on the formation of the genitive singular. The 17th-century division is maintained in modern standard grammars, although the dialects show great diversity with respect to nominal inflection. In what follows, we try to confine ourselves to examples which are valid for all dialects.

Irish has morphologically differentiated nominative/accusative, and genitive. The first declension has a distinct vocative. In all declensions, the vocative is introduced by the particle a^L. Thus, *Máire* 'Mary' has vocative *a Mháire*. In the second declension some nouns have a special dative form after prepositions. Morphological case-marking is for the most part lacking in the plural, with a single form used as nominative/accusative and after prepositions.

As far as plural marking is concerned, the actual form it takes is unpredictable from the form of the nominative singular, and there is great dialectal variation, with a multitude of affixes being employed. Consequently, no attempt is made to provide a thorough presentation of this phenomenon.

Two genders are distinguished, masculine and feminine. Gender is also largely unpredictable on the basis of the phonetic or morphological shape of the nominative singular. However, it is possible to identify a limited number of phonetic sequences and derivational suffixes which are associated with a fixed value for this feature. For example, nouns ending in the sequence **-(i)úr** are all masculine, e.g. *rásúr* 'razor', while those ending in **-(e)acht** are feminine, e.g. *gileacht* 'brightness'.

We now proceed to give a brief survey of the declensions. In the tables which follow, transcriptions are provided for mutated forms.

In the first declension, all nouns are masculine, and the genitive is formed by palatalising the final consonant, which may cause alternations in the preceding vowel (see

1.3.4.1.2). Nouns ending in **-(e)ach** have genitive in **-(a)igh**. The presence or absence of orthographic *e* in the nominative, and of orthographic *a* in the genitive, is governed by the principle mentioned in 1.1.2.1: the graphemes flanking consonants must belong to the group *i, e* or *a, o, u*. Thus, we find *orlach* [oːrləx] 'inch', Gen. *orlaigh* [oːrligʹ], but *coileach* [kolʹəx] 'cock', Gen. *coiligh* [kolʹigʹ]. The phonetic sequence after the medial consonant is identical, only the spelling differs.

Table 1

		Sg.	Pl.
a) fear 'man'	Nom.	fear	fir
	Voc.	aᴸ fhir [irʹ]	a fheara [arə]
	Gen.	fir	fear
b) orlach 'inch'	Nom.	orlach	orlaí
	Gen.	orlaigh	orlaí

The second declension consists of feminine nouns. The genitive is formed by palatalising the final consonant if it is not palatalised already, and adding **-e**. Nouns of more than one syllable ending in **-(e)ach** replace this by **-(a)í** in the genitive. A few nouns in this declension retain the dative singular:

Table 2

		Sg.	Pl.
a) lámh 'hand'	Nom.	lámh	lámha
	Gen.	láimhe	lámh
	Dat.	láimh	lámha
b) cailleach 'hag'	Nom.	cailleach	cailleacha
	Gen.	caillí	cailleach

The third declension embraces both masculine and feminine nouns. The genitive is formed by depalatalising the final consonant of the nominative if it is palatalised, and adding -a. This can give rise to alternations in the preceding vowel (see 1.3.4.1.2):

Table 3

			Sg.	Pl.
masc.	a) múinteoir 'teacher'	Nom.	múinteoir	múinteoirí
		Gen.	múinteora	múinteoirí
fem.	b) fuil 'blood'	Nom.	fuil	–
		Gen.	fola	–

The fourth declension is also mixed with respect to gender. Here the only morphological contrast is between singular and plural, as there is no distinct genitive:

Table 4

		Sg.	Pl.
a) cailín 'girl'	Nom.	cailín	cailíní
b) madra 'dog'	Nom.	madra	madraí

Most nouns in the fifth declension are feminine. The only generalisation that can be made about the genitive singular is that it must end in a non-palatalised consonant. It can be formed from the nominative in three ways: by depalatalisation, by adding **-(e)an**, or by adding **-(e)ach**. The choice of sub-paradigm is lexically determined.

Table 5

		Sg.	Pl.
a) athair 'father'	Nom.	athair	aithreacha
	Gen.	athar	aithreacha
b) comharsa 'neighbour'	Nom.	comharsa	comharsana
	Gen.	comharsan	comharsana
c) cathaoir 'chair'	Nom.	cathaoir	cathaoireacha
	Gen.	cathaoireach	cathaoireacha

As in other languages, certain commonly-used nouns are irregular, e.g. *bean* 'woman', has *mná* as its genitive singular and nominative plural.

2.1.1.2. The definite article

Irish has a definite article but no indefinite one. It agrees with the noun in case, number and gender. This agreement can be seen to some extent in the form of the article itself, but even more so in the change it evokes in the initial sound of the following noun (i.e. the mutation it produces). The following is the paradigm for masculine nouns in the singular.

Table 6

	Nom.	Gen.
a) cat [kɑt] 'cat'	an cat [kɑt]	an^L chait [xit′]
b) éan [e:n] 'bird'	an^T t-éan [t′e:n]	an éin [e:n′]
c) sagart [sɑgərt] 'priest'	an sagart [sɑgərt]	an^L tsagairt [tɑgərt′][1]

Feminine nouns have the same mutations, but arranged differently:

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[1] Recall that the lenition of [s] is accompanied by [t] insertion (1.4.4).

Table 7

	Nom.	Gen.
a) bróg [bro:g] 'shoe'	an^L bhróg [vro:g]	na bróige [bro:g´i]
b) áit [ɑ:t´] 'place'	an áit [ɑ:t´]	na^H háite [hɑ:t´i]
c) súil [su:l´] 'eye'	an^L tsúil [tu:l´]	na súile [su:l´i]

After a preposition and the article, all singular nouns, regardless of gender, are mutated. In D, they undergo lenition, in C and K, eclipsis:

Table 8

Unmutated	Prep.*	
a) bord [bo:rd] 'table'	ar an	bhord [vo:rd] (D)
	ar an	mbord [mo:rd] (C, K)
	'on the	table'
b) oileán [il´ɑ:n] 'island'	ar an	oileán [il´ɑ:n] (D, C, K)
	'on the	island'
c) sráid [srɑ:d´] 'street'	ar an	tsráid [trɑ:d´] (D)
	ar an	sráid [srɑ:d´] (C,K)
	'on the	street'

Prep.* = Preposition and article

In the plural, the mutations are the same for all nouns:

Table 9

	Nom.	na cailíní [kal´i:n´i:]
a) cailíní [kal´i:n´i:] 'girls'	Gen.	na^E gcailíní [gal´i:n´i:]
	Prep.	ar na cailíní [kal´i:n´i:]
b) éin [e:n´] 'birds'	Nom.	na^H héin [he:n´]
	Gen.	na^E n-éan [n´e:n]
	Prep.	ar na^H héin [he:n´]

2.1.1.3. The attributive adjective

Attributive adjectives follow their noun, agreeing with it in case, number and gender. As with the noun, morphological marking is manifested by affixation, vowel modification, and initial mutations.

2.1.1.3.1 The declensional system

Following the usage of Latin grammars, adjectives are divided into three declensions.

In the first declension, the masculine paradigm for the singular resembles that of the first declension of nouns, and the feminine that of the second declension of nouns. In both genders in the plural, a vowel is added to the stem, -a if the final consonant is non-palatalised, -e if it is palatalised:

Table 10

			Sg.		Pl.
			Masc.	Fem.	Masc. and Fem.
a)	bán	Nom.	bán	bán	bána
	'white'	Gen.	báin	báine	bána
b)	bacach	Nom.	bacach	bacach	bacacha
	'lame'	Gen.	bacaigh	bacaí	bacacha
c)	mín	Nom.	mín	mín	míne
	'nice'	Gen.	mín	míne	míne

In the second declension, the genitive feminine singular is formed by depalatalisation and the addition of -a, like in the third declension of nouns, while the masculine remains unaltered. The plural is the same as the genitive singular:

Table 11

			Sg.		Pl.
			Masc.	Fem.	Masc. and Fem.
a)	dathúil	Nom.	dathúil	dathúil	dathúla
	'good-looking'	Gen.	dathúil	dathúla	dathúla
b)	socair	Nom.	socair	socair	socra
	'steady'	Gen.	socair	socra	socra

The third declension consists of adjectives ending in a vowel. These do not undergo any changes.

2.1.1.3.2. Mutation of the adjective

Generally speaking, the same mutations can be observed on the adjective as on the noun following the article. Thus in the nominative feminine singular, the adjective is lenited, just as the noun is after the article. However, the mutations are not identical, and in some cases do not seem to realise any one morphosyntactic category. For example, plurals ending in a palatalised consonant lenite the adjective, but other plurals don't. The following is the paradigm for masculine nouns in the singular:

Table 12

	Nom.	an cat beag [kat b´og]
cat beag [kat b´og] 'small cat'	Gen.	an^L chat^L bhig [xat v´ig´]
	Prep.	ar an^E gcat beag (C,K) / an^L chat^L bheag (D) [gat b´og] [xat v´og] 'on the small cat'

Feminine adjectives exhibit the same mutations, but arranged differently:

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Table 13

	Nom.	an^L bhróg^L mhór [vro:g vo:r]
bróg mhór [bro:g vo:r] 'big shoe'	Gen.	na bróige móire [bro:g´i mo:r´i]
	Prep.	ar an^E mbróig^L mhór (C,K) / an^L bhróig^L mhór (D) [mro:g´ vo:r] [vro:g´ vo:r] 'on the big shoe'

Only one class of nouns causes mutations in the plural, those ending in a palatalised consonant. When the noun ends in a vowel, that is, in the vast majority of cases, there is no mutation, regardless of the gender or case:

Table 14

		Nom.	na cait^L bheaga [kɑt´ v´ogə]
a)	cait bheaga [kɑt´ v´ogə] 'small cats'	Gen.	na^E gcat beaga [gɑt b´ogə]
		Prep.	ar na cait^L bheaga [kɑt´ v´ogə] 'on the small cats'
b)	bróga beaga [bro:gə b´ogə] 'small shoes'	Nom.	na bróga beaga [bro:gə b´ogə]
		Gen.	na^E mbróg beaga [mro:g b´ogə]
		Prep.	ar na bróga beaga [bro:gə b´ogə] 'on the small shoes'

2.1.2. The adjective and adverb

In this section we look briefly at adjectives which have an invariable form, and adverbs which are derived from them.

2.1.2.1 Predicative adjectives

Predicative adjectives are not declined in Irish, e.g.

(1)   Tá   an fear / an bhean   / na daoine deas.

       be-Pres.   the man / the woman / the people nice

       'The man / the woman / the people is / are nice.'

2.1.2.2 The comparative and superlative

The comparative has the same morphological form as the superlative in Irish[2]. This is phonetically identical to the feminine genitive singular of the attributive adjective:

Table 15

	Positive	Comparative
a)	bán 'white'	báine
b)	bacach 'lame'	bacaí
c)	mín 'smooth'	míne
d)	dathúil 'handsome'	dathúla
e)	socair 'steady'	socra

---

[2] In what follows, we use comparative to refer to both comparative and superlative.

The only cases where the feminine genitive singular and the comparative diverge are a handful of adjectives with an irregular comparative / superlative, such as:

Table 16

	Positive	Compar. / Super.
a)	beag 'small'	lú
b)	maith 'good'	fearr
c)	olc 'bad'	measa

Syntactic expressions with the comparative are formed by two means. First, the verb *bí* 'be' is used in conjunction with the particle *níos* and the comparative:

(2) Tá an teach seo níos lú   ná   an ceann sin.
     is the house this PRT small-Compar. than the one   that
     'This house is smaller than that one.'

Alternatively, the copula *is* is used with the comparative / superlative alone:

(3) Is lú   an teach seo ná   an ceann sin.
     is small-Compar. the house this than   the one   that
     'This house is smaller than that one.'

There is no separate form for the superlative. The notion of superlative is expressed by modifying the noun with a relative clause consisting of the copula + comparative:

(4) Is é seo   an teach is   lú.
     is it this the house Cop.-Rel small-Compar.
     'This is the house which is smallest.'

2.1.2.3. De-adjectival adverbs

Adverbs are derived from adjectives by means of the particle *go*. This particle prefixes [h] before a vowel:

Table 17

Adjective	Adverb
maith 'good'	go maith 'well'
olc 'bad'	go holc 'bad(ly)'

Such adverbs frequently appear as predicates with the verb *bí* 'be':

(5) Táim go   maith.
     am-I PRT good
     'I am well.'

2.1.3. Pronouns

We apply a slightly different classification here than that employed in traditional grammars. A distinction that cuts right across this category is that between weak and strong

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forms, the latter being derived from the former by the attachment of clitics. Strong forms are typically used for emphasis, contrast etc. Before discussing individual classes of pronouns, we present the three kinds of enclitics used.

2.1.3.1. Pronominal enclitics

We begin with emphatic enclitics:

Table 18

		Sg.	Pl.
1		-sa [sə] / -se [ʃi]	-na [nə] / -ne [n´i]
2		-sa [sə] / -se [ʃi]	-sa [sə] / -se [ʃi]
3	masc.	-san [sən] / -sean [ʃən]	-san [sən] / -sean [ʃən]
	fem.	-sa [sə] / -se [ʃi]	

The phonetic variant chosen depends on the final vowel or consonant of the host: the forms with a non-palatalised consonant are attached to [ə] and non-palatalised consonants, while the forms with a palatalised consonant are cliticised to [i] and palatalised consonants:

Table 19

		Uncliticised	Encliticised
a)		leabhar	mo leabharsa
		'book'	my book-Cl.
			'**my** book'
b)		máthair	do mháthairse
		'mother'	my mother-Cl.
			'**your** mother'

As well as emphatic clitics marked for person, number and gender, there is an invariant form *féin*, which roughly corresponds to contrastive *self* in English, and which is encliticised to pronominals.

2.1.3.2. Personal pronouns

2.1.3.2.1. Non-subject pronouns

The following is the paradigm for weak and strong pronouns:

Table 20

			Weak	Strong
Sg.	1		mé	mise
	2		tú	tusa
	3	masc.	é	eisean
		fem.	í	ise
Pl.	1		sinn (K) / muid (C, D)	sinne (K) / muide (C, D)
	2		sibh	sibhse
	3		iad	iadsan

2.1.3.2.2. Subject pronouns

There are two ways of marking a pronominal subject in Irish. One way is for the personal pronouns in Table 20 above to be added to the verb. In the 3rd singular and plural, an allomorph with initial **s-** is used when the pronoun is a subject:

(6)   Ólann sí tae.

       drinks she tea

       'She drinks tea.'

Alternatively, an inflected verb, marked for person and number, may be used instead of a pronoun:

(7)

a)   D'ól mé tae. (C, D)

      drank I tea

b)   D'ó**las** tae. (K)

      drank-I tea

      'I drank tea.'

In b), the ending **-as** marks the verb as 1st singular.

Like independent pronouns, inflected verbs have a strong form, obtained by adding an appropriate clitic:

(8)

a)   D'ólas-**sa** tae.

      drank-I-Emph tea

      'I drank tea.'

b)   D'ólas féin tae.

      drank-I self tea

      'I myself drank tea.'

2.1.3.3. Possessive pronouns

These appear as proclitics and mutate the following noun:

Table 21

		Sing.	Pl.
1		mo^L / m' (before Vowels)	ár^E
2		do^L / t' (before Vowels)	bhur^E
3	masc.	a^L	a^E
	fem.	a^H	

Emphatic possessive enclitics appear after the noun:

(9)

a)   mo chapall**sa**

      my horse-Emph

      'my horse'

b)   a   theach féin
       his house self
       'his own house'

2.1.3.4. Prepositional pronouns

These are a feature of all Celtic languages, not just Irish. When the complement of a preposition is pronominal, the preposition is inflected, just like a verb. Thus instead of *do mé we find a single inflected form *dom* 'to-me'. The majority of simple prepositions have a full paradigm of inflected prepositions; we illustrate the general process with the paradigm for *do*:

Table 22

		Sing.	Pl.
1		dom	dúinn
2		duit	daoibh
3	masc.	dó	dóibh
	fem.	di	

Like with other pronouns, the prepositional pronouns have a strengthened form as well:

(10)

a)   domsa
       to-me-Emph.
       'to **me**'

b)   dúinn féin
       to-us   self
       'to ourselves'

2.1.3.5. Demonstratives

Demonstrative adjectives consist of two parts - the article and an enclitic on the noun:

(11)

a)   an fear   seo
       the man   this
       'this man'

b)   an bhean   sin
       the woman that
       'that woman'

c)   an cailín   úd
       the girl   yon
       'yon girl'

These enclitics can also appear with various pronouns, in which case the form *siúd* is used for 'yon':

(12)

a) Tá sé seo   ag baile.
    is he this   at home
    'This man is at home.'

b) iad sin atá   ag obair   i Sasana
    them those are-Rel.   at work-VN in England
    'those who are working in England'

c) Bhímé ag caint   léi   siúd.
    was I at talk-VN   with-her yon
    'I was talking to yon woman.'

When stressed, the demonstratives can appear on their own:

(13) Tá 'seo   maith go leor.
    is this   good enough
    'This is good enough.'

2.1.4. The verb
2.1.4.1. Dialectal variation
The variation between the dialects is striking in the case of the verbal system. This manifests itself in the fact briefly alluded to in 2.3.2. above, namely, that Irish employs a mixture of synthetic and analytic forms. Broadly speaking, K is more synthetic, D is more analytic, and C lies somewhere between the two extremes. However, it should be stressed that no dialect is purely synthetic or analytic. Thus, the 3rd singular is analytic in all dialects, and the 1st singular present in D is always synthetic. The standard morphology laid down in 1953 resolved this problem by simply prescribing a mixture of synthetic and analytic forms taken from the various dialects. We adhere to this in our presentation, but it should be borne in mind that this idealised system does not correspond to the usage of any one dialect.

2.1.4.2. Verbal categories
2.1.4.2.1. Tense and mood
Irish has the following morphologically marked tenses: present, past and future.

It distinguishes an indicative, imperative, and to a very limited degree, subjunctive mood. The subjunctive is used almost exclusively in wishes:

(14) Go raibh   maith agat.
    Part be-Subj   good at-you
    'Thank you'.

There is also what is traditionally called a "Conditional Mood", which is used in irrealis contexts:

(15) Dá mbeadh   airgead agam, cheannóinn   gluaisteán nua.
    if would-be   money at-me, would-buy-I   car   new
    'If I had money, I would buy a new car.'

2.1.4.2.2. Aspect

Aspect is expressed morphologically and by periphrastic constructions. The former means is exploited for habitual action in the past (see conjugations in 2.1.4.5):

(16) Ghlanadh   Seán an   teach gach   lá.
     used-to-clean John the   house every day
     'John used to clean the house every day.'

The verb *bí* is used in a number of aspectual constructions with prepositions and the verbal noun (VN). The chief of these are as follows:

    1. Progressive — *bí* + *ag* + VN
    2. Prospective — *bí* + *chun* / *le* + VN
    3. Perfective — *bí* + *tar éis* / *i ndiaidh* + VN

The following sentences illustrate:

(17)

a)   Tá Máire ag ól   tae.
      is Mary   at drink-VN tea
      'Mary is drinking tea.'

b)   Bhí   sí chun   dul go dtí an siopa.
      was she to   go to   the shop
      'She was about to go to the shop.'

c)   Táim tar éis an obair a   chríochnú.
      I-am after the work PRT finish-VN.
      'I have finished the work.'

2.1.4.2.3. Passive and impersonal

Modern Irish has a periphrastic passive, but no morphologically marked one. The periphrastic passive corresponds to the three types of aspect mentioned above:

    1. Progressive passive — *bí* + Subject + PRT + VN
    2. Prospective passive — *bí* + Subject + *le* + VN
    3. Perfective passive — *bí* + Subject + verbal adjective (VA)

The usage is illustrated below:

(18)

a)   Tá an tae á   ól   ag Máire.
      is the tea PRT drink-VN at Mary
      'The tea is being drunk by Mary.'

b)   Cad atá le   déanamh?
      what is-Rel with do-VN
      'What is to be done?'

c)   Tá an obair déanta agam.
      is the work do-VA at-me
      'I have done the work.'

For non-periphrastic verbs, there is no passive. Irish does, however, have impersonal forms, which occur in all tenses and moods:

(19)

a) Glantar   an teach.
    clean-Impers. the house
    'Somebody cleans the house.'

b) Glanfar   an teach.
    will-clean-Impers. the house
    'Somebody will clean the house.'

2.1.4.2.4. The verbal noun

Irish has no infinitive. Instead, the VN is used in this function. For the syntax of this usage, see 3.3.2.

As far as morphology is concerned, the VN is nominal in that it exhibits nominative and genitive case:

Table 23

	VN	
Verb	Nom.	Gen.
a) glan 'clean'	glanadh	glanta
b) bearr 'shave'	bearradh	bearrtha
c) cáin 'censure'	cáineadh	cáinte
d) mothaigh 'feel'	mothú	mothaithe
e) imigh 'go'	imeacht	imithe

There is some degree of regularity in the derivation of the VN from the root, e.g. the suffix -(e)adh is very common with verbs of the first conjugation (see 2.1.4.5.). Nevertheless, for a large number of verbs of all conjugations, the formation of the VN must be regarded as lexically determined; for details see Ó Siadhail (1989).

2.1.4.2.5. The copula and the substantive verb

There are two equivalents of the English verb *be*, the choice of which depends on the syntactic context (see 3.2.). The substantive verb *bí* has a full paradigm, while the copula is a clitic and is defective, exhibiting a single form for all persons, and possessing only two tenses.

2.1.4.3. Mutations and particles

Mutations are used widely with verbs, for the most part being induced by preverbal particles. For example, the negative marker $ní^L$ causes lenition, while interrogative an^E induces eclipsis:

(20)

a) Ní   théann   Máire go dtí an siopa.
    Neg. go-Pres Mary to   the shop
    'Mary doesn't go to the shop.'

b) An   dtéann   Máire   go dtí   an siopa?

    PRT-Interr.   go-Pres.   Mary   to   the shop

    'Does Mary go to the shop?'

Certain tenses are lenited even when no particle precedes the verb, i.e. lenition is an inherent marker of the tense. Originally, this lenition was caused by a verbal particle do^L, but this no longer appears except in formal style, apart from when the verb begins with a vowel or lenited [f], which is phonetically zero. In such cases *do*, reduced to [d], marks the verb as lenited:

Table 24

Stem	Past	Past Habitual	Conditional
a) cuireann	chuir	chuireadh	chuirfeadh
'put'	[xirʹ]	[xirʹəx]	[xirʹəx]
b) ól	d'ól	d'óladh	d'ólfadh
'drink'	[do:l]	[do:ləx]	[do:ləx]
c) fan	d'fhan	d'fhanadh	d'fhanfadh
'stay'	[dɑn]	[dɑnəx]	[dɑnəx]

Particles can express more than one morphosyntactic category, and their form frequently reflects this. Thus an^E is interrogative, while $nach^E$ is interrogative and negative. By means of the features [+/– Past], [+/– Negative] it is possible to decompose the various particles. Thus, for instance, we can say that an^E is [–Past, –Neg.], because it occurs in tenses other than the simple past, and in affirmative contexts. $níor^L$, on the other hand, is [+Past, +Neg.], because it is found in the past tense in negative sentences.

Table 25

		Past	Negative
a)	Relative		
	a^L	+/–	–
	a^E	–	–
	ar^L	+	–
	nach	–	+
	$nár^L$	+	+
b)	Complementiser		
	go^E	–	–
	gur^L	+	–
	nach	–	+
	$nár^L$	⌀ +	
c)	Negative		
	$ní^L$	–	+
	$níor^L$	+	+

d)	Interrogative		
	an^E	–	–
	ar^L	+	–
	nach	–	+
	nár^L	+	+
e)	Temporal		
	sula^E	–	–
	sular^L	+	–
f)	Conditional		
	má^L	+/–	–
	mura^E	–	+
	murar^L	+	+
g)	Imperative		
	ná	–	+
h)	Optative		
	go^E	–	–
	nár^L	–	+

It can be seen that most of the particles used in the simple past differ from those in the other tenses, in that they end in -r, which nearly always induces lenition. Beyond this, though, it is difficult to make any meaningful generalisations about lenition. As we saw in Table 24, the past habitual and the conditional are lenited when no particle precedes, but they pattern with the present with respect to particle-induced mutations, while the simple past forms a paradigm of its own:

(21)

a)   Ghlan   sé   an teach. (lenition)
      cleaned   he the house
      'He cleaned the house.'
      Ar   ghlan   sé   an teach? (lenition)
      PRT-Interr.   cleaned   he the house
      'Did he clean the house?'

b)   Ghlanfadh   sé   an teach. (lenition)
      would-clean   he the house
      'He would clean the house.'
      An   nglanfadh   sé   an teach? (eclipsis)
      PRT-Interr.   would-clean   he the house
      'Would he clean the house?'

Furthermore, lenition is clearly not confined to past tenses, e.g. it always occurs after negative *ní*. Another point is that the past impersonal is never lenited. What this means, then, is that while certain subregularities do exist in the system, it is not possible to provide hard and fast rules for the mutations of Irish.

2.1.4.4. Stems and endings

In terms of stems, the fundamental distinction is between the present and the future. The former comprises the present, the past, the past habitual, the imperative and the subjunctive, while the latter encompasses the future and conditional.

When the synthetic form of the verb is used, there is a personal ending, e.g. 1st singular present in **-(a)im**. However, since these endings vary from tense to tense, it is not possible to identify a common set of personal suffixes for the whole paradigm.

2.1.4.5. The conjugations
2.1.4.5.1. Regular verbs

Irish distinguishes two conjugations. In the first, the stem is monosyllabic, with the exception of borrowings ending in the morpheme **-(e)áil**. The future and conditional are formed by adding **-f-**, which merges with a preceding voiced obstruent, devoicing it, and disappearing after sonorants:

Table 26

	Stem	Future
a)	gob [gob] 'protrude'	gobfaidh [gopə]
b)	cuir [kir´] 'put'	cuirfidh [kir´i]

In the following tables, we only transcribe the 3rd person singular, unless the phonetic realisation is not obvious from the spelling, in which case we give additional transcriptions. The transcription represents the C dialect.

Table 27

glan 'clean'

Present		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	glanaim	glanamaid
2	glanann tú	glanann sibh
3	glanann sé / sí	glanann siad
	[gla:nəN]	
Impers.	glantar	
Past		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	ghlan mé	ghlanamar
2	ghlan tú	ghlan sibh
3	ghlan sé / sí	ghlan siad
	[γla:n]	
Impers.	glanadh [gla:nu:]	

Past Habitual		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	ghlanainn	ghlanaimis
2	ghlantá	ghlanadh sibh
3	ghlanadh sé / sí	ghlanaidís
	[γla:nəx]	
Impers.	ghlantaí	
Future		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	glanfaidh mé	glanafaimid
2	glanfaidh tú	glanfaidh sibh
3	glanfaidh sé / sí	glanfaidh siad
	[gla:nə]	
Impers.	glanfar [gla:nfər]	
Conditional		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	ghlanfainn	ghlanfaimis
2	ghlanfá	ghlanfadh sibh
3	ghlanfadh sé / sí	ghlanfaidís
	[γla:nəx]	
Impers.	ghlanfaí [γla:nfi:]	
Imperative		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	(glanaim)	glanaimis
2	glan	glanaigí
3	glanadh sé / sí	glanaidís
	[gla:nəx]	
Impers.	glantar	
Subjunctive		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	glana mé	glanaimid
2	glana tú	glana sibh
3	glana sé / sí	glana siad
	[gla:nə]	
Impers.	glantar	
Verbal noun	glanadh [gla:nə]	
Verbal adjective	glanta [gla:ntə]	

With the exception of the verbal noun, the above paradigm is valid for this conjugation, although in some cases there is a certain amount of phonologically conditioned allomorphy.

The verbs in the second conjugation have present stems of two syllables, most of which end in **-(a)igh**. When the personal endings are added to this stem, the result is the long vowel **í** [i:], e.g. *ceannaigh*+**im** —> *ceannaím* [k´æ:ni:m´]. This [i:] alternates with [o:] in the future stem.

Table 28
ceannaigh 'ceannaigh'

Present		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	ceannaím	ceannaímid
2	ceannaíonn tú	ceannaíonn sibh
3	ceannaíonn sé / sí	ceannaíonn siad
	[k´æ:ni:N]	
Impers.	ceannaítear	
Past		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	cheannaigh mé	cheannaíomar
2	cheannaigh tú	cheannaigh sibh
3	cheannaigh sé / sí	cheannaigh siad
	[x´æ:nə]	
Impers.	ceannaíodh [k´æ:ni:u:]	
Past Habitual		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	cheannaínn	cheannaímis
2	cheannaíteá	cheannaíodh sibh
3	cheannaíodh sé / sí	cheannaídís
	[x´æ:ni:x]	
Impers.	cheannaítí	
Future		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	ceannóidh mé	ceannóimid
2	ceannóidh tú	ceannóidh sibh
3	ceannóidh sé / sí	ceannóidh siad
	[k´æno:]	
Impers.	ceannófar [k´æ:nɑ:r]	
Conditional		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	cheannóinn	cheannóimis
2	cheannófá	cheannódh sibh
	[x´æ:nɑ:]	
3	cheannódh sé / sí	cheannóidís
	[x´æ:no:x]	
Impers.	cheannófaí [x´æ:no:fi:]	

Imperative		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	(ceannaím)	ceannaímis
2	ceannaigh	ceannaígí
3	ceannaíodh sé / sí	ceannaídís
	[kʹæ:ni:x]	
Impers.	ceannaítear	
Subjunctive		
	Sg.	Pl.
1	ceannaí mé	ceannaímid
2	ceannaí tú	ceannaí sibh
3	ceannaí sé / sí	ceannaí siad
	[kʹæ:ni:]	
Impers.	ceannaítear	
Verbal noun	ceannach [kʹæ:nəx]	
Verbal adjective	ceannaithe [kʹæ:ni:]	

Once again, the ending of the verbal noun is unpredictable.

2.1.4.5.2 Irregular verbs

As might be expected, Irish has a number of irregular verbs. In some of them, a completely different stem appears in certain tenses, much in the manner of the *go-went* alternation in English. The irregular verbs also contain traces of the alternation of stems found in Old Irish, which was based on the presence or absence of particles before the verb. Thus, in the present-day language, there are two stems for the verb *bí* in the present tense: *tá* for when the verb stands alone, and *bhfuil*, used after certain particles:

(22)

a) Tá sé ann.
    is he there
    'He is there.'

b) An   bhfuil sé ann?
    PRT-Interr. is   he there
    'Is he there?'

In the following tables we give those parts of the relevant verbs which are irregular, the other parts being conjugated like *glan*. Only the analytic form of the verb is supplied, as the personal endings are the same as elsewhere, apart from the imperative, where we supply the 2nd singular. Independent (Ind.) stands for the form of the verb used when no particle precedes; dependent (Dep.) for the form used after a particle; negative (Neg.) for the form used with the negative particle.

Table 29

a) bí 'be'	
Present	
Ind.	tá
Dep.	bhfuil
Neg.	níl
Rel.	atá
Present Habitual	bíonn
Future	beidh [b´ei]
Past	
Ind.	bhí
Dep.	raibh [ro]
Past Habitual	bhíodh [v´i:x]
Conditional	bheadh [v´ex]
Subjunctive	raibh [ro]
Imperative	bí
Verbal noun	bheith
b) abair 'say'	
Present	deir
Past	dúirt
Future	déarfaidh
Conditional	déarfadh
Imperative	abair
Verbal noun	rá
Verbal adjective	ráite
c) beir 'catch'	
Present	beireann
Past	rug
Future	béarfaidh
Conditional	bhéarfadh
Verbal noun	breith
Verbal adjective	beirthe
d) clois 'hear'	
Present	cloiseann
Past	chuala
Verbal noun	cloisteáil
Verbal adjective	cloiste

e) déan 'do'	
Present	déanann
Past	
Ind.	rinne
Dep.	dearna
Verbal noun	déanamh [d´i:Nu:]
Verbal adjective	déanta

f) faigh 'get'	
Present	faigheann [fɑ:N]
Past	fuair
Future	
Ind.	gheobhaidh [ɣ´au]
Dep.	bhfaighidh [wi:]
Conditional	
Ind.	gheobhadh [ɣaux]
Dep.	bhfaigheadh [wi:x]
Verbal noun	fáil
Verbal adjective	faighte [fɑ:t´i]

g) feic 'see'	
Present	feiceann
Past	
Ind.	chonaic
Dep.	faca
Verbal noun	feiceáil
Verbal adjective	feicthe [f´ek´i:]

h) ith 'eat'	
Present	itheann
Future	íosfaidh
Conditional	d'íosfadh
Verbal noun	ithe [i:]
Verbal adjective	ite

Past : d'ith

i) tabhair 'give'	
Present	tugann
Future	tabharfaidh [tu:rə]
Conditional	thabharfadh [hu:rəx]
Imperative	tabhair [tu:r´]
Verbal noun	tabhairt [tu:rt´]
Verbal adjective	tugtha [tuki:]

Past: thug

j) tar 'come'	
Present	tagann
Past	tháinig
Future	tiocfaidh
Conditional	thiocfadh
Imperative	
2nd Sg.	tar
2nd Pl.	tagaigí
Verbal noun	teacht
Verbal adjective	tagtha [ta:ki:]
k) téigh 'go'	
Present	téann
Past	
Ind.	chuaigh
Dep.	deachaigh
Future	rachaidh
Conditional	rachadh
Verbal noun	dul
Verbal adjective	dulta

2.1.4.5.3. The copula

Although the copula is not marked for person, and only occurs in two tenses, its morphology is quite complex. This is because, being a clitic, it combines with other particles, undergoing various morphophonological changes in the process, many of which result in synchronically opaque forms. As a result, after the interrogative particle *an* the copula is not phonetically visible:

(23)

a) Is   fíor é sin.
    Cop.-Pres. true it that
    'That is true.'

b) An   fíor é   sin?
    Cop.-PRT-Interr. true it that
    'Is that true?'

In traditional grammars, *an* in b) is analysed as containing the copula, even though it is identical in form with the interrogative particle *an* found before verbs. The justification for this is its distribution, appearing as it does before an adjective, where we expect the copula to appear. As well as this, before vowels in the past tense the interrogative particle takes a different form before the copula from the regular verbal interrogative marker:

(24) Arbh   é sin   Seán?
      Cop.-Interr.-Past it that John
      'Was that John?'

Here, *arbh* is clearly distinct from the verbal interrogative particle *ar^L*. A further point is that even in the present, the copula *an* does not mutate (cf. 23b), while the interrogative particle used with ordinary verbs causes eclipsis.

The following is a mere outline of the inflection of the copula; for more detailed accounts, see de Bhaldraithe (1953), Sjoestedt-Jonval (1938), Wagner (1959).

Table 30*

	Pres.	Past	Pres.	Past
	Direct Speech			
	Declarative		Interr.	
C	is	ba^L	an	ar^L
Vow.	is	b'	an	arbh
	Neg.		Neg.-Interr.	
C	ní	níor^L	nach	nár^L
Vow.	ní^H	níorbh	nach	nárbh
	Indirect Speech			
	Declarative		Neg.	
C	gur	gur^L	nach	nár^L
Vow.	gurb	gurbh	nach	nárbh
* C = before a consonant, Vow. = before a vowel				

The past forms are also used in the conditional:

(25) Ba   mhaith liom   dul   ann.
     Cop.-Past good   with-me go-VN   there
     'I would like to go there.'

2.1.4.5.4. Relative forms

One of the more interesting morpho-syntactic features of Irish is that verbs have morphologically marked relative forms in C and D. In these dialects a special ending is used in the present and future tenses when the clause is introduced by the relative particle *a^L* (= English *that*). The suffix in question is **-(e)as**:

Table 31
glan 'clean'

	Non-rel.	Rel.
Pres.	glanann	ghlanas [γlanəs]
Fut.	glanfaidh	ghlanfas [γlanəs]

Note that this so-called relative form is frequently used in non-relative clauses, as in b) below:
(26)
a)   an gasúr   a   ghlanas   an fhuinneog
      the boy   PRT   cleans-Rel.   the window
      'the boy that cleans the window'

b) nuair   a   thiocfas   tú   ar ais
    when   PRT   will-come-Rel.   you   back
    'when you come back'

As well as this, a special set of forms exists for the copula in relative clauses:

Table 32

	Pres.	Past	Pres.	Past
	Non-resumptive*			
	Rel.		Neg.-Rel.	
C	is	ba^L	nach	nár^L
Vow.	is	ab	nach	nárbh
	Resumptive			
	Rel.		Neg.-Rel.	
C	ar	ar^L	nach	nár^L
Vow.	arb	arbh	nach	nárbh
*For the terms *resumptive* and *non-resumptive*, see 3.8.1.				

The following examples are illustrative of the relative copula:

(27)

a) an leabhar   is   fearr   liom
    the book   Cop.-Rel.   good-Comp.   with-me
    'the book which I like best'

b) rud   nár   mhaith leo   a   dhéanamh
    thing Cop.-Neg.-Rel.-Past   good   with-them PRT   do-VN
    'something which they would not like to do'

c) an rud   ab   fhearr léi
    the thing Cop.-Rel.-Past   better with-her
    'the thing which she would prefer'

2.1.5. Numerals

2.1.5.1. Cardinals

Three sub-groups can be distinguished here. The first consists of numbers used by themselves, without a noun, in counting, for example:

(28) ceacht   a   sé
      lesson   PRT   six
      'lesson six'

These are always preceded by the particle a^H:

Table 33

1	a haon	6	a sé	11	a haon déag
2	a dó	7	a seacht	12	a dó dhéag
3	a trí	8	a hocht	13	a trí déag
4	a ceathair	9	a naoi		
5	a cúig	10	a deich	20	a fiche

Numerals also are used to modify nouns. For the most part, these modifying numerals are the same as those used in counting, but there are occasional differences, e.g. 2, 4. Another point is that numerals mutate the nouns they precede: 1-6 cause lenition, and 7-10 eclipsis. The noun is in the singular, not the plural, after numerals.

Between 10 and 20, the numeral is split up, with *déag* 'teen' following the noun:

(29) dhá   leabhar   déag
      two   book   teen
      'twelve books'

The mutations from 11-19 are the same as from 1-9.

Table 34

Numerals with bád 'boat'	
1 (aon^L)...amháin	(aon) bhád [va:d] amháin
2 dhá^L	dhá bhád
3 trí^L	trí bhád
4 ceithre^L	ceithre bhád
5 cúig^L	cúig bhád
6 sé^L	sé bhád
7 seacht^E	seacht mbád [ma:d]
8 ocht^E	ocht mbád
9 naoi^E	naoi mbád
10 deich^E	deich mbád
11 aon^L...déag	aon bhád déag
20 fiche	fiche bád

The indefinite pronoun *ceann* 'one' is used when the noun is not specified, as the numerals in Table 34 cannot stand alone:

(30)

a) Cé   mhéad bád   a   bhí   ann?
    how   many boat   PRT   was   there
    'How many boats were there?'

b) Dhá   cheann.
    two   one
    'Two.'

In speech, many nouns of the second declension retain the old dual form after *dhá* (this dual is identical to the dative):

(31) dhá   mhuic
      two   pig-Dual
      'two pigs'

Some nouns have special forms used with numerals, e.g. *bliain* 'year':

Table 35

1	(aon) bhliain amháin
2	dhá bhliain
3	trí bliana
6	sé bliana
7	seacht mbliana
10	deich mbliana

Finally, special forms exist which are used to refer to people. Since these are nominal, they can stand alone, or be followed by a noun. Thus *beirt* by itself means 'two people', and before a noun 'two'.

Table 36

	Alone	With a noun
1	(aon) duine amháin one person one 'one (person)'	(aon) saighdiúir amháin one soldier one 'one soldier'
2	beirt	beirt shaighdiúir
3	triúr	triúr saighdiúir
4	ceathrar	ceathrar saighdiúir
5	cúigear	cúigear saighdiúir
6	seisear	seisear saighdiúir
7	seachtar	seachtar saighdiúir
8	ochtar	ochtar saighdiúir
9	naonúr	naonúr saighdiúir
10	deichniúr	deichniúr saighdiúir
12	dáréag	—

These personal forms are optional. Above ten, the same forms are used as with non-personal nouns:

(32)   trí   shaighdiúir   déag
       three   soldier   teen
       'thirteen soldiers'

In D, the personal forms function as indefinite pronouns, regardless of whether the referent is human or non-human. Thus *beirt* simply means 'two things/people'.

Above twenty, there are two systems in operation. In the spoken language, people count in twenties. Intervening numerals are compound, consisting of the usual form for numbers up to nineteen, and the relevant multiple of twenty. Thus 'twenty-one boats' will be *bád is fiche* 'boat and twenty':

Table 37

20	fiche	bád		
	twenty	boat		
	'twenty boats'			
30	deich	mbád	is	fiche
	ten	boat	and	twenty
	'thirty boats'			
40	daichead	bád		
	forty	boat		
	'forty boats'			
50	leathchéad	bád		
	half-hundred	boat		
	'fifty boats'			
55	cúig bhád déag	is		daichead
	five boat teen	and		forty
	'fifty-five boats'			
60	trí	fichid	bád	
	three	twenties	boat	
	'sixty boats'			
80	ceithre	fichid	bád	
	four	twenties	boat	
	'eighty boats'			
100	céad	bád		
	hundred	boat		
	'a hundred boats'			

In the standard language, and in spheres of activity involving the frequent use of figures, a decimal system is employed, but with the noun preceding the relevant multiple of ten:

Table 38

21	bád is fiche
30	tríocha bád
40	daichead bád
50	caoga bád
60	seasca bád
70	seachtó bád
80	ochtó bád
90	nócha bád
100	céad bád

When numerals higher than twenty stand alone, e.g. in figures, the multiple of ten precedes the smaller numeral, as in English:

(33) uimhir   seachtó   a   seacht.
      number   seventy   PRT   seven
      'number seventy-seven'

2.1.5.2. Ordinals

From three onwards, these are regularly derived from cardinals by adding **-ú** to the relevant numeral:

Table 39

1st	an chéad^L	an chéad bhád [vɑ:d]
2nd	an dara^H	an dara bád
3rd	an tríú^H	an tríú bád
11th	an t-aonú...déag	an t-aonú bád déag
21st	an t-aonú... is fiche	an t-aonú bád is fiche

2.2. Derivational morphology

2.2.1. Word formation and register

Compared to inflectional morphology, relatively little attention has been paid to derivational morphology in the literature. The situation is complicated somewhat by the fact that there are two means of forming new words available in the contemporary language. The first, which models itself very much on the English scheme, uses morphemes already present in the language to produce new lexemes. In many cases, this involves reviving old affixes and means of compounding which have become obsolete in the spoken language. This method is favoured by government bodies concerned with reviving Irish and extending the sphere of activities in which it is used. The best presentation of what one may call learned word formation is *Graiméar Gaeilge na mBráithre Críostaí*; for an abridged version in English see the Christian Brothers (1980).

Native speakers tend to favour syntactic compounding instead of morphological compounding. Thus, instead of a form like *housewife* or *Hausfrau*, Irish has *bean an tí* 'woman of the house'. Furthermore, the productive affixes of the Irish-speaking districts are considerably different from those of the learned register spoken by non-native speakers. de Bhaldraithe (1953) contains a chapter devoted to word formation patterns in the dialect of C. As he points out, the most productive adjectival suffix is **-(e)áilte**, as in *siúráilte* 'sure', an affix not listed in *Graiméar Gaeilge na mBráithre Críostaí*, which represents the standard language.

The reason for this suffix not being accepted in the formal register is connected with the fact that it is used with foreign bases. The language of native speakers in the 20th century is full of borrowings, which are increasingly less and less integrated. It is no exaggeration to say that for the average speaker of the last few decades word formation has practically ceased to exist; new words are simply taken over wholesale from English without changing their phonological or morphological shape.

In this situation, it is not possible to make absolute statements about productivity or non-productivity, as such statements depend on the register in question. What is highly

productive in terminological dictionaries prepared by government agencies often turns out to be completely unproductive in the spoken language. In what follows, we simply sketch the most commonly encountered patterns of word formation in the language as a whole. For more on this subject see Doyle (1992), (1996).

2.2.2. Affixation

2.2.2.1. Prefixation

The criteria employed for classifying a given element as a prefix rather than the first word in a compound are not very clear. Thus both de Bhaldraithe (1953) and *Graiméar Gaeilge na mBráithre Críostaí* classify *sean*^L 'old' and *leath*^L 'half' as prefixes, although they both can appear as separate words. Undoubtedly, one of the problems is that both in written and spoken Irish, a prefixed word and a compound are formally identical. They are written jointly, and the first element lenites the second. Thus, assuming for the purposes of argument that *seanbhean* 'old woman' contains a prefix, and *muiceoil* 'pork' is a compound, compare the formal makeup of the two:

Table 40

	First element	Second element	Result
a)	sean [ʃæːn] 'old'	bean [b´æːn] 'woman'	seanbhean ['ʃæːm´v´æːn] (C) 'old woman'
b)	muc [muk] 'pig'	feoil [f´oːl´] 'meat'	muiceoil* ['mik´oːl´] 'pork'

*Originally, this would have been spelt *muicfheoil*. Lenited [f] is silent, but the palatalisation feature remains, causing the final consonant [k] of *muc* to be palatalised.

Nevertheless, most prefixes in Irish are bound forms. Furthermore, even when there exist independent words like *sean* and *leath*, it is not always possible to paraphrase the prefixed formations by means of a syntactic phrase. Another point is that prefixes display a high rate of productivity, whereas compounds are less frequently attested. Thus the traditional division seems justified, even if there are some borderline cases like the ones discussed above.

Turning to prefixes, we find that most of them can attach to both nouns and adjectives:

Table 41

	Prefix	Base	Derivative
a)	an^L-	maith 'good' lá 'day'	an-mhaith 'very good' an-lá 'a great day'
b)	fíor^L-	crua 'hard' Gael 'Irishman'	fíorchrua 'truly hard' fíorGhael 'true Irishman'

Others only allow one base. Thus, **ban**^L- and **eas**^L- attach exclusively to nouns:

Table 42

	Prefix	Base	Derivative
a)	ban^L-	garda 'policeman'	bangharda 'policewoman'
b)	eas^L-	onóir 'honour'	easonóir 'dishonour'

In other cases, where the base is a verb, we seem to be dealing with simultaneous prefixation and suffixation:

Table 43

	Prefix	Base	Suffix	Derivative
a)	do^L-	bain 'cut'	-te	dobhainte 'difficult to cut'
b)	so^L-	cas 'twist'	-ta	sochasta 'easy to twist'
c)	in^L-	pós 'marry'	-ta	inphósta 'marriageable'

As frequently happens in word formation, a single prefix can have different functions:

Table 44

Prefix dubh^L-	Meaning 1 black	Example dubh-bhuí 'black-yellow'
	Meaning 2 Intensifier	dubh-fhuar 'very cold'

2.2.2.2. Suffixation

For the most part, prefixation is a category-maintaining operation in Irish. That is to say, the addition of the intensifying prefix *an^L-* to the adjective *maith* 'good' does not result in a change in grammatical category. On the other hand, suffixation frequently results in a new category. Thus, the suffix *-(i)úil* turns the noun *fios* 'knowledge' into the adjective *fiosúil* 'knowledgeable'. For this reason, we classify suffixes according to the category of word which they produce.

Noun-forming suffixes constitute a large group. The semantic classes are familiar from other languages:

Table 45

	Category	Suffix	Base	Example
a)	Agentive	-óir /-eoir	múin 'teach'	múinteoir 'teacher'
b)	Abstract	-e	bán 'white'	báine 'whiteness'
c)	Diminutive	-ín	scéal 'story'	scéilín 'id.-Dim.'

Adjectives are derived from nouns by means of suffixes like the following:

Table 46

	Noun	Suffix	Derivative
a)	fear 'man'	-(i)úil	fearúil 'manly'
b)	caint 'talk'	-(e)ach	cainteach 'talkative'

The ending **-(e)áilte** is used to borrow from English:

Table 47

English	Irish
fair	féaráilte 'id.'
fresh	friseáilte 'id.'
foul	fouláilte 'id.'

2.2.3. Membership of more than one category

Like in English, words in Irish can change their category without any overt formal indication of this. This is especially true of verbs and nouns. Because the verbal noun is both verbal and nominal, a single form can function simultaneously as a member of both groups:

(34)

a) Tá Seán   ag caint.

is John   at talk-VN

'John is talking.'   (verb)

b) Thug sé caint   uaidh.

gave he speech from-him

'He made a speech.'   (noun)

In cases like this, it is difficult to speak of derivation from one category to another, since it is not clear what the base is. Rather, one can say that a given lexical item is a member of two categories, and only the syntactic context will tell us which one is involved in a particular example.

In other instances, the change of category is made manifest by the presence of inflectional morphology. Thus, the adjective *dearg* 'red' can function as a verb *dearg* 'to make red', and this verb is conjugated like any verb of the first conjugation, with appropriate endings, mutations etc. Because of the semantics, the categorial change is adjective —> verb, rather than the other way round. Cases like this can be treated as conversion.

For this reason, we do not include the formation of verbs under the heading of derivational suffixes, since there are no affixal elements involved in the process.

2.2.4. Compounding

In the more formal written language, an old method of compounding has been revived. This involves the formation of right-headed compounds by preposing to them a defining element; this preposed element causes lenition:

Table 48

	Original words		Compound
a)	idir 'between'	figh 'weave'	idirfhigh 'interweave'
b)	ríomh 'compute'	post 'post'	ríomhphost 'electronic mail'
c)	bán 'white'	buí 'yellow'	bánbhuí 'cream-coloured'

Such compounds are very common, but native speakers were reluctant to accept them in the past. This may be connected with the fact that in colloquial speech compounds were left-headed, being formally identical with syntactic phrases consisting of a noun followed by another noun in the genitive:

Table 49

	Phrase		Meaning
a)	bean woman	tí house-Gen.	'housewife'
b)	muc pig	mhara sea-Gen.	'porpoise'
c)	sagart priest	paróiste parish-Gen.	'parish priest'

Nevertheless, as Irish becomes more and more a second language, and is employed more and more in formal rather than colloquial style, the revived pattern in Table 48, which is closer to English compounding, seems likely to become dominant. Another factor in this process is the feeling on the part of second-language speakers that right-headed compounds are more modern and less cumbersome than the syntactic compounds of Table 49.

As well as these regular cases of compounding, one can mention sporadic instances of lexicalisation, involving phrases other than combinations of nouns and dependent genitives:

Table 50

	Phrase			Meaning
a)	éirí rising	in up	airde	'airs and graces'
b)	cur putting	síos down		'account'
c)	uisce water	faoi under	thalamh ground	'intrigue'

3. Syntax

3.0. Introduction

In what follows, we do not present an overall view of all the syntactic constructions found in Irish. The reason for this is that many of them resemble those found in other Indo-European languages, and hence hardly require any comment. Instead, we have concentrated precisely on those aspects of the syntax where Irish differs from the better-investigated languages of Europe. It was felt that these would be of interest to linguists who do not know Irish, and also might encourage students of Irish to look at familiar material from a different perspective.

In most cases, the aspects of Irish syntax we chose to discuss happen to have been investigated in the generative syntactic literature of the last twenty years, and for this reason it is possible to provide a more or less coherent account of them. The framework in which the data is presented might be described as "mildly generative", in that we have adopted some of the terminology and methodology of this approach. However, we have tried to avoid too much technical detail, and hope that our presentation will be accessible to the reader who has not come into contact with generative grammar previously.

Graiméar Gaeilge na mBráithre Críostaí and Ó Cadhlaigh (1940) offer traditional descriptions of the sentence patterns of Irish. Ó Siadhail (1989) contains a comprehensive survey of the major syntactic constructions, and also discusses cases of regional variation. Stenson (1981), Guilfoyle (1990) and Duffield (1995) are generative treatments of some of the most basic syntactic patterns found in Irish. For lengthy studies of individual issues, see McCloskey (1979) and Carnie (1995).

3.1 Noun phrases

As the syntax of the NP is in some respects different from other languages, we include a brief presentation of its most salient features. For a theoretical analysis see Duffield (1995).

As in other languages, a dependent genitive follows the head N:

(1)   teach   Mháire
        house   Mary-Gen.
        'Mary's house'

A peculiarity of Irish is the fact that when both Ns are definite, the article may not appear on the first:

(2)   hata an   fhir
        hat the   man-Gen.
        *an hata an   fhir
         the hat the   man-Gen.
        'the hat of the man'

Adjectives follow their N, and precede genitives:

(3)

a)   teach   mór
       house   big
       'big house'

b)   teach   mór   Mháire
       house   big   Mary-Gen.
       'Mary's big house'

It should be noted that Ns, and even more so adjectives, are only fully declined in written Irish. In the spoken register, there is an increasing tendency to use the nominative singular everywhere:

(4)

a)   teach   an ghasúir   mhóir   (written)
       house   the boy-Gen.   big-Gen.

b)   teach   an ghasúir / ghasúr   mhór   (spoken)
       house   the boy-Gen.   boy-Nom.   big-Nom.
       'the house of the big boy'

Even in the written language, if the N is modified in some way and is not preceded by the article, it is not inflected:

(5)

a)   doras teach   Mháire
       door house-Nom.   Mary-Gen.
       'the door of Mary's house'

b)   tús   chaibidil   a   dó
       beginning chapter   PRT   two
       'the beginning of chapter two'

Examples like those above would seem to indicate that the historical genitive is disappearing in Irish. However, the mutation of the N serves as an indicator of case. Thus, there is a contrast between the two forms of *teach* 'house' in:

(6)

a)   teach [tʼæx]   Mháire
       house-Nom.   Mary-Gen.
       'Mary's house'

b)   doras   theach [hæx]   Mháire
       door   house-Nom.   Mary-Gen.
       'the door of Mary's house'

3.2 The copula and the substantive verb

In Chapter 2 we noted that there were two verbs in Irish corresponding to the English verb *be*. In this section, we explore the syntax of the two forms. See Ó Siadhail (1989) for a

survey of the main dialectal patterns. For detailed theoretical analyses see Stenson (1981), Carnie (1995), Doherty (1996, 1997).

3.2.1 The copula

Grammars of Irish such as the Christian Brothers (1980) state that there are two kinds of constructions in which the copula appears: classificatory and identificatory. One striking difference between them is in the word order:

(7)
a) Is   sagart   é.   (classificatory)
    Cop.-Pres. priest   him
    'He is a priest.'

b) Is   mise   an sagart. (identificatory)
    Cop.-Pres. me   the priest
    'I am the priest.'

In a) the notional subject follows the predicate, while in b) it comes after the copula.

The two constructions also differ in the presence or absence of agreement morphology. When the subject is 3rd person in identificatory sentences, an agreement marker is required after the copula:

(8) Is   é   Seán   an sagart.
     Cop.-Pres. him   John   the priest
     'John is the priest.'

This agreement marker appears in short responses as well:

(9) An   é   Seán   an sagart?
     Cop.-Interr.-Pres. him   John   the priest
     'Is John the priest?'
     Is   é / ní   hé.
     Cop-Pres. him / Cop.-Neg.-Pres. him
     'Yes / no.'

In classificatory sentences, on the other hand, there is no agreement marker after the copula, and in responses the dummy pronoun *ea* appears:

(10) An   sagart é?
      Cop.-Interr.-Pres. priest him
      'Is he a priest?'
      Is   ea / ní   hea.
      Cop.-Pres. *ea* / Cop.-Neg.-Pres. *ea*
      'Yes / no.'

This dummy *ea* also appears in K, in classificatory sentences in the 3rd person, with the predicate moving to initial position:

(11) Múinteoir is ea í.
      Teacher Cop.-Pres. *ea* her
      'She is a teacher.'

The copula is used to a limited extent with adjectives:

(12) Nach   deas   é!
      Cop.-Neg.-Interr.-Pres.   nice   it
      'Isn't it nice!'

3.2.2 The substantive verb (*bí*)

The distinction between the copula and the substantive verb is semantic: the former expresses inherent qualities, and the latter more temporary states[1]. On the syntactic level, *bí* allows only non-nominal predicates: adjectives/adverbs, PPs, Vs:

(13)
a)   Tá Máire go   hiontach. (adjective)
      is Mary PRT   wonderful
      'Mary is wonderful.'

b)   Tá Tomás   ag baile.   (PP)
      is Thomas at home
      'Thomas is at home.'

c)   Bhí   siad   ag caint.   (V)
      were   they   at talk-VN
      'They were talking.'

bí combines with the preposition *i* 'in' and the possessive adjective to express temporary states:

(14)
a)   Tá sí   ina   máthair.
      is she   in-her   mother
      'She is a mother.'

b)   Bhí tú   i   do   chodladh.
      were you   in   your   sleep
      'You were asleep.'

c)   Tá sé   ina   shamhradh.
      is it   in-its   summer
      'It is summer.'

There is a contrast between a) above and the copular sentence of (15):

(15) Is   máthair   mhaith   í.
      Cop.-Pres.   mother   good   her
      'She is a good mother.'

---

[1] This distinction breaks down in the case of adjectives, cf. example (12).

(14a) implies a change of state, e.g. after giving birth, she is (now) a mother. In (15), the permanent quality of being a good mother is predicated of *her*. Thus, the use of a temporal adverb like *anois* 'now' would be inappropriate with the copula:

(16)　*Is　　　máthair　mhaith í　anois.

　　　Cop.-Pres. mother　good　her now

Finally, a nominal predicate can be used with *bí* in a construction with the preposition *i* 'in'. The nominal is preposed:

(17)

a)　Múinteoir maith atá　　ann.　(C)

　　teacher　　good　is-Rel. in-him

　　'He is a good teacher.'

b)　Níl　　inti　ach　múinteoir.

　　is-Neg in-her but　teacher

　　'She is only a teacher.'

3.3. Word-order

3.3.1. Finite clauses

3.3.1.1. Subject and verb

In finite clauses, Irish displays Verb-Subject word order:

(18)　D'ól　Máire an tae.

　　drank Mary　the tea

　　'Mary drank the tea.'

In early works on Irish syntax, this was taken to be the underlying order. However, in non-finite clauses, the subject precedes the V:

(19)

a)　Tháinig　siad abhaile　agus [iad ag amhrán].

　　came　　they home　　and them at sing-VN

　　'They came home singing.'

b)　Chonaic　mé [Máire ag rince].

　　saw　　I　Mary at dance-VN

　　'I saw Mary dancing.'

The bracketed portions of the above sentences are referred to as Small Clauses, that is, clauses which contain a subject and predicate, but lack the verb *bí* 'be'. Interestingly, the same structure seems to be present in clauses involving the progressive construction, like the following:

(20)　Tá [Séamas　ag oscailt　an dorais].

　　is James　　at open-VN　the door-Gen.

　　'James is opening the door.'

This sentence is exactly parallel to a Small Clause:

(21)   Chuala sí [Séamas   ag oscailt   an dorais].
        heard she James   at open-VN   the door-Gen.
        'She heard James opening the door.'

The verb *bí* 'be' simply marks the tense as present, without contributing anything to the semantics. It precedes the subject, but the subject precedes the lexical verb *oscail* 'open'. In the interests of having a single structure for clauses, finite and non-finite, one could simply claim that there is one underlying Subject-Verb word order (like in other languages), from which the Verb-Subject order is derived by movement of V. Thus, returning to example (18), the underlying structure would be as follows:

(22)   Máire d'ól   an tae.
        Mary   drank   the tea

Because the V is finite, it is forced to move to sentence-initial position. If it is non-finite, there is no such requirement, and we find Verb-Subject word-order:

(23)   Tá Máire ag ól   an tae.
        is Mary   at drink-VN the tea-Gen.
        'Mary is drinking the tea.'

For more on this topic see Chung and McCloskey (1987), McCloskey (1991, 1996).

3.3.1.2. Objects, prepositional phrases, adverbials

Apart from the subject, the word order resembles that of other languages: direct objects normally follow the V, and are in turn followed by prepositional phrases, which in turn precede adverbials:

(24)   Thug mé [an   leabhar] [do Sheán] [sa   scoil] [inné].
        gave I   the   book   to John   in-the school yesterday
        'I gave the book to John in the school yesterday.'

There is one exception to this pattern. Clausal objects follow all other elements in the sentence:

(25)   Dúirt sí leo   aréir   [go raibh sí breoite].
        said   she to-them last-night that was she sick
        'She told them last night that she was sick.'

3.3.2 Non-finite clauses
3.3.2.1 VN+object

As mentioned earlier, in non-finite clauses the subject always precedes the V:

(26)   Ba   mhaith liom   [tú dul   ann].
        Cop.-Past good with-me   you go-VN there
        'I would like you to go there.'

With objects, the situation is much more complex. Let us consider once again example (20), repeated here as (27):

(27) Tá [Séamas ag oscailt an dorais].
is James at open-VN the door-Gen.
'James is opening the door.'

The object here is in the genitive. This is because the VN is nominal, and a dependent N is in the genitive, just as it would be if it followed an ordinary N (cf. (1) in 3.1).

This word order also appears in clauses with the particle a^L in K:

(28) Ba mhaith liom [Seán a léamh an leabhair].
Cop.-Past good with-me John PRT read-VN the book-Gen.
'I would like John to read the book.'

3.3.2.2 Object+a^L+VN

C and D differ from K with respect to the last example. In these dialects, the object is preposed before the particle a^L:

(29) Ba bhreá liom [tú an leabhar a léamh].
Cop.-Past fine with-me you the book PRT read-VN
'I would love you to read the book.'

This rule of object preposing is widespread in all dialects, when the subject is covert. In a sentence like the following it is assumed that there is a covert subject present which is identical with the subject of the main clause:

(30) Caithfidh mé [(Subj.) dul ann].
must I go-VN there
'I must go there.'

When there is a direct object in the complement clause, and the subject is covert, the object precedes the verb:

(31) Caithfidh mé [(Subj.) an leabhar a léamh].
must I the book PRT read-VN
'I must read the book.'

3.3.2.3 Pronominal objects

Pronominals in Irish do not have genitives. Instead, the appropriate possessive pronoun is used:

(32)
a) teach Mháire
house Mary-Gen.
'Mary's house'

b) a teach
'her house'

This means that pronominal objects of VNs cannot follow them. There are two possibilities for their realisation. The first is for them to be replaced by the appropriate possessive:

(33)　Caithfidh tú　　[a dhéanamh]. (D)
　　　must　　you　　its do-VN
　　　'You must do it.'

In the progressive construction, when the pronoun object is preposed, the particle *ag* is replaced by the particle do^L. The latter fuses with the possessive pronouns a^L, a^E, a^H (see 2.1.3.3) to yield *á*:

(34)

a)　　Tá siad ag cáineadh　　　　an gharsúin.
　　　are they at criticise-VN　　the boy-Gen.
　　　'They are criticising the boy.'

b)　　Tá siad　[$á^L$　　cháineadh]. (3rd sg. masc.)
　　　are they　at-his criticise-VN
　　　'They are criticising him.'

c)　　Tá siad ag cáineadh　　　　an chailín.
　　　are they at criticise-VN　　the girl-Gen.
　　　'They are criticising the girl.'

d)　　Tá siad　[$á^H$　　cáineadh]. (3rd sg. fem.)
　　　are they　at-her criticise-VN
　　　'They are criticising her.'

The second way to express the pronominal object is the same as that illustrated in the previous section, namely to use the particle a^L and prepose the object pronoun:

(35)　Táim　tar éis [(Subj.) é　a　　　dhéanamh.
　　　am-I　after　　　　it PRT　do-VN
　　　'I have done it.'

3.4. Complement clauses

Cross-linguistically, these can be divided into finite and non-finite clauses. The clause can be introduced by an overt particle called a complementiser, or it may simply follow directly after the V, as the following examples from English show:

(36)

a) I don't know [**whether** to do that].

b) I want [___ to do that].

c) I think [(**that**) she is clever].

3.4.1. Finite complements

Finite clauses are introduced by the complementiser go^E in its various guises (see 2.1.4.3.), and typically occur with cognitive and assertive predicates:

(37)

a) Ceapaim [go bhfuil siad imithe].
    think-I that are they go-VA
    'I think that they are gone.'

b) Is dócha [nár dhíol siad an teach].
    is likely that-Neg.-Past sold they the house
    'It seems that they didn't sell the house.'

c) Deir sí [go dtiocfaidh sé amárach].
    says she that will-come he tomorrow
    'She says that he will come tomorrow.'

The sequence of tenses is similar to that of English; in particular, the past is followed by the conditional when the action is to take place in the future:

(38) Dúirt sí [nach dtiocfadh sé an lá dar gcionn].
      said she that-Neg. would-come he the day after
      'She said that he would not come the next day.'

When the actions are simultaneous, the same tense is used in both clauses:

(39) Dúirt siad inné [go raibh siad ag dul abhaile (inné)].
      said they yesterday that were they at go-VN home yesterday
      'They said yesterday that they were going home (yesterday).'

As in other languages, the choice of a finite versus non-finite clause depends on the V of the main clause. Thus cognitive and assertive Vs are followed by [+finite] complements, as in (37) above, while mandative Vs take both finite and non-finite subordinate clauses:

(40)

a) Mhol sé [go ndúnfaí an mhonarcha].
    recommended he that would-close-Impers. the factory

b) Mhol sé [an mhonarcha a dhúnadh].
    recommended he the factory PRT close-VN
    'He recommended that the factory be closed.'

3.4.2 Non-finite complements

Non-finite complements are not usually introduced by an overt complementiser:

(41)

a) Caithfidh tú [(Subj.) dul ann].
    must you go-VN there
    'You must go there.'

b) Dúirt sí [tusa a dhul ann].
    said she you PRT go-VN there
    'She said that you should go there.'

The kind of non-finite complement can vary. Vs which only allow subjectless complements are called Control Vs. Typically, they include Vs like *déan iarracht* 'try', *féad* 'to be able', *tabhair ar* 'persuade':

(42)

a) Rinneamar iarracht [(Subj) an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim].
made-we attempt the Irish PRT learn-VN
'We tried to learn Irish.'

b) Ní fhéadfaidís [(Subj) é sin a dhéanamh].
Neg. they-would-be-able it that PRT do-VN
'They would not be able to do that.'

c) Thug Máire ar Sheán [(Subj) í a phósadh].
gave Mary on John her PRT marry-VN
'Mary persuaded John to marry her.'

Many Vs also allow overt subjects:

(43)

a) Mhol mé [í Seán a phósadh].
recommended I her John PRT marry-VN
'I recommended that she should marry John.'

b) An cuimhin libh [na daoine sin a
Cop.-Interr-Pres. memory with-you the people those PRT
bheith ag obair ann]?
be-VN at work-VN there
'Do you remember that those people were working there?'

Some Vs, e.g. Vs of perception, take Small Clause complements:

(44) Chuala mé [iad ag amhrán].
heard I them at sing-VN
'I heard them singing.'

Non-finite negative clauses have a special negative complementiser *gan*:

(45) D'iarr mé orthu [gan an leabhar sin a léamh].
asked I on-them Comp.-Neg. the book that PRT read-VN
'I asked them not to read that book.'

See further McCloskey (1980).

3.4.3 Clauses dependent on non-verbal elements

Like in other languages, complements, both finite and non-finite, are introduced not only by verbs. We frequently encounter them after constructions with the copula and the substantive verb involving nouns and adjectives:

(46)

a) An   bhfuil fonn   ort   [(Subj.)   dul   ann]?
    Interr. is   desire on-you   go-VN there
    'Do you want to go there?'

b) Is ait   liom   [Seán Máire a   phósadh].
    is strange with-me John   Mary PRT   marry
    'I find it strange that John should marry Mary.'

c) Ba   mhór an obair [gur   phós   siad sa   deireadh].
    was   big the work   that married they in-the end
    'It was a great wonder that they got married in the end.'

Likewise, they are widespread after prepositions:

(47)

a) i ndiaidh [iad   a   phósadh]
    after   them PRT   marry-VN
    'after they got married'

b) chun   [iad   a   fheiceáil]
    for   them PRT   see-VN
    'in order to see them'

c) le linn [iad   a   bheith ag caint]
    while   them PRT   be-VN at talk-VN
    'while they were talking'

d) tar éis [gur   thug mé   cabhair dóibh]
    after   that gave I   help   to-them
    'although I helped them'

A special feature of Irish is the use of the conjunctions *ach* 'but' and *agus* 'and' to introduce a wide range of clauses:

Table 1

a) Finite clauses
Ach [go bhfaca mé féin é], ní   chreidfinn   é.
but   that saw I self it Neg. would-believe-I it
'If I hadn't seen it myself, I wouldn't believe it.'
Is maith mar a   d'imir sé [agus go raibh a   chos   tinn].
is good as   PRT   played he and   that was his leg   sore
'He played well considering his leg was sore.'
b) Non-finite clause with overt subject
ach [é   bualadh   leo]
but him   meet-VN   with-them
'provided he meet them'
agus [í   Seán a   phósadh]
and   her John PRT   marry-VN
'seeing that she married John'

c) Non-finite clause with covert subject						
Beidh tú	i gceart ach [(Subj)	é	sin a		dhéanamh].	
will-be you	in right but	it	thatPRT		do-VN	
'You'll be alright provided you do that.'						
Is dócha	go raibh sí	ar meisce agus				
is likely	that was she drunk	and				
[(Subj.)	a fear	a		bhualadh].		
	her man	PRT		strike-VN		
'I suppose she was drunk if she hit her husband.'						

d) Small Clauses						
Ní	dúirt sé faic	ach [é	ina	shuí	cois	tine].
Neg.	said he anything	but him	in-his	sitting	by	fire
'He said nothing, but (stayed) seated by the fire.'						
Bhuail sí	lena	cara	[agus í	ag teacht		abhaile].
met	she with-her	friend	and	her at	come-VN	home
'She met her friend when she was coming home.'						

3.5. Case

3.5.1 Non-finite clauses

Irish non-finite clauses differ from those of English in another respect. In English, an overt subject must receive case either from the V or from the complementiser *for*:

(48)

a) I want him to do this.

b) For him to do this...

c) *Him to do this...

The question is, whether the same condition obtains for Irish. Unfortunately, it is difficult to decide on the basis of a sentence like the following:

(49) Ba   mhaith liom   [í   Seán   a   phósadh].
     Cop.-Past good with-me her   John   PRT   marry-VN
     'I would like her to marry John.'

As we noted in 2.1.3.2., 3rd person pronouns have two allomorphs: a form with **s-**, used when they directly follow the V, and a form without **s-**, used in all other contexts. Thus, the pronoun *í* 'her' could receive its case from the predicate *ba mhaith liom* 'I would like', or it could simply be the default case.

However, we also find non-finite clauses which are not complements to any category, in responses, for example:

(50) Caithfidh sí [(Subj.) an litir sin a scríobh].
      must she the letter that PRT write
      'She must write that letter.'
      [Ise an litir sin a scríobh], an ea?
      Her-Emph. the letter that PRT write, Cop-Interr. *ea*
      '**Her** write that letter?'

Here there is no possible case assigner, and yet the default form of the pronoun is allowed. This would suggest that in non-finite clauses in Irish, case can be assigned to the subject, independently of whether there is a case-assigning element in the main clause or not.

A related question concerns the case of object pronouns in non-finite clauses. Like subjects, these pronouns exhibit default case:

(51) Caithfidh sí [(Subj.) í a scríobh].
      must she it PRT write-VN
      'She must write it.'

Clauses introduced by Ps are helpful in deciding how the case is assigned. Normally, when a P governs a pronoun, the result is an inflected prepositional pronoun:

(52) chun + iad —> chucu
      for them for-them

But when *chun* introduces a clause, the pronoun is in the usual default case:

(53) chun [iad a fheiceáil]
      for them PRT see-VN
      *chucu a fheiceáil
      for-them PRT see-VN
      'in order to see them'

In other words, the case seems not to be assigned by the P, but by some element in the non-finite clause. The most likely candidate is the particle a^L. This particle is obligatory only when a transitive V is used:

(54)
a) *Caithfidh mé [(Subj.) an leabhar léamh].
      must I the book read-VN
b) Caithfidh mé [(Subj.) dul abhaile].
      must I go-VN home
      'I must go home.'

Without a^L, case cannot be assigned to *an leabhar* 'the book' in a).

For further discussion of this issue see Noonan (1992), Guilfoyle (1994), Carnie (1995), Duffield (1995).

3.5.2. Prepositional phrases and subjects

One of the difficulties encountered by learners of Irish concerns the syntactic expression of the logical subject of a sentence, in that this often appears as the object of a preposition:

Table 2

	Preposition	Example
a)	ar 'on'	tá fearg orm is anger on-me 'I am angry'
b)	ag 'at'	tá teach ag Liam is house at Liam 'Liam has a house'
c)	le 'with'	is maith léi is good with-her 'she likes'

Simplifying somewhat, the generalisation seems to be that when the logical subject is non-agentive it will appear in a PP. In the above examples, the semantic role of the N in the PP is Experiencer (a, c), and Possessor (b).

This results in an apparent paradox, namely, that there are two subjects: the N following the V, and the N in the PP. In terms of the syntax, there is some evidence that the N in the PP is the subject. This concerns non-finite clauses with PP constructions like those in Table 2. Recall that in Section 3.3.2.2. we remarked that the subject can be overt or covert in non-finite clauses:

(55)

a)
Ba	mhaith liom	[(Subj.)	dul	ann.]
Cop-Past	good with-me		go-VN	there

'I would like to go there.'

b)
Ba	mhaith liom	[tú	a	dhul	ann].
Cop.-Past	good with-me	you	PRT	go-VN	there

'I would like you to go there.'

Now, in constructions with a PP like those in Table 2, one finds two NPs in initial position in the complement clause:

(56)
Ba	mhaith liom	[tú	airgead a	bheith agat].
Cop.-Past	good with-me	you	money PRT	be-VN at-you

'I would like you to have money.'

In other words, the structure of such sentences resembles very closely that of a sentence like:

(57)
Ba	mhaith liom	[tú	é	a	cheannach].
Cop.-Past	good with-me	you	it	PRT	buy-VN

'I would like you to buy it.'

In both (56) and (57), the logical subject is in initial, i.e. subject, position, followed by a predicate. What this suggests is that we could think of *airgead* 'money' in (56) as the object of a complex predicate *tá...ag* 'be...at' (= 'have'). In section 3.5.1., we suggested that case can be assigned by the particle a^L in the non-finite clause. The same mechanism would appear to be at work here.

In finite clauses, like those in Table 2 above, there is no particle present to assign case to the logical object. In sentences with a transitive verb, the verb will assign case to the object. However, the verb *bí* 'be' is not transitive, so the only way for the object to receive case is to move to subject position. As there is only one such position, this excludes the possibility of the logical subject occurring there:

(58)

a) Tá   airgead   agat.

is   money   at-you

b) *Tá   tú   airgead agat.

is   you   money at-you

'You have money.'

One other case of clause involving idiomatic PPs can be mentioned. We frequently come across what look like "subjectless" sentences:

(59)

a) Ghéaraigh ar a   céim.

sharpened on her step

'Her pace accelerated.'

b) Chuaigh   díobh.

went   of-them

'They failed.'

As the translations suggest, the logical subject is once again the N of the PP. The difference between these constructions and that in (58), is that the post-verbal subject position is empty. There is only one N present in the sentence, which receives its case from the P, just as the logical subject does in (58).

Examples like (59) constitute very strong evidence that Ns in PPs count as subjects in Irish. If we assume that every sentence must have a subject, then there is only one possible candidate, namely, the N governed by the P.

For more on this issue, see McCloskey and Sells (1988), McCloskey (1996).

3.6. Raising

We begin this section with a brief exposé of this phenomenon in English. It has been observed that the semantics of the following two sentences is identical:

(60)

a) It seems that John loves Mary.

b) John seems to love Mary.

Because of this identity, it has been claimed that the subject of the subordinate clause in a) "raises" to the position of the subject of the main clause.

Turning now to Irish, we can observe a similar mechanism at work, in examples like these:

(61)

a) Caithfidh sé [bheith fuar] má tá an ghaoth ag séideadh.
    must   it be-VN cold   if is the wind   at blow-VN
    'It must be cold if the wind is blowing.'

b) D'fhéadfá [ceann níos measa a   fháil].
    You-could one PRT bad-Comp. PRT get-VN
    'You could get worse.'

    (61a) is semantically equivalent to:

(62) Caithfidh [go bhfuil sé fuar] má tá an ghaoth ag séideadh.
      must   that is   it cold   if is the wind   at blow-VN
      'It must be cold if the wind is blowing.'

In (62) the weather pronoun *sé* 'it' is in the clausal complement of *caithfidh*, while in (61a) it is the subject of *caithfidh*. Furthermore, weather pronouns normally occur with the verb *bí* 'be', but not with *caith* 'must':

(63)

a) Tá sé fuar.
    is it cold
    'It is cold.'

    *Caithfidh sé fuar.
    must   it cold

b) Tá sé ag cur   báistí.
    is it at put-VN rain-Gen.
    'It is raining.'

    *Caithfidh sé ag cur   báistí.
    must   it at put-VN rain-Gen.

In other words, (62) represents the original structure, with *sé* as the subject of the substantive verb *bí*, and (61a) must in some way be derived from it.

This kind of raising is similar to the sort found in English and other languages, where there is movement to subject position of the main clause. Less familiar is the following type:

(64)

a) B'éigean   do Sheán [bheith   breoite], mura raibh sé ag obair.
    Cop.-Past-éigean to John   be-VN   sick   if-Neg was he at work-VN
    'John must have been sick, if he was not working.'

b) Ní   féidir   leis sin [bheith   fíor].
    Cop.-Neg. possible with-it that be-VN true
    'That can't be true.'

In these sentences, the subjects of the lower clauses, i.e. *Seán* and *sin* 'that', raise not to the post-verbal subject position of the main clause, but to the PPs *do Sheán* 'to John' and *leis sin* 'with that'. As we saw in the previous section, in Irish this also counts as a subject position. Viewed in this light, the raising illustrated in (64) is not so exceptional; one might even argue that it is quite normal in the case of Irish.

For more on this phenomenon, see McCloskey (1984), Guilfoyle (1990).

3.7. Noun movement

One of the central claims of generative grammar is that pairs of semantically related sentences can be related by rules which move constituents. Passivisation can serve as an example. It seems reasonable to assume that the following two sentences are somehow related:

(65)

a)   Mary kissed John.

b)   John was kissed by Mary.

A standard movement analysis for this alternation would run as follows. The N *John* starts off as the direct object. Under passivisation, the V lacks the ability to assign case, hence the object must move to a position where it can receive it. The subject position is an eligible candidate, since nominative case can be assigned here. In passives, this position is empty, with the agent either lacking entirely, or located in the PP headed by *by*. This enables the object *John* to move to subject position. In the representation below, we mark the original position of the object by an empty position called "trace" (t), and co-index the subject with it, to indicate that it has moved:

(66)   John$_i$ was kissed t$_i$ by Mary.

We now proceed to examine some movement operations in Irish.

3.7.1. Passivisation

In Section 2.1.4.2.3. we discussed the periphrastic passive. In this construction, the object of the corresponding active sentence becomes the subject:

(67)

a)   Tá Máire ag péinteáil   pictiúir.

        is Mary at paint-VN picture-Gen.

        'Mary is painting a picture.'

        Tá an pictiúr á   phéinteáil ag Máire.

        is the picture PRT   paint-VN at Mary

        'The picture is being painted by Mary.'

b)   Phéinteáil Máire an pictiúr.
          painted   Mary the picture
          'Mary painted the picture.'
          Tá an pictiúr péinteáilte ag Máire.
          is the picture paint-VA   at Mary
          'The picture has been painted by Mary.'

The second members of the pairs of sentences above lend themselves to the same kind of analysis as that employed for English. Thus, in (67a) the N *pictiúr* 'picture' starts off as the object of *péinteáil* 'paint'. The passive V lacks the ability to assign case, and hence the N must move to subject position:

(68)   Tá an pictiúr$_i$ á   phéinteáil t$_i$ ag Máire.
        is the picture   PRT   paint-VN   at Mary
        'The picture is being painted by Mary.'

Note that movement does not have to take place. In impersonal constructions, the object stays put, because the impersonal is a case-assigning form:

(69)   Óladh   an tae.
        drunk-Impers.-Past   the tea
        'The tea was drunk.'

In Early Modern Irish (c.1200 - c.1600), the impersonal could be used with a PP to mark the agent, the latter being headed by one of the following prepositions, *ag* 'at', *le* 'with', *ó* 'from':

(70)

a)   Do   marbhadh   ann iad **ó**   esgáirdibh dhóibh.
          PRT   kill-Impers.-Past there them from enemies to-them
          'They were killed there by enemies of theirs.'

b)   Do   marbhadh   Ó Breislen **leo**.
          PRT   kill-Impers.-Past Ó Breislen with-them
          'Ó Breislen was killed by them.'

c)   Ro   cinneadh   an chomhairle sin   **aca**.
          PRT   decided   the advice   that at-them
          'That plan was decided upon by them.'

This possibility no longer exists, except in deliberately archaic style. The following is ungrammatical in modern Irish:

(71)   *Óladh   an tae ag / le / ó   Máire.
        drunk-Impers.-Past   the tea at / with / from Mary

3.7.2. Unaccusative verbs

The word order found with certain intransitive verbs resembles that found in the perfective passive (see (67b)):

(72)

a) Tá Seán   tagtha.

    is John   come-VA

    'John has come.'

b) Bhí Máire   imithe.

    was Mary   go-VA

    'Mary had gone.'

In the above sentences, the word-order is *bí*+Subj.+VA, which is precisely what can be observed in the passive:

(73) Tá an pictiúr péinteáilte.

      is the picture paint-VA

      'The picture has been painted.'

Verbs like *come* and *go* are usually described as unaccusative, the idea being that underlyingly they have an object but no subject. Unlike transitive verbs, the semantic role of the surface subject is not agent, but resembles more that of the object of a transitive verb: thus in (73) *pictiúr* 'picture', and in (72) *Seán* and *Máire*, all undergo some change of state. Like in passives, the underlying object of unaccusative verbs is required to move to subject position to receive case. In so far as these verbs in Irish exhibit the same behaviour as passives, this would seem to be confirmed by data like those in (72).

An objection that might be made to this analysis is that the putative underlying object never actually surfaces in object position, i.e. after the verb. However, we do find a handful of verbs where there is an alternation between an impersonal, with the N in object position, and a passive, where the N has moved to subject position:

(74)

a) Cailleadh   iad.

    lose-Impers.-Past them

    'They died.'

b) Tá siad$_i$ caillte t$_i$.

    are they   lose-VA

    'They are dead.'

Example b) offers strong support for a movement interpretation of unaccusatives.

The predicate *faigh bás* 'die', which literally means 'get death', resembles *caill* 'die' in that the entity undergoing death is in subject position in the perfect passive:

(75)

a) Fuair siad   bás.

    got   they   death

    'They died.'

b) Tá siad   faighte bás.

    are they   get-VA death

    'They are dead.'

At first sight, this looks anomalous: if passivisation involves movement of the direct object to subject position, then, on the basis of examples (67b, 73), we would expect the passive form of (75a) to be:

(76) *Tá   bás   faighte   acu.
       is   death get-VA   at-them

But if we say that the various verbs for *die* are unaccusative, then the data make sense. The entity which undergoes death is an underlying object, as shown by (74a), and hence can move to subject position. In *faigh bás*, we are really dealing with an idiomatic unaccusative V, rather than a transitive one. Since the V is unaccusative, its underlying object must move to subject position. (76) is ungrammatical because PPs with *ag* are only allowed with agents, and the pronoun *they* in (75) is not agentive.

For theoretical studies of passives and impersonals, see Stenson (1981, 1989), Guilfoyle (1990).

3.8. Wh-questions and relatives

A large part of the generative syntactic literature of the last few decades has concentrated on the problem of so-called Wh-movement, i.e. the formation of questions involving interrogative pronouns like *who*, *what*, etc. Underlying the various analyses proposed is the assumption that questions beginning with interrogative pronouns are derived from sentences where the pronoun is in the usual position for subjects, objects etc. Thus, a) below is derived from b):

(77)
a)   Who did John see?
b)   John saw who?

A further assumption is that relative clauses have a similar structure to Wh-questions. Consider an example like:

(78)   the girl whom John saw

Here the clause *whom John saw* would be derived from the sentence:

(79)   John saw whom.

McCloskey (1979, 1985, 1990) offers a comprehensive treatment of the nature of Wh-questions and relatives in Irish, which takes the above assumptions as its starting point; the rest of this section is very much based on his work. For different treatments of the same topic see Duffield (1995), Noonan (1997). Ó Siadhail (1989) contains numerous examples of the constructions McCloskey discusses.

3.8.1. Relative clauses

Irish does not have relative pronouns. Instead it employs two particles to introduce the following clause, whose phonetic shape partly overlaps, and is partly distinct (see Table 3 below). The two particles cause different mutations.

This latter property is connected with the syntactic function of the particles. One of

them is used to introduce a clause which contains a resumptive pronoun, a clause like:

(80)   the girl that John can't say where he saw **her**

where *her* is a resumptive pronoun, referring to *the girl*.

Resumptive pronouns are marginal in English, but they are completely unmarked in Irish. Clause (81a) is perfectly well-formed, unlike its English equivalent (81b):

(81)

a)   an cailín   a   bpógann   Seán í

    the girl   PRT   kisses   John her

    'the girl that John kisses'

b)   *the girl that John kissed her

The second particle resembles English relative *that*; this introduces relative clauses which do not have a resumptive pronoun:

(82)   an cailín   a   phógann   Seán

    the girl   PRT   kisses   John

    'the girl that John kisses'

As can be seen, in the present tense the two particles are realised as *a*, but differ in their mutation effects. For this reason, the particle which introduces clauses with resumptive pronouns is referred to as a^E, and to the one which introduces non-resumptive clauses as a^L.

As well as what we may call the two basic particles, there are forms which realise two morphosyntactic features simultaneously. Thus ar^L is past, and introduces non-resumptive clauses. Semantically, it represents a combination of [+Past] and [–Resumptive].

We can list the various relative particles employing three features: [+/– Past], [+/– Negative], [+/– Resumptive] (for the first two features, see 2.1.4.3.).

Table 3

	Past	Negative	Resumptive
a) a^L	+/–	–	–
b) a^E	–	–	+
c) ar^L	+	–	+
d) $nach^E$	–	+	+/–
e) $nár^L$	+	+	+/–

The following relative clauses illustrate the distribution of these forms:

Table 4

a) [+/–Past, –Negative, –Resumptive]
an cailín   a   phógann   Seán
the girl   PRT   kisses   John
'the girl that John kisses'
an cailín   a   phóg   Seán
the girl   PRT   kissed   John
'the girl that John kissed'

b) [–Past, –Negative, + Resumptive]				
an cailín	a	bpógann	Seán	í
the girl	PRT	kisses	John	her
'the girl that John kisses'				

c) [+Past, –Negative, + Resumptive]				
an cailín	ar	phóg	Seán	í
the girl	PRT	kissed	John	her
'the girl that John kissed'				

d) [–Past, +Negative, +/–Resumptive]				
an cailín	nach	bpógann	Seán	
the girl	PRT-Neg.	kisses	John	
an cailín	nach	bpógann	Seán	í
the girl	PRT-Neg.	kisses	John	her
'the girl that John does not kiss'				

e) [+Past, +Negative, +/–Resumptive]				
an cailín	nár	phóg	Seán	
the girl	PRT-Neg.	kissed	John	
an cailín	nár	phóg	Seán	í
the girl	PRT-Neg.	kissed	John	her
'the girl that John did not kiss'				

Let us discuss non-resumptive particles first. Clauses like those in Table 4 a) are derived by co-indexing the N *an cailín* with its initial object position, which we mark as trace (t)[2]. The representation of the second sentence would be:

(83)

a) an cailín$_i$ a phóg Seán t$_i$

    cf.

b) Phóg Seán an cailín.
    kissed John the girl
    'John kissed the girl.'

Such clauses are in fact ambiguous. The N can also be co-indexed with the subject position, yielding a different structure and interpretation:

(84)

a) an cailín$_i$ a phóg t$_i$ Seán
    the girl   PRT kissed John
    'the girl that kissed John'

    cf.

---

[2] This co-indexation in some ways resembles the movement of Ns described in the previous section.

b)   Phóg   an   cailín   Seán.
        kissed the girl   John
        'The girl kissed John.'

Co-indexing of this sort is confined to Ns which originate in subject or object position. Thus, we do not find co-indexation of an N which is in a PP:

(85)   *an   cailín$_i$ a   bhuail mé [$_{PP}$ le   t$_i$]
        the   girl   PRT   met   I   with

This is due to the existence of general restrictions on co-indexation with trace. In both English and Irish, for example, co-indexing cannot take place into an interrogative clause:

(86)
a)   *the girl$_i$ that I don't know [$_{Interr}$ when John kissed t$_i$]
b)   *an   cailín$_i$ nach   bhfeadar [$_{Interr}$ cathain a   phóg   Seán t$_i$]
        the   girl   PRT-Neg.   know-I   when   PRT   kissed John

In Irish, PPs also prevent this kind of co-indexation.

    In clauses with resumptive pronouns, the situation is different. Here, the pronoun appears in the position that trace occupies in the examples above. In this respect, compare:

(87)
a)   an cailín$_i$ ar   phóg   Seán í$_i$
        the girl   PRT   kissed John her
b)   an cailín$_i$ a   phóg   Seán t$_i$
        the girl   PRT   kissed John
        'the girl that John kissed'

The meaning is the same, but in one case (87a) there is co-indexation of the N *an cailín* with trace, while in the other (87b) the N in initial position is simply co-indexed with the resumptive pronoun.

    Since there is no trace in clauses with resumptive pronouns, the restrictions on co-indexing do not apply. Hence, we can find a co-indexed resumptive pronoun where a trace would be ungrammatical:

(88)   an cailín$_i$ ar   bhuail mé [$_{PP}$ léi$_i$]
        the girl   PRT   met   I   with-her
        'the girl that I met'

Here, the prepositional pronoun *léi* is co-indexed with *an cailín*. Trace is not allowed in this context (cf. (85)).

    What this means is that the range of constructions involving the [+resumptive] particle is on the whole much broader than that of the [–resumptive] one, since the occurrence of the [+resumptive] particle is not subject to the same constraints. There is one exception to this, namely, when the second member of the co-indexed pair is in subject position:

(89)   *an cailín$_i$ ar   phóg   sí$_i$ Seán
        the girl   PRT   kissed she   John

We can interpret this as an instance of a general condition which does not allow a pronoun to be too close to its antecedent. That is, the reason (89) is ungrammatical is basically attributable to the same condition that prevents:

(90)   *John$_i$ likes him$_i$.

where *John* and *him* refer to the same person.

3.8.2. Interrogative clauses

Up to now, we have confined our discussion to relative clauses. However, exactly the same patterns are observable in the case of Wh-questions, as a comparison of Table 4 above and Table 5 below reveals:

Table 5

a) [+/–Past, –Negative, –Resumptive]			
Cé	a	phógann	Seán?
who	PRT	kisses	John
'Who does John kiss?'			
Cé	a	phóg	Seán?
who	PRT	kissed	John
'Who did John kiss?'			

b) [–Past, –Negative, –Resumptive]			
Cén	cailín	a	bpógann	Seán í?
which	girl	PRT	kisses	John her
'Which girl does John kiss?'				

c) [+Past, –Negative, +Resumptive]			
Cén	cailín	ar	phóg	Seán í?
which	girl	PRT	kissed	John her
'Which girl did John kiss?'				

d) [–Past, +Negative, +/–Resumptive]			
Cén	cailín	nach	bpógann	Seán?
which	girl	PRT-Neg.	kisses	John
Cén	cailín	nach	bpógann	Seán í?
which	girl	PRT-Neg.	kisses	John her
'Which girl does John not kiss?'				

e) [+Past, +Negative, +/– Resumptive]			
Cén	cailín	nár	phóg	Seán?
which	girl	PRT-Neg.	kissed	John
Cén	cailín	nár	phóg	Seán í?
which	girl	PRT-Neg.	kissed	John her
'Which girl did John not kiss?'				

Given this exact correspondence between the two structures, the unified treatment of relative clauses and Wh-questions seems justified. Thus, in the first example above, the interrogative pronoun *cé* 'who' is co-indexed with a trace:

(91)   Cé$_i$ a   phógann   Seán t$_i$?
        Who PRT kisses   John
        'Who does John kiss?'

In questions involving a P, like *to whom* etc., an interrogative is coupled with a prepositional pronoun:

(92)
a)   Cé   leis?
      Who with-him
      'With whom?'

b)   Cad   faoi?
      what under-it
      'Under what?'

When the prepositional question occurs in a clause, both the interrogative and the prepositional pronoun move to initial position, leaving a trace:

(93)
a)   [Cé   leis]$_i$ ar   bhuail Máire t$_i$?
      who with-him PRT met   Mary
      'Who did Mary meet?'

b)   [Cad faoi]$_i$ ar   chuir tú an leabhar t$_i$?
      what under-it PRT put   you the book
      'Under what did you put the book?'

In D, there is an alternative construction, whereby the prepositional pronoun is a resumptive pronoun, remaining in its original position, and merely being co-indexed with the interrogative:

(94)   Cé$_i$ ar   bhuail Seán leis$_i$?
        Who PRT met   John with-him
        'Who did John meet?'

This construction is employed in all dialects when the interrogative contains an N:

(95)   [Cén cailín]$_i$ ar   bhuail Seán léi$_i$?
      which girl PRT met   John with-her
      'Which girl did John meet?'

(cf. (88))

One final point can be mentioned with respect to Wh-questions. Certain interrogative particles and adverbs are lexically marked as taking clauses beginning with either a^L or a^E:

Table 6

a) a^L				
Cathain	a	théann	sí	ann?
when	PRT	goes	she	there
'When does she go there?'				
nuair	a	théann	sí	ann...
when	PRT	goes	she	there
'when she goes there...'				
Conas	a	théann	sí	ann?
how	PRT	goes	she	there
'How does she go there?'				

b) a^E				
Cén	fáth	a	dtéann sí	ann?
which	reason	PRT	goes she	there
'Why does she go there?'				
Cén	t-am	a	dtéann sí	ann?
which	time	PRT	goes she	there
'What time does she go there?'				
Cén	áit	a	dtéann sí?	
which	place	PRT	goes she	
'Where does she go?'				

Although these resemble the constructions discussed above, it is difficult to account for their distribution in terms of the principles which govern the distribution of the nominal interrogative expressions in Table 5. Thus, in both the a) and b) examples, there would seem to be a trace, since there is no resumptive pronoun phonetically present in the b) sentences, although the particle used, a^E, is the one found in resumptive constructions. If we compare the last example in b) with a structurally similar sentence with a resumptive pronoun, we can see the difference:

(96)

a) [Cén áit]$_i$ a   dtéann sí t$_i$?
    which place   PRT   goes she
    'Where does she go?'

b) Cén bord$_i$ a   gcuireann tú an litir   air$_i$?
    which table   PRT   put   you the letter   on-it
    'On which table do you put the letter?'

Given this state of affairs, there seems no alternative to lexical marking for the particles and adverbs in question. We simply cannot predict on the basis of the syntax what the choice of relative marker will be.

3.9. Stylistic variation

Under this heading we discuss changes in word-order which are motivated by pragmatic or stylistic factors rather than purely grammatical considerations. For additional discussion see Wigger (1972), Stenson (1981), Ó Siadhail (1989), Duffield (1995).

3.9.1. Clefting

This involves moving some constituent to the front of the sentence in order to focus it. As with passivisation, the moved element is co-indexed with a trace. In the following pair of English sentences, the first is neutral, while the second emphasises the fronted N:

(97)

a)   John ate a sandwich.

b)   It was a sandwich$_i$ that John ate t$_i$.

Clefting is very common in Irish. The basic pattern is:

(Copula) + Fronted constituent + Relative clause

Irish allows a wide range of constituents to be thus fronted:

Table 7

a) Noun fronted
[Leabhar]$_i$ a cheannaigh sé t$_i$.
book PRT bought he
'It was a book that he bought.'
Is í [Máire]$_i$ a rinne t$_i$ an obair.
Cop.-Pres. her Mary PRT did the work
'It was Mary who did the work.'

b) Adjective fronted
Nach [dorcha]$_i$ atá sé t$_i$!
Cop.-Neg.-Pres. dark PRT-is it
'Isn't it dark!'

c) Prepositional Phrase fronted
Is [ar Mháire]$_i$ a bhí an t-áthas t$_i$.
Cop.-Pres. on Mary PRT was the joy
'It was Mary who was glad.'

d) Verb fronted
Is [ag caint]$_i$ a bhíodar t$_i$.
Cop.-Pres. at talk-VN PRT were-they
'Talking they were.'

e) Adverb fronted
[Tráthnóna]$_i$ a tháinig siad ar ais t$_i$.
evening PRT came they back
'It was in the evening they came back.'

As well as the cleft construction, many languages have pseudo-cleft sentences, where the element which is being focussed occurs sentence-finally, with some kind of indefinite or interrogative expression in initial position. We can indicate this once again by means of co-indexing:

(98) What$_i$ John ate was [a sandwich]$_i$.

Irish also has a pseudo-cleft construction. The structure is:

Copula + Indefinite + Relative clause + (ná) + Focus

The following are examples of pseudo-clefts:

(99)

a) Is   é$_i$ a   dúirt sé liom, [go   raibh sé ag imeacht]$_i$.
Cop.-Pres. it PRT   said   he to-me, that was   he at   leave-VN
'What he said to me was that he was leaving.'

b) Is   é rud$_i$ a   cheannaigh sí **ná** [bainne]$_i$.
Cop.-Pres. it thing PRT   bought   she PRT milk
'What she bought was milk.'

The focussed constituent may be introduced by means of an interrogative sentence followed by *ná* or *ach* 'but':

(100)

a) Cad$_i$ a   chonaic Seán ach[madra mór]$_i$?
what   PRT   saw   John but dog   big
'What did John see but a big dog?'

b) Cad$_i$ a   rinne   sé ach[an madra a   bhualadh]$_i$?
what   PRT   did   he but the dog PRT   hit-VN
'What did he do but hit the dog?'

Finally, a whole sentence can be focussed by certain adverbs/nouns used in conjunction with the copula:

(101)

a) Is   amhlaidh$_i$ a   [bhí Máire ag caint   le   Seán]$_i$.
Cop.-Pres. so   PRT   was   Mary at talk-VN with John
'The fact is that Mary was talking to John.'

b) Is   é [an chaoi]$_i$ a   [raibh siad   ag caint]$_i$.
Cop.-Pres. it the way   PRT   were-Dep.they   at talk-VN
'The fact is that they were talking.'

3.9.2. Heavy movement

A widespread cross-linguistic phenomenon is so-called "heavy" movement, whereby constituents with a complex internal structure are made easier to process, either by changing the position of the whole constituent, or one of its parts. Consider the sentence:

(102) I saw the man who was appointed managing director yesterday.

Such sentences can be ambiguous, depending on whether we treat *yesterday* as part of the main clause or the relative one. This ambiguity can be avoided by one of two stratagems:

1. Move the whole complex NP to the right:

(103) I saw t$_i$ yesterday [the man [who was appointed managing director]]$_i$.

2. Move part of the complex NP to the right:

(104) I saw the man t$_i$ yesterday [who was appointed managing director]$_i$.

As we saw in Section 3.8, Irish has two ways of dealing with relative clauses and Wh-questions, namely, resumptive and non-resumptive constructions. These two kinds of clauses are found in heavy movement as well.

Non-resumptive movement is what we find in English. Irish also exhibits this kind of stylistic shift, as the translations of (103) and (104) show:

(105)

a) Chonaic   mé t$_i$ inné   [an fear

saw   I   yesterday   the man

[a   ceapadh   ina   príomhbhainisteoir]]$_i$.

PRT   appoint-Impers.-Past   in-his   managing director

'I saw yesterday the man who was appointed managing director.'

b) Chonaic   mé an fear t$_i$ inné

saw   I   the man   yesterday

[a   ceapadh   ina   príomhbhainisteoir]$_i$.

PRT   appoint-Impers.-Past   in-his   managing director

'I saw the man yesterday who was appointed managing director.'

In the same way, prepositions with their objects are frequently moved to the end of the sentence:

(106) Bhuail mé t$_i$ aréir   [le   mo chara]$_i$.

met   I   last-night   with   my friend

'I met last night with my friend.'

An alternative method of facilitating the interpretation of sentences containing heavy NP constituents is what we may call the resumptive pronoun strategy. The cumbersome NP is isolated, and a resumptive pronoun substituted for it in its original position. We can illustrate this process with the sentence:

(107) Bhí   [an fear   a   raibh   mé ag caint   leis]

was   the man   PRT   was   I   at talk-VN   with-him

ina   chónaí i   gCorcaigh.

in-his   living in   Cork

'The man I was talking to lived in Cork.'

This can be made easier to process by isolating the subject, and then repeating the original sentence with a pronoun substituted for the NP. There is an intonational pause after the heavy element:

(113) Thug mé do Sheán aréir   é.
       gave I to John last-night it
       'I gave it to John last night.'

Apart from the direct object *é* 'it', we find here a PP - *do Sheán* 'to John', and an adverb *aréir* 'last night'. These differ with respect to whether their presence is obligatory or not. The adverb can be omitted without affecting the grammaticality of the resulting sentence:

(114) Thug mé do Sheán é.
       gave I to John it
       'I gave it to John.'

But if we leave out the PP, ungrammaticality ensues:

(115) *Thug mé aréir   é.
        gave I last-night it

This distinction, along with a number of other contrasts, leads to a division of such post-verbal elements into "complements" and "adjuncts". Complements comprise obligatory constituents like the direct object and the PP, while adjuncts are optional constituents like adverbs.

Returning now to the positioning of the unstressed pronoun, we can observe a pattern depending on the type of element that accompanies it. Briefly, an object pronoun may precede or follow adjuncts:

(116)
a) Thug mé do Sheán é [aréir].
    gave I to John it last-night
b) Thug mé do Sheán [aréir]   é.
    gave I to John last-night it
    'I gave it to John last night.'

However, it must follow complements. In the above example, *do Sheán* 'to John' is a complement, hence the following order is not allowed:

(117) *Thug mé é [do Sheán].
        gave I it to John

Apart from object pronouns, we also find optional leftward movement with light PPs and particles, whereby these are positioned before the direct object:

(118)
a) Thug sé an leabhar   dom.
    gave he the book   to-me
    Thug sé dom$_i$ an leabhar t$_i$.
    gave he to-me the book
    'He gave the book to me.'

b)　　Chaith sí　an　　deoch **siar**.
　　　threw she the　drink back
　　　Chaith sí　**siar**ᵢ　an deoch tⱼ.
　　　threw she back　the drink
　　　'She knocked back the drink.'

For more on light movement, see Duffield (1995), Adger (1997), Doyle (1998), McCloskey (1999).

3.10. Ellipsis

One striking feature of Irish syntax is the fact that there are no single words for *yes* or *no*. In short responses, the V of the original sentence is repeated:

(119)

a)　　An　　　　bhfuil Máire ag baile?
　　　PRT-Interr.　is　　Mary　at　home
　　　'Is Mary at home?'
　　　Tá /　　níl.
　　　is　　is-Neg.
　　　'Yes/no.'

b)　　Ar　　　cheannaigh　siad　arán?
　　　PRT-Interr.　bought　　they　bread
　　　'Did they buy bread?'
　　　Cheannaigh /　níor　　cheannaigh.
　　　bought　　　PRT-Neg. bought
　　　'Yes/no.'

Because the subject is often omitted in such responses, it has been claimed that we are dealing here with an ellipsis process which deletes the portion of the sentence following the finite V. Thus, the answer to the question in a) would have the following underlying structure:

(120)　Tá [Máire ag baile].
　　　is　Mary at home
　　　'Mary is at home.'

The constituent in brackets, which is a Small Clause (see 3.3.1.1.), is deleted in responses, and in other contexts, like tag questions:

(121)　Cheannaigh　siad　arán, nár　　cheannaigh?
　　　bought　　they　bread, PRT-Interr.-Neg. bought
　　　'They bought bread, didn't they?'

Two other types of ellipsis are attested. In emphatic answers, the subject pronoun is repeated with the V:

(122) An   bhfuil Máire ag baile?
PRT-Interr. is   Mary at home
'Is Mary at home?'
Tá sí. ['tɑ: 'ʃi:]
is she
'Yes, indeed.'

The second case occurs with auxiliary *déan* 'do' (past *rinne*). This is used in conjunction with a VN complement, as an alternative to the more usual word order where the finite V is in initial position:

(123)

a)   Cheannaigh siad   arán.
      bought   they   bread

b)   Rinne siad [arán a   cheannach].
      made they   bread PRT buy-VN
      'They bought bread.'

In a), the V *ceannaigh* 'buy' is finite and occurs sentence-initially. In b), it is non-finite and stays in its original position.

The auxiliary *déan* also occurs in short responses, but unlike other Vs, it is accompanied by the subject:

(124) An   gceannófá   arán?
PRT-Interr. would-you-buy bread
'Would you buy bread?'
Déanfaidh mé.
will-do   I
'I will.'

Presumably, the underlying structure of the response is:

(125) Déanfaidh mé   [arán a   cheannach].
will-do   I   bread PRT buy-VN
'I will buy bread.'

The bracketed phrase is then deleted.

There would appear to be two kinds of ellipsis. In the first kind (119, 121), the subject and everything that follows it is deleted. In the second kind of ellipsis (122) and (124), only the material following the subject undergoes deletion.

For a detailed account of this phenomenon, see Ó Siadhail (1973), McCloskey (1991).

3.11. Negation

3.11.1 Negative particles

Various particles are employed with Vs to express negation; these may also contain other features. For example, *ní* is [–Past], while *níor* is also [+Past]:

(126)

a) Ní ghlanann Seán an chistin.

Neg. cleans John the kitchen

'John does not clean the kitchen.'

b) Níor ghlan Máire an chistin.

Neg.-Past cleaned Mary the kitchen

'Mary did not clean the kitchen.'

For a full list of negative particles and their features see 2.1.4.3.

In non-finite clauses, the negative marker is *gan*:

(127) B'fhearr liom gan é sin a léamh.

PRT-better with-me not it that PRT read-VN

'I would prefer not to read that.'

The negative form of the copula is used in cleft constructions to mark a given constituent as negative:

(128) Ní [arán] a cheannaigh siad ach bainne.

Cop.-Neg. bread PRT bought they but milk

'It was not bread they bought but milk.'

3.11.2. Marking of negation

Cross-linguistically, negation is often marked morphologically on pronominal and adverbial elements, e.g. *nobody*, *never* in English. Irish lacks such elements. Thus, English *never* is translated as *not...ever*:

(129) Ní raibh mé riamh ann.

not was I ever there

'I was never there.'

Certain morphologically non-negative adverbs are semantically negative, in that the sentences in which they appear display the same characteristics as negative sentences. Consider the case of negative polarity items, i.e. morphological elements which can only be licensed by a negative:

(130)

a) I don't see anything.

b) *I see anything.

Morphologically non-negative expressions can also license polarity items. Thus, *only* in English can license *any*:

(131)   Only Mary bought anything.

Data like this suggest that such adverbs are also negative, even though this is not given any overt morphological expression.

The Irish equivalents of *any*, prenominal *aon*^{L} (K), and postnominal *ar bith* (C, D), display the same negative polarity effects:

(132)

a)   Ní   fheicim   **aon** rud   / rud   **ar bith**.

        Neg.   see-I   any thing   / thing any

        'I don't see anything.'

b)   *Feicim   **aon** rud   / rud   **ar bith**.

        see-I   any thing   / thing any

Irish differs from English with respect to morphologically non-negative adverbs. Frequently, Irish lacks an expression equivalent to the English one, and employs instead an overt negative particle before the verb. Thus, *only* is expressed in Irish by means of *ach* 'but', which focusses a particular constituent. For *ach* to be licensed, there must be a negative particle present:

(133)

a)   Níl   ach [cúig   phunt] agam.

        is-Neg. but five   pounds at-me

        'I only have five pounds.'

b)   Chuaigh   Seán   go dtí   an siopa

        went   John   to   the shop

        agus   gan   ach [cúig   phunt] aige.

        and   not   but five   pounds at-him

        'John went to the shop with only five pounds.'

c)   Ní   dhearna   mé ach [an   doras   a   dhúnadh].

        Neg.   did   I but the   door   PRT   close-VN

        'All I did was close the door.'

d)   Ní   raibh   ach [an dinnéar   ite   againn]...

        Neg.   was   but the dinner   eat-VA at-us

        'We had just eaten dinner...'

Irish also has morphologically non-negative adverbs like those of English, which usually appear in cleft constructions:

(134)

a)   Is   [annamh]   a   deireann   sí **aon** rud.

        Cop.-Pres. seldom   PRT   says   she any   thing

        'She seldom says anything.'

b)   Is   [ar éigean] atá   duine   **ar bith** fágtha.

        Cop.-Pres. scarcely is-Rel. person any   leave-VA

        'There's hardly anybody left.'

The fact that these adverbs are negative is shown by the fact that they license the negative polarity items marked in bold.

Before finishing, we can mention one other negative marker, namely, the expression *diabhal*. Historically, this means *devil*, but synchronically it corresponds to English *no* or *none*, the only difference being that it has emphatic force (cf. English *damn all*). It usually appears in responses:

(135)　An　　　　bhfuair tú　　aon airgead?
　　　　PRT-Interr.　got　　you　　any money
　　　　'Did you get any money?'
　　　　(An)　diabhal airgead,　mhuis'.
　　　　the　devil　money　indeed
　　　　'None.'

There is a condition on this negative marker to the effect that it can only appear in initial position. If it appears in a full sentence, the cleft construction is used:

(136)　[(An)　diabhal leabhar]　a　　léigh　an t-amadán sin.
　　　　the　devil　book　　PRT　read　the fool　　that
　　　　*Léigh an t-amadán sin (an) diabhal　leabhar.
　　　　read　the fool　　that the devil　book
　　　　'That fool didn't read a single book.'

Because it is negative, *diabhal* can license negative polarity items like *any*:

(137)　(An)　diabhal airgead a　　bhí ag **aon** duine an uair　sin.
　　　　the　devil　money PRT　was at any body　the time　that
　　　　'Nobody had any money at all then.'

This negative marker *diabhal* occurs in combination with another element. This is the quantifier a^E 'all':

(138)　Bhí　a　raibh　　ann　ar meisce.
　　　　was　all　was-Dep.　there　drunk
　　　　'Everybody who was there was drunk.'

diabhal combines with this to form a negative quantifier:

(139)　(An)　diabhal a　bhfuair mé.
　　　　the　devil　all got　I
　　　　'I got nothing.'

This negative quantifier in turn can license the *ach* 'only' construction (cf. (133):

(138)　Diabhal　a　raibh ann　ach cúpla duine.
　　　　devil　all　was　there　but couple person
　　　　'There were only a few people there.'

For more details see Ó Siadhail (1973, 1989), Acquaviva (1996).

4. Texts

We finish with two sample texts, accompanied by an interlinear phonetic transcription and literal gloss, and followed by an idiomatic translation in the case of the second text. Stress is marked on polysyllabic words, and also on monosyllabic words which receive sentence stress; secondary stress is marked in compound-like expressions. The dialect is that of C, but adapted so as to be as close as possible to the standard language, at least as far as orthography, morphology and syntax are concerned.

4.1 The Lord's Prayer

Ár n-athair atá ar neamh, go naomhítear
ə 'næ:rʸ ə'ta: ər 'Nʸæ:w gə 'ni:wi:tʸər
our father is-Rel. on heaven PRT sanctify-Impers.-Sub.

d'ainm, go dtaga do ríocht, go ndéantar
'tæ:nʸimʸ gə 'dʸæ:gə də 'ri:xt gə 'Nʸi:Ntər
your-name PRT come-Subj. your kingdom PRT do-Impers.-Sub.

do thoil ar an talamh, mar a dhéantar
də 'holʸ ərʸ ə(N) 'ta:lə ma:r ə 'ɣi:Ntər
your will on the earth as PRT do-Impers.-Sub.

ar neamh, ár n-arán laethúil tabhair dúinn
ər 'Nʸæ:w ə Nə'ra:N 'Le:u:lʸ 'to:rʸ ɣu:Nʸ
on heaven our bread daily give-Imper. to-us

inniu, agus maith dúinn ár bhfiacha, mar a
i'Nʸu əs 'ma: ɣu:Nʸ ə 'vʸiəxə ma:r ə
today and forgive to-us our debts as PRT

mhaithimid dár bhféichiúnaithe féin,
'wa:Nmidʸ da: 'vʸe:u:Ni: 'he:nʸ
forgive-we to-our debtors self

agus ná lig sinn i gcathú, ach saor sinn ó olc.
əs Na: 'lʸigʸ ʃiNʸ i 'ga:u: a:x 'si:r ʃiNʸ o: 'olk
and Imper.-Neg. let us into temptation but free us from evil

4.2. My Little Black Donkey

The following passage is taken from the short story *M'asal beag dubh* 'My little black donkey' by Pádraig Ó Conaire.

I gCinn Mhara a bhí mé nuair a chuir mé
i gʸi:Nʸ 'wa:rə 'vʸi: mʸe: nerʸ ə 'xirʸ mʸe:
in Kinvara PRT was I when PRT put I

aithne   ar m'asal beag dubh i dtosach.
'æ:n´i   ər 'ma:səL 'b´og 'du ə 'dosəx
acquaintance on my-donkey small black in beginning

Lá aonaigh a bhí ann, agus bhí sé ina
Lα: 'i:Nə 'v´i: α:N 'a:gəs 'v´i: ʃe: Nə
day fair-Gen. PRT was there and was he in-his

sheasamh ansin cois claí agus a thóin
'hæ:sə n'ʃin´ koʃ 'klai əs ə 'ho:n´
standing there beside ditch and his backside

le gaoith, gan aird aige ar an saol
l´e 'gi: gəN 'α:rd´ 'eg´i ər´ əN 'si:L
against wind without heed at-him on the world

ná ag an saol air.
Nα: eg´ əN 'si:L 'er´
nor at the world on-him

Ach chuir mé féin suim ann ó thús.
a:x 'xir´ m´e: 'he:n 'si:m´ α:N o: 'hu:s
but put I self interest in-him from beginning

Bhí asal uaim, bhí mé tuirseach den tsiúlóid.
'v´i: 'a:səL 'wem´ 'v´i: m´e: 'torʃəx gən 't´u:Lo:d´
was donkey from-me was I tired of-the walking

Nach n-iompródh seisean mé féin agus
Na:x 'Numpro:t 'ʃeʃəN m´e: 'he:n´ əs
Interr.-Neg. would-carry he-Emph. me self and

mo mhála agus mo chóta mór, agus gach aon sórt?
mə 'wa:Lə əs mə 'xo:tə 'mo:r əs gə'xe:N 'so:rt
my bag and my coat big and every single kind

Agus cárbh fhios nach bhfaighinn
'a:gəs kα:rw 'is Na:x 'wi:N´
and how-Cop.-Past knowledge that-Neg. would-get-I

saor go leor é?
'si:r gə 'L´o:r e:
cheap PRT enough him

Translation:

  I was in Kinvara when I first met my little black donkey. It was a fair day, and he was standing there by the ditch with his back to the wind, paying no heed to the world, and the world paying no heed to him.

  But I took an interest in him from the beginning. I wanted a donkey, I was tired of walking. Wouldn't he carry myself and my bag and my overcoat, and everything? And maybe I would get him cheap.

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