Cupla Focail

National Identity and Language in Ireland

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Cupla Focail – National identitet og sprog i Irland

Resumé

Irland har en særlig sprogsituation, idet deres nationalsprog samtidig er et minoritetssprog. Kun tre procent bruger irsk som deres primære kommunikative sprog, resten taler engelsk. På trods af det lille antal, der har irsk som hovedsprog, spiller sproget en stor rolle i Irland. Siden den irske selvstændighed fra engelsk kolonisering i 1922 har man forsøgt at genoplive det irske sprog, dog uden stor succes. Irsk er fortsat obligatorisk fag i skolen. Der er en irsk tv-kanal, irske stednavne samt diverse Cupla Focail, som sniger sig ind i sproget hist og her. Cupla Focail er irsk og betyder 'et par få ord', og det er netop disse, der bedst beskriver størstedelen af den irskes befolkning forhold til det irske sprog. Dette faktuelle ringe kendskab til sproget og det begrænsede sprogbrug indikerer, at sproget er primært symbolsk, og dens værdi skal findes heri.

Dette speciale afdækker det irske sprogs betydning for den irske nationale identitet. Specialet analyserer det irske sprogtab og ser det som et resultat af kolonisering, emigration og det engelske sprogs status som globalt 'lingua franca'. Det nuværende irske sprogbrug kan ses ud fra forskellige diskurser. Den første er en nationalsprogs-diskurs, som beskæftiger sig med sprogets status. Denne kommer særligt til udtryk gennem det statslige apparat og derved via forfatning, lovgivning og politiske erklæringer. Den anden omhandler en kultur-diskurs, der ser det irske sprog som værende vigtigt i sig selv ud fra en kulturel forståelse. Den tredje diskurs omhandler en minoritetssprog-diskurs, som er relateret til den faktuelle irsktalende befolkning. Den kommer især til udtryk i en EU kontekst, hvor sproglig mangfoldighed vægtes højt. Den sidste diskurs relaterer sig til det irske sprog som værende dødt og derfor ikke anerkendende overfor sprogets andre værdier end de kommunikative. De første tre diskurser er de mest brugte i Irland, da 89 procent af befolkningen ser det irske sprog som værende meget vigtigt. Ydermere kan de første to diskurser eksistere i samhørighed med et symbolsk sprog.

Specialet belyses ud fra tre teoretiske tilgange til nation, identitet og sprog. Disse er konstruktivisme, essentialisme og etnosymbolisme. Specialet finder, at dele af alle tre teorier kan drages i brug for at beskrive det irske tilfælde. Den teori, der dog bedst kan bruges til at forklare den irske sproglige situation i relation til deres nationale identitet, er etnosymbolismen. Etnosymbolismen opfatter national identitet som foranderlig, men forandringen sker ud fra en genfortolkning af nationens

rødder, der foretages af de forskellige generationer. Det irske sprog, kan i den sammenhæng, ses som en genfortolkning, hvor sproget bliver tildelt en symbolsk værdi i en nutidig kontekst.

Grunden til at irerne holder fast i deres sprog skal ses i lyset af dets betydning af national identitet. Sproget fungerer som en markør for den gæliske etnicitet og adskiller dermed irerne fra andre nationer og folkefærd. Dette skal især ses i forhold til koloniseringen. Irerne har et behov for at differentiere sig selv fra England og dets kultur. En måde at opnå dette på er gennem det irske sprog. Den nationale identitet er derfor påvirket af at være ekskluderende overfor Irlands 'Anden' nemlig England.

Specialet konkluderer, at det irske sprog er et vigtig symbol på den irske nationale identitet, det er derfor vigtigt at bevare, på trods af dets begrænsede funktionalitet. På en etnosymbolsk vis findes der dog også andre 'ethnies' end sprog, der tilsammen udgør den irske identitet. Disse elementer er etnicitet, fælles historie og myter samt katolicismen, der sammen med sprog danner grundlaget for den irske nationale identitet.

Foreword

When I first met my Irish husband and we set up a life for ourselves here in Denmark he learnt Danish. I thought it would be nice if I too got to know his culture and in return learned Irish. Because yes I do think that culture relates to language. Here some 10 years and a couple of children later I still do not know Irish! However, I do know English and that has served me fine so far. The amount of Irish I have been subjected to whilst in Ireland has been limited and has consisted mainly of the Cupla Focail, which is Irish meaning 'a few words', basically, the odd words remembered from learning Irish in school and the few words of Irish which have become part of everyday language. This, combined with the words used for ceremonial occasions and Irish pronouns such as titles and geographical names, made me wonder as to: Why do the Irish hold on to a language which they do not use? Thus I have chosen to write my thesis in the field of sociolinguistics mainly concerned with language, culture and national identity.

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1 Introduction

The language debate in Europe is concerned with the overall dominance of the English language on indigenous languages (Philipson 2007). However, there are contradictive trends in the fact that there is an increasing interest in minority languages at the same time as the dominance of the English language is being manifested as a lingua franca. In the preamble to the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages it is written that the protection of the European minority languages is important as they are a part of the European cultural heritage. Furthermore the EU values interculturalism and multilinguism and the rights of the minority language users (Council of Europe 1992).

The importance of language in a national context is much debated, as I will elaborate on in my thesis. Fisher sees language as an existential feature: "Language is the ultimate measure of human society. More than any of life's faculties, it is language that tells us who we are, what we mean and where we are going" (Fisher 1999:203).

One of the minority languages of the EU is the Irish language. It is, however quite unusual in comparison to other minority languages as it is also has the status of national language. This means that Irish is recognized as the primary constitutional language of Ireland although it is a minority language as only three per cent of the population use it as their prime communicative language (Statement on the Irish Language 2006). The de facto language of Ireland is English. Thus the Irish language use in Ireland is limited, but its status is not, suggesting that there is more to the language than its use. As a used language, the number of Irish speakers has been drastically reduced over the past four hundred years mainly due to the English colonisation of Ireland and Irish emigration. However, Dr. Mairead Moriarty a lecturer of sociolinguistics at University of Limerick states that the Irish language is hugely important as a marker of ethnic identity but not necessarily as a functional language. She adds that the language is needed on a symbolic level as it is what marks the Irish population as different (Moriarty 2011).

That the Irish wish to be different should be seen in the light of Ireland as a post colonial state. In that context Winston Churchill famously said about the Irish: "We have always found the Irish a bit odd. They refuse to be English" (Burke 2003:178). Thus the story of the Irish language in Ireland is also the story of a country affected by colonialism.

During the years of Irish colonisation the Irish language gradually disappeared in favour of the English language. Since the Irish independence the wish to restore and revive the Irish language has at large been on the political agenda and present in the country's language planning. This thesis will attempt to

tell the story of Irish language in Ireland and its significance for the nation. It is called Cupla Focail which in Irish means 'a few words'. Knowing a few words of a language may not be seen as very significant or knowledgeable. However, this thesis will explore the concept that a few words can have a very big meaning.

1.1 Research question

Professor of Irish studies at Aarhus University Michael Böss writes in his chronicle: *Fortællingen om den irske sprogdød*[1] about the consequences for the Irish people of the loss of their own language: "Med et moderne udtryk kan man tale om et katastrofalt sprogligt domænetab, der på sigt fratog irerne magten til at modernisere deres samfund udfra deres egen kulturtradition. Koloniseringen af Irland gjorde irerne politisk magtesløse og kulturelt rodløse."[2] (Böss 2007).

With this statement in mind I want to explore the importance of language in relation to identity and culture in an Irish context. Thus my research question is:

How bound is Irish national identity on language?

In order to answer that question I need to subsequently uncover: What languages are at play in Ireland today and how did it come to be that way? What role does the Irish language play in Ireland both in terms of language planning and public attitudes? How connected is language to national identity and ethnicity seen in relation to Ireland as a postcolonial state and the issues that entail?

1.2 Methodology

My approach to answering these questions will be through a theoretical conceptualisation in the form of various theoretical approaches to language and identity and through empirical case material from Ireland. The theoretical framework will look upon nations, identity and ethnicity as it is central to my research question. The main theories chosen are constructivism, essentialism and ethnosymbolism. They are interesting as that they have very different approaches to language and nation and it will thus

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[1] In English: "The story of the death of the Irish language".

[2] In English: "With a modern expression one can talk of a linguistic loss of domain that had catastrophic consequences that led to the Irish losing the power to modernize their own society from their own cultural heritage. The colonisation of Ireland left the Irish without political power and culturally rootless. "

be curious to see if any of them can be used as explanations in Ireland's case. I will mainly focus on these theories approach to language as an element of national identity. I begin chapter two with a definition of national identity by Anthony Smith. It is this approach I will use as my definition throughout this thesis. I have chosen this definition as it also focuses on national identity as a distinction from other nationalities, which is very relevant in the Irish case. Furthermore Anthony Smith is also the main scholar behind the ethnosymbolic paradigm.

The empirical material used in this thesis consists of various sources that relate to the history of Irish language, its current status and use and its position as a minority language. In order to see how the Irish identity is bound up with other elements than language I have also included a chapter which examines other attributes of the national identity. The empirical material consists of a broad spectrum of sources from a speech by Douglas Hyde in 1892 to a current Carlsberg TV commercial. What the sources all have in common is that they tell something of the status and value of the Irish language from various perspectives. Thus the sources help describe the role the language plays in relation to national identity. The focus has been to show the various settings in which Irish was used rather than an in depth scope on one area as I wish to uncover the general attitudes and use of the Irish language in order to answer my research question.

The use of the Irish language in contemporary Ireland can be viewed from a perspective of different discourses. These are national language discourse, cultural discourse, minority language discourse and dead language discourse. I have thus decided to include a chapter on discourse after the historical chapter, which will act as a reference to the empirical material of the contemporary language situation and language planning in Ireland.

Language planning, both theoretically and empirically, has been given significant attention in this thesis as it shows the position of governmental bodies on the language and thereby the importance that is placed on it from the official side as an attribute of Irish identity. Therefore much of my empirical material is drawn from preambles, the Constitution, official acts and governmental statements. Furthermore due to the fact that the language situation in Ireland is closely connected to the development of the English language I have decided to include a chapter on the expansion of the English language to a lingua franca.

The thesis is structured with three theoretical chapters concerned with nations, language, national identity and language planning. They are followed by empirical chapters which relate to the case of

Ireland. After each empirical chapter there will be a discussion chapter that looks upon the empirical cases in view of the theory. These chapters will be the foundation for answering the questions posed in my research question.

1.3 Terminology and Delimitation

One of the most important things to clarify in a thesis on Ireland is the terminology used concerning the country as it can be the basis of much confusion. In this thesis I use the term Ireland for the whole island up until the partition. After the partition I use the term Ireland to refer to the southern part of the island of Ireland namely the Republic of Ireland. Post partition, if referring to both Northern Ireland and the Republic I speak of the island of Ireland.

I refer mostly to England as the colonising power. However, one can also refer to Britain or the British to include the territories of Scotland and Wales, which make up Britain. If referring to Northern Ireland in inclusion with Britain the term is the United Kingdom or UK.

In this thesis I have, in post partition Ireland, excluded Northern Ireland in my research as the language situation and discourses are different to those in the Republic of Ireland.

Another term which is important to clarify in advance is Gaeltacht which means an Irish speaking area. Gaeltachts are thereby the areas in Ireland where the predominant language is Irish and were it is spoken on a daily basis. The Gaeltachts are mostly rural places, which are mainly scattered along the west coast of Ireland.

Since the main concern of this thesis is of a linguistic character that has been the principal focus in my theoretical and empirical approach, thus the other cultural elements of Irish national identity are not given the same attention. Furthermore I have chosen, in the empirical chapters, cases that were significant or representative of the topic rather than a broad analysis. This is valid for instance in the chapter on the symbolic language where the cases have been chosen with the research question in mind.

2 Language and National Identity

In this theoretical chapter I will commence by identifying the term national identity. Then I will look at the main theoretical approaches concerning nationalism and national identity. Finally, I will examine national identity in relations to language.

Theoretically, the fundamental differences within nationalism research are rooted in the different approaches to nations and national identity, mainly when nations came into being and how national identity arose. Thus I will look at these aspects when presenting the theories. The main theories within national identity studies are constructivism, ethnosymbolism and essentialism.

2.1 National Identity

National identity is characterised not only by the community or nation from within but also from without. British sociologist Anthony Smith defines national identity as:

 "...a sense of belonging to –but not necessarily reinforced by – a common culture, customs, language and political institutions. At the same time, national identity consists of a sense of distinctiveness from other people who may or may not share certain of these characteristics" (Smith 2001:10).

In a thesis where the Republic of Ireland is at the centre, it is relevant to look at the significant 'other'. Former colonies will always have a significant relationship to the old colonial power. According to the terminology of H.G. Mead identity or identification occurs in the meeting with the 'other'. National identity requires the existence of 'others' as well as being recognized by others. It is in the definition of national identity that it rests on exclusion and other negative criteria (Østergaard 1996: 491-492).

The Danish historian Böss looks at the psychological aspects of national identity stating its massive impact on the individual. The strong nation can help boost the frail individual self, meaning that one often associates oneself with a country's victories and defeats (Böss 2006:110). Thus he explains that National Identity can give the individual an existential sense of belonging. It is psychologically explained that by belonging to a nation the individual is given something in advance that it is not subject to change or maintenance but where the premises are simply there from the beginning (Böss 2006:114).

2.2 Constructivism

Constructivism, also known as modernism, has been one of the dominating theories on nationalism research since the 1960's. The main argument of constructivism is that nations and national identity are phenomena constructed by an elite and used as a political means to promote unification within the population

One of the main contributors to the constructivist way of thinking, Ernest Gellner, describes nationalism as: "primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent." (Gellner 1983:1). The constructivist school does not believe that nations become states but that states becomes nations, thereby excluding any kind of cultural heritage as a determinant when studying national identity and nationalist concepts. Hobshawm, another stern constructivst, sees the nation as a social entity invented as a consequence of the modern state (Hobsbawm 1990:9). He claims that ethnicity is based upon claims of a cultural character that are not authentic, which means that ethnic identity in the literal sense is an invented tradition. Hobsbawm defines:

> " 'Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past." (Hobsbawm 1983:1).

Furthermore he states that the traditions brought to life are of a dubious character and often have no real connection with continuity and history.

Nationalism is not understood as an ideology but as the cultural shape that has arisen due to industrialisation and the creation of nations. Thus Gellner writes that capitalism required that the workers had a common language. These demands were met by creating a common past and thereby a common culture. In this new era of capitalistic nation building language and culture bind people together and set the foundation for a national identity. Gellner explains how this shared culture grasps hold of the society: "Culture is now the necessary medium, the life-blood or perhaps rather the minimal shared atmosphere, within which alone the members of the society can breathe and survive and produce" (Gellner 1983: 37-38)

The constructivistic view on the role of language today is that it is mainly unnecessary as nationalism has lost its original nation-building function and therefore not needed. (Hobsbawm 1990:171-172) Thus Hobsbawn says:

> "Special cases aside, there is no reason to suppose that language was more than one among several criteria by which people indicated belonging to a human collectivity. And it is absolutely certain that language had as yet no political potential." (Hobsbawn 1990: 63).

Gellner asserts the unimportance of language by making the bold statement that: "Changing one's language is not the heart-breaking or soul-destroying business it is claimed to be in romantic nationalist literature." (Gellner 1983:60).

Bendict Anderson has built upon the constructivistic theory of Gellner and Hobsbawm. Whereas Hobsbawm talks of invented traditions Anderson talks of the imagined. He sees all nations in some sense as imagined communities. He argues that the citizens of a nation cannot comprehend or know the nation with all that it entails yet there exists a collective cultural memory. Therefore national identity as a result is imagined. Anderson credits the innovation of print and capitalism with the fast spread of national consciousness through commercial mass production of books, papers and other writings. These printed texts created a reference within the realms of culture and politics which resulted in people feeling connected (Anderson 1991: 91). Through print the communication was broadened and the language became the joint reference for the readers. The status of the language becomes heightened and deeply connected to the nation.

2.3 Ethnosymbolism

Anthony Smith first identified the ethnosymbolic approach as he was missing an explanation for the public support of the nation and the sentiments that the nation evoked (Smith 2003:85). He describes the nation as a named human population who share common ethnies. Ethnies consist of various elements such as rituals, shared history, myths, values and symbols who together constitute a nation's collective identity. Smith defines ethnies as: "named units of population with common ancestry myths and historical memories, elements of shared culture, some link with a historic territory and some measure of solidarity, at least among their elites" (Smith 1995:57).

The ethnosymbolic approach to the question of the longevity of nation is that nations have existed since ancient times, as the Elite alone can make up a nation. Smith contributes to the historical school dealing with 'La longue durée' meaning that the origin of nations as well as the direction in which they they are going should be traced over a long period of time and not: " tie their existence and formation to a particular period of history or to the processes of modernisation" (Smith1999:10). Smith also links ethnicity to the nation stating that most nations, both modern and pre-modern, have an ethnic foundation and with it certain traditions which provide the cultural sources in the formation of the nation (Smith 1999:13). The permanence of nationalism lies in the fact that nations are able to draw on this ethnic foundation in order to maintain or defend the nation (Smith 1999:18). Smith's theory on the balance between slow change and continuity indicates that our national identity is constantly changing but this is on the basis of the reproduction and new interpretation of ethnies e.g. value patterns, symbols and historical recollections (Smith 2003:33).

Thus Smith sees nationalism not only as a political ideology; it is also a culture and an identity (Smith 1991: 72). However, Smith stresses that the political nationalism and its effect on the nation and national identity should not be neglected as a political national agenda tend to overly mythologize small, inaccurate parts of its history (Smith 2003: 83-85).

Anthony Smith´s approach to the role of language for the nation is that it accounts for one part of the symbols that distinguish a nation. He argues that because language is so easily manipulated and the borders of its speakers are often blurred it is important to include other symbols of collective life such as dress, art, music, rituals etc (Smith1986:27).

2.4 Essentialism

The essentialist theory, also known as perrennialism, claims that nations have existed as long as societies (Smith 2003: 134-135). For essentialists the nation is immemorial. National forms may change and particular nations may dissolve, but the identity of a nation is unchanging. The task of nationalism is to rediscover and apply a submerged past in order to better build on the current nation. Essentialism demands continuity, any change to this continuity is explained by the slow rhythm of cultural identity (Smith, 2003:74). Essentialists believe national identity has its foundation in the general public's feelings and culture and not in the ideas and innovations of the elite. Thus from a linguistic perspective

the language goes from being the language of the people to a written language to the language of the state (Smith 2003:137-138).

Hastings,[3] author of the book *Construction of Nationhood* and a key recent exponent of this theory, wrote his book to deconstruct the constructivistic theory of Gellner, Hobsbawn and Anderson. Hastings thus writes about the history of nations and nationalism in themselves and not since 1780 as Hobsbawm suggest (Hastings 1997:2). To Hasting ethnicity is the foundation of the nation. He describes it as:

> "An ethnicity is a group of people with a shared cultural identity and spoken language. It constitutes the major distinguishing element in all pre-national societies, but may survive as a strong subdivision with a loyalty of its own within established nations" (Hastings 1997:3).

The ethnicity or ethnicities can become a nation when the spoken language becomes a written language in form of literature, especially in relation to the translation of the bible into the native language**.** (Hastings 1997:12). Hastings's explains: "The more a vernacular develops a literature with a popular impact, particularly a   religious and legal literature, the more it seems to push its speakers from the category of an ethnicity towards that of a nation".

Thus the role of language is quite significant to essentialism and the chain of development goes from ethnicity to nation to nation-state. A nation is therefore not necessarily a nation-state but has its own raison d'etre.

2.5 Language and the community

The idea that there is a close relationship between linguistic homogeneity and the nation can be traced back to the German Romanticists who first theorized the concept. They see language as the very essence of a nation's identity, which is one of the main concepts of the perennialistic/essentialistic theory. The German philosopher Herder writes in 1784:

"Has a nationality anything dearer than the speech of its fathers? In its speech resides its whole thought, domain, its tradition, history, religion and basis of life, all its heart and soul. To deprive people

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[3] Also referred to as a neo-essentalist

of its speech is to deprive it of it one eternal good… With language is created the heart of people." (As cited in Wilken 2001:175).

Herder saw the nation's ancestral language as a prime value for a group's cohesion and future existence. He argued that this premise was true for all nations who needed to hold on to their own language and culture thereby preserving the uniqueness and the diversity of countries.

This way of seeing language and culture in relation to the nation became a key factor in nation building within Europe in the 19th century (Wright 2000:15-16).The fact that language is associated with a nation and its identity, within a European context, has been accepted to such a degree that it has been labelled a common-sense presumption (Wilken 2001:158). As juxtaposition to the European model of language and identity one can look to America. Van der Plank compares the native European minorities with the immigrant minorities in America and finds that:

> "One of the most impressive differences between linguistic minorities in a European context is found in the more purely linguistic character of the former. In America, language is just one of the differentials, among which social class, social value (culture), religion, and possibly racial differences are much more decisive for the total process of assimilation". (van der Plank 1978:424 as cited in Wilken 2001)

The connection between language and identity often led to a political legitimisation and perhaps that is why the national languages were on the increase in Europe. From 1800 to 1900 the number of national languages increased from 16 to 30 and from 1900 to 1937 again to 53 (Wilken 2001:176-177).

In the 20th century many scholars distanced themselves from the concept that it is essential for a nation to have one language in order to achieve a sense of national consciousness. Weber stated that the nation is not identical to a particular community of language speakers. "On the contrary, a common language does not seem to be absolutely necessary to a 'nation'" (As cited in Hutchinson and Smith 1994:22).

However, other scholars have followed the line of Herder. Karl Deutsch (1966) is one of them. He sees language as social glue and states that it brings a given group together to communicate. Here they are able to share ideas and traditions that require a cultural understanding which a joint language

provides: "Peoples are held together 'from within' by this communicative efficiency, the complementarity of the communicative facilities acquired by their members" (as quoted in Wright 2000: 64).

In the 1980's and onwards the constructivist notion of nations as constructed or imagined communites gained prominence theoretically. With that in mind the notion of language, merely used as a political tool and thus not important in itself, was a logical consequence (Wilken 2001:185).

Bendict Andersson even stated that the arrival of nation-states were founded not in blood but in language. This means that it was linguistic differences that placed the marker of national borders (Wilken 2001:189) Anderson claimed that the imagined Christian community had been taken over by an imagined linguistic community: "the elevation of these vernaculars to the status of language-of-power...... made its own contribution to the decline of the imagined community of Christendom" (Andersson 1983 as cited in Wilken 2001:173)

One current view on language and nation is that of the British linguist Sue Wright. Her theory states that a community is a *community of communication* where language plays the role of social glue. She recognizes the constructivist argument, in that the role of language is exaggerated in terms of a nation's identity and understanding, but concludes:

> "However, far from proving the case that language is unimportant, this seems to show only the opposite. The language issue is far more complex than some authors claim, and while open to manipulation and misrepresentation, no less central because of that." (Wright 2000:69).

Professor of linguistics Peter M. Hill also looks at the link between language and nationalism and concludes that language can create a community as it enhances common values and experiences through the shared language. Hill states that in the modern world language has become a marker of nationality. Thus threats to the language within the community are perceived as threats to the community's identity. (Hill 2003:110)

2.5 Discussion of theories

The three theoretical approaches on nations and national identity all attempt to account for when the nation or nation-state emerged and in relation the source of national identity. Constructivism stands in contrast to essentialism whereas the ethnosymbolic paradigm is in the middle of the two.

The constructivists see the nation as constructed from above by a societal elite. They believe that national sentiment and identity arose as a political product in order to get coherence and ease the nation building process. National identity is thus a constructed phenomenon.

In stark contrast is essentialism/perennialism which believes that the nation has historical roots that are embedded in the nation. The key word is continuity, which is passed on through the generations forming the nation's identity.

The ethnosymbolists' approach builds both on change and continuity. It agrees with the fact that many modern nation states are a product of political nationalism; however nations existed prior to the modern state. These states were formed on the basis of ethnic communities with shared identity.

The theoretical views on language match their different views on the nation and its roots or lack thereof, from the constructivist view of having no significance or purpose in today's society as it was mainly a tool needed for nation building, to the essentialist view where language is the pillar of nationality and a nation's identity. In between the two is once more ethnosymbolism which sees language as one of the elements that make up a national identity and thus this theory gives it some importance.

 I want to use the different approaches to nationalism, language and identity to see how they can be applied to the empirical material or conversely how they do not apply. Some academics, such as Wright, tend to draw from a combination of the theories. I too see the necessity to do that and agree with Wright on her stand that language can be manipulated and serve purposes of a political agenda, however, it does not prove that language is not important or significant.

Furthermore, considering that language is an element of national identity, as defined by Anthony Smith (2001) and the importance of ´the other' in national identity as stated by Østergaard (1996), this shows the importance of seeing language as both exclusive for the people who do not know the language, and inclusive for those who does. Language can thus be seen as an important feature in

distinguishing one's identity from another or one nation from another. Therefore despite the constructivist argument that language is not important in a contemporary globalised society it still remains that, in a European context, language is hugely associated with identity.

3 Language Policy and Planning

When the Republic of Ireland achieved independence from Britain in 1922 the issue of language and how to go about it was in need of attention after a period of British rule. Furthermore Language Policy and Planning is still very much on the agenda in Ireland today, which will be described throughout this thesis and on in its own in the chapter on Language Planning in Ireland, thus I am including this theoretical chapter on Language Policy and Planning.

The utility of Language Policy and Planning[4] is described by Sue Wright as being able to see how the elite can use language as a tool of definition and consensus within a group. Furthermore it can be used to see how language is used as a measure of dividing and regulating national borders. LPP is also beneficial as a tool in order to understand: "how language plays a critical role in exclusion and disadvantage. It can investigate whether the group that is denied the opportunity to use its own language in key domains is denied a human right" (Wright 2004:13).

LPP became a recognized field of scholarly study after the Second World War. This was especially due to the situation that arose in relation to the general decolonisation that took place. Many 'new' nations had to deal with the language situation after the departure of the colonial power. A leading scholar in the field of sociolinguistics Joshua Fishman believed that the language problems of the older nations differed from those of the new nations. As the old nations had a long literate tradition they could draw from, language planning should merely modernize the language in order to follow with the times. However, new nations had the immediate task of selecting a national language and the role of any other languages in the new national setting (Fishman 1968:494). A common view, among western sociolinguists in the late 60's, was that linguistic homogeneity was preferable as it helped modernize and stabilise the nation, thus aiding the process of nation building and national development (Ricento 2000:198). Thus the goals of LPP were associated with maintaining or controlling a nation's language situation in order to regulate the use of various languages in a national context. In the desire to unify

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[4] Abbreviated LPP

and modernise the nation, language is characterised as a resource with value and as a subject that can be planned (Jernuud and Das Gupta 1971:211).

The recommended model for many of the newly independent countries in the middle of the 20th century became a situation of stable diglossia, where the European language, often English or French, should be the formal language and then the indigenous language could fill out other communicative needs (Ricento 2000:198).

Over the next twenty years the focus of LPP changed from being mainly concerned with standardization and modernisation to emphasis on the socio-political and economic consequences of LPP (Ricento 2000:202). The stable diglossia situation was challenged and scholars looked into the political and economic consequences of languages having different statuses such as high and low status. Hence the status of a language was often equal to the status of its speakers. The ideological nature of diglossia, bilingualism and multilingualism could not just be fitted in to existing taxonomies. Thus:

> " it became apparent that language choices could not be engineered to conform to 'enlightened' models of modernity; linguistic behaviour was social behaviour, motivated and influenced by attitudes and beliefs of speakers and speech communities, as well as by macro economic and political forces " (Ricento 2000:203).

In the last 20 years or so of scholarly LPP research, the main focus has been on the loss of language and minority languages. Due to economic progress main languages such as English have gained linguistic dominance, which has caused thousands of indigenous languages to disappear or become marginalised (Ricento 2000:204). This reveals that LPP can be/has been used as a tool of idealising some languages at the benefit of others, meaning that the cry for modernisation almost became equivalent to the Westernization process. This insight led to a revival of minority languages and the rights of minority language speakers. Two prominent socio-linguistic researchers in recent times Philipson and Skutnabb-Kangas talk of language choice as a human right: "The ecology-of-language paradigm involves building on linguistic diversity worldwide, promoting multilingualism and foreign language learning, and granting linguistic human rights to speakers of all nations" (Philipson 1996:429).

This paradigm of language as a fundamental right can be seen in the EU today. The EU is concerned with various aspects of language both the promotion of multilingualism, to see language as an

expression of culture and to protect endangered languages. Many scholars (ex. Wilken 2001, Hill 2003) have defined the European model of identifying cultures. The Danish anthropologist Lisanne Wilken explains that the EU is comprised of cultures that are identified by three principles. They have to have a name, a territory and a language. Wilken concludes that language becomes a key identity marker and is considered one of the most important premises that make up a culture (Wilken 2001:157). She describes an EU logic where language almost becomes synonymous with culture and therefore language can be used as a political tool for a culture's agenda. Wilken states that since the EU took an interest in minority language in the 1980's a large number of more or less unknown languages have emerged on the EU scene for recognition (Wilken 2001:182).

3.1 Types of Language Planning

Language planning usually operates within three different types or terms. These are status planning, corpus planning and acquisition planning. Status planning has to do with, as the name indicates, the status a language has in the nation. It concerns itself with the rights and function the language has and is therefore an external language feature. It is through laws and regulations that the status of the language is determined. A language can have either official or national status or both. This distinction is important in the case where a language has the title of a national language but not an official language. Here it is possible that such a language is not translated or used as the political language nor is it used in the written legislation (Odgaard 2004:67).

The second type is corpus planning which has to do with the building blocks of the language such as the semantics, the lexicology and the absorption of loanwords. The main scope of corpus planning is to change and amend a given language. Thus it is mainly connected to the written language (Odgaard 2004:69). However, corpus planning often follows an agenda from the status planning and is not ideology free. Linguistic and stylistic choices are made with a greater plan in mind. One sees, for instance, the national varieties of English in British English, Irish English and American English that express the need to individualize and nationalize the diversities of English in the given country. (Fishman 2006).

The last kind is acquisition planning which is connected to the use and organization of language in teaching and education (Odgaard 2004:70). The ideology and linguistic choices introduced in status planning and corpus planning are effectuated by authorities (teachers and educators) in acquisition planning. This is valid in areas such as the choice of languages that are being taught and for how long,

and which curriculum and teaching methods that should be applied. Furthermore, it relates to the teaching of the correct language in coherence with the current corpus plans. (Shohamy 2006: 76-77).

3.2 National language and language planning

There is good reason as to why political leaders would choose to make political decisions and statements on the topic of language. According to Wright three strong arguments are at play that show the importance of promoting a national language.

Firstly, language plays a utilitarian role as a mean of communication, employment possibilities and social interaction. Secondly, it can be the endorsement of cohesion and what that means in terms of sense of belonging, inclusion and the symbolic value it has of sharing a language. Not knowing the nation's language can be exclusive and symbolic of not wanting to be a part of the community. Finally, the third reason is that the language may be different to the language of the neighbouring countries, which can be used so as to be treated as a separate and individual nation (Wright 2004:42). In cases of colonisation a language has often been forced upon a group to either incorporate them or to exploit them, in Ireland's case this was by a neighbouring country. The impact of not only having a language imposed upon you but also being colonised and not being regarded as an individual nation can lead to a change in identity: "Those who have to acquire a language of the other or a hybrid language of contact will see the relationship of their identity and communicative competences altered." (Wright 2004:8).

4 Global English

The language that Irish lost out to was the language of their colonial power, English. I will in this chapter look at how the English language has become the modern day Lingua Franca or,as it is also referred to, the language of globalisation.

English was a relatively small language that augmented with the increasing empire. British colonialism followed the pattern of other imperialists in that the language did not infiltrate all classes but was instated as a ruling language, which meant a diglossic language situation in many colonies. In the 19th century the English language became the general language of commerce as Britain led in the industrial revolution. This leads to the English proclamation in 1849: "Ours is the language of the arts and sciences, of trade and commerce of civilisation and religious liberty." (as cited in Wright 2004:140).

The collapse of the British Empire after WWII did not lead to the decline of English as the predominant language. This was due to the fact that the US was the new dominant country in areas of culture, economy and science. Thus: "English, the Lingua Franca of British colonialism did not fade with empire because the next power that came to dominance in the western capitalist world was also speaking English" (Wright 2004: 155). Therefore English continued its dominance and also became the language associated with globalisation. This can be seen in the use of English as their corporate language by many multinational companies, irrespective of the company's national origin.

Many scholars feel that the English dominance is a threat to multilingualism and fear that linguistic and possible cultural loss may be a consequence.

Phillipson is one of them. He describes English as Janus-faced, as it on the one hand seems to open doors to influence in form of employment and commerce and on the other is a threat to the autonomy and sustainability of the national language. Furthermore the need to be proficient in the English language can mean that some people are initially excluded due to what Philipson refers to as linguistic apartheid (Philipson 2007). Another scholar McKay raises her concern as well:
"The main negative effects of the spread of English involve the threat to existing languages, the influence on cultural identity, and the association of the language with an economic elite" (McKay 2002:20)

In the article, used and quoted in my research question, *Fortællingen om den irske sprog død* (2007) by Michael Böss, he tells the story of the death of the Irish as an example of the dire consequences that losing a language has. He then states the importance of learning from that story and seeking to play an active role in preserving our (Danish) language.

However the research article by the German scholar Juliane House (2003) suggests that English need not be a threat to multilingualism. She argues that one should distinguish between language for communication and language for identification. Stating that English does not play an identity carrying role for the individual she says that English as a Lingua Franca could have a positive effect: "It can be seen as strengthening the complementary need for native local languages that are rooted in their speakers' shared history, cultural tradition, practices, conventions, and values as identificatory potential." (House 2003: 562).

Another key terminology in the English as a global language debate is 'loss of domain', which concerns itself with specific areas where English has taken over as applied language instead of the national language. These are areas of research, business, IT and teachings in higher education. This can lead to a situation where the population is divided in to two, those who master English and those who do not, resulting in a situation where some people will be excluded in certain domains (Odgaard 2004: 63-64).

5. The language situation in Ireland

To see that language plays a significant role in Irish society one only has to look at the Irish Constitution from 1937[5]. On looking up the word culture in the index pages it says 'see language'. This clearly shows that culture in Ireland is thought of as being related to language.

Ireland is today officially a bilingual country, which is stated in the Irish Constitution. In article 8 it is written that:

1. The Irish language as the national language is the first official language.

2. The English language is recognised as a second official language.

The Irish Taoiseach[6] at the time of the Constitution Eamonn De Valera defines the term national language as being:

> "It is the language that is the most associated with this nation; the language that is in accordance with the traditions of our people. We are a separate people and our language was spoken until little over one hundred years ago generally by our people". (As cited in Chriost 2005: 120).

However, as the situation stands today less than three per cent of the Irish population has Irish as their primary language, which is usually only spoken on an everyday basis in the Gaeltacht areas. Thus English is by far the predominant language in Ireland (Statement on the Irish language 2006). I will return to the current language situation in the 21st century and its significance later in the chapter *Irish a Symbolic Language*. Firstly, I will, however, look at the historical background for languages in Ireland

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[5] In Irish: BUNREACHT NA hÉIREANN. Listed in the bibliography under this name.

[6] The Irish word for Prime Minister

and seek to why the Irish language is close to extinction. I will do that over three chapters, the first concerned with the period up until the end of the 19th century and the second with the period leading up to the formation of Irish Free State and finally the most recent history of the 20th century. Hereafter I will discuss these chapters in relations to the theory presented in this thesis.

5.1 The History of Irish language

The Irish language is the original Celtic that derives from the Gaelic migration to Ireland around 300 BC. The Celtic languages dominated Western Europe until they were pushed to the west by the Germanic and Romanic languages and then only spoken in the so-called Celtic Fringe. The Celtic languages are represented in three subgroups: Gaelic as spoken in Ireland, Scotland and on the Isle of Man, Brythonic language as spoken in Wales, Cornwall and Brittany and the now completely extinct Gaulish which was spoken by the Gauls[7] (Böss 1997:214).

Irish was the only known language in Ireland until the Anglo-Norman invasion in 1167, this attack gives occasion to some Irish people talking about 800 years of oppression. However, despite taking over half of Ireland, their stronghold was not evident and by the end of the 15th century the invaders had assimilated into the Irish culture and only a small group was left on the Irish east coast around the Dublin area (Ó'Riagáin 1997: 4). The descendants of the settlers following the Anglo-Norman invasion were later to be known as the Anglo-Irish which indicates the group's relationship to an identity form of colonial nationalism, a feeling of national sentiment expressed by the descendants of settlers to a colony (Chriost 2005: 85-86). Chriost explains: "This readjustment of identity is of great significance for the Irish language as the Gaelic-Irish and the Anglo-Irish located their common ground in terms of religious identity rather than in language," (Chriost 2005:86).

Due to the assimilation of the invaders Irish carried on as the main language up until the English plantations that took place under the Tudor and Stuart monarchs between 1534 and 1610. Winning the Nine Year War (1593-1603) marked the English stronghold in Ireland and subsequently saw the departure of the Irish Gaelic leaders. During the height of the Nine Year War in 1599 the leader of the Gaelic Irish, Hugh O' Neill, stated that a unified and independent Catholic Ireland was to be run by the

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[7] Gaul's geographically area consisted of parts of modern day Belgium, Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Germany and Italy.

Gaelic Irish and Anglo-Irish together (Chriost 2005:86) This strongly indicates that the Anglo-Irish had become an integrated part of the Irish society.

However, that was not to happen and the 17th century was marked by the Cromwellian settlement and conquests and a series of Penal Laws introduced by English monarchs in Ireland. The purpose of the Penal Laws was to establish a protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. They consisted of a string of restrictions on all Catholics in terms of power, land ownership and general rights including prohibition of the Irish language up until 1871. As a consequence a period of a diglossian language situation followed with English being the administrative and ruling language and Irish being a peasant language spoken by a rural underclass (Böss 1997:215).

Thus many Irish Gaelic sought to learn English, or send their children to school to learn it, as it was the language of power and commerce in Ireland. Furthermore the attitudes towards the English language by the Gaelic Irish Elite were generally positive as it was seen as a reflection of status in society and not closely connected to ethnicity or national identity (Chriost 2005:88-89). The status of English as the language of modernity and the ruling class was also reinforced by the fact that from the 17th century until the foundation of the Irish Free State only a very limited amount of books were printed in the Irish language (Chriost 2005: 90-91).

This is also valid for religious literature as, although funding was granted by English Queen Elisabeth (1533-1601) to translate the bible into Irish, the enthusiasm to implement an Irish version of the Bible was limited and it was not until 1690 that a version of the New and Old Testament appeared together in an Irish version. Furthermore the Irish Catholic Clergy showed little interest in the Irish language (Hastings 1997: 86). The prevailing sentiment was that if the English language was good enough for the Clergy it would suffice for the laity as well. According to Hasting the Irish language might have survived if it had been used as a written language:

> "In an age of print a national language will not survive under pressure, if its national leaders are choosing not to use it….There seems to be little doubt that if Irish scholars abroad in the17th century had produced an Irish Bible and a mass of printed Irish Catholic literature… then Irish would have remained the language of Ireland" (Hasting 1997:87).

An estimated 45 per cent of the population were Irish speaking during the last quarter of the 18th century in Ireland. In 1801 England completed its colonisation of Ireland with "The Act of Union". Ireland was now divided in to an English speaking east and an Irish speaking rural west. Even when the Penal Laws started to be lifted and campaigns for the emancipation of Catholicism in Ireland took place, the inclusion and reinstatement of the Irish language was not on the agenda. Catholic Irish political leader Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), although a native Irish speaker, saw English as the necessary political language and the language for a future Ireland (Chriost 2005: 100).

English language gradually gained further ground and the number of Irish speakers went below 30 per cent by the middle of the 19th century when the first census to include language speakers took place (Ó'Riagáin 1997: 4).

In 1841, although a minority in Ireland, the Irish language speakers still consisted of around two and a half million people out of a population of eight million people. However, in the space of five years the Irish population was drastically reduced by the severe famine, through a combination of a huge amount of deaths and mass emigration. The famine hit the Irish speakers the hardest as they were the poorest and most dependent of the potato-harvest (Böss 1997: 215). This reflects the socio-economic status of the Irish language which it gained during the 18th and 19th century where the language is associated with a poor rural population and has a low status.

5.2 Celtic revival and Gaelic League

The first half of the 19th century saw that the Catholic majority had become a political force where the main objective was the fight for the Catholic emancipation and the removal of the Penal Laws. Having succeeded in these areas the second half of the 19th century was concerned with political independence and land reforms. The counterpart of the political movement was a cultural movement, later to be known as the Gaelic League[8], which was concerned with cultural issues and the Gaelic Irish cultural heritage and which reconnected with the Celtic legacy and its imagery in form of insular art, such as found in the Book of Kells dating back to the 9th century AD.

One group in this cultural society was a language movement who fought for the revival of the Irish language (Ó'Riagáin 1997: 7).

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[8] Formed in 1893 and known as Conradh Na Gaeilge in Irish

The first president of the Gaelic league, Douglas Hyde, made a speech in 1892 on *The necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland*. In this speech which was given to the newly formed Irish national literary society he addresses the question of why Ireland should become more Celtic:

> "…because the Irish race is at present in a most anomalous position, imitating England and yet apparently hating it. How can it produce anything good in literature, art, or institutions as long as it is actuated by motives so contradictory? Besides, I believe it is our Gaelic past which, though the Irish race does not recognise it just at present, is really at the bottom of the Irish heart, and prevents us becoming citizens of the Empire, as, I think, can be easily proved." (Hyde 1892)

In connection to the issue of the Irish language Hyde believes that its revival is essential for the Irish identity and states on its importance and on the issue of Irish being a low status language:

> "I have no hesitation at all in saying that every Irish-feeling Irishman, who hates the reproach of West-Britonism, should set himself to encourage the efforts, which are being made to keep alive our once great national tongue. The losing of it is our greatest blow, and the sorest stroke that the rapid Anglicisation of Ireland has inflicted upon us. In order to de-Anglicise ourselves we must at once arrest the decay of the language. We must bring pressure upon our politicians not to snuff it out by their tacit discouragement merely because they do not happen themselves to understand it. We must arouse some spark of patriotic inspiration among the peasantry who still use the language, and put an end to the shameful state of feeling -- a thousand-tongued reproach to our leaders and statesmen -- which makes young men and women blush and hang their heads when overheard speaking their own language." (Hyde 1892)

The Irish Literary Society, however, used Gaelic Irish more as an inspirational source than as a language. As a result the phenomenon of Hiberno-English another form of English, was developed, which reflected the local dialects, grammar and syntax as spoken in Ireland. An Irish literary revival followed in the wake of the Gaelic League. One of the main literary contributors was poet W. B. Yeats an Anglo-Irish with nationalist sympathies but no knowledge of the Irish language. He was, however, fascinated by it as a mean of accessing the Celtic past. He eagerly used Irish myths and folklore in his poetry and texts and was fascinated by rural peasant Ireland (Chriost 2005: 102). Yeats saw it as his mission, along with his generation of poets and authors, to reconstruct the Irish national heritage with

all its folklore and symbols and thereby rebuild a Celtic consciousness for the Irish people and Ireland. (Böss 1997: 188-191).

Moran (1872-1936) publisher of "The Leader" did not follow Yeats' Celtic dream. He did not believe that Ireland could be decolonised by producing Irish romantic literature and plays for the theatre in English. To him the Irish nation did not exist outside the Irish language (Böss 1997: 204-205). The Gaelic League had been successful in lobbying for the introduction of Irish language into the school curriculum. The League had established itself throughout Ireland in order to secure the main purpose of teaching the Irish language. Their education methods and development of a standard Irish language were later to form the basis of the country's language policy. However, none of this led to an increase or even a stabilisation in the number of Irish speakers and the number decreased from 23 percent in 1851 to 13 percent by 1901 (Chriost 2005: 111).

5.3 The Republic of Ireland

The Gaelic League, which had started out as an apolitical purely cultural organisation, became more and more political at the beginning of the 20th century and favoured the Irish nationalist organisations:

"It can of course be argued that the League's programme of cultural nationalism always left it predisposed to favour movements of political nationalism." (Ó'Riagáin 1997: 13).

As a result of the Easter Rising in 1916 the support grew for Sinn Féin, which was the more radical movement in the fight for independence. Sinn Fein formed a provisional government in 1918-19 in which the president of the Gaelic League became the minister of the Department of National Language (Riagáin 1997: 14).

This provisional government was certain of the success an independent Ireland would have in restoring the language:

> "Everyone knows that if the Dáil [Irish parliament] takes control of the country – and
> everyone knows that there is at least a chance that it will – the Irish language will be
> restored to preeminence in every part of the country" (Mac Fhionnlaoich 1919 as cited in
> Byrne 2007:308)

A series of proposals on the Irish language was put forward by the Department of National Language. Distinctions were made between the areas that were Irish speaking, English speaking and bilingual. It was proposed that the English speaking areas should have one hour of Irish taught to them every day. Furthermore, Irish should be used as the main language in the public sector. None of these proposals were put into the effect as the main preoccupation for the provisional government was concerned with self-government and the War of Independence which had commenced against England. In 1922 after negotiations with England the Irish Free State was a reality. However, as a result six northern counties[9] were to remain under British rule. This led to a civil war in Ireland between those who accepted the independence of a divided Ireland, Pro Treaty, and those who did not, anti Treaty. The civil war ended in favour of the Pro-Treaty front but left the newly formed Republic of Ireland divided and hurt (Ó'Riagáin 1997:14).

The early language planning in an independent Ireland had as it goals to maintain the language in the Gaeltacht areas, to restore the language in the rest of Ireland and to set out an education scheme in order to accomplish this. There was no consideration given to any limitations of a social or economic character that the language policy may have, such as the willingness of the population to embrace the Irish language (Chriost 2005: 113). The Language Planning Policy for the first three decades can thus be seen as more aspirational than pragmatically founded.

By 1926 a mere 16 per cent had Irish as their first language. Furthermore the Gaeltachts were peripheral rural areas characterised by emigration and an underdeveloped economy. Initiatives to develop these areas were undertaken and they were given preferential treatment in form of economic enticements, as was the case with the schools who taught most classes in Irish or were fully Irish speaking. In the years after the independence the push for Irish in the education system became so significant that one could talk of Gaelicisation of the school system. The Irish Minister for Education, Eoin MacNeill, writes in a state document from 1924 that:

> "[t]he ministry of education can and will Gaelicise the young people up to eighteen [….], but all their efforts will be wasted if the other Departments do not cooperate in keeping them Gaelicised when they leave school" (As cited in O' Croidheáin 2006: 171).

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[9] Northern Ireland

To follow up on the work of the education department everyone in the public service had to have knowledge of Irish. However, the level of Irish known did not mean that Irish became the first language in the public sector. This was the case as well within the Dáil[10] which was predominately English speaking and the Irish language being used for primarily for ceremonial reasons (Ó'Riagáin 1997:19)

By the 1950s a different approach to language planning was initiated. As previously written, pre the Celtic revival very few publications had been produced in the Irish language, meaning that the language had not evolved in the written form in many years. Thus a large emphasis was placed on modernising and establishing standards for written Irish (Chríost 2005: 126). Furthermore the Irish that was spoken in Donegal was different to the Irish spoken on the Dingle Peninsula. The Irish language had, during the years of marginalisation developed differently, in the rural areas where they were still spoken.

 A Committee for the restoration of the Irish language[11] was established and made many recommendations to achieve this aim. However, in 1965 the Commission also stated a new aim for the restoration which was a shifting of the focus from an aspiration of an Irish speaking Ireland to a wish for a bilingual language situation. By doing this the Commission acknowledges the actual current language situation. They state that whilst Irish must have the primacy of national language the English language has prevailed:

> "It would also be unrealistic not to recognise that, because of our geographical position and the pattern of our economic and social relationships, a competent knowledge of English will be needed even in a predominately Irish-speaking Ireland. English is of great value as an international language in communications, trade and tourism, and as a means of participation in world affairs. It provides access to the knowledge and culture of the English speaking countries as well as to the large body of Irish literature written in English and to the prose, poetry, songs and speeches in which Irish national aspirations have to a large extent been expressed. Moreover, knowledge of English helps us to maintain our ties with the million of people with Irish birth and descent living in English

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[10] The name of the Irish Parliament

[11] Known as "An Coimisíun um Athbheochan na Gailge" in Irish

speaking countries" (Coimisíun um Athbheochan na Gailge, 1965 as cited in Chriost 2008: 79-80).

English would continue its absolute dominance in Ireland with a decline of Irish speakers to a staggering five per cent by the 1990's (Chriost 2005: 133) Irish language continued to be given preferential treatment as the national language. This can seen in an economic context also as the Irish language was highly subsidised. The justification for this was found in a report of the Committee on Irish Language Attitudes Research[12] in 1975:

"the average person would seem to place considerable value on the symbolic role of the Irish language in ethnic identification and as a cultural value and of itself". (As cited in ÓRiagáin 1991:261).

This clearly shows the fact that the language itself is of importance and not necessarily the ability to speak it. Furthermore this is an example of a new approach that began in the 1970's where interest was taken in the attitudes and sentiments to the language rather than its use. The relationship between national sentiment and language can be seen in the fact that the enthusiasm for Irish language in the late 70's and 80's was somewhat diminished as a result of the bad name Irish nationalism was given in relation to the IRA and the trouble in the North. (O'Reilly 2001: 82-83).

5.4 Theory and Discussion

These past chapters show how the Irish language went from being Ireland's only language to near extinction. One of the major reasons for the language loss was the English colonisation of Ireland. The restrictions placed on the Irish language combined with the socioeconomic status of English led to its rapid decline. The Irish language itself had also converted in to a low status language during the colonisation and according to Ricento (2000) the status of a language became equal to the status of its speakers. Thus the enticement to remain Irish speaking was small and the language was not given special attention by the elite until the late 19th century. Furthermore, Benedict Anderson talks of the community being established through print. A print reference to the Irish language did not exist during the years of colonisation up to the Gaelic Revival as hardly any books were printed in Irish. The Irish language therefore faced difficult conditions for survival. Perhaps it would have stood a better chance against a language other than English, as the English language has, since the 19th century, become the

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[12] Abbreviated CILAR

language of capitalism and modernity and thus a tough competitor for an already dying indigenous language. Constructivism can thus be used to explain the language loss that took place as a consequence of English colonialism as they were the elite in Britain during the occupation and one way of culturally incorporating Ireland in the Empire was to instate English as the ruling language and marginalise Irish.

However these chapters also show an Irish history and language which can be traced back more than 2000 years suggesting that the Irish national identity was not a product of a nation-state as the constructivist theory suggests. Furthermore in connection with the Anglo-Norman invasion in the 12th century the invaders assimilated into Irish society and adapted their language indicating that there must have been a developed Irish culture at that stage. The descendants of this invasion were later to be known as the Anglo-Irish, who showed their allegiance with England in religion rather than in language. As Chriost (2005) states in my thesis the difference between the identity of the Anglo-Irish and the Gaelic-Irish were thus primarily rooted in religion.

With the Gaelic League a wish to rekindle the Irish Gaelic identity emerged and an array of historical cultural symbols were used as a reference. They came from the realms of literature, art, language, storytelling, myths and sports. This correlates well with Anthony Smith's definition of national identity as being made up of cultural elements or ethnies, one of them being language. Furthermore, Smith's ethnosymbolic approach concerning the reinvention of historical symbols in order to renew one's national identity fits well here. The symbols give the Irish a sense of belonging to Ireland in an Irish Gaelic tradition and not an English one or a British one. As Smith (2001) also writes national identity helps you distinguish yourself from others. This is also the case with the definition from Østergaard (1996) who states that National Identity rests on exclusion. This means that Irish identity can be described as being Irish-not-English. In that context the wish to revive and reinstate Irish as first language in Ireland from the Celtic Revival and onwards can be seen as wanting to signal one's identity as Irish and not English as was the case with Hyde's speech on the need to speak Irish in order to de-anglicise Ireland. In that context the Irish language is given values resembling Herder's views on language, namely that the ancestral language can secure the future survival of a given group. According to Hyde the loss of the Irish language is the biggest blow to Irish identity. However, the ethnicity of Ireland, the Gaelic race, has prevented Ireland from full integration with the British Empire.

Language was, as a consequence of the values attached to it, given massive significance as it possibly could sunder the colonial tie with England. Thus Language revival became a prime component in post-colonial Ireland. This correlates well with the constructivist approach where language is seen as an important element in the nation building strategy and a way to create cohesion within the state. The political elite tried vividly to reinstate Irish as the national language of a free Irish State. If language was something that was constructed and could easily be manipulated by political or intellectual elite, such as suggested by the constructivists, then it is curious to see that the elite in Ireland did not succeed. Massive political attempts to Gaelicise the population and enforce the Irish language were fruitless. Thus, the constructivistic approach cannot be applied in this instance as the language campaign was unsuccessful.

6 Language Discourses

In contemporary Ireland social anthropologist Camille O'Reilly has identified four different Irish language discourses. She sees the discourses as ideological strategies and approaches to Irish language. They consist of a national language discourse, a cultural discourse, a minority language discourse and a dead language discourse (O´Reilly 2001: Chapter 5). In the chapters to follow it will be noticeable how these discourses are evident in various settings and forms.

The emphasis of the national language discourse is on pride for the Irish language and is associated with overcoming insecurity about Irish identity in form of an inferiority complex. Thus it is concerned with the attitudes surrounding the language and its status and therefore considered in all aspects of language planning. However, it does not necessarily concern itself with the language users. The manifestation of this discourse is in the fact that the nation's language policies and approaches are built on Irish as the national language and this can only happen as long as there is public support for the language and its status. (O'Reilly 2001:96).

The cultural discourse is connected to the fact that the act of speaking Irish is commonly perceived as a cultural activity. Furthermore, language is associated with having its own aesthetic qualities. Irish as a unique language is seen as part of the linguistic world heritage (O'Reilly 2001:93).

The minority language discourse stands in contrast to the national language discourse and is related to the rights discourse. It is focused on the language where it is actually being used so this is mainly in the Gaeltacht areas. There is a positive attitude towards granting rights for the minority language users as

the language is looked upon in a favourable manner. Furthermore the minority language discourse should be seen in a European setting where the Irish language is one of many minority languages (O'Reilly 2001:93).

Dead language discourse sees the Irish language as dead and the attempt to revive it as a dead course. It does not concern itself with symbolic value but equates the Irish language with any given language. Irish language is then an obstacle and a nuisance as it does not open doors of communication or employment due to its scarce use and geographic constriction (O'Reilly 2001:96).

7 The Symbolic language

The explanation for calling this chapter the symbolic language is due to the small amount of actual Irish speakers remaining who use Irish as their main communicative language. According to a survey conducted by MORI[13] in 2004 89 per cent of the Irish population believes that the promotion of the Irish language is important for the nation as a whole whereas only 39 per cent state that actually speaking the language is important to be Irish (McCubin 2010:458). This suggests that the language serves a purpose other than a means of communication, namely "chiefly as a symbol of national identity" (Campbell, 2009). Some have, however, already declared the language dead. Böss (2007) talks of language death as does Hindley (1991) in "The death of the Irish language: a qualified obituary".

In this chapter I will look at whether the Irish language can be considered dead and investigate its presence in Ireland also as seen in the preamble of the 2006 Statement on the Irish language. Thus I want to explore the role of the Irish language in a contemporary context and look at it and its function in Ireland today. In order to explore this I will approach the topic from various angles; Irish language in a marketing context, in relations to the EU, Irish media and Irish in Public Life. These chapters should also be seen in relation to the discourses presented in the previous chapter. Firstly, I will, however, look at the language from the political viewpoint.

In 2006 the Irish government published a Statement on the Irish Language which describes the current use of Irish language together with a plan for how it is or should be integrated in Ireland over the next 20 years. It is written in the Preamble of this statement that:

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[13] Leading market and research company in UK and Ireland

"The Government affirms its support for the development and preservation of the Irish language and the Gaeltacht by this statement. The Government believes that the Irish language is of particular importance for the people, society and culture of Ireland. As a spoken community language, Irish is unique to this country and is, therefore, of crucial importance to the identity of the Irish people and to world heritage".

Thus it is clear that although the language has almost disappeared the aspiration to keep it alive and its value as an Irish identity marker is still very much intact. According to the 2002 census of population there is little less than 3 % of the population that has Irish as their main language of communication. However, 42 % claims to have the ability to speak Irish. To put these figures in context, the fact that Irish has status as the national language shows that its role is mainly symbolic, or as Chriost says: "While elevating the language it also served to reduce the language to the condition of an atrophic icon of monolithic notion of Irish national identity." (Chríost 2005: 119).

7.1 Irish as a Marketing Tool

As described in the beginning of this chapter the public backing for the Irish language is huge and this positive sentiment towards the Irish language has been used by businesses.
In the article "Utilising a minority language to develop brand identity: An evaluation of current practise using the Irish language" companies state that they use the Irish language because it promotes customer loyalty and gives them a brand identity. Generally, the Irish value companies that use the Irish language, which connects nicely with the fact that Irish people consider Irish of particular importance to themselves or the country as a whole. Furthermore it seems that the use of Irish language is not dependent on language competences as: "The Irish language holds a prized place in the psyche of the Irish consumer, irrespective of their own ability in the language, and marketers are now successfully harnessing the use of Irish as a means to enhance Irish brand-worthiness and build on the customer-relationship aspect." (Trimble 2008).
This means from a marketing perspective that there is money to be made on exploiting the special status Irish language has in the population. However, many companies on the Irish market consider the risk that applying a full Irish language brand might alienate many (potential) customers (Campbell 2009:71). There is though an emerging trend in the use of Irish in a marketing context, evidence of this can be seen in the Irish Business Awards that has a category called *Use of Irish as a marketing tool in the Private Sector*. In 2008 it was a Carlsberg TV commercial that won the prize.

The commercial[14] not only uses the Irish language to advertise the product, it manages to include the various levels of Irish speaking abilities by using just the Cupla Focail:

Carlsberg Commercial:

The story line consists of three Irish men on holiday in Brazil. They walk into a bar with locals and order three Carlsbergs.

Irishman one: Three Carlsberg please

Bartender: Sure! Where are you from?

Irishman two: Ireland

Bartender: (in enthusiastic voice) Ireland! Do something Irish!

Irishman one: Like what

Local Customer male: Do some Irish singing

Bartender: Exactly or what about some Irish dancing

Sexy customer female: Sing or Dance!

Irishmen mumble amongst each other

Irishman one: (He speaks in Irish[15]) Can I go to the bathroom

Irishman two: (Looks at the bepuzzled bartender) A poem in our native Irish tongue.

Irishman one: (In Irish) And a fox

Irishman one: (Now with attention from everyone in the bar he continues in Irish in a poetic voice)

I like cake. And Sharon Ni Bheolain (The name of a female Irish TV presenter). I am wearing a jumper. There's clouds in the sky. Give me cake.

Voice over: It's not just A or B. There is probably C

Sexy customer female: (Now dancing with Irishman one): Speak more Irish!

Irishman one: (In Irish) Quiet, Road, Girl, Milk.

This commercial indicates that Irish language is a symbol for Irishness for the Irish people along with the stereotype of Ireland as a singing and dancing nation. It shows that the Irish language is inclusive for an Irish population, in the fact that it is only the Irish people who understand what is being said.

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[14] See list of sources for the link to the commercial that can be found on You Tube

[15] I have used the English translation.

However, this commercial does also, with applied humour, indicate the level of Irish known to the general public and the paradox of having and learning a language that is effectively not used. The Irish sentences spoken are the remnants of learning the Irish language in school. Thus the commercial by using common Irish phrases and words at a very simple linguistic level avoids alienating or excluding a large percentage of the population. Furthermore it could indicate that if the level of spoken Irish in the commercial is representative of the 42 % of Irish people who claim to have the ability to speak Irish then their ability is not overly impressive. Böss writes that the questionnaires that are at the base of the figures showing the Irish Language abilities do not register the actual reality, rather people's attitudes and ideal aspirations of how they would like to speak the Irish language (Böss 1997: 220). Although this commercial demonstrates very basic Irish it still uses Irish language and thereby gives voice to Irish in a field of business and marketing outside the state regime and the Gaeltacht.

7.2 Irish language and the EU

When Ireland joined the then EEC in 1973 it stepped further away from the UK shadow and gained a new independence in a European setting. In an Irish language context this appealed to many people as Irish language now was a recognized minority language among other member states in a multilingual setting and not in the margins of a dominated English speaking world. Furthermore funding and support for the Irish language as a minority language was available in an EU context. However, it does weaken Irish language's status of being the National Language, as national languages usually do not need protection and special funding whereas a minority language does and the Irish language was labelled a minority language (O'Reilly 2001: 93-94).

The Irish language had only received status as a Treaty Language and not that of an official and working EC language. The dissatisfaction with this status change was expressed in connection with EU's enlargement. Ten new member states, some of them smaller than Ireland, and nine new official and working languages were added to the EU and made the language issue a more current political concern. The movement Stádas (Status) campaigned in Ireland for Irish to become an official EU language. In April 2004 they gathered thousands of people in a march in Dublin with banners in all the EU languages demanding official status for Irish. With them they had a petition which 80,000 people had signed. The campaign was successful and in August of the same year the government applied for official and working status of the Irish language. (Ó Riain 2009:50).

Irish attained the status of an official language as the first language of the EU that is not the most widely spoken language in any of the member states, which in an EU context makes it both a minority language and an official language. The decision to make it an EU language was not met with much opposition from the EU, although it means an extra cost of translations at an estimated 3.5 million euro a year, probably as it is in line with the EU philosophy of linguistic diversity. It is stated in article 22 of *The Charter of Fundamental Rights* that member states must: "respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity" (Philipson 2007:67). Furthermore as I write in the chapter on Language Planning (Wilken 2001:157) states that the EU has a ternary cultural understanding of the nation. They must have a name, a territory and a language. In the case of Ireland they are Irish, live in Ireland and speak English. Thus the identity for the Irish is best understood by being Irish, living in Ireland and speaking Irish and if the latter cannot be the case then at least the Irish language must be fully recognized.

7.3 Irish Media

Anderson refers to "the joint reference" that is achieved within a common print community as a booster of nation building and sense of national identity. In that context I wish to investigate a small part of the Irish mass media spectrum in relation to "the joint reference", in terms of print but also in relation to broadcasting, to see what reference the Irish people have. Ireland's recent media landscape has seen two advents, which each describe two different sides to Irish culture. Firstly the arrival of TG4, an Irish language television channel, and secondly the Irish version newspapers of British tabloids such as the Irish Daily Mail and the Irish Sun. The first is an example of the Irish language gaining access within an all English speaking domain of mass media, whereas the second is an example of the English language dominance spreading to the culture of the media.

In the article *Normalising language through television*: *The case of the Irish language television channel* Mairead Moriarty describes the positive effects media can have on the language use and the positioning of the language in the form of attitudes. Furthermore having a minority language channel such as TG4 will help encourage Linguistic normalisation and create a linguistic environment outside the educational system. Early print broadcasting did not cater for minority languages and lost ground to a media dominated by majority languages. In achieving air-time the cultures of the minority languages have associated themselves more with youth and modernity. (Moriarty 2009: 138-139).

Irish language has been present on TV since the advent of RTE (Radió Telifis Éireann). The national channel started broadcasting in 1960 although the Irish language practices were limited to symbolic and occasional use. During the 1980´s and early 90's various umbrella organisations within the language movement came together to lobby for an all Irish language television channel and they were successful in their campaign, Teilifis na Gaeilge (now TG4) was launched in 1996. (Moriarty 2009: 140).

TG4 has marketed itself as an Irish language channel however nearly half of their programmes are in English and all pre-recorded Irish programmes have English subtitles. This combination of language was introduced in order to alienate as few viewers as possible and secure the channel's survival. "In attempting to provide the public with programmes in the Irish language, TG4 is subject to market forces that demand larger audiences than the Irish-speaking public can provide." (Watson 2002:754). The promotion of Irish language and culture are still the main objectives for the channel whose core product is to provide programmes in the Irish language. It currently has a 3 per cent share of the market and provides almost five hours of Irish language programming a day. The most popular programmes have an audience of over 120.000 (TG4 Annual Report 2009). These facts lead Moriarty to say:
"The Irish language cannot be considered 'dead' when it is reaching the home of Irish people on a daily basis" (Moriarty 2009:141).

Furthermore an Irish language channel gives a different outlet for the Irish language than the education system and thereby assists in the normalisation of the language so that it does not merely exist as a taught language but rather a living one and thus a more contemporary and functional language. According to Moriarty: "TG4 has achieved more in terms of attitudinal stance of the Irish language in the last 10 years than other language policies previously enacted by the state have done from the point of view of the present cohort" (Moriarty 2009:141)

In Ireland there are many British TV channels available among the Irish and the global ones. The market share for the top 5 most viewed British channels in Ireland is just under 20 % indicating a clear presence and influence on the Irish market (Mavise 2010). Along with the British channels an increased number of British based newspapers produced in Irish version have appeared in Ireland.

British newspapers have traditionally been bought in Ireland alongside indigenous ones despite the objections towards having British press in Ireland. However, the share of Irish based newspapers is the biggest. The shared language and the colonial tie has led to an area of shared cultural reference also

enforced by British TV and radio's presence in Ireland and means that British papers could, with small changes, extend their market to include Ireland (Sweetman 2008: 574). In the middle of the 1990's this led to the phenomena of Irish versions of British news papers especially within the tabloid genre. There are currently three UK based Irish version tabloids on the Irish market namely the Irish Sun, The Irish Mirror and the Irish Daily Mail they have a market share of a little under 30 per cent in 2007. (Sweetman 2008:575).

The Irish versions are similar to the British ones in areas such as sport, show business and lifestyle, where they differ is in areas such as news and finance. But as the first areas tend to weigh the heaviest in tabloids the biggest parts of the news paper are similar. The Irish version tabloids try to create an Irish identity by giving the paper a more Irish feel. Symbols such as the colour green, the Irish angel, Shamrocks and green Irish soccer jerseys are scattered around in the news paper to give the feeling that you are reading an Irish newspaper although "real" Irish newspapers do not use this symbolism. However, that the identity is split at times is evident in the review of Ken Loach's film *The Wind that Shakes the Barley,* a movie about the Irish War of Independence which was heavily attacked in the British edition of the Daily Mail but acclaimed in the Irish version of the same publication (Sweetman 2008:578). This shows that while Britain and Ireland may share a language not everything else is automatically shared.

7.4 Irish in public life

The Irish language has the greatest present within the Irish educational sector, which I will elaborate on in the chapter on language planning and, more specifically, acquisition planning. Aside from the schooling system Irish language is notably in media, as described, and in public life, mainly in form of names and titles. The Prime Minister is known as the Taoiseach, the Parliament is the Dail, the Police is the Garda Siochana or the Gardai and the Irish tourist organisation is Bord Fáilte. On the doors to the toilets in Irish pubs and restaurant the signs will say Fir (Men) and Mná (Women). All the cities and larger towns in Ireland will often be known in both their Irish and their English name on the traffic posters, train stations and coach destination. For example Dublin is Áth Cliath and Limerick is Luimneach and on all buses and signs leading to the city centre it will be written An Lár, which means the city centre. (Böss 1997:221)

In the world of sports the Irish language plays a big role within the GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) which was founded back in the late 19th century as part of the Gaelic revival. The association had as its

aims to preserve and cultivate the national pastimes. The most popular Irish national games are Hurling, Gaelic football and Camogie, which draws huge attendance to their matches and which almost every child in Ireland has played in and out of school (www.gaa.ie). All speeches and presentations at games are made at least partly in Irish and game tickets are printed in Irish. In reality that means that all the ceremonial and symbolic things are in Irish and everything else like the coaching, commentary, webpage etc. are in English, mainly due to the fact that the general public has to understand what is happening and not be alienated by language.

The ceremonial use of the Irish language is evident in other areas of Irish life than sports. At ceremonies such as wedding, graduations and christening it is common that a Cupla Focail sneaks into the speeches. Politicians often begin or end their speeches with a few words in Irish. The former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern (1997-2008) had poor Irish skills and even struggled to pronounce the Irish. However, his follower Taoiseach Brian Cowen placed Irish among his three main political priorities, conducting 35% of his first press conference in Irish. Furthermore, all political party leaders are now fluent Irish speakers, which has led to increased use in Parliament (Ó Riain 2009).

7.5 Theory and Discussion

Professor Martin Hill says: "Through language people identify with a particular community. In some countries and in some situations, the choice of language is more important than the content". (Hill 2003:111).

The cases used in this chapter, on current Irish language use in Ireland, show that the choice of language is important for Irish identity. The language although small in use still plays a significant symbolic role. However, to rest the Irish identity on the symbolic language use alone may be too weak. The cases also highlight some of the different language discourses explained by O'Reilly (2001). The main discourses related to a symbolic language are the national language discourse as seen in the preamble, and the EU status quest and the cultural discourse as demonstrated by TG4 and the GAA. Furthermore the minority language discourse is also noticeable in relation to the EU as Irish is categorised as a minority language or lesser used language and as such falls into an EU agenda of protecting and promoting these languages.

The essentialist direction on national identity, where the identity is founded in the written language, cannot be applied to the language situation in Ireland either as the functional use of Irish has been constantly declining. A symbolic language with only a minority speaking it on a daily basis would not suffice as an element of identity for a nation. Böss writes that in losing their language the Irish lost the ability to modernise their own country from their own cultural background. He does then see an identity change related to the language shift from Irish to English(Böss 2006). The examples of British newspapers, that were made to be a little Irish, show that the countries have come to share cultural elements throughout the years, otherwise these joint news papers would not be possible. The joint English language is rooted in shared cultural references stemming from the colonisation but still existent today. Wright too states that when adopting a language from an 'other' the communicative competences together with one's identity will be altered (Wright 2004:8) According to Wright, in the case of Ireland the English language has become such an integral part of the Irish identity: "There is in fact a strong argument to be made that English has established itself as one medium for the expression of Irish cultural identity." (Wright 2004:46)

 However, there is a place for the Irish language in Ireland today, not least through the general enthusiastic national sentiment connected with the language. One can see that in the chapter on Irish language use in marketing as the language is used because it evokes feelings of coherence and relates to the country's national identity. This, combined with the country's perseverance for the language's survival, relates well to Herder´s view, which saw the language as a key cultural element in the cohesion of a nation and its ability to preserve its individuality. This opinion is reflected in the Irish proverb adopted by the language restoration movements "Ní tir gan teanga" which translates to "There is no country without language". Furthermore, the historical account of language in Ireland and the Celtic heritage suggests indeed, that the Irish nation is not a modern phenomenon as the constructivists would argue, but has roots that go back further than the nation state in accordance with ethnosymbolic and essentialistic theories.

The constructivist theory also seems to fall short in relation to the importance of language in contemporary society. It is clear that the Irish language is very much connected to their sense of belonging and thus important. Therefore language in Ireland is not a matter that was only in contention in relation to nation building but keeps being on the political agenda and that of the community. Furthermore the language movements lobbying for an Irish TV-channel and official status in the EU are real examples of language from below, and not the directions of the political elite. These

movements can though be seen as players in a political game as they appear as eager lobby organisation in connection with language matters.

House (2003) talked of having a language for identification and a language for communication. It seems that the Irish language is used for identification purposes. However, due to its little usage it cannot make up full identification for the Irish identity. Other symbols would be needed for full identification just as the ethnosymbolic paradigm suggest a range of ethnies in making up national identity, where language is one of them. The Irish language has, in an ethnosymbolic way, been reinvented as a symbolic language. The uses of Irish language in public life, in sports, in marketing and in the media are all indicators of this.

8 Language Planning

I have already described in chapter five the history of language planning since the Irish Republic namely in terms of Status planning and somewhat of Corpus planning. In this chapter I will look at current Language Planning Issues in Ireland. I will do this as Language Planning gives an insight into the emphasis placed on language and thus how important Ireland believes language or, more correctly, Irish is. I will look at two recent primary sources, specifically the Official Languages Act 2003 and the Statement on the Irish Language 2006. Furthermore I will focus on Acquisition planning in Ireland as the education system is the biggest outlet of the Irish language. In that context I will also look at scholars who believe that the attention the Irish language receives through schooling is wrong and that the status the Irish language has in Ireland is problematic.

Language Planning in Ireland in the 21st century is still concerned with the protection and revitalisation of the Irish language as it has been since 1922 and the beginning of the Irish Free State. English and other languages, as a result of the Celtic Tiger and immigration to Ireland, primarily from the new Eastern European EU countries have not been included in Language Planning (Ó Laire 2005: 252). The Official Languages Act 2003 is thus concerned with the Irish Language and the rights of Irish speakers. The main thrust of the Act is with Irish speakers and their meeting with the public sector. The Act wants to ensure that the Irish language is used and available throughout Ireland, incorporated by a statutory framework. Prior to this Act the ability to function in the Irish language was legally required for all government bureaucrats, however fluency was not a requirement and Irish was rarely used. With the Act the use of Irish in the government has increased, enabling any Irish citizen to obtain government services entirely in Irish. It is stated in section 9 (3) that:

"The duty of public bodies to ensure that any communication providing information to the public – in writing or by electronic mail – is in the Irish language only or in the Irish and English languages". (Official Languages Act 2003).

This shows that the Irish language is given preference over the English language as it can be communicated in without the presence of English. "Even though the Act is termed the Official Languages Act, the role of English is skirted or ignored." (Ó Laire 2005: 253). In fact, in Ireland there has never been an official language policy in relation to the English language (Ó Laire 2005:252), although the Irish have their own version of English Hiberno-English that correlates directly to the Irish language and its syntax. It consists of a hybrid dialect that has words or phrases imported directly from the Irish language or in an anglicised form (O´Byrne 2007:318).

In 2006 the Government followed up on the Act by issuing The Statement on the Irish Language as described in chapter 6, where it shows its continuous support for the Irish language and its framework. The Statement consists of a 20 year plan where the aim is to increase bilingualism within Ireland. Bilingualism as an aim has been on the Language Planning Agenda since the acknowledgement of Irish as a sole language for the people of Ireland was dropped in the 1960's[16].

To achieve the aim the State is to increase the amount of Irish in which they conduct their daily business, special support is given to the Gaeltacht areas but primarily the goal should be achieved through education, which has been the cornerstone of Irish Language Planning since its beginning (Ó Laire 2005:261).

8.1 Acquisition Planning

Irish is mandatory in Irish schools from primary school until Leaving Certificate, although it is possible to leave school before that, which means that exposure to the Irish language within the education system is a minimum of 11 years (Ó Laire 2005:254). The level of Irish taught in the schools varies according to whether they are English medium-schools where the language used is English or Irish-medium-schools (Gaelscoileanna). The Irish medium-schools have 7.35% of the pupils in primary school and just fewer than 5 % at secondary level. However, demand for Gaelscoileanna has been growing steadily since the late 1970's and they are also given special mention in Objective 6 of the Statement on the Irish Language where support to Irish-medium schools is promised.

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[16] See the quote from Commision to the restoration of the Irish Language 1965. chapter 5.3

In the curriculum for Irish taught in primary schools it is stated that:

> "In English-medium schools, the curriculum is designed to enable children to develop communicative competence in Irish in an enjoyable way. It also enhances the cultural identity of the child through cultural awareness activities. In Irish-medium schools, the *Gaeilge* curriculum is designed so that children can develop greater mastery of the language, in a way which enhances their intellectual, emotional and imaginative development. The benefits to children of being bilingual at an early age include enhanced self-esteem, positive attitude towards language learning, and greater cognitive flexibility." (Department of Education and Skills)

The direction that Irish should be taught in a enjoyable way which enhances the cultural identity of the child shows that the State wishes the pupils to have positive associations with Irish language that they can use to achieve awareness of what it means to be Irish.

However, the general actual linguistic outcome of Irish proficiency after leaving school is often criticised as being really bad, as demonstrated by the Cupla Focails from the Carlsberg commercial. This leads to criticism of the educational system and its inability to teach Irish in a more productive way (Moriarty 2011), but also antagonism towards even learning the language in the first place.

8.2 Criticism of Language strategy

Anne O´Byrne (2007) argues in her article "Learning a strange native language" that Irish has played too big a role in nation building. In her view she had to learn a language she now does not know how to speak and which to her always seemed strange. O'Byrne states that Ireland has experienced a double estrangement in relation to language, firstly in losing the language due to colonisation and then again when trying to restore an alien language in Ireland. She described the wish to restore the Irish language as a utopian fantasy of returning to the womb, a place where you feel at home:

> "Of course such a return is impossible. We never are and never will be at home, and having or, more accurately, not having lost a mother tongue means having a category under which to classify one's homesickness, and a distinct character to give that home. Instead of formless, universal, existential angst one has national, post-colonial, Irish longing. The resuscitation of the Irish language would be the homecoming, one that would never be accomplished." (O´Byrne 2007:316).

Newly elected (March 2011) Taoiseach from the Fine Gael Party, Enda Kenny, proposes that Irish should not be mandatory in school at second level education as he believes compulsion has done nothing to revive the language. He states that the competence level Irish pupils possess when leaving school does not correlate to the 1500 hours of Irish taught in most schools. Dr Kevin Williams a Senior Lecturer of education concurs and says that compulsion is not the way forward:

> "I have come across young people who, after 11 or 12 years of being forced to learn the language, know hardly a single word of it. Once I addressed a senior pupil by the Irish version of his name and he informed me that he had no idea of what I was talking about." (Irish Independent January 2011).

7.3 Theory and discussion

Wright describes three reasons why the promotion of a national language is important (see chapter 5.3): firstly, communicative purposes; secondly, cultural purposes, sense of belonging and national cohesion; thirdly, to be treated as an individual state and differ from neighbours. (Wright 2004:42).

In Ireland it is mainly the second and third reasons that act as valid reasons. Although the Official Languages Act enhances the use of Irish in reality it is English that is the main communicative language outside the Gaeltacht, thereby invalidating the first reason. The second reason is seen in the acquisition planning in the curriculum for the Irish language. Here the emphasis is on cultural awareness in form of roots. The role of language is highlighted in connection to what it means to be Irish. Furthermore, it is believed that by grasping this cultural legacy it will help to boost the self-esteem that comes from being a part of a nation with an important heritage. Hereby the Irish state places importance on continuity as does ethnosymbolism and essentialism. The importance should perhaps also be seen in the light of colonialism, Famine and the partition of Ireland. The fact that a nation with so many historical defeats still has a rich unique Irish culture, through which the people of Ireland are able to connect through the use of Irish language, is significant. However, by stating that the Irish language symbolizes all this can also mean excluding people who have no knowledge of the Irish language, making them feel less Irish. The third reason is quite obvious in Ireland's case. Moriarty (2011) even states that the Irish language is the one thing that marks the Irish as truly different. Furthermore it was needed as a symbol for the nation building process since the Irish independence.

The Official Languages Act shows the presence of a minority language discourse and a national language discourse as it is concerned with the rights of the Irish speakers, primarily living in the Gaeltacht, and with the fact that the language needs to be fully implemented in the state bodies.

The criticism of the language strategy, which I have included in this chapter, falls in two categories. The first is related to the 'Dead Language Discourse' where Irish language is considered more or less extinct and is not saluted for its cultural value, but considered a foreign language like German or French but with less practical use. This criticism of the language strategy suggests a modernist approach related to constructivism where the language is not of significant importance for today's society.

The second criticism has to do with the way Irish has been taught in schools and the resulting lack of Irish speaking capacity at the end of school. The newly elected Taoiseach from Fine Gael suggests that the solution should be to remove Irish as a mandatory subject in schools. This proposal has already led to protest and has received substantial column space during the general election campaign that took place in February 2011 (See Appendix C). One of the opponents of the proposal, former Minister of Arts Mary Hanafin, describes the proposal as an act of cultural vandalism which she sees as diminishing the status of the Irish language. Her view on the Irish language is that it is of the most importance as it is the only thing that separates the Irish from being branded: "East Americans or the West British" (McGee 2011). Hanafin's view does not differ much from Hyde's speech from 1892 on the need to de-anglicise Ireland so as not to be seen as West British. This shows that the argument from some members of the political elite, explaining the importance of language for Irish society, has been much the same for the past 100 years.

9 Irish National Identity

I have already in previous chapters explained the role of language for Irish identity. In this chapter I will write about the national identity of the Republic of Ireland as made up by various attributes. Several scholars describe the Irish National Identity along the same pages, such as Hutchinson who states it is an agrarian cultural nationalism which is Gaelic and Catholic in nature. White concurs to this stating that it is shaped by devout Catholicism and mythical Gaelic origins and McCaffrey talks of Irish identity as comprising of language, religion, land and ethnic origin. (Davis 2003:18).

One of Ireland's heroes Padraic Pearse, who proclaimed himself provisional President of Ireland during the 1916 Easter Rising, wrote about the Irish:

"Irish nationality is an ancient spiritual tradition, and the Irish nation could not die as long as that tradition lived in the heart of one faithful man or woman" (Padraic Pearse 1916 as cited by Davis 2007:17).

The Irish tradition that Pearse refer to can be seen in the nation's culture and is an integral part of Irish national identity. The culture of Ireland is defined by the Encyclopaedia Brittanica:

> "The cultural milieu of Ireland has been shaped by the dynamic interplay between the ancient Celtic traditions of the people and those imposed on them from outside, notably from Britain. This has produced a culture of rich, distinctive character in which the use of language—be it Irish or English —has always been the central element. Not surprisingly, Irish culture is best known through its literature, drama, and songs; above all, the Irish are renowned as masters of the art of conversation". (Ireland 2011 Encyclopaedia Brittanica).

That the Irish hold their culture proud can be viewed in a 1995 ISSS[17] survey conducted in 23 countries on national attitudes. Part of the survey depicted below shows Ireland topping the list in all three categories concerning matters of culture and history. It illustrates that Ireland is a country which has a

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[17] The survey was administered in Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. The sample size in each country varied from a low of 994 in Ireland to a high of 2,438 in Australia (Davis 2003:19)

high level of pride in the nation's art, literature and sports. (Davis 2003:25). The sports graph is significantly higher than the average for the other countries. This is mainly due to the fact that Irish games such as hurling and Gaelic football are considered cultural activities that are linked with a Gaelic identity. In Ireland hurling can be traced back more than a thousand years (Davis 2003:25).

Percentage of respondents who are very proud of selected national characteristics
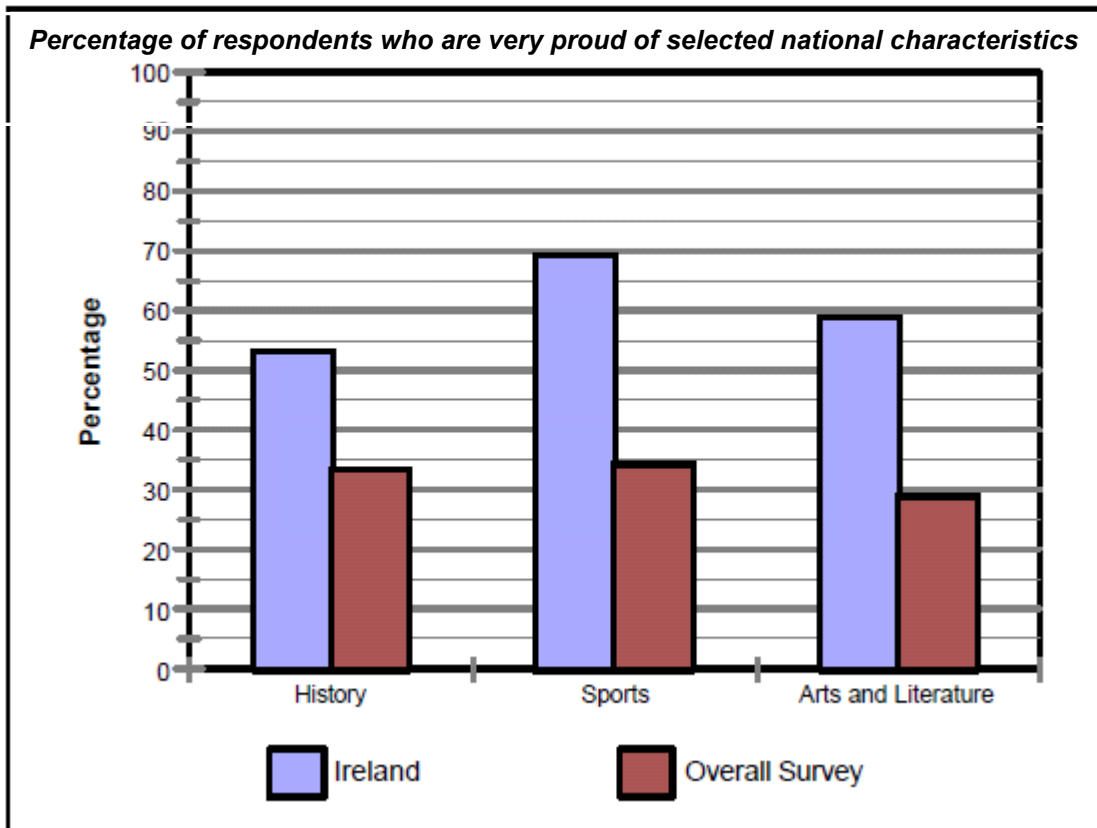
One example of what the nation is proud of is the story of traditional Irish dancing modernised and sent to the global scene. Riverdance is according to Moriarty (2011) a good example of the cultural elements of the Celtic Tiger that took place in Ireland since the mid 1990's. She sees Riverdance as an indicator of a newfound confidence in Irish identity and culture which helped kick-start an interest in other Celtic features among them the Irish language, which in turn saw an increased interest in Ireland as well as the Diaspora (Moriarty 2011).

9.1 Gaelic-Anglo

In the historical chapters I have shown how the Irish went from being a Celtic population to a mix of Celtic and Anglo with the Anglo-Norman invasion and the English colonisation of Ireland. After the Irish Civil War the population of the republic had to come to terms with its mix of identity and although the Celtic side was hugely emphasized in nation building the Anglo identity is present also symbolically. It is written in article 3 of the Constitution that:

> "It is the firm will of the Irish nation, in harmony and friendship, to unite all the people who share the territory of the island of Ireland, in all the diversity of their identities and traditions, recognising that a united Ireland shall be brought about only by peaceful means with the with the consent of a majority of the people, democratically expressed, in both jurisdictions in the island." (BUNREACHT NA hÉIREANN)

A symbol of the unification of the Anglo and Celtic heritage in Ireland is also represented in the country's flag consisting of the colour green, white in the middle and then orange. The green colour has been associated with the Irish Catholic nation since the 17th century and the orange colour associated with the protestant Orange Order who took their name from William of Orange. It is stated by the Department of the Taoiseach that:

> "The Irish Tricolour is intended to symbolise the inclusion and hoped-for union of the people of different traditions on this island, which is now expressed in the Constitution as the entitlement of every person born in Ireland to be part of the Irish nation (regardless of ethnic origin, religion or political conviction)". (Department of the Taoiseach 2011).

However, the Republic is quite homogeneous and mainly consists of people from the Gaelic-Irish background or Anglo-Irish who have merged with the Irish identity. The homogeneity of the population can also explain the fondness that the majority of the Irish language as it is related to the Irish National Identity.

To see the country's association mainly with the green side of the flag, one can Google Irish culture and then click images[18] and see what comes up on the first several pages. Pictures of Irish dancers, rural landscapes, Shamrocks, Irish sports, St. Patrick's Parade, Celtic imagery and font, leprechauns, signs written in the Irish language and so on. A poster from the late 1940's appears as well in this Google search with the writing: "THE KING IS GONE - NOW BREAK THE LANGUAGE CONNECTION WITH ENGLAND[19]". Aside from the irony that it is written in English it clearly shows the antagonism towards England.

The relationship with Britain is still marked as being the 'Other' as it is the country Ireland compares themselves the most with and shares the most popular culture with. The historical wrong doings of the old colonial power are noticeable in Anglo-Irish relations in the saying "that the Irish can't forget and the British can't remember".
However, over the years as the Republic stopped being in open conflict with British identity mainly due to Irish sovereignty the relationship with the old colonial partner has grown less hostile. This has happened simultaneously with the fact that Britain became less of an opponent and more of a trade partner and political partner (Böss 1997:33).

9.2 Religion

The Gaelic-Irish tradition is hugely connected to Catholicism and thus very connected to the Irish national identity. The connection between the Irish Nationalist movement and Catholicism can at least be dated back to Daniel O'Connell, the Catholic Emancipator, as written in chapter 5 (Davis 2003:20). Religion is therefore also named in the very beginning of the preamble to the Irish constitution:

> "In the Name of the Most Holy Trinity, from Whom is all authority and to Whom, as our final end, all actions both of men and States must be referred, We, the people of Éire, Humbly acknowledging all our obligations to our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ, Who sustained our fathers through centuries of trial,". (BUNREACHT NA hÉIREANN)

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[18] See Appendix A for pictures

[19] See Appendix B for picture of the poster

Up until 1973 the Catholic Church had been granted a place of special position by the state of Ireland in the constitution but the Fifth Amendment removed this and consequently the State does not have Catholicism in the constitution anymore.

Nevertheless the fact that nearly 95% of the population is Catholic and that Ireland has the highest church attendance rates in Europe shows that the religion is still a very important part of Irish life. Furthermore a 1995 survey shows that over 50% of the Irish population linked Catholicism to Irishness (Davis 2003:20).

A recent book, called *Outside the Glow: Protestants and Irishness in Independent Ireland* written by Dr. Heather Crawford, finds that due to the close connection between Irish identity and Catholicism, Protestants are automatically being labelled less Irish and considered to be hostile towards Irish culture, sport and language. (Crawford 2010).

9.3 Irish Diaspora

Since the 1700's and especially the Famine in the middle of the 19th century Ireland has been a nation marked by a constant and substantial emigration, except during the Celtic Tiger of the late 1990's and 00's where Ireland saw immigration. However, many of the immigrants, mainly from Eastern Europe, have travelled back since the financial crisis and economic recession that has hit Ireland hard.

 In 1890 almost 40 per cent of people born in Ireland were living abroad. Almost 10 million are thought to have gone to Britain and approximately 5 million to America. Today 70 million people outside Ireland claim Irish descent. 45 million of them live in America and state Irish as their primary ethnicity. (Kenny 2003: 136).

The Irish Diaspora is thus huge and exceeds the population of Ireland many times over. The Diasporas have been embraced by many states to which there were high levels of emigration, as a way of transnationalising the very meaning of the nation. (Gray 2002:133)

This was also true in the case of Ireland who has taken a particular interest in the Diaspora since the 1990's. The symbolic notion of the Diaspora was seen in the light of globalisation and as a way the Irish identity and cultural legacy stretched outside the borders of the Republic. The President of Ireland from 1990-1997 Mary Robinson said she represented both the Irish of the Republic but also the Irish abroad and in that context spoke of the 'cherished Diaspora' (Gray 2002: 124-125). Her successor

President Mary McAleese continued the rhetoric speaking of the Global Irish family. In her annual St. Patrick's Day message she often speaks of the extended Irish family:

> "Thanks to our global family the link with Ireland has been kept alive over generations and our culture introduced to countless millions throughout the world. Saint Patrick's Day is marked and relished in a myriad of places in a celebration that is both local and global and that is quintessentially Irish yet warmly welcoming of friends from other cultures and traditions. So whether you are parading down the street of a small rural Irish village or one of the largest cities in the world, Saint Patrick's Day parade is a shared celebration with the same deep pride and love of life and of community at its heart."
> (McAleese 2010)

The recognition of the Irish living abroad was also included in the 19th amendment of the Irish constitution from 1998. It was made following the Good Friday Agreement and Article 2 was changed in accordance with issues concerning the island of Ireland. A further addition to the Article was made so it reads:

"Furthermore, the Irish nation cherishes its special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage".

From a linguistic perspective the Irish Diaspora is the most significant in English speaking countries. This can also help to explain why the status of the English language became heightened in Ireland as America, England and Australia were the destinations for so many Irish people to make a new life for themselves. The letters sent home to Ireland from abroad in the period after the Famine was mostly written in English, furthermore they often encouraged the use of English language (Chriost 2005: 101). There are still sporadic groups of Irish Language speakers in America and Britain but no linguistic policies have been made in Ireland in order to target the Irish Diaspora. The focus has been mainly on tourism, investments and cultural elements other than language.

9.4 Discussion and theory

This chapter shows some of the elements of Irish national identity other than language. The identity consists of a Gaelic culture with deep historical roots and a profound connection to Catholicism. Although Irish national identity has been influenced by colonialism and the culture as a result is somewhat anglicised the most noticeable ethnicity is Gaelic in appearance and thus provides the ethnic foundation for the nation.

The description of the Irish nation and its culture relates well to Smith's (1999) definition of the nation. The Irish share many ethnies as can be seen in their enthusiasm over the country's history and achievements in the world of sports and arts. This shows that the country's connection with its history and myths is quite high and significant in the fact that it is important for the nation. Furthermore, one sees in Ireland many examples of what Smith (1999) calls the reproduction or interpretation of ethnies. Examples can be found in the vast use of Celtic symbols, Riverdance and also in the Diaspora adaptation of Irishness.

The inclusion of the Diaspora in the 'global Irish family' should also be seen in the light of Ireland's history. War, civil war, colonisation, Famine, emigration and poverty have been some of the tragedies that have befallen Ireland. Böss (2006) stated that the population of a nation often associates with the country's victories and defeats. In Ireland there have been many defeats which have left the country with an inferiority complex towards its neighbours to the east and west (Moriarty 2011). However, the ISSP survey showed that the Irish were proud of their nation's history. The history they are proud of could also include that of the Irish Diaspora. Instead of letting the story of emigration be a sad tale the Irish Presidents have made it into an empowering story of the spread of Irishness and a bond to a world where the Irish have made a big impact namely, USA.

10. Conclusion

This thesis shows that the Irish language holds a significant place in the Irish national identity. The language´s primary function is symbolic and is used to mark the ethnicity of the Irish as a Celtic people with a Gaelic heritage, which they value highly. Thus it is mainly used to signal what the Irish are not, which is the fact that that they are not English. This correlates well with the definition on national identity by Anthony Smith where national identity is both a sense of belonging to a common culture, where language is one element of this, and where it is also a sense of distinctiveness from others.

The need to show this distinction is mainly due to the scars left in the Irish identity stemming from the English colonisation, where the Irish lost some of their culture the Irish language included. The loss of the language can not only be blamed on the colonisation but also has reasons related to emigration, the status of English and the lack of willingness from the clergy and other members of the elite to maintain the language at an earlier stage. Furthermore the Gaelicisation that took place in the early years of the Republic of Ireland and the language planning that followed had little or no effect on reviving the language use. English is thus the dominant language by far in Ireland; however, it does not receive the same attention as the Irish language. Therefore when I state that language indeed is a big part of the Irish identity the language in question is the Irish language. The English language is the main mean of communication and as Wright (2004) states English language has been used as a medium to express Irish culture. However, it has not been taken to heart as a symbol of identification as it is still associated with the oppression and the language of the colonising power. In a European multi-lingual context Ireland also needs Irish language in order to be Irish.

Considering the fact that the language is primarily symbolic also means that the language discourses, which are described in this thesis, take up different amounts of ground within the Irish society. The first two discourses concerning the national language discourse and the cultural discourse are the most used as they can exist with a language that is limited in use and symbolic, which is the relationship most of the population has with the Irish language. The minority language discourse has increased with EC/EU membership and with the increasing philosophy of language choice as a human right. However, the Irish language strategy has for the last 50 years or so been mainly about bilingualism and thus a minority language discourse is not central to this strategy. The dead language discourse is present in Ireland and is especially voiced in connection with acquisition planning. However, the discourse is not heavily supported as the figures show an overwhelming enthusiasm for the Irish

language within the general public and the dead language discourse dismisses the significance of the Irish language.

The two first discourses are also examples of language from above and language from below. As the first discourse can be seen in all aspects of language planning and is constitutionally declared, it is the State that enforces and interprets what it means for Irish to have the status of national language. The second discourse on the cultural aspects of language has been much a case of language from below. As described in the thesis speaking or using the Irish language is considered a cultural activity and it is thus reinforced everywhere Irish is being used even if it is only in the form of Cupla Focail. Furthermore, the thesis explains that it has been language movements that have pushed for an Irish TV-channel and for Irish to be implemented as official EU language. They also played a significant role in Ireland's independence; these are genuine examples of language from below.

Throughout the thesis I have been looking at the theory in connection with the empirical material. Out of the three main theories used, essentialism, constructivism and ethnosymbolism it is the latter that comes closest to explaining the Irish case. A nation that has a symbolic language as a significant part of its identity coupled with other ethnies, to use the terminology of Smith, such as religion, history and arts can make up full identification. Furthermore the identity is rooted in being a Celtic people in a Gaelic nation. The Celtic symbols have been reinterpreted over the centuries but are still relevant in contemporary Irish society and thus in Irish identity. The Irish language itself can be seen as a cultural element which has been reinvented over the years and now stand as a symbolic language and a symbol of Irishness.

The constructivist theory is valid in terms of the initial language change from Irish to English during the colonisation and the way Irish language was heavily used in the nation building of a wounded state that needed sense of cohesion after the civil war. The Irish state even went as far as trying to Gaelicise the population. However, it did not succeed in the plan to re-establish the Irish language in Ireland. This suggests that the language is not that easily manipulated by even by the nation's elite. The dead language discourse dismisses the importance of the Irish language for the Irish nation. This discourse relates well to a constructivist view. However, little evidence seems to enforce this discourse within the Irish nation. Another point where the constructivist theory cannot be used is that there seem to be evidence suggesting that the Irish nation has roots from before the nation-state. This is founded in the fact that they resisted British identity though colonised and held on to their own religion and ethnicity

from before the English colonisation. Finally the constructivist theory proposes that language has outplayed its role in contemporary society. This cannot said to be the case in Irish society. The language question has played and continues to play an important role in society both through identification and politically.

Essentialism has some valid arguments in the Irish case in relation to the formation of the nation. It values the written word as a nation founding element together with ethnicity. In Ireland the initial population of Gaelic people, spoke Gaelic (Irish) and had a recorded written language predating medieval times. However, the theory of essentialism do not account for the impact from the political playing field and the subsequent language loss that followed. A symbolic language would not be substantial enough for the importance the essential theory places on language. Hastings offers an explanation himself as to the Irish language loss. He believes that when the Irish did not chose to translate the bible into Irish, although given the opportunity, the language suffered as a consequence. To the Irish the Catholic emancipation was more important than the language. Although this may be true to a certain extent I believe Hastings' explanation cannot be fully applied to explain the language loss. As I have accounted for in this thesis the dominance of the English language in a globalised world together with the Irish emigration to English speaking countries also played an important role in the language change from Irish to English.

I can from all this conclude that the Irish language is a very essential symbol for the Gaelic people living in Ireland and is thus an important part of Irish identity. Thus it has been retained as a symbol of national identity although its practical function is very limited. The fact that the language represents that much to the Irish people validates its purpose. Furthermore, it shows a reason why language is needed for more than communication, namely identification, which is something that a lingua franca cannot replace. The language as mean of identification can also explain why the language planning concerning the Irish language has been of an aspirational character rather than realistic. A functional language needs realistic aims, a symbolic language does not. However, this thesis show that the symbolic language is not alone in making up the Irish identity, other factors such as ethnicity, shared history and myths and Catholicism are also important elements. Thus Irish national identity is bound on the Irish language but not alone in defining it.

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Video file:

To view the Irish Carlsberg Commercial it can be found on YouTube here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTNBmFveq2U

And with English subtitles here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AF9FLBvxgho&feature=related

12. Appendix

A

Appendix B

Appendix C

Students protesting against language proposal. Photograph: Bryan O'Brien. Irish Times

http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2011/0215/1224289827771.html