

ECONOMIC LIFE



This section shows the small but gradually increasing presence of Irish in economic and business life. It looks at the public and private sectors: titling, branding, advertising. The economic benefits to the language community and the potential economic power of the 'language dividend' are briefly treated.

ECONOMY AND LANGUAGE

BACKGROUND

Irish is not yet a significant factor generally in economic life. The intricate relationships between language, bilingualism, multilingualism on the one hand and economic development or stagnation or community development on the other hand are only beginning to be the subject of study, whether nationally or globally. Language and economy tend to be seen more in regional *Gaeltacht* but not in national integrated terms.

The issues to be further examined in the case of Irish might include the following:

- *language or languages as a ‘public good’ to which all citizens are entitled equal access and which the State has a duty to ensure*
- *language or languages as ‘social capital’ which serves to enhance the individual and the community*
- *language or languages as ‘economic capital’ the possession of which serves to enhance the life chances of the individual and thereby the wealth of the community*
- *language or languages as ‘added value’ which may be activated as required.*

To date, discussion has centred largely on the following kinds of questions:

- *economic development and linguistic development as parallel processes as had been happening in the case of the Gaeltacht, expressed by one Government Minister as: ‘No jobs, no people. No people, no Gaeltacht’ – the development of the linguistic region, however, was, and is, highly dependent on which language is spoken by the people in the jobs and on attendant issues arising*
- *integrated economic and linguistic development having two discernible strands: small to medium enterprises (SME) functioning locally on language-related production or other kinds of production (environmentally friendly); language as a base for economic enterprises as cultural tourism, family/activity holidays, language learning and associated use of local services, whether for holidaymakers, summer students, trainee teachers, civil servants, interested persons from abroad – this integrated approach is that now favoured by Údarás na Gaeltachta.*

Two other issues have also been aired:

- *the possibility that Irish speakers, no matter where located, could set up services for themselves as a community through Irish: a bank, for example – apart from some instances of a small number of individuals taking shares in community radio (Raidió na Life, Dublin) or a daily newspaper (Lá Nua, Belfast), this idea has not really flourished*
- *computation of the real economic input of the language and culture-based activity that actually exists: e.g. Summer Colleges in the Gaeltacht; the Oireachtas festival in whichever area in which it is held.*

The growth in ancillary service industries to support *TG4*, *Raidió na Gaeltachta*, or the demands of the Official Languages Act are potent examples of the domino effect of any major change. Future planning might take this aspect into account.

LEGISLATION

Apart from the Act establishing *Údarás na Gaeltachta*, there are probably only two examples of references to language in legislation that had a direct effect on what might be termed aspects of economic life: *An tAcht Árachais* (Assurance Act) 1936 which provided for all further documentation in Irish if a form was filled out in Irish; *An tAcht Iompair* (Transport Act) 1950 in relation to station names and tickets in bilingual format. They are, nevertheless, examples of language planning by the State for its citizens. Other State entities with a possible commercial remit now come under the Official Languages Act 2003. State bodies privatised after the Act retain the obligations of the Act. At the time of passage of this Act, the wish was expressed that it might, in future, apply also to the private sector.

ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT AND LANGUAGE

Leaving aside *Údarás na Gaeltachta* generated employment in the *Gaeltacht*, and public servants who may use Irish in work or service, there are over 1,000 persons directly engaged in language related activities in employment with Irish language organisations and agencies, a survey conducted by the newspaper *Foinse* found in early 2003. Of these, 660 were based in the *Gaeltacht*; 244 in the capital,

Dublin; 66 in Belfast. Given improved travelling conditions, the responsible Minister has raised the concept of a semi-urban *Gaeltacht* in the case of *Baile Ghib* (Gibstown, County Meath), in the vicinity of Dublin, and *Baile Bhuirne* (County Cork) because of its proximity to Cork. This approach does not, however, appear to have benefited the Connemara *Gaeltacht* in linguistic terms. It would require a far more integrated planning base. The Minister has also suggested (early 2003) that all the Irish language agencies and organisations currently based in Dublin might move to a new campus in either of the two County Meath *Gaeltacht* pockets or to other *Gaeltacht* areas. The suggestion has not met with general enthusiasm. While the suggestion may not be without merit, a more coherent and integrated approach would be necessary. Visibility for Irish in the larger urban areas within a national strategy for the language was recommended by *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta* as of benefit to the perceptions of *Gaeltacht* residents.

The *Gaeltacht* economy benefits also from its status as repository of the language. Apart from the benefit to local businesses of the many language learning and development courses located in the *Gaeltacht*, local families who keep the students of Summer Colleges are subvented by the Department with responsibility for the *Gaeltacht* through *Scéim na bhFoghlaimoírí Gaeilge* (Scheme for Learners of Irish). In recent years compliance with the tax regime was to be imposed. This was strongly opposed by the *Mná Tí* who ran the households and by the colleges who feared that it would no longer be financially possible for the households to maintain their accommodation and linguistic input to the work of the colleges. An agreement was eventually reached with the State through the Minister responsible and written into the Budget for 2004.

TITLING, BRANDING AND PACKAGING

Firms, largely semi-State bodies, may occasionally sponsor language activities. Small or medium sized indigenous enterprises may name their goods through Irish for impact or identification. But most titling/branding/packaging remains monolingually English except in rare and sporadic instances. Producers of organic goods may use Irish.

Examples of the general use of Irish in these ways fall under several headings. State enterprises may have the Irish version of their title or be in bilingual format. Some of the Irish only versions have easily become part of everyday parlance in English as is the case with historical terms, not easily translatable without the requisite culture-specific background, relating to the governance of the Republic of Ireland: *Uachtarán* and *Áras an Uachtaráin* (President and the Residence of the President); *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister); *Tánaiste* (Deputy Prime Minister); *Oireachtas* (Chambers of Legislature); *Dáil* and *Seanad* (lower and upper houses); *Teachta Dála* (Member of lower house); *Tá* and *Níl* (literally 'is' and 'is not', in reply to agreement or not with resolution when voting in the *Dáil*); *Cathaoirleach* (Chairperson) in the Houses of the *Oireachtas* (legislature) and in some local authorities.

Some dates are given in the following examples of titling in Irish of official bodies to show that the trend is holding, although no more than a symbolic gesture in some instances. However, this symbolic use of the language should not be scorned as sometimes occurs, being dismissed as 'lip service' or use of the '*cúpla focal*' (few words). It has a genuine beneficial and normalising contextual effect on the overall language environment.

Before the enactment of the Official Languages Act 2003 which will ensure guidelines on these matters, such titling was, however, often due to the inclination or political will demonstrated by the particular Minister or the advice proffered by civil servants. Quite recently, pressure was brought to bear by the hospitality sector, concerned that years of market branding could be lost, to ensure that '*Fáilte*' (welcome) would remain in the title of a proposed new agency. With the establishment of Tourism Ireland Limited, the new North-South tourism body, a decision was taken (2003) to establish this new agency by Act in the Republic, to bring together the functions of *Bord Fáilte Éireann* begun by Act in 1955 and CERT (1963), the training agency for the hospitality sector. While section 7 of the new Act establishes a body to be 'known as *An tÚdarás Náisiúnta Forbartha Turasóireachta* or in the English language the National Tourism Development Authority' (wording which gives precedence to the Irish version), subsection (5) of section 7 states that 'The Authority may, for operational purposes, describe itself as '*Fáilte* Ireland'. Thus was a compromise reached resulting in the retention of *Fáilte*, as well as the shamrock as symbol, but in a new format.

Many of the public bodies listed below are taken, more or less randomly, and in the exact

format provided by the agencies themselves, from the Administration & Diary Yearbook (Institute of Public Administration), the recognised reference and source of information on all aspects of life in Ireland. The examples given are not necessarily inclusive or representative. The fact that organisations use the bilingual version of their title may or may not indicate an acceptance of, or a favourable attitude to, the Irish language. It may indicate no more than past custom. Neither can it be assumed that those using the English version only in this publication may not also have an Irish version, although the linguistic choice manifested in the Administration & Diary Yearbook is in itself of interest, since organisations usually supply their own copy to the publisher.

PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (STATE-SPONSORED BODIES)

Public enterprises using Irish form of titling

Irish version solely or mostly

-
- **Aer Lingus** 1936 (but spelling partially adapted to English orthography); National air carrier, now *Aer Lingus* Group plc 1993 and privatised with 25% Government shareholding
 - **Aer Rianta cpt** Management of airports (now being replaced by three companies)
 - **Bord na Móna plc** Peat Board
 - **An Bord Pleanála** 1977 Planning Board rarely if ever used
 - **Comhairle na nOspidéal** 1970 Advises Minister on hospital matters
 - **Córas Iompair Éireann (CIÉ)** Public Transport Authority. The Transport Act of 1950 obliged CIÉ to act bilingually. Although subsidiary companies of CIÉ following re-organisation by Act of 1986 are titled bilingually: **Bus Átha Cliath**–Dublin Bus, **Bus Éireann**–Irish Bus, **Iarnród Éireann**–Irish Rail, emphasis is given to the Irish version in public signage. During 2003, a campaign was mounted to ensure that any privatisation of public transport would also act bilingually. This eventuality is covered under the Official Languages Act. The new tram service for Dublin City has been named unilingually in Irish, **Luas** (Speed). Signage within *Luas* trams and for stations and oral announcements are bilingual.
 - **FÁS (Foras Áiseanna Saothair, Agency for work resources)** 1988 Body to promote training and employment programmes
 - **Forfás** (1993) Body for national policy on technology, innovation. The name of this agency was described as a ‘coinage invented within the Department of Enterprise and Employment’ at the time, formed from a prefix *for-* ‘extra-’ + *fás* ‘growth’; properly in such a compound the initial ‘f’ of *fás* is lenited, giving *forfhás*, or now regularly *forás*, a common word in contemporary Irish meaning ‘development’. However, Irish speakers found it difficult to accept the linguistic rules being so nonchalantly broken.
 - **An Post** National postal service, State-owned company since 1984
 - **RTÉ (Radio Telefís Éireann)** National broadcaster including Irish language services
 - **Raidió na Gaeltachta** and **TG4** (brand name for *Teilifís na Gaeltachta*)
 - **Teagasc** Agriculture and Food Development Authority
 - **Comhairle** (advice) 2000 Departmental body, citizens’ advice – new legislation (2006) changed to ensure nomenclature Citizens Information now (centres and website funded and supported by *Comhairle*)
 - **Taobh Tíre** (countryside) Pilot project to provide library services to isolated areas.
- The English language versions of the companies listed above are never or rarely used except as descriptors.

Public Enterprises using bilingual form of title with linguistic emphasis as used by them

Irish version first and in common use

-
- **Bord Bia** Irish Food Board
 - **Bord Gáis (Éireann)** 1978 Irish Gas Board
 - **Bord Glas** 1990 Horticultural Development Board
 - **Bord Iascaigh Mhara** Irish Sea Fisheries Board
 - **Bord Scannán na hÉireann** Irish Film Board
 - **An Chomhairle Leabharlanna** 1947 The Library Council
 - **Coillte Teoranta** The Irish Forestry Board (Limited)

English version first or more prominently displayed

- The Arts Council 1951 & 2003 *An Chomhairle Ealaíon*
- Central Fisheries Board Act 1980 *An Príomh-Bhord Iascaigh*
- *An Bord Pinsean* Act 1990 The Pensions Board (*Emphasis to title in English through font size and type*)
- Commission for Communications Regulations *An Coimisiún Rialáil Cumarsáide*
- Commission for Energy Regulation Acts 1999–2002 *An Coimisiún um Rialáil Fuinnimh*
- Health Research Board Act 1961 & 1986 *An Bord Taighde Sláinte*
- The Heritage Council *An Chomhairle Oidhreachta*
- Higher Education Authority Act 1971 *An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas*
- Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) 2001
Comhairle na nDámhachtainí Breisoideachais agus Oilíúna (*Irish script minuscule*)
- Higher Education Training and Awards Council
Comhairle na nDámhachtainí Ardoideachais agus Oilíúna (*Both versions equal*)
- Irish Greyhound Board *Bord na gCon* (*Emphasis to title in English through font size and type*)
- The Irish National Stud Company Ltd *Cólucht Groighe Náisiúnta na hÉireann Teoranta*
(*More commonly spelt 'groi' nowadays*)
- Local Government Computer Services Board 1975 *An Bord Seirbhísí Ríomhaire Rialtais Áitiúil*
- Marine Institute *Foras na Mara*
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment *An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta*
- National Disability Authority 1999 *Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais*
- The National Lottery 1986 *An Crannchur Náisiúnta* (*Emphasis to title in English through font size and type*)
- National Qualifications Authority of Ireland Act 1999 *Údarás Náisiúnta Cáilíochtaí na hÉireann* (*Both versions equal in logo also*)
- The National Roads Authority Act 1993 *An tÚdarás um Bhóithre Náisiúnta*
- National Safety Council 1987 *Comhairle Sábháilteacht Náisiúnta* (*Emphasis to title in English only in logo*)
- Ordnance Survey Ireland (2002 as State body) *Suirbhéireacht Ordanáis Éireann*
(*Emphasis to title in English only in logo*)
- Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland Act 1991 *An Institiúid Éireannach um Chosaint Raideolaíoch*
- Voluntary Health Insurance Board Acts 1957 & 1996
An Bord Árachais Sláinte Shaorálaigh
- Dublin Docklands Development Authority *Údarás Forbartha Dughailte Bhaile Átha Cliath*

The case of *Bord Bainne* (The Irish Dairy Board) is an interesting one. While this commercial co-operative, which owns the Kerrygold company, tends now to use only the English version, public commentary on its performance will tend to use both versions indiscriminately, as a result, perhaps, of the previous semi-State status and Irish title of the business. A report in the business pages of the Irish Times for 18 May 2004 had *Bord Bainne* in the title but both Irish Dairy Board and *Bord Bainne* in alternate paragraphs. There are many other such official bodies which are titled in English, or use only the English version.

There is probably little difference, apart from the attitudinal, which may be inferred from the use of Irish in name, in the level of more active use of the language internally in all these bodies. In the case of private or community enterprises that choose an Irish title, the reasons may vary from a form of patriotism to need for differentiation in a crowded market to need for some 'softening' of the purposes of the enterprise both in the public perception and in the eyes of clients. Some current examples from this sector are given later in this section.

PROFESSIONAL BODIES

Many, but not all, professional bodies will be titled bilingually, particularly those arising from legislation.

Professional Bodies, particularly those involved in education, registration, advising Minister

Irish name first

- **An Bord Altranais** 1950 & 1985 The Nursing Board
- **Bord na Radhaircmheastóirí** Act 1956 Opticians Board
- **Cumann Leabharlann na hÉireann** (The Library Association of Ireland) (*English version bracketed thus*)
- **Acadamh na Lianna** 1968 Irish language forum /discussion group for doctors
- **Institiúid Bitheolaíochta na hÉireann** (Institute of Biology of Ireland) (*English version bracketed thus*)
- **Institiúid Ceimice na hÉireann** (The Institute of Chemistry of Ireland) (*English version bracketed thus*)

English name first

- Dental Council Act 1985 **An Chomhairle Fiaclóireachta**
- Fire Services Council Act 1981 **Comhairle na Seirbhísí Dóiteáin**
- Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland
(**Cumann Innealtóirí Comhairle na hÉireann**) (*Irish version bracketed thus*)
- Association of Local Authority Arts Officers
(**Cumann Oifigigh Ealaíona na nÚdarás Áitiúla**) (*Irish version bracketed thus*)
- The Institute of Engineers of Ireland (**Cumann na nInnealtóirí**) (*Irish version bracketed thus*)
- Irish Airline Pilots' Association (**Cumann Píolótaí Aerlínte**) (*Irish version bracketed thus*)
- Irish Medical Organisation (**Ceardachumann Dochtúirí na hÉireann**) (*Irish version bracketed thus*)
- Irish Planning Institute (**Institiúid Pleanála na hÉireann**) (*Irish version bracketed thus*)
- The Psychological Society of Ireland (**Cumann Síceolaithe Éireann**) (*Irish version bracketed thus*)
- The Irish College of General Practitioners **Coláiste Dhochtúirí Teaghlaigh Éireann**
(*Emphasis on English version in logo*)
- The Irish Dental Association **Cumann Fiaclóirí na hÉireann**

There are many other professional organisations which do not use Irish in their title. Most but not all educational bodies, including unions and representative bodies of local/regional authorities or health services, will have bilingual titling. This does not necessarily entail use of the Irish version in all public signage nor in active use of the language, whether internal as language of work or external as language of service.

Practitioners of several professions have internal voluntary groups where Irish speakers may discuss matters of professional interest through Irish: *An Roth* (The Wheel) for engineers *Acadamh na Lianna* (1968, Academy of Doctors) for the medical profession, *Fasach* (Precedent) for the legal profession. From the viewpoint of language planning, the necessary links are evident between, on the one hand, professional education and practice in the community and, on the other hand, continuing contact with aspects of the profession (including provision of journals).

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The majority of national cultural organisations will have bilingual titling as will youth organisations and some publishing bodies.

Irish version only

- **Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann** Traditional forms of music, song, dance
- **Macra na Feirme** Association for young farmers/rural dwellers

Bilingual (some using bracketed forms)

- **Ból-Chumann na hÉireann** Irish Road Bowling Association
- **Muintir na Tíre** 1937 (Irish National Community Development Movement)
- Irish Countrywomen's Association **Bantracht na Tuaithe**
- GAA-Gaelic Athletics Association (**Cumann Lúthchleas Gael**)
- The National Folk Theatre of Ireland / **Siamsa Tíre**

TITLING OF COMMUNITY ENTERPRISES

Irish version only

-
- *Aiséirí* (Resurrection, rise again) Organisation for addiction intervention
 - *Bóthar* (road) Third World Development Agency
 - *Cúnamh* (literally ‘help’) Registered adoption society
 - *Cairde* (Friends) To reduce health inequalities among ethnic minorities
 - *Cáis* (Cheese) 1983 The Irish Farmhouse Cheesemakers Association
 - *Comhlámh* (a helping hand) Returned development workers
 - *Crann* (tree) Strives to heighten appreciation of trees and woodland
 - *CLÉ* (*Cumann Leabharfoilsitheoirí Éireann Teo*)
(literally Association of Irish Book Publishers Limited, publish in both languages)
 - *Doras Luimní* (Door to Limerick) Organisation for the marginalised in Limerick
 - *Obair* (Work) Programme for the unemployed
 - *Tosach* (literally ‘beginning’, also ‘forward’, especially in sport)
Regional support agency to community based projects
 - *Treoir* (literally ‘direction, advice’) Federation of Services for Unmarried
Parents and their Children

Bilingual with either Irish or English first (some using bracketed forms)

-
- *Cuidiú* (literally ‘helping/help’) – The Irish Childbirth Trust
Parent to parent support for families
 - *Coillte Teoranta* (woods + limited – company) The Irish Forestry Board
(*Emphasis given to Irish version in logo*)
 - *CNEASTA* (kind, adjective) (The Irish Council for Training, Development
and Employment for Persons with Disabilities)
 - *CRÉ* (earth/clay) Composting Association of Ireland
 - *Clúid* (covering) Housing Association
 - *Cuisle* (pulse, also used figuratively) Integrated holiday and respite centre,
wheelchair accessible
 - *Dóchas* (hope) The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development
Organisations
 - Irish Heart Foundation *Foras Croí na hÉireann*
 - Ireland Literature Exchange *Idirmhalartán Litríocht Éireann*
Funds literary translation from English or Irish to other languages
 - The Irish Refugee Council *Comhairle Teifeach na hÉireann*
 - Irish Red Cross *Crois Dhearg na hÉireann*
 - *An Taisce* (hoard of precious things) The National Trust for Ireland 1948
 - *TRÓCAIRE* (pity) – The Irish Catholic Agency for World Development
(*Emphasis on Irish version in logo*)

COMMERCIAL USES OF IRISH: NAMING COMPANIES, PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

The following examples show the growing range and variety of the use of Irish for commercial purposes. They have not been sought out but noted at random in the general environment or in advertising or news items. They do not comprise a comprehensive account nor can they be taken as constant. The names and nature of companies and goods tend to change over time.

Business or shop name in Irish

-
- *Áibhéil* (bilingual play on pronunciation which is close to ‘awe’ + ‘veil’ of
English literally ‘exaggeration’) Bridal wear
 - *Amárach* Consulting (tomorrow) Market research company
 - *Árachas* (insurance) ‘The Irish for Insurance’ is the company’s promotional slogan.
 - *Caoga* (fifty) Insurance
 - *Cruinn* (precise) Technologies
 - *Doras* (door) Joinery services

- **Inis Meáin** Upmarket knits marketed in Japan and globally from the Middle Island, Aran Islands, Galway Bay
- **Nua** (new) Research Services Market research company
- **Oghma** Services Ltd. (*Oghma* was the name of a chief of the mythical *Tuatha Dé Danann*. He is attributed with creating the system of letters known as *Ogham*.) Telecommunications company
- **Púca** (hobgoblin, troll) Mobile phone marketing company
- **Suantraí** (lullaby) Babysling
- **Suas** (up) Educational Development Limited
- **Suas Teoranta** (Limited) *aim not given in telephone entry*
- **Suaimhneas** (rest, peace and quiet) *aim not given in telephone entry*
- **Slán** (secure, healthy, safe, intact) Technologies
- **Tógáil** (building) Building service
- **Tacsai** (Taxi)
- Team**Obair** (TeamWork) Recruitment Agency
- **Slí Siar** (Pathway to the West) Consultancy firm promoting Irish business in China and Chinese business in Ireland. Corporate logo is two intertwined dragons each in 'S' shape facing each other on an Irish heraldic shield; the Celtic dragon facing east and the Chinese dragon facing west.
- Use of capitals and bilingualism is shown in the following example.

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TTT stands for *Teastas Triail Tiomána*, DTT for the translation, Driving Theory Test.

Brand name in Irish

- **Madra** (dog) Dog food; a grooming service
- **Bia Kidz** Irish-made children's healthy foods
- **Fiacla** (teeth) Toothpaste
- **Sásta** (pleased, satisfied) Brassed wood screws
- **Páiste Sásta** (pleased/satisfied child) Re-usable nappies from organically grown materials
- **Solus** (light) Light bulbs
- **Seoda** (jewels; precious things) Handcrafted jewellery shop
- **Sin é** (That's it) Shop/pub name
- **Ispíní** Sausages
- **Bainne Úr** Fresh milk
- **Galánta** (Elegant) Body lotion with seaweed extract

Brand name anglicised form or culturally derived

- Curim (From the older form '*coirm/cuirm*') Irish Beer
- Shomera (From *seomra*, room) Standalone wooden rooms
- Stira (From *staighre*, stairs) Spiral or pull down stairs to reach attic space
- Mileeven (From '*mil aoibhinn*', lovely honey) Confectionery and other related products

THE BUSINESS SECTOR – PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

PUBLIC SECTOR

On the official front, forms, (including tax forms and some post office forms, and all correspondence relating to Prize Bonds), which have more community affect, are generally available, some in Irish only, some in bilingual format, from State and semi-State sources. To query them, however, through Irish is more difficult, although easier in writing than orally. One specific unit is maintained in the Dublin area by the Revenue Commissioners for those who wish to conduct their tax affairs through Irish. It had been expected that such a service might be available throughout the country in the recent re-organisation of services to more local access. This, however, was delayed in the initial

planning stages of relocation. Public transport tickets are bilingual. *Bus Éireann* has a partially Irish language version of its website as one among French, German, Italian, Spanish and Polish versions. Irish vehicle tax registration forms are available from local authorities in Irish in hard copy or online where business may be carried out through Irish forms. All such services will now be regulated through the Schemes of the Official Languages Act.

The first issue (January 2007) of the new customer publication of *Bord Gáis* (Gas Board) was bilingual. The accompanying letter in English points out that 'this supports the Official Languages Act, a government initiative designed to promote the use of the Irish language'. A brochure giving a summary of the *Plean Póilíníochta* (Policing Plan) 2007 was distributed in bilingual format to every residence and business address in the State. A more substantial brochure from the Department of Foreign Affairs giving a summary of the Government White Paper on Irish Aid to the poorest countries arrived first in English, subsequently in the Irish form. The Office of Consumer Affairs issued cards in Irish with consumer rights tabulated.

A report prepared for the Minister for Communications on moving towards a zip code post system included concerns already highlighted in NI that placenames might be omitted. While the system is not yet in operation, the Minister promised in the *Dáil* in October 2005 that the use of usual addresses in Irish and in English would continue within any new arrangements and that the international abbreviation (probably from the French 'Irlande') IE for *Éire*/Ireland would not supersede existing usage. [This position was reiterated in May 2008 by the next Minister when he explained that the terms of reference of the board appointed on the matter of national postcodes contained, *inter alia*, a stipulation that no person should have to change the composition of his/her postal address as a result of any recommendations made nor be prevented from using either of the official languages of the State to do so. A system of some 200 examples of postcodes containing letters was expected to be in use in the future, added to personal addresses. In the case of the *Gaeltacht*, these letters could well be based on the official Irish placename in the view of the Minister. Such an approach does not, however, fully answer the query of the Irish speaker outside the *Gaeltacht* who might prefer the use of letters based on the Irish version of his local town or city.](#) The change from local service to the new system of post sorting and delivery, whereby all letters from a large region are sent to some central depot has led to language problems also. Names and addresses may sometimes be translated to English. This practice is not widespread but delay or non-delivery of post addressed in Irish continues to occur. Nevertheless, due to time exigencies the Department allowed *An Post* to breach the regulation agreed in accordance with the Official Languages Act that the annual report would be issued bilingually in 2005.

The semi-State *Coillte Teoranta* (Woods Limited) also issued its report solely in English at first instead of simultaneously bilingual (May 2005). The intention appeared to be that, until the report was placed before the *Oireachtas* by the Minister for Agriculture and Food, the Irish version could wait. Such anomalies will not occur again.

Questions were also put to the Minister for Health regarding contracts in the health services area which contained a proviso that 'only tenders submitted in the English language will be accepted' (March 2005). The phone helpline set up to deal with queries on the retention by nursing homes of inmates' old age pensions had not one person competent to deal with queries in Irish. *Gaeltacht* community fora have complained of unilingual English advertising for posts in *Gaeltacht* areas, particularly in health and agriculture (July 2005). Probably the most glaring example of non-adherence to language courtesies occurred with the 2005 issue of the *Eolaí Teleafóin* (Telephone Directory) for the 01 Dublin region. All names with the length mark were misprinted, whether first name, surname, or in a foreign language with a similar character. The Customer Support Department of Golden Pages, who were responsible, blamed the use of a new computer system at file transfer stage to the printer, after what was described as rigorous proofreading. Since a complete reprint and redistribution of the directory was not considered feasible, it issued a booklet of Correction Pages which, though apparently drawn from the original proofread version, was in no way perfect. However, it did have the small advantage of providing Irish speakers in the Dublin area with a unified list of Irish-language addresses. The latest edition of the *Eolaí* still contains glaring mistakes of some names in Irish.

These are examples of the somewhat tortuous process of agreeing and implementing a language policy in the public sector, particularly in such a pervasive and crucial area of contact between State

and citizen, which comprises one aspect of the economy where the citizen is client or customer and is referred to in these terms in the mission statements and service charters of bodies. On the other hand, the situation is improving and Irish organisations were the first to point this out. Brochures dealing with a range of issues, from the flu to the most recent additional points for breaches of the road code are available in Irish. Irish as the language of service to the public was rare, even in *Gaeltacht* areas, (and particularly from State agents in *Gaeltacht* areas), but now more generally accepted as a component of customer service, language courtesy. Improvement is already apparent (2006). Examples range from the Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority (*Údarás Rialála Seirbhísí Airgeadais na hÉireann*), established in May 2003, which recently issued, in Irish, a very clear guide for consumers on savings and investments, including pensions, to *An Bord Uchtála* (Adoption Board), which issued a brochure to every household on the procedures for seeking information or contacting children or birth parents. The Irish version is well laid out and concise.

The National Car Testing (NCT) centre, although a private company on contract to the State, will issue results of the test in Irish to Irish speakers. However, NCT certificates were recently refused, on foot of the existing regulation, to taxis which had the Irish version, *Tacsaí*, displayed. These taxi owners had to resit the test, at their own expense, and mount new signs on their cars. The Minister for Transport declared himself unable to provide them with any compensation under the existing arrangements although, on the intervention of *An Coimisinéir Teanga*, the existing Statutory Instrument was amended to allow the use of ‘*TACSAÍ*’ and ‘*uimhir chheadúnais*’ in Irish (SI 157/2004). Such are the anomalies and inconsistencies of a non-integrated State language policy. It is possible to do the car driving test through Irish. Some borough councils issue paper parking discs with bilingual instructions on the back although the months on front are in English only. These discs are distributed under license from a Swedish company.

Services are definitely improving as the Official Languages Act begins to be understood. On the other hand, there have been some recent incidents of persons wishing to show solidarity with the language by using the Irish form of their name with official bodies through birth certificate, passport, driver’s license and bank account. Passport issue requires two years of use of the Irish version of their name by persons not formerly known by this version. The production of a passport is then considered sufficient identity for driver’s license and banks. Some people take the step of changing their name by deed poll if not registered through Irish at birth.

The advertisement sections of both Irish and English-medium newspapers show not only increased use of Irish, but a much wider range of employment opportunities for competent bilinguals.

PRIVATE SECTOR

There is a small but developing trend for some use of Irish in the private business sector. There are, of course, a growing number of small businesses that function bilingually or mostly in Irish, whether in the *Gaeltacht* or outside the *Gaeltacht*. Modern technology has greatly aided this development. These businesses have arisen to fill niche or popular markets produced by language developments in media, advertising and public relations; publishing; radio, television and film production; telecommunications and multi-media production; interpretation and translation; applied professional services; language teaching packages online; organic foods and natural cosmetics. They have also arisen to cater for the growing Irish-conscious population in the catchment area of Irish-medium schools, *gaelscoileanna*: greeting cards, whether Irish or bilingual; T-shirts. Mainstream businesses such as banks cannot underestimate either the growing influence of this category of *clientèle*. Critical mass is undoubtedly making a difference. [An auctioneering business in Manorhamilton \(*Cluainín Uí Ruairc*\), County Leitrim, began to offer service through Irish in late 2007, out of personal commitment but also as a service to clients.](#) Bank cheque books are available in Irish on request. The position of AIB (Allied Irish Bank) is that the bank will respond if there is sufficient demand from Irish speakers for services in Irish from branches rather than individual demand. In NI, in early 2003, an official complaint was made by a customer whose cheque in Irish was refused by a store which later assured Irish speakers that this would not happen again. Bank of Ireland ATMs in several outlets, including NI, offer Irish as one of the language choices (as do the automatic ticket machines for the Dart train in the Dublin area). [Irish speakers were, however, disappointed that the privatised *Aer Lingus* will not be using Irish in its greeting to plane passengers on its proposed flights out of Belfast, on the basis that three languages would be](#)

unwieldy (English, Irish, Ulster-Scots), although such trilingual use is not unusual: Irish, English and the language of the destination airport are already in use by *Aer Lingus*.

Each *Gaeltacht* has several examples of these service based enterprises as has Dublin and some provincial towns. Other business ventures have been initiated by voluntary community organisations.

Europus, an interpretation and translation agency is based in Connemara as is *Telegael* and *eoteilifís* for the audiovisual sector. In Waterford there is Nemeton, an independent film maker. The Munster *Gaeltacht* based *Grúpa Bhard na nGleann* (Bard of the Glens Group) is reaching up to 130 individual learners of Irish in fifteen countries around the world through its award-winning programme, *GaelTalk*. The company has also sold almost a thousand Irish books online to buyers in 35 countries through its service, *litríocht.com* (literature). Its Irish translation section is available from *freastal.ie* (service) and it has an office also in Silicon Valley. It has won several awards as employer. There are independent film makers also in Donegal. Many of these audio-visual companies emerged as a result of farsighted investment, particularly in training, by *Údarás na Gaeltachta*.

In the *Gaeltacht*, the local credit unions may conduct business through Irish. Most shops will offer degrees of bilingual service. Auctioneers may offer service through Irish. Local small to medium enterprises (SMEs) assisted by *Údarás na Gaeltachta* will have the intention to function as much as is possible and practicable through Irish and will receive language training for that purpose. Since some of these do global business, they are very dependent on the technological infrastructure available, including broadband, a fact recognised by the *Gaeltacht* Authority. Industrial developments in the *Gaeltacht* that are subvented by the *Gaeltacht* Authority carry linguistic conditions. There are some EU-funded developments between Ireland and Wales that are specifically language and culture based.

The organisation *Gael-Linn* (established 1953) was probably the first business oriented enterprise through Irish to be established. In its early days, it provided mould-breaking examples in fish farming, cinema reels, film and music, Bingo games in halls. Most of these types of activities it still continues but in recent years diversified into new outlets some of which have since been discontinued: a café in central Dublin, educational CD-Roms in collaboration with international firms. It re-established a monthly meeting, *Plé* (discussion), which will have a guest speaker on relevant issues, sometimes business people or from areas that impinge on business. It offers many education and youth-related activities. It is funded through its own activities, State subvention, and weekly lotteries.

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Following on the Placenames Orders of the Official Languages Act, two private map providers, AA Ireland and HarperCollins, will in future use bilingual forms of Irish placenames in maps for tourists, although they have no statutory obligation to do so. *Sin É* (That's it) appears quite often as a shop sign. In California, it is now the name of a new wine being produced by a Belfast woman.

One of the larger online recruitment services, *irishjobs.ie*, went bilingual in late 2005 in reply to demand for bilingual jobseekers. The site itself will become bilingual and bilingual advertisements are accepted at no extra cost. A survey conducted by the site showed that 41% of respondents considered that it was possible to use Irish in the workplace and 35% self-reported being at ease speaking in Irish. The younger the respondents (21–35) the more likely they were to report liking Irish in school, a finding replicated in other surveys also (*Fine Gael* and *Foinse*).

Private bodies will issue materials of interest in Irish or bilingually, particularly for schools. Newspapers issue posters. The charitable trust, Agri Aware, which represents the various national organisations in agriculture and in dairying, has issued a handbook in Irish for schools.

FUNDING SCHEMES AND AWARDS

The Department with responsibility for the language launched a new fund, worth €1 million over three years, for business in late 2005. Enterprises seeking funding must first obtain collaboration and co-funding on a 3:1 basis from a local authority or chamber of commerce and then submit a detailed business plan with defined targets. The maximum available over three years under the fund for any one venture is €500,000.

The language implementation body, *Foras na Gaeilge*, on the one hand, and the annual competition organised by the voluntary *Glór na nGael* on the other, have various schemes to persuade local businesses especially to use Irish more visibly. A number of large stores do so now in Dublin and Cork, particularly book shops. Others will have the names in Irish of basic commodities on the checkout bill or '*Go raibh maith agat*' ('Thank you') in Irish. In places outside the capital,

Dublin, this happens largely as a result of the encouragement of voluntary organisations, particularly *Gael-Taca* (1986), founded specifically for the purpose of ‘marketing’ the benefits of bilingualism with business. These important symbolic uses only rarely extend to service, however. Branches in Ireland of British stores may also have bilingual signage. The new (2007) Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Powerscourt, County Wicklow, has an elegant sign for those who wish to sleep undisturbed: the Irish word *Cíúnas* (Quiet). As do other businesses, it offers thanks in Irish on bills to customers. *An Foras* distributed a bilingual business diary for 2006. It also assisted a NI consultancy firm to make its site bilingual as a result of the consultancy work requested by Irish language enterprises.

The advantages of bilingualism for marketing purposes, particularly for small to medium sized enterprises in a competitive market, has been acknowledged by *Foras na Gaeilge* through a new matching funding scheme for signage or print materials up to €2,000. However, reservations have been made on the distinction between encouragement of voluntary individual activity and funding for the same activity. The Marketing Institute of Ireland and *Fáilte* Ireland agree that Irish is a useful marketing tool to differentiate in a crowded market. In tourism, the *Gaeltacht* Authority intends to make cultural and linguistic tourism a priority.

Irish language companies have been recognised through awards. The Businesswoman of the Year award twice went to companies operating from *An Spidéal* (Spiddal). The award of Entrepreneur of the Year was won by a *Gaeltacht* businessman, owner of the Irish language weekend newspaper and the airline he established. A Cork *Gaeltacht* company has received awards locally and nationally. All these awards were by means of open competition and peer assessment.

Specifically for businesses through Irish, *Údarás na Gaeltachta*, runs an annual *Gradaim Ghnó na Gaeltachta* award scheme for entrepreneurs (*Gaeltacht* Business Awards); *Gaillimh le Gaeilge* has its annual award scheme for the city enterprises; the Belfast Media Group originated the *Barr-Chaoga* awards (Top Fifty) on an all-island basis. Also on an all-island basis, the Irish Marketing Institute has an award for *Gnó as Gaeilge* (business through Irish) supported by *Foras na Gaeilge*, as a section in its annual awards.

INTEGRATED SCHEMES

Gaillimh le Gaeilge (Galway with Irish), is probably the most integrated language business venture involving all sectors, private and public, towards implementing a comprehensive language policy. It received one of the EU Language Label awards in 2004. Begun in 1987, with the main aim of making Galway the foremost bilingual city in Ireland, under the auspices of *Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge* (Congress of Irish voluntary organisations), through which it was chaired, the venture works in association with Galway Chamber of Industry and Commerce and Galway City Council. It is funded from both these sources as well as the Department with responsibility for the language. Research was conducted in the past (1987) to show the commercial and monetary value to the city of a bilingual policy. It funds an annual prize in recognition of local businesses which have incorporated the use of Irish into their daily operations: stationery, signage, promotion and marketing, advertising, oral communication, staff training. Eighty members of the local business community were present for the presentation of the 2006 awards. The shortlist included a hotel, a football club, several commercial and development firms, and the overall winner, the voluntary agency Samaritans. It issues a directory of local services through Irish. Carlow is now planning similar bilingual status.

Apart from Galway City, the largest *Gaeltacht* town is probably *An Daingean* (Dingle) in County Kerry. The local Chamber of Commerce has its own language policy not unrelated to local demands.

Údarás na Gaeltachta established a tourist development company, *Gaelsaoire* (Irish holiday), in 1997 to encourage cultural tourism in the *Gaeltacht*. One of the target groups is the parents of students at the summer colleges. *Gaeltacht* tourism is worth up to €170m per year and sustains many jobs. In 2006, *An tÚdarás* considered tourism one of its major points of economic and cultural policy and launched *Straitéis Turasóireachta 2007–2010* with funding up to €1.5 million.

PROFESSIONAL AND COMPANY ORGANISATIONS

There is a small Dublin based voluntary organisation for business people, *Foras Gnó na hÉireann* (Irish Business Body), which acts as a forum for those in business, administration, management, industry and commerce.

The international firm, Accenture, has established a *Cumann Gaelach* with over 250 staff members, under its Corporate Citizenship (Inclusion and Diversity) programme.

SUMMARY ON LANGUAGE AND ECONOMIC LIFE

Overall, the arguments on creativity and cultural confidence having beneficial effects on developmental enterprise, community development, and social entrepreneurship have not thus far produced very visible effects on the economy of the Celtic Tiger in the case of the Irish language but the field is developing. The most significant has probably been the introduction of a degree course through Irish on Finance, Enterprise and Computing at Dublin City University. The course is provided by *Fiontar* (Enterprise), attached to the Business School, and has been successful both in work placements with business and in employment rates for graduates. A broadly similar course is now available in Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology.

New forms of training and small enterprises have grown around the newly established Irish language media. Computer, internet and web design services, as well as design of publications particularly, are other areas where some small bilingual companies operate. It is expected that the Official Languages Act will over time encourage even more, particularly in the area of translation, interpretation, public relations, design and advertising, as well as in a range of professional services, health and law among them.

The telecommunications company, Esat BT, recently announced that it is in consultations towards the provision of a bilingual service to customers, a move that will mean it may be the first *private* company to comply with the Official Languages Act. *Rua Telecom* is a private sector venture that offered a bilingual service at cheaper rates on the telephone service. In the telecommunications sector, while Vodafone has so far resisted the requests to provide predictive text in Irish, the Meteor company has provided an Irish language version among other language versions of its website.

These are early examples of what has been described as the ‘language dividend’. That is the potential Irish speakers possess, if they banded together as do other interest groups, to demand specific services from suppliers. [It is of some significance that a relative newcomer to the mobile phone market in Ireland has produced a predictive texting dictionary in Irish, targeted especially at the young market. This had been sought for some years by Irish speakers in the youth category, without success until the competitiveness of the market increased.](#) It is being argued, however, that the interests of language movements may be more cultural than commercial, to their economic detriment. A very new venture (March 2007) for Irish-speaking consumers is intended to give information on all services available through Irish, whether nationally or internationally, particularly in the private sector. Service providers may advertise on the proposed website and customers may make their needs known. *Cumann na dTomhaltóirí Gaelige* (Organisation of Irish language Consumers) and *Cumann Tráchtála* (Commerce Organisation) are collaborating in this new initiative to register a sufficient number of speakers to demonstrate to business that a niche market exists for goods and services through Irish.

There are strong economic benefits to the local community from many of the Irish language activities and initiatives, as was researched recently in the case of the *Oireachtas*. It was calculated that the *Oireachtas na Samhna* (Halloween) 2004 festival of Irish culture was worth up to €4 million to the local economy of Letterkenny. A conference was held on the subject during the *Oireachtas*, entitled (in translation) ‘Irish as Resource – Possibilities and Challenges’. The annual *Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann* (Music Festival of Ireland), organised by *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí* in different towns, can attract up to 10,000 musicians and countless participants. It is calculated to be worth some €20m to the local economy. Similarly, the annual Willie Clancy School does the same for West Clare. The Galway integrated bilingual scheme was estimated in 2000 to be worth €63m to the city. While these are more cultural than linguistic, the language is never far away during the activities.

An interesting example of State and probable subsequent private action in the area of packaging occurred as the result of a High Court action taken by a citizen to ensure that the mandatory health information on cigarette packaging should be bilingual, in Irish and in English. The State accepted that the law must be amended by October 2008.

So far, these tend to be the most visible manifestation of ‘the language dividend’ in the economic progress of language and culture.