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Term planning in a lesser-used EU language

The Irish case

Úna Bhreathnach

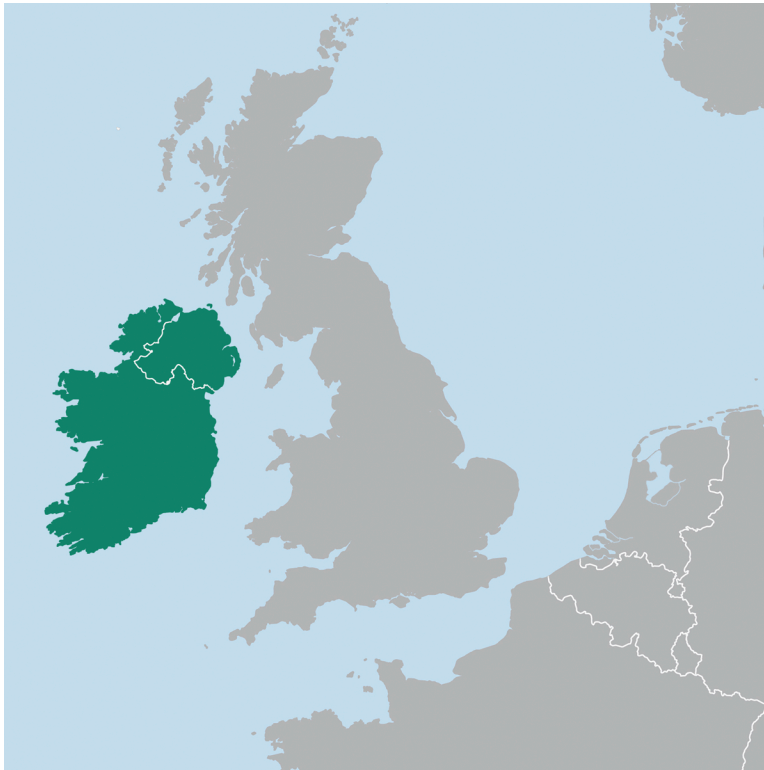
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This chapter considers the current state of terminology planning for Irish. In it the unusual and paradoxical sociolinguistic situation of Irish — a symbolically important and often learned language in a bilingual country, where community language transmission is in decline — is summarised, and the consequent implications for corpus development and terminology domains are examined. The thorny questions of term acceptance, term implantation, and *in vivo* term creation are discussed and the main structures for terminology planning — Foras na Gaeilge, An Coiste Téarmaíochta, Gaois, and Rannóg an Aistriúcháin — presented. A section is devoted to the transformative effect of official language status in the EU since 2007, and the terminology structures created to support that status.

Keywords: Irish language, terminology planning, lesser-used languages, EU official language status, language planning, code-switching

1. Introduction

Because Irish is — like all languages — unusual, a brief history is given in Section 2, and the domains of current language use are described. The language resources are set out and the implications of the diglossic, unequal relationship with English are summarised. In Section 3, the work of the Irish Terminology Committee is described, followed, in Section 4, by the work of its university partner, the Gaois research group. Section 5 deals with legal terminology. In Section 6, we look at the transformative effect of EU official-language status for Irish, and the terminology work done since 2007 to support that status, the GA-IATE project in particular.



2. The linguistic environment

2.1 The decline and revival of the Irish language

Irish declined from common use throughout the long colonial period and particularly during the 19th Century. Revival efforts since the 1890s and the foundation of the State in 1922 have had a dual focus: the maintenance of the language heartlands, and the encouragement and use of Irish in the whole country in specific domains. Irish has, since the foundation of the State, had an important role in Irish society as a symbolic language, a status enshrined in the Constitution and reflected in its central place in education, the media, the law and administration. Thousands of daily speakers use Irish in these high-level domains, although it has never been restored to any extent for such important activities as industry, trade and medicine.

Although Irish is in a strong position from a status and an official point of view, and is generally viewed very positively by Irish people (Darmody and Daly 2015), the natural everyday use of the language is limited and so is its intergenerational transmission (for more on this paradoxical situation, see Ó Catháin 2016). It is the traditional language community only in the rural *Gaeltacht* (Irish-speaking) areas, mainly along the

western seaboard. The number of native speakers declined all through the twentieth century, and the *Gaeltacht*, despite developments in industry, modern media and tourism, has remained a predominantly rural economy, with industrial development achieved at a high linguistic price. The symbolic status of the language does not protect its role as a community and family language, and the State has been accused of abandoning the *Gaeltacht* and the century-long revival project:

To update Fishman's (1985, 74) assertion that the aspirational and status aspects of language policy in Ireland were in danger of respecting Irish to death, it now seems increasingly clear that Irish society, and its independent state, are now simply symbolizing Irish to death. Symbolism is the line of least resistance, an agenda that has the appearance of support by not upsetting any section of the out-group but essentially anaemic to the concerns of the in-group. It gives the appearance of action while remaining pointless vis-à-vis real concerns.
(Ó Giollagáin 2014, 116)

Irish is highly unusual among lesser-used languages in that many of its users are not native speakers. Since the foundation of the State in 1922, generations of Irish people have learned Irish in school. According to the 2022 Census, almost 1.9 million people can (or state that they can) speak Irish, yet there are just 72,000 daily speakers in the State (Central Statistics Office 2023). Of these, only 20,000 live in the *Gaeltacht*.

2.2 Domains of language use

The Official Languages Act 2003 and Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 require the stationery, signage, and publications (including policy documents, annual reports, audited accounts and financial statements) of some 650 public bodies to be made available in Irish or in English and Irish, as well as at least 20% of their advertising. As a result, translation is now one of the major language-related industries requiring terminology; the bulk of translation work is commissioned to comply with legislative requirements.

There is a long history of legal translation, and therefore legal terminology work, in Ireland, as primary legislation has been published bilingually since the foundation of the State in 1922, as is EU legislation in recent years.

The Irish language is used in Irish-medium education, particularly primary education. Irish forms part of the core curriculum in all schools, and c.67,000 pupils attend Irish-medium schools (Gaeloideachas.ie). Teachers, however, are usually trained through English, and may have no experience of Irish-language terminology before entering the classroom.

A limited number of print and broadcast media use Irish exclusively or occasionally. The establishment of a national Irish-language radio station (*Raidió na Gaeltachta*) in 1972, and, particularly, the Irish-language television station TnaG (later TG4) in 1996 led to greatly increased demand for term resources. It opened up new domains in tech-

nology (studio work and broadcasting) and provided a live service through Irish to end users. It also led to the creation of many small media production companies whose work (and terminology needs) changed rapidly, moving, for example, from analogue to digital technology.

2.3 Language resources

Corpus planning (if not, perhaps, overall language strategy) has improved significantly in recent years with a major focus on lexicography: the New English-Irish Dictionary, the first since 1958, was published online in 2013 and in print in 2020, and will be followed by other online-only Irish-Irish and Irish-English dictionaries.

Language technologies and corpus research are current points of focus, and the Digital Plan for Irish (Government of Ireland 2022) recognises the threat of digital extinction if language technologies for spoken and written Irish are not developed. A major National Corpus for Irish (with 100 million words) was published in 2024 (Bhreathnach et al 2024).

2.4 The relationship with English and implications for *in vivo* term creation

Formal written Irish has traditionally eschewed the use of loanwords and codeswitching, and *béarlachas* (use of anglicisms) is disliked (Ní Ghearáin 2011). But nearly all speakers of Irish are also native-level English speakers, and many are learners of Irish. As a result, codeswitching (and borrowing) is a common informal and spoken-language strategy, and one that attracts considerable discussion among observers of the language (Caomhánach 2022; T. Hickey 2009; Ní Ghearáin 2011; Ní Laoire 2016). The use of Irish-language terminology is not linguistically neutral but rather is linked to role negotiation, identity construction and in-group membership:

Outside the formal workplace, the unmarked choice for technical, scientific or specialist terms is predominantly the [code-switched] item but the interactional force of use/non-use of [code-switching] is always context-bound. In some social networks, particularly within the education sector where L1 and L2 speakers often interact, fine-grained subtle judgements are needed as to use and non-use of [code-switching] for terminology to avoid communicating condescension or risking exaggeratedly stereotyped behaviour.

(Ní Laoire 2016, 88)

This is related to a wider discussion (summarised in Ó Murchadha 2020) about the weakening of language competence among younger and non-traditional speakers. It seems, anecdotally, that *Gaeltacht* native speakers of Irish – nearly all of whom can speak English – are reluctant to use modern terms, often preferring an English word. The following quote illustrates that:

A friend of mine [from an Spidéal, in the *Gaeltacht*] was building a house there recently and he said it was very funny and very interesting too. That he'd speak Irish to everyone. Every craftsman that came in, the builders, the window specialists and so on. Everything in Irish the whole time. But when there was something, a message to be left on the phone or something to do with money, anything written, that was all in English. It didn't matter how often he said it to them in Irish, it'd always come back in English. Texts about the windows that were to be installed, or particular slates for the floor and someone was coming for that. He had fine Irish and so did everyone working there but nothing to do with business could be discussed except in English.

(quoted in Bhreathnach 2011, IV, 108)

The expectation of code-switching for terminology in spoken and informal use has meant that *in vivo* term creation has not really developed in traditional Irish. This is not a new phenomenon. Ó Dónaill, writing in 1951, argued that the ability of *Gaeltacht* people to create their own terms had declined dramatically in the space of a few generations (Ó Domhnaill 1951, 17). This statement seems to be corroborated by Ó Siadhail's (1978) finding that, in Inis Meáin, far more traditional or historical terms were to be found in the construction domain than in that of clothing, which is much more changeable.

On the other hand, many Irish speakers are very interested in the language and in its development; indeed, the obsession with talking about the language is reflected in the National Corpus for Irish, where the third most frequent noun (after 'year' and 'person') is *Gaeilge*: 'Irish language'. Just as, during the early language-revival period, readers sent lists of terms to newspapers and journals (Mag Eacháin 2014), there are now dictionaries published by interested individuals and groups, such as a recent collection of LGBTQ+ terminology (Ní Choisdealbha 2018 and Mac Eoghain, 2022, discussed in Murphy and Mac Murchaidh 2023). The terms in those dictionaries are generally, though not always, the product of individual invention rather than collections of terms gathered in the community.

2.5 Implications for terminology demand and use

As a result of all the above – the decline in language transmission, the large number of language learners, the use of the language in high-level educational, administrative, and legal domains, the desire for language purism in some registers – there is considerable need for terminology in Irish. Much of the terminology required is not highly specialised, however, and most terminology users are working in translation, in the media, and in education. They are not in the forefront of research or innovation.

3. Foras na Gaeilge and An Coiste Téarmaíochta

Foras na Gaeilge was established as a North-South Implementation Body under the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999. It therefore works throughout the whole island of Ireland (Northern Ireland and the Republic). It is co-funded by the Oireachtas (Irish parliament) and the Northern Ireland Assembly. This arrangement has sometimes suffered as a result of political instability and lack of decision-making in Northern Ireland. Responsibility for developing Irish-language terminology and dictionaries (though not, oddly, for grammar and orthography) was transferred to this newly-constituted language body, which is also responsible for language promotion and support through its various funding schemes.

Foras na Gaeilge appoints the national committee for term planning, *An Coiste Téarmaíochta*, the Terminology Committee. In existence informally since 1927, the Terminology Committee was formally established within the Department of Education in 1968, and was transferred to Foras na Gaeilge in 1999 (Ní Ghallchobhair 2014). It consists of 24 voluntary and *ex-officio* members, meeting once a month in Dublin (with an option to join by video link), with a permanent secretary and one assistant who coordinates its work. New members are proposed by the Chair of the committee and appointed by the board of Foras na Gaeilge. Since their role is a voluntary role, many of the non *ex officio* are retired or work in the public sector.

Many members have a linguistic or academic background, although the media and the educational, literary and translation sectors are also represented. Finding domain experts is difficult in a minority language like Irish. In some cases (such as sports, journalism and education) it is possible; in others, such as medicine and other technical areas where no training is given through Irish, it is challenging. Many people working with Irish are not domain professionals but *language* professionals.

Since 2004, Foras na Gaeilge has supported research contracts with Gaois, the Irish-medium unit within Dublin City University, to carry out terminology work on its behalf. This work has included the creation, development and management of the National Terminology Database for Irish, www.tearma.ie (see Image 1).

The Terminology Committee's most time-consuming commitment, by far, is in providing terminology advice to the public. It provides an information service to the public free of charge by email, by phone and through an enquiry form on the tearma.ie website. Approximately 200–250 requests are received from up to 100 individuals every month. In the case of each *ad hoc* query, an interim response is given within three days by the Committee secretary, and then the query is added to the agenda of the next monthly meeting.

Prior to each monthly meeting, term candidates are sent to the Committee members via an Extranet (see Image 2). Only term candidates queried by members of the Committee are discussed at meetings. They do not represent a structured section of a partic-

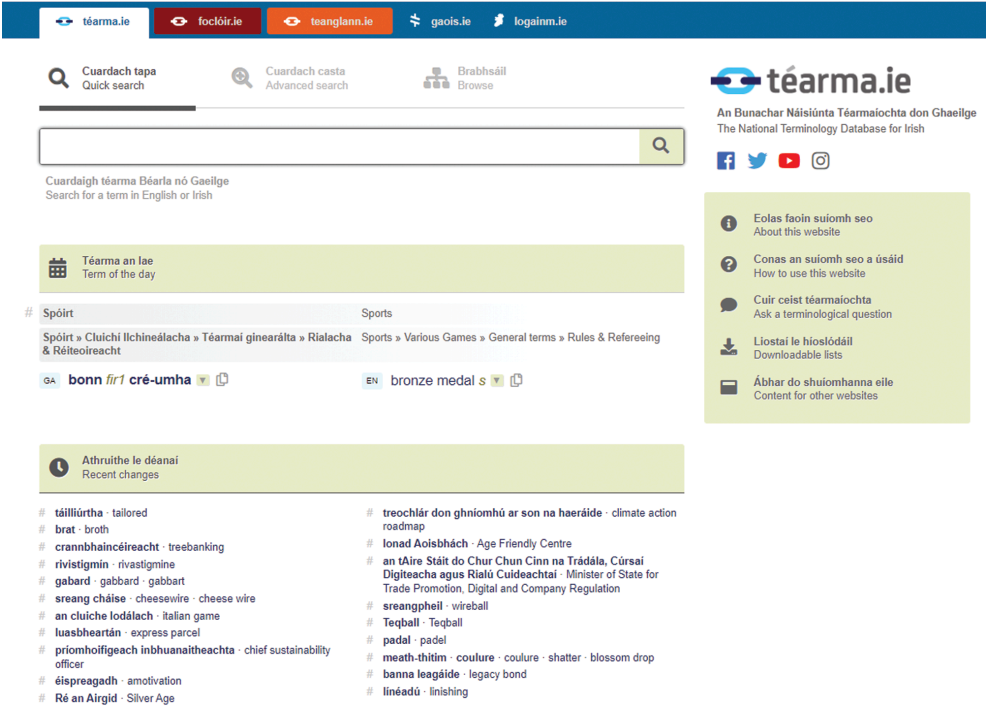


Image 1. Homepage of téarma.ie, the National Terminology Database for Irish

ular domain, and the concepts and definitions may not have been researched in depth for want of time. Proposed terms are not made available for public review, and comment is not actively sought by the Terminology Committee on terms that are under consideration. Members of the public requesting terms are asked to make a recommendation.

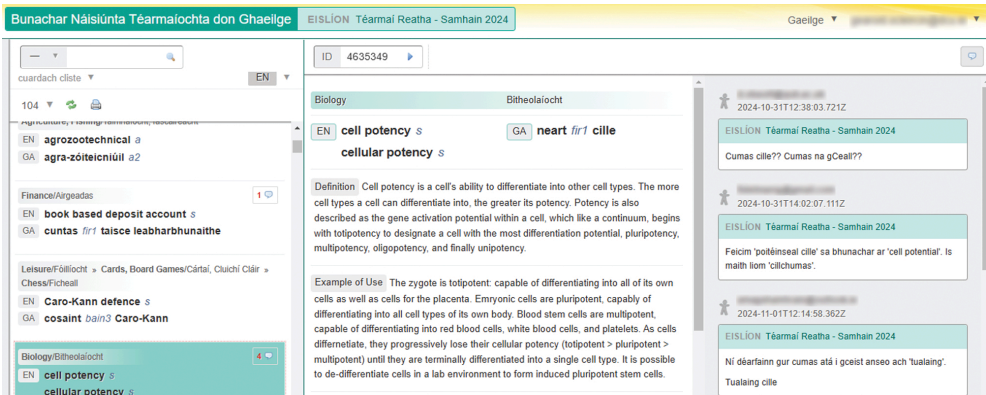


Image 2. Sample of an Extranet entry and discussion

Below (Image 3) is a sample of terminology queries (letters a-c) submitted to the May 2024 meeting, which come from the domains of anthropology, biochemistry, biology, botany, business, chemistry, construction, ecology, economics, education, government, law, librarianship, literature, mathematics, medicine, music, oceanography, pharmacology, photography, politics, social sciences, sports, transport, and zoology.

Another role of the Committee is to act as a clearinghouse for terminology projects and lists completed by other organisations — Gaois's IATE terminology and other domain-specific work, for instance. Collections have been created by the police force and the army, and by researchers on their own subjects. The Committee has an advisory role on terminology and language policy. It supports external projects, and has worked with the dictionary department to ensure consistency of language resources.

Because virtually all term requests and source lists of terms come from English, and because nearly all Irish speakers are also fluent English speakers, a translation approach is usually taken.

Concept research for Irish is not done, except in the case of domains in which indigenous terms exist, such as GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) sports, or sailing, which was researched by a Terminology Committee subcommittee. In the case of subject-field collections, a more onomasiological approach is taken. Term extraction is not considered very relevant to Irish terminology, because there is no big technical corpus except for textbooks and translations, which generally only contain Terminology Committee terms. The Committee secretary and members rely on their own knowledge of the language, aided by the Committee *Handbook*, which sets out rules for transliteration.

In accordance with term formation principles, terms are based on international usage, on the contemporary language, and on historical words or particles. Verbs and adjectives may be researched and included, as well as other material which is not strictly terminological, such as road signs and the names of public bodies. The Terminology Committee receives (and usually responds to) requests for general-language words and phrases, such as for house names, gravestones and even tattoos, 'Celtic'-themed tattoos being a popular category. Criticisms are sometimes voiced, however, that Irish language terminology is over-dependant on the English language and that other languages are not considered. Because of the number of term requests, not all are researched very thoroughly or discussed in great detail. Term quality is not independently assessed.

The primary source of terminology for Irish is tearma.ie. All terms authorised by the Terminology Committee are published there and available for download in TBX and TXT format. As at March 2025 there are 189,258 concepts and 194,750 Irish-language terms in the database (stats.gaois.ie). There is no legal obligation on the Irish administration or others to use terms provided by the Terminology Committee, but in practice, tearma.ie is recognised as the authority. For some years, until the arrival of the English-Irish dictionary in 2013, tearma.ie was the only authoritative modern language resource available online. During that time, it was treated as a dictionary — a rather unsatisfactory

<i>actinomycosiss</i>	<i>carbon compliance market</i>
<i>active consents</i>	<i>castration-resistant prostate cancer</i>
<i>active travels</i>	<i>cetylpyridinium</i>
<i>additional educational needs</i>	<i>chamazulene</i>
<i>ahistorical</i>	<i>China fir</i>
<i>allicin</i>	<i>chloroplatinic</i>
<i>androstenone</i>	<i>citronellal</i>
<i>anise hyssop</i>	<i>clear (or clean) desk policy</i>
<i>arbutin</i>	<i>coastal rowing</i>
<i>Assistant Keeper</i>	<i>cobalt(II) acetate tetrahydrate</i>
<i>Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation</i>	<i>cobalt(II) carbonate</i>
<i>audit (a class or lecture)</i>	<i>cobalt(II) carbonate hydroxide (2:3)</i>
<i>autism friendly</i>	<i>monohydrate</i>
<i>ball head</i>	<i>cobalt(II) sulphate heptahydrate</i>
<i>bell tree</i>	<i>complementary solution</i>
<i>biguanide</i>	<i>concentration</i>
<i>bioeconomy</i>	<i>congestion charge</i>
<i>bioresource</i>	<i>congestion pricing</i>
<i>biostabilisation</i>	<i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with</i>
<i>black carrion beetle</i>	<i>Disabilities Independent Monitoring</i>
<i>black-headed velvet ant</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>
<i>bolete</i>	<i>counter-shading</i>
<i>borderisation</i>	<i>craneable</i>
<i>Boycott, Divestments and Sanctions</i>	<i>Creative Commons Attribution Licence</i>
<i>bristly-legged spider hunting wasp</i>	<i>crizanlizumab</i>
<i>caprification</i>	<i>cultureme</i>
<i>caprifig</i>	<i>cyphenothrin</i>

Image 3. Sample of terminology queries (letters a–c) submitted to the May 2024 meeting of the Terminology Committee

general-language dictionary — and the usage statistics, of up to 1 million searches per month, reflected that. Although the number of searches has reduced somewhat from that peak (to 423,000 per month on average, in 2024; search figures are published at stats.gaois.ie), it is still central to the language user's experience.

4. The role of Gaois as a university terminology contractor

Gaois is a research group in Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge (the School of Irish) in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, DCU (Dublin City University), comprising 15–20 lecturers, researchers, interns, and postgraduate students. Gaois means ‘wisdom’ and the research group’s aim is to sustain and transform Irish language and culture through the development of innovative and trusted resources. Research staff have backgrounds in linguistics and computational linguistics: thus, development work can be carried out in-house. The group is managed from day to day by a group of three (editorial manager, quality manager and technology manager), supported by an administrator. As well as terminology, Gaois works, with government funding, in developing placenames, folklore, biography and corpus resources for Irish. A common thread running through all the projects is the application of modern technology to expand the understanding of the Irish language and its wider influence, past, present and future.

4.1 Development of the National Terminology Database for Irish

The development of the National Terminology Database for Irish by what is now known as the Gaois research group was funded from 2004–2007 under the Communications and Transport Technology fund (Priority 1, Measure 4) of the INTERREG IIIA Ireland/Wales programme. It was co-funded by Foras na Gaeilge and by Fiontar (through the Strategic Initiative Fund of the Higher Education Authority). Through this project a database was created, all extant term lists were added to the database, ambiguities and discrepancies were resolved, metadata was created, and the result was made available to the public.

Since 2007, the project has been financed by Foras na Gaeilge in a series of contracts awarded to Gaois. The editorial resources have varied over the period, from around 7 to 0.5 full-time equivalent staff. Tasks covered by development contracts include routine editorial work, technical development, and the development of new collections. Metadata development, on domain structure for example (de Barra-Cusack 2014) is also carried out. Gaois reports on a monthly basis to the secretary of the Terminology Committee, and a Gaois terminologist is a member of that committee.

From its initial development in 2004, the aim of the National Terminology Database team was to create a sophisticated database for storing and digitising existing term lists, a robust editorial system for terminologists, and a user-friendly interface for both general and expert users. The latest version, in use since 2019, is called Terminologue (Méchura et al. 2022). As well as being used for the National Terminology Database itself, Terminologue was made available under an open-source MIT licence and as a hosted resource (at [Terminologue.org](https://terminologue.org)). It has been translated by users into 20 languages, and is widely used for terminology research and teaching.

4.2 Terminology creation and management work

Gaois staff have worked over the years on various domains for which terminology was not available. In all cases this involved cooperation with the Terminology Committee and with subject experts. Areas of research have included computing, sport, art, archiving, COVID-19, plant and animal names, country names, and business. As well as this, routine editorial housekeeping is carried out, disambiguating concepts, resolving errors, and responding to requests from the public.

4.3 The network of experts

Gaois has since 2021 managed the Network of National Experts, funded by the Irish Government. This is a facility to enable EU translators, and others, to seek advice where a term they require is either not available in the IATE database or where the IATE entry is unclear or inadequate. There are currently 31 experts who have agreed to answer queries from translators and also from the Terminology Committee.

4.4 Terminology research

Because Gaois is a University research group, a particular interest is taken in innovation and in the dissemination of research outputs. Gaois is an active member of EAFT, and national and international terminology events are regularly organised (for instance, the 2010 Terminology and Knowledge Engineering conference (Bhreathnach and De Barra-Cusack 2010), the 2021 EAFT Summit on ‘Terminology in Challenging Circumstances’, and a 2022 symposium on terminology and the Irish language), and terminology is taught at undergraduate and PhD level (Bhreathnach 2011; de Barra-Cusack 2014; de Poire 2025). In an effort to understand the impact of Irish terminology work and its implantation, terminometry work has been undertaken since 2022. The results indicate that, in written discourse, Terminology Committee terms are almost always used (Ó Cleircín and Murphy 2024); future research on a corpus of spoken Irish may give a more nuanced perspective.

Gaois project alumni are now working as translators or in other language-focused positions at both a national and an EU level, as well as in academic and government roles. A further important output is the practical experience in terminology work gained by graduate interns working on Gaois terminology projects.

5. Legal terminology for Irish: Roles and responsibilities

There are other organisations which also have a role in terminology. Chief among these is *Rannóg an Aistriúcháin* (the Translation Section) of the Oireachtas (Irish parliament), responsible for translation of primary legislation into Irish (or, rarely, into English). It translates the order paper of the Oireachtas (the order of business for the day), standing orders for business, the text of proposed amendments to the Constitution, and other documents such as annual reports. It also provides an interpreting service in the Dáil, the Seanad (Senate) and the Joint Committee for Irish, though this service is rarely needed.

Rannóg an Aistriúcháin is under obligation to respect precedent in translating legal text. It is specifically responsible for official legal terms in Irish (McGrory, 2018). Thus the terms which are already in use represent the standard even if they are archaic or no longer in common usage – or contradict the advice of the Terminology Committee. There is also an intermittently active Irish Legal Terms Advisory Committee (established by act of the Oireachtas in 1945). Both *Rannóg an Aistriúcháin* and the Irish Legal Terms Advisory Committee are restricted to specific areas of legal terminology work.

6. EU terminology and its transformative role for Irish

When Ireland joined the European Communities in 1973, English was adopted as its official language for EU purposes. The Irish government, citing practical difficulties that it claimed would arise in relation to translation and terminology if Irish had official status, sought a special ‘treaty’ status for Irish. This meant that only the Treaties would be translated into Irish (Ó Laighin 2008, 258) but that it would not be used as a working language in the EU. In 2004, during the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, a comprehensive public lobbying campaign was started in Ireland to make Irish an official language of the EU, and in the summer of the same year, the Irish government announced its intention to pursue official EU status for Irish. This was achieved in 2005, and Council Regulation 920/2005 was adopted.

Official status came into effect on 1 January 2007, and it is generally agreed that this has had considerable symbolic and practical importance. Because of the lack of qualified translators, a derogation was agreed limiting the types of documents that the institutions were obliged to provide in Irish. This derogation finally came to an end on 1 January 2022, and the same rules now apply to Irish as to all other official languages.

6.1 The GA IATE project 2008–24

The Irish government moved to address translation capacity issues in several ways: by funding university courses focused on translation, editing and interpreting, including legal translation; by introducing an accreditation system for translators; by establishing an internship programme in DCU; and with a legal terms extraction programme.

The GA IATE (Interactive Terminology for Europe) project (described in detail in Bhreathnach, Cloke, and Nic Pháidín 2013) was established in 2008 as a terminology project to meet EU translation needs and ensure that there was no undue delay in the production of Irish-language legislation (There were also the more general aims of ensuring that all languages with official status were treated equally regardless of socio-terminological or sociolinguistic differences, and ensuring that the IATE database was useful and relevant). The project, which ran until the end of 2024, was a complex, multi-agency undertaking. Project participants were based in Ireland, Brussels and Luxembourg and included Gaois, the Government department with responsibility for the Irish language, and the European Institutions, particularly the Commission, Council and Parliament. Also included were the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (CdT), the Court of Justice and the Committee of the Regions.

Terminology projects normally circulated to the various EU-language departments were in the case of Irish outsourced to Gaois. The entries were examined by Gaois editors in collaboration with external experts, and Irish-language terms were proposed. New (non-derivative) terms requiring validation were routed through the national Terminology Committee. All the terms proposed were shared with EU translators for their comment. Lists of entries containing Irish-language terms were then returned by Gaois every month to the Directorate-General for Translation for input to the IATE database. Terms validated by the Terminology Committee are published on tearma.ie, and all the Irish terms in IATE are also available in the Gaois terminology database.

The main measurable result of the project was the number of IATE entries processed, where the Irish entry was created or improved. IATE contained just 14,701 Irish terms in 2007, the fourth lowest number for the twelve ‘new languages’. Over 4,000 IATE entries per year were processed for Irish, and c.122,000 entries were processed in total. The lists sent to Gaois covered a wide range of domains. Some of these – such as *Waste Management*, *Financial Terminology*, *Disinformation*, *Urban Mobility*, *Ukraine 2022* and *Data Protection* – covered areas for which few, if any, terms had previously been developed for Irish. There are now (2024) more terms available in IATE in Irish than in any of the twelve other ‘new languages’, with the exception of Polish (‘IATE – Central Statistics’, n.d.).

Another result of the GA IATE project is that the language itself has developed in small ways. For instance, in 2021 Gaois was asked to tackle a long list of complex chemical terms, a domain not elaborated systematically for Irish before then. This neces-

sitated consultation with the Terminology Committee, whose rules for transliteration were insufficiently detailed to handle some of the newer categories of chemicals, and the development of new rules.

Not all terms processed as part of the GA IATE project are or will ever be widely used. The terms are available, however, and the language is now well able to deal with these domains. Because EU legislation is subsequently transposed into national legislation and regulations, the terminology work completed as part of the project had subsequent benefits at the state level. The Network of Experts, mentioned above, is another byproduct of the project, as is a major parallel corpus of English and Irish legal texts, published at gaois.ie and heavily used by translators.

EU status (as well as the Official Languages Act) was the major catalyst for Irish government investment in Irish-language translation and terminology. There is no question but that, if it were not for the EU language status of Irish and the commitment of the Irish government to supporting that status, Irish equivalents for many of the concepts in the IATE database would not exist. This is a major enlargement of the lexicon, and a relief to the Irish speaker who is tired of the lazy claim that ‘you couldn’t discuss that in Irish’. Of course official status has had many other advantages, such as the creation of well-paid jobs for skilled Irish speakers, and the impact of that for the perceived value of the language.






7. Concluding remarks: Outlook for terminology planning for Irish

In conclusion, it seems fair to say that terminology planning for Irish has improved significantly in recent years. The old image of Irish as a language of the rural poor in which nothing ‘important’ or modern could be discussed has faded. Major investment by the Irish Government has led to an increased supply of terminology, a well-designed and heavily-used terminology database, and solid term-creation processes. This is coupled with investment in lexicography and both are developed in tandem. Terms are disseminated among many user groups without difficulty or objection and are generally accepted and used, at least in formal and written registers.

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