

Undergraduate Thesis Assessment Rubric

Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia

Thesis Author: Vratislav Karpíšek

Title: The relations of Irish and English in Ireland in the period of 1890 - 1930

Length: 50

Text Length: 36

<i>Assessment Criteria</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. Introduction is well written, brief, interesting, and compelling. It motivates the work and provides a clear statement of the examined issue. It presents and overview of the thesis.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
2. The thesis shows the author's appropriate knowledge of the subject matter through the background/review of literature. The author presents information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources are included (if appropriate).	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
3. The author carefully analyzed the information collected and drew appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence. Ideas are richly supported with accurate details that develop the main point. The author's voice is evident.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
4. The thesis displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
5. Conclusion effectively restates the argument. It summarizes the main findings and follows logically from the analysis presented.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
6. The text is organized in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is easy to follow. Transitions, summaries and conclusions exist as appropriate. The	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	

author uses standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation.		
7. The language use is precise. The student makes proficient use of language in a way that is appropriate for the discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
8. The thesis meets the general requirements (formatting, chapters, length, division into sections, etc.). References are cited properly within the text and a complete reference list is provided.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	

Final Comments & Questions

The thesis traces the decline of the Irish language since Ireland became dominated by England in the 12th century, with a special focus on the period of the language revival and the first decade of the Irish Free State (1890-1930). Most of the relevant factors (notably government legislation and the Great Irish Famine) are listed and discussed, one issue that merits highlighting is the fact that in contrast to countries of Central Europe, language was not generally regarded as an element of national identity in Ireland until late 19th century (see, for example, Daniel O’Connell’s support of the use of English). This contributed to the fact that the language revival came too late to reverse the language shift.

The focus on education was well chosen by the candidate and accordingly, the thesis contains a number of intriguing details concerning various forms of Irish tuition as well as the efficiency of the methods employed. This can be regarded as the biggest contribution that the dissertation brings to the field. In the brief section on religion the candidate rightly concludes that the Catholic Church as an institution did “little to help the position of Irish” (26) despite the fact that a number of clergymen were influential in the language movement. The thesis then continues by highlighting the *Gaeltachtaí* and Northern Ireland as geographical areas with a distinct position as regards the Irish language and its teaching in schools.

The thesis uses a wide range of sources relevant to the subject, which contributes to its remarkable factual richness and precision despite some minor lapses (e.g. *Gaeltachtaí* does not denote the inhabitants of *Gaeltacht*, but it is the plural of the word [26]; “at the end of the 19th century, just about a half of the population consisted of monolingual Irish speakers” [8], *recte* 18th century). What could be improved, however, is the analytical dimension of the dissertation. The question of ideologies informing the promotion of Irish is briefly touched upon (24-25), but it would greatly benefit the thesis if more space were devoted to it. Especially the discussion of literature has the impression of a rather haphazard sketch – the mention of *Peig* as the only example of an Irish literary text is followed by a discussion of James Stephens’s *The Crock of Gold*, which, in the absence of further explanation, appears out of place. The thesis could have benefited from the use of the monographs by Philip O’Leary, *Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival* (1994) and *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State* (2004), as well as the inclusion of key ideological statements by figures such as Douglas Hyde and Patrick Pearse. Also the comparative dimension, briefly mentioned in the introduction (Sorbian, Belarusian), could be developed further.

The standard of language is very good throughout, with occasional minor mistakes and clumsy sentences. Also formally the work is of a good standard, the only issue being the consistent confusion of elements of Irish surnames with initials (e.g. the last three words in Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost, in fact, form the surname).

In conclusion, this is an original and well-written thesis that could be improved by giving more space to the analysis of the material. I recommend the grade of **1/výborně** or **2/velmi dobře**, depending on the outcome of the defence.

Suggested questions at the defence:

1) The thesis concludes with the following statement: “notwithstanding the establishment of the Irish Free State and its broad use of Irish through the educational and administrative system, there was little hope of Irish becoming the sole language of Ireland.” This is undoubtedly true, but it was never the goal of the majority of the revivalists, who have, despite occasional radical statements, always aimed at a form of bilingualism (see, e.g., Hyde’s “The Necessity of De-Anglicizing Ireland” and the inspiration Pearse took from bilingual education in Belgium). Regarded in this light, can the effort to revive Irish be seen as entirely unsuccessful?

2) What were, in the candidate’s view, the biggest merits and shortcoming of the Irish Free State’s policy towards the Irish language?

3) What is the candidate’s view of the ideologies that lead to the efforts to revive the language in the period in question?

Supervisor/Reviewer: Radvan Markus, Ph.D.

Date: 18.5. 2021

Signature: