

INTRODUCTION

This text has been designed to acquaint the student with the elements of the Irish language. The principal features of the grammar and syntax are explained in the lessons and practice in the application of the rules is provided by the translation exercises--Irish to English. Users of the text suggested that this revision should contain translation exercises from English to Irish and some pieces of conversation so that in addition to understanding the language some facility in writing and speaking it would be attained.

Irish is a Celtic language and has been spoken in Ireland since the arrival of the Celtic people in Pre-Christian times. It is still spoken in what is known as the Gaeltacht: small areas in Waterford, Cork and Kerry in the south, and wider areas in Connemara (West Galway), Mayo and Donegal. As these places are separated by wide stretches of English-speaking areas there are many variations in the dialects spoken. Although there has been one official standard for Irish spelling and grammar since the 1950's there is just no official standard pronunciation. Detailed information on Irish phonetics may be had in the publications of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies and Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann.

Extensive modern dictionaries are **Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla**, ed. Niall Ó Dónaill (Dublin, 1979) and **English-Irish Dictionary**, ed. Tomás de Bhaldraithe (Dublin, 1959). An abbreviated form of the Ó Dónaill text is available under the title **Gearrfhoclóir Gaeilge-Béarla**. A smaller pocket dictionary, **Foclóir Póca: English-Irish, Irish-English** (Dublin, 1986), which has pronunciation guides, is also useful.

David Greene's **The Irish Language** (Cork, 1966), a brief study of the nature and development of the language, is recommended for beginning students. For those who wish to pursue their study the following texts will prove useful: **O'Nolan's New Era Grammar of Modern Irish** (Dublin, 1934); **New Irish Grammar** by the Christian Brothers (Dublin, 1973), an abbreviated version in English of the more complete **Gráiméar Gaeilge na mBraíthre Críostaí** (Dublin, 1960); **Gramadach Gaeilge agus Litriú na Gaeilge: An Caighdeán Oifigiúil** (Dublin, 1958).

It is suggested that the tapes accompanying the text be used to acquaint the learner with the pronunciation.