Preparing a Structural Syllabus for Adult Learners of Irish

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A careful examination of Modern Irish linguistic structures suggests an inherent logical sequencing of grammatical structures which could prove very useful in designing a language course syllabus. The teacher of Modern Irish, following this somewhat flexible sequence of structures embedded in natural communicative situations, could slowly introduce the learner to the grammatical core of the language over time. A similar approach could be useful in teaching the grammatical structures of many other languages.

BACKGROUND

I have been teaching Modern Irish for almost as long as I have been learning it, that is, for close to 25 years now. From the start, I have proceeded from the notion that effective teaching of Irish can not only ease the individual learner's task of mastering a difficult language, but also help increase the size of the Irish-speaking speech community, both in Ireland and overseas, a serious consideration in the teaching of lesser-used languages. The variety of Irish that I have taught in the classroom and in my home has varied over the years. For my first seven years of teaching, I taught only Standard Irish (An Caighdeán Oifigiúil); I then changed the variety taught to Cois Fharraige Irish, following publication of Micheál Ó Siadhail's Learning Irish, with its accompanying tape cassettes, in 1980.3 More recently, from 1989 to 1991, while teaching Modern Irish for the UCLA extension program, I began incorporating elements of Aran Irish (specifically, of the variety found in eastern Inis Mór) in my teaching.

As a learner of the language, I first concentrated on written Standard Irish, while familiarizing myself thoroughly with the scholarly literature on the eastern Connemara dialect of the Cois Fharragá area, especially with the work of Tomás de Bhardraite, and with the creative work of Connemara writers, especially that of Máirtín Ó Cadhain. My exposure to the spoken language—in any variety—was very limited in those years, but beginning around 1980, I formed a close friendship with two native speakers from the western Connemara dialect area close to Carna, which has allowed frequent conversation—usually by telephone—up to the present. Starting in the summer of 1990, when I began my dialectological field research on variation in spoken Irish in the Aran Islands for the School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, I have had a strong exposure to Aran Irish, having spent a good period of time nearly every summer there since 1990 and having amassed a considerable corpus of tape-recorded material from all three islands. I would say that the variety of Irish I now speak is that of eastern Inis Mór, especially that of the townland of Corrúch, since the bulk of my more intensive field work has been done with two informants, Tomás Ó hIarnáin and his sister Áine (Tom Ellen and Nan Ellen), who live literally at the back door of the house where my father's father was born. My speech, nonetheless, may perhaps be modified from time to time in the direction of Cois Fharragá Irish or of Standard Irish, consciously or unconsciously, in the course of conversation. The examples given in this article may in fact betray those varying influences; nevertheless, they will usually represent a variety of Irish quite close to Standard Irish, but also one which would not be uncharacteristic of natural speech on Inis Mór. In other words, where two or more variants of a linguistic form are heard on the island, the most standard of the variants will be given in the examples. In this way I hope to present samples of speech which could be regarded as being quite close to
Standard Irish, yet at the same time as having the authenticity of a living regional dialect, so that the teacher of Standard Irish may profit from the argument of this article without being distracted unnecessarily by unfamiliar or even bizarre linguistic forms.

In summary, then, it is as an advanced learner of Irish with more than two decades of experience in teaching Irish, some seven years of field research on Aran Irish, regular interaction with friends and relatives in the Aran Islands, and a familiarity with a broad range of languages, both Indo-European and non-Indo-European, that I approach the subject of this article. My training and experience in applied linguistics has been of use in preparing this article, and my background in both sociolinguistics and dialectology will perhaps add some depth to my remarks. Uppermost always in my mind as I teach Irish has been the concern for the presentation of the linguistic forms of Modern Irish to the learner in a classroom situation in such a way that their learnability is enhanced to the highest degree possible. Modern Irish normally proves to be a difficult language to learn for English speakers, and thus presents the teacher of Irish with considerable challenges.

**USEFUL TEACHING DEVICES**

We can start our search for more learnable presentations of linguistic forms by remembering some of the linguistic "gimmicks" used by some of the remarkable teachers who taught us the languages we learned in classroom situations. Such "gimmicks" were usually operations which created new surface forms out of surface forms learned previously. Having learned form A, one performed a certain operation and got form B. One could even create form C by combining forms A and B, and then, perhaps, repeat the process. For example, having learned the word "define", one could go on to create the words "define", "definitely", "definitive", "definately", "definition", and so on.

This technique of word formation is reflected in the derivational processes of many languages. Similar relations hold between forms in the inflectional processes of many languages. For example, once the learner of Spanish has mastered the often irregular first person singular indicative forms of the verb in the present tense, he/she can usually form all the present subjunctive forms of the verb with ease, e.g., (with the verb *hacer*, "to do, make") from *hago*, one gets *haga, hagas, etc.*; (with the verb *conocer*, "to be acquainted with") from *conozco*, one gets *conozca, conozcas, etc.* Similarly, the third person plural form of the verb in the simple past tense will usually serve as the base form for all the forms of the past subjunctive, e.g., (with the verb *sentir*, "to feel") from *sintieron, one gets sintieran, sintieramos, etc.* In the same way, the infinitive form will usually serve as the base form for the future and conditional verb forms, e.g., (with the verb *hablar*, "to speak") from the infinitive *hablar, one gets hablaré, hablaría, etc.*

Evidence from descriptive and historical linguistics suggests that such "gimmicks" may have a reality independent of the classroom teacher's imagination. The importance of surface patterning in verbal paradigms and nominal declensions has long been stressed by structural linguists, especially by those influenced by the Prague School or by Tagmemicists. Similarly, the importance of analogical thinking in the restructuring of linguistic systems over time has been stressed by many historical linguists. The role of markedness in morphological and syntactic surface patterning (cf. Greenberg, 1966), the restructuring of sound systems in phonological space (cf. Martinet, 1964, and later, Labov, 1972), and the reshaping of verbal paradigms (cf. Bybee, 1985) are just some of the indications that patterning and analogical thinking are very important in human language. The work of generative grammarians and developmental linguists has added yet other data suggesting that analogical thinking is vitally important in the first language acquisition process as the
child constructs an algorithm capable of generating a potentially infinite number of grammatical sentences from data which is limited and -- at times -- defective. It is in fact at the act of acquiring a first language by a new generation of children that students of language change and variation habitually look when seeking the source of language change, abrupt or gradual.

Having seen that professional linguists outside of the classroom often have an intense interest in the same patterns and processes -- synchronic or diachronic -- that may form the basis of a language teacher's "gimmicks", let us take a look at surface patterns and processes in Modern Irish, with a view to giving real help to teachers and learners of Irish in the classroom.

THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE

In looking at the surface patterning and processes of Modern Irish, my emphasis will be on the spoken language rather than on the written language. I have two reasons for emphasizing the spoken language over the written language. First, the written form of a language will often "take care of itself" if good written instructional materials are made available to a "good learner"; students with good motivation, good study habits, and an aptitude for learning languages will find little difficulty in learning even a "dead" language, such as Classical Latin or Classical Greek in a reasonable period of time, say, two or three years. The student of the spoken form of the language, however, may face considerable obstacles in developing his/her listening skills and speaking skills, even when equipped with good audio-visual materials; imagine, for instance, a student of colloquial French or Cantonese trying to learn the spoken language from books and recordings alone. The teacher in such instances would be a vital part of the language learning process, and would provide invaluable linguistic input and conversational practice which would be otherwise unavailable to the learner. Furthermore, if the proverb

\[
\text{Beatha teanga n i a labhairt ("A language will remain alive only if it is spoken") is the motto of the teacher of modern Celtic languages, we must take the teaching of the spoken forms of the languages very seriously indeed!}
\]

The second reason for emphasizing the spoken form of the language has to do with the often complete lack of isomorphy between the spoken and written forms of a language. It is not just a matter of clothing the graphemes of a language with a phonetic substance, so that the letters of an alphabet or the characters of a syllabary are replaced by sound segments or by series of sound segments, much as one would tint an old black-and-white photograph with colors, nor is it a matter of simply dealing with spelling problems or "suprasegmental phonemes". The relationship between the spoken and written forms of the word moins [mwè] ("less") in French or of maith [maθ] ("good") in Inis Mór Irish is by no means obvious, nor is the relationship between the written form beithloch ("beast") in Standard Irish and the spoken form [bejʌx] in Inis Mór Irish. The reason is that the forms of the visual universe of the language constructed by the learner from written materials and drawn upon by the learner for reading or writing may have only a loose relationship to the forms of the acoustic universe accessed by the learner for listening comprehension and speaking. Let's look at an example from French, the present tense of the verb vendre, "to sell":

1. je vend(s) nous vendons
2. tu vend(s) vous vendez
3. il vend ils vendent
   elle " " elles " 
   on " "

Ignoring the pronouns, note the characteristics which distinguish the conjugated forms from one another. We see that, with the exception of the first two persons singular (distinguished only by their pronouns), all the forms are distinguished from one another by their suffixes. The three
pronouns of the third person singular, to be sure, share a
verb form with only a zero suffix, but the three persons
of the plural are all distinguished from one another and from
the singular forms by distinctive suffixes. Having said this,
there seems to be little else to say. The array of forms
seems to have no overall design; it seems merely to be the
shapeless residue of linguistic change over time. Let’s have
a look at the acoustic counterpart to that written paradigm,
represented for convenience by the International Phonetic
Alphabet:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(sg.)</th>
<th>(pl.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ³(a) vā</td>
<td>nu vändō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ty vā</td>
<td>vu vānde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. i l vā</td>
<td>il vānd(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ol vā</td>
<td>ol vānd(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ō vā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This array could be said to be drawn from an entirely
different universe of mental representations. Ignoring the
pronouns once again, we now note that the forms are
distinguished from one another by features entirely unlike
those of the written paradigm, and furthermore, that there is
a striking shape to this paradigm. Now the singular forms
are all indistinguishable from one another, having an
identical CV form; the plural forms, however, remain distinct
from one another through their suffixes, while their common
stem form, ending in a consonant cluster, distinguishes
them sharply as a group from the forms of the singular. One
could say that the two arrays are, strictly speaking,
incomparable, and that they are drawn from two distinct
universes of mental representations: one visual and the
other acoustic. If we can accept that premise, then we might
suggest that this has deep implications both for the
acquisition of verbal paradigms and for their processing in
written versus oral communication. Looking at the forms
written in I.P.A. symbols, we can see immediately the

advantages to the learner of internalizing that array of forms
as opposed to the array from the written language; the
economy of expression, the symmetry of the forms, and the
isomorphism of the two blocks of forms with major cognitive
categories such as the singular/plural distinction, all seem to
invite acquisition by the learner.

What I am suggesting in regard to written versus
spoken French can be regarded as equally true of the
dialects of Modern Irish in both their written and spoken
forms. Cois Fharráighe and Inis Mór in Irish in particular have a
fit between orthography and sound system which is quite
similar to that of French, both in having strings of letters
used to represent single sounds or diphthongs and in the
regularity of the correspondence between the conventional
written symbols and the sounds represented. It is in fact to
the world of spoken Inis Mór Irish and to the acoustic
universe that lies behind the spoken language that I will
make reference from this point on, though much the same
arguments could be made, mutatis mutandis, for any of the
other dialects, including the Lárchanúint.

TEACHING LINGUISTIC STRUCTURES

Let us imagine a conversation in the town of Cill
Rónáin, on Inis Mór. Little Seáinín is heading out the door.
His mother calls out to him:

Mother: Cáil tú ag goil?
Seáinín: Amach 'uig an gcéibh.
Mother: Fáigh do chaipín!
Seáinín: Cén fháth?
Mother: Tá sé fuar, agus déarfainn go ndéanfadh sé
báisteach.
Seáinín: An gcaithfidh mé mo chóta?
Mother: Caith, ach ni gáith geansaí a chur ort. Nil
sé chomh fuar sin.

(in English)
Mother: "Where are you going?"
Seáinín: "Out to the quay".
Mother: "Get your cap!"
Seáinín: "Why?"
Mother: "It's cold, and I'd say it'll rain".
Seáinín: "Shall I wear my coat?"
Mother: "Yes, but there's no need for you to put on a sweater. It isn't that cold".

Examining this little corpus of material, a naturalistic dialogue between mother and child, we find that it is made up of relatively short, often elliptical phrases and simple clauses with little embedding or subordination. From the standpoint of sentence types, we find commands, questions, explanations and a request for guidance. It is the kind of conversational exchange one would expect between parent and child, and it happens to contain most of the major sentence structures of Modern Irish; surely this is no accident. Furthermore, as mentioned above, it consists of very short utterances, material of the sort which can be easily stored in short-term memory and/or processed without difficulty for either speech or listening comprehension. It is, in fact, material of the utmost value for a learner of the language, whether a child or an adult. Notice also that all these structures occur naturally and effortlessly in a pragmatic situation and that one structure seems to presuppose another. It would take no great leap of the imagination to suggest that the teacher, in loco parentis, by slowly introducing the learner to these structures, embedded in natural communicative situations, could introduce the learner to the core of the language in a very effective way.

TEACHING THROUGH COMMANDS

What kinds of linguistic structures do we have in Irish? We have commands (imperative constructions); explanations (declarative or indicative constructions); questions (interrogative structures); reported information (finite clause complements); indications (deictic constructions); and clausal expansions of noun phrases (relative clauses). Since all of these constructions can be negated, we now have double the number of constructions.

Faced with this array of structures, we can start with the commands, the morphologically least complex and the most laconic of all the constructions. Again, it is not by accident that proponents of the Total Physical Response method have placed such great emphasis on imperative constructions. Such constructions, of utmost simplicity in the beginning, may later come to incorporate relative clauses and finite clause complements, producing imperative constructions of considerable complexity.

Languages with rich morphological case-marking, such as Lithuanian and Russian, can be taught in this fashion, starting perhaps with intransitive commands, followed by transitive constructions with direct objects in the accusative case, then by ditransitive constructions with indirect objects in the dative case, followed by objects in the locative or instrumental cases. The vocative case, of course, would be used naturally when giving commands. The nominative case would normally be absent from commands, but it would find a natural home in declarative or indicative constructions employed as context-creating comments (e.g., "explanations") accompanying commands. The genitive case could be used anywhere as an expansion of a noun phrase. Singular and plural forms for the different genders would be introduced with each case. In this way an entire case system can be acquired sequentially in a natural and painless way.

Modern Irish, of course, has little left of the Proto-Indo-European morphological case-marking. Nevertheless, a natural sequence of structures suggests itself. Once again, we begin with the imperative forms of intransitive verbs, e.g.,

\[ \text{Imigh!} \sim \text{Imigh leat!} \] ("Leave!") \sim \text{"Scram!")}

followed by imperative forms of transitive verbs accompanied by an object noun phrase, either definite or
indefinite, singular or plural, e.g.,
*Déan sin!* ~ *Ná déan sin!* ("Do that!") ~ "Don't do that!")

Definite noun phrases in the singular have the advantage of beginning to reveal the gender of nouns and the phenomenon of lenition; if the teacher is not ready to deal with gender and mutations, he/she can use indefinite object noun phrases and avoid the use of object pronouns at the very beginning, e.g.,
*Cuir cathaoir ansin!* ("Put a chair there!") instead of
*Cuir an cathaoir ansin!* ("Put the chair there!")

Note that in the last two examples we have avoided the use of prepositional phrases by using locative pro-forms; since the learner must sooner or later learn such forms as *anseach, ansin, isteach, amach,* etc., this might be a good time to introduce them. Soon after, however, perhaps after introducing gender in definite object noun phrases, prepositional phrases might be introduced, along with the phenomenon of voicing/nasalization. The prepositional phrase, with a singular, definite common noun as its object (the locative construction *par excellence*) is a natural way to introduce voicing/nasalization. Prepositional phrases with plural definite common nouns as objects, however, would offer no problems with mutations for the learner, e.g.,
*Cuir na caipíní ar na cathaoireachta*! ("Put the caps on the chairs!")
(as opposed to
*Cuir an caipín ar an gcathaoir!*). ("Put the cap on the chair!")

In such contexts, simple deictic constructions without pronouns could be used as a natural way of decrypting noun phrases, e.g.,
*Seo caipín! ~ Sin cathaoir!* ("This is a cap!") ~ "That is a chair!")

Simple deictic constructions with pronouns could be used to introduce actors, e.g.,
*Sin i Máire! ~ Seo é Seán!* ("That is Máire!") ~ "This is Seán!")

The more problematic prepositional phrases with indefinite common nouns as objects, in which the noun sometimes requires lenition and sometimes does not, depending on the preceding preposition, could be left for a little later, as could proper nouns as objects of prepositions. So could ditransitive verbs like *Tabhair*! ("Give!") and *Bain*! (*Remove!*), which are often accompanied by the prepositions *do* ("to/for") and *de* ("from/of"), respectively, which require lenition, not voicing/nasalization, of a following singular, definite object noun.

Object pronouns would not be introduced in a substantial way until the gender assignment of a good deal of vocabulary was no longer a problem for the learner. The so-called "conjugated prepositions" would be introduced last of all.

The reader may have noticed the conjugated preposition in the expression given much earlier, *"Imigh leat!"*. Since the teacher is the principal provider of naturalistic spoken input, the learner could expect occasional examples of more complex grammatical items in the input, especially when embedded in formulaic expressions. The learner would already be familiar with some expressions, such as *Dia dhi! (= Dia daoibh!)*, *Sián leat!, Go raibh maith agat!*, and so on; the inflected ("conjugated") prepositions could be accepted by the learner in the forms encountered and held in reserve for later, more exhaustive decryption.

Learning languages through commands has yet another powerful advantage. Many commands are given quite idiomatically; thus commands are not necessarily predictable by simple reference to a list of imperative verb forms. To render the English phrase "Come here!", one would expect the Irish phrase *Tar anseo!* In *Inis Mór* Irish,
however, I would expect the phrases Goile! (= Gabh i leith!), Goile anseo! or Go! 'niall!, which are not at all predictable from the dictionary definition of Gabh!. If we glance at the late Professor de Bhal draith's English-Irish Dictionary and restrict ourselves to the glosses for the English expression "Come on!", we find Seo chuige! Ar aghaidh linn! Siúl uait! Fág seol!, and Téanam ort! (leaving aside the expressions Bi aige! and Féach leis!, which have a sharply different meaning). Note that not one of these expressions contains the verb Tarl. "Come!". The teacher who judiciously introduces a few such commands at a time might convey a sense of the interesting ways in which languages develop and at the same time pique the curiosity of the learner.

BEYOND COMMANDS: TEACHING CLAUSE STRUCTURES CONTAINING REGULAR VERBS

Returning to the dialogue between little Seáínín and his mother, we noted a good bit more than commands given by Seáínín's mother to Seáínín. We noted questions asked by Seáínín's mother and by Seáínín, a brief answer given by Seáínín and explanations given by Seáínín's mother to help provide a context for her commands. In the same way, the teacher, while providing input through commands, may also begin to comment on the actions being performed and on the context in which the actions are occurring; in this way, indicative clause structures, interrogative and non-interrogative, positive and negative, can be slowly introduced.

Indicative clause structures can be introduced systematically when the learner has begun to internalize lenition and voicing/nasalization. My suggestion for the first tense to be introduced would be the simple past tense, either as an elucidating comment by the teacher on an action just performed or as an answer to the question Céard a rinne sé/sí?("What did he/she do?").

The past tense of regular Irish verbs is unique in using only lenition in its mutations and in having no tense suffix. In inflecting regular verbs, the speaker simply lenites the stem of the verb, which is identical to the form already learned for the imperative singular. The past tense, used with a wide range of verbs, then, becomes a good way of mastering lenition as well as helping to internalize stem forms already learned while mastering the imperative.

The future tense, to be introduced next, is a good way of introducing actions which are about to be performed (actions already familiar to the students through acting out commands) as well as of introducing students to the complex but clear-cut division of labor between lenition and voicing/nasalization which operates in this and all the remaining tenses in positive vs. negative clauses, in main clauses vs. finite clause complements and in non-interrogative vs. interrogative clauses. The minor complication of lenition of the positive verb forms in past habitual and hypothetical conditional clauses and in all positive relative clauses can be easily handled by the student at a later stage, as can the mandatory voicing/nasalization in all non-past finite clausal complements and in negative relative clauses.

As mentioned earlier, deictic constructions and constructions employing the copula, so radically different in clause structure and in verbal morphology from other finite verb structures, can be introduced naturally from time to time by way of presenting new objects and new actors to the learner.

As for the continuous aspect of the finite verb, comments made employing the present continuous tense and describing actions being carried out could be made at the earliest stages of instruction through commands, so long as only intransitive verbs were used, or else transitive verbs which could be used without an overt object. Use of objects with transitive or ditransitive verbs would best be left until the learner were somewhat confident in the use of genitive forms of the noun, both singular and plural, unless the teacher were willing to permit forms which were purely in the nominative case, forms that are heard often enough in
the Gaeltacht today.

Speaking of the genitive forms of noun phrases, genitive singular forms of proper nouns can be introduced early by referring to items of personal property owned by different students in the class. Such forms would already be familiar to students through hearing themselves addressed by the teacher using the vocative forms of their personal names (see below); since the vocative and genitive forms of proper nouns are identical, there would be no need for the learner to master any new forms.

Noun phrases with common nouns and their modifiers in the genitive singular and genitive plural can be postponed until the learners are comfortable with gender assignment to common nouns and their modifiers in the nominative case. I myself would allow the modifications of the genitive constructions which are common in Connemara and the Aran Islands, i.e., the leaving of indefinite common nouns and their modifiers in the nominative case, and the marking of the genitive singular and genitive plural of definite common nouns and their modifiers by lenition and voicing/nasalization alone, respectively, with suppression of all gender distinctions, e.g.,

- teach an theas sin ("that man's house")
- teach na bhfhir sin ("those men's house")
- teach an bhean sin ("that woman's house")
- teach na mhan sin ("those women's house")

This allowance would greatly simplify the teaching of the genitive case for conversational purposes; on the other hand, allowing such deviant forms might be seen by many teachers of Irish as permitting too great a departure from the norms of Standard Irish.

As mentioned above, noun phrases in the vocative case could be introduced through proper nouns at the very beginning of the course, as the teacher calls on individual students by name. Here too, vocative forms marked only by lenition (in the case of masculine names) or by no lenition at all could be permitted from students, at least initially, since these practices are so widespread in the Connemara and

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Aran Gaeltacht.

TEACHING INITIAL MUTATIONS

Whatever modifications we permit in spoken forms, it is clear that mastery of the mutations is vital if a learner is to be regarded as a fluent speaker of Modern Irish, not only from the standpoint of the learner's speech production but also of his/her comprehension of a native speaker's speech. On more than one occasion, I have seen a puzzled look on the face of a relatively fluent non-native speaker when I have used an expression such as A' déann?, which contains, of course, the verb form téann ("he/she/etc. goes") as transformed by the voicing/nasalization process. He or she will usually ask at that point, "What is that verb déann?" The comprehensibility problem is compounded, of course, in the case of a large number of regular verbs whose final root consonants deviate in forming the future and conditional tenses, e.g., Ni throiditich sé, a' dtroiditich? ("He won't fight, will he?") or Ni thágfhá é, a' bhfágfhá? ("You wouldn't leave it, would you?").

The solution to the problem, of course, is for the learner to become far more familiar with the mutations, the bête noir of the learner of "school Irish", and with root-final devoicing. Continued modelling of verbal mutations and of root-final devoicing by the teacher through extensive use of confirmation questions ("yes/no questions") using a wide range of verbs, requiring simple confirmation by the student listeners, could be quite helpful. Such devices could also be useful in familiarizing the students with the more unusual phonetic realizations of verbal mutations, e.g.,

- Ar threig sé a bhean? ("Did he abandon his wife?")
- Ar qhriosaigh sé an sluá? ("Did he incite the crowd?").

As illustrated in the examples just given, the phonotactics of the simple past tense can be especially
daunting, even to the advanced learner of Irish. Some of the verb-initial consonant clusters, e.g., /hr/ or /fr/, have the phonetic character of complex phonemes whose articulation is by no means clear to the learner who has mastered the articulation of the individual segments. Once again, constant modelling of such combinations of sound segments by the teacher through confirmation questions in naturalistic dialog with the students should help resolve this problem.

TEACHING RELATIVE CLAUSES

The use of constituent questions ("information questions"), the "Who/What/Where/When/Why/How?" questions, should also help the student to form questions and to understand better the use of the direct and indirect relative clauses. The teacher models one of these constructions, containing either a direct or an indirect relative clause, every time he/she asks such questions; yet often all that is required of the student listener is a single word or a short phrase in response. This can be a real boon to a classroom of learners who are still in their "silent period" or who are very hesitant to offer a response.

TEACHING CLAUSE STRUCTURES CONTAINING IRREGULAR VERBS

I have left discussion of clause structures containing irregular verbs until now because a number of irregular verbs do not simply describe actions or events; these particular verbs have important pragmatic and syntactic functions as well. Consequently, it is good to have had an overall view of grammatical structures before discussing both the pragmatic and syntactic roles of such verbs in the language and their introduction into the sequence of structures to which the learner is to be exposed.

First of all, the substantive verb Be! ("Be!/Exist!") is of crucial importance in the structure of the language. Among other things, it helps provide frames for describing the attributes of persons or things, or for describing their condition at a given point in time (in predicate adjectival constructions, e.g., Tá an teach móir, "The house is big"; Tá Seán tinn, "Sean is sick") and for locating an object in space (in locative constructions, e.g., Tá an teach ar an gnó, "The house is on the hill"). Most importantly, perhaps, it can express the continuous nature of an ongoing activity (in progressive constructions with verbal nouns, e.g., Tá sé a réiteach an dinnéir, "He is preparing dinner," or Tá an dinnéar á réiteach, "The dinner is being prepared") or the resultant state of an action (in stative constructions with the past participle of a verb, e.g., Tá an dinnéar réitithe, "The dinner is prepared").

As mentioned earlier, progressive constructions in the present continuous tense of the verb in particular have a vital role to play in describing ongoing activities in the classroom from the very outset of instruction. Along with deictic constructions, they help establish a "here and now" situation for the learner. Present continuous constructions with the verbs Téigh! ("Go!") and Tar! ("Come!") are particularly useful. The verb Déean! ("Do!") is also useful from very early on, at least in the formulaic expression Céard a rinne sé/sí/etc.? ("What did he/she/etc. do?"). The verb Abair! ("Say!") will be useful when the learner is ready to acquire complex sentence structures with finite and non-finite clause complements. Even so, the teacher can familiarize students with such structures by using an indirect command such as Abair le Seán (a) (t)heacht! ("Tell Seán to come!", a command employing a non-finite clause complement) or a command such as Abair le Seán go bhfuil tú tinn! ("Tell Seán that you are sick!", a command using a finite clause complement). Such commands from the teacher require comprehension from the student, but they demand no productive use of the structures involved. A wide range of examples, especially verbal nouns in non-finite clause complements, could be modelled by the teacher while the students are still in their "silent period".

The irregular verbs Tabhair ("Give!") and Faigh!
("Get!") are especially useful in modelling ditransitive constructions; Tabhair! is valuable for modelling the aberrant preposition do ("to, for"), which requires lenition, not voicing/nasalization, with definite dative singular common nouns, e.g., don féar ("to/for the man"). The other irregular verbs Feic! ("See!") Clois! ("Hear!") Íth! ("Eat!") and Beir! ("Seize/Give birth!") can be introduced in whatever forms and at whatever points in the instructional sequence that the teacher feels is appropriate.

TEACHING THE MORPHOLOGY
OF THE REGULAR VERBS

As in the examples in Spanish given earlier, the teaching "gimmicks" employed by the teacher of Irish have to do mainly with the teaching of the morphology of the verb, with the way in which the learner is taught to construct an Irish verb, beginning with the simple root. As we will see, the demands made upon the learner to master the morphology of the verb increase in an interesting way in parallel to the sequence of tenses and aspects I have already laid out.

Beginning with the regular verbs, for the imperative singular, the learner need learn only the simple root for verbs of one syllable (First Conjugation verbs), e.g.,

Éist! ("Listen!"

For verbs of two syllables ending in a vowel and for two-syllable "syncopating" verbs (both normally labelled "Second Conjugation verbs"), again, nothing is required of the learner except the learning of the verbal stem, e.g.,

Imigh! ("Leave!") Seachain (é)! ("Avoid (it)!")

Plural imperative forms for First Conjugation verbs require the simple addition of the suffix -igu, e.g.,

Éistigu! ("Listen!"(pl.))

while Second Conjugation verbs take the suffix -igu, e.g.,

Imigh! ("Leave!"(pl.))

Syncopating verbs demand syncopation as well in imperative plural forms, e.g.,

Seachnaigé (é)! ("Avoid (it)!" (pl.))

In fact, if some learners generalize the -igu suffix to Second Conjugation verbs, this need not overly concern the teacher, since native speakers, at least on Inis Mór, do the same.1

As for negative commands, the learner need only prepose the invariable particle ná, with no mutations required, e.g.,

Ná h-éist! ("Don't listen!")
Ná h-imigh! ("Don't leave!" (pl.))

As the learner is introduced to the simple past tense, he/she must master the lenition of verbal forms, but little else is required. For verb stems beginning with a vowel, the learner must learn the simple past marker d-, which is the historical trigger for the lenition of consonant-initial verb stems, but which now disappears before such stems. The negative particle níor and the interrogative particle ar, both peculiar to the simple past tense of regular verbs, must also be added to the learner's repertoire of verbal particles. Examples of such simple past forms include:

D'imigh sé/sí/(etc.)... ("He/she/(etc.) left...")
Sheachain sé/sí/(etc.)... ("He/she/(etc.) avoided...")
Níor imigh sé/sí/(etc.)... ("He/she/(etc.) didn't leave...")
Ar sheachain sé/sí/(etc.)...? ("Did he/she/(etc.) avoid...?")

From the standpoint of morphological complexity, either the future tense or the present habitual tense could be introduced to the learner next. In fact, one tense could be presented to the students shortly after the other has been introduced, whichever tense is chosen first. The present
habitual tense demands one personal inflectional ending, while the future tense, like the simple past tense, demands no inflectional endings for person whatsoever. On the other hand, as mentioned a bit earlier, one subset of First Conjugation verbs, those with roots ending in a voiced plosive or voiced fricative, could cause learners a bit of trouble as they acquire the future tense. Both tenses require mastery of voicing/nasalization as well as lenition for handling interrogation and negation, respectively.

In keeping with the instructional sequence outlined earlier, let us begin with the future tense. First Conjugation verbs are characterized by a suffix /-Ha/ in Cois Fharrage and Inis Móir Irish. For all verbs with roots ending in consonants other than voiced plosives or voiced fricatives, the mark of the future tense is a simple suffixed neutral vowel, a morpheme with very low acoustic saliency, e.g.,

\[ Cúiridh sé/sí/(etc.)... \]  
\[ (\text{He/she}/(etc.) will put...\) \]
\[ ([ki:ri]) \]

For verbs whose roots end in a voiced plosive or in a voiced fricative, there is an additional mark of the future: the devoicing of these root-final consonants before the tense suffix /-Ha/, e.g.,

\[ Fáigfadh sé/sí/(etc.)... \]  
\[ (\text{He/she}/(etc.) will leave (sth.)) \]
\[ ([fa:ka]) \]

While this devoicing is good for helping the listener distinguish future forms of verbs from their simple past counterparts, it adds yet more morphophonemic complexity to the load already being handled by the learner, who is only now being introduced to voicing/nasalization, and who may not have fully mastered lenition.

Second Conjugation verbs, on the other hand, have an entirely different future suffix, the stem vowel [o:], a suffix that requires no alteration of the verbal root with most Second Conjugation verbs, e.g.,

\[ Imeoidh sé/sí/(etc.)... \]  
\[ (\text{He/she}/(etc.) will leave ...\) \]
\[ ([im'oi]) \]

The syncopated verbs of the Second Conjugation will of course add a complication, e.g.,

\[ Seachnóidh sé/sí/(etc.)... \]  
\[ (\text{He/she}/(etc.) will avoid...\) \]

but perhaps the student will have some familiarity with syncopation from having heard imperative plural verb forms from the teacher earlier.

Whether it is worthwhile for the teacher to try to structure the input so that those verb stems requiring the least morphophonemic manipulation are introduced first to the student is a question which can be left to the individual teacher. With our emphasis on authentic communication in the classroom, however, it seems best to allow the verbs to enter the classroom dialog as they arise naturally in the course of student/student or student/teacher interaction. Perhaps the teacher, as suggested above, can be prepared to do a great deal of modelling and allow students to remain silent until they are comfortable in using such forms.

The present habitual verb forms, as mentioned above, are not quite as demanding of the student as the future forms. The First Conjugation verbs have a personal suffix /-im/ ([i:m']) for "ego", the speaker, and a single suffix /-ann/ ([a:n]) for all other persons, a suffix which might better be regarded simply as a tense marker. There are no root-final morphophonemic changes, e.g.,

\[ Fáigaim (é)... \]  
\[ (\text{I leave (it)\ldots }) \]
\[ Fáigann sé/sí/(etc.) (é)... \]  
\[ (\text{He/she}/(etc.) leaves (it)\ldots ) \]

Second Conjugation verbs are characterized by the substitution of the stem vowel /i/ for the neutral vowel of the First Conjugation suffixes, producing the markers /-im/ ([i:m']) and /-inn/ ([i:n]), respectively, e.g.,

\[ Imim... \]  
\[ (\text{I go away...}) \]
\[ Imiónn sé/sí/(etc.)... \]  
\[ (\text{He/she}/(etc.) goes away...\) \]
The syncopated verbs of the Second Conjugation once again add a slight complication, e.g.,

Seachnaim... ("I avoid...")
Seachnalonn sé/sil/(ets.)... ("He/she/(etc.) avoids...")

Interrogative and negative forms, once again, will demand mastery of voicing/nasalization and lenition, respectively.

The habitual past tense, a logical outgrowth of the habitual present tense, is a bit more demanding than the habitual present tense. For each of the two verb conjugations, the suffixes for the speaker and the singular hearer (first and second persons singular, respectively) form an "I/thou" dyad, but bear no physical resemblance to each other nor to the "default" suffix shared by all the other persons. First Conjugation verbs have the suffixes -inn ([i:N]),-á ([a:]); and -adh ([ax]) for speaker, singular hearer, and "other" persons, respectively. Second Conjugation verbs once again substitute a stem vowel -á- for the neutral vowels in two of these forms, producing -inn ([i:N]) and -íodh ([ix:i]). In Inis Mór Irish, however, the second person singular suffix is -á, a suffix identical to its counterpart in First Conjugation verbs.

The second complication confronting the learner of the habitual past tense is the extension of lenition to positive verb forms, e.g.,

D’fhágann é... ("I used to leave (it)...")
D’fhágá (é)... ("You used to leave (it)...")
D’fhágadh sé/sil/(ets.) (é)... ("He/she/(etc.) used to leave (it)...")

This is logical enough, since the learner has perhaps come to associate lenition with past tenses. What will perhaps confuse the student, however, is the use of the future and present habitual interrogative and negative markers in this tense as well, not the simple past interrogative and negative markers which the student has perhaps come to associate

with the concept of "past time", but which are unique to the simple past tense, e.g.,

An bhfágaínn (é)...? ("Did I (habitually) leave (it)...?")
Ní fhágaínn (é)... ("I did not leave (it)...")

Perhaps through extensive reinforcement with input using the hypothetical conditional tense (to be introduced next) in addition to the habitual past, the students can be accustomed to the use of non-past markers in past tense contexts.

The hypothetical conditional tense forms are interesting hybrid verb forms, with the roots and stem vowels (for Second Conjugation verbs) characteristic of future tense forms, but with the lenition and personal suffixes characteristic of the habitual past forms, e.g.,

D’fhágfáin (é)... ("I would leave (it)...")
D’imeoinn... ("I would go away...")

For the learner, no new elements are added, but the novel combination of elements already learned in other temporal contexts could make considerable demands on the flexibility and processing capacity of the learner. It is logical, therefore, that this tense be introduced last. Its extremely high frequency, however, and its substitutability for the habitual past tense in habitual past contexts (though not for verbs of the same formation) may make such forms more familiar to the students over time than the habitual past forms themselves.

A final note on the inflection of regular verbs: the teacher may find that the students occasionally regularize the paradigms, replacing the few personal suffixes found in "synthetic" verb forms with "analytic" constructions of invariable verb form plus personal pronoun, e.g.,

Imioll am... (instead of Imim a...)
D’fhágfadh tú... (instead of D’fhágtha... (= D’fhágtha...))

I recommend that the teacher be tolerant of such forms, since such forms abound in the speech of native speakers of Irish, at least in the Aran Islands. Conversely, I would encourage the eventual learning of the "synthetic" forms of the third person plural verb forms in the habitual past and
hypothetical conditional tenses, with the suffix -idis, added after the stem vowel, when present, e.g.,
D'fháaidís (é)... ("They used to leave it...")
D'imidís... ("They used to leave...")
D'iméoidís... ("They would leave...")

since such forms co-exist in Irish-speaking areas along with their "analytic" counterparts and since they are the preferred forms in written Standard Irish. Though such "synthetic" forms complicate the learning of verbal paradigms for learners, they offer ease of articulation, since the sound sequence [xį] found in all their "analytic" counterparts (e.g., D'fháaidh siad) is thereby avoided.

TEACHING THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE IRREGULAR VERBS

Turning to the morphology of the eleven irregular verbs in Modern Irish\textsuperscript{16}, a closer look will reveal no great difficulties for the learner. The apparent chaos of verbal forms resolves itself into recurrent patterns of verbal suppletion\textsuperscript{17} (actually "quasi-suppletion", since the verbal roots or stems involved are all or nearly all etymologically related despite their often bizarre appearances). All of the irregular verbs except Tabhairt! ("Give!") and It! ("Eat!") have unique roots or stems in the simple past tense. Of those nine verbs, six (in Standard Irish) do not use the simple past interrogative and negative markers an and ni; instead, they simply generalize the markers an and ni to the simple past tense. Mutations following such markers are occasionally irregular; one verb, Faigh! ("Get!"), eclipses the verb stem after both an and ni, and another verb, Abair! ("Say!"), fails to mutate the verb stem after ni at all. Furthermore, a subset of those six verbs, the four verbs Bil! ("Bel/Exist!!"), Téigh! ("Go!!"), Feic! ("See!!"), and Déan! ("Do!!"), have special suppletive forms for the dependent (interrogative, negative and finite clause complement) forms of the verb in this tense. To reiterate, even in the simple past tense, the patterns of suppletion are complex, but not chaotic.

Turning to the future tense, we see that all irregular verbs, with the exception of the verbs Feic! ("See!!"), Clois! ("Hear!!"), and Déan! ("Do!!"), have distinctive stems for the future tense, and that those stems are shared with the hypothetical conditional verb forms. The paradigms of the verbs It! ("Eat!!") and Tabhairt! ("Give!!") are unique in that the distinctive stems shared by these pairs of tenses are virtually the only irregularities to be found in their paradigms. The verb Faigh! ("Get!!") is unique in that both tenses have a dependent stem form which resembles to a greater or lesser extent (depending on the precise dialectal variants chosen by the speaker) the stem found in the habitual tenses of the verb. Once again, the verb Faigh! distinguishes itself by eclipsing the stem after the negative marker ni in the future and hypothetical conditional tenses as well as in the simple past tense.

In all of the verbs just mentioned, the stem found in the future and hypothetical conditional tenses contrasts with the stem found in the two habitual tenses: the present (habitual) and the past habitual. In most cases, the learner should perceive at least dimly the etymological relationship between the two sets of stem forms; for a minority of cases, simple rote memorization must serve to supply the learner with the needed forms.

Approximately half the irregular verbs have irregular forms in the imperative singular; again, simple rote memorization is my only recommendation to the learner. Since the learner will be hearing countless commands from the teacher, the linguistic input should be more than adequate for the learner.

The verb Bil! ("Bel/Exist!!") is unique in having a special immediate present tense which is used, among other things, to help supply a present continuous tense for other verbs. These immediate present forms are genuinely suppletive, with a stem tá for the positive forms and a stem fuil for the dependent forms (suitably mutated). These forms contrast with the stem bi- found in the habitual present and
habitual past tenses (and elsewhere). Again, the ubiquity of the verb Bí! in classroom conversation should assure early acquisition of at least some of the forms of this verb.

In the spoken Irish of Cois Fharraghe and of Inis Mór, these irregular paradigms are slowly being regularized. The simple past tense forms of Abair! ("Say!") have been regularized in both areas as d'úirt, ar 'úirt,...?, níor 'úirt,... The simple past tense forms of Déan! ("Do!") have also been regularized widely in Inis Mór to rinne, ar rinne,...?, níor rinne,... The verb Líth! ("Eat!") is also slowly moving toward regularization in Inis Mór; the future and hypothetical conditional stem los- is now used in the habitual tenses by many speakers, at least as an alternative form. That change, once completed, would make the patterns of suppletion in the verbs Líth!, Feic! and Criois! virtually identical. Finally, the paradigm for the verb Faigh! ("Get!") is being regularized in several competing ways in Inis Mór alone. In short, here again overgeneralization of forms by learners will find its reflection in the living language of native speakers.

The object of this long discussion of the morphology of the irregular verbs in Irish is to show that there is indeed deep regularity in the irregular verbal paradigms and that irregular verbs have a "crazy logic" of their own. The patterns of suppletion, however bizarre on the surface, in fact serve to underline contrasts and similarities between important cognitive categories. If the teacher does not teach "against the grain" of the verbal system, and in fact respects the natural "fissures" found in the material, the ease of acquisition may be considerably enhanced for the learner. All this is "good to know" for the creative and intelligent teacher; as for the instructional sequence, it would be best to follow the general suggestions given earlier for the presentation of irregular verbs in the classroom.

TEACHING THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE COPULA

As for the copula, there is little to say. The copula hardly behaves like an Irish verb at all. Its paradigm is incredibly simple, and quite distinct from those of all other verbs. It has a non-past "realis" tense with the single invariant positive marker is, the negative marker ní, and the interrogative marker an (ar as well, in Cois Fharraghe and Inis Mór Irish). The marker in the non-past tense for finite complement clauses, which is gur, is identical to the simple past finite complement clause marker gur used in the simple past tense with regular verbs, and could, consequently, lead learners to associate that form with the past tense. Similarly, the use of the regional dialectal non-past interrogative form ar just mentioned could lead the learner to believe that a question was being asked in the past tense. The absence of lenition in the following noun or adjective would normally provide the clue that the construction is in the non-past tense, but learners could not be expected to have fully internalized that knowledge. In fact, learners may have a strong tendency to lenite nouns and adjectives after the negative marker ní or to eclipse them after the interrogative marker an because of their experience with such markers before verbs. This would provide another argument for the early introduction of the copula into the instructional sequence for purposes of contrast with other verbal constructions.

The contrasting tense construction is an "irrealsis" construction shared by both the past tense and the hypothetical conditional tense, both marked by the positive marker ba, the negative marker níor(bh), the interrogative marker ar(bh), and the finite complement marker gur(bh); these markers are all followed by lenition. In Cois Fharraghe and Inis Mór Irish, the phonetic shapes of the markers and the use of lenition on the nouns and adjectives which follow them show interesting developments. Let it suffice to say, however, that neither the Standard Irish forms, the Cois Fharraghe forms ("analytic", with voicing/nasalization of the ba base form), or the Inis Mór forms (without voicing/nasalization, even after dā ("if"), and without lenition of following nouns, but with the normal lenition of following
adjectives encountered in Cois Fharraille Irish) could be taught to the students.

The point to impress on the students is the fact that copula constructions, no less than other verbal constructions, are "predicate-first" constructions, and that students should be comfortable in making comments in such constructions before mentioning the topic. The use of constructions without the copula, such as Fear maith é! ("He's a good man!") or Fear maith a bhi ann! ("He was a good man!") might help bring this truth home. At any rate, because of the uniqueness of the copula constructions and the simplicity of the paradigm of the copula, the copula, as well as deictic constructions, could be introduced early into the instructional sequence independently of the other verbs, in the manner suggested much earlier in this paper.

CONCLUSION

The approach to teaching Modern Irish just shown demands an immense amount of experience and creativity from the teacher. It could not come out of a textbook or even a set of programmed audio-lingual materials. Despite its emphasis on the mechanics of the language, it really demands a communicative approach to instruction with a great deal of "authentic" dialog from both teacher and students, albeit in a relatively controlled classroom setting. It reflects the crucial role of input from a native (or near-native) speaker as a trigger for the language acquisition process that is described in Pinker (1996) where the native speaker not only models the correct forms, but also reinforces them, leading by the same token to the extinction of any hypercorrect or overgeneralized forms produced by the learner, since such forms will not normally be mirrored in the input of the native speaker. In our case, it is the teacher acting in loco parentis who supplies the input, not the child's peer group. The disadvantage of this situation is that the learner is deprived both of the cameraderie of the peer group and of the intense social pressure to conform linguistically to the peer group. Unfortunately, pair work and group work among the learners cannot completely overcome this disadvantage. At most, such activities can achieve relative fluency without native-speaker accuracy, with the overgeneralizations and other in-group innovations characteristic of groups of second language learners learning together with little access to native-speaking peers, whether in an immersion classroom far from a community of native speakers or in an urban neighborhood densely populated by fellow immigrants.

This, then, is an approach to teaching Irish grammatical structures in which the teacher is the principal performer in a complex web of activities. In some areas of the proposed approach, such as the introduction to the morphology of the verb, there is a definite sequencing of the linguistic structures presented to the learner which seems to spring from the material itself. In other areas, such as the introduction of deictic constructions or of vocative or genitive forms of proper nouns, the material seems to demand little or no sequencing, and the choice of forms is left to the instructor as he/she responds to the pragmatic pressures of the teaching situation in a real classroom, with real students attempting real communication in a language of which they may know little. What is most astonishing to me in all this discussion is that I have found no need to make reference to a "natural order of acquisition" in language learners. The "teachability" and hence "learnability" of elements in the approach just outlined seems to have more to do with the ways in which the learning of some elements seems to presuppose the learning of other elements (e.g., pronouns, which presuppose the learning of common nouns and their genders) or with the possibilities of immediate comprehension in a concrete classroom situation. As parents speaking to children or as natives speaking to foreign visitors, we find ways of making ourselves understood without necessarily using the "interlanguage" of the learner. So too with the teacher, as vital producer of input for the learner. Meeting the learner half-way does not
necessarily mean distorting the input. We may "stoop to conquer", but we need bend only so far!

I hope that the suggestions made here will be of immediate use to teachers and learners of Modern Irish, and that this kind of approach to the teaching of linguistic structures may be useful in the teaching of a wide variety of other languages as well.

NOTES

1 See Duran (1994) for a fuller account of my teaching experiences over the years.
2 See Duran (1995) for some discussion of the possible social interaction of learners of Irish with fluent speakers of Irish, both native and non-native speakers.
3 See Ó Siadhail (1980).
4 I should mention that both my father's parents came from eastern Inis Mór, though my father, born in Boston, Massachusetts, was raised without Irish.
5 The recommended pronunciation for the standard orthography. See Duran (1995), note 7, for discussion.
6 This dialogue is not based on spontaneous recorded conversation, since surreptitious recording of conversations in the Aran Islands is out of the question. I have checked the text for naturalness, however, with some of my informants on Inis Mór.
7 See Asher (1982) and Seely and Romijn (1995), but especially Anon. (1985) Bun-Ghaeilge do Thuismitheoirí (Basic Irish for Parents), which is an excellent illustration of the use of TPR for teaching Irish.
8 I use the term "voicing/nasalization" to refer to the grammatically-conditioned voicing of unvoiced consonants and nasalization of voiced consonants in word-initial position, usually referred to as "eclipse" by traditional grammarians who deal with the Irish language.
9 For clarity of exposition, here in this section reference will be made to Standard Irish variants of imperative verb forms, not to the variants normally found in Inis Mór Irish. The forms found in examples, however, may sometimes reflect non-standard variants heard in Inis Mór Irish. See Note 16.
10 Exceptions to the rules, such as two-syllable First Conjugation verbs like Dearmad! ("Forget!"), Tiomáin! ("Drive!"), or Sábháil!

Preparing a Structural Syllabus for Adult Learners of Irish

("Save!"), pose only minor learning problems and will not be dealt with here.

11 It might be thought that plural forms, especially for syncopating verbs, introduce a measure of complexity for the beginning learner. Remember, however, that it is the teacher, rather than the students, who will most likely give commands to groups. The students, once again, require only comprehension of such forms, not productive control of them.

12 The symbol /h/ here represents a historical phoneme /h/, which in Cois Fharraghaír Irish and Inis Mór Irish has disappeared from the surface representation of the suffix, but which manifested its underlying presence through the devoicing of root-final plosives and fricatives in First Conjugation verb roots.

13 Here I give the invariant suffix -á found in Inis Mór Irish, rather than the forms -tá, -teá, -títeá of Standard Irish.
14 The invariant suffix -á is used for the second person singular in the hypothetical conditional tense as well as in the habitual past tense by speakers of Inis Mór Irish; it is used for verb forms of both conjugations.

15 In fact, I can say that there is no "synthetic" verb form that does not have an "analytic" construction as a counterpart in Inis Mór Irish.

16 For reasons of simplicity, the discussion here of the morphology of the irregular verbs is based initially on the forms found in Standard Irish. However, regional variants found in Cois Fharraghá and Inis Mór Irish will be mentioned in the discussion as needed.

17 See Rudes (1980) for an excellent account of verbal suppletion in Indo-European languages. Though individual elements may substituted for one another in the course of linguistic change, there is an amazing continuity in the patterns of verbal suppletion themselves over very long periods of time.

REFERENCES


Preparation of a Structural Syllabus for Adult Learners of Irish


Teacher Certification and Less Commonly Taught Languages"*

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This article advocates certification of instructors of one particular less commonly taught language, Irish. Such certification would aid instructors to gain formal recognition in the teaching community. In 1994, the author carried out a small survey of students learning Irish in the New York City area. The results showed that students felt confident about their teachers’ fluency and knowledge of grammar; however, many students were less satisfied with their instructors’ teaching abilities. This article recommends that certification of Irish language instructors should focus on both language fluency and pedagogy.

It was recently mentioned in a New Jersey newspaper that we are beginning to see the “mainstreaming” of Irish language teaching in the United States (Llorente 1995, p. D6). This is a result of the fact that Irish, which was once only taught in the United States by interested individuals in their homes, churches, and clubs, is now becoming quite commonplace in adult schools and community colleges in states such as New Jersey (NJ). These continuous education programs offer a wide range of subjects and the coordinator may not necessarily be knowledgeable of the Irish language. One can be assured that it would be a great aid to such a coordinator to know that the instructor he or she is

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