

interactive self-instruction programs on CD-ROM all help, but they cannot substitute for rigorous classroom experience as part of a student's regular academic program. Compared to Spanish or French majors on a Junior-Year Abroad program, who are typically expected to be linguistically proficient and ready for in-depth literary or cultural study, the North American Irish-language community still has far to go in terms of really giving its students solid preparation. But, as the Irish proverb says, "De réir a chéile a thógtar na caisleáin" (Rome was not built in a day).

Reviews

IRISH NOW! v9: Published by Transparent Language 9 Executive Park Drive Merrimack, NH 03054

Irish Now! Is a CD-ROM program marketed for learning Irish. You might suspect from the title that the program is for beginners. It is not.

The opening screen presents four titles from which to choose; an excerpt from "Angela's Ashes," "Discovering Ireland," "Survival Phrases for Irish," and "The Most Common Words in Irish". "Angela's Ashes" is for the advanced learner. The three other titles are intermediate level. There is no beginner level.

There is no accompanying manual to guide you through the various supporting activities, i.e. reading exercises, cross word puzzles and a vocabulary game. There is a printable manual from the program. I do not like to print manuals from programs so I consider this a disadvantage. With patience and several hours of practice I was able to maneuver through the various programs with relative ease.

The approach of *Irish Now!* is interactive. The learner is able to choose to read sections of text and/or listen to a 'native' speaker. There are several speakers and no attempt is made to explain the differences in their dialects. A nice touch, however, is a button, which allows you to slow the speech without distortion. You may choose to hear individual words, a sentence or an entire text with a press of a button. A microphone can be added to compare your pronunciation with that of the 'native' speaker. Individual words are highlighted and linked to a grammar section. The treatment of grammar is comprehensive and available to those so inclined. The grammatical explanations are academic and there are some typographical errors in the examples. In one or two instances the information presented is incorrect. For example, the grammar states that the Irish word for yes is 'Is ea' and the word for no is 'ní hea'. On another occasion a past tense question was asked and the answer presented in the present tense.

Titles come with a text – a story, poem, article or a language tutorial. Accompanying games (Cross Word, Vocabulous!, Word Dictation and Unscramble) reinforce the reading exercise. Each game activity allows you to limit the vocabulary presented to a section, a range of sections or the entire text. Games are scored to allow the learner to chart progress. Scores are time-weighted which seems to put undue emphasis on speed over accuracy. It is a bit cumbersome to place the ‘síneadh fada’ over vowels when required. Character choices are not limited to ‘síneadh fada’; characters from other languages are also presented.

There is a section “Reference Tools” which appears under each title. There are two choices “Irish Gaelic Alphabet Reference” and “Irish Gaelic Grammar Basics.” The voice reciting the Alphabet sounded like standard American-English or very slightly accented Hiberno-English. There is no mention of long vowel sounds.

There are pictures of people accompanying the Conversation exercise in the “Survival Phrases for Irish.” A number of people in the pictures look Italian, not Irish. It was distracting to read the text of a conversation about a lost wallet, listen to the conversation and see a ‘Carabiniere’ identified as the ‘Garda.’

Irish *Now* is a useful supplement to classes and ‘immersion’ programs. I would not recommend it to anyone learning Irish on their own and certainly not to a beginner.

Robert S. Burke

Children’s Literature for L1 Children and L2 Adults: The Case of Little Red Riding Hood.

This review will consider two versions of a children’s tale as it has been translated into Irish. The story in question is Little Red Riding Hood. Considered here are Roslyn Blyn-LaDrew’s translation - *Clóicín Dearg* (Cincinnati, OH: Another Language Press, 2001, 22 pages) and Treasa Ní Ailpín’s version – *Cochailín Dearg* (Baile Átha Cliath: An Gúm, 1999, 27 pages).

While it is not uncommon to have a number of versions of picture books in more commonly spoken languages such as English or Spanish, the fact that there are two versions of this story published in Irish within two years testifies to the great interest in this language at home and in the Diaspora. In fact, Blyn-LaDrew’s version is published in the United States and Ní Ailpín’s version in Ireland. Ní Ailpín’s version clearly states that the book is orientated towards 4-7 year olds. However with some supplemental exercises, it could be used with adults.

The Another Language Press version in general is marketed to those purchasing books for children. Another Language Press publishes *Red Riding Hood* in seven languages . In the 2002-2003 AIMS International Books Catalog, the Irish version is placed under the category of “Children’s Books in Many Languages.” However, a note is added for this volume that in addition to young speakers/learners in Ireland, adult learners of Irish can be found around the world. At the time the reviewer received a sample copy, Dr. Roslyn Blyn-LaDrew wrote indicating that she has created a number of teachers’ aids including oral questions and writing prompts to go along with the book. Taking these supplemental activities into consideration, there is no doubt that her motivation in translating this children’s tale was to provide adults learning Irish with another resource. You can write her about these aids at jladrew@chesco.com . In addition to testing comprehension, the exercises also provide discrete practice on a number of grammar points.

The choice of vocabulary between the two volumes is also an interesting contrast and may have been chosen as a result of target populations. Ní Ailpín’s version makes use of informal versions of characters names, “Mamaí,” “Daidí,” and “Mamó” both in the narrative and in quotes (using the vocative). In Blyn-LaDrew’s volume, these characters are referred to with the formal “máthair,” “athair,” and “seanmháthair” in the narrative. Only the mother is addressed informally as “a Mhamaí” in quotes. Two possible reasons for this choice by Ní Ailpín can be thought of by the reviewer, to make the volume more attractive and approachable to native Irish speaking children and to also aid English speaking children by using the cognates of Mommy and Daddy. It should be noted that this appears to have been a choice

on Ní Ailpín's part. The original Ladybird volume (as the English versions are known) uses the more formal names of "mother," "father," and "grandmother" in both the narrative and quotes. Additionally, it should be noted that Ní Ailpín's version is not a translation of the original Ladybird book, but rather an Irish language version of the tale that makes use of the same pictures as the Ladybird book. In some cases the written text on a given page has completely different meaning between the two language versions. For example, the opening page has the following text in each of the Ladybird versions:

Little Red Riding Hood lived with her mother and father in a house in the forest (*Little Red Riding Hood*, 1998, p. 4).

Bhí Cochaillín Dearg ina suí go moch ar maidin. Bhí sí ag cabhrú le Daidí agus Mamaí (Ní Ailpín, 1999, p. 4). [Little Red Riding Hood was up early in the morning. She was helping Daddy and Mommy. Trans. by reviewer.]

Despite a focus on young children in Ní Ailpín's volume and adult learners in that of Blyn-LaDrew, both volumes could be used with either population to varying degrees. The great advantage of the Ní Ailpín volume is the beautifully illustrated pictures (by David Parkins). However, while these are an advantage for older children and adults, the reviewer would not recommend using this version with infants. The drawings of the "mac tíre gránna" are frightening especially as the story progresses. This is true also with other Ladybird books. For example, in "Áille agus Brúid," the Beast could scare a two year old. The artwork in Blyn-LaDrew's translation is black line drawing and limited to two colors (by Edward Nofziger). "An mactíre" in this case is drawn as a sad or comical figure. One might fear that the simple drawings or limited color of Blyn-LaDrew's version might not hold a young child's attention. But this does not appear to be the case, because each sentence or part of a compound sentence has its own illustration. There is always something for a parent to point to as he or she reads each sentence to his or her child. In this sense also, the Blyn-LaDrew version is excellent for adult learners and no English

translation should be needed for advanced beginners since one has a picture with each sentence. An example of this picture-sentence sequence is as follows from page 9:

Deir an mactíre: "Tá ocras orm!" [To the left is a picture of the wolf holding his stomach and tongue hanging out.] "Ó! Ó!" arsa an tseanmháthair, "Tá eagla orm! Is tú an mactíre!" [To the right is a picture of grandmother in bed looking scared.] Agus ritheann an tseanmháthair go dtí an choill. [To the left is a picture of grandmother running among trees.]

One element that will draw the attention of the adult reader immediately is the time in which the story is told. Blyn-LaDrew tells her version in the present tense to supposedly give the reader the feeling of being there as the story unfolds. Ní Ailpín uses the past tense reminiscent of a story beginning "once upon a time." Ní Ailpín's choice of time is the same as the original Ladybird version. Though, since her narrative is different from the English version, she could have opted for the present. However, Blyn-LaDrew used the same tense as the original Another Language Press version. As a translator, this does not appear to have been an option. Her version is a sentence by sentence translation from the original.

If you were planning to use the book with a child, you might be wondering what happens to the grandmother and Little Red Riding Hood. The reader of this review may be aware that there is great variation in the endings of this tale dating back to the 1600's. It is not surprising therefore to learn that these two volumes differ. In Ní Ailpín's version, despite the graphic depiction of the wolf, no one, including the wolf, gets killed. While we are not told in the text, the pictures inform us that the wolf bound and gagged grandmother and placed her under the bed. In Blyn-LaDrew's version, there is also no blood shed. Grandmother runs away when the wolf arrives. In the earlier versions of this tale, both the grandmother and Red Riding Hood were eaten by the wolf. In some versions, the wolf is even killed. While the wolf is spared in

both of these versions, you will have to read the texts to see who saves the day.

References

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Ní Ghráda, M. (1984). *Áille agus Brúid*. Baile Átha Cliath: An Gúm.

Resources

AIMS International Books: <http://www.aimsbooks.com/>

Litriocht.com: <http://www.litriocht.com/>

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