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## **Neo-Irish: An emerging post-traditional idiom?**

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Some remarks on recent syntactic trends and shifts manifest in the Irish language in recent years, and a preliminary investigation of the extent and significance of some of these phenomena.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Irish language, as spoken in the Gaeltacht regions, may be defined, in the context of the history of the language, and in the context of language change and evolution in general, as relatively stable idiom. Comparing texts from the 1800s – by Raftery (1779-1835), Amhlaoibh Ó Súilleabháin (1780-1838), Colm de Bhailís (circa 1798-1903) or others – with texts published in the last quarter of the 20th century, or, for example, with recordings of native speakers, one has the impression of dealing with a continuum. Since the year 2000 however, or shortly thereafter, during the time when Irish has become a mediated language, a language act has reinforced its official status under the constitution, and working status has been accorded it in the European Union, divergence from and rupture of the traditional language has been occurring with greater alacrity than ever since the forming of the Irish state, and to a degree perhaps comparable with change between the time of composition of Tadhg Ó Cianáin's *Imeacht na nIarlaí* (1609) and the time of composition of Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghaire by Eibhlín Dhubh Ní Chonail (c. 1743-1800) or *Cúirt an Mheán Oíche* by Brian Merriman (c. 1745-1805). This paper will examine examples of contemporary Irish from some of the most recent corpuses, and comment on features contained therein that may be indicative of change.