

## CHAPTER 7

## ‘Translation in Progress’

*Centralizing and Peripheralizing Tensions in the  
Practices of Commercial Actors in Minority  
Language Sites*

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## INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with examining how the tensions between centralizing and peripheralizing ideologies are reflected in the practices of individual commercial actors in sites of peripheral multilingualism. My starting point is the following: given the importance of tourism and craft industries in sites of peripheral multilingualism, as outlined in the introduction to this volume, the role of individual commercial actors in these sectors can be a significant one in these sites, and their language practices may have an important impact. The linguistic decisions and practices of individual commercial actors can be seen as involving guesswork in terms of credibility and acceptability (Bourdieu 1991) within the boundaries of prevailing language ideologies. Their practices may thus constitute a challenge to or a reaffirmation of these ideologies (cf. Kelly-Holmes 2010 for a discussion of this). Of course, commercial actors are also members of speech communities and share language ideologies of those speech communities. Thus, they may not always act in strictly rational ways—in economic terms—with respect to the language choices they make in their marketing, advertising, and so on (Atkinson and Kelly-Holmes 2006). Consequently, the role of the individual commercial actor in creating, following, maintaining, or challenging language trends and language regimes is all part of the political economy of language in sites of peripheral multilingualism (Kelly-Holmes 2010; Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes 2011).

The focus here is on two particular interrelated questions: First, do individual actors in sites of peripheral multilingualism attempt to centralize or peripheralize Irish (e.g. do they attempt to draw it into the centre of their everyday business and commerce as a type of normalization, or do they peripheralize it by confining it to particular functions and domains)? I understand centralizing here as the opposite of peripheralization and thus as a form of linguistic normalization (cf. Bastardas and Soler 1988), whereby the use of Irish in a commercial domain is driven by the desire to have it used as a normal and unremarkable language of daily life and commerce. Centralizing, then, involves taking on the trappings of modernity: for example, corpus planning, using, disseminating and adhering to standards, ‘correction’ of linguistic landscapes in minority language contexts, and use of the language in commercial or other high prestige domains (cf. Strubell 1998; Atkinson and Kelly-Holmes 2006). Peripheralizing, then, is the other side of the coin: using Irish in a marked, exceptional, and non-essential way, which may add symbolic value, but which reinforces its status as something that is peripheral and not part of the ‘real’, ‘modern’ world.

Secondly, do individual commercial actors in sites of peripheral multilingualism adopt centre/centrist practices and ideologies (understood here as norm-driven policies and practices based on parallel monolingualism and modernist concepts) or peripheral practices (understood here as hybrid processes, based on individual practices). As outlined in the introduction to the volume, peripheral multilingualism is driven by the concept of linguistic repertoire (e.g. Makoni and Pennycook 2007; Blommaert 2010; Pennycook 2010). In contrast to the centre, which is seen as the source of norm creation and norm (re)enforcement, the periphery involves multiple sites of normativity (cf. Blommaert et al. 2005). Centre multilingualism is concerned with geographically or socially demarcated speech communities, whereas peripheral multilingualism involves communities of practice (cf. Rampton 2006, 2009). The concept of ‘bilingualism as deficit’ is fundamental to centre multilingualism, whereas peripheral multilingualism assumes a ‘bilingualism as added value’ (Jaffe 2006) approach. Significantly, in terms of the focus here on individual commercial actors, we can understand centre multilingualism as making use of ‘available forms’ and ‘available classifications’, whereas peripheral multilingualism involves ‘individual acts of sign-making’ (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 12), and, in common with many contributors to the current volume, it is to those ‘individual acts of sign-making’ that we turn our attention in this chapter.

The particular site is the website for pottery workshop in the *Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht*/Dingle Peninsula, a designated Irish-speaking area, in the South-West of Ireland. I begin by discussing Irish in relation to the concept of peripheral multilingualism before going on to describe the sociolinguistic context of the peripheral multilingual site of interest, in particular in relation to centralizing and peripheralizing tensions. The chapter then focuses on the case of one particular commercial actor, Louis Mulcahy Pottery, and examines the practices on the website for that company.

## IRISH AND PERIPHERAL MULTILINGUALISM—A PROBLEM CASE

The first thing to say about Irish in relation to the concept of peripheral multilingualism is that we are not dealing with a ‘straightforward’ case of a peripheralized language community in a peripheral location. Irish is both central and peripheral at one and the same time in contemporary Ireland. The respective centralization or peripheralization can vary depending on the actors, location, context, and so on. This complexity, however, exemplifies the tensions that characterize centre–periphery relations in the contemporary era, and how these impact on multilingualism. In a context such as that of Irish, the periphery–centre dynamic involves constant change and renegotiation: it cannot really be understood in terms of a system that is unchanging or subject only to very slow change, in the way in which, for example, Wallerstein (2004) has conceived centre–periphery economic and geographic relations, or, de Swaan (2001) has metaphorized centre–periphery relations between languages (as discussed in the introduction to the volume). In fact, it is almost impossible to classify a language such as Irish in terms of de Swaan’s ‘World Language System’, since ‘peripheral languages’, according to de Swaan, are generally oral and without status in education, government, and so on, something which is clearly not the case for Irish, while central languages are national languages with all the associated functions, again something which Irish falls short of for a variety of reasons (cf. e.g. Mac Giolla Chríost 2005; Ó Laoire 2008; Walsh 2011).

The concept of a ‘privileged minoritized language’ (Kelly-Holmes 2006a) sums up this ever-changing, constantly renegotiated status between centre and periphery. As a ‘privileged minoritized’ language, Irish is both central and peripheral to everyday life in Ireland. It is clearly central in some domains, being the first official language of the country, and given a privileged status in the education system and other official domains of life. However, it is certainly peripheral in other areas (e.g. in mainstream entertainment, mainstream media, commerce, and advertising). Most significantly, it is not the everyday language of communication for the majority of people in Ireland, although many people do use Irish on a daily basis (cf. e.g. Mac Giolla Chríost 2005; Ó Laoire 2008 for an overview of the situation). For Irish, as for many languages in a similar sociolinguistic situation, periphery–centre relations are determined on the basis of context (who, what, where, how, why) and are fluid rather than fixed.

Education is a good example of the centralizing–peripheralizing tensions. While Irish can be seen to be at the core of the national curriculum, particularly for primary schools—it is a compulsory subject throughout schooling and is usually required for matriculation purposes—its status in education is the subject of constant debate. Its forced centrality almost makes it a target for those who argue that its peripheral status in everyday life and in the ‘real world’ should be reflected in its status in educational and official domains. As Gal and Woolard (2001) point out, normalization is a marked way of using a language in order to make use of the language less marked. Irish in its many contradictions and complexities also shows

how the drive to normalize and centralize a language by reversing an existing language hierarchy can often in fact highlight and reinforce its peripherality (cf. Gal and Woolard 2001).

In addition, norm-setting for Irish is not a straightforward case of rules being set by the centre and followed by the periphery. In matters of spoken language, the native speaker from the geographically peripheral *Gaeltacht* was traditionally seen as the expert and so those geographically remote areas (like the Dingle Peninsula) were in fact seen as central for that process. However, much of the emphasis in status planning for Irish has been on written language, and the norms for this have tended in recent years to be derived by elites living outside the periphery. In debates on terminology, the speakers from the *Gaeltacht* may either be absent or may adopt a more laissez-faire attitude to mixing between the languages—an example of ‘peripheral multilingualism’ in terms of this volume—whereas ‘language ideological brokers’ (Blommaert 1999) are more concerned with boundary work between the two languages (cf. e.g. Lenihan’s (2011) study of the Irish language Facebook site). Unsurprisingly, there is resistance to adopting new terminology, designed in and disseminated from the centre, among *Gaeltacht* speakers (cf. Ní Ghearáin 2011).

Finally, while Irish has long been stigmatized and peripheralized in the modern era and not associated with economic advancement (cf. Walsh 2011 for extensive and comprehensive overview of these issues), there has, since the founding of the state, been an advantage to Irish-English bilingualism for those in the centre, although not always for those in the periphery (who were expected to remain monolingual in the *Gaeltacht* to provide linguistic resources for the centre, particularly to support and aid the objectives of acquisition planning). So, discourses of ‘bilingualism as deficit’ and ‘bilingualism as added value’ (Jaffe 2006) have managed to co-exist in Ireland.

## THE CONTEXT: THE DINGLE PENINSULA AS PERIPHERAL AND CENTRAL

Like the Irish language, the Dingle Peninsula, where the Louis Mulcahy workshop is located, is also both peripheral and central. Significantly for Dingle, its peripherality and its centrality are interrelated and interdependent. Dingle is central as a key tourist destination (listed frequently in the top 10 European tourist destinations); many larger centres (e.g. Limerick) are bypassed by tourists and holidaymakers (domestic and international) on their way to Dingle; and Dingle is also a centre for the Irish language as part of the *Gaeltacht* area, which is made up of designated Irish-speaking or bilingual Irish-English areas. For its locality, Dingle town is also a centre of trade, particularly fishing, and provides shops and other facilities for the hinterland. Crucially, it is also central to the Irish nation’s imagining of itself as bilingual and to the marketing of Ireland abroad; the image of the Dingle peninsula is an iconic one both in the Irish imagination and in the marketing discourse about

Ireland as a tourist destination. However, Dingle is also peripheral, in its geographical isolation, distance from larger urban centres and from the capital, and limited access to health, infrastructure, and so on.

Dingle like other minority language spaces has been the subject of language policy and language planning initiatives—most explicitly in the establishment of the *Gaeltacht* areas, which can be seen as an attempt to create boundaries around the communities and the language practices of these peripheries in an attempt to keep them monolingually Irish or at least predominantly Irish-speaking, regardless of the sociolinguistic realities within the area.

The case of the *An Daingean*/Dingle renaming controversy highlights the tension that arises from the need for the area to be imagined as a monolingual periphery by the centre and the imposition of centralizing (monolingual) norms in order to achieve this. As part of the Official Languages Act (2003), a major piece of status planning for Irish, there was a move to change the name of Dingle town on signage and to impose a monolingual Irish name—*An Daingean*—with English only or bilingual signage to be removed. The move was resisted by a large number of local people, one of the main objections being that the erasure of the English name (Dingle) would adversely affect tourism, given the value of the brand internationally (cf. Moriarty 2011 for a discussion). The renaming controversy can be seen as an attempt to impose centrist norms—norms of parallel monolingualism—onto chaotic and fragmented language practices, and to impose boundaries between the Irish and the English languages. As discussed in the introduction to the volume, Wallerstein (2004) sees peripheries as being created and maintained by centres as a source of primary resources (cf. Heller, this volume). Dingle and the other *Gaeltacht* areas in Ireland have to be maintained as monolingual peripheries not only to act as a linguistic resource for the rest of the nation (e.g. for language tourism and the language industry) but also to provide a resource to legitimize Irish claims to be different from the rest of the Anglophone world and to be ‘genuinely’ bilingual. Another recent example of an attempt, driven by centre ideologies, to impose monolingual norms on language practices in peripheral sites, was the ‘C’ status afforded to Dingle in Ó Giollagáin et al.’s (2007) survey of Irish language usage in *Gaeltacht* areas. The town of Dingle was classified as a ‘C’ location, meaning the lowest level of Irish language usage on a day-to-day basis. However, the survey can, like the renaming attempt described above, be seen to represent an attempt to impose centrist norms on multilingual realities, since it is conceptualized on the basis of bounded languages and ‘clean’ (i.e. one language or the other) language practices.

In common with many of the peripheral sites under examination in this volume (e.g. Inari, Acadie), the tourism crafts industry in Dingle grew out of a need for an alternative economic development strategy for the area, which was adversely affected by structural changes in the national and global economy. Peripherality underpins Dingle’s popularity and appeal as a tourist destination for both domestic and international tourists, again, in common with many of the sites examined in this volume.

## PERIPHERAL MULTILINGUALISM AND POTTERY

Louis Mulcahy is described as ‘one of Ireland’s most eminent potters’ and ‘the best-known Irish potter’ (<http://www.louismulcahy.com>). His creations are not just for tourists: as one Dublin customer comments on the company’s website, he offers ‘inspirational pieces to lighten up our homes’ (<http://www.louismulcahy.com>). Significantly, he moved his business from Dublin, the capital, to the Dingle peninsula in the 1970s. This could be understood as a type of opting out and moving from the centre to the periphery. However, if we do not accept a fixed notion of centre–periphery, we can see the move actually as an attempt to centre the business even more, by locating it in an area which, while being geographically peripheral, is also central in terms of the tourist trail and the craft route. The area is also of iconic centrality, as outlined above, in the imagining and marketing of Ireland for Irish people and for tourists, and so the locating of his pottery workshop on this site can be seen in fact as a definite centring move as well as one that at the time challenged the established norms of the centre–periphery relationship.

The business is, we are told, a key economic actor in the area, employing forty people, and the impact of the businesses relocation to the Dingle Peninsula ‘on the morale and economy of the local *Gaeltacht* community has been enormous’. The continued location at a time when many of the better-known Irish craft industries are contracting out work to cheaper labour markets overseas gives his work an added authenticity: ‘Despite the high Irish labour costs, Louis continues to make all his pots at his workshop in Dingle.’ He is described as ‘the last of the big potteries making all their pottery exclusively in Ireland’. Amid pictures of iconic scenery and pottery—with the potter emerging from the sea with one of his creations in one image—visitors to the website are given the message on the homepage that Louis Mulcahy is ‘one of the last workshops making every piece by hand at their base in Dingle’ (<http://www.louismulcahy.com>).

The discourse of the website involves a strong marketing of place (Urry 2005), and peripherality is a key resource in the marketing discourse and clearly adds value to the brand. The pottery is ‘a great keepsake from Dingle’ and ‘his work is distinctively Irish and reflects the magnificent scale and wonderful colours of the landscape of his chosen home’ (<http://www.louismulcahy.com>). Thus, if he were to leave this geographically peripheral site and move back to the centre of Ireland, Dublin, or a larger urban area, he would in fact be peripheralizing his work. This example shows the danger of falling into a fixed notion of central–peripheral relations: as stated previously, centre–periphery dynamics are being constantly negotiated and renegotiated and are entirely context-dependent.

The marketing discourse not only highlights the peripherality that is at the heart of the brand’s distinctiveness, it also traces the causes, and references the fragility and vulnerability of peripheral economies. For example, the closure of any factory in the West of Ireland is often followed, almost instantaneously, by emigration of those workers to other countries for work, and to a lesser extent to larger urban centres in

other parts of Ireland. The closure of a factory in a larger centre is unlikely to lead to such a massive change—especially not in the short term—as people have more opportunities to find alternative employment in their location. While Appadurai's (1996) ethnoscapings may bring to mind large cosmopolitan and industrial centres, because of the conditions of peripheralities, there has always been movement into and out of these areas. Previously, the movement was predominantly outward in the form of labour emigration, with some inward movement in terms of lifestyle migration or the return of emigrants. Nowadays, tourists make up the biggest inward flow, as well as those with their own property in the area as part-time residents.

The marketing discourse is also a discourse of peripherality in the sense that it can be seen to borrow from and rely on endangerment discourses (Duchêne and Heller 2007) about the Irish language. This key business located in this peripheral site, which is also a minority language site, and so a site where endangerment discourses are played out, is also presented in heroic terms: the economy is being saved and the language is being saved also:

[I]n 2004 he became the first Irish craftsman ever to receive an honorary degree from the National University of Ireland in recognition of his artistry and the prosperity it has brought to his community, together with his support of the local culture including the endangered Irish language. (<http://www.louismulcahy.com>)

It is interesting that Irish is described on the website as endangered, as in the extract above, even in what is considered and proclaimed to be its centre and heartland (i.e. the *Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht*). The pottery's efforts to save the language, to revitalize it, and to centralize it are told within a peripherality discourse:

The fact that, despite the long hours spent in building their internationally known business, the family took the time and effort to learn the local language and speak it in their home and business lives showed a dedication to the well-being of their community.

The language was learned, not as a necessary means of doing business, employing local people, and so on—it was in fact learned despite this. Learning it was an additional burden and distraction from building up the business and enjoying family life—both of which are presented as vital, normal activities that do not need Irish. Learning Irish is presented as an act of solidarity with the local community. The 'international' world of business is juxtaposed with the 'local' language. Thus, even though the act of putting Irish on the global website and also making metalinguistic discussion about Irish part of the content of the website and part of the marketing of the pottery can be seen as a centralizing, modernizing move, the net effect is that the language gets re-peripheralized through the endangerment-type discourse on the website.

The default homepage is in English, but some Irish is used throughout this default version (versions in Irish and Danish are available and these will be discussed

below). Irish is used in the slogan of the company, the sparrow pottery: *potadóireacht na caolóige*. Here the slogan is written in the old Gaelic alphabet, which was in use up to the middle of the twentieth century, but is now used only in symbolic and marked contexts. The slogan also alludes to nature (the sparrow pottery), again strongly indexing place, although no translation is given and the meaning, even for speakers of school Irish, might not be obvious to most visitors to the site. The choice of an Irish slogan for the marketing of the company can be seen as a type of centralizing or normalizing. Marketing on the web involves a global audience, and consequently many companies opt for English as their default language, even when the product or company does not originate in an English-speaking company (Kelly-Holmes 2006b). Thus, the decision to use an Irish slogan, without an English translation, in this global, high status domain could be seen as a normalizing move which presents Irish as being as fit for this purpose as any other language, particularly its rival English. However, the position of the slogan and the use of old Gaelic script mark the usage as graphic rather than textual (for a wider discussion of this, cf. Kelly-Holmes 2005). It is irrelevant whether the Irish version is understood. It still enhances the product because it looks authentic and different—this, it could be argued, continues to peripheralize Irish.

As well as the slogan for the pottery workshop itself, Irish is used in a number of product names, for example, the *Smoilín* range; and it is also used in product names which are also descriptions (e.g. *Dearg* for red). Again, we can see this use, on the one hand, as centralizing. It involves a high status domain (i.e. branding), which is a central part of the business and its identity, and it is on this basis that tourists and customers are attracted to the workshop and enticed to buy the products. In addition, the Irish names are not marked by italics, thus in paralinguistic terms, they are normalized, and the use of Irish for technical details such as colour (which can be seen as part of the ‘housekeeping’ and serious business of a sales website) and its use on the front page can all be seen as centralizing. However, we can also see this usage as peripheralizing. The usage is generally fetishized (Kelly-Holmes 2005), or functions as a type of linguascaping (Jaworski et al. 2003), since the use of Irish on the front page is limited to a number of tokens, with the main or serious business taking place in English, thus reinforcing the linguistic status quo: it makes sense in relation to the norm, which is English, from which it departs (cf. Bourdieu 1991).

One of the questions to be addressed in this chapter is the extent to which this particular commercial actor adopts centralizing or peripheralizing practices in commercial linguistic choices and language practices. As mentioned earlier, the Louis Mulcahy site is provided in an Irish and also a Danish version. The choice of the former version can be seen to be a rational choice in terms of the discourse of the site—its strong indexing of place and neo-Whorfian discourse (Jaffe 2006) about the relationship between product, place, and language. Not to have an Irish language version, in the context of having linked the business so strongly to its locality, would be a marketing blunder. The provision of a Danish site would appear to be motivated by Lisbeth Mulcahy, who is herself Danish. Danish does not frequently appear as an

option in tourist language selections and can be considered in world-systems terms as relatively small and even peripheralized in certain contexts (e.g. international tourist domains). The provision of two ‘small’ languages (one very small and one ‘central’ in de Swaan’s (2001) terms) alongside English sends an interesting, destabilizing message in terms of the received norms of commercial multilingualism—the normal expectation being that languages such as French, German, and Spanish, for example, would be provided (cf. Kelly-Holmes 2006b).

The provision of Irish and Danish versions can be seen as an attempt to centralize them, and, not surprisingly, this centralizing move relies on a parallel monolingual ideology. For example, in the section where the language choice is made, the user is presented with a symbolic line separating all the languages:

English | Gaeilge | Dansk

The strict separation between *Gaeilge* and English in this particular location does not in fact reflect everyday life and local practice in this site of peripheral multilingualism, as outlined above, or in fact the everyday existence of both languages in Ireland.

The visitor, having chosen Irish, is then presented with the following statement in all three languages:

Translation in Progress

Much of this website is available in Irish now, and most of it will be. However, there will be occasional words or phrases in English, which is unavoidable.

Here we can see that a centrist ideology is being adopted in relation to the translation of the site. The provider states the need for separate, parallel versions; the Irish site needs ‘purity’ and should be used with caution until the site is complete. Being ‘complete’ means a site that is only in Irish and from which all English words have been eradicated. This reflects an ideology of ‘functional completeness’ (Moring 2007), which is seen as necessary in order for minority languages to be taken seriously. The respective language must be able to fulfil all functions in all domains and only then will it be normalized. However, the reality of everyday life in sites of peripheral multilingualism such as Dingle, is, in common with many of the sites discussed in this volume, very much one of mixed up, bilingual and hybrid language practices, which are very hard to separate and demarcate. However, on this commercial site, we can still see the ideal, which is that of parallel monolingualism (Heller 1999), and which reflects a centrist concept of multilingualism, involving bounded languages (as discussed in the introduction to the volume). The user must choose his/her language preference; a bilingual option (i.e. a mixed Irish and English version) is not possible. The centrist ideology of parallel monolingualism is reinforced by the search engine, Google, which saves the language preference of individual users and automatically enforces it on the user on their next visit,

strengthening the message that people speak one language, people prefer to speak one language (and only one at a time), and people only speak one language for one particular domain. In addition, if the user selects the Irish version of the site, the Google Translation toolbar automatically pops up with a warning that the site is in Irish and asks if the user wants to use the application to translate it back into the ‘normal’ language of that user (i.e. English).

The Irish version of the site is an identical, parallel version of the default English site with all the same features. As the user hovers over the list of links on the right hand side, synopses in English appear. In addition, Irish and English co-exist on this site, which is in fact a bilingual or mixed one, rather than a strictly monolingual one. For example, the link to join the mailing list includes instructions partly in English and in Irish, within a frame that is partly in English (including ads for the products and marketing discourse about the pottery) and partly in Irish (headings for tabs and links). English product names are used in descriptions that are written in Irish, and vice versa. The heading for the mailing list form is in English: ‘Join our mailing list/newsletter sign up’, while particulars such as email, name and country as well as instructions for completing the form are given in Irish only.

A customer comment in English is posted above an Irish text encouraging customers to click on the hyperlink to read more testimonials and customer comments:

Excellent Service—loved the pottery making.

*Féach ar a thuilleadh rudaí a dúirt custaiméirí eile* (My translation: Have a look at what other customers say)

Only one of the many customer posts featured is in Irish:

*Tá ceann de na mugs a cheannaigh me i 1980 agam fós Sean O Broin* (My translation: I still have one of the mugs I bought in 1980)

Interestingly, this particular poster uses ‘mugs’ rather than an Irish equivalent in his otherwise Irish language sentence, again highlighting the mixed language practices that are a feature of everyday life.

Peripheral practices are then in evidence throughout the designated *Gaeilge*/Irish language website, which is more mixed than the English version. In the English default site, Irish is used mainly for graphic/symbolic purposes, whereas in the designated *Gaeilge*/Irish language site, it fulfils unremarkable functions, as well as these symbolic functions. This takes place in a mixed, hybrid context where the frame is sometimes Irish, sometimes English, and sometimes both. However, as the ‘Translation in Progress’ warning indicates, this hybridity is seen as transitional phase, on the way to complete and separate versions; it is something that needs to be excused by the commercial actor, even though it actually works.

## DISCUSSION

As well as borrowing from globalized trends in terms of language practices on commercial websites, the *louismulcahy.com* site can also be seen to make its own norms: Danish is a chosen language for the site, not because of demands from foreign tourists, size of the language or number of speakers, but because it is an available resource and an individual initiative. The Irish-English practices on the website reflect a bottom-up initiative by an individual actor who will get the job finished (i.e. complete the translation) eventually, when there is time; but there is also an implicit acknowledgement that from a pragmatic point of view an unfinished, partially Irish site, can work and be acceptable (Bourdieu 1991) and can add value to the brand. Peripheral multilingual practices can be a reflection of a way of life that is removed from centres of norms and centres of power; they may also be a reflection that is at odds with the image that the centre has of this place as monolingual, peripheral, uncomplicated, and homogeneous (see the discussion in the introduction to the volume). In the current context of a language ideological shift from ‘bilingualism as deficit’ to ‘bilingualism as added value’ (Jaffe 2006: 51), and even more than this, a ‘valorization of multilingualism’ at the global level, and the development of global markets for ‘the expression of “authentic” minority language identities’ (p. 51), ‘transidiomatic practices’ (Jacquemet 2005) and having a little bit of the language can be enough to add difference and authenticity, no matter how fleeting.

Peripheral multilingualism thus offers the possibility to valorize the chaotic coexistence of languages and heteroglossic practices (cf. Pietikäinen, this volume). However, as we can see in the case of the Dingle/*An Daingean* renaming controversy, central authorities seek to impose order on such chaotic practices and carry out the necessary restorative boundary work (Bauman and Briggs 2003). Even for individual commercial actors and community members, while practices may be multilingual and mixed, ideologies and metalinguistic comment, as evidenced by the endangerment discourse and the invoking of a parallel monolingual discourse by *www.louismulcahy.com*, can reinforce and maintain centrist ideologies. Furthermore, while new technologies and means of production allow linguistic and other resources to circulate in more unregulated and fragmented ways (cf. Pietikäinen 2010), new modes and new technologies do not mean that centre ideologies automatically give way to more fluid ones.

The pottery website also shows how the ‘neo-Whorfian discourse’ (Jaffe 2006), the same one used in endangerment discourses (Duchêne and Heller 2007) and by minority language movements, can be utilized to appeal to tourists, consumers of crafts and cultural products. In this way businesses can create a ‘unique selling proposition’ in marketing discourse based on a ‘primordial language-culture connection in bounded communities’ (Jaffe 2006: 59). And thus, ‘minority and indigenous communities can reposition their identity as a commodifiable resource in the interconnected fields of tourism and cultural production’ (da Silva, McLaughlin, and Richards 2006: 186).

Relations between centre and periphery, between the majority and minority language, are, according to Aracil (1983), governed by a type of ‘linguistic interposition’, which means that relations are always determined from the perspective of the dominant language; in our terms from a centrist rather than a peripheral perspective. More than this, however, Pujolar (2006: 79) argues that linguistic interposition

generates a categorical division between the dominated and dominating languages that ends up influencing any situation perceived in any way to be ‘foreign’... And beyond this, any forum for interaction between that which is one’s own and that which is foreign is to be treated as a vacuum, an impossibility or as simply not existing.

In some ways, we can see the tokenistic use of Irish on the website and the ‘incomplete’ translation of the Irish version as evidence to support the persistence of ‘linguistic interposition’ and the continuing ‘impossibility’ of addressing a global audience directly through the minority language, thus leading to further peripheralization of Irish. However, if we look at this from an alternative point of view, the website represents the reality of the global-local connection, which, in this case at least, negates the peripherality of the physical site and bypasses the national level. For example, this is the first site to appear in the Google search engine if the term ‘Irish pottery’ is entered. The ‘traversals’ (Lemke 2002) that are enabled in cyberspace thus present a considerable challenge to established notions of peripherality and centrality. Furthermore if we abandon a centrist/monolingual ideology in measuring this interposition and imagine instead that it can happen through mixed language practices, then we can see new possibilities opening up in current practices.

As argued in the introduction to the volume, peripheral multilingual sites are also spaces for reinventing and reconfiguring borders and values of languages and their speakers, linked to the economy of local resources. As da Silva, McLaughlin, and Richards (2006) point out, ‘the very act of commodification can be seen as destabilizing’ and can have unexpected consequences not just for the relevant minority language. For example, even where the dominant (national/majority) language in a relationship of peripheral multilingualism is English, as in the case of Irish, its role as a tourist lingua franca gives it new meaning in its use and selection by [www.louismulcahy.com](http://www.louismulcahy.com) and other commercial actors. Its selection can take on the meaning of speaking to a global rather than/in addition to a national audience, thus possibly justifying its use as a positive rather than as a negative (i.e. not as an imposition by a dominant language in the national context or because of an individual’s lack of competence in the relevant minority language).

Finally, let us return to our concern with the individual commercial actor and his or her role in peripheral multilingualism. The current case reminds us that the individual commercial actor is not always straightforward, predictable, and rational

when making decisions about language in relation to his/her products, marketing, and so on. As Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 12) point out:

We have available the culturally produced semiotic resources of our societies, and are aware of the conventions and constraints which are socially imposed on our making of signs. However {we} are guided by interest, by the complex condensation of cultural and social histories and of awareness of present contingencies.

The linguistic decisions of individual actors such as [www.louismulcahy.com](http://www.louismulcahy.com) can be seen in terms of ‘the complex condensation of cultural and social histories and of awareness of present contingencies.’ Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) capture wonderfully the complexity of decision-making in a commercial environment, particularly involving individual actors in small communities, where ideological, social, cultural historical and other factors all play a part, but so too does pragmatism. Out of this messy and imperfect combination, creativity and individual acts of sign-making can be born, and this creativity seems key to understanding peripheral multilingualism.

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