

The grammatical explanations are concise, but couched in a technical terminology which, although necessary in so short a book, may be difficult for students, especially those educated in the United States. The major flaw in the organization of the book is the use of two separate systems of phonetic spelling: the International Phonetic Alphabet in the glossary, and the authors' own system in the lessons.

There is another aspect, which bears far greater relevance to the value of the book as part of the entire Irish language movement. It must be remembered that this is a member of a popular series and will appear in many stores throughout the English-speaking world, where no other book on Irish would ever be seen. In the last few years, a concerted effort has been made to establish a norm for the language. In 1948, the Irish Department of Education adopted a standardized spelling, which is used in this book. Also in 1958, the government issued an official grammar (Gramadach na Gaeilge - An Caighdean Oifigiúil); it was followed by a new edition of the Christian Brothers' Irish Grammar, using the same standard system. Regrettably, Mssrs. Dillon and O Croinin have chosen not to align themselves with this movement. They have used instead the speech of a limited area (West Kerry and Cork) with almost no reference to the existence of other, more widely spoken dialects. Indeed, they show little awareness of contemporary Irish as a living, dynamic force in Irish life.

When Teach Yourself Welsh was recently published, the authors provided an appendix, listing current books in Welsh, as well as magazines and newspapers. In Teach Yourself Irish, there is no mention of any current publications such as Inniu, or of books, such as those released by Club Leabhar. Most of the recommended books are out of print or even collectors' items. The Welshmen, Bowen and Jones, urge their students to use the language: "If you are a Welshman, then you will be a proper Welshman, standing on his own two feet, with his own language." Dillon and O Croinin make no such appeal. They hope readers will "feel their way into the Munster poetry of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and perhaps even the lyric and bardic poetry of an earlier time."

-- Walter Stock