"Brexit means Brexit": A Corpus Analysis of Irish-language BREXIT Neologisms in The Corpus of Contemporary Irish

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Abstract

The primary objective of this paper is to map the introduction and adoption of various Irish-language BREXIT neologisms in The Corpus of Contemporary Irish (CCI)[1]. This study follows a corpus approach and aims to record the development of Irish-language BREXIT neologisms in a subcorpus of media texts compiled from CCI. Firstly, a general overview is given of the Irish language along with a background to the development of various Irish-language BREXIT neologisms. The corpus is utilised to examine these terms and to identify any lexico-grammatical patterns of use. The emerging linguistic patterns are surveyed and discussed in the results section. This is a narrow study and is limited to print media, as there is currently no comprehensive corpus of spoken data available for Irish. While BREXIT is still a relatively new term, it is highly topical and in widespread use at the time of writing. This analysis aims to provide an insight into the development of unique Irish-language neologisms along with providing a base for future comparisons of similar neologisms in other minority languages

Keywords: Irish language, corpus linguistics, lexicography, neologisms

1   Introduction and background

The term BREXIT was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in December 2016 and has become a global word since its initial coinage in 2012. BREXIT is a blend of Britain or British with exit, which captures the meaning "Britain exiting from the EU" or "Britain's exit from the EU" or "British exit from the EU" (Fontaine 2017: 2). Its rapid rise in use reflects the importance of the phenomenon it describes, along with the need to fill a lexical gap in language. It is currently in widespread use and is universally accepted and understood in various languages around the world. There are two primary Irish-language equivalent terms in use – *Brexit* and *Breatimeacht*. While the term *Brexit* is commonly used in both spoken and written Irish, the term *Breatimeacht* has gained increased currency, and both terms are now frequently used. *Breatimeacht* is a blend of *Breatain* (Britain) with *imeacht* (to leave), which captures a similar meaning to its English-language equivalent.

The Irish language is an official language in Ireland and the European Union. Although it is recognized as the first official language in Ireland, it holds minority status. New Irish-language terms continually enter the lexicon in various domains, but it is difficult to predict which terms will be adopted and which will fall into decline.

Table 1: A sample of newly-coined Irish-language terms published in the National Terminology Database for Irish in 2018.

English term	Irish term	Domain
hackspace	*ceárta chomhspéise*	Computers, Computer Science
horizon scanning	*faire na fáistine*	Government › Administration
follow churning	*suaitheadh leanúna*	Computers, Computer Science › Information Technology › Internet › Social Media

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1   https://www.gaois.ie/g3m/ga/

While Crystal (1995: 132) claims that there is never any way of telling which neologisms will stay and which will go, Metcalf (2002: 152) suggests that the "success or failure of new words is not entirely random". The continual need for new words reflects the importance of language as a communication device (Kerremans 2013: 18) and the term BREXIT, in both English and Irish, is exceptional in the sense that it is a highly topical term and is much more frequently used than other newly-coined words.

> BREXIT has not simple come into use in an ad hoc and temporary way (i.e. not fully adopted into the language). It has on the contrary, gained media currency and is, at the time of writing, a term that all UK residents know. (Fontaine 2017: 13)

Kerremans (2013: 18) suggests that neologisms are often coined due to a combination of a social need which is frequently intertwined with a semantic need in the language, i.e. to fill a lexical gap. The creation and adoption of an individual Irish-language term for BREXIT to fill this empty space in Irish is unique insomuch as the English-language term BREXIT has gained currency in German-, Spanish- and French-language print media (Fontaine 2017: 5), and equivalent translated terms have not been commonly used or created in other languages.

2   Formation and development

The first recorded use of the term BREXIT in an Irish-language context stems from social media in May 2015 (confirmed by analysis undertaken by Kevin Scannell on Irish-language terms for BREXIT in online texts) (K Scannell 2018, personal communication, 22 March).

(1) Cúis faoiseamh dom nach iad an DUP atá ina "déantóir Rí". Cúis imní féidearthacht Brexit. Cúis amhrais easaontú na Ríochta. [8 May, 2015, Twitter] [2]

(1) It is a cause for relief for me that the DUP are not "king-makers". The possibility of Brexit is a cause for anxiety. Dissolution of the Empire is a cause for doubt.[3]

Similarly, the first recorded use of the Irish-language term *Breatimeacht* can be found on social media in November 2015. The initial Irish-language references focus primarily on the selection of an appropriate Irish-language term for BREXIT, with the term *Breatimeacht* prevailing as suitable term in subsequent discussions.

(2) Cé acu seo is fearr mar Ghaeilge ar Brexit? Breatamach, Breatimeacht, Breatscor nó Breatéalú? [5 November 2015, Facebook][4]

(2) Which of these is best as an Irish term for Brexit? *Breatamach, Breatimeacht, Breatscor* nó *Breatéalú*?

(3) … nárbh fhearr Breatimeacht? (ainneoin pbhreith RTE/BBC, Breatimeacht thar am, dar le go leor de mhuintir na 6 chontae 😉) [5 November, 2015, Twitter][5]

(3) … would *Breatimeacht* not be better? (despite RTE/BBC poll, about time for *Breatimeacht*, according to a lot of people in the 6 counties😉)

Following initial references online, both *Breatimeacht* and *Brexit* were added to *The National Database for Terminology* (téarma.ie[6]) and to *The New English-Irish Dictionary* (foclóir.ie[7]), two of the

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2   https://twitter.com/aonghusoha/status/596693772156706816

3   All translations are the author's own unless otherwise specified.

4   https://www.facebook.com/groups/166677873392308/permalink/973884952671592/

5   https://twitter.com/Cormacag5/status/662276243002404864

6   http://www.tearma.ie/Home.aspx

7   https://www.focloir.ie/en/

primary online Irish-language terminological and lexicographical resources currently available, in September 2016 and January 2017, respectively. *An Coiste Téarmaíochta* (The Terminology Committee) is responsible for the creation and development of authoritative standard Irish-language terms which are published in the téarma.ie database. Precedent is given to the term *Brexit* in the database, as the term *Breataimeacht* is marked with the explanatory note "in use". The term *Breatimeacht* is recorded in the database as an additional term in recognition of its frequent use in Irish (J Ní Mhaoileoin, personal communication, 22 March). However, the semantic meaning of the term *Breatimeacht* created difficulties for *An Coiste Téarmaíochta* prior to its inclusion in the téarma.ie database. As the term stems from the noun Britain (*Breatain*), it does not include Northern Ireland which is part of the United Kingdom but not part of Britain. Similar issues arose in relation to other proposed Irish-language terms which were in circulation during the decision-making process, e.g. *Sasamach* (a blend of *Sasana* (England) and *amach* (to go out)), *Bréalú* (a blend of *Breatain* (Britain) and *éalú* (to escape) along with other similar variations (ibid.)

Ní Ghallchobhair (2014: 226) sets out the guidelines followed by *An Coiste Téarmaíochta* in relation to Irish-language term creation, and both the terms *Brexit* and *Breatimeacht* fall within these.

- *Roghnú ó théarmaí dúchasacha a bailíodh* (to select from previously collected native terms);
- *Síneadh brí a chur le focail/míreanna dúchasacha* (to add an extended meaning to native words/parts);
- *Díorthú ó fhocal dúchasach (e.g. ainmfhocal as aidiacht)* (to derive from a native word (e.g. a noun from an adjective));
- *Iasachtaí a thraslitriú* (transliteration of loanwords);
- *Iasachtaí a fhágáil sa bhunteanga* (to leave loanwords in the source language);
- *Meafar Gaeilge in ionad meafair iasachta* (to choose an Irish-language metaphor over a loan metaphor);
- *Téarma tuairisciúil in ionad meafair iasachta* (to choose a descriptive term over a loan metaphor);
- *Lomaistriúchán* (calque, loan translation).

Additionally, both *Brexit* and *Breatimeacht* are listed as Irish-language words in *The New English-Irish Dictionary* (NEID), developed by *Foras na Gaeilge*. NEID is the most comprehensive English-Irish online dictionary currently available, and precedence is given to the word *Breataimeacht* over *Brexit*. *Breatimeacht* is listed as the initial entry and *Brexit* is marked with the explanatory note "foreign". Furthermore, only *Breatimeacht* is used in the Irish-language examples for "hard Brexit" (*Breatimeacht crua*) and "soft Brexit" (*Breatimeacht bog*).
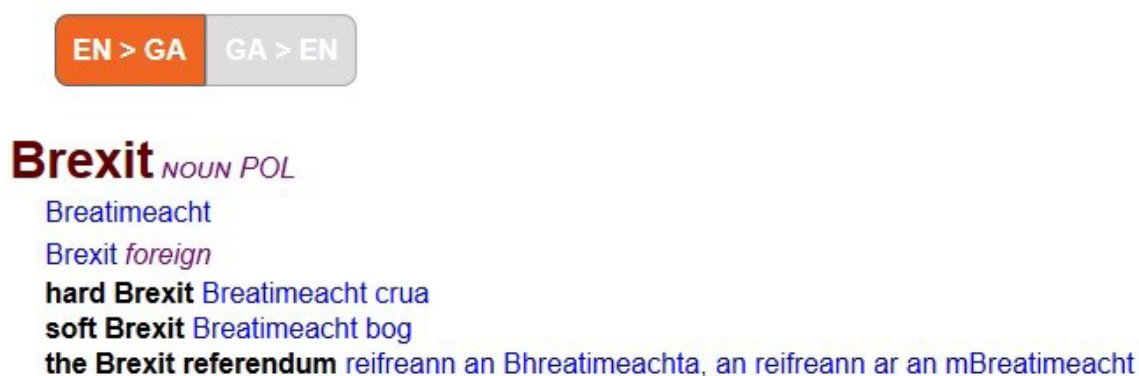

Figure 1: *New English-Irish Dictionary*, s.v. 'Brexit'[8]

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8   https://www.focloir.ie/en/dictionary/ei/Brexit

Kerremans (2013: 20) suggests that a positive influence in the adoption of neologisms "is to be expected when the neologism is used in more formal types of sources like newspapers and large Internet portals, because they guarantee a large readership that in turn can diffuse the neologism further in ever expanding circles." It could be suggested that the inclusion of the term *Breatimeacht* in both foclóir.ie and téarma.ie has assisted in its adoption over other Irish-language variants. Figure 2 maps various Irish-language BREXIT neologisms as used online. A significant increase in use is noted in June 2016, which reflects the term's topicality during the referendum regarding the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union. However, the increased usage of the term *Breatimeacht* over other Irish-language neologisms occurs from September 2016 onwards, which coincides with its inclusion in the téarma.ie database and subsequent addition to NEID.
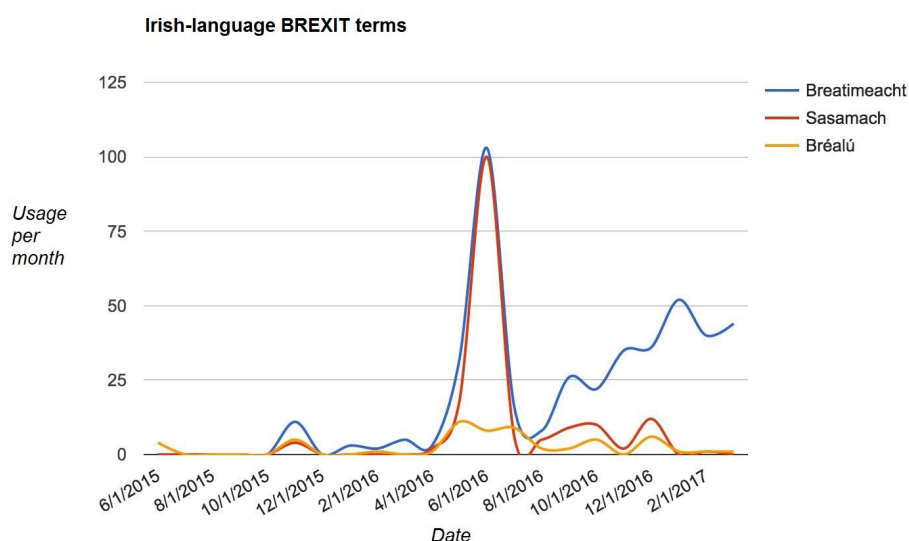
Irish-language BREXIT terms

Figure 2: Use of Irish-language BREXIT neologisms online[9].

Ní Laoire (2008: 191 as cited in O'Connell 2013: 199-200) suggests that even though there is limited evidence "of a direct casual, measurable link between media and language styles in a speech community", it is accepted that all aspects of the media "form part of the linguistic mix that is a speech community and can be accepted as reflecting current language use to some degree". Moreover, she argues that "the media may influence the speed and spread of changes in language use through their role in picking up and reflecting changes in progress" (ibid.) Although the sociolinguistic factors influencing the adoption of the term *Breatimeacht* over other Irish-language equivalent terms is not the central focus of this paper, it is submitted that the selection and conscious use of the term *Breatimeacht* on the primary Irish-language current affairs radio show *Cormac ag a Cúig* (F Ó Drisceoil, personal communication, 11 May) has helped its dissemination and adoption in Irish-speaking communities. However, further analysis is needed to comprehensively assess why the term *Breatimeacht* has gained precedence over other Irish-language equivalent terms.

3   Methodology

The Corpus of Contemporary Irish, the principal Irish-language corpus of published texts in the 21st century, is utilised in this study to examine the incremental rise in use of the term *Breatimeacht* over other Irish-language neologisms coined to describe BREXIT. A subcorpus of print media texts was

9   https://twitter.com/kscanne/status/844958295047766017 (With permission from Kevin Scannell)

created to facilitate this study, ranging from the term's first recorded use in November 2015 to December 2017. The corpus was compiled using the AntConc corpus analysis toolkit (Anthony 2018), and contains 8.2 million words. This is an unannotated corpus, and its contents are set out in the appendix of this paper. This study follows a corpus-based approach, as previously identified Irish-language BREXIT neologisms are analysed in the corpus search. However, it is also corpus-driven as it does not limit the search to these terms alone, but seeks to uncover other Irish-language terms and phrases used to describe BREXIT. Since the corpus is unannotated, each of the variant morphological forms for both terms *Brexit* and *Breatimeacht* were queried to ensure a complete reflection of frequency and usage was reported.

Initially, a word list was generated, and any potential Irish-language equivalent terms for BREXIT were selected and analysed. These terms were chosen by examining entries on the word list beginning with the letter 'b' (*Breatain* / Britain), 's' (*Sasana* / England) and 'r' (*Ríocht Aontaithe* / United Kingdom). The resultant terms along with their frequency in the corpus are listed in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Frequency of BREXIT terms in CCI

Term	Frequency
Breatimeacht	925
Brexit	314
Sasamach	17
Bréalú	14
Breataimeacht	2
Breatamach	1
Breatéalú	1
Brimeacht	1

The following section discusses the primary usage patterns for the terms *Brexit*, *Breatimeacht*, *Sasamach* and *Bréalú*. Results with a frequency lower than five are not included in this analysis. As this is an unannotated corpus, a collocational analysis of the various terms could not be undertaken due to numerous morphological variations which were presented in the results. However, a future analysis of this would provide an interesting insight into the various collocational and frequency patterns of these terms.

4   Results

4.1   Markers

Fontaine (2017: 4) states that as new words are coined they are generally marked in some way as they enter the language.

> When a word first appears in a language, whether as a loan or calque, or as a nonce formation, it appears that speakers are aware of its newness, that is they are aware that they are exploiting the productivity of the language system. Thus, in modern journalistic language the word is often put in inverted commas, a phrase is added such as "what has been called", "as it is termed" and so on, or a complete gloss is provide. (Bauer (1983: 42) as cited in Fontaine (2017: 4))

There is strong evidence in the corpus of each of these factors in the Irish-language forms presented in the results.

Bréalú

(4) Leis an reifreann maidir le "Bréalú" nó "Brexit" ag tarraingt orainn i mí Meithimh, tá an díospóireacht faoi lán seoil, ach cad é an tionchar a bheas aige orainne sna Sé Chontae? (2016-03-22, *Meon Eile*)

(4) With the "*Bréalú*" or "*Brexit*" referendum approaching us in June, the debate is in full swing, but what impact will it have on us in the Six Counties?

(5) Léiríonn taighde an ESRI gur gnónna i dTuaisceart Éireann agus i gcontaethe ar an dteorainn is measa a bhuailfí dá dtárlódh 'Bréalú', sé sin dá bhfágfadh an Bhreatain an t-Aontas Eorpach. (2015-11-05, *Nuacht RTÉ*)

(5) ESRI research reflects that businesses in Northern Ireland and in border counties would be worst affected if '*Bréalú*' takes place, that is if Britain leaves the European Union.

Sasamach

(6) Ach go luath tar éis an vóta ar son 'Sasamach' thug sé tuairim uaidh don *Belfast Telegraph* ag rá go mbeadh daoine ó thuaidh anois ag meá cén todhchaí ab fhearr leo – fánacht sa Ríocht Aontaithe ach lasmuigh den Aontas Eorpach nó bheith mar bhaill d'Éirinn Aontaithe a bheadh mar chuid den Aontas Eorpach. (2016-07-18, *Meon Eile*)

(6) But shortly after the vote for '*Sasamach*' he gave his opinion to the *Belfast Telegraph*, stating that people in the north were now weighing up which future they would prefer – to remain in the United Kingdom but outside the European Union or as members of a United Ireland which would be part of the European Union.

(7) Ach, tá tírdhreach na hAlban athraithe ó bhonn anois agus is é Páirtí Náisiúnta na hAlban atá anois i mbun cúrsaí agus iad ag ullmhú leo le haghaidh athreifrinn i ndiaidh an vóta ar son Breatimeachta (nó 'Sasamach' mar is gnáth le hEoghan Ó Néill a thabhairt air ar Raidió Fáilte). (June 2016*, An tUltach*)

(7) But the landscape in Scotland is now utterly changed and it is the Scottish Nationalist Party that is now in charge and they are preparing for a re-referendum after the vote for *Breatimeachta* (or '*Sasamach*' as Eoghan Ó Néill is inclined to refer to it on Raidió Fáilte.

Breatimeacht

(8) Agus é ag trácht ar cheist na 'Breatimeachta' (Brexit) an tseachtain seo caite dúirt ár dTaoiseach Ionúin linn go gcrochfaí claí na teorann aríst ar an bpointe boise dá mba rud é go bhfágadh an Ríocht Aontaithe an tAontas Eorpach. (2016-01-26, *Tuairisc.ie*)

(8) While referring to the '*Breatimeachta*' (Brexit) question last week, our Beloved Taoiseach informed us that the border fence would be re-established immediately if the United Kingdom left the European Union.

(9) Má tá an Bhreatain idir dhá cheann na meá maidir le fanacht nó imeacht, ní bheadh a lán daoine in Éirinn a bheadh in amhras ná gur chóir dúinne cloí go daingean lenár mballraíocht, pé bóthar a thógfadh an Bhreatain nó pé fadhbanna a chruthódh 'Breatimeacht' dúinn. (April 2016, *Feasta*)

(9) If Britain is hanging in the balance regarding staying or leaving, not many people in Ireland will be in doubt that we should adherently stick to our membership, despite the road Britain will take or whatever problems '*Breatimeacht*' will create for us.

Brexit

(10) Ag caitheamh leide a bhí sé ag Méara Londain Boris Johnson, atá ar son "Brexit", is é sin an Bhreatain ag fágáil an AE. (2016-02-22, *Nuacht RTÉ*)

(10) He was giving a hint to the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, who is for "Brexit", that is Britain leaving the EU.

(11) Cé go mbíodh Sinn Féin ar an dul Eoraisceipteach céanna leis na haontachtaithe tá siad iompaithe i bhfabhar agus ag tabhairt foláirimh faoin gcontúirt d'Éirinn, thuaidh agus theas, dá nglacfaí le 'Breatamach' – Brexit mar a thugtar air. (2016-02-23, *Tuairisc.ie*)

(11) Even though Sinn Féin have been on the same Eurosceptic side as the unionists, they have turned in favour and are warning about the dangers that exist for Ireland, both north and south, if '*Breatamach*'– Brexit as it is termed, is accepted.

As seen in the above examples, the newness of each term is primarily marked in results relating to late 2015 and 2016. The use of markers is not as frequent in the corpus results from 2017 onwards, which suggests the terms have been conventionalized to some degree. Additionally, an explanatory gloss follows the newly-coined terms in examples (5) and (11). Both *Sasamach* and *Bréalú* mainly occur in results from 2016, and both terms are chiefly found in publications based in Northern Ireland, e.g. *An tUltach* and *Meon Eile*. The contextual use of these terms reflects the potential political and economic impact the United Kingdom leaving the European Union could have on Northern Ireland. Furthermore, example (7) suggests the term *Sasamach* is predominantly used by Eoghan Ó Néill, a radio presenter and journalist based in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Both *Bréalú* and *Sasamach* have not been widely adopted, as evidenced by the limited number of examples produced in the corpus results. The following section focuses on the development of the term *Breatimeacht* along with its primary patterns of use.

4.2   Gender

While the term *Breatimeacht* is classified as a masculine noun, it is used both as a masculine and feminine noun in the corpus results. In Irish, a masculine noun following a definite article is not typically lenited, e.g. *an fear* (the man). However, a feminine noun following a definite article is typically lenited, e.g. *an bhean* (the woman). Examples (12) and (13) show *Breatimeacht* used as both a masculine and feminine noun.

(12) Agus an Breatimeacht ag druidim linn, tá imní ar an gCoiste go ndéanfar maolú ar an aitheantas a tugadh don Ghaeilge i dTuaisceart na hÉireann le blianta beaga anuas. (August 2017, *Feasta*)

(12) With the *Breatimeacht* getting ever closer, the Committee is worried that the recognition given to the Irish language in Northern Ireland in recent years will be reduced.

(13) Is í an Bhreatimeacht an t-athrú is mó ar shaol na ndaoine le fada. (2016-07-27, *Tuairisc.ie*)

(13) The *Breatimeacht* is the biggest change affecting people's lives in a long time.

Another example of variation in gender can be seen in the use of *Breatimeacht* in conjunction with an adjective. In Irish, an adjective following a masculine noun is not typically lenited, but an adjective following a feminine noun is. Examples (14) and (15) show the Irish-language term for "hard Brexit", with example (14) reflecting its use as a masculine noun, e.g. *Breatimeacht crua* and example (15) reflecting its use as a feminine noun, e.g. *Breatimeacht chrua*.

(14) Níl aon mhíniú tairgthe aici ach oiread ar a ráiteas "no deal is better than a bad deal", ná ar an bhfáth go mb'fhearr Breatimeacht crua ná socrú éigin a chuideodh le comhlachtaí na Breataine earraí a dhíol san AE. (2017-06-01, *Tuairisc.ie*)

(14) She has offered no explanation either on her statement "no deal is better than a bad deal", nor a reason as to why a hard *Breatimeacht* would be preferable nor some type of an arrangement which would help British businesses sell products in the EU.

(15) Ba chosúil nár mhian léi eolas ar bith a scaoileadh cé is moite de leide a thabhairt gur Breatimeacht chrua a bheadh ann. (November 2016, *Comhar*)

(15) It appears that she would not like to give anything away except to hint that a hard *Breatimeacht* will happen.

There are a few possible reasons for the variance in gender exemplified in the corpus results. As previously stated, *Breatimeacht* is a blend of the terms *Breatain* and *imeacht*. The term *imeacht* is classified both as a verbal noun and masculine noun in Irish. However, many nouns ending in -(e)acht are classified as feminine in Irish, and this could lead to confusion in relation to the gender of a newly-coined term such as *Breatimeacht*. The primary Irish-English dictionary, *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* (Ó Dónaill 1977), classifies *imeacht* as a masculine noun. However, an additional variant form is included in the dictionary, which suggests that *imeacht* is also used as a feminine noun (ibid. s.v. 'imeacht') which reflects specific dialectal usage. Furthermore, the term *Breatain* (Britain) is a feminine noun which might lead to the presumption that *Breatimeacht* should be classified as a feminine noun. A future quantitative comparative analysis of both *Breatimeacht* and *imeacht* in relation to gender variance could provide insight into whether *Breatimeacht* as a feminine noun is more common than *imeacht* as a feminine noun. This analysis would also assist in explaining whether the variance in gender of *Breatimeacht* is influenced by the term *Breatain,* classified as a feminine noun, or whether the variance of gender in the corpus examples is a result of the term's relevant newness and recent coinage.

4.3   Definite article

In addition to variance in gender, the corpus results reflect the intermittent use of a definite article in conjunction with the term for BREXIT, e.g. *an Breatimeacht.* The inclusion and exclusion of a definite article is shown in a sample of results below.

(16) Luadh an Breatimeacht agus na deacrachtaí leis an Fheidhmeannas i rún na hArd-Chraoibhe i dtaca le hAcht Gaeilge de. (March 2017, *An tUltach*)

(16) The *Breatimeacht* and the issues with the Executive were mentioned in a resolution by the *Ard-Chraobh* in relation to an Irish Language Act.

(17) Cás ar leith é Tuaisceart Éireann agus dá bhrí sin caithfear é a chosaint ó Bhreatimeacht. (2016-08-14, *Tuairisc.ie*)

(17) Northern Ireland is an exceptional case and therefore needs to be protected from *Bhreatimeacht*.

(18) B'fhéidir gur dóigh leat gur fada é seo ón mBreatimeacht. (2016-03-14, *The Irish Times*)

(18) Maybe you think that this is a long way from the *mBreatimeacht*.

(19) Sholáthair Nicola Sturgeon plécháipéis polasaí faoi stádas na hAlban san Aontas Eorpach agus cé gur vótáil an Bhreatain Bheag i bhfabhar Breatimeachta, chuir an Chéad-Aire Carwyn Jones polasaí chun tosaigh i bhfabhar ceangal leis an margadh Eorpach. (2017-01-31, *Tuairisc.ie*)

(19) Nicola Sturgeon provided a discussion policy document in relation to Scotland's status in the European Union and even though Wales voted for *Breatimeachta*, First Minister Carwyn Jones put forward a policy in favour of linking with the European market.

(20) Reifreann sa Ríocht Aontaithe inar vótáladh i bhfabhar na Breatimeachta, nach léir a toradh fós. (December 2016, *Comhar*)

(20) A referendum in the United Kingdom in which the *Breatimeachta* was voted for, its results are still not clear.

(21) Ar *Monocycle*, ní luaitear toghchán Mheiriceá, ní luaitear Breatimeacht, ní luaitear ráta malairte. (2016-07-08, *NÓS*)

(21) On *Monocycle*, the American election is not mentioned, *Breatimeacht* is not mentioned, exchange rates are not mentioned.

Examples (16), (18) and (20) show the use of the term *Breatimeacht* in conjunction with a definite article. However, examples (17), (19) and (21) show the use of the term *Breatimeacht* without a definite article. *An Caighdeán Oifigiúil* (2016: 4), the official standard for Irish, states a definite article should be used when a noun has an abstract or conceptual meaning associated with it. This suggests that a

definite article should be used in conjunction with the term *Breatimeacht,* but the implementation of this rule varies greatly in the corpus results, as evidenced in example (16) to (21).

4.4   Periphrastic sentences

Zabaleta et al. (2008: 207) suggests that one of the primary difficulties facing journalists working in minority languages is "the translation and/or formation of technical words that, as a rule, refer to specialized topics and come from wire services or sources in the majority language." The following points are listed as strategies which are utilised by communities, media organizations and journalists to combat these difficulties:

> (1) looking up in dictionaries; (2) writing periphrastic sentences that would circumvent the need for a specific term; (3) newsroom discussions and agreement on new terms; (4) language training courses organized by the organizations; (5) elaboration of internal stylebooks; and (6) hiring of linguists to correct and standardize the writing of journalists, a capacity only in the hands of large media outlets (ibid.)

The corpus results show some evidence of Zabaleta et al.'s second point, i.e. writing periphrastic sentences that would circumvent the need for a specific term. The primary phrase employed in reference to BREXIT in the corpus is *imeacht na Breataine as an Aontas Eorpach* or its variant form *imeacht na Breataine ón Aontas Eorpach* which translates as "Britain leaving the European Union".

(22) Chaith Seansailéir an Státchiste, George Osborne, dhá lá abhus i mbun feachtais ag tathant ar dhaoine vótáil in aghaidh imeacht na Breataine as an Aontas Eorpach sa reifreann ar an 23 Meitheamh. (2016-06-07, *Tuairisc.ie*)

(22) The Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, spent two days there campaigning and urging people to vote against Britain leaving the European Union in the referendum on the 23 June.

(23) …agus go gcinnteoidh an Rialtas ó dheas roimh imeacht na Breataine as an Aontas Eorpach nach ndéanfar aon laghdú ar stádas oifigiúil na Gaeilge mar theanga oibre san Aontas Eorpach, agus go leanfar ar aghaidh leis an aitheantas don Ghaeilge mar phríomhtheanga na hÉireann sa bhaile agus thar lear. (August 2017, *Feasta*)

(23) … and that the government in the south would confirm before Britain leaves the European Union that the status of the Irish language as an official language of the European Union will not be reduced, and the recognition of the Irish language as the primary language of Ireland at home and abroad will continue.

(24) Bhuail an Taoiseach Enda Kenny le príomhaire na Breataine David Cameron an tseachtain seo caite agus bhí Brexit – imeacht na Breataine ón Aontas Eorpach – ar cheann de na hábhair a phléigh siad. (2016-02-03, *The Irish Times*)

(24) The Taoiseach Enda Kenny met with the British Prime Minister, David Cameron last week and Brexit – Britain leaving the European Union – was one of the topics under discussion.

However, it is accepted that the phrase "Britain leaving the European Union" and its variant forms is also used in other languages, and a comprehensive comparison of use would need to be undertaken to confirm whether the Irish-language phrase is more prevalent than its equivalent form in majority languages. Ní Ghallchobhair (2014:3) suggests that journalists in spoken media focus on concise and clear language and are inclined to simplify, or completely avoid, technical terms. It is suggested that print journalists are not as restricted regarding space and have an opportunity to review a new term or phrase (ibid.), which could explain the use of such periphrastic sentences in this corpus of print media texts. However, such phrases are also in use in other non-minority languages, and as there is no spoken corpus of Irish language media currently available it is difficult to confirm whether periphrastic sentences are more commonly used to describe BREXIT over the equivalent terms *Brexit* or *Breatimeacht* in Irish.

5   Conclusion

This paper aimed to map the adoption and development of Irish-language BREXIT neologisms through undertaking a corpus analysis of use in print media. The corpus results show that the newly-coined term, *Breatimeacht*, has gained precedence in Irish-language print media over other Irish-language equivalent terms. These results contrast to analysis undertaken on the use of both *Brexit* and *Breatimeacht* in Irish-language content online (K Scannell 2018, personal communication, 22 March). At the time of writing, the term *Brexit* (1998 references) has gained precedence over *Breatimeacht* (1813 references) in online references. While the research presented in this paper provides an insight into initial use of Irish-language BREXIT neologisms in print media, further work is needed to provide a more comprehensive overview of the terms' adoption and patterns of use, especially in spoken media. It is yet to be seen whether *Breatimeacht* will become a fully conventionalized term in Irish or whether it is just a transitory vogue word such as "millennium bug or Y2K, which were in vogue towards the end of 1999… and do not (or hardly) occur in current language" (Kerremans 2013: 38). The linguistic analysis and contextual examples suggest that *Breatimeacht* has gained widespread dissemination in print media and this has assisted in its use and adoption in other domains. It has gained the upper hand over other Irish-language BREXIT neologisms in print media, but the contextual examples reflect that there is still some uncertainty in relation to its uniformity of use, e.g. gender. However, its topicality can only further increase its awareness and dissemination, and thus it has strong potential of becoming fully conventionalized in the Irish-language.

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Acknowledgements

Appendix

Corpus Source	Date	Available
An tUltach	2015-2017	https://antultach.wordpress.com/
Comhar	2015-2017	https://comhar.ie/
Feasta	2015-2017	http://www.feasta.ie/
NÓS	2015-2017	https://nos.ie/
Nuacht RTÉ	2015-2017	https://www.rte.ie/news/nuacht/
The Irish Times (Irish-language articles)	2015-2017	https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/treibh
Tuairisc.ie	2015-2017	https://tuairisc.ie/