

## 4 *The semi-vowel and consonant systems*

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### 4.1 Semi-vowels

Some sounds in Irish have a very limited usage in actual pronunciation. A good example is the fact that /ɣ/ is needed only initially in Irish (as opposed to Scottish Gaelic where it is found non-initially). Another example is the fact that while slender *dh/gh* /j/ and slender *ch* /xʰ/ are found initially in all dialects, only in Donegal and Connacht are slender *dh/gh* /j/ and slender *ch* /xʰ/ necessary medially. Yet despite the restricted occurrence of such sounds in actual pronunciation, an underlying broad *dh/gh* /ɣ/, slender *dh/gh* /j/, broad *bh* /w/ and broad *mh* /w̃/ are required in order to explain the relationship which exists between certain forms.

#### 4.1.1 Slender fricatives

Here the conversion of a semi-vowel slender *ch* /xʰ/ or slender *bh/mh* /ɣʰ/ to /j/ is our main concern; but the further change *dh/gh* /j/ to /gʰ/ is also discussed.

**4.1.1(i) Treatment of slender *ch* /xʰ/ and slender *dh/gh* /j/.** The various developments of slender *ch* /xʰ/ and slender *dh/gh* /j/ in the major dialects are illustrated in Table 4.1.

In summary it can be said that slender *ch* /xʰ/ either must be preserved as in *cloiche* /kloxʰə/ (D, Mo) or be changed to /h/ as in *cloiche* /klohə/ (M) or be changed to /j/ following an unstressed vowel. Conversely, slender *dh/gh* /j/ is changed to slender *ch* /xʰ/ as in *cruaidh* /kru:əxʰ/ (Mo).

It must be pointed out that, although the convention in Irish is to spell the plural of *éadach* ‘cloth’ as *éadaighe* (or more recently *éadaí*), from a morphological point of view, we are dealing with a plural formed by slendering with the addition of the vowel *-e* /ə/ (see 7.3.2), i.e. *éadaiche* (→ /e:di:/). [The addition of an underlying /ə/ is necessary to allow for the difference between, for instance *éadach* ‘cloth’, plural /e:di:/ and *bromach* ‘colt’, plural /brumə/ (Cf).] Similarly, although the genitive of *bealach* ‘way’ is

conventionally spelt *bealaigh*, showing the slender *gh* /j/, this is morphologically a case of a genitive formed by slendering [see 6.3.1(i)]. There are one or two noteworthy exceptions to the general rules as shown in Table 4.1. For instance in the genitive of *teach* (M, C) ‘house’, which is based on *tighe* (M, C) (now conventionally spelt *tí*), slender *ch* /xʰ/ is changed to /j/ rather than /h/, i.e. /tʰixʰə/ → /tʰijə/ (→ /tʰi:/).

Table 4.1 *Treatment of slender ch /xʰ/ and slender dh/gh /j/ in major dialects*

Dialect	After a short stressed vowel	After a long stressed vowel	After /ə/	Unstressed word final position
	<i>cloiche</i> gen. of <i>cloch</i> ‘stone’	<i>cruaidh</i> ‘hard’	<i>éadaighe</i> ‘clothes’	<i>bealaigh</i> , gen. of <i>bealach</i> ‘way’
Donegal	/kloxʰə/	/kru:əj/	/j/ /e:dəjə/ (→ /e:di:/)	/j/ /bʰaləj/ (→ /bʰali:/)
Mayo	/kloxʰə/	/xʰ/ /kru:xʰə/ (except after /i:/ <i>fraoich</i> /j/ /fri:j/ (→ /fri:/))	/j/ /e:dəjə/ (→ /e:di:/)	/j/ /bʰaləj/ (→ /bʰali:/)
Cois Fhairrge	/h/ /klohə/ (→ /klo:/)	/kru:əj/ (→ /kru:ə/)	/j/ /e:dəjə/ (→ /e:di:/)	/j/ /bʰaləj/ (→ /bʰalə/)
Munster	/h/ /klohə/	/kru:əj/ (→ /kru:əgʰ/)	/j/ /e:dəjə/ (→ /e:di:/)	/j/ /bʰaləj/ (→ /bʰaləgʰ/)

**4.1.1(ii) Interchange between slender dh/gh /j/ and slender g /gʰ/.** There is a major rule in Munster which changes slender *dh/gh* /j/ to /gʰ/, e.g.:

- (1) *cruaidh* /kru:əj/ → /kru:əgʰ/ ‘hard’  
*d’éirigh* (*Seán*) /dʰairʰəj/ → /dʰairʰəgʰ/ (M) ‘(Seán) got up’

However, between a finite verbal form and a pronoun subject, the rule does not take effect:

- (2) *d’éirigh sé* /dʰairʰəj/ (→ /dʰairʰə/) ‘he got up’

Two grades of word boundary need to be distinguished and for convenience the boundary between the finite verbal form and a pronoun subject might be

labelled a ‘weak’ word boundary as opposed to a ‘strong’ boundary where no subject pronoun follows.

There are sporadic examples of this rule in other dialects, e.g. *Seoighe* ‘Surname’ as /s’o:ɣ’/ (Cn).

**4.1.1(iii) Development of slender bh/mh /v̥’/.** The various treatments of slender *bh/mh* /v̥’/ are illustrated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 *Treatment of slender bh/mh /v̥’/ in major dialects*

Dialect	After short stressed vowel	After /ə/ (non-final)	Unstressed word final position	Before consonant (except /s/)
	<i>nimhe</i> gen. of <i>nimh</i> ‘poison’	<i>gainimhe</i> gen. of <i>gaineamh</i> , <i>Gaillimhe</i> gen. of <i>Gaillimh</i> ‘Galway’	<i>gaineamh/ gainimh</i> ‘sand’	<i>nimhneach</i> ‘poisonous’ ( <i>nimhneas</i> ‘poisonousness’)
Donegal	/n’iv’ə/		/gan’əv’/ (Mn, Gd)	/n’iv’n’əx/ (→ /n’iv’n’əx/)
Mayo	/n’iv’ə/	/j/ /gan’əjə/ (→ /gan’i:/)	/j/ /gan’əv’/ (/gan’əj/ → /gan’i:/)	/n’iv’n’əx/ (→ /n’iv’n’əx/)
Connemara	/n’iv’ə/	/ga:l’əv’ə/	/j/ /gan’əj/ (→ /gan’ə/)	/n’iv’n’əs/ (→ /n’iv’n’əs/)
Munster	/j/ /n’ij’ə/ (→ /n’i:/)	/j/ /ga:l’əjə/ (→ /ga’l’i:/)	/gan’əv’/	/j/ /n’ijn’əx/ (→ /n’im’əx/)

Examples are scarce and it is necessary to use the word for ‘sand’ in which gender (and consequently inflection) fluctuate: see 7.1.2.

In summary, slender *bh/mh* /v̥’/ must either be preserved or changed to /j/. As can be seen from Table 4.2, the change to slender /j/ is needed more frequently in Munster than elsewhere.

There are some exceptions to the general rules shown in Table 4.2. In Mayo, after a neutral vowel /ə/, slender *bh/mh* /v̥’/ is retained in *tairbhe* /tar’əv’ə/ ‘benefit’ and, presumably under Galway influence, in *Gaillimhe* /ga:l’əv’ə/, gen. of *Gaillimh* ‘Galway’.

In Connemara slender *bh/mh* /v̥’/ is changed to /j/ in *scribhneoir* /s’k’r’ij:n’oir’/ (→ /s’k’r’i:n’oir’/) ‘writer’ and presumably under Munster influence, in the adjective *Muimhneach* /mij:n’əx/ (→ /mi:n’əx/) ‘Munsterman’.

In Munster, the general rule is that slender *mh/bh* (i.e. /vʲ/) is changed to /j/ as in:

- (3) *nimhe* /nʲijə/ (→ /nʲi:/), gen. of *nimh* ‘poison’  
*aimhleas* /ajlʲəs/ (→ /ailʲəs/) ‘disadvantage’  
*deimhin* /dʲejənʲ/ (→ /dʲainʲ/) ‘certain’  
*duibhe* /dijə/ (→ /di:/) comparative of *dubh* ‘black’  
*goibhní* /gejnʲi:/ (→ /gəinʲi:/ → /gəiŋʲi:/) (Mk) ‘smiths’

There are, however, exceptions such as:

- (4) *uimhir* /ivʲərʲ/ ‘number’  
*soibhir* /sevʲərʲ/ ‘rich’

Interestingly, while *soibhreas* is /sevʲərʲəs/ ‘wealth’, the pronunciation /səirʲəs/ is needed in Munster verse.

**4.1.1(iv) Random change of slender dh/gh /j/ to /vʲ/.** There is a very restricted minor rule which is in effect the opposite rule to that treated above. Under this rule slender *dh/gh* /j/ → /vʲ/ in examples such as:

- (5) *guidhe* /gijə/ → /givʲə/ (C) ‘praying’  
*eidhean* /ejən/ → /evʲən/ (Tm) [(→ /evʲən/ (Cn))] ‘ivy’  
*tighthí* /tʲijhi:/ → /tʲivʲhʲi:/ (→ /tʲifʲi:/) (Er) ‘houses’  
*thoigh* /hej/ → /hevʲ/ (Dn, Mk) ‘chose’

There is, in fact, another even more restricted minor rule which is the voiceless equivalent of the change /j/ → /vʲ/. Under this rule slender *ch* /xʲ/ is changed to slender *f* /fʲ/ in examples such as:

- (6) *cluiche* /klɪxʲə/ → /klifʲə/ (C) ‘game’  
*doicheall* /dexʲəl/ → /defʲəl/ (C) ‘inhospitality’

All the rules noted concerning slender fricatives in 4.1.1(i-iv) must be applied before the merger of semi-vowels with neighbouring vowels (see 4.1.3) and before the removal of semi-vowels (see 4.1.4).

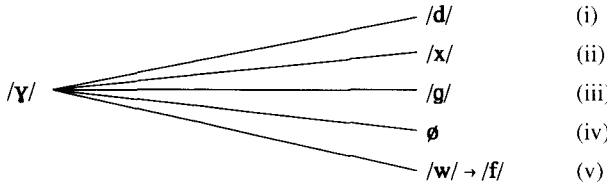
#### 4.1.2 The voiced velar fricative

As was pointed out in 4.1, apart from word-initial position, the status of the voiced velar fricative /ɣ/ is purely theoretical. The voiced velar fricative

broad *dh/gh* /ɣ/ in the underlying forms is changed in ways which correspond to those of the palatal fricative *dh/gh* /j/. Yet broad *dh/gh* /ɣ/ is changed to /x/ and /w/, which is exactly the reverse of the changes to slender *ch* /x'/ and slender *bh/mh* /ɣ'/ to /j/ which were dealt with in 4.1.1.

There are five different ways in which the velar fricative must be changed as shown in Figure 4.1:

Figure 4.1 Changes required for broad *dh/gh* /ɣ/



**4.1.2(i) Broad *dh/gh* /ɣ/ changed to /d/.** This change is required in verbal forms which are immediately followed by a personal subject pronoun, e.g.

- (7) *bhriseadh sé* /v'ɾ'is'əɣ s'e:/ → /v'ɾ'is'əd s'e:/ (→ /v'ɾ'is'əɟ s'e:/)  
(C, D) 'he used to break'

This rule operates in Connacht and Donegal but not in Munster and would appear to be optional in parts of Connemara.

**4.1.2(ii) Broad *dh/gh* /ɣ/ changed to /x/.** This devoicing of broad *dh/gh* /ɣ/ to /x/ is needed after the change of broad *dh/gh* /ɣ/ → /d/ treated in 4.1.2(i), so that it is now possible to state a rule that in Connemara and Munster any broad *dh/gh* /ɣ/ which remains in a finite verbal form (excluding the impersonal form) must be changed to /x/:

- (8) *bhriseadh* /v'ɾ'is'əɣ/ → /v'ɾ'is'əx/ 'used to break'

In Donegal and Mayo /ɣ/ → /w/ [see 4.1.2(v)] → /u:/ [see 4.1.3(ii)], e.g. *bhriseadh* /v'ɾ'is'u:/. In West Kerry this devoicing is also required in the impersonal *briseadh* /b'ɾ'is'əɣ/ → /b'ɾ'is'əx/ (Dn) 'one broke'.

**4.1.2(iii) Broad *dh/gh* /ɣ/ changed to /g/.** This rule affects the impersonal form in certain Munster dialects, e.g. *-(e)adh* /b'ɾ'is'əɣ/ → /b'ɾ'is'əg/ (Mk). There are further sporadic examples where this change is necessary, e.g.:

- (9) *carghas* /karyəs/ → /kargəs/ → /karəgəs/ (D) ‘Lent’  
*Fearghal* /f‘aryəl/ → /f‘argəl/ → /f‘arəgəl/ (D) (a man’s name)  
*blioghan* /b‘lyəŋ/ → /b‘lyəŋ/ (Mn) ‘milking’

**4.1.2(iv) Removal of broad dh/gh /ɣ/.** Broad *dh/gh /ɣ/* is removed after a stressed long vowel, e.g.:

- (10) *tuagh* /tu:əɣ/ → /tu:ə/ ‘an axe’

On the removal of /ɣ/ a preceding short vowel is lengthened, e.g.:

- (11) *leaghadh* /L‘ayəɣ/ → /L‘a:ɣ/ [→ /L‘a:w/ (Cn)] ‘melting’  
*bleaghan* /b‘lyəŋ/ → /b‘l:a:n/ [→ /b‘l:a:n/ (Cn)] ‘milking’  
*faghann* /fayəŋ/ → /fa:n/ [→ /fa:n/ (Cn)] ‘gets’

The broad *dh/gh /ɣ/* is needed in the underlying forms of these words in order to allow for the relationships between, e.g. *bligh* ‘milk’ and *bleaghan* (now conventionally spelt *bleán*) ‘milking’ or the relationship between *leaghann* /L‘a:n/ (Cn), *leáighim* /L‘ajəm/ (Er) and *leigheann* /l‘ain/ (M), /L‘e:n/ (D) ‘melts’. For further discussion of this variation between broad *dh/gh /ɣ/* and slender *dh/gh /j/* see 4.2.2(ii).

In Munster, following an unstressed short vowel and immediately before a word boundary, /ɣ/ is removed, e.g. *briseadh* /b‘r‘is‘əɣ/ → /b‘r‘is‘ə/ ‘breaking’.

It is important that the two previous rules (i.e. broad *dh/gh /ɣ/* changed to /x/ and /g/) precede this rule so that other finite forms ending in broad *dh /ɣ/*, e.g. *bhriseadh* /b‘r‘is‘əx/ ‘used to break’ and (in parts of Munster) the impersonal form in the past, e.g. *briseadh* /b‘r‘is‘əg/ ‘one broke’ are excluded here.

**4.1.2(v) Broad dh/gh /ɣ/ is changed to /w/.** This rule is needed subsequent to the four rules in 4.1.2(i-iv). In this way any broad *dh/gh /ɣ/* which has not already been altered or removed is now changed to /w/, e.g. *briseadh* /b‘r‘is‘əɣ/ → /b‘r‘is‘əw/ ‘breaking’, which is subsequently realized as /b‘r‘is‘u:/ (Mo) or /b‘r‘is‘ə/ (Cn). The change of /w/ to /f/ is treated in 4.2.3.

#### 4.1.3 Merger of semi-vowels with neighbouring vowels

Basically we are dealing here with two rules which involve the merging of the semi-vowels broad *bh/mh /w̃/* and slender *dh/gh /j/* with either a following or a preceding vowel. The semi-vowels have much in common and

indeed they are dealt with here by the same two rules. The result of this merger, irrespective of which rule is involved, is that where there is a slender *dh/gh /j/* the sound /i:/ will emerge, and where there is a broad *bh/mh /w̃/* the sound /u:/ will emerge.

**4.1.3(i) Slender *dh/gh /j/* or broad *bh/mh /w̃/* followed by a short vowel.**

This first rule stated in its broadest terms deals with the case of slender *dh/gh /j/* or broad *bh/mh /w̃/* when followed by a short vowel. Essentially this rule is intended to handle examples involving slender *dh/gh /j/*:

- (12) *páighe* /pa:jə/ → /pa:ii:/ (→ /pɑ:ii:/) (Cn) ‘pay’  
*láighe* /la:jə/ → /la:ii:/ (→ /lɑ:ii:/) (Cn) ‘loy, spade’  
*nuaidheacht* /nu:əjəxt/ → /nu:ixt/ (Cn) ‘news’  
*truaighe* /tru:əjə/ → /tru:əi:/ (Cn) ‘pity’  
*léighim* /Lˈe:jəm/ → /Lˈe:m/ (Cn) ‘I read’

There are some important restrictions on the rule. In the first place if the slender *dh/gh /j/* or broad *bh/mh /w̃/* is preceded by an unstressed vowel it must come under the second general rule [see 4.1.3(ii)]. Secondly, where the preceding vowel is long only slender *dh/gh /j/* (and not broad *bh/mh /w̃/*) is involved, e.g. *námhaid* /na:wəd/ ‘enemy’ (C,D). Thirdly, there is a geographical restriction in that Donegal and Mayo are excluded, so that there slender *dh/gh /j/* is retained:

- (13) *páighe* /pa:jə/ (D, Mo)  
*léighim* /Lˈe:jəm/ (D, Mo)

A fourth restriction is that in the case of a short vowel preceding slender *dh/gh /j/* the rule takes effect only if it is a high vowel, e.g.:

- (14) *fioghachán* /fˈijəxɑ:n/ → /fˈii:xɑ:n/ → /fˈi:xɑ:n/ ‘weaving’

Where slender *dh/gh /j/* is preceded by mid-vowels or low vowels a diphthong or, in the case of Donegal, a long vowel [see 4.1.3(iii)] is required, e.g.:

- (15) *leigheas* /Lˈe:jəs/ → /Lˈais/ (C), /lˈəis/ (M) ‘cure’  
*bodhar* /bawr/ → /baur/ (C) ‘deaf’  
*adharc* /ajərk/ → /airk/ (C), /eirk/ (M) ‘horn’

Finally, morpheme boundaries play a part, in the case of the adjectival suffix *-mhar* where there is variation. An example is *greannmhar* /gʲr̥ˠa:nw̥ər/ (Cf) beside /gʲr̥ˠanw̥ər/ → /gʲr̥ˠanəw̥ər/ [ → /gʲr̥ˠanəw̥ər/) (Mk) → /gʲr̥ˠanu:r/ (M, Er)] ‘amusing’. Another case in point is the Munster second plural past ending *-abhair* as in *dheineabhair* ‘you made’ /jin̩ˠəw̥ər/ (Dn, Rg) beside /jin̩ˠu:r/ (Mk).

#### 4.1.3(ii) *Slender dh/gh /j/ or broad bh/mh /w̥/ preceded by a short vowel.*

This second rule deals with the case of slender *dh/gh /j/* or */w/* preceded by a short vowel. Essentially this rule is to handle examples such as:

- (16) *talamhan(a)* /taləw̥ən/ → /talun/ [ → /ta:Lu:n/ (Cn)] [ → /talunə/ (Mo)], gen. of *talamh* ‘ground’  
*caillighe* /ka:l̩ˠəjə/ → /ka:l̩ˠi:/, gen. of *cailleach* ‘hag’  
*ualaighe* /u:əl̩ˠəjə/ → /u:əl̩ˠi:/, plural of *ualach* ‘load’  
*bealaigh* /b̩ˠələj/ → /b̩ˠali:/, gen. *bealach* ‘way’

The conventional spelling of these words would now be *talún*, *caillí*, *ualaí*, *bealaigh* but the retention of an underlying /w̥/ or slender *dh/gh /j/* is demanded by the morphology in all of the forms in (16).

Once again, there are some limitations which must be placed on the general statement of the second rule.

Where the preceding short vowel is an epenthetic vowel, operation of the rule is optional, at least in parts of Connemara, e.g.

- (17) *marbh* /marəw/ ~ /ma:ru:/ ‘dead’  
*garbh* /garəw/ ~ /garu:/ ‘rough’

On the other hand, it does not seem to be optional in, e.g. *talamhan* /talun/ (M) [ → /ta:Lu:n/ (Cn)] where the semi-vowel is followed by a vowel with a subsequent consonant.

The final */w/* of the impersonal form also proves exceptional in that in Connemara the merger rule is optional, e.g. *briseadh* /b̩ˠr̩ˠis̩ˠəw/ ~ /b̩ˠr̩ˠis̩ˠu:/ (Cn) ‘one broke’. In Mayo, the rule comes into play only where there is no other semi-vowel in the underlying form (i.e. Category 1 verbs; see 8.1.2), e.g. *briseadh* /b̩ˠr̩ˠis̩ˠəw/ ~ /b̩ˠr̩ˠis̩ˠu:/ ‘one broke’. For Category 2 verbs see 4.2.3.

There is a further limitation when the vowel and semi-vowel are followed by a word boundary, that is to say, when they are in word final position. In

this case the rule will not apply in Connemara due to the removal of semi-vowels (see 4.1.4):

- (18) *bealaigh* /b'äləj/ → /b'a:lə/ (→ /b'æ:lə/) (Cn), gen. of *bealach* 'way'

In Munster, however, as *dh/gh /j/* has previously changed to /g'/ (e.g. *bealaigh* /b'aləg'/, gen. of *bealach* 'way'), the restriction here need only apply to the weak boundary between a verb form and personal pronoun due to the removal of semi-vowels [see 4.1.4(i)]:

- (19) *d'éirigh sé* /d'air'əj s'e:/ (→ /d'air'ə s'e:/) 'he rose'

There is one other limitation which is important. If the preceding vowel is stressed, for the rule to take effect that vowel must be a high one. This means there are examples such as:

- (20) *nimhe* /n'iv'ə/ → /n'ijə/ → /n'i:ə/ → /n'i:/ (→ /n'i:/) (M), gen. of *nimh* 'poison'  
*tighe* /t'ijə/ → /t'i:ə/ → /t'i:/ (C, M), gen. of *teach* (C), *tigh* (M) 'house'

On the other hand mid-vowels and low vowels generally will be diphthongized, e.g.:

- (21) *loighe* /lējə/ → /laj/ (Cn) 'lying'  
*leabhar* /l'awər/ → /l'aur/ (C, M) 'book'  
*adharc* /ajərk/ → /airk/ (C), /oirk/ (M) 'horn'

These two general rules discussed above will come into operation after vowel separation (see 3.2), in order to allow here for differences between front and back vowels, and also subsequent to the development of fricatives, as they are needed for this rule. They must, however, be applied before Stress-shift 2 (see 2.8.3), as the long vowels which emerge here may receive the accent.

**4.1.3(iii) The diphthongs /aj/, /ej/ are changed to /e:/ and /aw/, /ow/ are changed to /o:/.** There is another change needed for Donegal and sporadically for Connacht which must be implemented prior to the two rules under discussion in 4.1.3(i-ii). Under this rule /ej/, /aj/ are changed to /e:/ and /aw/ and /ow/ are changed to /o:/, e.g.:

- (22) *adharc* /**ajər**k/ → /**e:rk**/ (D) ‘horn’  
*leigheann* /**L’ejən**/ → /**L’e:n**/ (D) ‘melts’  
*tabhair* /**tawər**/ → /**to:ɪr**/ (D, C) ‘give’  
*leabhar* /**L’awər**/ → /**L’o:ɪr**/ (D) ‘book’  
*bodhar* /**bowər**/ → /**bo:ɪr**/ (D) ‘deaf’

A similar rule must be implemented at this point for Clare by which /**aw**/ or /**ow**/ would give /**o:ɪ**/, e.g.:

- (23) *amhrán* /**awʳra:n**/ → /**ō:ra:n**/ (→ /**u:ra:n**/ (see 3.3.4) ‘song’  
*samhradh* /**saʳrəw**/ → /**sō:rəw**/ (→ /**su:rə**/) ‘summer’

There must be some exchange between /**w̃**/ and /**w**/ in the underlying forms. It would appear for example that Donegal *amhrán* /**o:ra:n**/ ‘song’ should be derived from *abhrán*, as /**o:ɪ**/ is conditioned by *bh* but not by *mh*. The pronunciation /**o:ra:n**/ (C) is exceptional in Connacht and must be a sporadic example of the Donegal rule. In the same way, Donegal *deamhan* /**d’o:n**/ ‘demon’ would require an underlying *deabhan*, presumably influenced by *diabhal* ‘devil’.

#### 4.1.4 Removal of final semi-vowel

**4.1.4(i) Main rule.** This rule is required to remove a final /**w**/ or /**j**/. In Donegal or Mayo, a semi-vowel is lost after a long vowel only when followed by a personal subject pronoun: *léigh sé* /**l’e:ɟ s’e:ɪ**/ → /**l’e: s’e:ɪ**/ ‘he read’. On the other hand, the semi-vowel must be preserved if there is a normal word boundary, e.g.

- (24) *léigh Seán* /**l’e:ɟ s’a:m**/ (D, Mo) ‘Seán read’  
*dligheadh* /**d’l’i:w**/ (D, Mo) ‘law’  
*ceannaíodh* /**k’an:i:w**/ (D, C) (→ /**k’an:i:f**/ (Er) [see 4.2.3]) ‘one bought’

After any short vowel the semi-vowel is removed.

In Connemara, the final semi-vowel is not removed in the (past) impersonal form, e.g. *briseadh* /**b’r’is’əw**/ ‘one broke’ or following an epenthetic vowel, e.g. *marbh* /**marəw**/ ‘dead’. The rule is optional in the case of /**w**/ after a short stressed vowel as in *dubh* /**du**/ or /**duw**/ ‘black’. In all other cases /**w**/ or slender *dh/gh/j* is removed, e.g.

- (25) *léigh Seán* /l'e:ɟ s'a:m/ → /l'e: s'a:m/ (→ /l'e: s'au:n/) 'Seán read'  
*dligheadh* /d'l'i:w/ → /d'l'i:/ 'law'  
*déanamh* /d'i:nəw/ → /d'i:nə/ (→ /d'i:n'ə/) 'doing, making'  
*briseadh* /b'r'is'əw/ → /b'r'is'ə/ 'breaking'

In Munster, the removal of a final semi-vowel is not required. Final /ɣ/ was removed previously [see 4.1.2(iv)]. The rule does not affect /w/ as can be seen in an example such as *déanamh* /d'e:nəw/ (→ /d'ianəw/) (M) 'doing'.

**4.1.4(ii) Three Munster rules.** There are three Munster rules which must be considered at this point. Firstly there is the removal of final /i:/ following a long syllable in examples such as:

- (26) *páighe* (/pa:ɟə/ → ) /pa:i:/ → /pa:/ (M) 'pay'  
*sléibhe* (/s'l'eiv'ə/ → /s'l'e:ɟə/ → ) /s'l'e:i:/ → /s'l'e:/ (M) gen. of *sliabh* 'mountain'  
*truaiḡhe* (/tru:əɟə/ → ) /tru:əi:/ → /tru:ə/ (M) 'pity'  
*cruaidhe* (/kru:əɟə/ → ) /kru:əi:/ → /kruə/ (M) comparative of *cruaidh* 'hard'

Secondly there is the removal of final /w/ following a stressed *á* /a:/, *ao* /e:/, or *ia* /i:ə/. Examples are:

- (27) *lámha* /la:wə/ → /la:ə/ (→ /la:/) (M) 'hands'  
*lámhacán* /La:wəka:n / → /La:əka:n/ ( → /la:ka:n/ ) (Mk) 'crawling'  
*tábhacht* /ta:wəxt/ → /ta:əxt/ (→ /ta:xt/) (M) 'importance'  
*faobhar* /fe:wər/ → /fe:ər/ (→ /fe:r/) (M) 'keen edge'  
*saoghal* (/se:ɣəl/ → ) /se:wəl/ → /se:əl/ (→ /se:l/) (M) 'life'  
*riabhach* /ri:əwəx/ → /ri:əəx/ (→ /ri:əx/) (M) 'speckled'  
*diabhal* /d'i:əwəl/ → /d'i:əəl/ (→ /d'i:əl/) (M) 'devil'

Thirdly there is the removal of medial /j/ following a stressed vowel (except in the case of a low vowel) as in an example such as *scríbhneoir* (/s'k'r'i:v'n'or'/ → ) /s'k'r'i:ɟn'or'/ → /s'k'r'i:n'or'/ (M) 'writer'.

#### 4.1.5 Treatment of semi-vowel broad *mh* /w̃/ as a consonant

The semi-vowel /w̃/ has the quality of a consonant when it comes before a stressed vowel, though often, depending on the dialect, becoming a labiodental

slender /v/, particularly in Munster. However the symbol /w/ has been retained and used in the phonetic transcription throughout this account.

The semi-vowel /w̃/ must be given a consonantal quality after a stressed /a/ in West Connemara and South Mayo, e.g.:

- (28) *gamhain* /gawən/ (West Cn, South Mo) ‘calf’  
*samhradh* /sawrə/ (West Cn), /sawru:/ (South Mo) ‘summer’  
*cleamhnas* /kʰawənəs/ (West Cn, South Mo) ‘match’

This consonantal quality is not needed in the case of *bh* /w/ as opposed to /w/ in:

- (29) *leabhar* /lʰaur/ (Ca, Tm) ‘book’  
*gabhar* /gaur/ (Ca, Tm) ‘goat’

This internal development of *mh* /w̃/ as a consonant following stressed /a/ is also necessary as a minor rule in Munster dialects, e.g.:

- (30) *amhrán* /auʰra:n/ (Dn) ~ /avəʰra:n/ (Dn, Mk) ‘song’  
*amharc* /avərk/ (Mk) ‘sight’

#### 4.1.6 Defricatization of the semi-vowels broad *mh/bh* /w̃/ and slender *mh/bh* /ṽ/

In Connemara and sporadically in other dialects /w̃/ or /ṽ/ may interchange with /m(ʰ)/ before /s(ʰ)/, e.g.:

- (31) *tréimhse* /tʰrʰe:vʰsʰə/ → /tʰrʰe:mʰsʰə/ (Rm) ‘period’  
*damhsa* /da:wsə/ → /da:msə/ (West Cn) ‘dancing’  
*láimhsiughadh* (/La:vʰsʰu:/ → ) /La:mʰsʰu:/ → /La:mʰsʰu:/ (Cf)  
 ‘handling’  
*domsa* ~ *domhsa* /do:sə/ (M) /du:sə/ (C, D) ‘to me’

In Munster dialects there is an optional defricatization of *bh/mh* or *ph* following *-m*, the form of *mo* /mə/ ‘my’ after a preposition ending in a vowel, e.g. *i m bolg* /ə̃m boləg/ ~ /ə̃m woləg/ ‘in my stomach’ (Mk).

It may also be mentioned in passing that there is in Connemara a defricatization of slender *bh* /ṽ/ in monosyllabic second plural personal pronouns, e.g. *sibh* /sʰibʰ/ ‘you’, *libh* /lʰibʰ/ ( ~ /lʰi:bʰ/) ‘with you’ as opposed to disyllabic second plural personal pronouns where the second

syllable is exceptionally pronounced with a long *i* /i:/, e.g. *oraibh* /ori:/ ‘on you’, *asaibh* /asi:/ ‘out of you’. This rule is a late one as it applies after the lengthening in place of *th/ch* /h/ in Cois Fhairrge (see 2.7), e.g. *fúthaibh* ‘under you’ /fu:həv’/ → /fu:v’/ → /fu:b’/.

#### 4.1.7 Treatment of /h/

**4.1.7(i) Fricatization of /h(ʰ)/.** The close relationship between /hʰ/ and /xʰ/ has already been seen in the discussion of the slender fricatives (see 4.1.1). Here, however, we are dealing with an underlying slender *th* /hʰ/ which changes to slender /xʰ/ following a stressed vowel and under certain conditions.

This change appears to be a major and obligatory rule in Donegal and Mayo, e.g.:

- (32) *caith* /kaxʰ/ (D, Mo) ‘throw’  
*rith* /rixʰ/ (D, C) ‘run’  
*maith* /maxʰ/ (D, Mo) ‘good’

There are however some restrictions. The slender *th* /hʰ/ remains (eventually changing to /h/ in most dialects excepting Ring) before /i:/, in a personal verbal ending or before a consonant, e.g.:

- (33) *caithfidh* /kahi:/ (D, Mo) ‘will throw’  
*chaith mé* /xah mʰe:/ (→ /xa mʰe:/) ‘I threw’  
*caithtear* /kahʰtʰər/ (→ /katʰər/) ‘one throws’

Lastly, the change does not take place between two vowels where diphthongization (see 3.5.1) has taken place, e.g.:

- (34) *soitheach* /saihhah / ~ /sexʰah / (Gd) /saihəx/ ~ /sexʰəx/ (Er)  
‘vessel’

This change is not normally found in Munster. In Connemara it is a minor rule applying, optionally, to words such as:

- (35) *rith* /rixʰ/ (D, C) ‘run’  
*ráithe* /ra:xʰə/ (D, C) ‘three month period’  
*oíche* /i:xʰə/ (D, C) ‘night’

A similar change also is required as part of a different sort of development. This /h'/ is the result of a lenition of initial /s'/ or /t'/ when followed by a long vowel. In Connemara and Tourmakeady it must be a high back vowel, i.e. *u*, when /h'/ is the result of lenited /t'/. In Donegal and Mayo and in Munster (with some few exceptions) only /h'/ from /s'/ is changed before a long back vowel, e.g.:

- (36) (a) *Sheáin* /x'a:ɲ'/ 'Seán!  
*sheol* /x'o:ɲ'/ 'sailed'  
*shiúil* /x'u:ɲ(ɹ)'/ 'walked'  
 (a) *shiopa* /x'upə/ (Cn) '(his) shop'  
 (*nuair a*) *thiocfainn* /x'ukəɲ'/ (Cn, Tm), /hukəɲ'/ (D, M) '(when) I would come'  
 (a) *thiubharfainn* /x'u:rəɲ'/ (Cn, Tm) '(which) I would give'

There is yet another environment where /h/ will be changed to /x/ but this seems to be limited to certain dialects such as Ring. The rule is needed following a stressed vowel and preceding a word boundary or certain types of morpheme boundary, e.g.:

- (37) *gaoth* /ge:ɲ/ (Rg) 'wind'  
*liath* /l'i:əɲ/ (Rg) 'grey'  
*leath* /l'ax/ (Rg) 'half'  
*riothadar* /r'uxədər/ (Rg) 'they ran'

It can also occur sporadically in compounds such as *tráthnóna* /tra:xnu:nə/ (Rg) 'afternoon'.

All the above changes of slender *th/sh* /h'/ to /x'/ will naturally take effect before /h'/ is changed to /h/ or indeed before any removal of /h/.

Finally, certain Donegal dialects show the reverse process, that is the substitution of /h/ for original broad *ch* /x/, e.g.:

- (38) *luchóg* /Luhag/ (Gd) 'mouse'  
*Gaelach* /ge:lah/ (Gd) 'Irish'

**4.1.7(ii) Removal of /h/.** There are three different contexts in which /h/ must be removed: firstly, adjacent to another consonant; secondly, in word final position where the next word does not begin with a vowel, and thirdly, between two vowels.

The case of /h/ adjacent to a consonant is obviously closely connected with the whole question of devoicing (see 4.2.3). It is difficult to say quite how much voice is retained by the sonants in any particular dialect. This whole question is no doubt further connected with the rule by which /rh/ is changed to /hr/ [see 4.2.6(v)]. The discussion here is confined to the second and third contexts.

In Munster, both in word final position and between vowels, broad, *th* /h/ is quite stable. Notwithstanding this, it is generally removed following a long vowel when preceding the morpheme *-as* /əs/:

- (39) *gnáthas* /gna:s/ 'custom'  
*dlúthas* /dlu:s/ 'density'

In Donegal, in word final position broad *th* /h/ is removed after a long vowel, but generally remains after a short vowel, e.g.:

- (40) *fáth* /fa:/ (D) 'reason'  
*dath* /dah/ (D) 'colour'  
*leath* /L'ah/ (D) 'half'

In some Donegal dialects following /a/ a glottal stop is needed, e.g.:

- (41) *fathach* /faʔax/ ~ /fahəx/ → /fa:x/ (Tn) 'giant'

In Mayo, following /u/, the removal of /h/ is not required as it has been altered to /w/ prior to this rule, which in turn is changed to /f/ under a general rule in the dialect which changes /w/ to /f/ before a word boundary (see 4.2.3):

- (42) *guth* /guh/ → /guw/ (→ /guf/) (Mo) 'voice'  
*gruth* /gruh/ → /gruw/ (→ /gruf/) (Mo) 'curd'

On the other hand, between vowels broad *th* /h/ must normally be removed after a long *a* in examples such as:

- (43) *soláthar* /sola:hər/ → /sola:ər/ (→ /sola:r/) 'provision'  
*gnáthach* /gna:həx/ → /gna:əx/ (→ /gna:x/ → /gra:x/) (Mo) 'usual'

In the west of Connemara, /h/ is not removed medially. However, in Cois Fhairrge (and the Aran Islands) the removal of broad *th* /h/ is needed in almost all positions except in word-initial position. Examples are:

- (44) *luath* /**lu:əh**/ → /**lu:ə**/ (Cn) ‘early’  
*guth* /**guh**/ → /**gu**/ (Cn) ‘voice’  
*máthair* (/**ma:hər**/ → ) /**mɑ:hər**/ (West Cn) → /**mɑ:r**/ (Cf)  
 ‘mother’  
*cuthach* /**kuhəx**/ (West Cn) → /**ku:x**/ (Cf) ‘frenzy’  
*bóthar* /**bo:hər**/ (West Cn) → /**bo:r**/ (Cf) ‘road’  
*gearrtha* (/**gʰa:rhə**/ → ) /**gɑ:rhə**/ (West Cn) → /**gʰɑ:rə**/ (Cf) ‘cut’

Nevertheless, at certain boundaries the removal of /h/ is optional, e.g.

- (45) *dathúil* /**dahu:l**/ ~ /**daul**/ (Cf) ‘beautiful’  
*le haghaidh* /**lʰe hai**/ ~ /**lʰai**/ (Cf) ‘for’  
*ná himigh* /**na: himʰə**/ ~ /**na: imʰə**/ (Cf) [see also 6.2.3(i)] ‘don’t go off’.

## 4.2 Consonants

### 4.2.1 Overview of system

The following table is a basic outline of the underlying consonantal system.

Table 4.3 *Outline of consonantal system*

Broad consonant				Slender consonant			
/p/	/t/	/k/		/pʰ/	/tʰ/	/kʰ/	
/b/	/d/	/g/		/bʰ/	/dʰ/	/gʰ/	
/f/	/s/	(/x/)	/h/	/fʰ/	/sʰ/	(/xʰ/)	/hʰ/
(/w/)		(/ʃ/)		(/vʰ/)		(/jʰ/)	
(/wʰ/)		(/n/)		(/vʰʰ/)		(/nʰ/)	
/m/		/n/		/mʰ/		/nʰ/	
		(/l/)				(/lʰ/)	
		/l/				/lʰ/	
		(/r/)				(/rʰ/)	
		/r/				/rʰ/	

The sounds bracketed in the table occur initially only as a result of lenition. The tense quality is often lost in /**l**(ʰ)/, /**n**(ʰ)/ or /**r**(ʰ)/, depending on the dialect in question. The /**h**(ʰ)/ is usually realized as /h/ [or /**x**(ʰ)/, see 4.1.7(i)]. There are occasional words with an initial *bh/mh*, e.g. *bhíog* /**vʰi:ɡ**/ (Cf) ‘sudden jump’, *mhuing* /**wiŋʰg**/ (Cf) ‘mane’.

There are several good reasons for the retention of a distinction between *b h* /w/ and *mh* /w̃/. In the first place, when the semi-vowel is removed its nasal quality may be retained in the vowel:

- (46) *comhairle* /k̄o:rlə/ (Er) 'advice'  
*romhat* /r̄o:t/ (Er) 'before you'

In Connemara, Tourmakeady, Ring and in Dunquin the nasal causes the previous vowel to be raised, e.g. *romhat* /r̄o:t/ → /ru:t/ (see 3.3.4). In addition to this, in West Connemara and Mayo, the consonantal quality is preserved in words with an original *mh* /w̃/ but not where there is an original *bh* /w/ (see 4.1.5), e.g. *sleamhain* /s'ɫ'awən'/ 'slippery' as opposed to *leabhar* /L'aur/ 'book'. Finally, there are two further rules which are conditioned by this distinction between *mh* /w̃/ and *bh* /w/. In Donegal /o:ɪ/ develops in words such as *leabhar* /L'o:ɪ/ 'book' only where /a/ or /o/ precedes the sound *b h* /w/ [see 4.1.3(iii)] and contrariwise in Clare /o:ɪ/ (ultimately /u:ɪ/) is required when /a/ or /o/ precedes *mh* /w̃/ in words like *samhradh* /so:ɪrə/ (→ /su:ɪrə/) 'summer'.

#### 4.2.2 Slender quality

**4.2.2(i) General principles.** When the general phenomenon is being described, the traditional terms 'slender' and 'broad' are used as general terms rather than palatalization and the reasons for this were given in 0.8. The actual realization of both slender and broad quality depends a great deal and in a very complicated way on the phonetic context. Although an account of such surface realization is not attempted here, it is appropriate to mention certain general traits. One important feature is the heavy velarization or labialization which is found on broad consonants when they occur before front vowels. Another important feature is that slender labials are hardly ever phonetically palatalized.

Generally speaking, the consonants in a cluster must have the same quality, that is the entire cluster must be either broad or slender. Normally, in a consonant group a broad and slender consonant are not permitted side by side. If such a case arises due to the application of morphological rules or due to pre-tonic elision (see 2.5), this incongruity will be eliminated by the assimilation of the broad quality by the slender quality. There are, however, four important exceptions to the general rule.

Firstly, *dh/gh* /j/ will not spread the slender quality to a following consonant, e.g.:

- (47) *saghdadh* /sajdə/ (→ /saidə/) (Cf) ‘incite’  
*adhmad* /ajməd/ (→ /əiməd/) (M) ‘timber’  
*laghdú* /Lajdu:/ (→ /Laidu:/) (C) [ → /laidu:/ (M)] ‘lessen’  
*meadhg* /m’ajg/ (→ /m’aig/) (C) ‘whey’

Secondly, when /s/ in word-initial position precedes a slender consonant, assimilation of the slender quality will not take effect if the consonant is a labial:

- (48) *smig* /sm’ig’/ ‘chin’  
*speal* /sp’a:il/ ‘scythe’

On the other hand assimilation is required in a medial position, e.g.:

- (49) *caismirt* /kas’m’ərt’/ ‘contention’  
*taisme* /tas’m’ə/ (D) ‘accident’

It might be assumed that this initial assimilation is a late or surface phonetic adjustment sensitive to phonetic specification rather than to such underlying distinctions as broad or slender. The lack of assimilation here is then due to the fact that slender labials are not phonetically palatalized.

Furthermore, in certain dialects, for instance Inishmaan, or optionally in Cois Fhairrge and in Dunquin, the assimilation does not take place before a velar, e.g. *scéal* /sk’e:il/ ‘story’. Also in some Munster dialects, e.g. Iveragh, Muskerry, the initial slender *s* /s’/ of the third singular pronoun may not show the slender quality following a verbal form ending in /x/, e.g. *tugadh sé* ‘let him give’ /tugəx se:/ (Mk).

Thirdly, although there is a difference between a broad and slender /r/ or /r/, that opposition is subsequently removed in certain circumstances and this must be ultimately connected with the fact that the slender quality of /r’/ and /r’/ will be removed before a dental or when following /s/ or in word-initial position. Examples are:

- (50) *tairne* /ta:rn’ə/ ‘nail’  
*boird* /baurd’/ (Cn) ‘tables’  
*srian* /s’ri:n/ (Cf) ‘bridle’  
*rí* /ri:/ ‘king’

Fourthly the opposition between slender *ch* /x’/ and broad *ch* /x/ is removed before a dental, e.g.:

- (51) *boichte* /**boxt**ə/ comparative of *bocht* ‘poor’  
*uicht* /**oxt**’/ (C) gen. of *ucht* ‘bosom’

In certain Donegal dialects *ch* /**x**/ must be changed to a vocalic *r* before a dental, e.g.:

- (52) *bochta* /**boɾtə**/ (Gd) ‘poor (people)’  
*ocht* /**oɾt**/ (Gd) ‘eight’

A further exception to the general rule of slender quality assimilation is the case of the impersonal form endings which have an initial /**t**/ or /**f**/. Often assimilation is optional, e.g. *ligfí* /**l’ig’f’i:**/ (→ /**l’ik’i:**/) ~ /**lig’fi:**/ (→ /**l’ik’fi:**/) ‘one would let’.

A similar phenomenon must be dealt with in the case of *timpeall* ‘around’ in certain Munster dialects:

- (53) *t(h)impeall* /**t’i:m’pəl**/ (Dn, Mk) : /**t’im’p’əl**/ (D, Mo) →  
 /**h’aím’p’əl**/ (Rg) : /**t’i(:)mpəl**/ (Cf) ‘around’

The assimilation may also apply across word boundaries, e.g.

- (54) (*cuir*) *síos tine* /**s’i:s’ t’in’ə**/ ‘set a fire!’

In such external sandhi, or indeed simply across morpheme boundaries, a following initial front vowel can cause a preceding consonant to become slender, e.g.:

- (55) *bád iascach* /**ba:d i:əskəx**/ → /**ba:d’ iəskəx**/ (Cn) ‘fishing boat’  
*báidín* (*bád* + *ín*) /**ba:d’i:n’**/ (Cn) ‘a little boat’  
*sáibhéara* (*sábh* /**sa:w**/ + *éara*) /**sa:v’e:ɾə**/ (Cn) ‘sawyer’

Apart from the case of initial *s*, the general assimilation of slender quality is needed at an early stage. It will take effect before syllable adjustment (see 2.3) as, when a cluster is split up, the group as a whole must have already assimilated the slender quality. Indeed, the adjusting of syllables and the assimilation will come into play as often as ‘incongruous’ clusters arise. In almost all cases (there are one or two exceptions), the entire cluster must have established its quality prior to the vowel separation.

The rule which removes the slender quality from slender /r'/ and slender /r'/ before a dental must normally be thought of as applying *before* vowel separation (see 3.2) as shown in Table 4.4

Table 4.4 *Munster and Connemara derivations of boird 'tables'*

Rule ordering	Munster	Connemara
underlying form	/b <sup>h</sup> er'd'/	/b <sup>h</sup> er'd'/
raising (see 3.3.5)	/b <sup>h</sup> ur'd'/	
removal of slender quality	/b <sup>h</sup> urd'/	/b <sup>h</sup> erd'/
vowel separation (see 3.2)	/bur'd'/	/bord'/
vowel lengthening (see 3.4.2)	/bu:rd'/	
diphthongization (3.4.2)		/baurd'/
realization	/bu:rd'/	/baurd'/

Interestingly, there is one exception, where the removal of the slender quality from slender *r* /r'/ and slender *rr* /r'/ is required after vowel separation. In the comparative of *ard* 'high', in Donegal and Mayo the slender quality is removed from /r'/ *before* vowel separation (i.e. following the normal rule order), while in Connemara and Munster the slender quality is removed *after* vowel separation (the exceptional rule ordering). These two rule orderings are illustrated in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 *Derivations of oirde, comparative of ard 'high'*

Rule ordering	Donegal/Mayo	Rule ordering	Connemara	Munster
underlying form	(/er'd'ə/)	underlying form	/er'd'ə/	/er'd'ə/
raising (see 3.3.5)		raising		/ur'd'ə/
removal of slender quality	/erd'ə/	vowel separation	/er'd'ə/	/ir'd'ə/
vowel separation (see 3.2)	/ord'ə/	removal of slender quality	/erd'ə/	/ird'ə/
vowel lengthening (see 3.4.2)		vowel lengthening		/i:rd'ə/
diphthongization (see 3.4.2)		diphthongization	/aird'ə/	
realization	/ord'ə/	realization	/aird'ə/	/i:rd'ə/

**4.2.2(ii) Fluctuation between broad and slender quality.** There is a tendency for consonants to fluctuate between broad and slender quality in certain words, depending on the particular dialect. This phenomenon may

best be dealt with in the lexicon. Nevertheless, certain trends can be observed and it seems there are three particular environments where this variation is most likely.

Firstly, a *t* /t/ or *f* /f/ in word-initial position tends to change its quality, e.g.

- (56) *teora*(inn) /t'ɔ:ɪə/ (Ky, Mk) 'boundary' : /tɔ:ɪɾən'/ (Cf)  
*tobar* /tɔbər/ 'well' : /t'ɔbər/ (Rg)  
*tuigim* /tig'əm'/ (M, D) 'I understand' : /t'ig'əm'/ (C)  
*foghlaim* /fo:ləm'/ (Cf) 'learning' : /f'ɔ:ləm'/ (West Cn)  
*fuinneo(i)g* /fin'ɔ:g'/ (C) → /fin'ag/ (D) 'window' : /f'i'n'ɔ:g/ (M)  
 [→ /f'i'n'u:g/ (Dn, Rg)]  
*faoi* /fi:/ (C, D) 'under' : /f'e:/ (M) (see also 3.6.2)

This type of variation is presumably triggered by the assimilation which occurs between the article and a following vowel, e.g.:

- (57) *an t-éan* /ə(n) t'e:n/ 'the bird'  
*an fhead* /ə n'ad/ 'the whistle'

Furthermore there is the fact that lenited /t'/, i.e. /h/, does not ultimately in most dialects distinguish between slender and broad, e.g.:

- (58) *tuig* /tig'/ : *ní thuigim* /n'i: hig'əm'/ 'I don't understand'

At this point the root is then reinterpreted as being *tig* /t'ig'/.

Secondly, a medial broad *dh/gh* /ɣ/ and slender *dh/gh* /j/ tend to vary. Examples are:

- (59) *adhmad* /a:məd/ (C, D) 'timber' : *aidhmad* /aiməd/ (M)  
*leaghaim* /L'a:m'/ (Cn) 'I melt' : *leighim* /l'a'im'/ (M) /L'e:m'/ (D)  
*leáighim* /L'a:jəm'/ (Er)  
*rogha* /rau/ ~ /rou/ (M) 'choice' : *roghain* /raun'/ (C) : *roighe* /re:/ (D)  
*Fearghal* /f'arɣəl/ → /f'arəgəl/ (D) man's name : /f'arəjəl/ → /f'ari:l/ (M)

We may note in passing that even in the orthographical tradition a broad *dh* or *gh* have commonly represented *dh/gh* /j/ in such words as *gadhar* /gair/

'dog', *saghas* /sais/ 'sort'. In Donegal a rule might deal with an internal lenition together with a slendering of the consonant, e.g.:

- (60) *sagart* /sajərt/ (Gd) 'priest'  
*agam* /ejəm/ (Tn) 'at me'

Where there is a non-reverting lenited initial consonant [see 6.2.5(i)] slendering of /ɣ/ would be needed, e.g.:

- (61) *dhá* /jæ:/ (Gd) 'two'  
*a dhath* /ə ja/ (Gd) 'nothing'

Thirdly, slender quality fluctuates in the case of a medial liquid or nasal. Examples are:

- (62) *dúnaim* /du:nəm/ (M) 'I shut' : *dúinim* /du:m'əm/ (Cn)  
*baileaghadh* (→ *bailiú*) /bail'u:/ 'gathering' : *balú* /ba:lu:/ (Cf)  
*foláir* /fola:r'/ → /f(ə)'la:r/ (M) 'necessary' : *fleár* (/fel'a:r/ → /fəl'a:r/ → /f'l'a:r/ (Cn)  
*amáireach* /ə'ma:r'əx/ (Dn) (→ /ə'ma:r'əx/ (Cn)) 'tomorrow' :  
*amárach* /əma:rəx/ (Rg, Tm, Er) [→ /əmə:rah/ (Gd)]  
*urball* /urəbəl/ (→ /rubəl/) (D, Mo) 'tail' : *eireaball* (/ərbəl/ [see 3.3.6] → /ərəbəl → /er'əbəl/ (M)  
*furast(a)* /furəst/ (D) → /fə'rustə/ → /frustə/ (C) 'easy': *friste*  
*/fir'is't'(ə)/ → /f'r'is't'(ə) (M)*

In the final example the cluster *st* is also made slender.

Often, as in *dúnaim*, a slender quality is developed in all the verbal forms, excluding the verbal noun. This points to the fact that it is due to the influence of a rule which causes the final *l* in *oscail* 'open' to be slender [see 6.3.1(ii)1]. Pairs, such as *cosain* (M) and *coisin* (Cn) 'defend' or *fulaingt* /fel'ən't'/ ~ /folən/ (in petrified usages) (Cf) 'suffering', show how the slender quality seems to spread through forms where a cluster arises such as *fuilngnám* 'I suffer' and may eventually permeate the entire inflection of the verb, including even the verbal noun. In general it would appear that this fluctuation is a phenomenon which is needed late in the derivation. It is required subsequent to the introduction of the epenthetic vowel (see 2.2) as illustrated by *eireaball* (M) 'tail' (normally slendering is applied prior to the introduction of the epenthetic vowel but in this case that ordering would

yield \**eiribeall*) and examples such as *fleár* (C), *frist(e)* (M) would indicate that it is required before Stress-shift 1 (see 2.8.2).

#### 4.2.3 Devoicing

Essentially, two general principles are involved here: adjacent consonants must agree in the matter of voicing, and the unvoiced consonant will dominate. However, there is one important addendum; in the case of sonants, i.e. *l*, *n*, *r*, the assimilation of a voiced consonant by an unvoiced one normally only takes place when /h/ is the unvoiced consonant. There are two important rules for devoicing to note here.

Firstly, there must be a rule which causes devoicing as a result of /h/ (which itself is, in turn, often removed), e.g. *leag* /L'ag/ 'lay' : *leagfaidh* 'will lay'. In some parts of Connemara the sonants (*l*, *n*, *r*) are devoiced, but in many dialects they retain full voicing. An example where a plosive is devoiced is:

- (63) *leag* /L'ag/ 'lay' : *leagfaidh* /L'aghəj/ → /L'akhəj/ → /L'akəj/  
(→ /L'ækə/ (Cn) ~ /L'aki/ (D, Mo) ~ /L'akəg/ (M)) 'will lay'

Generally, this devoicing as a result of a following /h/ is found throughout the dialects. Exceptionally, in some Donegal dialects, for example Gweedore, /w/ will not be devoiced, e.g. *scríobhfaidh* /s'k'r'i:wi:/ (Gd) 'will write', *lobhtha* /LOWə/ (Gd) 'rotten'.

It may be noted that there is a sporadic variation among the dialects between a voiced and unvoiced dental plosive (i.e. *d* or *t*) following *l* or *n*. This is, however, probably best left to the lexicon. Examples are:

- (64) *cárta* (most of M, Cn) 'card' : *cárda* (D, M, East Galway, South Tipperary)  
*contae* (most of M) 'county' : *condae* (D, C, Dn)  
*cuartaíocht/cuairtíocht* (D, C) 'visiting' : *cuardaíocht* (M)  
*canta* (Mk) 'chunk of bread' : *canda* (Cn)

Secondly, the voiced versus unvoiced contrast is unnecessary following *f* /f/, *s* /s/ or *ch* /x/. Examples are:

- (65) *scríobhta* /s'k'r'i:fdə/ (Cf) 'written'  
*bocht* /boxt/ 'poor'  
*creistiúint* (*creid* + *s* + *ú* + *n* + *t*) /k'r'əs't'u:n't'/ (Cf) [see 4.2.6(i)]  
'believing'

*tuisceint* (*tig + s + n + t*) /tʰisˈkʰənˈtʰ/ (C) [see 4.2.6(i)] ‘understanding’

*absalóid* /absələ:ɔdˠ/ (Ih) → /aspələ:ɔd/ (Tm, Im) ‘absolution’

Although the combination *ft* /ft/ is rare in Irish, it is noteworthy that the cluster does arise in Donegal where *f* /f/ seems to strengthen *t* /tʰ/ in words such as:

- (66) *geata* /gˠatə/ → /gˠaftə/ (D) ~ /gˠautə/ (Gd) ‘gate’  
*ratan* /ratən/ → /raftən/ (Mn) ‘rafters’  
*lata* /latə/ → /Laftə/ → /Lautə/ (Gd) ‘loft’  
*scata* /skatə/ → /skafˠtə/ (with slendering) (Gd) ‘crowd’

In Connemara /t/ is retained in such words, e.g.:

- (67) *geata* /gˠætə/ (C) ‘gate’  
*lota* /lotə/ (C) ‘loft’

In Munster on the other hand /t/ is sometimes strengthened to give /xt/, e.g. *lota* /lotə/ → /loxtə/ ‘loft’ (M), *rata* /ratə/ → /raxtə/ (M) ‘rafter’.

This removal of the contrast between voiced and unvoiced consonants can occur across word boundaries, e.g. *an bád seo* /ə baɪtˠ sˠo/ ‘this boat’. Of course, as this is a closely knit syntactic unit there is normally no pause involved.

There is yet another sort of devoicing which is primarily required in the North. In this case the final consonant of certain types of syllable is devoiced. In many parts of Donegal a glottal stop occurs after a short syllable with a final lax consonant, particularly when followed by a pause. This glottal stop largely devoices the preceding consonant, e.g.:

- (68) *fuin* /finˠhʲ/ (Tn) ‘knead’  
*mhól* /wolhʲ/ (Tn) ‘praised’  
*dhuibh* /yifʲ/ (Tn) gen. of *dubh* ‘black’  
*cion* /kˠinʲ/ (Tn) ‘affection’  
*scuir* /skirˠʲ/ (Tn) ‘overlap’  
*dubh* /duwʲ/ (Tn) ‘black’

There is some need for a similar devoicing in Connacht. In the first place, in Erris following a long vowel, a final /w/ in verbal forms (when not followed by a personal pronoun subject) must be devoiced, e.g.:

- (69) *bíodh* /b'í:w/ → /b'í:f/ (Er) 'let it be'  
*chóireodh* /xɔ:r'ɔ:w/ → /xɔ:r'ɔ:f/ (Er) 'would arrange'

In a similar fashion in Mayo /w/ is devoiced in word final position following a short stressed vowel in words such as:

- (70) *tiubh* /t'u:w/ → /t'uf/ (Er, Tm) 'thick'  
*duibh* /d'iv'/ → /d'if'/ (Er) gen. of *dubh* 'black'  
*guth* (/guh/) → /guw/ → /guf/ (Er, Tn) 'voice'

The full devoicing, at least of verbal forms, must take effect subsequent to the merger of semi-vowels with neighbouring vowels (see 4.1.3), as illustrated by : *bhailigheadh* (→ *bhailíodh*) /wal'əjəɣ/ → /wal'əjəw/ → /wal'í:w/ → /wal'í:f/ 'used to gather'. In other words, a long vowel is needed in order to provide the requisite context for devoicing to occur.

A further type of devoicing is required for West Connemara. In this case, medial *l*, *n* and *r*, are devoiced in a certain limited number of words. Examples are:

- (71) *baladh* /bəl'hə/ (Lm) 'smell'  
*loine* /lɪn'hə/ (Lm) 'churn-dash'  
*tórainn* /tɔ:r'hən'/ (Lm) 'boundary'  
*tórramh* /tɔ:r'hə/ (Lm) 'wake'

Furthermore *l*, *n*, *r* and *m* are at least partly devoiced adjoining /h/, particularly in the tenses marked for the future and in the verbal adjectives:

- (72) *bhuailfeadh* /wʊəl'h'əx/ (Lm) 'would hit'  
*d'fhanfadh* /danhəx/ (Lm) 'would remain'  
*cumfaidh* /kum'hə/ (Lm) 'will compose'  
*curtha* /kur'hə/ (Lm) 'put'  
*aithne* /æ:hn'ə/ (→ /æ:n'hə/) (Lm) 'acquaintance'  
*aithrí* /æ:hr'í:/ (→ /æ:r'hi:/) (Lm) 'repentance'

For the metathesis see 4.2.6(v).

Finally, there is a devoicing of final *g* /g (ʔ)/ when it follows a neutral vowel (excluding an epenthetic vowel). This change, with some few exceptions, is a general feature of Donegal and Connacht. Examples are:

- (73) *Nollaig* /**NO**Ləgʷ/ → /**NO**Ləkʷ/ (D, C) ‘Christmas’  
*Nollag* /**NO**Ləgʷ/ → /**NO**Ləkʷ/ (D, C) gen. of *Nollaig* ‘Christmas’  
*reilig* /rɪlʷəgʷ/ → /rɪlʷəkʷ/ (D, C) ‘graveyard’  
*tháinig* /hɑ:nʷəgʷ/ → /hɑ:nʷəkʷ/ (D, Er) ‘came’  
*carraig* /kɑ:rəgʷ/ → /kɑ:rəkʷ/ (D, north Mo) ‘rock’

The addition of a morpheme does not block the rule: *reilige* /rɪlʷəkʷə/ (C) gen. of *reilig* ‘graveyard’, *Nollaigeacha(i)* /**NO**Ləkʷəxi:/ (Cn) ‘Christmases’.

The rule does not apply in Munster except in some words where *ng* /ŋ (ʷ)/ is lost before a final /g (ʷ)/ [see 4.2.5(iv)], e.g. in:

- (74) *tarrang* (/tɑ:rəŋgʷ/ → ) /tɑ:rəgʷ/ → /tɑ:rəkʷ/ ‘draw’  
*thuirling* (/hu:rlʷəŋgʷ/ → ) /hu:rlʷəgʷ/ → /hu:rlʷəkʷ/ ‘descended’

However, there is no devoicing in *folang* (/fɔ:ləŋgʷ/ → ) /fɔ:ləgʷ/ ‘suffering’. The verbal endings seem to block the limited devoicing:, e.g. *tairringim* /tɑ:rəŋgʷi:mʷ/ ‘I draw’.

#### 4.2.4 Voicing

A final /t/ following a neutral vowel is voiced (for a full discussion see McKone 1981). This is not a feature of Munster but is required for Connacht:

- (75) *agat* → *agad* (C) ‘at you’  
*malairt* → *malraid* [see 4.2.6(ii)] (C) ‘change’  
*conairt* → *conraid* [see 4.2.6(ii)] (Er) ‘pack of hounds’

In the use of second singular of the prepositional pronouns, the rule has a wider context in Donegal in that it is a feature of the final *t* in all second singular prepositional pronouns (with the exception of *leat* ‘with you’ and *ort* ‘on you’):

- (76) *ionat* /i:ɒnəd/ ‘in you’  
*agat* /e:ɟəd/ (Tn) ‘at you’  
*duit* /d̪i:d/ ‘to you’  
*frít* /fʲr̪i:dʲ/ ‘through you’

#### 4.2.5 Liquids and nasals

4.2.5(i) *Tense versus lax*. It is clear from such rules as syllable lengthening (see 3.4) that there must be in the lexicon a distinction between tense and lax

consonants in the case of liquid and nasals, i.e. /**Ń** (˘)/, /**L** (˘)/ etc., as opposed to /**n** (˘)/, /**l** (˘)/ etc. This contrast has a role to play in lenition [see 6.2.1(iii)]. Apart from lenition the opposition tense versus lax need not be preserved. In certain environments the contrast will be completely removed. In the following, six of those various contexts are discussed.

Firstly, the sound /**r** (˘)/ survives in certain Munster dialects (and sporadically elsewhere) as a form of lenited *r* (for a full discussion of this phenomenon see Ó Siadhail and Wigger 1975:115 and Ó Murchú 1986). Examples are:

- (77) *do rogha rud* /**də r˘au rud**/ (C) ‘your choice’  
*a rí* /**ə r˘iː**/ (Dn, Mk) ‘o king!’  
*do rugadar* /**də r˘ugədər**/ (Dn, Mk, Ky) ‘they gave birth’

While in the case of /**r**/ normally, except in certain cases in Donegal, the tension is removed (i.e. /**r**/ becomes /**r**/) subsequent to vowel lengthening, there is a close relationship between tension and slender quality. Since slender *r* will not ultimately appear either in word-initial position or before dentals (see 4.2.2(i)) and as /**r**/ is removed, even in Donegal, the easiest arrangement is to say that it is from /**r**/ rather than /**r**/ that the slender quality is removed. It is of no significance whether this /**r**/ is in the underlying form or whether it arises because of a following dental. In this arrangement /**r**/ will remain where it is lenited in word-initial position. The fact that only a limited number of phrases are involved can be explained by alternative rule orderings. In the examples above, *do rogha rud* /**də r˘au rud**/ ‘your choice’ etc., lenition is required after the removal of the slender quality; elsewhere removal of slender quality is needed following lenition.

Secondly, in many parts of Connemara /**l**/ and /**n**/ become tense (i.e. /**L**/ and /**N**/) and thus a tripartite system is needed: /**L**/ and /**L**/, /**l**/; /**N**/ and /**N**/, /**n**//. The examples in (78) illustrate *l* and examples in (79) illustrate *n*:

- (78) *ball* /**ba:l**/ (Cn) ‘place’  
*baladh* /**ba:lə**/ → /**ba:lə**/ (Cf) ‘smell’  
*buille* /**bu:l**˘/ (C) ‘blow’  
*buile* /**bil**˘/ (C) ‘anger’
- (79) *bonn* /**bu:n**/ (Cn) ‘sole’  
*buan* /**bu:n**/ → /**bu:n**/ (Cn) ‘lasting’  
*Spáinn* /**spa:n**˘/ (C) ‘Spain’  
*(tai)spáin* /**spa:n**˘/ (C) ‘show!’

In some Donegal dialects, Gweedore for example, a /n/ becomes /n̩/ when between vowels as in:

- (80) *duine* /d̩in̩ə/ → /d̩in̩ə/ ‘person’  
*gloine* /g̩lin̩ə/ → /g̩lin̩ə/ ‘glass’  
*gainimh* /g̩an̩əv̩/ → /g̩an̩əv̩/ ‘sand’

In Munster the opposition between tense and lax *l* and *r* is lost, so that a two-part system emerges with /l/, /l̩/ and /n/, /n̩/. However, in certain parts of Munster, for example Muskerry and Ring (see Ó Cuív 1951:51-2), /n̩/ between vowels or in word-final position becomes /ŋ̩/, e.g.:

- (81) *coinne* /k̩in̩ə/ → /k̩iŋ̩ə/ (Mk, Rg) ‘appointment’  
*binn* /b̩i:n̩/ → /b̩i:ŋ̩/ (Mk, Rg) ‘melodious’

This change from /n̩/ to /ŋ̩/ must, of course, be implemented before the difference between /n̩/ and /n̩/ is removed.

Thirdly, it should be noted that *m* /m̩ (̩)/ and *ng* /ŋ̩ (̩)/ must be regarded as tense seeing that syllable lengthening occurs preceding them (see 3.4).

Fourthly, tension is removed before *s* as in, e.g.:

- (82) *inseacht* /i:(t)n̩s̩əxt/ → /i:(t)n̩s̩əxt/ (C) : /in̩s̩əxt/ (Tn) ‘telling’

Fifthly, both *n* and *l* are normally tense when beside a dental except before *s* in Connacht and parts of Donegal and before *t* in Donegal and Mayo:

- (83) *baint* /ban̩t̩/ → /ban̩t̩/ (Cn) ‘cutting’  
*sneachta* /s̩n̩əxtə/ → /s̩n̩əxtə/ (D, C) ‘snow’  
*tharlaigh* /ha:r̩li:/ (D, Mo) ‘happened’  
*óinseach* /u:n̩s̩əx/ (C) : /o:n̩s̩əx/ (Tn) ‘foolish woman’

Lastly, in most Connemara dialects /n̩/ becomes /n̩/ following /v̩/ as in:

- (84) *doimhne* /daiv̩n̩ə/ (Cn) comparative of *domhan* ‘deep’  
*goibhne* /g̩aiv̩n̩ə/ (Cn) ‘smiths’

This tensing of /n̩/ also occurs in North Donegal, e.g.:

- (85) *doimhne* /d̩iv̩n̩ə/ (Gd) comparative of *domhan* ‘deep’  
*cúimhne* /k̩iv̩n̩ə/ (Gd) ‘memory’

In South Donegal and Mayo, however, *doimhne* /div'n'ə/ (Tn, Mn, Er, Tm) and *cúimhne* /kiv'n'ə/ (Tn, Mn, Er, Tm) are required. Although in Munster, the distinction between /n'/ and /n'/ is generally removed, the pronunciation in Muskerry of examples such as the following with /ŋ'/ points to the fact that /n'/ must also be changed to /n'/ in Munster:

- (86) *oibhní* /ev'ən'i:/ → /ejn'i:/ → /əin'i:/ → /əiŋ'i:/ (Mk) 'rivers'  
*goibhní* /gev'n'i:/ → /gəjn'i:/ → /gəin'i:/ → /gəiŋ'i:/ (Mk) 'smiths'  
*Suibhne* /siv'n'ə/ → /sijn'ə/ → /si:n'ə/ → /si:ŋ'ə/ (Mk) a surname

**4.2.5(ii) Denasalization.** Primarily we are dealing here with a rule by which *n* followed by a consonant is changed to *r*. There are two parts to this rule.

Firstly, in word-initial position *n* is changed to *r* following any consonant except *s* (or /h/ due to lenition of an original *s*). Examples are:

- (87) *cnoc* /knuk/ → /kruk/ (D, C) 'hill'  
*mná* /mna:/ → /mra:/ (D, C) [ → /mra:/ (Cn)] 'women'  
*gnaoi* /gni:/ → /gri:/ (D, C) 'liking'  
*múth* /tnu:h/ → /tru:h/ (D, C) [ → /tru:/ (Cf)] 'desiring'  
*an tsneachta* /ə t' #n'axtə/ → /ə t' #r'axtə/ gen. of *sneachta* 'snow'  
*sneachta* /s'n'axtə/ (Mo) 'snow'  
*shneachta* /hn'axtə/ (Mo), lenited form of *sneachta* 'snow'

As can be seen from *an tsneachta* 'of the snow', the rule takes effect across the boundary between the article and its noun. It is worth noting that nasalization of a following vowel may be preserved from the original nasal, e.g.:

- (88) *cnoc* /krúk/ (Er) 'hill'  
*gníomh* /g'r'í:w/ (Er) 'deed'  
*mná* /mrā:/ (Er) 'women'  
*sa tsnámh* /sə trā:w/ (Er) 'into the deep'

Secondly, in medial position *n* becomes *r* for the most part only when it follows another nasal as in:

- (89) *imní* /im'n'i:/ → /i(:)m'r'i:/ (Cn) 'worry'  
*cúimhne* /kiv'n'ə/ ~ /ki:v'r'ə/ ~ /kim'n'ə/ ~ /kim'r'ə/ (Cf) 'memory'  
*ingne* /in'g'n'ə/ → /iŋ'g'r'ə/ (Cf) '(finger/toe) nails'

*cloigne* /**kleg'n'ə**/ (Cn) 'heads'  
*macnas* /**maknəs**/ (Tm) : /**makrəs**/ (Ln) 'wantonness'

The first part of the rule is needed for Donegal and Connacht (including Inishmaan and Inishmore and to a large degree for Inisheer and Clare). The second part is often optional. Examples from Donegal are:

- (90) *Doimínic* /**dim'r'ək'**/ (Gd) (man's name)  
*damnú* /**damru:**/ (Gd) 'damnation'

It is however required sporadically over a far wider area as can be seen in the examples:

- (91) *léimnigh* /**l'e:m'r'æg'**/ (Dn) 'leaping'  
*g'éimnigh* /**g'e:m'r'æg'**/ (Dn) 'lowing'

Curiously, there are random cases when the opposite change is needed, that is *r* becomes *n*, for instance in the Dunquin taboo formation: (a) *Chríost* /**x'n'ist**/ (Dn) 'Christ!' or South Tipperary *préamhacha* /**p'n'i:əxə**/ 'roots' (see Ó Maolchathaigh 1963) but *daúis* /**da'nu:s**/ (Rg).

Finally, there is a deal of dissimilation involving liquids in isolated words such as:

- (92) *baineann* /**bir'ən**/ (Cf) 'female' : /**bin'ən**/ (M)  
*(dá) réir* /**r'e:r'**/ ~ /**l'e:r'**/ (Cf) 'according to it'

A minor rule within Cois Fhairrge is the interchange of /l/ and /rl/ in words with a final /əx/ such as:

- (93) *muicealach* /**mik'ələx**/ ~ /**mik'ərləx**/ (Cf) 'botcher'  
*péicealach* /**p'e:ik'ələx**/ ~ /**p'e:ik'ərləx**/ (Cf)  
 'a vain person'  
*béalbhach* /**b'e:lu:x**/ ~ /**b'e:rlu:x**/ (Cf) 'bridle-bit'

**4.2.5(iii) Introduction of *n* beside an original nasal fricative.** The need for retention of nasalization adjacent to nasals would seem to be related to the age of a speaker, the oldest speakers retaining nasalization, at least in uncommon words. Even in words where the nasal fricative /w̃/ is subsumed into a diphthong /au/, nasalization may be preserved as a feature, e.g. *amhlaidh*

/aʊlə/ (Cf) ‘thus’. In a limited number of words a rule is required to convert that nasalization into *n*, e.g.:

- (94) *damhsa* /daʊsə/ ~ /daʊnsə/ (Cf) ‘dancing’  
*lámhacán* (/La:ʷəkə:n/ → /lawəkə:n/ → ) /Lauka:n/ → /laʊŋka:n/  
 (Dn) ‘creeping’  
*pamhsaer* /paʊse:r/ ~ /paʊse:r/ ~ /paʊnsə:r/ (Im) ‘flower’

**4.2.5(iv) Velarized nasal.** This rule removes /g(ʷ)/ after /ŋ(ʷ)/. The /ŋ(ʷ)/ arises either as a result of /g(ʷ)/ being nasalized in eclipses or it develops from a dental /n/ in front of a velar plosive. In certain dialects after the assimilation operates, the plosive, if voiced, is removed. In Mayo, this /g(ʷ)/ is lost in every context, e.g.:

- (95) *ceangal* /kʷaŋgəl/ → /kʷaŋəl/ (Mo) ‘binding’  
*loinge* /Liŋʷgʷə/ → /Liŋʷə/ (Mo) gen. of *long* ‘ship’

This does not happen in Donegal, Connemara or Munster. There is a minor rule in Munster which turns *ng* /ŋ(ʷ)g(ʷ)/ into *g* /g(ʷ)/ when following a neutral vowel and before a word boundary in a word such as *tarrang* /tarəŋg/ → /tarəg/ (→ /tarək/) (see 4.2.3) ‘drawing’. In contrast to this, in Connacht and Donegal it is the nasal which must be preserved in this context. Examples are:

- (96) *scilling* /sʷkʷilʷəŋʷgʷə/ → /sʷkʷilʷənʷə/ (D, C) ‘shilling’  
*fuiling* /felʷəŋʷgʷə/ → /felʷənʷə/ (D, C) ‘suffer’  
*tarraing* /tarəŋʷgʷə/ → /tarənʷə/ (D, C) ‘draw’

The rule applies even when endings are added, e.g.:

- (97) *scillinge* /sʷkʷilʷəŋʷgʷə/ → /sʷkʷilʷənʷə/ gen. of *scilling* ‘shilling’  
*scillingeacha* /sʷkʷilʷəŋʷgʷəxə/ → /sʷkʷilʷənʷəxə/ [ → /sʷkʷilʷnʷəxə/  
 → /sʷkʷilʷəxə/; see 4.2.5(v)] ‘shillings’

This removal of voiced velar (i.e. *g*) following a nasal can be viewed as an extension of the general rule which operates in word-initial position (see 6.2.1(viii)).

**4.2.5(v) Lateral and nasal assimilation.** There is a development of /d(ʷ)/ and /n(ʷ)/ to /l(ʷ)/ and /n(ʷ)/ when they occur beside another /l(ʷ)/ or /n(ʷ)/. Examples of this change are:

- (98) *maidne* /madʰənʰə/ → /madʰnʰə/ → /manʰə/ (D, C) gen. of *maidin* 'morning'  
*áilne* /a:ilənʰə/ → /a:ilnʰə/ → /a:lʰlʰə/ → /a:lʰə/ comparative of *álainn* 'beautiful'  
*cad 'na thaobh?* /kad nə he:w/ → /kanəhe:w/ (Ky, Mk) 'why?'  
*codladh* /kɔdləɣ/ → /kɔlləɣ/ → /kɔlləɣ/ → /kɔləɣ/ 'sleep' (for development see 4.1.2)

It may be noted in passing that a change in the opposite direction is needed for Ballymacoda, e.g. /l/ → /ld/. That rule is required after /ld/ is changed to /l/ but prior to the Munster removal of the distinction between /l/ and /l/, so that the sequence must be *codladh* /kɔdlə/ → /kɔlə/ → /kɔldə/ 'sleep'.

There is another rule of importance by which *n* or *l* is removed before *r*. Examples are:

- (99) *anró* /aunro:/ → /auro:/ (Mk, Rg) 'hardship'  
*scannradh* /skaunrə/ → /skaurə/ (Mk, Rg) 'scaring'  
*bainríon* /baunri:n/ → /bauri:n/ (Mk, Rg) 'queen'  
*lonnrach* /lu:nrə/ → /lu:rə/ (Mk) 'shining'  
*ceannrach* /k'aunrəx/ → /k'aurəx/ (Mk) 'halter'  
*síolrach* /s'i:lərəx/ → /s'i:rərəx/ (Mk, Rg) 'offspring'  
*dealramh* /d'aurləw/ → /d'aurəw/ (Dn, Mk) 'likeness'

Interestingly, both *l* and *n* are dropped before *r* in Muskerry (whereas in Dunquin only *l* seems to be dropped and then only occasionally). In Donegal the rule would appear to be needed only for, e.g.:

- (100) *scannradh* /skanru:/ → /skaruz/ (D) 'scaring'  
*bainríon* /banri:n/ → /bari:n/ (Gd) 'queen'  
*sonnraithe* /su:nri/ → /so:ri/ (Tn) 'noted'

**4.2.5(vi) *The intrusive dental.*** The type of assimilation which is common for laterals and nasals is rarer in the case of /r/ beside /l/ or /n/. We are concerned here with a plosive dental which will separate /l/ or /n/ from a following /r/. By all appearances this rule is entirely optional. Most often, this is a voiceless dental plosive /t̪/ which devoices the following *r*. In part of Connemara and in Mayo a sort of semi-devoicing is required rather than /t̪/. Examples are:

- (101) *bainríon* /**banri:ən**/ → /**ban̪ri:ən**/ (Cn, Mo) ‘queen’  
*eanraith* /**anrə**/ → /**an̪rə**/ ~ /**an̪rə**/ (Cn, Mo) ‘broth’  
*anró* /**anro:**/ → /**an̪ro:**/ ~ /**an̪ro:**/ (Cn, Mo) ‘hardship’

There are, however, some words where full voicing is preserved, e.g.

- (102) *lonnradh* /**LUNrə**/ → /**LUNdrə**/ (Cf) ‘shining’  
*malrach* /**ma:LRəx**/ → /**ma:LRəx**/ (Cf) ‘young boy’  
*lionnrach* /**L'i:NRəx**/ → /**L'i:NRəx**/ (Cf) ‘fluid from a sore’

The cluster is normally unaltered (except that vowel lengthening can occur, see 3.4). Sometimes *rl* will arise due to metathesis [see 4.2.6(ii)], particularly in Mayo, in words where /**d**/ is required in Connemara, e.g.:

- (103) *galra* /**ga:LRə**/ (Cn) ~ /**garlə**/ (Mo) ‘disease’  
*olra* /**OLDrə**/ (Cn), /**ulrə**/ (Tm) (→ /**urlə**/) (Er) ‘eagle’  
*biolra* /**b'ildrə**/ (Cn), /**b'irlə**/ (Er) ‘watercress’

These exemplified derivations would presuppose a rule changing an underlying *galar* to *galra*, *iolar* to *iolra* [see 4.2.6(ii)] before the intrusion of /**d**/ and before the metathesis *lr* to *rl*.

**4.2.5(vii) Adjacent vibrant and sibilant.** There are two basic contrary rules: firstly, that /**s'**/ adjacent to /**r**/ becomes /**s**/; secondly, that /**s**/ adjacent to /**r**/ becomes /**s'**/.

As has been seen [4.2.2(i)] /**r**/ is never slender when following a sibilant. The opposition between /**s**/ and /**s'**/ is also removed in this environment. In essence, these changes involve the position of the tip of the tongue; either the /**r**/ retracts the /**s**/ or the /**s**/ brings the /**r**/ forward. Where the tip of the tongue is retracted the result is a postalveolar sibilant (i.e. /**ʃ**/), which is further back than /**s'**/.

Table 4.6 illustrates the variation in the major dialects.

As may be deduced from Table 4.6, the first rule applies in Donegal, the second in Mayo. In the west of Connemara, the second rule is optional, while in Cois Fhairrge the first one is optional. In Munster the first rule obtains in initial position.

In Cois Fhairrge (and West Connemara), there is also a metathesis [see 4.2.6(iii)] which affects the combination *sr* in words such as:

- (104) *lasrachaí* → *larsachaí* /**La:rsəxi:**/ ~ /**Lair]əxi:**/ (Cf) ‘flames’  
*pisreoig* → *pirseoig* /**p’irso:g’**/ ~ /**p’ir]o:g’**/ (Cf) ‘superstition’  
*glaisreo* → *glairseo* /**gLa:rsu:**/ ~ /**gLa:r]u:**/ (Cf) ‘hoar-frost’

Table 4.6 *Realization of adjacent vibrant and sibilant in major dialects*

Underlying form	/s’r’/	/sr/	/r’s’/	/rs/
Example	<i>srian</i> ‘reins’	<i>sráid</i> ‘street’	<i>tuirseach</i> ‘tired’	<i>comharsa</i> ‘neighbour’
Donegal	/sr/	/sr/	/rs/	/rs/
Mayo	/r/	/r/	/rj/	/rj/
West				
Connemara	/r/	/sr/ ~ /r/	/rj/	/rs/ ~ /rj/
Cois Fhairrge	/r/ ~ /sr/	/sr/	/rj/ ~ /rs/	/rs/
Munster	/sr/	/sr/	/rj/	/rs/

The two rules illustrated in the table above affect the result of the metathesis in the normal way.

**4.2.5(viii) The slender vibrant (/r’/).** Apart from the removal of slender quality, there are two other noteworthy rules affecting /r’/.

Firstly, in Gweedore, there is a major rule which converts /r’/ to /j/. Some examples are:

- (105) *Máire* /**mæ:r’ə**/ → /**mæ:jə**/ (Gd) woman’s name  
*bádóir* /**bæ:dar’**/ → /**bæ:daj**/ (Gd) ‘boatman’  
*iascaire* /**i:əskər’ə**/ → /**i:əskəjə**/ (Gd) ‘fisherman’  
*gáirí* /**gæ:r’i:**/ → /**gæ:ji:**/ (Gd) ‘laughing’  
*fir* /**fir’**/ → /**fij**/ (Gd) ‘men’

Where /j/ follows a neutral vowel and is at the end of a word, it combines with that neutral vowel to give /i:/, e.g. *soi* [dh] *bhir* /**se:r’ər’**/ → /**se:vi:**/ ‘rich’. Although there is a similarity between the latter change and that of *bealaigh* (/b’aləx’/ → ) /b’aləj/ → /b’ali:/ [see 4.1.3(ii)] gen. of *bealach* ‘way’, they do not, as a whole, operate in a parallel fashion, as can be seen in:

- (106) *fir* /**fir’**/ → /**fij**/ (Gd) ‘men’  
*nigh* /**n’ij**/ → /**n’i:**/ (D) ‘wash!’

*iascaire* /i:əskər'ə/ → /i:əskəjə/ 'fisherman'  
*caillighe* /kəl'əjə/ → /kəl'i:/, gen. of *cailleach* 'hag'

The development of /ð/ from slender *r* /r'/ is widely known in Scotland. There are, however, occasional examples recorded for Donegal, e.g.:

(107) *cladhaire* /klɛ:r'ə/ ~ /klɛ:ðə/ (Tn) 'coward'  
*oighreog* /e:ðag/ (Tn) 'ice'

Somewhat similar to this is the sporadic change from slender *r* /r'/ to /d'/ in various dialects in such words as:

(108) *dréimire* /d'r'e:m'ər'ə/ ~ /d'r'e:m'əd'ə/ (Cf) 'ladder'  
*báire* /ba:r'ə/ → /ba:d'ə/ (Dn) 'goal'  
*mochóirí* /muxo:r'i:/ ~ /muxo:d'i:/ (Mk) 'early risers'

#### 4.2.6 Metathesis

There are several different cases where the order of neighbouring sounds must be altered. Five rules governing some of these changes are proposed here:

**4.2.6(i) s following a plosive.** An *s* following a plosive is switched about so that it then precedes the plosive, e.g.

(109) *creidsiúint* → *creistiúint* /k'r'ed' + s + ú + nt/ → /k'r'es't'u:n't'/ (C, M) 'believing'  
*túigsint* → *túisciúint* /tig' + s + n + t/ → /tis'k'ə'n't'/ (M) (→ /t'is'k'ə'n't'/) (C) 'understanding'  
*absalóid* /absəlo:d'/ (Ih) → *asbalóid* /aspəlo:d'/ (Im, Tm, Mk) 'absolution'  
*gíogsán* → *gíoscán* /g'i:ɣ + s + a:n/ → /g'i:skɑ:n/ (C) [ → /g'i:skɑ:n/ (Cn)] 'squeaking'  
*bocsa* /boksə/ (D) → *bosca* /boskə/ (C, M) 'box'

The rule applies generally to the dialects. However, in Donegal velar plosives (i.e. /g (ʔ)/ or /k (ʔ)/) are excluded so that *bocsa* /boksə/ (Gd) 'box' and *túigseannach* /tik's'ənah/ 'understanding' are required. Certain borrowings do not come under the rule:

- (110) *stáitse* ‘stage’  
*bitse(ach)* ‘bitch’  
*peáitse* (Cf) ‘page’ : *páiste* ‘child’  
*meaits* ‘match’ : *maiste* (Rm) ‘spill’

**4.2.6(ii)** /l/ or /n/ + /ə/ + /r/. The combination vowel + /l/ or /n/ + /ə/ + /r/ changes about so that the /r/ will follow directly the /l/ or /n/. Furthermore, the then adjacent /l/ or /n/ or /r/ may be subsequently transposed as in:

- (111) *galar* /galər/ → /gairə/ → (/garlə/) (Er) ‘disease’  
*iolar* /ulər/ → /ulrə/ (/urlə/) (Er) ‘eagle’  
*malairt* /malərˈtʰ/ → /malrədʰ/ → /malhrədʰ/ ~ /ma:lʰrədʰ/ (Cf)  
 ‘change’  
*conairt* /konərˈtʰ/ → /kunhrətʰ/ → /kunhrədʰ/ (Er) ‘pack of hounds’

This metathesis is confined to Connacht and is most pervasive in Erris, where examples with /n/, such as *conairt* ‘pack of hounds’, are found. (For the substitution of *d* for *t* in final position after a neutral vowel in *malraid*, ‘change’, *conraid* ‘pack of hounds’, see 4.2.4.)

**4.2.6(iii)** *sr* /sr/ → *rs* /rs/. There is an optional rule in Cois Fhairrge which causes *sr* /sr/ to be changed to *rs* /rs/ in medial position, e.g.:

- (112) *lasrachaí* /La:srəxi:/ ~ *larsachaí* /La:rsəxi:/ (Cf) ‘flames’  
*glaisreo* /gLa:fru:/ ~ *glairseo* /gLa:rsu:/ (Cf) ‘hoar-frost’

**4.2.6(iv)** *C/r/ǃ'CV* → *Cǃ/r/'CV*. There is a minor rule which is required in Munster dialects which will change the combination *consonant + r /r/ + short vowel + consonant + stressed vowel* (i.e. *C/r/ǃ'CV*) to *consonant + neutral vowel + r + consonant + stressed vowel* (i.e. *Cǃ/r/'CV*) provided the newly created cluster is permitted by the syllabic rules. Examples are:

- (113) *brollach* /brə'lax/ → /bər'lax/ (Dn, Mk) ‘breast’  
*bradán* /brə'da:n/ /bər'da:n/ (Dn, Mk) ‘salmon’  
*graibhéal* /grəv'eil/ → /garə'veil/ (Mk) ‘gravel’  
*cruithneacht* /krəŋ'haxt/ (Mk) → /kər'n'axt/ (Ky) ‘wheat’

**4.2.6(v)** /h/ *beside a liquid*. There is a rule by which /h/ beside a liquid is transposed as in examples such as:

- (114) *aithrí* /**ahr'i:**/ → /**ar'hi:**/ (M) ~ /**arh'i:**/ (Tn) → /**ærh'i:**/ (Lm) 'repentance'  
*aithne* /**ahn'ə**/ → /**an'hə**/ (Tm) → /**æn'hə**/ (Lm) 'acquaintance'  
*iothlainn* /**ohlən'**/ → /**olhən'**/ (Lm) 'haggard'

In the examples in (114) an original short vowel precedes *l*, *n*, and *r*. In Cois Fhairrge *h* has already been removed [see 4.1.7(ii)]. In Munster the metathesis is not required before *n* or *l* and only occasionally before *r* because a rule introducing a secondary epenthetic vowel (see 2.4) has already taken effect at this point in the derivation so that the cluster does not arise.

- (115) *aithne* /**ahən'ə**/ (M) 'acquaintance'  
*iothla* /**ihələ**/ (Mk) ~ /**ahələ**/ (Rg) 'haggard'  
*fothram* /**föhərəm**/ (M) 'noise'

In Erris there is apparently no metathesis following a short vowel, e.g. *aithrí* /**ahr'i:**/ 'repentance'. In Donegal metathesis is recorded, e.g. *raithneach* /**ran'həx**/ (Tn) 'fern', *aithris* /**ar'həs**/ (Mn) 'narrate'.

It would seem that following a long vowel this rule of metathesis is necessary before *r* in any dialect where /**h**/ is still retained at this point in the derivation. There is more variation before *l* or *n*:

- (116) *saothrughadh* /**su:hru:**/ → /**ser'hu:**/ (M) ~ /**si:rhuz**/ (D, Mo, west C) 'earning'  
*bóithrelí* /**bo:hr'ə**/ → /**bo:r'hə**/ (M) ~ /**bo:r'hi:**/ (Mo, west C) 'roads'  
*féithleog* /**f'e:hl'o:g**/ → /**f'e:l'ho:g**/ (Mk) 'sinew'  
*traithnín* /**tra:hn'in'**/ (Er) → /**tra:n'hi:n'**/ (Tm) 'blade of grass'  
*cáithnín* /**ka:hn'in'**/ → /**ka:n'hi:n'**/ (Mk) 'flake'

To some extent, this metathesis might simply be seen as varying degrees of the devoicing of liquids (see 4.2.3). Indeed /**ɾ**/ and /**ɳ**/ are required for Teelin (see Quiggin 1906:89, 98), e.g.:

- (117) *aithne* /**æŋ'ə**/ (Mn) 'acquaintance'  
*aithrí* /**ær'i:**/ (Mn) 'repentance'  
*saothrughadh* /**su:ɾhu**/ (Mn) 'earning'  
*parrthas* /**pa:ɾhəs**/ (Mn) 'paradise'  
*tuartha* /**tu:əɾə**/ (Mn) 'bleached'

#### 4.2.7 Expressive clusters

The increase in the number of consonants in a word-initial cluster is sometimes used to alter the meaning slightly or to lend a greater expressiveness to the word. It is difficult to say how productive this phenomenon is. Often, as in the following examples, the words involved are pejorative. Two cases are dealt with here.

**4.2.7(i) Initial s.** There is the largely optional prefixing of /s/ to a single or double consonant group, e.g.

- (118) (s)máirtíneach (Cf) ‘cripple’  
(s)lúbíneach (Cf) ‘messer’  
(s)lapaire (Cf) ‘a pudgy person’  
(s)crománach (Cf) ‘tall stooped person’  
(s)cluitéara (Cf) ‘a glutton, sponger’  
geataire ‘long rush’ : sceatachán (Mk) ‘splinter, slightly built person’

A similar variation throughout the dialects is exemplified in (119). In many cases, there is no semantic significance:

- (119) preab (Gd) ‘spadeful’ : spreab (Cf)  
corróig (Cn) ‘hip’ : scorróg (Gd)  
poilséir (Cn) ‘pilchards’ : spoilséirí (Rg)

Interestingly, *s* is often prefixed to the name of an animal to give extra force to a command, e.g.:

- (120) scut amach (Cf) ‘out with you, cat’  
scearc amach (Cf) ‘out with you, hen’

The examples in (120) are derived from *cut* ‘cat’ and *cearc* ‘hen’.

**4.2.7(ii) Initial /p’/.** There is the prefixing of *p* /p’/ to an initial /l’/ in examples like Cois Fhairrge (*p*)leidhce, (*p*)leota, (*p*)leidhb ‘fool’. This may be related to lenition; see 6.2.5(i).