



Administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) 1737

1737 CHAPTER 6 11 Geo 2

An Act that all Proceedings in Courts of Justice within this Kingdom shall be in the English Language.

Whereas many and great mischiefs do frequently happen to the subjects of this kingdom from the proceedings in courts of justice being in an unknown language; those who are summoned and impleaded having no knowledge or understanding of what is alledged for or against them in the pleadings of their lawyers and attorneys, who use a character not legible to any but persons practising the law:

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 Short title given by [Short Titles Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1951 \(c. 1\)](#)

[1.] All proceedings in courts of justice, patents, charters, pardons, commissions, &c. shall be in English. and in legible character, not in court-hand, and with usual abbreviations in English, and figures. Penalty £20 to prosecutor.

To remedy those great mischiefs, and to protect the lives and fortunes of the subjects of this kingdom more effectually than heretofore from the peril of being ensnared, and brought into danger, by forms and proceedings in courts of justice in an unknown language, . . . ^{F1} all writs, process, and returns thereof, and proceedings thereon, and all pleadings, rules, orders, indictments, informations, inquisitions, presentments, verdicts, prohibitions, certificates, and all patents, charters, pardons, commissions, records, judgments, statutes, recognizances, bonds, rolls, entries, fines, and recoveries, and all proceedings relating thereunto, and all proceedings of courts-leet, courts-baron, and customary-courts, and all copies thereof, and all proceedings whatsoever in any courts of justice within this kingdom, and which concern the law and administration of justice, shall be in the English tongue and language, and not in Latin or French, or any other tongue or language whatsoever, and shall be written or printed in a common legible hand and character, and not in any hand commonly called Court-

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hand, with the like way of writing or printing, and with such abbreviations, as are now commonly used in the English language, and with the like manner of expressing numbers by figures as have been heretofore or are now commonly used in the said courts respectively; any law, custom, or usage, heretofore to the contrary thereof notwithstanding; and all and every person and persons, who shall write or print any of the proceedings, or other the matters or things above mentioned, in any hand commonly called Court-hand, or in any language except the English language, shall for every such offence forfeit and pay the sum of twenty pounds . . . ^{F2}

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words repealed by [Statute Law Revision Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1953 \(c. 1\)](#)
F2 Words repealed by [Common Informers Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1954 \(c. 11\)](#), **Sch.**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C2** [S. 1](#) amended as to proceedings for penalty or forfeiture by [Common Informers Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1954 \(c. 11\)](#), **s. 1(1)**

II **But names of writs, process or technical words, may be expressed as commonly used, so as not in court-hand. Prosecutions to be in three months.**

Provided nevertheless, That such penalty shall not be extended to the expressing the proper or known names of writs, or other process, or technical words, in the same language as hath been commonly used, so as the same be written or printed in a common legible hand and character, and not in any hand commonly called Court-hand; and that all prosecutions for offences against this act shall be commenced within three calendar months, after the same shall be committed.

III, IV. ^{F3}

Textual Amendments

- F3** [Ss. 3, 4](#) repealed by [Statute Law Revision \(Ireland\) Act 1878 \(c. 57\)](#)

V **Commissions and proceedings in admiralty may be certified in Latin.**

Provided always, That nothing in this act contained shall extend to certifying beyond the seas any case or proceedings in the court of admiralty; but that in such cases the commissions and proceedings may be certified in Latin, as formerly they have been.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C3** Functions of court of admiralty now exercisable by Queen's Bench Division of High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland: [Supreme Court of Judicature Act \(Ireland\) 1877 \(c. 57\)](#), **s. 9**, [Supreme Court of Judicature \(Ireland\) \(No. 2\) Act 1897 \(c. 66\)](#), **s. 6**, [Government of Ireland Act 1920 \(c. 67\)](#), **ss. 38, 40, 41**, [S.R. & O. 1921/1802 \(Rev. XVI, p. 954: 1921, p. 1332\)](#), **arts. 2, 7** and [1921/1804 \(Rev. XVI, p. 967: 1921, p. 422\)](#), **art. 5**

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VI F4

Textual Amendments

F4 S. 6 repealed by Statute Law Revision Act 1950 (c. 6)

VII, VIII F5

Textual Amendments

F5 Ss. 7, 8 repealed by Statute Law Revision (Ireland) Act 1878 (c. 57)

Changes to legislation:

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

- Act repealed by [2022 c. 45 s. 4](#)