Celtic and English in Contact
Routes taken across the North Sea by Germanic tribes in the 5c. The Jutes came from Jutland and settled in Kent. The Saxons came from the area of present-day (Lower) Saxony and settled largely south of the River Thames. The Angles came from the lower part of the the Jutland peninsula which is now Schleswig Holstein in Germany and settled in central and northern England.

The lines in the above map are very approximate. Many of the settlers may have crossed the North Sea from the area of present-day Belgium as this would have involved the shortest sea journey.
Celtic-English contact through the ages

1) Old English period

Germanic invaders of England came into contact with Celts, speakers of Brythonic, as of the mid 5c AD. As opposed to former views, one now assumes that the Celts were subjugated by the Germanic tribes rather than banished to unpopulated parts of the west of England and Scotland. They probably got the Celts to work for them. Consider that the word for Celt in Old English is *wealh* (cf. Welsh) and that this existed in a feminine form *wielh* which was also the word for female servant.

Although there are few loanwords from Celtic, an influence on English pronunciation and grammar may have occurred: (i) the transfer of consonant weakening from Brythonic to English may have been responsible for the loss of inflectional endings and the typological realignment of English as a SVO language in the following centuries. (ii) the rise of the progressive in English (e.g. *I am visiting Moscow this week*) and the use of possessive pronouns with inalienable possession (e.g. *I broke my arm, My tooth is sore*).
2) Early Modern period

The spread of English throughout the British Isles led in later centuries to a gradual shift from Celtic to English on the part of speakers in the Celtic regions, specifically in Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

The language shift which took place caused the transfer of many structures from the Celtic languages to the varieties of English which emerged in these regions. This is especially true of English in Ireland and in western, northern Scotland including the islands off the north-west coast of this country. As with the earlier period, the main linguistic levels affected were phonology and syntax. This is typical of language transfer from a substrate language (in this case Irish and Scottish Gaelic) to a superstrate language (in this case English).

The remarks which I will make on English in Ireland apply to a great extent to the English language in those regions of Scotland where shift from Gaelic took place in recent centuries.
The development of the English language in Ireland

website:  www.uni-due.de/IERC
Periods in the development of Irish English

1) **First period**  *Late 12th century to 1600*

Establishment of English on the east coast in a band from Dublin down to Waterford. English is above all present in the towns; Anglo-Norman — and of course Irish — in the countryside. Increasing Gaelicisation in the centuries after the initial invasion led to the demise of English outside the major towns. The low point for English is reached in the 16th century with Irish in a correspondingly strong position.

2) **Second period**  *1600 to present-day*

This begins with a decisive military defeat for the Irish. The north of the country is particularly affected with settlers from Lowland Scotland moving to Ulster and establishing a firm presence there. Later on in the 17th century there are vigorous plantations of the south of the country (under Cromwell). By the end of the 17th century, the position of English is unassailable and the general decline of Irish sets in with events like the Great Famine in the late 1840’s and the ensuing mass emigration dealing a final blow to the language.
The spread of Ulster Scots (with northern varieties of English) throughout Ulster from the early 17th century onwards.

The spread of English from the east of Ireland westwards from the late 12th century onwards.
The English language in Ireland

After the accession of James VI of Scotland as James I to the English throne a vigorous policy of plantation was pursued in Ulster, filling the geographical and political vacuum left by the defeated Irish with settlers from Lowland Scotland and also from other parts of Britain, mainly northern Britain. These settlers are the ancestors of the current Protestant population in Northern Ireland.

The two new groups in 17th century Ulster led to a linguistic landscape in which Ulster Scots on the rim of the province and Mid-Ulster English further inland became the dominant varieties of English. Ulster Scots has retained its specific profile to this day and has been strengthened by official recognition in the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992) which was adopted by the government of the United Kingdom in 2001.

The English language in major cities of Northern Ireland has undergone specific developments which have been investigated by sociolinguists, above all by James and Lesley Milroy.
The English language in Ireland

In the south of Ireland the development of English was characterised by the major language shift which took place approximately between the early 17th and late 19th century. In this period the rural population abandoned their native Irish and increasingly adopted English as their first, and later their only language. During this process many features, above all in pronunciation and grammar, were transferred as part of the new variety of Irish English.

Prominent features of the Irish pronunciation of English include the lack of interdental fricatives, a fricative /t/ in open positions and the continuing presence of historical /r/. In the area of grammar several features are present which can be traced to the language shift or to the retention of earlier English input to Ireland, e.g.

*They’re after selling their house* ‘They have just sold their house’
*She has the work done* ‘She has now finished the work’
*He likes the life in Dublin* ‘He likes life in Dublin’
*Where are ye going?* ‘Where are you [more than one person] going?’

Some of these features are only found in vernacular Irish English, e.g.

*He does be at home in the morning* ‘He is always at home in the morning’, *
*What are youse up to?* ‘What are you [more than one person] doing?’, *
*They didn’t cause no trouble* ‘They didn’t cause any trouble’.
The areas in Ireland today in which native speakers are found in historically continuous communities. Some areas are in a stronger position than others, e.g. North-West Donegal and West Galway have the most vibrant communities whereas North-West & South Mayo, West Kerry, Cape Clear and West Waterford are in a much weaker position. Rathcairn is an entirely transported community (from Galway in the early 20th century).
Varieties of Irish English have been transported to many overseas locations (the Caribbean, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand) as a result of considerable emigration from Ireland during the colonial period (17th to 19th centuries). Possible influences of Irish English on varieties of English in other parts of the anglophone world have been identified (Hickey ed. 2004).

Recent varieties of Dublin English show new developments which have arisen during the economic boom which Ireland has experienced in the past 15 years or so (Hickey 2005). Advanced Dublin English has features of pronunciation (vowel values and consonant shifts) which have spread rapidly to other parts of the Republic of Ireland.

There is no codified standard of Irish English, but supraregional usage, derived from middle-class Dublin English, was a de facto standard during the 20th century. This has been affected by new Dublin English and the latter is quickly establishing itself as a model of non-local Irish English usage.
Key features of English in Ireland, Phonology & Morphology

Phonology

1) Lenition of alveolar stops in positions of high sonority, e.g. *city, cat.*
2) Use of clear [l] in all positions in a word (only in conservative varieties)
3) Retention of syllable-final /r/
4) Distinction of short vowels before /r/ (only in conservative varieties)
5) Retention of the distinction between *which* and *witch.*

Morphology

1) Distinction between second singular and plural personal pronouns
2) Epistemic negative *must,* e.g. *He mustn´t be Scottish.*
3) *Them* as demonstrative, e.g. *Them shoes in the hall.*
Key features of English in Ireland, Syntax

1) Perfective aspect with two sub-types:
   a) Immediate perfective, e.g. She is after spilling the milk.
   b) Resultative perfective, e.g. She has the housework done. (OV word order)

2) Habitual aspect, expressed by do + be or bees or inflectional -s in the first person singular
   a) She does be reading books.
   b) They bees up late at night.
   c) I gets awful anxious about the kids when they’re away.

3) Reduced number of verb forms, e.g. seen and done as preterite, went as past participle

4) Negative concord, e.g. He’s not interested in no cars.

5) Clefting for topicalisation purposes, e.g. It’s to Glasgow he’s going.

6) Greater range of the present tense, e.g. I know him for more than six years now.

7) Be as auxiliary, e.g. They’re finished the work now.

8) Till in the sense of ‘in order that’, e.g. Come here till I tell you.

9) Singular time reference for never, e.g. She never rang yesterday evening.

10) For to infinitives of purpose, e.g. He went to Dublin for to buy a car.

11) Subordinating and (frequently concessive), e.g. We went for a walk and it raining.

12) Preference for that as relative pronoun This is the book that I read.
Language contact
Contact: Some preliminary distinctions

1) Language contact is really contact between speakers of different languages.

2) The term *language* is an abstraction from a certain type of human behaviour involving sounds in specific sequences.

3) Contact can be motivated by necessity (filling of lexical gaps, new terms for new phenomena, e.g. scientific inventions) but can also be the result of prestige, or just a passing fashion, as with the many borrowings from English which are not strictly speaking needed by the modern European languages which have them.
Contact situations

*One-way borrowing*
- Receiving language <
- Donor language

*Language shift*
- Original language abandoned >
- All speakers shift to new language

*Language convergence*
- One or more languages become more similar through borrowing in both directions
Linguistic levels and contact

- Phonetics, Phonology: all sounds, system sounds
- Morphology: forms and words
- Syntax: clauses and sentences
- Semantics: meanings of various kinds
- Pragmatics: language use
Linguistic levels and contact

Levels most affected

Vocabulary (loanwords, phrases)
Sentence structure, word-order
Speech habits (general pronunciation, suprasegmentals [stress, intonation])
Sounds (present in loan-words)
Grammar (morphology: inflections)

Levels least affected
Types of language contact and their effects

- Contact, but little if any bilingualism (French in Middle English no bilingualism German and English today)
  - Only loan-words, cultural borrowings

- Contact with approximation of one or both languages to the other
  - Koineisation or dialect levelling, some structural permeation with similar languages (late Old English and Norse)

- Contact with language shift (Irish -> English) of outset transferred to target
  - Grammatical interference, speech habits transferred from substrate to target

- Contact but restricted input, uncontrolled acquisition (Caribbean creoles)
  - Pidginisation, grammatical restructuring, creolisation if there is no linguistic continuity of any kind
## Contact scenarios, 1

### Very early contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language(s) 1</th>
<th>Language(s) 2</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) North-West Indo-European</td>
<td>Vasconic (Basque), Semitic</td>
<td>5000 BC onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Finnish</td>
<td>Germanic</td>
<td>First centuries AD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Western Romance</td>
<td>Celtic in Gaul and Iberia</td>
<td>Period of Roman Empire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Signs of contact

Very early loanwords which have been phonologically adapted to receiving language

Germanic loans in Finnish *rengas 'ring', kaunis (/sk/ simplified to /k/)

'beautiful', *kuningas 'king* with the final /s/ of the nominative which has been lost elsewhere or become /r/ as in Icelandic

Lexical doublets in Irish, one Indo-European, one not

* cathair 'city', baile 'town'; bean 'woman', ainnir 'young woman'; muir 'sea, ocean', farraige 'sea'
Contact scenarios, 2

Some common language contact scenarios in European history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language 1</th>
<th>Language 2</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Swedish</td>
<td>Low German</td>
<td>Hanse period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Russian, German, etc.</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>18c/19c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The history of English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language 1</th>
<th>Language 2</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Old English</td>
<td>British Celtic</td>
<td>5c onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Old English</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>7c onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Old English</td>
<td>Scandinavian</td>
<td>9c onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Middle English</td>
<td>Anglo-Norman/Central French</td>
<td>11c/13c onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Early Modern English</td>
<td>Latin/Greek</td>
<td>17c/18c onwards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possible sources of features in Irish English

1) Transfer from Irish
2a) Dialect forms of English
2b) Archaic forms of English
3) Features deriving from the context in which English was learned
4) Features with no recognisable source (independent developments)
### Suggestions for sources of key features of Irish English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morphological features</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinct pronominal forms for second person singular and plural</td>
<td>Convergence of English input and Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Them</em> as demonstrative</td>
<td>English input only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic features</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitual aspect, <em>e.g.</em> <em>She does be worrying about the children.</em></td>
<td>Convergence with English input in south, possibly with influence from Scots via Ulster; otherwise transfer of category from Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate perfective aspect with <em>after</em>, <em>e.g.</em> <em>He’s after breaking the glass.</em></td>
<td>Transfer from Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resultative perfective with OV word order, <em>e.g.</em> <em>We have the work done.</em></td>
<td>Possible convergence, primarily from Irish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Suggestions for sources of key features of Irish English

| Feature                                                                 | Source                                                                 
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subordinating and, e.g. <em>She went out walking and it raining.</em></td>
<td>Transfer from Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variant use of suffixal -s in present, e.g. <em>They likes the life in Dublin.</em></td>
<td>English input, particularly on east coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clefting for topicalisation purposes, e.g. <em>It’s to Galway they’ve gone today.</em></td>
<td>Transfer from Irish, with some possible convergence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater range of the present tense, e.g. <em>I know him since he moved here.</em></td>
<td>Transfer from Irish, with some possible convergence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative concord, e.g. <em>They don’t know nothing.</em></td>
<td>Convergence of English input and Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For <em>to</em> infinitives indicating purpose, e.g. <em>He went to Dublin for to buy a car.</em></td>
<td>Convergence of English input and Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced number of verb forms, e.g. <em>I seen it, He done it.</em></td>
<td>English input only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be as auxiliary, e.g. <em>He’s gone now.</em></td>
<td>English input only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single time reference for never, e.g. <em>She never rang yesterday eveing.</em></td>
<td>Transfer from Irish, English input</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some tentative conclusions

Language contact can cause considerable structural change if it is very intense.

Language shift is a special situation which leads to the transfer of speech habits from the source to the target language.

Such features can remain in the target language forming a variety which is seen by later generations as part of their identity.


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