

Irish English in the context of previous research¹

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1. Introduction

The current chapter is intended as an overview of the main focus of research on Irish English to date. This variety has been well served by scholars in recent decades with a flourishing of interest stemming from various approaches to analysing English in Ireland. For the purpose of presentation, this chapter is divided into various sections each of which concerns itself with a particular subarea. After these introductory paragraphs, there is a section on the early history of the variety of Irish English (Section 2.). This is followed by a consideration of the main linguistic event in the history of Ireland, the shift from Irish to English for the great majority of the population (Section 3.). In keeping with new trends in Irish English scholarship (Hickey 1999a), shared features across the country as a whole are then reviewed (Section 4.). Following on from this, there is a section on the interpretation of features, considering in particular their possible sources (Section 5.). Such reflections are relevant to the question of whether language contact or retention of dialect input are the source for features of Irish English (Harris 1991; Hickey 1995, 2006). The last section looks at recent changes in Dublin English (Section 6.) which, because of the status of the capital in the Republic of Ireland, are having a profound influence on the course of non-local varieties of English in the south of the country (Hickey 1999b).

1.1. The history of Irish English scholarship

The history of Irish English studies reaches back into the late eighteenth century. What can be regarded as the first studies of Irish English are glossaries for the archaic dialect of Forth and Bargy (Vallancey 1787–1788). The gathering of lexical material into glossaries is part of an antiquarian interest in language which flourished at this time, not only in Ireland. This interest continued throughout the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries and led in particular to collections of local words and sayings for the north of Ireland, this concern with local vocabulary in Ulster persisting up to the present (Macafee 1996).

Almost at the same time as the first glossaries were being compiled, at least one author, Thomas Sheridan, was involved in laying out rules for the elocution of English. Part of Sheridan's concern was with pointing out the nonstandard pronunciation of Irish English (Sheridan 1781). Like the glossarists, Sheridan was located within a certain tradition, this time that of prescriptive grammar, which in England had its major representative in the grammarian Bishop Lowth (see Lowth 1762).

In the course of the nineteenth century, the concern with antiquarianism and elocution receded, and there was a lull in the activity of scholars concerning themselves with English in Ireland. Of course at this time, the study of the Irish language was a central concern and reached clear expression in works such as O'Donovan's (1845) Irish grammar and the monumental *Grammatica Celtica* by Zeuss (1871). However, in the second half of the nineteenth century, a small number of authors began to concern themselves with specific features of Irish English, very often in the context of English in the north of Ireland. In addition, there are one or two cases of writers who concerned themselves with features of a certain locality, the most well-known of these is probably Patterson, who produced a book on provincialisms in the speech of Belfast (1860).

But it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that works dedicated specifically to Irish English as a distinctive variety of English began to appear. The main monograph of this period is that published by Patrick Weston Joyce (1910), *English as We Speak it in Ireland*, which despite all its shortcomings, still represents the beginning of modern scholarship on this variety. Articles also began to appear in learned journals, the most important of which was the study by Hayden and Hartog (1909). From the 1920s there exists a study by James Jeremiah Hogan (1927), which is basically an examination of the historical documents available for Irish English. Hogan is also known for his textbook, entitled *An Outline of English Philology Chiefly for Irish Students* (Hogan 1934), which contains many remarks on specific traits of Irish English. After this work, there was a break until the late 1950s, when Patrick Leo Henry published his doctoral dissertation *An Anglo-Irish Dialect of North Roscommon* (1957), which initiated scholarly research into Irish English in the second half of the twentieth century. The 1960s saw publications by authors who were to become authorities in this field: George Brendan Adams for English in Ulster

and Alan Bliss for English in the south of Ireland. Both of these authors had long publication careers and were active in the 1970s and, in the case of Bliss, up to the mid-1980s. By this time, a younger generation of scholars had become active, John Harris, Jeffrey Kallen, Markku Filppula and the present author, all of whom inherited ideas from Henry, Adams and Bliss and continued to develop these, adding their own interpretations in the process. In addition to these authors, one should mention those working on the lexicon of Irish English, above all Terence Dolan (see Dolan 2004). Parallel to this work, two Scottish linguists, James and Lesley Milroy, with their colleagues in Belfast, were engaged in seminal investigations of English in the city which were to lead to a paradigmatic change in the field of sociolinguistics (J. Milroy 1978; L. Milroy 1987; J. Milroy and L. Milroy 1997).

1.2. Issues in Irish English studies

Most investigations into Irish English have so far had an historical component, perhaps the only exception being sociolinguistic examinations of phonology in urban settings, mainly Belfast, Derry and Dublin (J. Milroy 1978; McCafferty 2001; Hickey 1999b, 2004, 2005). The historical considerations of scholars have been concentrated on syntax and morphology and concerned with the relative weight to be accorded to contact explanations on the one hand and to those which appeal to the retention of inherited features in input varieties of English in Ireland on the other.

Because the interface between Irish and English has been a permanent feature in the history of Irish English, the weighting of contact in its genesis is the single most controversial issue in this field. Up until the early 1980s, contact explanations were favoured, above all in the work of P. L. Henry and Alan J. Bliss (cf. Henry 1957, 1958 and Bliss 1972, 1976 as representative examples of this approach). In this they were following on much earlier work by older authors such as P.W. Joyce and J.J. Hogan. However, with the publication of a seminal article by John Harris (1984), the pendulum began to swing in the opposite direction, and researchers started to attribute much more weight to the retention of inherited traits. Authors such as Jeffrey Kallen (1989, 1990) and Markku Filppula (1991, 1993) offered syntactic analyses of Irish English which addressed both possible sources. By the early 1990s, the pendulum had swung back to a more central position, and in research by scholars such as Karen Corrigan

(1993) and the present author (Hickey 1995, 2006), the role of contact, this time considered in an objective and linguistically acceptable manner, re-established itself to a certain degree.

1.3. Terminology

There are different designations for the many varieties of English spoken on the island of Ireland. In the north of the country, terms are used which reflect historical origin, e.g., *Ulster Scots* for the English stemming from the initial Lowland Scots settlers, *Mid-Ulster English* for geographically central varieties which are largely of northern English provenance. *Contact English* is found occasionally to refer globally to varieties spoken in areas where Irish is also spoken. In general treatments of English in the south of Ireland, three main terms are to be found.

- *Anglo-Irish* is an established term in literature to refer to works written in English by authors born in Ireland. It is also found in politics to refer to relations between England and Ireland. The difficulty with the term is its occurrence in these spheres and the fact that, strictly speaking, it implies an English variety of Irish and not vice versa. It should be mentioned that within the context of other varieties – Canadian English, for instance – the term is still used to refer to English in Ireland (Kirwin 1993).
- *Hiberno-English* is a learned term which is derived from the Latin term *Hibernia* ‘Ireland’. The term enjoyed a certain currency in the 1970s and 1980s, but in the 1990s, many authors ceased to employ it, as it contributes nothing in semantic terms and is unnecessarily obscure, often requiring explanation to a non-Irish audience or readership. However, some authors, such as Dolan and Filppula, continue to employ the term.
- *Irish English* is the simplest and most convenient term. It has the advantage that it is parallel to the designations for other varieties, e.g., American, Australian, Welsh English, and can be further differentiated where necessary. Throughout the present chapter this term will be used.

A non-linguistic term with a considerable history should be mentioned in this context. The word *brogue* means a clearly recognizable Irish accent, frequently of rural origin. The term comes either from the Irish word for ‘shoe’ or possibly from an expression meaning something like ‘a lump in one’s tongue’ (Bergin 1943; Murphy 1943). It is often used in a loose sense to mean the Irish pronunciation of English (Walsh 1926) and the term is also found outside Ireland, e.g., in Ocracoke Brogue on the islands off the coast of North Carolina.

2. History

2.1. Periodisation of Irish English

The most cursory glance at the history of Irish English reveals that it is divided into two periods. The first period starts in the late twelfth century with the arrival of the first English-speaking settlers and finishes around 1600, when the second period opens. The main event which justifies this periodisation is the renewed and vigorous planting of English in Ireland at the beginning of the seventeenth century. One must first understand that during the first period the Old English – as this group is called in the Irish context – in Ireland came increasingly under the influence of the Irish. The Anglo-Normans who were the military leaders during the initial settlement had been completely absorbed by the Irish by the end of the fifteenth century. The progressive Gaelicisation led the English to attempt planting the Irish countryside in order to reinforce the English presence there. This was by and large a failure, and it was only with James I that successful planting of (Lowland Scottish and English) settlers in the north of the country tipped the linguistic balance in favour of English in the north. The south of the country was subject to further plantations along with the banishment of the native Irish to the west during the Cromwellian period, so that by the end of the seventeenth century, Irish was in a weak position from which it was never to recover. During the seventeenth century, new forms of English were brought to Ireland: Scots in the north and West/North Midland varieties in the south (where there had been a predominantly West Midland and South-West input in the first period). The renewed Anglicization in the seventeenth century led to the “discontinuity hypothesis”, namely the view, above all of Bliss (see Bliss 1972), that the forms of English from the first period were completely supplanted by the varieties introduced at the

beginning of the modern period. However, on the east coast, in Dublin and other locations down to Waterford in the south-east, there is a definite continuation of south-west English features which stem from the imported varieties of the first period (Hickey 2001).

2.2. The medieval period

The documentary record of medieval Irish English is confined for all intents and purposes to the collection of sixteen poems of Irish provenance in the British Museum manuscript, Harley 913, which are known collectively as the *Kildare Poems* (Heuser 1904; Lucas 1995) after one of the poems in which the author identifies himself as from the county of Kildare to the south-west of Dublin. The collection probably dates from the early fourteenth century. The language of these poems is of a general West Midland to southern character. It is a moot point whether the *Kildare Poems* were written by native speakers of Irish using English as an official, “high” language in a diglossic situation and whether indeed the set was written by one or more individuals (Hickey 1993, 2006).

Apart from the *Kildare Poems*, medieval Irish English is attested in a very small number of verse fragments and in some fragmentary city records from Dublin and Waterford, comments on which can be found in Henry (1958) and Hickey (2002). These documents do not, however, have anything like the significance of the *Kildare Poems*, either from a linguistic or an historical perspective.

2.3. The early modern period

At the end of the sixteenth century, attestations of Irish English begin to appear which are deliberate representations of the variety of the time. These are frequently in the guise of literary parody of the Irish by English authors. The anonymous play *Captain Thomas Stukeley* (1596/1605) is the first in a long line of plays in which the Irish are parodied. Later a figure of fun, the stage Irishman, was to be found in dramas of this type, establishing a tradition of literary parody that lasted well into the twentieth century (Bliss 1976, 1979; Sullivan 1980). The value of these written representations of Irish English for reconstructing the language of the time has been much questioned – e.g., by reviewers of Bliss (1979) (see Hickey 2002: 126–127)

– and it is true that little if any detail can be extracted from these sources. In addition, most of the satirical pieces were written by Englishmen so that one is dealing with an external perception of Irish English at the time. Nonetheless, this material can be useful in determining what features were salient at the beginning of the early modern period and hence picked up by non-Irish writers.

Satirical writings are not the only source of Irish English, however. There are some writers, especially in the nineteenth century, who seriously attempt to indicate colloquial speech of their time. The first of these is probably Maria Edgeworth, whose novel *Castle Rackrent* (1801), is generally regarded as the first regional novel in English and much admired by Sir Walter Scott. Other writers one could mention in this context are Carleton and the Banim brothers. William Carleton (1794–1869) is the author of *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (5 volumes, Dublin, 1830–1833) and uses Irish English in the speech of the socially low-standing peasants. John (1798–1842) and Michael (1796–1874) Banim are the authors of *Tales of the O'Hara Family* (6 volumes, 1825–1826), where again Irish English is used for narrative effect. The novel by Edgeworth and extracts from the works of Carleton and the Banim brothers are contained in *A Corpus of Irish English*, see Hickey (2003a).

3. The language shift

Literary representations do not reveal anything about the then relationship of Irish to English, the spread of English or the regional input from England. There were no censuses before 1851 which gave data on speakers of Irish and English (after that date one can draw a reasonably accurate picture of the decline of Irish). Adams (1965) represents a useful attempt to nonetheless produce a linguistic cartography of Ireland at the beginning of the early modern period. The upshot of this situation is that there is no reliable data on the language shift which began in earnest in the early seventeenth century and which had been all but completed by the late nineteenth century. This has meant that statements about the shift have been about what one assumes must have happened rather than on the facts revealed from historical documents. Nonetheless, the external history of this shift shows what the overall conditions were and allows some general statements in this respect. The first point to note about the shift from Irish to English is that in rural areas there was little or no education for the native

Irish, the romanticized hedge schools (Dowling [1935] 1968) notwithstanding. So it is clear that the Irish learned English from other Irish who already knew some, perhaps through contact with those urban Irish who were English speakers, especially on the east coast, and through contact with the English planters and their employees. The latter play no recognizable role in the development of Irish English as a separate linguistic group, i.e., there is no planter Irish English, probably because this group was numerically insignificant, despite their importance as a trigger in the language shift process. What one can assume for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in rural Ireland is a functional bilingualism in which the Irish learned some English as adults from their dealings with English speakers. By the early nineteenth century, the importance of English for advancement in social life was being pointed out repeatedly, by no less a figure than Daniel O'Connell, the most important political leader before Parnell (Daly 1990).

The fact that the majority of the Irish acquired English as adults in an unguided manner had consequences for the nature of Irish English. Bliss (1977) pointed out that this fact is responsible for both the common malapropisms and the unconventional word stress found in Irish English. However, the stress pattern in verbs with final long vowels, e.g., *distribute* [dɪstri'bju:t], *educate* [ɛdju'ke:t], can also be due to English input, particularly as late stress is a feature of southern Irish, not of that of the west and north. Consequently, influence due to contact with Irish could only be posited for the south of Ireland and might have affected the pronunciation of English words.

Another point concerning the language shift in Ireland is that it was relatively long, spanning at least three centuries from 1600 to 1900 for most of the country. The scenario for language shift is one where lexical transfer into English is unlikely, or at least unlikely to become established in any nascent supraregional variety of English in Ireland. After all, English was the prestige language, and the use of Irish words would not have been desirable, given the high awareness of the lexicon as an open class. This statement refers to Irish lexical elements in English in Ireland, both historically and at the present. In some written works, and historically in varieties close to Irish, there were more Irish words and idioms (on the latter, see Odlin 1991).

In phonology and syntax the matter is quite different. Speakers who learn a language as adults retain the pronunciation of their native language and have difficulty with segments which are unknown to them. A simple case of

this would be the substitution of English dental fricatives by stops (dental or sometimes alveolar, depending on region) in Irish English. A more subtle case would be the lenition of stops in Irish English, e.g., *cat* [kæt̪], which, while systemically completely different from lenition in Irish, could be the result of a phonological directive applied by the Irish learning English to lenite elements in positions of maximal sonority.

In syntax, there are many features which either have a single source in Irish or at least converged with English regional input to produce stable structures in later Irish English. To begin with, one must bear in mind that adult speakers learning a second language, especially in an unguided situation, search for equivalents to the grammatical categories they know from their native language. The less they know and use the second language, the more obvious this search is. A case in point would involve the habitual in Irish. This is a prominent aspectual category in the language and available for all verbs by using a special form of the verb *be* and a non-finite form of the lexical verb in question (e.g., *Bíonn sí ag léamh [gach maidin]* ‘is she at reading [every morning]’). There is no one-to-one formal or semantic correspondence to this in English, so what appears to have happened is that the Irish availed of the afunctional *do* of declarative sentences, which was still present in English at the time of renewed plantation in the early seventeenth century (especially if one considers that the input was largely from the West Midlands), to produce an equivalent to the habitual in Irish (Hickey 1995, 1997). This usurpation of an English structure in a language contact situation to reach an equivalent to an existing grammatical category in Irish depends crucially on a distinction between the existence of a category and its exponence. The difference in exponence (the actual form used) between the habitual in Irish and Irish English has often led scholars to either dismiss Irish as a source for this in Irish English or to produce unlikely equations to link up the category in both languages formally (Tristram 1997). But if one separates the presence of a category in a grammar from its exponence, then one can recognize more clearly the search for equivalence which the Irish must have undertaken in acquiring English and one can understand the process of availing of means in English, present but afunctional (i.e., declarative *do*), to realize an existing category in their native language.

3.1. Supraregionalisation

It is obvious from English loanwords in Irish that early Irish English had not progressed through the major long vowel shift in England, e.g., Irish *bacús* ‘bakehouse’ shows unshifted /a:/ and /u:/. The play *Captain Thomas Stukeley*, referred to above, consistently uses <oo> for words with /au/ from /u:/ in English, e.g., *toon* for *town*. Furthermore, comments from Thomas Sheridan in the late eighteenth century (Sheridan 1781) show that Middle English /a:/, as in *patron*, still had not shifted, nor had Middle English /ɛ:/ as in *meat*. But present-day Irish English shows little or no trace of these unshifted vowels. The reason is not that the shift took place in Irish English some time in the nineteenth century but that the unshifted forms were replaced by mainstream English pronunciations due to a process which I have labelled *supraregionalisation* (Hickey 2003b). The essence of this process is the replacement of salient features of a variety (Hickey 2000a) by more standard ones, frequently from an extranational norm, as with southern British English vis-à-vis Irish English. The motivation for this move is to render a variety less locally bound and more acceptable to a non-vernacular community, hence the term *supraregionalisation*. I assume that this process has applied not just to Irish English but to other extraterritorial varieties during their histories, and that it is this which has in large part led to regional or national standards throughout the Anglophone world. The process is especially obvious in Irish English because there are records of features before *supraregionalisation* set in. In Ireland, and probably in other Anglophone countries, *supraregionalisation* is bound up with education and the formation of a middle class, and so it is a process which can be largely located in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For Irish English this has meant that certain features disappeared in the course of the nineteenth century. For instance, the lowering of /e/ before /r/ (historically attested in England in words like *dark*, *barn* and of course in county names like *Hertfordshire*) was very widespread in Ireland and is recorded at the beginning of the nineteenth century in pronunciations like *serve* /sa:rv/. This lowering has been lost entirely in Irish English, significantly the only instances which remain are those which are part of mainstream English (*dark*, *barn*, etc.).

3.2. Vernacularisation

The story of supraregionalisation does not end with the disappearance of strongly local features. There is another pathway which such features can take. This is the relegation to vernacular varieties. Take the instance of Middle English /ɛ:/ as in *beat* /be:t/. This pronunciation is now confined to strongly local varieties where supraregionalisation has not taken place. Furthermore, non-local speakers can style-shift downwards to achieve a vernacular effect. It is part of the competence of all speakers of Irish English that they know what features can be donned to impart a popular touch to their speech. Another example of this would be the use of *youse* or *yez* for the second person plural (also found in other Anglophone areas such as Tyneside). This is shunned by non-local speakers but can be employed when deliberately switching to a vernacular mode.

The process of vernacularisation has in some instances led to a lexical split. Consider the reflex of velarized [ɫ] before [d] in Irish English: this led to the diphthong [au] as in the words *old* [aul] and *bold* [baul] with the common post-sonorant stop deletion. These forms are available alongside /o:ld/ and /bo:ld/ to non-local speakers, but the meanings are somewhat different as the original forms with [au] have gained additional meaning components: [aul] ‘old + affectionate attachment’, e.g., *His [aul] car has finally given up the ghost*, [baul] ‘daring + sneaking admiration’, e.g., *The [baul] Charlie is back on top again*.

4. Ireland as a linguistic area

The above lists do not contain features which readers may think are typical of Irish English, e.g., the epenthesis in words like *film*, *girl*, *arm* or the distinction of short vowels before /r/, e.g., *term* [tɛ.ɹm] and *turn* [tʌ.ɹn]. The reason is simply that these are traits of vernacular varieties throughout the entire island. So when treating features of Irish English, a holistic view can be useful; that is, rather than stress differences, one could examine the features common to most or all varieties of Irish English and indeed go a step further and compare these to parallel structures in Irish. This approach is largely typological and sees Ireland (north and south) as a linguistic area (Hickey 1999a, 2006). It has actually quite a distinguished pedigree and antedates the recent interest in Irish English of the past three decades. In the 1950s, Heinrich Wagner published a monograph in which he attempted to

link up the common structures among the languages of the British Isles (Wagner 1959). While one can be critical of Wagner's method, his main thesis that these commonalities (especially in the verbal area: aspectual distinctions and the existence of continuous forms) are not the product of chance but of prolonged contact, has received support from recent areal studies, e.g., in Vennemann (2000). For the south of Ireland (and in many instances for the north also), one can note the following features shared by all vernacular varieties (not all of these are strongly diagnostic of Ireland as a linguistic area as they are also found in forms of English in England, quite apart from Anglophone varieties overseas).

Table 1. Shared features in vernacular varieties of (southern) Irish English

Phonology	
1)	Lenition of alveolar stops in positions of high sonority, e.g., <i>city</i> [sɪ̟i]
2)	Use of clear [l] in all positions in a word (now recessive), e.g., <i>field</i> [fi:lɪd]
3)	Retention of syllable-final /r/, e.g., <i>board</i> [bɔ:rd]
4)	Distinction of short vowels before /r/ (now recessive), e.g., <i>tern</i> [tɛrn] versus <i>turn</i> [tʌrn]
5)	Retention of the distinction between /m/ and /w/, e.g., <i>which</i> [wɪtʃ] and <i>witch</i> [wɪtʃ]
Morphology	
1)	Distinction between second singular and plural personal pronouns, e.g., <i>you</i> [ju] versus <i>youse</i> [juz] / <i>ye</i> [ji] / <i>yeez</i> [jiz]
2)	Epistemic negative <i>must</i> , e.g., <i>He musn't be Scottish.</i>
3)	<i>Them</i> as demonstrative, e.g., <i>Them shoes in the hall.</i>
Syntax	
1)	Perfective aspect with two subtypes: a) Immediate perfective, e.g., <i>She's after spilling the milk.</i> b) Resultative perfective, e.g., <i>She's the housework done</i> (OV word order)
2)	Habitual aspect, expressed by <i>do + be</i> or <i>bees</i> or inflectional <i>-s</i> in the first person singular a) <i>She does be reading books.</i> b) <i>They bees up late at night.</i> c) <i>I gets awful anxious about the kids when they're away.</i>
3)	Reduced number of verb forms, e.g., <i>seen</i> and <i>done</i> as preterite, <i>went</i> as

past participle

- 4) Negative concord, e.g., *He's not interested in no girls.*
 - 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) Lack of *do* in questions, e.g., *Have you had your breakfast yet?*
 - 8) *Be* as auxiliary, e.g., *They're finished the work now.*
 - 9) *Till* in the sense of 'in order that', e.g., *Come here till I tell you.*
 - 10) Singular time reference for *never*, e.g., *She never rang yesterday evening.*
 - 11) *For to* infinitives of purpose, e.g., *He went to Dublin for to buy a car.*
 - 12) Subordinating *and* (frequently concessive), e.g., *We went for a walk and it raining.*
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4.1. Pragmatics and aspectual categories

The perfective aspect listed under Syntax 1a) above has a high informational value associated with it. The pragmatic component of this grammatical category may give the clue to analysing the differentiation made by speakers in their use of the immediate and resultative perfect (1b). The latter implies that the speaker was aware the action was either being carried out or at least pending. This does not hold for the immediate perfective which is apparently why the term "hot news" enjoys such popularity among authors on the subject.

- (1) a. *Máire is after wetting herself. – I know.*
- b. *I'm after finishing my homework. – Ah, you don't say.*

There are shades of meaning involved with both types of perfectives which make them mutually exclusive in certain situations. For instance, an implication of the resultative perfect is that the goal of the action is intended and, importantly, known to the person(s) listening, whereas the immediate perfective often contains an element of surprise, hence the ungrammaticality of the first of each pair of the following sentences.

- (2) a. **He's the soup bowl dropped.*
- He's after dropping the soup bowl.* Irish English

	<i>He's dropped the soup bowl!</i>	non-Irish English
b.	<i>*They've the window broken.</i>	
	<i>They're after breaking the window.</i>	Irish English
	<i>They've broken the window!</i>	non-Irish English

4.2. Grammatical bleaching

There is no accepted term for the phenomenon which is to be discussed in this section. Essentially, it is the reverse of grammaticalisation and could be labelled de-grammaticalisation, reverse/inverse grammaticalisation or the dominance of the “pragmatic mode” (Givón 1979: 223). In analogy with the established term “semantic bleaching” which indicates a loss of semantic content, I have chosen to label it here “grammatical bleaching” as it too refers to a reduction in the grammatical nature of the phenomenon involved. A dominance of the pragmatic mode according to Givón involves loose conjunction rather than tight subordination, more typical of the syntactic mode, and shows a greater preponderance of topic-comment structures rather than subject-predicate structures.

Language contact situations may favour parataxis, clause subordination being a feature which develops with the grammaticalisation of other elements (which are broadly pragmatic, indicating modality, temporality, given information, etc., Hopper and Traugott 1993: 177–184). Equally, in cases of uncontrolled second-language acquisition with language shift – the historical Irish scenario – one would expect subordination to be abandoned in favour of simpler juxtaposition.

Turning to Irish English, one finds that there are instances of the abandonment of hypotactic constructions for paratactic ones. Consider the following examples.

- (3) a. *She met her husband and he coming down the road.*
 b. *He went out and it raining.*

It would appear here that concessive or temporal clauses are linked with the conjunction *and*, neglecting the syntactic means which English puts at the speaker's disposal, i.e. *although* and *while*.

The origin of such structures has been the object of research in particular by Filppula (see Filppula 1991 for instance) who has found instances in

older varieties of English (attested in the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) and occasionally for the English of Somerset. However, by far and away the more important input would seem to be Irish which utilizes the same syntactic means as seen below.

- (4) a. *Bhuaíl sí leis a fear céile agus é ag teacht aníos*
hit she with her man self and he at coming down
an bóthar.
the road
'She met her husband while he was walking down the road.'
- b. *Chuaigh sé amach agus é ag cur báistí.*
went he out and it at putting rain-GEN
'He went out although it was raining.'

If one recalls that semantic-pragmatic forces hold sway over structural properties in situations of extreme contact (Hopper and Traugott 1993: 214) then one can further understand how such transfer occurred in the genesis of Irish English. For this reason, there would have been no acquisitional motivation on the part of speakers to introduce a distinction on a structural level which could be realized purely in discourse, i.e., pragmatically. Added to this, but not necessarily prior to it, is the fact that clause coordination predominates in Irish anyway so that the desire for categorial equivalence in English to Irish structures would not have motivated speakers to introduce a distinction which they did not favour in the outset language.

Furthermore, the matter would have received support from later generations of Irish children for whom of course parataxis would acquisitionally predate hypotaxis, and in the case of these concessive and temporal clauses, coordination would simply not have been superseded by subordination.

4.3. Clefting

If the "pragmatic mode" is taken to be characteristic of speakers of Irish learning English in the uncontrolled and deficient environment of the early modern period, then it should not be surprising that there was a greater preponderance of topic-comment structures in their language. Foremost among the devices used in Irish English to realize such communicative aims

is clefting, which has a greater syntactic range of realizations (with various adverbial qualifiers) and a greater acceptance in this variety than in comparable extraterritorial forms of English, let alone in mainland English.

- (5) a. *It's to Galway he's gone today.*
 b. *It's often he went home.*

Filppula, who has done most work on topicalisation in Irish English, states that the degree to which it is represented in Irish English goes beyond the amount of structural rearrangement one might expect, given the dominance of topic-comment linear organization over subject-predicate word order (1993: 212). He accepts that either substratal influence from Irish or from early vernacular input varieties is responsible for the high incidence of topicalisation devices in the syntax of Irish English.

5. Interpreting features of Irish English

As mentioned above, in the 1990s, the pendulum of academic opinion moved more to the centre with the gradual acceptance of contact as a source of specific features in Irish English (Hickey 1995). This happened not for ideological reasons, as often previously, but from a better understanding of the mechanisms of language transfer and language shift, not least due to authors taking on board the ideas of other linguists examining contact in general, expressed most clearly in the seminal monograph, Thomason and Kaufman (1988). Convergence became the new standard wisdom, with contact and retention occupying places of equal standing in the history of Irish English. The consideration of other scenarios in the development of English led to a third force entering the discussion, namely creolisation as a possibility during formative stages of Irish English. Two long articles – Corrigan (1993) and Hickey (1997) – consider the issue and reject it because there was no break in linguistic continuity in Ireland. The authors mentioned maintain that the uncontrolled adult second language acquisition which characterized the language shift in Ireland in the early modern period was the historical setting closest to the restructuring of English seen in Anglophone creoles, e.g., in the Caribbean. In the Irish case, this was not due to the creativity of generations without full linguistic antecedents but to unfettered transfer on the syntactic level from the first language of those involved in the language shift.

Table 2. Suggestions for sources of key features of Southern Irish English

<i>Phonological features</i>	<i>Possible source</i>
Dental/alveolar stops for fricatives	Transfer of nearest Irish equivalent, coronal stops
Intervocalic and pre-pausal lenition of /t/	Lenition as a phonological directive from Irish
Alveolar /l/ in all positions	Use of non-velar, non-palatal [l] from Irish
Retention of [ɹ] for <wh>	Convergence of input with the realization of Irish /f/ [ɸ]
Retention of syllable-final /r/	Convergence of English input and Irish
Distinction of short vowels before /r/	Convergence of English input and Irish
<i>Morphological features</i>	<i>Possible source</i>
Distinct pronominal forms 2 p.sg. + pl.	Convergence of English input and Irish
Epistemic negative <i>must</i>	Generalization made by Irish based on positive use
<i>Them</i> as demonstrative	English input only
<i>Syntactic features</i>	<i>Possible source</i>
Habitual aspect	Convergence with South-West English input on east coast, possibly with influence from Scots via Ulster. Otherwise transfer of category from Irish
Immediate perfective aspect with <i>after</i>	Transfer from Irish
Resultative perfective with OV word order	Possible convergence, primarily from Irish
Subordinating <i>and</i>	Transfer from Irish
Variant use of suffixal -s in present	South-west input in first period on east coast
Clefting for topicalisation	Transfer from Irish, with some possible convergence
Greater range of the present tense	Transfer from Irish, with some possible convergence
Negative concord	Convergence of English input and Irish
<i>For to</i> infinitives indicating purpose	Convergence of English input and Irish

Reduced number of verb forms	English input only
<i>Be</i> as auxiliary	English input only
Single time reference for <i>never</i>	Transfer from Irish, English input

Apart from the putative source of specifically Irish English features, there have been various suggestions concerning the linguistic models to use in interpreting such features. For instance, in the area of aspect, there have been attempts to use grammaticalisation models (Kallen 1989, 1990) and prototype theory (Hickey 2000b) to arrive at a satisfactory description of the linguistic facts. Greene (1979) and Ó Sé (1992, 2004) are influential articles describing the verbal systems of Irish.

5.1. The lexicon

The linguistic level which has been given greatest attention by non-linguists is certainly the lexicon. The tradition of gathering word-lists goes back at least two centuries, if one considers the glossaries gathered by Vallancey for the archaic dialect of Forth and Bargo in the south-east corner of Ireland (Vallancey 1787–1788).

Quite a considerable number of specifically Irish English items represent archaic or regional usage which has survived in Ireland. For instance, the adjectives *mad* and *bold* retain earlier meanings of ‘keen on’ and ‘misbehaved’ respectively. In some cases the words are a mixture of archaism and regionalism, e.g., *cog* ‘cheat’, *chisler* ‘child’, *mitch* ‘play truant’. One can also notice semantic extensions which have taken place in Ireland as with *yoke* with the general meaning of a thing/device. An additional feature here is the merger between words which are complementary in meaning: *ditch* is used for *dyke*; *bring* and *take*, *rent* and *let*, *borrow* and *lend* are often interchanged as are *teach* and *learn* (but only with the latter for the former on a lower stylistic level).

Although Irish today is spoken natively by less than one per cent of the population, and although the knowledge of Irish among the majority is, in general, very poor indeed, there is a curious habit of flavouring one’s speech by adding a few words from Irish, which is sometimes condescendingly called using the *cúpla focal* (lit. ‘couple of words’). The words used are always alternatives to English terms readily available, e.g., *ciúineas* ‘silence’, *piseog* ‘superstition’ (anglicized as *pishogue*), *sláinte* ‘health’ or *plámás* ‘flattery’. Such incursions into the lexicon of Irish are brief and

superficial. Borrowings can go both ways, e.g., the common term *craic* for 'social enjoyment' is a loan from Irish, itself originally a borrowing from English.

The difficulty with the lexicon of Irish English lies not in finding words which come from Irish or which are regional/archaic English in origin but in determining whether these are current in present-day Irish English and, if so, for what sections of the population. There is a great difference in the lexical items available to and used by, say, older rural inhabitants and young urbanites.

Lexicographically, the north of Ireland is well served by Fenton (2001), Macafee (1996), Todd (1990), and the south in recent years has experienced a number of publications in this sphere (with varying degrees of linguistic analysis) (Ó Muirthe 1996; Share 1997; Dolan 2004). Clark ([1917] 1977) is an older work by an author about whom very little is known. Traynor (1953) and Moylan (1996) are regional lexical studies. For a brief overview of the Irish English lexicon, see Hickey (2005a). Kallen (1996) provides a linguistically interesting examination of the structure of the present-day lexicon. There also exist studies of the vocabulary of individual literary authors, especially James Joyce (e.g., Dent 1994; O'Hehir 1967). Wall (1995) is a general lexicon of literary works.

6. Sociolinguistic developments

In present-day Ireland, the major instance of language change is undoubtedly the shift in pronunciation of Dublin English (Hickey 2005b). To understand the workings of this shift, one must realize that in the course of the 1980s and 1990s, the city of Dublin, as the capital of the Republic of Ireland, underwent an unprecedented expansion in population size and in relative prosperity with a great increase in international connections to and from the metropolis. The in-migrants to the city, who arrived there chiefly to avail of the job opportunities resulting from the economic boom, formed a group of socially mobile, weak-tie speakers, and their section of the city's population has been a key locus for language change. The change which arose in the last two decades of the twentieth century was reactive in nature: fashionable speakers began to move away in their speech from their perception of popular Dublin English, a classic case of dissociation in an urban setting (Hickey 2000c). This dissociation was realized phonetically by a reversal of the unrounding and lowering of vowels typical of Dublin English hitherto.

The reversal was systematic in nature, with a raising and rounding of low back vowels, the retraction of the /ai/ diphthong and the raising of the /ɔi/ diphthong representing the most salient elements of the change (Hickey 1999a). These changes are displayed in the following.

Summary of the present-day Dublin Vowel Shift

a) retraction of diphthongs with a low or back starting point

time	[tʌɪm]	→	[tʌɪm]
toy	[tɔɪ]	→	[tɔɪ], [tɔɪ]

b) raising of low back vowels

cot	[kɒt̚]	→	[kɔt̚]
caught	[kɔ:t̚]	→	[kɔ:t̚], [kɔ:t̚]

	ɔɪ		ɔ:
	↑		↑
Raising	ɔɪ	ɔ	ɔ:
	↑	↑	↑
	ɔɪ	ɔ	ɔ:
Retraction	aɪ	→	aɪ

It should be noted that these changes are progressing by a slow and gradual process which affects all the elements which are potential candidates for the change. In this respect, the change is progressing by means of Neogrammarian advance, i.e., every possible input is affected by the change. But because of the status of Dublin English as the variety of the country's capital, the change is also being picked up elsewhere in the country. In these cases, the spread is by lexical diffusion (Wang 1969) because speakers outside of Dublin adopt the change through particularly frequent words they hear with the new Dublin pronunciation and not because of any motivation to dissociate themselves from any group of low-prestige speakers in their surroundings, the internal motivation in Dublin (Hickey 1999b).

Because of the status of Dublin, non-vernacular speech of the capital acts as a de facto standard or at least guideline for the rest of the country when others, outside of Dublin, are seeking a non-local, generally acceptable form of Irish English. This has also meant the retroflex [ɻ] used by fashionable speakers in Dublin (probably as a reaction against the traditional low-

rhoticity of Dublin English) is spreading out of the capital, especially with younger urbanites from different parts of the country (note that within the Irish context, Received Pronunciation is not a speech model worthy of emulation).

7. Conclusion

The development of the English language in Ireland, both historically and in the present-day, has provided food for linguistic discussion and continues to do so, due to the long-term interaction between Irish and English and due to the different types of regional input. It is a measure of the maturity of the field that recently more and more subareas are being covered by significant publications and that the arguments for various standpoints are based on strictly linguistic criteria. Avenues which remain to be explored do exist, and the topic of the current volume, the pragmatics of Irish English, represents one of the most fruitful.

Notes

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