**A Corpus of Irish English**

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*Foreword*

The present corpus has been assembled over the past few years with the intention of placing the majority of available texts for Irish English from the late Middle Ages to the beginning of the twentieth century at the disposal of interested scholars. The corpus encompasses a number of genres, from 14th century poetry to drama in the modern period with additional material such as glossaries of dialect material, a regional novel *Castle Rackrent* (1801) and further prose material from the 19th century. The material stems both from Irish and non-Irish authors. The latter form a group of writers who attempted to represent Irish English in fictional prose. The most famous of these is Shakespeare who in the Four Nations Scene from *Henry V* has an Irish character (Captain Macmorris) with salient features of 16th century Irish English. Such an outside perspective on English in Ireland is of interest as it shows what features were salient and hence registered by the non-Irish. The tradition, at which Shakespeare stands in its early stage, is one in which parody of the speech of the Irish is attempted with stock figures of fun. These are set in contrast to English characters, chiefly in drama, a practice which has lasted over four hundred years. Of at least as much interest are the attempts of Irish writers during the 19th and early 20th centuries to render the speech of rural and urban inhabitants in as realistic a manner as possible. In the case of writers like Lady Gregory and John Millington Synge there is much controversy concerning the language of their plays. For a corpus linguist their attestations of Irish English are worthy of investigation because they frequently provide refutation or confirmation of structures which are known to have existed in spoken Irish English and which are still attested in different varieties today.

Corpus compilation is always a team effort. In the case of *A* *Corpus* *of* *Irish* *English* I was fortunate in being able to enlist several students and younger colleagues without whose conscientious attitude to the project it would not have been possible to realise it within the time schedule envisaged. These are Almuth Ulrich (Munich), Andrea Grimm and Maria Wastl (Bayreuth) as well as Anamaria Barbaric, Kerstin Berke, Michaela Gehring, Christine William, Astrid Göbels, Frauke Matz, Arno Siemes and Magda Woloszyn (Essen).

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**1 Introduction**

There is great variation in both the design and the size of corpora. For any prospective compiler the main question is whether his/her intentions are liable to satisfy a need taken to exist among fellow linguists for a particular corpus. In the case of a major project covering something as global as present-day English one can safely assume that there will be demand for what one produces. Furthermore, if one has large-scale financial and staff resources then the question of size can be treated quite generously. Considerably more attention must be devoted in advance to these questions when the projected corpus is to cover a rather specialised need. In the case of the present corpus a number of decisions have had to be made in advance to render the project feasible and hopefully useful to linguists working in the field of Irish English or more generally in varieties studies.

The first major decision to be made when compiling a corpus of a variety of English is whether one includes historical or just present-day material. Another decision, independent of the first, concerns the representativeness of the texts chosen. In the present instance this question posed itself at the very outset. Assuming that an historical element is to be included, should a corpus of Irish English offer a cross section of literature written in English by authors who were Irish by birth or affiliation? If so, are the usual criteria of literary merit to be the guideline for the quantity of material by a certain author to be entered. To quote a case in point, if this were so it would be necessary to give considerable weight to the works of W. B. Yeats and G. B. Shaw. But the matter can be seen in quite a different light. Going on the assumption that users of a corpus of a variety of English will be interested in determining what linguistic features are characteristic for just that variety, one should choose texts which are linguistically representative. There may be cases where literary merit and the interest of the variety linguist meet, as in the writings of J. M. Synge, but this is more the exception than the rule. Authors like Shaw and Yeats are not particularly interesting linguistically as both use very standard forms of English.

The decision of the present author has been made for a corpus which illustrates the language traits of Irish English at their most salient. This has meant that some authors are included who are not normally regarded as particularly meritorious from a literary point of view, e.g. Lady Augusta Gregory and Dion Boucicault. Others are represented by a work or works which are not necessarily regarded as their masterpieces but which show their portrayal of Irish English at its best. This is evident in the case of Shaw whose *John* *Bull*’*s* *other* *island* is the only work incorporated and in that of Yeats who is represented by the plays *Cathleen* *ni* *Hoolihan* and *The* *Countess* *Cathleen*. As the corpus includes historical material, it has seemed sensible to start from the earliest attestations of Irish English and divide the texts according to period and genre. In the older period of Irish English only poetry is to be found and it has been included although some of it is perhaps dubious in its dialectal authenticity but which for want of other material must be accepted.

**1.1 Scale of corpus**

*The basic situation* The literary remains of Irish English reach back to the early 14th century. Despite the relatively long period for which there are documents their actual number is small, very small, if one compares this with that for mainland England in the same period. There are several reasons for this which will be outlined below. Suffice it to say at the outset that the remnants of medieval Irish English can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The situation improves in the early modern period which can be said to begin sometime after 1600. In the early 17th century the English put a policy of determined settlement (plantation) into effect, first of all in the north of the country with Scots settlers who were encouraged by James I of England to move to Ulster and fill the vacuum left behind after the defeat of the Gaelic forces in this region previously. These plantations reached their culmination in the mid-17th century with the re-allocation of land in the east to English mercenaries and servants loyal to Cromwell and in the parallel expulsion of the native Irish from these lands to the poorer and latterly more populated west of the country.

For the early modern period a number of text types are available. The most frequent is the comedy in which an Irish character makes an appearance and is usually ridiculed. Prose sketches in a similar vein are also common and one has direct portrayals, if somewhat brief, of Irish English by Irish writers as well. Into the latter category fits Swift’s *Irish* *Eloquence* and *A* *Dialogue* *in* *the* *Hypernian* *Stile*.

Various prose fragments have been included in the present corpus as these document the transition period from a mainly Irish-speaking country to one in which the former native language is recessive and no longer of importance for the development of English. The formative early modern period is one in which much transfer from Irish into English can be observed, no doubt due to the considerable bilingualism which was typical for broad sections of the population during the changeover from Irish to English.

For the nineteenth century drama is the most important genre. It accounts for the large number of plays in the corpus for this period. With the literary revival at the end of the 19th century the emphasis is no longer on comic portrayals of more or less ridiculous Irish figures but with a more authentic representation of Irish characters as epitomised by the works of Synge. Dramatic realism also makes a contribution here with the plays of O’Casey which contain dialogue in the language of the working classes of Dublin.

Alongside the many plays of linguistic interest in the nineteenth century there are also novelists and short-story writers who used Irish English in conscious contrast with more standard forms of English for a deliberate effect in their work. This is true for instance of the 19th century northern Irish writer William Carleton (1794-1869) in whose *Traits* *and* *Stories* *of* *the* *Irish* *Peasantry* (5 vols., Dublin, 1830-33) Irish English is found in the speech of the socially low-standing peasants (see extracts in the present corpus). This use is different from that in Synge where there is no discrimination on the basis of language (Todd 1989: 73), especially as there is no standard usage in the plays with which the more idiosyncratic forms of the language could contrast.

**1.2 The question of genre**

It is immediately evident that *A* *Corpus* *of* *Irish* *English* consists largely of drama. There is a sound reason for this. As the primary aim of the corpus is to offer written representations of Irish English it is sensible to concentrate on the genre in which the spoken word, i.e. that which is least influenced by any standard, is central.

The decision to concentrate on drama for the modern period has meant that prose writers have been largely excluded by reason of the genre they exemplify. Nonetheless some prose has been integrated into the present corpus. For instance, the 19th century Northern Irish writer William Carleton (1794-1869), in whose *Traits* *and* *Stories* *of* *the* *Irish* *Peasantry* (5 vols., Dublin 1830-33) Irish English is found in the speech of the socially low-standing peasants, is represented by a selected of these tales. This is also true of the Banim brothers, John (1798-1842) and Michael (1796-1874), from whose *Tales of the O’Hara Family* (6 vol., 1825-26) a set of extracts have been taken.

For the early modern period various prose fragments have been included as these document the transition period from a mainly Irish-speaking country to one in which the former native language is recessive and no longer of importance for the development of English.

**2 Periodisation of corpus**

**2.1 Medieval period**

The older period of Irish English is the medieval one (see the more detailed outline of history in 3. below). It begins with the arrival of mercenaries from Wales in 1169 and lasts until the final defeat of the united Irish forces by the English at the battle of Kinsale in 1601 (during the Tudor conquest of Ireland, Moody and Martin (eds.) 1965: 174ff.; Wallace 1973: 38ff.). In this period the available linguistic material is scanty. Indeed the bulk of it is contained in a set of poems to be found in the Harley 913 manuscript of the British Museum and which are available in an annotated edition by Wilhelm Heuser in 1904 who took certain liberties in punctuation and expanding abbreviations (Kosok 1990: 22). Going on some onomastic evidence these poems are regarded as Irish in provenance and are referred to as the *Kildare* *Poems* after the mention of a monk, Michael of Kildare, as the author of one of the poems; they probably stem from the beginning of the 14th century. To these should be added the poems ‘The virtue of herbs’ and ‘On blood letting’ (Zettersten 1967). Prose documents from the early period are scarce indeed. From the 14th century there are the *Acts* *and* *Statutes* *of* *the* *City* *of* *Waterford*; from the 16th century there is the motley *Book* *of* *Howth* (Kosok 1990: 28), neither of which are linguistically particularly interesting. For the present corpus only the poetry just mentioned has been incorporated.

The linguistic continuation of the medieval period is not to be found in the literature of the 17th and 18th century but in the attestations of an archaic dialect from the south east of the country (Co. Wexford). It is called after the two baronies where it was spoken, Forth and Bargy. This variety of English is more like a form of Middle English (Hickey 1988) which has been influenced by Irish, at least lexically. It survives only in the form of glossaries (Vallancey 1788 and Poole, published by Barnes in 1867) which were compiled at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries respectively before the dialect died out. Both these glossaries are to be found in the corpus, along with one or two texts in the dialect (poems and songs). In the corpus the glossaries are available in database form which facilitates lexical examination. They may be processed as databases and/or converted into texts quite easily using the supplied database management software.

**2.2 Early modern period**

When considering the early modern period in Ireland a strict distinction in types of English, (1) and (2) below, must be made. This distinction has continued to be important up to the present day.

1) More or less genuine representations of Irish English by native Irish writers.

2) Stretches of texts by non-Irish writers where a non-native perception of Irish English is found.

There is a remarkable amount of material available, mostly in the form of drama, stretching in time from the very end of the 16th up to the mid 18th century (Bliss 1979). This literature contains material of both of the above types and forms the bulk of this section of the corpus. Notable among the dramatists whose works are to be found here are William Congreve (1670-1729), Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816), George Farquhar (1678-1707), see below. There are a few prose samples from this period, such as *The* *Irish* *Hudibras*, probably by James Farewell, and Swift’s *A* *Dialogue* *in* *the* *Hybernian* *Stile*.

Type (2) literature should not be underestimated in its value. It is interesting in that it reveals what features of Irish English were salient and thus registered by non-native speakers. These features have gone into forming the linguistic notion of the *Stage* *Irishman*, a stock figure in much drama from this period onwards (Duggan 1969 [1937]; Kosok 1990: 61ff.).

**2.3 The 19th and 20th centuries**

For this period most texts represent drama, for the reason outlined above that this genre is likely to contain most examples of specifically Irish English features as it is written speech.

The two main authors here are John Millington Synge and Sean O’Casey. These literary figures are in a way complementary. Synge is to rural Ireland what O’Casey is to urban Ireland, above all Dublin. O’Casey was himself a native of Dublin, while Synge, although not a native of the west of Ireland, studied the life and language of its inhabitants (see his *The Aran Islands* 1899) and attempted to represent this faithfully, at least in his early plays. It is true of both authors that their later plays are stylistically more idiosyncratic and less typical of a general form of the rural or urban varieties of Irish English.

Other dramatists some of whose typical works are included in this section are Dion Boucicault (1820-1890), Lady Augusta Gregory (1852-1932) along with Shaw and Yeats (see remarks above).

**2.4 Structure of corpus**

The sections of the present corpus have been arranged in such a way that when the corpus has been installed and loaded with *Corpus Presenter* the following hierarchical structure will be shown. For this display the software uses a small dataset file (a control file for the display of a corpus) which is to be found in the head folder \Corpus\_Irish\_English and which is called CIE.CPD (= Corpus of Irish English.Corpus Presenter Dataset).

*Introduction*

Overview of Corpus

*Middle Ages*

Kildare Poems (1)

Kildare Poems (2)

A Treatise on Gardening

The Virtue of Herbs

The Pride of Life

*Forth & Bargy*

Vallancey’s glossary (1788)

Poole’s glossary (early 19c)

*Fingal*

The Fingallian Dance (1650-60)

The Irish Hudibras (1689)

Purgatorium Hibernicum (1670-5)

*Drama*

16th century

Anon.: Sir John Oldcastle (1599/1600)

Shakespeare: Henry V (1599/1623)

Anon.: Captain Thomas Stukeley (1596/1605)

17th century

Cuffe: The Siege of Ballyally Castle (1642)

Dekker: The Honest Whore Part II (1605/1630)

Dekker: Old Fortunatus (1599/1600)

Head: Hic et Ubique (1663)

Jonson: The Irish Masque (1613 /1616)

Randolph: Hey for Honesty (c. 1630/1651)

Shadwell: The Lancashire Witches (1681/1682)

Anon.: The Welsh Embassador (1623)

18th century

Breval: The Play is the Plot (1718)

Centlivre: A Wife Well Managed (1715)

Congreve: The Way of the World (1700)

Farquhar: The Beaux’ Stratagem (1707)

Farquhar: The Twin Rivals (1702/1703)

Goldsmith: She stoops to conquer (1773)

Michelbourne: Ireland Preserved (1705)

R. B. Sheridan: The School for Scandal (1777)

R. B. Sheridan: St. Patrick’s Day or The Scheming Lieutenant

Th. Sheridan The Brave Irishman (1740/1754)

19th century

Boucicault: The Colleen Bawn (1860)

Boucicault: Arragh na Pogue (1864)

Boucicault: The Shaughraun (1875)

Gregory: Hanrahan’s Oath

Gregory: On the racecourse

Gregory: Spreading the news

Gregory: The workhouse ward

Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest (1895)

Yeats: The Countess Cathleen (1899)

Yeats: Cathleen Ni Houlihan (1902)

20th century

Shaw: John Bull’s Other Island (1904)

Synge: In the Shadow of the Glen (1903)

Synge: Riders to the Sea (1904)

Synge: The Well of the Saints (1905)

Synge: The Playboy of the Western World (1907)

Synge: The Tinker’s Wedding (1909)

Synge: Deirdre of the Sorrows (1910)

O’Casey: The Shadow of a Gunman (1923)

O’Casey: Juno and the Paycock (1924)

O’Casey: The Plough and the Stars (1926)

O’Casey: The Silver Tassie (1928)

Behan: The Quare Fellow (1954)

Behan: The Hostage (1959)

*Novels*

19th century

Edgeworth: Castle Rackrent (1801)

*Prose*

19th century

Banim: O’Hara Tales (1825-26)

Carleton: Traits and Stories (1830-33)

*Varia*

17th century

Anon.: Bog-Witticisms (c. 1687)

Anon.: Pairlement Chloinne Tomais (1645-50)

Anon.: The Irishmen’s Prayers (1689)

Anon.: John Dunton, Report of a Sermon (1698)

18th century

Anon.: Peadar O Doirnin, Muiris O Gormain (1730-40)

Anon.: The Pretender’s Exercise (?1727)

Anon.: A Dialogue between Teigue and Dermot (1713)

Swift: A Dialogue in Hybernian Stile (c.1735)

**3 Outline of external history**

**3.1 Medieval Irish English**

*Initial settlement* In 1169 on the request of a local lord in the south east of Ireland a group of adventurers from England landed near Wexford (Hickey 1993). This historical fact marks the beginning of the political association of England with Ireland. The initial foray to Ireland was nothing like a systematic invasion, in contrast to the Norman invasion of England in the previous century. In a way it resembled the first Germanic raids on Britain more than 700 years earlier: it began as a sortie across the sea to a neighbouring country ostensibly to come to the aid of a native warlord. The Normans were militarily far superior to the native Irish and the Norsemen (descendants of the original Vikings) with whom they engaged in combat taking the town of Wexford immediately and the city of Waterford a few months later in a legendary battle involving Richard Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke. In collusion with sections of the native Irish the Normans took Dublin the following year.

The first adventurers to arrive on Irish soil appear to have been a motley bunch. They came from Pembrokeshire in West Wales (Moody and Martin (eds.) 1967: 127ff.). We know from historical records that there were at least three languages represented in this early group. Anglo-Norman, a variety of medieval English and to some degree Flemish (Curtis 1919). Much as the presence of the latter may serve to spice the demographic picture of medieval Ireland, for the further linguistic development of both Irish and English, Flemish is of no relevance. A few loan-words have survived in the archaic dialect of Forth and Bargy but that is about all. No traces of Flemish influence are to be seen in Irish. Welsh was in all probability also among the languages of the first invaders; however traces of Welsh are not to be seen anywhere. This leaves us with French and English which will presently be the topic of comment.

*Spread of English* The development of English in Ireland since the 12th century has not been continuous. This fact is due to the settlement of the island by the English and to the political conditions in England itself.

Only the east and south-east coast of Ireland were settled in the late Middle Ages, above all the towns/cities of Wexford, Waterford, Kilkenny and Dublin. At this time Dublin had already gained the status of capital of the country. Like other cities in Ireland, Dublin owes its origins to a Viking settlement before the turn of the millenium (Moore 1965: 10). Because of its favourable position in the middle of the east coast and with the central plain as its hinterland, Dublin was able to assert itself over other urban settlements in Ireland on river estuaries. As far as English is concerned, this fact is of some importance. The city was quickly occupied by the English after its conquest; in 1171 Henry II came to Ireland and issued the *Charter* *of* *Dublin* in 1172 (Dooley 1972: 68ff.). From this time onwards English has existed continuously in Dublin, indeed within a roughly semi-circular area around the town. This region has been termed the *Pale*. Within the boundaries of the Pale the political influence of England has never ceased to exist. This is basically the reason for the continuous existence of English in Dublin: in the history of Ireland English has maintained the strongest influence in those areas where its political influence has been most keenly felt.

Viewed as a whole, however, only a small part of the country was colonised with English. After the 12th century settlements spread to other cities, e.g. in the south (Cork) and in the west (Limerick and Galway) and further up the east coast to the north-east (Carrickfergus). The evidence for this are castles and fortifications built by the Normans. It is not fully clear whether these settlements involved Anglo-Norman and English speakers or just Anglo-Normans (the latter were the military leaders in the non-Irish population in late medieval Ireland).

The impact of Anglo-Norman/English on rural Ireland was slight to begin with and of the two groups that of the English was probably less. This is of central importance when considering the linguistic status of English vis à vis Irish in the late Middle Ages. There can be no talk of English being a superstrate at this stage (as it was to become in the early modern period). Indeed English competed with Anglo-Norman in medieval Ireland and both these languages definitely interacted with Irish as is to be seen in the large number of loan-words from both (Risk 1971a+b).

Beyond the Pale in the centuries after the initial settlement on the east coast an ever increasing assimilation of the original English by the native Irish set in. This assimilation had two main reasons. For one the English settlers of this early, pre-Reformation period were of course Catholic and for another the connections with England were in fact quite loose. Those adventurers who sought land and political influence in Ireland evinced only nominal allegiance to the English crown. They had become to a large extent independent in Ireland (Moody and Martin (eds.) 1967: 133ff.). Indeed one can interpret the visits of English kings in Ireland such as that of Henry II in Dublin in the late 12th century as a scarcely concealed attempt to assert the influence of the English in a colony which did not lay undue emphasis on crown loyalty. In later centuries other monarchs were to follow suit. Thus John came to Ireland in 1210 and Richard II twice (in 1394 and 1399). Each of these visits was intended to serve the purpose of constraining the power of the ostensibly English nobility. With the severing of ties with England the original English naturally drew closer to the native Irish.

This development explains the decline of English in Ireland in the late 14th and 15th centuries. Especially after the adoption of Protestantism by the English government, initiated by the ‘Reformation Parliament’ (1529-1536) of Henry VIII, the English settlers in Ireland felt cut off and identified themselves increasingly with the native Catholic population.

The lowest point in the spread of English is to be found in the first half of the 16th century. English really only existed with any resilience in Dublin (more broadly, within the Pale) and in the south-east corner of the country. The resurgent Gaelicism of the 16th century led by necessity to the recession of English influence (Moody and Martin (eds) 1967: 158ff.).

*The linguistic situation in medieval Ireland* The history of English in Ireland is not that of a simple substitution of Irish by English. One must consider in this connection both the linguistic situation and the diachronic distribution of English in the country. At the time of the first English incursions the linguistic situation in Ireland was quite homogeneous. In the 9th century Ireland was ravaged by Scandinavians just like the rest of Britain. The latter, however, settled down in the following three centuries. The decisive battle against the Scandinavians (Clontarf, 1014) represented on the one hand the final break with Denmark and Norway and on the other resulted in the complete assimilation of the remaining Scandinavians to the native Irish population much as it did in other countries, such as England and northern France. For the period of the initial invasions one can assume, in contradistinction to various older authors such as Curtis (1919: 234), that the heterogeneity which existed was more demographic than linguistic. Scandinavian had indeed a profound effect on Irish, particularly in the field of lexis (see Sommerfelt in Ó Cuív (ed.) 1975) but there can be no assuming that a bilingual situation obtained in the Ireland of the 12th century.

It is not possible to reconstruct the extent to which the English-speakers were different from those of Anglo-Norman. Certainly the latter were dominant in the military sphere and the English may well have been involved in trade and crafts, i.e. in typical service activities among the non-Irish population, and would have been present in the towns more than in the Norman castles in the countryside. But there was a clear interleaving of both communities and the early literature after the invasion was often written in Anglo-Norman, e.g. the *Entrenchment* *of* *New* *Ross* or *The Song of Dermot and the Earl*. There are contemporary references to spoken Anglo-Norman in court proceedings from Kilkenny (Cahill 1938: 160f.). Anglo-Norman seems to have been maintained well into the 14th century, as the famous *Statutes* *of* *Kilkenny* (Lydon 1973: 94ff.) attest. These were composed in Anglo-Norman and admonished the native Irish population to speak English. The large number of Anglo-Norman loanwords in Irish (Risk 1971: 586ff.) which entered the language in the period after the invasion testifies to the existence of Anglo-Norman on Irish soil from the mid 12th to the 14th century.

**3.2 Early modern Irish English**

For the history of English in Ireland, the 16th century represents a break in its development. Politically it was marked by increasing separatist activities on the part of the Irish (of native and/or original English stock) which ended in the final victory over the Irish by English forces in the battle of Kinsale in 1601. The subsequent departure from Ireland by native leaders in 1607 (known somewhat romantically as the *Flight* *of* *the* *Earls*) left a political vacuum which was filled energetically by the English. As of the early 17th century English attained a dominant position in Ireland and has continued to enjoy this status as a superstrate vis à vis Irish since.

The establishment of English in Ireland in the early modern period is due to the ‘Plantations’ (MacCurtain 1972: 89ff.). These forced settlements were carried out sporadically in the 16th century and then with great consistency in the 17th century. The first plantations originate in the time from 1549 to 1557 (Moody and Martin (eds.) 1967: 189ff.) as the two counties Laois (read /li:$/) and Offaly (then King’s and Queen’s County respectively) in the centre of the country were settled by force. The English who moved there were, however, quickly assimilated by the native population. The same is true of the later ‘Plantations’ in the province of Munster in 1586-1592 (Moody and Martin (eds.) 1967:190) which did not lead to any change in the linguistic composition of the country. Remarkable in this connection is that the poet Edmund Spenser was appointed secretary in 1580 to the then governor of Ireland Lord Grey de Wilton. Spenser was allotted land in Munster in an attempt to plant the country with Protestant overlords. However, his efforts did not bear any fruit, his own castle being burnt down in 1598 a year before his death. It should be noted here that these early plantations were doomed to failure as they only involved representatives of the English upper classes. The plantations in Ulster were of quite a different nature as they consisted mostly of farmers, artisans and tradesmen who replaced rather than governed the native Irish population. These plantations began under James I (1603-1625) who settled fellow countrymen from the Lowlands and from West Scotland in the nearby north of Ireland.

With regard to the south of the country, it was only from the second half of the 17th century onwards, after Oliver Cromwell had been militarily victorious over Ireland and the Irish rebels were completely defeated that the settlements of English on a large scale took place. These originated from the necessity for Cromwell to allot land in Ireland to those who had rendered him military service. These English settlers retained their language and passed it on to following generations. After the victory over the Catholic forces under James II by William III (at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690) Catholics were excluded from political power and from higher positions in society. At the same time thousands of immigrants settled in the north of the country. These came for the greater part from the Scottish Lowlands and from the North Midlands of England (Adams 1958: 61ff.; 1967: 69ff.). The settlements formed the basis for the demographic split of the country (Heslinga 1962). Due to these immigrants the division of Ireland came to be as much linguistic as political and confessional.

**4 Historical documents**

The break in the development of English in Ireland justifies a division into a first and a second period. By this is meant the division of the history of Irish English into an earlier period from the late 12th century to the late 16th century and into a second later period which has lasted from the 17th century to the present day.

One of the main difficulties for the historical linguist is in establishing a link between the varieties spoken in these periods. To begin with an outline of the older types of Irish English and their historical attestations is offered.

**4.1 Medieval period**

Irish English of the late Middle Ages is recorded in two sources. The first is the *Kildare* *Poems* and the second the so-called *Loscombe* *Manuscript*. The designation *Kildare* *Poems* is used as a cover term for 16 poems which are scattered among Latin and Old French items of poetry in the Harley 913 manuscript. Their Irish source is evident both from their theme and their language. The term ‘Kildare’ may in fact not be appropriate, there are suggestions that the verse was produced in Waterford. The case for Kildare is based on the explicit mention of one Michael of Kildare as author of a poem. The series was critically edited by Wilhelm Heuser in 1904 in the *Bonner* *Beiträge* *zur* *Anglistik*.

The text of the *Kildare* *Poems* in *A Corpus of Irish English* corresponds to the Heuser edition. The number references are to the edition by Heuser. The Roman numerals used are those employed by Heuser. Note that he linked items 2 - 5 together to form a group of four ‘sermon poems’ (Predigtgedichte). There are a number of additional pieces and fragments attached to the Heuser edition in his ‘appendix’ (Anhang, pp. 187-229) which is in two parts, one consisting of pieces dealing with the material of the Kildare poems and one consisting of excerpts of manuscripts which he regards as Irish and which had not been investigated before his time. Because of the heterogeneous and in some cases doubtful nature of this material it has not been included here but it is to be found as a separate file KILDARE2.CIE which is also part of *A Corpus of Irish English*.

The page numbers in the right column are those used in this text. The number after the word ‘page’ in this file refers to the Heuser book. Anyone using this book should take note of the fact that the binding is faulty: pages 97 to 112 are inserted between pages 80 and 81 due to a printer’s error. In the corpus file, as with all other files, a semi-colon at the beginning of a line is regarded as a comment and the rest of a line after it is ignored by all retrieval programmes.

*Contents*

1) I. Hymn by Michael Kildare

2) IIa. Sarmun

3) IIb. Quindecim signa ante iudicium

4) IIc. Fall and passion

5) IId. Ten Commandments

6) III. Seven Sins

7) IV. Christ on the cross

8) V. A song on the times

9) VI. Nego

10) VII. The land of Cokaygne

11) VIII. Satire on the people of Kildare

12) IX. Pers of Birmingham

13) X. A rhyme-beginning fragment

14) XI. Elde

15) XII. A lullaby

16) XIII. Erthe

17) XIV. Five evil things

The *Loscombe Manuscript* (so-called because it had come into the possession of C. W. Loscombe) contains two poems, ‘On blood-letting’ and ‘The virtue of herbs’, which according to the analyses of Heuser (1904: 71-5), Irwin (1933) and Zettersten (1967) are to considered without a doubt as Irish and probably stem from the end of the 14th century. In discussing both poems Heuser mentions a variety of features which point to the south of England (the assumed source of English in medieval Ireland), to Ireland in particular and which also betray the influence of the Irish language (Heuser’s *keltischer Einfluß* ‘Celtic influence’).

The poems had been known in the early 19th century to Thomas Wright and Joseph Halliwell who published the first in its entirety and a fragment of the second in their *Reliquiae Antiquae I* (1841). The poem ‘The virtues of herbs’ is contained in MS 406 of the Wellcome Historical Medical Library. The Loscombe manuscript has been in the possession of this library since 1914 (Zettersten 1967). The text in *A Corpus of Irish English* corresponds to that given in Zettersten (1967).

There is one further minor poem which is considered to be of Irish provenance. Bliss (1984: 32f.) mentions it briefly in his overview of Irish English literature from the medieval period. The poem was originally edited by A. T. Amherst who in 1894 produced an article ‘A fifteenth-century treatise on gardening’ which has remained the only edition of the text. The text in *A Corpus of Irish English* corresponds to that given in Amherst (1894).

Irish English of the 14th century is recorded briefly in two other sources. The first is an account book of the Priory of Holy Trinity Chapel in Dublin, where the poem ‘Pride of Life’ was discovered. The manuscript was prepared around 1340 (Heuser 1904: 66). This piece is a morality play which was written down in the first half of the fifteenth century (Dolan 1991:146) by two monks. The title of ‘The Pride of Life’ was conferred on the work by James Mills, deputy keeper of the Public Records in Dublin, who published an edition of the play with the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland in 1891. The original manuscript was destroyed in the fire at the Four Courts in June 1922 and the version used here is the subsequent edition by Norman Davis (1970).

The second source is formed by the ‘Acts and Statutes of the City of Waterford’ from 1365. Although there is no critical edition of these, there are remarks on their language in Henry (1958: 66). There are a few further manuscripts which are either positively Irish or which can be assumed with reasonable certainty to be so. These are listed in McIntosh and Samuels (1968). For a full bibliography of relevant works, see section 1.4.1 *Medieval Irish English* in Hickey (2002).

**4.2 Early modern period**

The paucity of documents from the medieval period is a major handicap in the linguistic analysis of this variety; the difficulty with the early modern period, however, lies in deciding how to evaluate the available material. There are basically three types of record involved here.

The first consists of a series of literary documents (mostly drama) in which Irish English is parodied in the form of comical figures in a largely English setting. The validity of using literary dialect for a linguistic analysis is more than questionable, as Sullivan (1980) in his analysis has confirmed. Such texts can only serve as general guidelines for the more salient features of Irish English; they cover several centuries and are available from the beginning of the 17th century. In essence the difficulty is that one must rely on eye dialect. The orthography of English is not necessarily suitable for rendering the idiosyncrasies of Irish English and indeed one cannot assume that a non-native speaker’s attempt to caricature Irish English will be satisfying and accurate though it may well give indications of what features of a dialect were salient for non-native listeners.

The second type of record is the word list. This is very restricted in the type of information it provides but is obviously more accurate than the literary parody. For lexical items and restricted phonological analysis word lists serve a certain purpose. In the early modern period there are word lists available for the archaic dialect of Forth and Bargy, notably that collected by one Captain Charles Vallancey in 1788 and that by Jacob Poole at the beginning of the 19th century which was later published by William Barnes in 1867. The Ulster Scots areas of the north of Ireland are relatively rich in special lexical items and many are given in Fenton (2001). For Irish English in general there are collections like Clark (1917) and sections in works like Joyce (1910). See also Hickey (in press).

The third record consists of incidental remarks on Irish English made by an author involved in another matter. A case in point is Thomas Sheridan in his grammar of English (late 18th century) in which he notes certain Irish English pronunciations (typical of Dublin). In the present century Hogan’s *Outline* *of* *English* *philology, chiefly for Irish students* (1934) provides a further example of this type. In addition there are, as of the beginning of the 20th century, individual studies of Irish English, such as Hayden and Hartog (1909) and Hogan (1927).

Neither the instances of literary parody nor early Dublin English are to be considered here as they represent a dialect of too late a date. This is not, however, the case with the glossaries for Forth and Bargy. The records we have represent the dialect before its final demise at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century. However in language, the dialect is very archaic and far more deviant from any variety of mainland English than the language of the *Kildare* *Poems*, written some four hundred years earlier (see Hickey 1988).

One can speculate on the reasons for this. To begin with the glossaries of Forth and Bargy illustrate native language forms of the inhabitants of this corner of Ireland. However, the *Kildare* *Poems* may well have been written by native speakers of Irish using English as a literary language. Indeed if one stops to consider the dominance of Irish over English in 14th century Ireland and the (later) references in historical records to the incomprehensible type of English spoken by the Irish (see Stanihurst 1577 as a noted example) then the *Kildare* *Poems* are somewhat surprising in their standardness. But this is only an apparent paradox. Going on the assumption that the authors of these poems were native speakers of Irish then they would have found themselves in a kind of diglossic situation in which English (or Anglo-Norman as many of the items in the *Kildare* *Poems* attest) represented a H-variety which was kept separate from the L-variety Irish. In the Wexford baronies of Forth and Bargy there were monoglot speakers of English as Stanihurst and others state. Here there was no standardising effect of a H-variety and, into the bargain, there was considerable contact with native-speaking Irish in surrounding areas.

**5 Archaic dialect material**

**5.1 Forth and Bargy**

In the history of Irish English the dialect of the extreme south east corner of the country occupies a unique position. The dialect of this area is called after the two baronies in which it was spoken, Forth and Bargy in Co. Wexford (Doland and Ó Muirithe 1996). It should be borne in mind in the following that this area is that in which the first English settlers arrived. Of all forms of Irish English Forth and Bargy is thus geographically the most original. The conception of Forth and Bargy as a conservative *Sprachinsel* and not as an autochthonous variety of Irish English is supported by a further fact.

There is an another *Sprachinsel*, which is even less attested and which has been still less the object of scholarly interest, namely the dialect of Fingal, an area immediately north of the city of Dublin (see map Forth\_Bargy.jpg in *A Corpus of Irish English*). Our knowledge of this variety of diachronic Irish English is due to historical references and to three small texts which are, however, corrupt (Bliss 1979: 194ff.; for a relatively detailed analysis, see Hogan 1927: 39ff.). Initial voicing, final stressed vowels and a number of Irish loan-words and syntactic constructions link Fingal with Forth and Bargy. After the 17th century there are no more extant texts in the Fingal dialect and, as opposed to the situation with Forth and Bargy in the south-east corner of the country, there are no records of speakers of the dialect. As the texts in the Fingal dialect are of a satiric nature and as they may well have been composed by non-native speakers of the dialect they are of correspondingly less value for linguistic analysis than the glossaries of Forth and Bargy. In addition the material on Fingal is quantitatively insufficient for a satisfactory analysis. Nonetheless the available material is offered in *A* *Corpus* *of* *Irish* *English* (see the following section for comment) as there may well be scholars interested in looking at the attestations, if only to arrive at a similar opinion themselves.

The origin of the *Sprachinseln* of Fingal and Forth and Bargy can be accounted for by considering the geopolitical developments in Ireland in the 15th and 16th centuries. After the extensive cultural and political assimilation of the ‘Old English’ (the English immigrants of the initial period after the Norman invasion) Ireland became more and more Irish-speaking. The wave of Gaelicisation continued into the 16th century and was mentioned frequently by contemporary historians such as Stanihurst in his ‘Description of Ireland’ in Holinshed’s *Chronicles* (Stanihurst 1808 [1586]: 3ff.). He maintains that English was only spoken in the area of the Pale (a broad area around the city of Dublin) and some adjoining counties such as Meath and Louth to the north, Kildare, Wicklow and Carlow to the south. Stanihurst also mentions a certain county *Fingal* by which he meant the area around Dublin city. Of the English before the 17th century only that of a pocket in north Co. Dublin has been attested and this area is indicated by the name *Fingal* which in its scope formerly referred to almost the entire county. Stanihurst also alludes to the second region in which English succeeded in maintaining itself: Forth and Bargy. From this it is evident that the two areas, Fingal and Forth and Bargy, are relic areas in which the English of the pre-Elizabethan period continued to be spoken beyond 1600. The varieties of English which were introduced into Ireland in the course of the 17th century, in the period of large-scale settlement of the south of the country, formed the basis for general southern Irish English today and were clearly distinguished from the varieties of the older period, i.e. those of Fingal and Forth and Bargy. These later varieties were themselves also influenced by Irish. However, certain prominent features of the English of the older period such as initial voicing and final stress are no longer to be found. In the present-day dialect of Dublin city some features are, however, attested which can be traced back to pre-17th century Irish English, something which is not surprising, given the fact that English never died out in Dublin city.

For a full bibliography of relevant studies, see section 1.4.2 *The dialect of Forth and Bargy* in Hickey (2002).

**5.1.1 Sources**

With the dialect under consideration one is confronted with a variety of Irish English which no longer exists. This dialect was replaced entirely at the beginning of the last century, after a period of decline, by general Irish English. The knowledge we have of this dialect is due to the work of a few investigators who at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries recorded the dialect in the form of glossaries. The main sources of information are two studies: the first is an essay with a glossary and some text by Charles Vallancey (some 22 pages long) which was published as a *Proceeding of the Royal Irish Academy* in 1788. The second study is somewhat more substantial (70 pages in all) and consists again of a glossary with some texts which were collected at the turn of the 18th century by a Protestant farmer, Jacob Poole, though not published until 1867 by an Anglican clergyman, Rev. William Barnes (see the foreword in the reprint by Dolan and Ó Muirithe 1996 [1979: 5]). A report by the Englishman J. A. Picton, also dating from 1867, is of secondary interest although it contains an ostensibly original address in the dialect. Two further studies from the 19th century, which however hardly add to the decipherment of the dialect, are Hore (1862) and Russell (1892 [1857]).

At the beginning of the present century this variety of English aroused a degree of linguistic interest. The historian Curtis and the Anglicist Hogan comment on the dialect in two works of a general nature on the history of Irish English (Curtis 1919: 248; Hogan 1927: 37ff.). The Celtologist T. F. O’Rahilly compared the stress system of this dialect with that of adjacent varieties of Irish (O’Rahilly 1932: 94f.). Since then no further analyses of this variety of Irish English have appeared. Dolan and Ó Muirithe (1996 [1979]) is a reprint of Barnes (1867) which, while it offers some etymological information, does not present a linguistic analysis of the material it presents. Ó Muirithe (1977, in Ó Muirithe, ed.) does not contain anything new and consists almost entirely of quotations. It is characteristic of these works that the authors immediately reject any attempt at phonological analysis: ‘we have not attempted phonetic transcriptions of the words in the glossary for the simple reason that nobody can be sure of the pronunciation of many of them’ (Dolan and Ó Muirithe 1996 [1979: 5]).

The only scholars who tried to evaluate the material of Forth and Bargy linguistically are Heuser (1904) and Hickey (1988). Heuser relied on Barnes’ edition of Poole (1904: 56ff.) and sees the dialect as a continuation of the language of the *Kildare* *Poems* despite the relatively long period of time which lies between the attestations of the two varieties of diachronic Irish English. This view is shared by the present author and it is the intention of Hickey (1988) to offer arguments in support of regarding this archaic dialect as a form of Middle English rather than of modern Irish English.

**5.1.2 Vallancey’s glossary**

Charles Vallancey (1721-1812) was born in Windsor of a Huguenot family and trained as a military engineer and developed antiquarian interests with reference to Ireland after coming there with the army in 1762 becoming a general by 1803. He founded the antiquarian journal, *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis* (1770-1804) which dealt with different facets of native Irish culture. His linguistic knowledge left much to be desired and in keeping with general beliefs of his time he sought to show that Irish (which he did not know) originated in the Middle East, putting these ideas forth in his *Grammar of the Hiberno-Celtic or Irish Language* (1773). Vallancey was one of the founders of the *Royal Irish Academy* (1782), subsequent to the *Hibernian Antiquarian Society* (1779), both with the object of studying ‘the ancient state of arts and literature’ in Ireland. In the spirit of these aims he produced a glossary of the dialect of Forth and Bargy in 1788 which was one of the first proceedings of the *Royal Irish Academy* to be published. The database in *A Corpus of Irish English* contains all the items of this original glossary with Vallancey’s etymological suggestions.

Files in corpus: VALLANC.DBF, VALLANC.DTX

**5.1.3 Poole’s glossary**

Jacob Poole (1774-1827) was a Quaker from Growtown in Co. Wexford. He lived on the family estate and shared the antiquarian interests of many of his contemporaries which led him to compile a glossary of words from Forth and Bargy at the beginning of the 19th century. Poole’s list is much larger than Vallancey’s and a good deal less speculative. It was edited by the Dorset poet William Barnes (1801-1886) who had a decided interest in English dialects and who regretted the existence of foreign loans in English, campaigning for a replacement of classical terms by invented ones based on purely English lexical material. Barnes edition appeared in 1867 and is the basis for the database containing Poole’s material in *A Corpus of Irish English.*

Files in corpus: POOLE.DBF, POOLE.DTX

**5.2 Dialect of Fingal**

Although Ireland had been colonised in the late Middle Ages by English speakers, the Gaelicisation which flourished in the 14th and 15th centuries all but deleted traces of the original variety of English spoken in the east of the country. There are two exceptions to this statement. The first concerns an area in the south-east of the country, in Co. Wexford. Here in the baronies of Forth and Bargy remnants of the English of the original settlers survived up to about the beginning of the 19th century (see previous section). Knowledge of this dialect is derived from two glossaries which are included in this corpus (again see above for details).

The second relic area lies north of the city of Dublin on the border of Co. Dublin with Co. Dundalk. It is known as ‘Fingal’, a term which is an Anglicisation of Irish *Fine* *Gall*, literally ‘territory of foreigners’. This designation would seem to point to a Norse settlement north of Dublin, but still within the Pale and furthermore one in which there was close mixing of the Norse and Celtic communities, a view supported by Sommerfelt (1962: 74). There is even a name for them, the *Gall-Ghoídhil*, i.e. the Norse-Irish, if one bears in mind that the term *Gall* ‘foreigners’ was applied to the Norse in the period of invasion and settlement which began at the start of the 9th century. Sommerfelt entertains the idea that pidgins must have arisen at the interface of the Norse and Celtic communities. However, attractive this view might be in the light of present-day creole studies, there is no linguistic evidence of such pidgins and the Irish language does not show any definitive evidence for creolisation as a result of the influence of pidgin forms of Norse-Irish.

Returning to the area of Fingal one must emphasise that for the Early Modern period the variety of language spoken there was a form of older English, whatever the Norse-Irish background was which the area had formerly. There is a strong Irish lexical element in the English of Fingal, indeed it is this element which many commentators stress as being the defining difference between the Fingal dialect on the one hand and that of Forth and Bargy on the other (Bliss 1979: 28f.). However, one should not make too much of the difference on these grounds as the glossary of Poole shows quite clearly that a large number of words in the dialect derive from Irish, something which is not surprising, given the sustained contact which the inhabitants of Forth and Bargy had with the surrounding native Irish.

Early observers of the special position of Fingal, such as Stanihurst (1577) and Petty (1691) (see Adams 1965) over a century later, do not offer any linguistic evidence of the dialect and so one must rely on fragments obtained from other sources. Three of these are included in *A* *Corpus* *of* *Irish* *English*.

**5.2.1 *The Fingallian Dance* (1650-60)**

This text is one of two short poems which are contained in a manuscript catalogued as MS Sloane 900 in the British Museum. The texts have remained unedited though the second one was printed in a book on Howth (a small town north of Dublin) by F. E. Ball in 1917. As Bliss (1979: 45) rightly points out, the modernised text is of little linguistic interest as most of the dialect features have been ironed out. Going on the persons named in the text, who were identified by Ball, one can assume that the text was written sometime before 1660.

File in corpus: FINGAL.CIE

**5.2.2 *Purgatorium Hibernicum* (1670-75)**

This text, like *The* *Fingallian* *Dance*, is available in the manuscript MS Sloane 900 under the title *The* *Fingallian* *Travesty*: *or* *the* *Sixt* *Book* *of* *Virgills* *Ænæids* *A* *la* *mode* *de* *Fingaule*. The version included here is to be found in MS 470 in the National Library of Ireland under the title *Purgatorium* *Hibernicum*: *or*, *the* *Sixt* *Booke* *of* *Virgills* *Æneis*; *Travestie* *Burlesque* *a* *la* *mode* *de* *Fingaule*. A third version under the title *The Irish Hudibras* is also included in *A* *Corpus* *of* *Irish* *English* (see below). The text consists of a humorous adaptation of Book VI of the *Æneid*, placed in the setting of Stuart Ireland. The section presented here concerns the meeting of Æneas with his former mistress Dido.

No author can safely be named for the present work. The copier of the extant text mentions one Francis Taubman but as Bliss (1979: 48) points out, no independent corroboration of this can be found, nor is the character of Francis Taubman ascertainable from other sources. Bliss dates the text as not later than 1675.

File in corpus: PURGATOR.CIE

**5.2.3 *The Irish Hudibras* (1689)**

This is the latest of three adaptations of book six of Vergil’s *Æneid* to which Bliss gave the general title *The* *Fingallian* *Burlesque* (Bliss 1979: 47) and in which Aeneas’ descent into Hades is transposed to Fingal in north Co. Dublin. The text has been adapted to suit English tastes and reflects anti-Catholic attitudes, particularly in the depiction of the Irish chieftain Nees, who is shown as dirty and full of superstition. The Irish characters depicted are referred to as *Dear-Joys* which in the 1680’s became a popular term for an Irishman just as *Teague* (a then common first name) had done (Bliss 1979: 56). The Irishness of the text has been toned down, as seen in the relative paucity of Irish words and turns of phrase but the general intention of displaying Irish English as a corruption of more standard forms of English is quite clear.

The author of this text is not known. The speculation that it was one James Farewell seems unfounded as this author would have been far too young at the time, although he may have edited the work at a later date (Bliss 1979: 57). The text can be dated accurately as it contains a reference to a banner (*Now* *or* *never*, *Now* *and* *forever*) which was hoisted over Dublin Castle when James II entered the city in March 1689.

File in corpus: HUDIBRAS.CIE

**6 Early Modern Period**

**6.1 Anonymous prose fragments**

The attention paid to certain plays, scenes from plays and short dialogues from the Elizabethan period which claim to portray the Irish English of the time, has been scant in the past. The monograph by Duggan (1968 [1937]) is a notable exception in this area. From a linguistic point of view the work which did most to document and comment on the relevant writings of the Elizabethan and post-Elizabethan period for Irish English is *Spoken* *English* *in* *Ireland* *1600-1740* by Alan Bliss (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1979). The book contains 27 texts, many of them plays or extracts from plays, which are direct representations of Irish English or which contain characters who putatively speak Irish English. Along with a description of the texts, Bliss offers a comprehensive linguistic analysis of the evidence for Irish English of the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries, i.e. for the formative period for the development of modern Irish English during which the influence of Irish was clearly felt but which is characterised by the widespread switchover to English. In *A* *Corpus* *of* *Irish* *English* many of the texts which Bliss (1979) examined have also been included. Those without any certain authorship are discussed at this point. There are four in all, fragments or short pieces purporting to represent Irish English, more often than not as perceived by native English writers. Anonymous play fragments are dealt with in 6.3 below.

**1 *Bog* *Witticisms* (1687)**

This work is a motley collection of Irish English puns, sayings, phrases and words. It is available in three editions at the end of the 17th century and was reprinted several times up to the middle of the following century (Bliss 1979: 52). The title derives from the first edition, though the following two give the name *Teague-Land* *Jests* under which it was known to many contemporaries, including probably the author(s) of *The* *Fingallian* *Burlesque*. Another title is an expansion of the current one: *Dear* *Joy*’*s* *Bogg* *Witticisms*. Recall in this connection that the terms *Teague* and *Dear* *Joy* were derogatory appellations for the Irish in the late 17th century.

The authorship of the *Bog* *Witticisms* is unclear. There is a possibility that James Farewell, who was mentioned in connection with *The* *Irish* *Hudibras*, was involved as he is referred to in the preface ‘To the Reader’. Bliss (1979: 54) affirms that this work was definitely known to the compiler of *The* *Irish* *Hudibras*.

File in corpus: BOG\_WIT.CIE

**2 *The* *Irishman’s* *Prayers* (1689)**

The present text represents an extract from a broadsheet which was collected by Samuel Pepys and left by him to the Library of Magdalene College, Cambridge. The events surrounding the broadsheet involve the landing of Schomberg (one of William III’s marshals) in Ireland to crush the remaining Jacobite resistance in Ireland. This had suffered a blow by the fall of Derry to the Protestants but in the event the Jacobites had time enough to muster their forces together and engage in a decisive battle against Protestant forces in July 1690 on the river Boyne north of Dublin. William III of Orange inflicted a telling defeat on the Irish forces under James II and put an end to any hopes of Catholic resurgence in Ireland.

File in corpus: PRAYERS.CIE

**3 *A* *Dialogue* *between* *Teigue* *and* *Dermot* (1713)**

This text is another broadsheet commenting on a riot which occurred in 1713 in Dublin following a general election. The text is in the Thorpe Collection in the National Library of Ireland (Bliss 1979: 65). The dialogue is between two Irishmen with typical Irish first names and recounts the events when a crowd of native Irish, obviously without franchise, gathered outside the courthouse before which the (open) election was taking place and who interfered with the election proceedings and were subsequently shot on by guards who were called in by the city sheriffs to curtail the riot. The election was postponed for a time and repeated leading to a victory of the Whig over the Tory candidates.

File in corpus: TEIG\_DER.CIE

**4 *The* *Pretender’s* *Exercise* (?1727)**

This short piece is quite unusual, appearing to be something like an excerpt from a play. It is in fact a brief dialogue between a sergeant and a recruit in contemporary Irish English. The pretender in the title is of course the son of James II who was seen at the beginning of the 18th century as a possible means of realising Jacobite aspirations. Forces were recruited for the pretender in the 1720’s (Bliss 1979: 68) so that the present piece had a certain topicality.

The full title of the text is *The* *Pretender*’*s* *Exercise* *to* *his* *Irish* *Dragoons* *and* *his* *Wild* *Geese*. The mention of wild geese is a reference to Irish soldiers who emigrated from the country voluntarily, something for which provision was made in the Treaty of Limerick of 1691. No author and no printer is mentioned for the text. It is to be found in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin (Bliss *loc*. *cit*.).

File in corpus: PRETEND.CIE

**6.2 Attributable prose fragments**

**1 Maurice Cuffe**

*The Siege of Ballyally Castle* (1642) This piece of prose contains vernacular Irish English of the 17th century in a fairly unadulterated form (Bliss 1979: 42). It is an account of a siege of the castle in Co. Clare, somewhat north of the city of Ennis which was part of a rebellion by the native Irish against the Protestant landowners. The Maurice Cuffe in question was the third of seven sons of an Irish merchant family of English descent. The passage in question deals with the events in early spring of 1642 in the five weeks during which the family castle was under siege.

File in corpus: BALLY.CIE

**2 John Dunton (1659-1733)**

Dunton was an Englishman born in Huntingdonshire of a family of clergymen. His father, a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge travelled to Ireland as a chaplain to one Sir Henry Ingoldsby. John Dunton neither accompanied his father, nor did he follow in his professional footsteps but dabbled in bookselling and publishing in England, marrying one of the daughters of Samuel Annesley, another one of whom became the wife of Daniel Defoe. After the death of his wife in 1697, Dunton went to Ireland on an extended tour which took him to the far west of the country. On his return journey he attended a funeral and reported on a sermon held on the occasion. It is this which forms the extract *Report* *of* *a* *Sermon*. The details on pronunciation which Dunton includes are interesting linguistically and not found in other works of this period (Bliss 1979: 61).

File in corpus: SERMON.CIE

**3 Jonathan Swift (1667-1745)**

That Swift was interested in and gifted with manipulating language, particularly for his own satirical ends, is amply attested in his major prose works, such as *A* *Modest* *Proposal* (1729), and of course in *Gulliver’s* *Travels* (1726). The item included at this point is a brief dialogue which ostensibly represents Irish English at Swift’s time. Note that it is the language of the planters which is being ridiculed here (Bliss 1979: 71). The conversation which takes place is between a planter B and an urban dweller A who asks the former a series of questions about rural affairs. A corresponding piece in which the language of the upper classes is the object of satirical attack is *Polite* *Conversation* published in 1738. The piece *Irish* *Eloquence* contains material similar to that of *A* *Dialogue* *in* *the* *Hybernian* *Stile* but has been re-arranged in the form of a letter.

File in corpus: HYBERNIA.CIE

**4 Peader Ó Doirnín (*c* 1704-1769)**

Ó Doirnín is an undistinguished poet from the first half of the 18th century who was born near Dundalk and educated in Munster and Connacht in so-called hedge schools, i.e. improvised schools with irregular teachers in the time of the Penal Laws during which general education for the Catholics was forbidden (this situation was redressed with the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 passed largely due the agitation for the Catholic cause by Daniel O’Connell). Ó Doirnín spent his life as a schoolmaster in the north of the country (Bliss 1979: 70) despite harassment by English officials.

The poem *Muiris* *Ó* *Gormáin* (1730-40?) tells of another schoolmaster who was a rival of Ó Doirnín possibly for the affections of Rose, Ó Doirnín’s later wife. Most of the poem is in Irish with some lines in English, hence its inclusion in *A* *Corpus* *of* *Irish* *English*.

File in corpus: MUIRIS.CIE

**6.3 Anonymous fragments**

**1 *Sir John Oldcastle* (1600)**

This is a play which was apparently in two parts (Bliss 1979: 33) but only the first was published, printed in quarto in 1600. The author is not known although the play has been attributed to Shakespeare as Falstaff in *Henry* *IV*, *Part* *II* was originally called Sir John Oldcastle. His name was changed at the request of Lord Cobham who was related in ancestry to Oldcastle.

The historical figure Sir John Oldcastle was prominent in the Lollard movement (composed of followers of the religious reformer John Wyclif) towards the end of the 14th century. At the beginning of the 15th century he was stamped a heretic and imprisoned in the Tower of London. Having escaped he was later recaptured and put to death by hanging in 1417. The section in which Irish English is represented concerns an Irish servant who murders his master and then robs him, this episode being linked up to the main events of the play, the action taken against Oldcastle and his relationship to Henry V.

File in corpus: OLDCAST.CIE

**2 *Captain Thomas Stukeley* (1605)**

This play is anonymous and the speculations on its authorship remain just that. The main character of the play is, however, an historical figure who was active in Ireland in the 1560’s (Bliss 1979: 32f.), particularly in the defence of Dundalk during a siege by the native Irish in 1566. The play is available in a single edition from the year 1605. It contains a single scene in Irish English, the seventh scene, which by some curious twist is present in two consecutive versions in the edition. The first version is in blank verse like the remainder of the play and the second in prose. Bliss (*loc*. *cit*.) supports the view that the Irish English scene is not by the author of the rest of the play and attributes a good knowledge of Irish affairs to its original composer. There are discussions of this play in older literature, notably Duggan (1937: 51-57) and Bartley (1954: 14-16).

File in corpus: STUKELEY.CIE

**3 *The Welsh Embassador* (1623)**

This play is found in a manuscript from The Cardiff Public Library and was not available to the public until 1920. The manuscript is not authored and it has been attributed to Thomas Dekker (see below) on the basis of the style used. The play is set in Old English times and the plot is unnecessarily complex (Bliss 1979: 40). The use of Irish English justifies the inclusion of the extract here.

File in corpus: WELSH.CIE

**4 *Páirlement Chloinne Tomáis* (1645-50)**

This satire on life in south-west Ireland in the early 17th century (the title means: ‘The parliament of the Thomas clan’) contains two significant episodes involving fictitious parliaments in north Kerry in 1632 and 1645 (Bliss 1979: 44). The author is definitely Irish and he is clearly critical of the society which he portrays and uses Irish English to reveal the boorishness of the Irish peasants and their naive admiration of Thomas’s pathetic attempts at speaking what he assumes is proper English.

File in corpus: PAIRLEM.CIE

**6.4 Extracts from non-Irish plays**

It is not difficult to justify the inclusion of excerpts from plays by non-Irish writers in *A* *Corpus* *of* *Irish* *English*. The main reason for doing so is that they include characters who either imitate Irish speech or themselves are intended to be true representatives of this. The difference between these two types is important. On the one hand one is dealing with parody of the Irish and their speech and so one can expect a distortion of the salient elements of Irish English. On the other hand one is confronted with a genuine attempt to portray the English language of the contemporary Irish in writing. Both attempts bear risks for the linguist facing the task of interpretation. The parody type representation is likely to be the least satisfactory. After all, the aim would have been fulfilled if the English audience recognised the ethnic group which was being parodied. It is not faithfulness of detail but rather bold strokes which were called for in the display of Irish English. With the portrayal of contemporary Irish characters the matter is on a sounder footing as the author concerned had to offer a convincing rendering of the majority if not all speech characteristics of his dramatic figures.

**1 William Shakespeare (1564-1616)**

The section of *Henry V*, written in 1599, which is of interest in the present connection is a section known as the *Four Nations* scene which was not present in the original quarto printing of 1600 (a memorial reconstruction and one of the bad quartos) but was in the First Folio of 1623 (based on Shakespeare’s own notes). Captain Macmorris is Shakespeare’s one and only Irishman.

File in corpus: HENRY\_V.CIE

**2 Thomas Dekker (?1570-1632)**

Dekker was a Londoner who spent most of his life, as far as is known, in that city. He was employed after 1598 by Philip Henslowe, builder and later manager of the Rose Theatre on Bankside in 1587, for whom he wrote plays, frequently in collaboration with other writers. Dekker was without any Irish connections (Bliss 1979: 36f.) but was interested in Irish affairs and has Irish English speech in two of the plays of which he is the sole author. In *Old* *Fortunatus*, which was written in 1599 and published the following year, the Irish relevance is slight as the characters just pretend to be Irish. However, in the later play *The* *Honest* *Whore* (1604/1630), written some years after the former play, there is a genuine Irish character, a footman called Brian, whose speech is neither an imitation nor a parody, although his connection with the main plot and the subplot is tenuous.

There is no reference to authorship in the manuscript of *The* *Welsh* *Embassador* (?1623) (Cardiff Public Library) which was first published in 1920. The play was first attributed to Dekker by Lloyd (1945) and this is supported by Bliss (1979: 40) who substantiates the arguments in favour of this assumption. He mentions an entry in a list of manuscript plays compiled in 1677 and linguistic similarities between a passage in this play and one in *The* *Honest* *Whore*. The main Irish character in the complex plot is the footman Edmund.

Files in corpus: FORTUNAT.CIE, WHORE.CIE

**3 Ben Jonson (1573-1637)**

Like Dekker, who he attacked in the character of Demetrius in *Poetaster* (1602), Jonson was a Londoner, growing up in the city and returning there in 1597 after a period as a soldier in the Netherlands. Again like Dekker he was a member of Henslowe’s company and enjoyed the not infrequent Elizabethan and later Jacobean progression from actor to playwright. Jonson is renowned for his many masques, in which dramatic speech is enhanced by scenic and musical special effects. Indeed the example in question here is an ‘antimasque’ (Bliss 1979: 38) which acts as comic relief vis à vis a main masque. *The* *Irish* *Masque* was performed in December 1613 and January 1614 as part of wedding celebrations for the then Earl of Somerset.

*The* *Irish* *Masque* deals centrally with Irish characters. In *Bartholomew* *Fair* (1614/1631) there is an Irish scoundrel Captain Whit whose language is similar to that in *The* *Irish* *Masque* and in *The* *New* *Inn* (1629/1631) the character Lady Frampul pretends to be an Irish nurse and makes use of Irish phrases in her attempts to do this.

Jonson would appear to have been interested in other ethnic groups of the British Isles apart from the English as is attested in another antimasque *For* *the* *Honour* *of* *Wales* (1618/1640).

File in corpus: IR\_MASQU.CIE

**4 Thomas Randolph (1605-1635)**

Though not born in London, Randolph received his education at Westminster School like the author he admired most, Jonson. For university education he went to Cambridge and attained a master’s degree in 1631 and subsequently became a fellow of Trinity College. Not only that, he was engaged as of 1630 as a playwright in the Salisbury Court Theatre in London and was much influenced by Jonson at the time. Randolph’s career was brief. Before reaching the age of 30 he contracted smallpox and died, having attained a considerable literary reputation. His play *Hey* *for* *Honesty*, *Down* *with* *Knavery*, written sometime before 1630 (Bliss 1979: 41), is based loosely on Aristophanes’ *Plautus* and betrays Randolph’s classical interests, resulting no doubt from his education in Cambridge. The play was expanded upon by another unconfirmed author with the initials ‘FJ’ and first appeared in 1651. Like *Henry* *V*, this play contains a *Four* *Nations* scene which is the extract included in the present corpus.

File in corpus: HONESTY.CIE

**5 Thomas Shadwell (?1642-1692)**

Shadwell was an Englishman born in Norfolk. With the restoration of Charles II to king in 1660 his father John Shadwell was appointed Recorder of Galway although this fact does not seem to have affected his son’s life. Thomas Shadwell travelled abroad and then returned to England where he started a career as playwright. He is chiefly known to the present-day literary world at the object of Dryden’s satirical attacks in *MacFlecknoe* and in *Absalom* *and* *Achitophel*. These were responses to Shadwell criticism of Dryden, who he condemned for his moderate praise of Ben Jonson, in *The* *Medal* *of* *John* *Bayes*. The play *The* *Lancashire* *Witches*, *and* *Tegue* *o* *Divelly* *the* *Irish* *Priest*, produced in 1681, was inspired by the animosity generated against the Catholics as a result of the ‘Popish Plot’, fabricated in 1678 by Titus Oates in which he claimed that there was a plot to murder Charles II and place the Catholic James on the throne, thus re-introducing Catholicism into reformed England. The Irish priest referred to in the title is supposed to exorcise the witches of the play who are tormenting English aristocracy and his speech offers renderings of what Shadwell conceived of as Irish English.

File in corpus: WITCHES.CIE

**6 John Durant Breval (*c* 1680-1738)**

Born and educated in London, Breval was of French origin but quite English in upbringing, going to Trinity College, Cambridge like Randolph and also becoming a fellow for a period before being expelled on charges of adultery. After this he worked in the army, doing a stint in Flanders. Later on he was engaged as a journalist and writer of travel books. It is uncertain whether he visited Ireland but he would appear to have had an interest in the country, judging by the poem *MacDermot*, *or* *the* *Irish* *Fortune* *Hunter* (1719). The drama *The* *play* *is* *a* *plot* is quite mediocre from a literary point of view but does contain an Irish character Machone who appears periodically in the play and whose speech is clearly seen in the excerpt included at this point in the corpus.

File in corpus: PLOT.CIE

**6.5 Drama by Irish writers**

The first authors in this section are all writers of the Restoration period, the half century after the return of Charles II to the throne (1660). There is a strong Irish representation in this period of English literature. The comedy of manners which was cultivated at the time due to the re-opening of theatres in England and the existence of the Smock Alley theatre in Dublin is witty, non-moralistic, even cynical in its language, something which is often seen in connection with if not indeed attributed to the Irish character of many of the prominent dramatists of this period. However, many of these writers, such as Congreve, are Irish simply by accident of birth. Nonetheless, they can be seen as part of an incipient Anglo-Irish literary scene on which Swift was later to have such a formative influence at the beginning of the 18th century and which continued, in drama, at least up to the era of Shaw.

**1 Richard Head (1637-1686)**

Born at Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim in 1637 the son of a clergyman killed in the rebellion of 1641. He died in a drowning accident in the Solent in 1686. He started studying at Oxford but abandoned this because of dissipation. He then became a bookseller in London and wrote poetry and drama. The latter includes the successful comedy *The* *Humours* *of* *Dublin* (1663). Head’s most well-known book is his autobiographical *The* *English* *Rogue*.

File in corpus: HIC\_ET.CIE

**2 John Michelbourne (1646-1721)**

Michelbourne was born in 1646 and died in Derry in 1721. He had a political career and was one of the governors of the city at the time of the siege during the period of Jacobite resurgence. This experience flowed directly into his account in the tragi-comedy *Ireland* *Preserved*, *or* *the* *Siege* *of* *Londonderry* (1705).

File in corpus: IRE\_PRES.CIE

**3 Susannah Centlivre (1667-1723)**

Centlivre was born Susannah Freeman probably in Holbeach in Lincolnshire in 1669 and died in 1723. She married at 16 and trained as an actress and subsequently wrote plays, 19 in all, most of them comedies. Twice widowed she produced her first play, *The* *Perjured* *Husband*, a tragedy in 1700. In 1706 she married her third husband, Joseph Centlivre, Queen Anne’s head cook at Windsor. Her plays are comedies of intrigue and manners, the three most important of which are: *The* *Busie* *Body* (1709), *A* *Wife* *Well* *Managed* (1715), *A* *Bold* *Strike* *for* *a* *Wife* (1718). The second contains a scene with a stage Irishman, Teague, which is included here.

File in corpus: A\_WIFE.CIE

**4 William Congreve (1670-1729)**

Congreve was born at Bardsey near Leeds. His father was posted on military service in Ireland which led to his being educated there, first at Kilkenny School and later at Trinity College, Dublin, where he was a fellow student of Swift. In London he entered the Middle Temple to study law but did not practise. His first publication was a novel but he soon took to writing comedies the most important of which are *The* *Old* *Bachelor* (1693), *The* *Double* *Dealer* (1694), *Love* *for* *Love* (1695) and *The* *Way* *of* *the* *World* (1700). After the last play which was not a success on its first run, Congreve abandoned writing. In his latter years he was a supporter of the Whig party which allowed him to live comfortably despite his failing sight. He died after a coach accident in 1729. Congreve was one of the major figures of Restoration drama and shows a vibrant style of language which is reputedly an Irish element in his dramatic prose which is attested by later writers such as Wilde and Shaw.

Files in corpus: WAYWORLD.CIE

**5 George Farquhar (1678-1707)**

Farquhar was born in Derry in 1677 and died in 1707. He started to study in Trinity College, Dublin but was expelled in 1695. He then worked for a publisher as corrector and later as an actor in the Smock Alley theatre where he played major Shakespearian roles. During a performance of Dryden’s *Indian* *Emperor* he stabbed another actor by accident, injuring him seriously. Farquhar gave up acting as a consequence and left for London in 1697 where he began as a playwright and achieved considerable success. He accepted a commission in 1704 to recruit in the midlands and his experiences are reflected in his famous comedy *The* *Recruiting* *Officer* (1706).

Farquhar fortunes were never very stable and after a period in Holland he returned to England, selling his recruiting commission. Due to the financial help of the actor Wilks, Farquhar was able to work on his best known comedy *The* *Beaux* *Stratagem* (1707) before he died. Farquhar is one of the last Restoration dramatists and his many plays such as *Love* *and* *a* *Bottle* (1698), *The* *Constant* *Couple* (1699), *Sir* *Harry* *Wildair* (1701), *The* *Inconstant* (1702), adapted from Beaumont and Fletcher, *The* *Twin* *Rivals* (1702) and *The* *Stage* *Coach* (1704) had a strong influence on subsequent writers in the 18th century including novelists like Fielding, Smollett and Defoe.

Files in corpus: BEAUX.CIE, RIVALS.CIE

**6 Thomas Sheridan (1719-1788)**

Sheridan was born in Co. Cavan in 1719 and died in London in 1788. He enjoyed a various career as actor, lecturer and writer. The godson of Swift he produced *The* *Works* *of* *Swift* *with* *Life* (18 volumes) in 1784. As a dramatist Sheridan is known for one play, *Captain* *O*’*Blunder* *or* *The* *Brave* *Irishman* (1754), which he wrote as an undergraduate, and as a manager of the Smock Alley theatre in Dublin where he worked for some years. Sheridan is important in the history of Irish English as the author of *A* *Rhetorical* *Grammar* *of* *the* *English* *Language* (1781) which contains a section on the Irish pronunciation of English. He is also the author of a successful *General* *Dictionary* *of* *the* *English* *Language* (1780, 2 volumes) and an earlier *A* *Course* *of* *Lectures* *on* *Elocution* (1762). Probably on the grounds of these linguistic interests, Sheridan developed a close friendship with the lexicographer Dr. Johnson. Thomas Sheridan is the father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

File in corpus: BRAVE.CIE

**7 Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774)**

Goldsmith was born in Pallas, Co. Longford in 1728, the son of an Irish clergyman, and died in London in 1774. He was educated at Athlone and Edgeworthstown and continued his third-level education at Trinity College, Dublin. He subsequently studied medicine at Edinburgh and Leyden. He undertook a journey throughout Europe in 1755-6 and returned to England, joining up with Dr. Johnson and his literary associates. Goldsmith produced a considerable amount of ephemeral literature, his literary reputation resting on two comedies *The* *Good* *Natured* *Man* (1768) and *She* *Stoops* *to* *Conquer* (1773) as well on the novel *The* *Vicar* *of* *Wakefield* (1766). Mention should also be made of the long poem ‘The Deserted Village’ (1770) which is the portrayal of a village in the north-west of Ireland which was ruined by the effects of the Penal Laws and the behaviour of the landlords.

Files in corpus: STOOPS.CIE

**8 Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816)**

Sheridan was born in Dublin in 1751 and died in 1816. He was the son of Thomas Sheridan and Frances Chamberlaine, herself the author of at least one novel and several comedies. Sheridan was educated at Harrow and soon started writing. He married Elizabeth Linley, the daughter of a composer, who he met after his family had moved to Bath. Returning from his elopement to France he settled in London and produced the play *The* *Rivals* in 1775 which was a success at Covent Garden. These were followed by the hastily written works *St*. *Patrick*’*s* *Day* and *The* *Duenna* both composed in 1775. Sheridan involved himself in the Drury Lane theatre, buying first half, then the total share of the theatre. Soon afterwards he produced his own major work *The* *School* *for* *Scandal* (1778) which was quickly followed by another comedy of considerable merit, *The* *Critic* (1779). In the ensuing years, Sheridan engaged in politics and held ministerial posts for some thirty years. He was involved in the impeachment of Warren Hastings in 1788 and gained a considerable political reputation. His financial affairs deteriorated due to Sheridan living beyond his means. The fire at the Drury Lane in 1809 and the loss of his seat in parliament in 1812 lead to his ruin and decline into abject poverty in which he died four years later. Belated recognition of his literary merit was awarded him in the funeral and burial he received at Westminster Abbey.

Files in corpus: SCANDAL.CIE, ST\_PATS.CIE

**7 The 18th and 19th centuries**

With the close of the 18th century, drama by Irish writers went into a marked decline, and did not re-generate itself until some of the major figures of the Irish Literary Revival, like Lady Gregory and Yeats, turned towards drama, culminating in the linguistic and thematic innovations of Synge. This break in the tradition of play-writing which had begun in the Restoration period meant that there was no continuation of the literary concerns of the 18th century in the late 19th century. The expression of nationalist sentiment in the latter type of drama was far removed from the type of comedy written for an audience in Regency England in the former. For one thing the earlier drama was part of English literature. The themes of the 17th and 18th playwrights were not specifically Irish. Those Irish characters who appear in their plays, do so in a setting which is English. The concern with Ireland and matters Irish by major writers begins with Swift. The dramas produced after the beginning of the Irish Literary Revival in the 1880’s were Irish in their theme. The question of theme should not, however, be seen as the only defining feature of English literature by Irish authors. The predilection for satire, a strongly ironical sense of humour and a prevailing occupation with linguistic form are qualities which are shared by such diverse writers as Swift and Sterne in the 18th century and Shaw and Joyce in the 20th century.

One can safely say that after Richard Brinsley Sheridan drama by Irish writers went into a period of decline. Figures like Maturin, Knowles, Shiel and Lover are very definitely minor. It is not until the mid-19th century that playwriting produced a prominent writer in Ireland. This is the somewhat isolated figure of Dion Boucicault who despite his name was a true Irish writer. Boucicault is innovative inasmuch as he deals with Irish themes and does not try to ingratiate himself with an English audience. Admittedly much of his work is in a pathetic vein, which has giving him the reputation of furthering the figure of the stage Irishman, but nonetheless his achievement in liberating Irish theatre from its dependence on an English, specifically London audience, should not be underestimated (Kosok 1990: 132). Boucicault is a solitary figure in the Irish literary tradition and the only one in the 19th century to have established a reputation for himself in the United States and not primarily in England.

**1 Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849)**

Maria Edgeworth was born in England near Reading the daughter of Richard Lovell Edgeworth and after her schooling she moved with her father to the family estate at Edgeworthstown in Co. Longford. She was influenced by her father’s views on education and began fictional writing with much encouragement from him. *Castle* *Rackrent* (1800) is the main novel by which she is known today. Sir Walter Scott claimed to have been much influenced by this work which is regarded as the first regional novel in English literature. Contemporary observers such as Jonah Barrington (1997 [1872]: 250-4) acknowledged the topicality and realism of Edgeworth’s fiction when compared to other writers of the time such as Lady Morgan (?1776-1859) who wrote in a much more romantic vein, as in her popular *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806). For this reason *Castle* *Rackrent* has been included in *A Corpus of Irish English*. The work contains much dialogue in Irish English and is hence of linguistic interest. It is the only novel in the present corpus although works by other novelists from the early nineteenth century, such as Samuel Lover (1797-1868) or Charles Maturin (1780-1824), might have been included if more time and means had been available to the compiler of the corpus.

File in corpus: RACKRENT.CIE

**2 William Carleton (1794-1869)**

William Carleton was born in Clogher, Co. Tyrone as the last of 14 children. What is known of his childhood derives from his own (incomplete) autobiography which is, however, unreliable. After the eviction of his family in 1813 he was a member of a secret society for a while. About 1818 he began working as a teacher, an experience reflected in his *Traits* *and* *Stories* *of* *the* *Irish* *Peasantry* (5 vols., Dublin, 1830-33) published after he moved to Dublin where he had to struggle against poverty during his first years there. He converted to Protestantism in the turbulent years surrounding Catholic Emancipation (1829) and developed strong anti-Catholic attitudes which he retained for the rest of his life. After the publication of *Traits and Stories* he began writing novels in a didactic vein producing several in the 1840’s. He continued this work in the 1850’s and 1860’s such as *Willy Reilly and his Dear Colleen Bawn* (1855) which enjoyed great popularity. Carleton cannot be easily classified in the context of Irish writers. An Irish-speaker from rural Tyrone, he became a Protestant and was in favour of the union with England. He was often condescending to his subject matter, the rural Irish, but nonetheless his portrayals are generally regarded as authentic.

File in corpus: TRAITS.CIE

**2 John Banim (1798-1842) and Michael Banim (1796-1874)**

John Banim was born in Kilkenny city and educated at Kilkenny Grammar School which was normally reserved for Protestants. He studied art in Dublin and after finishing his studies in 1816 moved back to Kilkenny becoming a drawing master. After four years he returned to Dublin, in bad health and disappointed in his private life. Here Banim worked as a journalist but also published poetry and drama, none of which was particularly successful. In 1822 he decided to collaborate with his brother Michael in writing stories about the native Irish in the style of Sir Walter Scott. The result was *Tales of the O’Hara Family* (6 vol., 1825-26) which was produced after he moved to London. These led to literary recognition and he continued to write, producing a number of plays in the 1820’s and 1830’s. He also wrote a number of historical novels, emulating the manner of Scott, such as *The Anglo-Irish of the Nineteenth Century* (1828). He spent the latter years of his life in Kilkenny suffering from paralysis, a situation which led to a falling off of his literary output in the 1830’s.

Michael Banim, the elder brother of John, remained in Kilkenny as a shopkeeper in his father’s failing business. He collaborated with his younger brother in the production of *Tales of the O’Hara Family* and apparently supplied his brother his material for many of the latter’s historical novels. He also produced some novels of his own, but only one of these, *The Town of the Cascades* (1864), actually bore his name.

File in corpus: O\_HARA.CIE

**2 Dion Boucicault (1820-1890)**

Dion Boucicault was born in Dublin in 1820 and died in New York in 1890. He received his college education at University College London. He started writing early, his first play *London Assurance* was very successful. He later chose Irish themes which he often treated in a stock fashion with much imitation of Irish speech through ‘eye dialect’. He later worked in America where his plays, with their stereotypical portrayal of Irish figures, were received well by the general public. The three most popular of these — *The* *Colleen* *Bawn* (1860), *Arrah* *na* *Pogue* (1864), *The* *Shaughraun* (1874) — have been included in *A Corpus of Irish English* as they represent the speech of Irish drama before the Irish Literary Renaissance and Lady Gregory.

Files in corpus: COLLEEN.CIE, ARRAH.CIE, SHAUGHRA.CIE

**3 Lady Augusta Gregory (1852-1932)**

Of Anglo-Protestant landed gentry stock from Co. Galway, Augusta Gregory, née Persse, was to become one of the leading figures of the Irish Literary Renaissance through her patronage of W. B. Yeats and the encouragement she gave to J. M. Synge and later to Sean O’Casey. For nearly all her life she concerned herself with the theatre and wrote many pieces which purported to display Irish peasant life using realistic language. In this respect she is a precursor of Synge who used the non-standard English of the rural inhabitants of western Ireland as the basis for his poetic diction. Lady Gregory was frequently criticised in her day for using ‘Kiltartanese’, i.e. an exaggerated form of local speech stemming from the town of Kiltartan in Co. Galway (near her estate at Coole). From a purely linguistic point of view Lady Gregory’s plays are interesting precisely because of their minor literary status: here we can probably assume that her creative literary imagination did not take too many liberties in the representation of peasant speech (as opposed to Synge). The four plays included in *A Corpus of Irish English* are the following: *Spreading* *the* *News* (1904), *On* *the* *Racecourse*, *Hanrahan’s* *Oath*, *The* *Workhouse* *Ward* (1907).

Files in corpus: THE\_NEWS.CIE, RACECOUR.CIE, HANRAHAN.CIE, THE\_WARD.CIE

**3 Oscar Wilde (1856-1900)**

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin and died in exile in Paris. He studied at Trinity College Dublin and at Oxford and began his literary career writing poetry. Wilde is best remembered as a prominent representative of late 19th century aestheticism in England and as the author of plays about English upper class society. These are rather ineffectual thematically but are saved by their verbal wit and sound construction. One of these has been included in *A Corpus of Irish English* which probably represents the dramatist Wilde at his best, *The* *Importance* *of* *Being* *Earnest* (1895). From a linguistic point of view none of Wilde’s plays show anything like the degree of non-standardness found with Lady Gregory or Synge.

File in corpus: IMPORT.CIE

**4 William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)**

Yeats was born in Dublin as the son of the painter John Yeats and older brother of the other painter Jack Yeats. He died in France just before the outbreak of the Second World War. Yeats is best remembered as the major Irish poet of modern times with a productive literary life of over 50 years. From his drama output the two patriotic plays, *The* *Countess* *Cathleen* (1899), *Cathleen* *Ni* *Hoolihan* (1902), have been included here as they are probably the best-known. To a limited extent they incorporate Irish speech of the late 19th century, though in a very stylised form.

Files in corpus: CATHLEEN.CIE, HOULIHAN.CIE

**8 The 20th century**

**1 John Millington Synge (1871-1909)**

Synge was born in Dublin of Protestant stock and educated at Trinity College and the Royal Irish Academy of Music. In Paris he met W. B. Yeats who persuaded him to abandon the fin de siècle poetry which he had been writing up to then. Yeats encouraged him to go to the Aran Islands to experience the genuine life and customs of the Irish peasantry. Synge described his sojurns there in the book *The Aran Islands* (1907) in which he claimed that he had heard all the linguistic structures which he used in his plays when eavesdropping on the local inhabitants there. It is to this day a matter of debate just how genuine Synge’s language is and how much it is the result of the poetic licence which he obviously took in writing. Suffice it to say here that all the major syntactic structures of present-day Irish English (habitual and perfective aspect patterns) are already attested in Synge’s plays. All six of these have been included in the present corpus. In chronological order they are the following: *The* *Shadow* *of* *the* *Glen* (1903), *Riders* *to* *the* *Sea* (1904), *The* *Well* *of* *the* *Saints* (1905), *The* *Playboy* *of* *the* *Western* *World* (1907), *The* *Tinkers’* *Wedding* (1907), *Deirdre* *of* *the* *Sorrows* (1909).

Files in corpus: SHADOW.CIE, RIDERS.CIE, SAINTS.CIE, PLAYBOY.CIE, TINKER.CIE, DEIRDRE.CIE

**2 George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)**

Shaw was born in Dublin but moved as a young man to England where he was to remain for the rest of his life. Of the very many plays which he wrote in his long career as a dramatist, only one deals explicitly with national cultural differences, *John* *Bull’s* *Other* *Island* (1904). There is a limited representation of Irish speech in this play which justifies its inclusion in *A Corpus of Irish English*.

File in corpus: JOHNBULL.CIE

**3 Sean O’Casey (1884-1964)**

O’Casey was born in poor circumstances in Dublin and like most of his contemporary literary colleagues ended up by going to England to live. He began his career as a dramatist rather late but produced three fine plays in quick succession which are generally regarded as his masterpieces. These are the following, which are to be found in the present corpus: *The* *Shadow* *of* *a* *Gunman* (1923), *Juno* *and* *the* *Paycock* (1924), *The* *Plough* *and* *the* *Stars* (1926). The fourth play, *The* *Silver* *Tassie* (1928), already represents a departure from his earlier realistic style and a move towards more symbolic dramatic work.

In linguistic terms O’Casey is to Dublin what Synge is to the rural west: a writer who chose the speech of his environment for dramatic effect and who attempted to depict what he regarded as the genuine speech of the local population. This is certainly true of Dublin English as found in O’Casey’s plays and is confirmed by later authors working in a similar vein and of course by present-day Dublin English which continues many of the features illustrated by in O’Casey’s work. Examples of these are the use of *youse* for the second person plural, distinctive vocabulary items and various clippings, such as *ructions* (from *insurrection*) still found to this day.

Files in corpus: SHADOW.CIE, JUNO.CIE, PLOUGH.CIE, SILVER.CIE

**4 Brendan Behan (1923-1964)**

Behan was born and died in Dublin. In his relatively short life Behan established a reputation as the living stage Irishman, including the tendency to overdrink which ruined his health and induced his premature death. He had strong republican sympathies and was himself imprisoned for carrying explosives and sentenced to three years in the Borstal detention centre which led to him writing an autobiography *Borstal Boy* (1958). The time in prison provided the material for his play *The* *Quare* *Fellow* (1956). The later play *The* *Hostage* (1959) also deals with national sentiments and the relationship with Britain. Both are included in *A Corpus of Irish English*.

Files in corpus: QUARFELL.CIE, HOSTAGE.CIE

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**Glossary**

**Ascendancy** Originally a reference to the Protestant ruling class in 18th century Ireland. It came to refer particularly to the ruling gentry and later as a vague term for a putative Protestant elite in Ireland.

**Belfast** The capital of Ulster at the estuary of the river Lagan in the north east of the country. It was founded in the 17th century and expanded greatly with industrial development of such industries as ship-building in the 19th century. Linguistically it is an amalgam of Ulster Scots and Mid-Ulster English inputs along with independent developments of its own, especially in the last century.

**Blarney** An impressionistic term for flattering, cloying speech which is supposed to be typical of the Irish. The term is known in this sense since the time of Elizabethan I (who is reputed to have used the label in this sense). The term derives from a stone on the top side of Blarney Castle near Cork city which is supposed to give the person who kisses it ‘the gift of the gab’.

**Brogue** A term stemming from the Irish word either for ‘shoe’ or ‘a knot in the tongue’. Its actual origin cannot be ascertained anymore. The label was already known to Shakespeare and has been used indiscriminately in the past four centuries for any strongly local accent of Irish English. Occasionally the term is used outside of Ireland as in ‘Ocracoke Brogue’ to refer to the local accent of offshore islands in North Carolina.

**Cant** A term for vernacular speech. Its use varies from instance to instance and has been used, for example, to refer to the speech of Irish gypsies. The term is taken by Irish scholars to stem from Irish *caint* ‘talk’ but the use in the New World can in fact be derived from French.

**Dublin** The capital of the Republic of Ireland and by far and away the largest city in the entire island with nearly one third of the Republic’s population (slightly over 1 million people) living in its metropolitan area.

**Forth and Bargy** Two baronies in the extreme south-east of Ireland, in Co Wexford, where a particularly archaic form of English, from the medieval period of settlement in Ireland, was spoken up to the beginning of the 19th century.

**Gaelic** A generic term for the Q-Celtic branch of the Insular Celtic languages consisting of Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Manx. In a Scottish context the bare term ‘Gaelic’ or ‘Gallick’ (reflecting the local pronunciation) is taken to refer to Scottish Gaelic.

**Hibernia** The Latin word for Ireland, possibly deriving from the word for ‘winter’ but more likely from the name of an ancient tribe associated with Ireland.

**Irish** The name for either the people of Ireland or the Celtic language still spoken by a small minority chiefly on the western seaboard.

**Northern Ireland** Since 1921 a state within the United Kingdom. It consists of six of the nine counties of the province of Ulster and was created as an option for the Protestant majority in the north-east of Ireland, descended from original Scottish and English settlers, to remain within the British union.

**Old English** A reference to the English settlers in pre-Reformation Ireland, i.e. the descendants of the late medieval settlers who came at the end of the 12th century. This group was mostly assimilated to the native Irish. Those who were left had the option of changing to Protestantism with the adoption of this as state religion under the Tudors.

**Pale** A term for the area of Dublin, its immediate hinterland and a stretch of the east coast down to the south-east corner which was originally settled by the English and the Anglo-Normans. This area was fairly successful in resisting increasing Gaelicisation up to the 16th century. The varieties of English in this area still show features which stem from late medieval Irish English whereas those further west in the country show greater evidence of influence from Irish, the native language before the switch-over to English.

**Republic of Ireland** Since 1949 the official name for the south of Ireland (excluding Northern Ireland). With the declaration of a republic Ireland left the Commonwealth and achieved formally a greater degree of independence from the United Kingdom.

**retentionist view** A vantage point in Irish English studies where considerable weight is accorded to regional English input to Ireland in the genesis of the specific forms of English in Ireland. This stance implies that the role of Irish is not assumed to have played a central role.

**Shelta** The assumed language of the Irish travelling people of which only a little is known (vocabulary and some grammatical features). The language is scarcely accessible today and not assumed to be the robust native speech of travelling people, even if this was in fact once the case.

**Stage Irish** A stereotype Irishman who began to make an appearance in English drama at the beginning of the 17th century and who remained well into the 19th century. The term does not have any precise linguistic reference but is used popularly to denote any individual who is assumed to display supposedly Irish characteristics, such as flattering, flowery language and melodramatic behaviour to an exaggerated extent.

**substratist view** A vantage point in Irish English studies where considerable weight is accorded to structural transfer from Irish into English during the genesis of the specific forms of English in Ireland. This stance implies that the role of regional English input is not assumed to have played a central role.

**Ulster Scots** The language of the Scottish settlers, in the coast regions in the north and north-east of Ulster, and of their descendants. Much assimilation and mixing has taken place in the past few centuries especially in cities like Belfast.

**Ulster** A province of Ireland in the north of the country. It consists of nine counties, six of which now form the state of Northern Ireland. Co Donegal in the extreme north-west is part of the Republic of Ireland but has more linguistic features in common with speech in Northern Ireland, both with Ulster Scots and Mid-Ulster English.

**universalist view** A kind of ‘third way’ in Irish English studies which is seen as complementing both the substratist and retentionist views. In essence it assumes that there are universals of uncontrolled adult second language acquisition (which are similar in many ways to creolisation, but not identical of course) and which are responsible for many of the specific structures, such as verbal aspect distinctions, which arose during the language switch-over from Irish to English.

**Yola** The form of the word ‘old’ in the dialect of Forth and Bargy which came to be used as a reference to the dialect itself.