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THE LANGUAGES OF IRELAND AN INTEGRATED VIEW

1 Introduction

Throughout its history Ireland has seen a wide variety of languages, some of which were spoken only by small groups and some of which only lasted for a limited period of time. The two languages which have lasted longest and which still exist today are, of course, Irish and English; it is these which form the two main sections in the current volume. However, to do justice to the topic of languages in Ireland it is necessary to consider other languages and also to examine how these interacted with each other through contact between groups of speakers.

Little is known of the earliest languages, that is of those which preceded the Celtic language of Indo-European stock which formed the predecessor to the oldest form of the Irish language which is still found in historically continuous areas on the western seaboard of Ireland. There has been much conjecture concerning the nature of the pre-Indo-European languages of the British Isles (Vennemann 1994, 2010) and to what extent these languages are connected with a possible Vasconic group (of which Basque is the sole contemporary survivor) and perhaps further back still with western forms of Semitic which spread upwards along the west coast of Europe to Ireland and Britain (Vennemann 2001, 2002).

Given the nature and size of the current volume it will not be possible to consider questions of language contact from pre-history, nor can the origin of structural features of Irish in the input forms of Celtic (Hickey 1996) be looked at. It is hoped that the following references will be of value to readers wishing to pursue these questions further.

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2 Latin

According to established tradition (O'Rahilly 1942), Ireland was christianised in the course of the fifth century by St. Patrick. As a result of this, the Latin language was introduced and used by monks in religious rites and the study of church documents. Manuscripts in Latin from Ireland date back to the seventh century. These are copies of sacred texts, typically the Gospels or lives and writings of saints (Plummer ed., 1997 [1910]). Hagiography became an established practice in the early Irish church (Carey, Herbert and Ó Riain eds, 2001) and lives of Irish saints in Latin are found in the second half of the first millenium AD. The *Vita Sancti Columbae* by Adomnán (c. 628-704) is a life of Columba, an Irish missionary and who in 563 established a base on the island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland which then became a centre of Irish monasticism introducing Christianity to the region. The *Vita Brigitae* by Cogitosus (a monk from Kildare) is dated to not later than 650 AD and is a life of St. Brigid (of Kildare) who flourished in the second half of the fifth century. Some saints' lives appear later, e.g. the two lives of Saint Patrick in *The Book of Armagh*, a medieval collection of Irish manuscripts.

In Ireland the Latin text of the Four Gospels is best known from the *Book of Kells* the most famous of all the early illuminated manuscripts in the British Isles (Simms 1988; Pulliam 2006). It is traditionally associated with Kells in Co. Meath where it is recorded just after 1000 AD. The Book of Durrow is a further illuminated manuscript, probably prepared at the abbey in Durrow, Co. Offaly and dating from the seventh century. It is similar to the Book of Kells in style of illumination and also contains the Four Gospels.

Latin continued to be used as the language of formal writing into the second millenium, especially by ecclesiastical writers. Indeed an indentifiable variety of the language – characterised by ornate and often artificial vocabulary – seems to have been used by Irish monks (beginning in the first

millenium AD) and is often referred to as Hiberno-Latin (Lapidge and Sharpe 1985; Picard 2003).

One of the foremost writers of Latin in the Irish context is Gerald of Wales (c. 1146 - c. 1223), *Giraldus Cambrensis* in Latin, who wrote two works concerning Ireland the *Expugnatio Hibernica* 'The Conquest of Ireland' and the *Topographia Hiberniae* 'The Topography of Ireland'. Gerald was concerned with justifying the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland and painted an unfavourable picture of the Irish in these works (O'Meara 1982).

2.1 Celtic scholarship in Latin

Latin has always been used as a language of scholarship in Ireland. It is thus not surprising that the first grammars of Irish were in Latin. In 1571 there appeared the *Alphabeticum et Ratio legendi Hibernicum, et Catechismus in eadem Lingua* by John Kearney. At the beginning of the seventeenth century Giolla Brighde Ó hEodhasa [O'Hussey] (c 1575-1614), a Franciscan monk working in Louvain, produced a grammar entitled *Rudimenta Grammaticae Hibernicae* (de Clercq and Swiggers 1992: 87-91). Later in the seventeenth century, in 1677, the *Grammatica Latino-Hibernica, nunc compendiata* by Francis O'Molloy. This tradition continued into the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, first for books, later just for titles in Celtic studies. The first grammar of Celtic by Johann Caspar Zeuß (1806-1856), a German working within Indo-European studies, was published in 1853 in Latin shortly before his death. A second edition, revised by H. Ebel, appeared in 1871. A standard collection of writings in Old Irish appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century (Stokes and Strachan 1971 [1901-03]) with the Latin title 'Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus'. Latin titles have also been used for collections of Irish writings, e.g. those on early Irish law, see Binchy (1966).

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3 Old Norse¹

Monastic culture in Ireland was to be seriously disturbed because of developments in Scandinavia. In the late eighth century the Scandinavians became expansionist and raided neighbouring coasts in the North Sea area and the coastline of Scotland and Ireland. The earliest attacks were on Lindisfarne and Jarrow in 793-4. Here the monasteries with their ornamental riches attracted the raiders as did the monastic settlement on the island of Iona, a centre of Hiberno-Scottish culture. In the course of the ninth century the initial plundering yielded to more permanent settlements in the parts of the British Isles which the Scandinavians had been to in previous decades. This was a qualitative change and was to have lasting consequences for the peoples of the British Isles. From this point onwards the Scandinavians are

¹ Old Norse refers to the common language used throughout the Scandinavian peninsula and on Denmark in the last few centuries of the first millennium AD. This was a Germanic language and from it the modern North Germanic languages are derived, viz. Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Faroese and Icelandic (which is closest to it). It was probably comprehensible to the English of the time but not to the Irish whose language belongs to a different branch of Indo-European (to Celtic as opposed to Germanic).

known as Vikings, a term whose first syllable derives either from Frisian *wic* ‘settlement’ or Old Norse *vik* ‘bay’.

The early Viking raids were carried out by Norwegians. In the course of the ninth century the Danes joined them, beginning with a series of attacks on the east coast of England in 835. In Ireland these two groups are distinguished as ‘fair foreigners’ and ‘dark foreigners’ respectively. This distinction is reflected in Irish with *Fionnghall* ‘fair foreigner’ for the former and *Dubhghall* (which gave the modern surname *Doyle*) ‘dark foreigner’ for the latter.

In Ireland, Scandinavian influence is taken to have ended with the Battle of Clontarf (then near Dublin) in 1014 in which the Irish leader Brian Boru was victorious. In both Ireland and England the Scandinavians were assimilated by the local population but in many cases they retained their names, typically those ending in *-son*, e.g. *Johnson*, *Anderson*, *Peterson*.

In Ireland and Scotland Scandinavian ancestry is apparent in certain surnames, e.g. *Ó hUiginn* (English *Higgins*) ‘Viking’ which corresponds to Scottish *MacLochlann* (English *McLoughlin*) ‘son of Viking’ from *Lochlannaigh* ‘Viking’, i.e. inhabitant of a country of lakes.

Norse names in Ireland The Scandinavians are responsible for the founding of most Irish towns which are situated at the estuaries of major rivers. Dublin and Belfast are two exceptions; the former city predates the coming of the Vikings and the latter is a new settlement from the beginning of the seventeenth century. In some instances the English names of towns are derived from the Norse names and are not related to the Irish form: *Loch Garman* ‘Wexford’, *Port Láirge* ‘Waterford’, *An tInbhear Mhór* ‘Arklow’, *Howth* < Norse *huvud* ‘head’, *Leixlip* ‘salmon leap’ was translated literally into Irish as *Léim an Bhradáin* ‘leap of the salmon’. The island of Dalkey (south side of Dublin) derives from Norse *dalkr* ‘thorn’ + *ey* ‘island’ which gives Irish *Deilginis* ‘thorn island’. In some cases the Irish name is a rendering of a Norse original, e.g. *Sceiri* (English ‘Skerries’) meaning ‘reef islands’ (now a town north of Dublin) which is cognate with modern Swedish *skären* which denotes the same.

A later lack of knowledge of Old Norse has meant that some names are folk etymologies with different original meanings. For instance, the small island just north of Dublin, *Ireland’s Eye* has a second element from Scandinavian *ey* meaning ‘island’. *Waterford* is from Scandinavian *Vadrefjord* and refers to the point at the river estuary where *wethers* ‘castrated rams’ were shipped to other ports (the first element is unrelated to the Old Norse word for ‘water’, *vatr*).

Three of the four provinces of Ireland have a second syllable from Norse *staðr* ‘place’ (or possibly from a combination of genitival *s* + Irish *tír* ‘country’): *Munster*, *Leinster*, *Ulster*. The first syllable is derived from a name for the tribe which lived in the area designated as is the entire form of the fourth province, *Connacht*.

Linguistic influence Because of the considerable structural distance between Old Irish and Old Norse (much greater than that with Old English), no borrowings in the area of grammar are apparent, even though the sociolinguistic situation in the later Viking period must have been similar to that in England with Irish and Vikings living side by side.

Nonetheless there are lexical borrowings from Old Norse which often reflect the areas of contact with Vikings, e.g. *ancaire* ‘anchor’, *seol* (< Old Norse *segl*) ‘sail’. Some borrowings are similar to those in English, e.g. *fuinneog* /fin¹o:g/ from Old Norse *vindauga* corresponds to the same borrowing into late Old English which gave modern ‘window’. Some Old Norse borrowings belong to the more peaceful later period and suggest a different type of contact with the Viking than in the earlier period of plundering, e.g. *margadh* (< Old Norse *markadr*) ‘market’, *bróg* (< ON *brók*) ‘shoe’. There is a comparable influence of Old Norse on Scottish Gaelic during the Viking period in Scotland (Stewart 2004).

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4 Anglo-Norman

The coming of the Anglo-Normans from south-west Wales to the south-east of Ireland at the end of the twelfth century initiated a long period of involvement of England with Ireland. The English language became established on the east coast in a band from Waterford up to Dublin and beyond. English was above all present in the towns. Anglo-Norman (and

Irish) were to be found in the countryside. Increasing Gaelicisation in the centuries after the initial invasion led to the demise of English outside the major towns. The low point for English lies in the sixteenth century with Irish in a correspondingly strong position.

The Pale² is the area around medieval Dublin where English influence was greatest. This influence lasted from the late twelfth to the late fifteenth century, but even in Dublin the influence of Irish was increasingly felt with the regaecilisation which reached its zenith during the sixteenth century.

4.1 The situation in late medieval Ireland

The history of English in Ireland is not that of a simple substitution of Irish by English. When the Anglo-Normans and English arrived in Ireland the linguistic situation in Ireland was quite homogeneous given that the Scandinavians had been assimilated in the previous centuries just as they had been in England and northern France. For the period of the initial invasion one can assume, in contradistinction to various older authors such as Curtis (1919: 234), that the heterogeneity which existed was more demographic than linguistic. Old Norse had an effect on Irish, but there is no evidence that a bilingual situation obtained any longer in late twelfth century Ireland.

As one would expect from the status of the Anglo-Normans in England and from the attested names of the warlords who came to Ireland in the late twelfth century, notably Strongbow, these Anglo-Normans were the leaders among the new settlers. The English were mainly their servants, a fact which points to the relatively low status of the language at this time. As in England, the ruling classes and the higher positions in the clergy were occupied by Normans soon after the invasion. Their language was introduced with them and established itself in the towns. Evidence for this is offered by such works as *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* (Orpen 1892, Long 1975) and *The Entrenchment of New Ross* (Shields 1975-6) in Anglo-Norman as well as contemporary references to spoken Anglo-Norman in court proceedings from Kilkenny (Cahill 1938: 160f.). Anglo-Norman seems to have been maintained in the cities well into the fourteenth century as the famous *Statutes of Kilkenny* (1366) attest (Lydon 1967: 155, 1973: 94-98; Crowley 2000: 14-16). These were composed in Anglo-Norman and admonished both the French-speaking lords and the native Irish population to speak English. The statutes were not repealed until the end of the fifteenth century but they were never effective. The large number of Anglo-Norman loanwords in Irish (Risk 1971: 586-589), which entered the language in the period after the invasion, testifies to the existence of Anglo-Norman and the robustness of its position from the mid twelfth to the fourteenth century (Hickey 1997). In

² The English phrase 'beyond the Pale' derives from this time when the English population regarded the native Irish culture outside of the Pale as barbaric.

fact as a language of law it was used up to the fifteenth century as evidenced by the Acts of Parliament of 1472 which were in Anglo-Norman.

The strength of the Irish language can be recognised from various comments and descriptions of the early period. For instance, Irish was allowed in court proceedings according to the municipal archives of Waterford (1492-3) in those cases where one of the litigants was Irish. This would be unthinkable from the seventeenth century onwards when Irish was banned from public life.

Still more indicative of the vitality of Irish is the account from the sixteenth century of the proclamation of a bill in the Dublin parliament (1541) which officially declared the assumption of the title of King of Ireland by Henry VIII (Dolan 1991: 143). The parliament was attended by the representatives of the major Norman families of Ireland, but of these only the Earl of Ormond was able to understand the English text and apparently translated it into Irish for the rest of the attending Norman nobility (Hayes-McCoy 1967). Needless to say, the English viewed this situation with deep suspicion and the Lord Chancellor William Gerrard commented unfavourably in 1578 on the use of Irish by the English 'even in Dublin' and regarded the habit and the customs of the Irish as detrimental to the character of the English. Furthermore, since the Reformation, Irishness was directly linked to Popery. Accordingly, the Irish and the (Catholic) Old English were viewed with growing concern.

4.2 The status of Anglo-Norman

Anglo-Norman remained the language of the ruling landlords for at least two centuries after the initial invasion in 1169. The English rulers of the time were themselves French-speaking: Henry II, who came to Ireland in 1171 and issued the Charter of Dublin in the same year, could not speak English according to Giraldus Cambriensis (Cahill 1938: 164).

The Normans exerted a considerable ecclesiastical influence in Ireland. Before their arrival, the religious focus of the country was Clonmacnoise on the River Shannon in the centre of the country. This waned in status after the introduction to Ireland of new continental religious orders (Watt 1972: 41ff.) such as the Cistercians (founded in 1098 in Cîteaux near Dijon) and the Franciscans.

The extent of the Norman impact on Ireland can be recognised in surnames which became established. Such names as Butler, Power, Wallace, Durand, Nugent and all those beginning in Fitz-, e.g. Fitzpatrick, Fitzgibbon, testify to the strength of the Normans in Ireland long after such events as the loss of Normandy to England in 1204. Anglo-Norman influence on Irish is considerable in the field of loanwords but the reverse influence is not attested, although official documents exist to almost the end of the fifteenth century which were written in Anglo-Norman or Latin (Cahill 1938: 160).

The high number of everyday loans (see below) would suggest close contact between Anglo-Norman speakers and the local Irish.

The Anglo-Norman landlords established bases in the countryside as clearly attested by the castles they built. These Normans were granted land by the English king and in principle had to render service or pay scutage. In their turn they had others on their land who would also have been of Norman or English stock while the native Irish were on the level of serfs. Because of this organisation there were clear lines of contact between the natives and the new settlers which account for the linguistic influence of Anglo-Norman on Irish.

4.3 Anglo-Norman loanwords

The high number of everyday loanwords from Anglo-Norman in Irish (Risk 1971, 1974; Hickey 1997) suggests that the new settlers used Anglo-Norman words in their Irish and that these then diffused into Irish by this variety being ‘imposed’ on the native Irish (Hickey 2010: 10f.).

| (1) | Anglo-Norman | > | Irish | |
|-----|-----------------|---|-----------------|-------------|
| a. | <i>duke</i> | > | <i>diúice</i> | ‘duke’ |
| b. | <i>sucré</i> | > | <i>siúcra</i> | ‘sugar’ |
| c. | <i>joignour</i> | > | <i>siúinéir</i> | ‘carpenter’ |
| d. | <i>di(s)ner</i> | > | <i>dinnéir</i> | ‘dinner’ |
| e. | <i>warantie</i> | > | <i>baránta</i> | ‘guarantee’ |
| f. | <i>warde</i> | > | <i>bárda</i> | ‘guard’ |
| g. | <i>aventure</i> | > | <i>amhantúr</i> | ‘adventure’ |
| h. | <i>flour</i> | > | <i>plúr</i> | ‘flour’ |
| i. | <i>chaumbre</i> | > | <i>seomra</i> | ‘room’ |
| j. | <i>archer</i> | > | <i>airseóir</i> | ‘archer’ |
| k. | <i>page</i> | > | <i>páiste</i> | ‘child’ |
| l. | <i>college</i> | > | <i>coláiste</i> | ‘college’ |

A similar model has been suggested for the appearance of a large number of Old Norse words in Scottish Gaelic with initial /s/ + stop clusters. Here the Old Norse settlers are assumed to have imposed their variety of Gaelic – which would have included many Old Norse words, identifiable by characteristic initial clusters – on the general Scottish Gaelic-speaking population around them (see remarks in section 3. above).

The quantity of loans from Anglo-Norman into Irish and their phonological adaptation to the sound system of Irish (see Hickey 1997 for details) speaks for both a socially important donor group (the Anglo-Normans) and at the same time for a large and stable group of substrate speakers. This latter fact would explain why the loans from Anglo-Norman are completely adapted to the sound system of Irish, e.g. the word *páiste* /pa:s^ht^hə/ ‘child’ shows obligatory metathesis and devoicing of the /dʒ/ in

page to make it conform to Irish phonotactics. This adaption is evidence of the robust position of Irish at the time and contrasts strongly with that today where English loans are entering the language in large numbers (Hickey 1982, Stenson 1993) and are not necessarily adapted phonologically, e.g. *seaicéad* /s^hak^he:d/ ‘jacket’, an older loan which has a modern equivalent /dʒakit/ where the voiced affricate is not devoiced and simplified as in the earlier case.

The strong position of Irish in the post-invasion period led to extensive bilingualism among the Anglo-Normans. It is known that they assimilated rapidly to the Irish, intermarrying and eventually becoming linguistically indistinguishable from them. Indeed two members of the Anglo-Norman nobility became noted Irish poets, the First Earl of Kildare (died 1316) and Gerald the Third Earl of Desmond (died 1398), ‘Gerald the Rhymer’. This situation lasted throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and led commentators on the state of Ireland like Richard Stanihurst (1586) to bemoan the weak position of English with respect to Irish even in the towns of the east coast.

It was a practical step for the Anglo-Normans to change over to Irish and one which facilitated their domination of Ireland. The retention of Irish for such a long period after the initial invasion (Cosgrove 1967) helped to cement their independence from English-speaking mainland Britain, something that was not seriously threatened until the advent of the Tudors. With the establishment of Protestantism as the state religion of England, the people in Ireland whose ancestors came from Britain after the initial invasion came to be known as ‘Old English’ (Irish *Sean-Ghail*). Many of these were prominent representatives of Irish culture vis-à-vis the later English, above all Geoffrey Keating / Seathrún Céitinn, c 1580-1644, the author of a famous work *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* ‘Foundation of Knowledge about Ireland’.

4.4 Anglo-Norman names

Despite the fact that the Anglo-Normans were fully Gaelicised they retained their names and these are still quite distinctive, e.g. those beginning in *Fitz-* ‘son of’, e.g. *Fitzpatrick*, *Fitzgerald*, *Fitzmaurice* which testify to the numbers of Normans in Ireland.

The number of Norman place names is remarkably small, especially considering the large amount of Norman surnames which became established in Ireland and the many loanwords in Irish from the Norman invaders. One reason might be that the Normans did not found towns. Instead they built keeps in the countryside and ruled from fortified castles. But even there few if any Norman names are to be found. Perhaps it has to do with the acceptance by the Normans of the names which went with the territories occupied by the Irish. Occasionally there are recognisable instances of Norman names, e.g. English *Brittas*, Irish *Briotás* (south of

Dublin) < Old French *Bretesche* ‘boarding, planking’ or English *Pallas*, Irish *Pailis* ‘stockade’. A further case is that of regions dominated by a particular Norman family. Because the Normans were concentrated in the south of Ireland there are names which derive from the province of Munster and a point of the compass: *Ormond* < *Iarmumhan* ‘east Munster’, *Thomond* < *Thiarmumhan* ‘north Munster’ and *Desmond* < *Deasmumhan* ‘south Munster’, the latter later forming a common firstname in Ireland.

Word stress A prominent feature of southern Irish is that long vowels in non-initial syllables attract stress, e.g. *cailín* /ka^li:n^l/ ‘girl’. This may be the result of Anglo-Norman influence (in the south-east) after the twelfth century as older authors like O’Rahilly seem to think (1932: 86-98) and it certainly applied to many French loanwords, e.g. *buidéal* /bø^de:l/ ‘bottle’ (see Hickey (1997) for further discussion). This late stress in a word may be responsible for the procope which led to the first name *William* appearing in Irish as *Liam*.

Lenition Historically, there are instances of Anglo-Norman (and English) loanwords where the initial segment of the word was regarded as lenited and then ‘de-lenited’ on borrowing. This applies in particular to /v-/ and /w-/ which appear as /b-/ on borrowing, e.g. *barántas* ‘waranty’, *balla* ‘wall’, *bigil* ‘vigil’, *bís* ‘vice’. Older examples have this as well, e.g. *seabhac* < *hawk* where the initial /h-/ was interpreted as a lenited form of /s^h/ and then reversed in Irish. More recent loans may also show this kind of reversal, e.g. *giúmar* from *humour* where the initial /j-/ was ‘de-lenited’ to /g^h-/.

Lenition may also appear as a word-internal phenomenon, i.e. an internal voiceless segment may result in a voiced segment in the loanword. Irish loans from Anglo-Norman from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries can be cited as instances of this lenition, e.g. *bagún* from *bacun* ‘bacon’ or *buidéal* from *botel* ‘bottle’.

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5 Irish

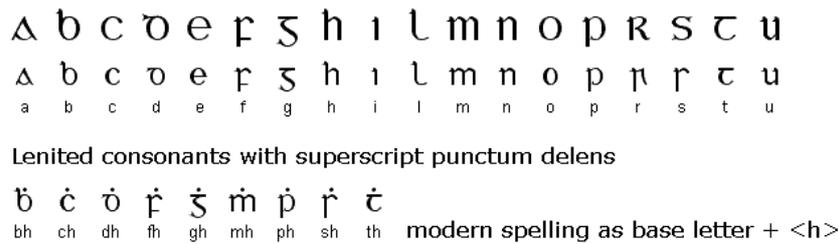
The period of early Irish for which documentation is available in the Roman

alphabet begins after the Christianisation of Ireland in the fifth century. The first documents are glosses and marginalia from the mid-eighth century contained in manuscripts found on the continent in the missionary sites of the Irish (Thurneysen 1946, E. G. Quin 1975). These were in Germany (*Codex Paulinus* in Würzburg, glosses on the letters of St Paul), Switzerland (*Codex Sangallensis* in St. Gall with the glossed version of Priscian’s grammar) and northern Italy (*Codex Ambrosianus* in Milan, glosses on some psalms). This period lasted until the end of the ninth century. The single external event which was most responsible for the demise of Old Irish³ in Ireland was the coming of the Vikings in the late eighth century.

By considering Latin loanwords in Irish one can see that part of the phonological makeup of the language was the word-internal lenition (voicing of voiceless stops and deletion of voiced ones) which had begun during the Ogham period (before 600), e.g. *lebor* /l^jevər/, later /l^jaur/, from *liber* ‘book’, *sacart* /sagart/ from *sacerdos* ‘priest’. The same applies to the Scandinavian loanwords towards the end of the first millennium, e.g. *margadh* /margað/ later /marəgə/ from *markaðr* ‘market’. Phonological reduction can also be seen in cluster simplification as in *fuinneog* /fin^jo:g/ from *vindauga* ‘window’. These developments continue well into the Middle Ages and are evident in the Anglo-Norman loanwords from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (see above).

In Old Irish there is also a phenomenon called *vowel affection*, a change in vowel height determined by the vowel in the following syllable (Thurneysen 1946: 47-48), a type of *umlaut* which remained a characteristic of the language for some time: /o/ became /u/ before a following /i/ and /u/ became /o/ before a following /a/ or /o/ (Stifter 2010: 67). These vowel changes never attained grammatical status as *umlaut* did in North and West Germanic.

Figure 1: *Irish Gaelic type, an adaptation of medieval Roman hands*



The Old Irish written tradition declined in the Middle Irish period, although no indication of dialect formation is as yet clearly evident. There is

³ The main work on Old Irish is still the classic study by Rudolf Thurneysen (1857-1940). It first appeared as *Handbuch des Altirischen* in 1909 and was later translated into English, appearing in 1946 as *A Grammar of Old Irish*.

uncertainty in morphology as writers were less sure about what constituted classical Old Irish. The Middle Irish period drew to a close with the coming of the Normans in the late twelfth century. The simplification of the inflectional system continued throughout the Middle Irish period with the nominal and verbal system of Old Irish much reduced. By the end of the Middle Irish period distinctions between cases with nouns had become blurred and the complex system of verb prefixes has been greatly simplified either by these being dropped or by being absorbed into the stem of a verb and becoming opaque as a result. Independent forms of personal pronouns develop during this period. The old infixed pronouns are replaced by post-posed independent pronouns. Synthetic forms of pronoun and copula are replaced by an invariant form of the copula with generic personal pronouns. Changes in the sound system led to certain realignments. The loss of /θ/ and /ð/ – probably in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, O’Rahilly (1926: 163-168, 192) – resulted in different outcomes for lenition as an initial mutation. /s/ became /h/ and /d/ became /y/ on lenition.

There is no contemporary handbook of Middle Irish, although there is an older work by Georges Dottin from 1913. The best treatment of this stage of the language is probably the long article in *Stair na Gaeilge* (see Breatnach 1994).

Middle Irish was followed by the Early Classical Period which stretched from the arrival of the Normans to the end of an independent Gaelic society, as a consequence of English military successes and increasing anglicisation of Ireland, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The old form of Irish society in which poets still had a place, however tenuous, came to an end so that there was no continuation of a single written standard (Williams 1994). Indeed it is unlikely that such a standard would have survived as it was more frequently than not at variance with contemporary forms of the language. The anglicisation just accelerated a process which had begun long before.

The development of Irish has been closely connected to that of English ever since the latter language was introduced to Ireland in the late twelfth century. In general the principle holds, that the expansion of English was to the detriment of Irish. This is because English spread in previous centuries chiefly by original Irish speakers switching to English. The spread of English was largely from east to west, from the more affluent to the poorer parts of the country (see Map 4 below).

5.1 Studies of Irish

The first treatise in Irish on questions of language is *Auraicept na n-Éces*, literally ‘the poet’s primer’ (Calder 1917, Ahlqvist 1983), an uneven work, containing many unfounded speculations on the origin of Irish and of alphabets alongside reasonable comments on the structure of the language. It was composed in sections, the earliest of which reach back to the seventh century (although the manuscripts date from the fourteenth century and

afterwards) and in which many of the terms later found in the language were introduced. The text itself is quite short, less than 200 lines, but the manuscript contains much extraneous comment, resulting in a size of some 1600 lines for the entire work. It is not known who the original author was, although there is no lack of speculation, such as that of O'Donovan (1845: 55) who sees the work as having been composed by one Forchern who is supposed to have flourished in Ulster in the first century AD.

More recent authors such as Ó Cuív (1965: 158) see *Auraicept na n-Éces* as arising under the influence of Isidore of Seville's (c 560-636) *Etymologiae* (something also noted by Thurneysen 1928: 303) and ventures that the latter accounts for the liking for etymologies and explanations which one finds in many of the later glossed manuscripts. It is not until very much later that one has grammars on Irish.

5.2. The Bardic Tracts

The Irish *Bardic Tracts* is a collective term (McKenna 1979 [1944]) given to a series of treatises for instructing professional writers in the grammar of Irish. They belong to the period from 1200 to 1600 (Classical Modern Irish, Ó Cuív 1965: 141) during which a uniform type of language was used in professional praise-poetry for Irish local rulers. This written register was far removed from spoken speech and one of the chief purposes of the bardic tracts was to instruct potential writers in a form of the language which for them would have been quite archaic. Most of the material in the tracts stems from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Adams 1970: 158) but some of it survives in manuscripts which were written in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The earliest of the tracts may, in the opinion of Ó Cuív and Bergin go back to 1500 or possibly earlier.

Linguistically, the bardic tracts are far superior to the *Auraicept na n-Éces*. They contain terms which are both derived from Latin and devised to deal with the special features of Irish, for instance the well-known three parts of speech: *focal* 'noun', *pearsa* 'verb' (later replaced by the indigenous term *briathar*) and *iairmbéarla*, literally 'hindspeech' a term used to refer to unstressed proclitics (Adams 1970: 158).

5.3 Early grammars of Irish

At the end of the sixteenth century and during the seventeenth several works on Irish were published in Latin on the continent, especially in Louvain (see section 2.1 *Celtic scholarship in Latin* above). Apart from grammars in Latin, an elementary Irish dictionary was produced by Micheál Ó Cléirigh.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century one finds *The Elements of the Irish Language, grammatically explained in English, in fourteen chapters* by Hugh MacCurtin which was printed in Louvain in 1728. By the same author there exists an *English-Irish Dictionary* (Paris, 1732). In keeping with the

profession practised by many of these authors, one often has grammatical comment as an interspersed or an appendix in a religious work. Thus Andrew Donlevy appended a chapter entitled ‘The elements of the Irish language’ to his *Irish-English Catechism* of 1742. Towards the end of the eighteenth century one finds an Irish grammar (*Grammar of the Ibero-Celtic, or Irish language*) by Charles Vallancey in 1773 which was printed in an enlarged edition in 1782. By the beginning of the nineteenth century more grammars begin to appear, the most comprehensive being *A Grammar of the Irish Language* by John O’Donovan in 1845. By this time the interest of Indo-European scholars had been directed towards Celtic languages, consider Johann Casper Zeuß’s *Grammatica Celtica* of 1853 (revised by H. Ebel in 1871) and academic articles by scholars like Heinrich Zimmer. This period also saw Alfred Holder’s *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz* (3 vols. 1896-1907) and Franz Nikolaus Finck’s *Die araner mundart. Ein beitrag zur erforschung des westirischen* (1899). The beginning of the twentieth century is marked by the monumental *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen* by Holger Pedersen (1909-1913) and Rudolf Thurneysen’s standard work *Handbuch des Altirischen* (1909, translated into English and published in 1946) along with the *Grammaire du Vieil-Irlandais* by Joseph Vendryes (1908), the *Manuel d’irlandais moyen* by Georges Dottin (1913) and Julius Pokorny’s *A Concise Old Irish Grammar and Reader* (1914).

An early bibliographical compilation of available publications and manuscripts was made by Richard Best which covers the period 1913-1941 (Best 1942). A later publication is Baumgarten (1986) which brought Best’s compilation up to 1971. On the website of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies there is a section dealing with the electronic *Bibliography of Irish Linguistics and Literature* (URL: <http://bill.celt.dias.ie/>). A book with an emphasis on the external development of Irish and its status in Irish society since the late eighteenth century is Edwards (1983).

The standard print collection of early Irish manuscript material is Stokes and Strachan (1975 [1901]).

5.4 The later development of Irish

The fortunes of the Irish language changed considerably in the late sixteenth century when the native lords of Ulster were defeated by the English. This led to their departure from Ireland (in the *Flight of the Earls*⁴ from Lough Swilly in 1607) and to the widespread settlement of Ulster, chiefly by Lowland Scots encouraged to do this by their compatriot, King James I of England (1603-1625).

The political vacuum caused by the *Flight of the Earls* was filled by the Scottish and English in Ulster. The system of plantation which was

⁴ This is referred to in Irish as *Teitheadh na nIarlai* ‘The Flight of the Earls’, but also by the alternative label *Imeacht na nIarlai* ‘The Departure of the Earls’.

promoted by the English government of the time (Dudley Edwards 2005 [1973]: 158-161) meant that the better lands of Ulster and much of the south of Ireland was reserved for English-speaking settlers and the Irish were banished to the poorer parts of the country, such as the area of the Sperrin Mountains in Central Tyrone where Irish survived into the twentieth century (see maps below).

When the old Gaelic order came to an end at the beginning of the seventeenth century the system of patronage for Irish poets and scholars also declined rapidly. With that the use of a classical standard of written Irish declined as well and in the course of this century traces of dialects appear more and more in Irish documents (Williams 1994: 447). It is certain that Irish had already become dialectally diverse but because of the nature of the textual record, features of the dialects did not appear in writing.

The exclusion of Irish from public life resulted from the Penal Laws, a collective term for anti-Catholic, i.e. anti-Irish, legislation which greatly diminished the standing of the language and its speakers in Irish society. With further developments of the seventeenth century, notably the campaigns and expulsions by Oliver Cromwell in the late 1640s and early 1650s, the language shift from Irish to English was accelerated. This was a process which was never to be reversed. Other major demographic events, especially the Great Famine of the late 1840s and subsequent mass emigration, led to a serious drop in the numbers of Irish speakers so that by the late nineteenth century the Irish-speaking districts were fragmented into three major areas, Cork-Kerry-Clare, Galway-Mayo and Donegal with a few other small enclaves, e.g. in West Waterford.

But above all it was the attitude of the Irish themselves to their native language which accelerated the dramatic shift to English in the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁵ The association of the Irish language with poverty and backwardness, indeed with famine, and the ever-increasing necessity for competence in English both in Irish society and for those wishing to emigrate meant that the end beckoned for Irish as a living language across the entire country. The revival movement (Ó Súilleabháin ed., 1998) which arose in earnest at the end of the nineteenth century and which is associated with such major culture figures as Douglas Hyde (Dubhghlas de hÍde, 1860-1949, the founder of *Conradh na Gaeilge*, The Gaelic League, and the first president of the Irish Free State 1938-1945) was powerless to halt this large-scale demographic movement away from the language, although the movement did succeed somewhat in stemming the tide.⁶

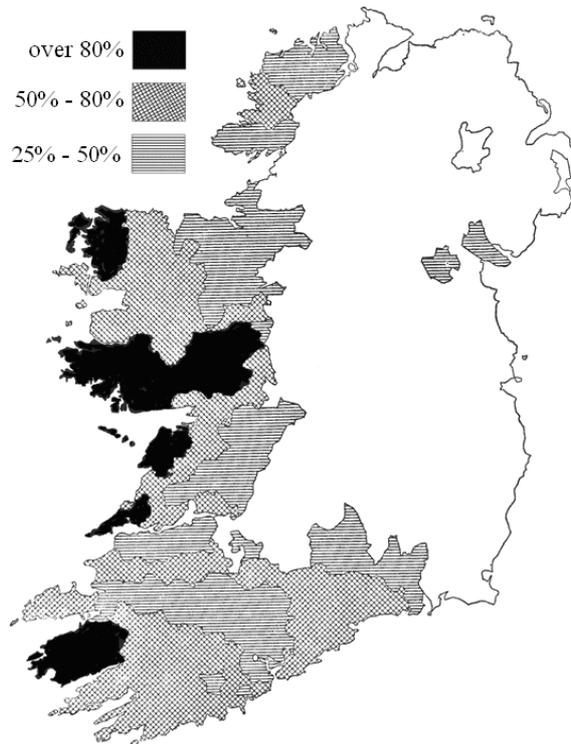
⁵ See the discussion of attitudes to Irish in Crowley (2005: Chapter 5, especially pp. 118-127).

⁶ See Mac Mathúna (2007: 224-30) ‘Tuisicint an Phobail ar an Athrú Teanga’ (‘The people’s understanding of the language shift’) for a good overview of attitudes to Irish and their effect on the position of the language in Irish society.

5.4.1 Reconstructing historical distributions

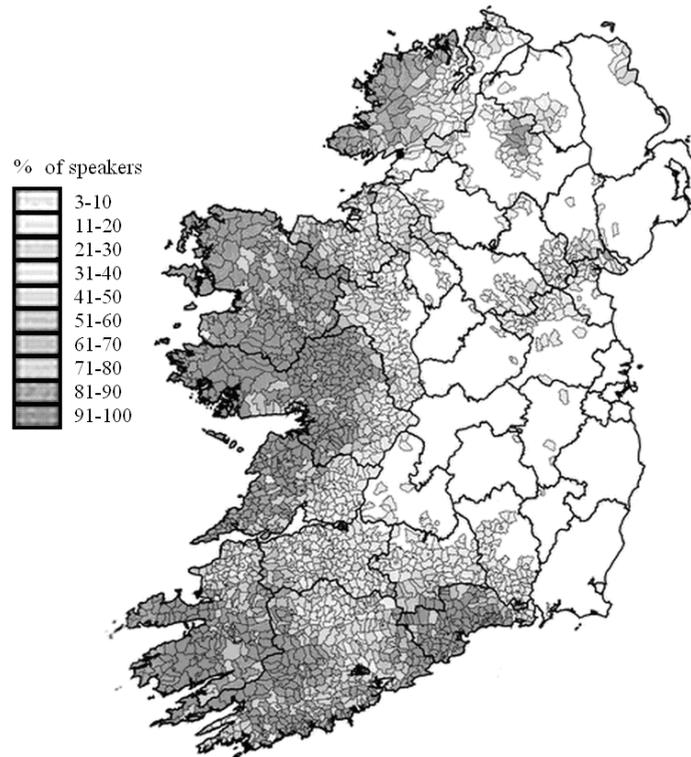
The census of 1851 was the first to register language use in Ireland. The data which was gained in this census must be treated with caution, however. Because of the negative image of the Irish language in Irish society in the nineteenth century, and especially in the aftermath of the Great Famine (1845-8) there was considerable underreporting of the ability to speak Irish.

Map 1: *The distribution of Irish immediately after the Great Famine (1845-1848) going on the 1851 census (after Ó Cuív 1951, appended maps)*



Distributions which more accurately reflect the linguistic situation in the immediately pre-Great Famine period have been reconstructed by Garret Fitzgerald in a number of studies which he published in the past two decades or so (Fitzgerald 2000, 2005). The following map shows his reconstruction on the basis of data in the 1911 census for speakers born just before the Great Famine (1845-8).

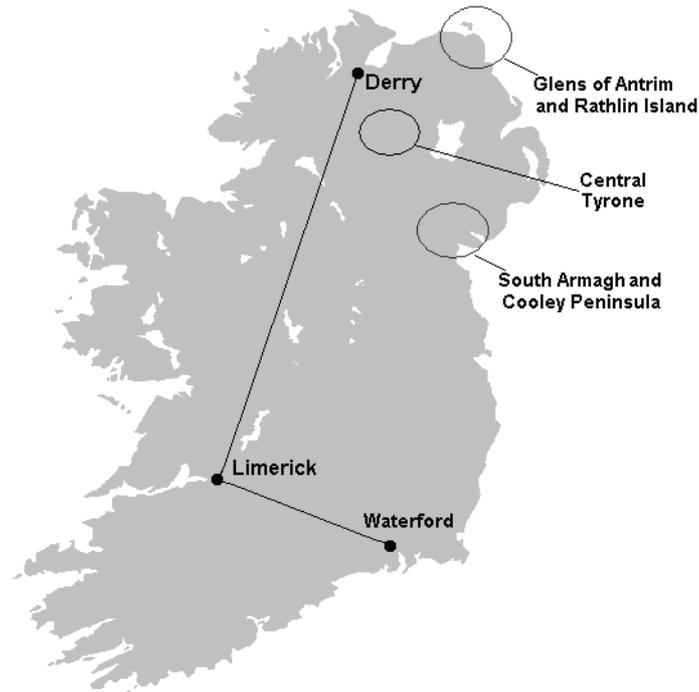
Map 2: *Pre-Great Famine Irish-speaking areas by district electoral divisions, based on 1911 population aged 60 and over (after Fitzgerald 2005: 16, Map 1)*



Both of the above maps share features in terms of distributions. If one generalises from both maps and redraws them on the bases of areas which were at least 25% Irish-speaking in the immediate pre-Great Famine period then the following picture appears.

The entire West and South-West behind the lines from Derry to Limerick and Limerick to Waterford respectively show a high concentration of Irish speakers which increases towards the coast, i.e. the further one moves away from the east of the country. In addition there were three enclaves in the North which still showed a concentration of native speakers. These were areas which did not experience active settlement by Scots and English people in the seventeenth century. Indeed it is known that the native Irish, i.e. Irish speakers, were banished to the mountainous area of Central Tyrone, *Na Speiríní*, the Sperrin Mountains, as a consequence of land redistribution during the seventeenth century.

Map 3: *Division of Ireland by density of Irish speakers in the mid nineteenth century*

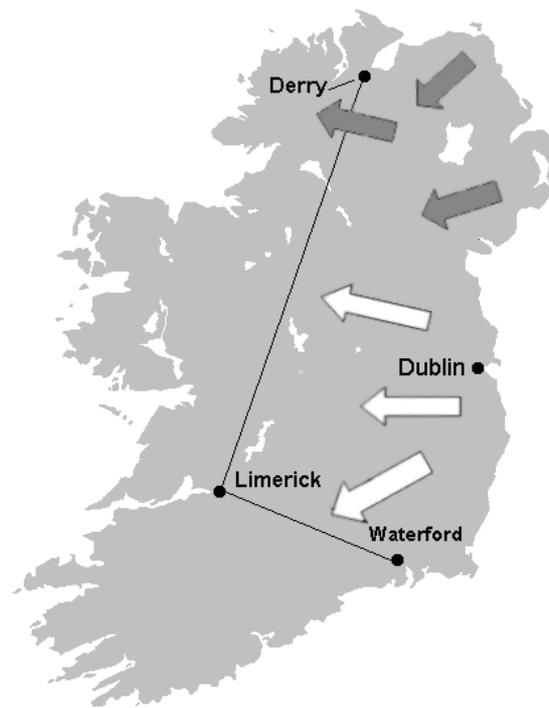


The Glens of Antrim, in the extreme North-East, and South Armagh (again a mountainous area around *Sliabh gCuilinn*, Slieve Gullion) along with *Leithinis Chuaille*, the Cooley Peninsula (especially the area around *Omeath*, Irish *Ó Méith*, on the north side of this peninsula), were further marginal areas which were not affected by the seventeenth-century Protestant plantations (Whelan 1997).

5.4.2 The geographical spread of English

The following map shows the approximate spread of Scots and English in Ulster from the beginning of the seventeenth century onwards and that of more general forms of English from the late medieval period onwards (after the twelfth century). It is clear that the east and centre of Ulster experienced a considerable settlement of English/Scots speakers while in the South the spread of English was gradually from the east of the country, from an area just north of Dublin down to Waterford, that of the original late medieval Pale. This spread of English pushed Irish further west, west of the Derry-Limerick line and south-west of the Limerick – Waterford line.

Map 4: *Spread of varieties of English in Ulster (dark arrows) and in the South of Ireland (light arrows) during the course of Irish history*



But there is a further reason for the retreat of Irish from the east and from the midlands. The Cromwellian confiscations, which have been kept alive in folk memory in the phrase ‘to hell or to Connaught’, displaced large proportions of the Irish-speaking population to west of the river Shannon (Barnard 2000 [1975], Canny 2001: 384-401). The Derry-Limerick line, shown in the map above, is for the greater part co-terminous with the Shannon river (at least south of Co. Roscommon). It can be assumed that the steep decline in Irish east of the Shannon is in no small part due to the Cromwellian expulsions of the later 1640s and early 1650s.

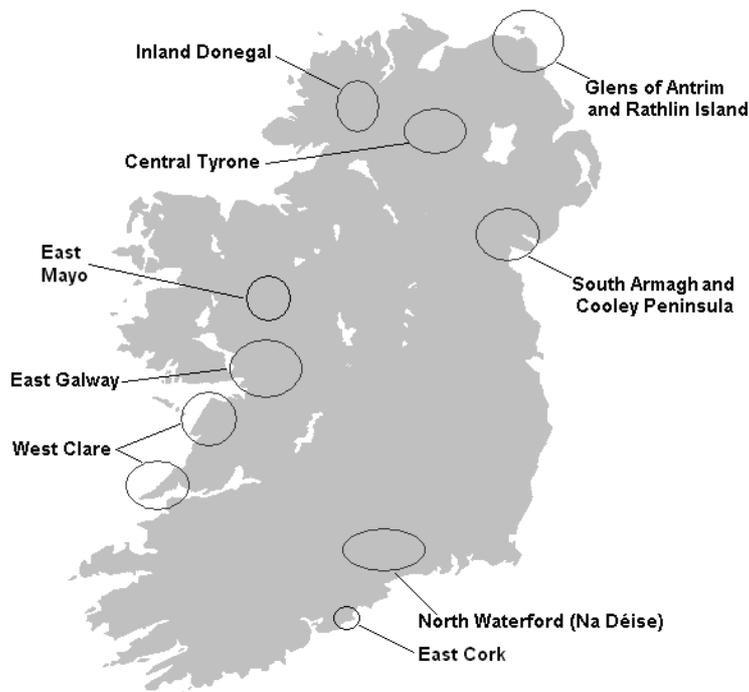
5.4.3 The present-day linguistic landscape

The current dialect areas – South, West and North – are the remnants of a much greater geographical distribution of Irish throughout the country (Hickey 2011: 105-133). The major differences in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, which can be observed in Irish today, probably go back to the early classical period. However, these differences were masked by the use of an artificial written standard which was maintained into the seventeenth century. The language shift from Irish to English (Hickey 2007,

chapter 4) meant that the geographical distribution of Irish throughout Ireland became intermittent. The dialect areas along the western seaboard were probably more or less contiguous up to the middle of the nineteenth century after which they became fragmented because of the shift to English in Co. Clare and large sections of north Co. Galway and Co. Mayo as well as Co. Sligo.

The standard dialect survey of Irish is Heinrich Wagner's comprehensive atlas (see Wagner 1958-64). But even while this was being compiled in the mid twentieth century the speakers were invariably older males whose Irish was frequently moribund. The situation today is that large tracts of both halves of Ireland have no historically continuous Irish-speaking areas any more. There are no such areas in Northern Ireland or in Leinster.⁷ In Munster there are remnants in Ring in Co. Waterford and in Muskerry in Co. Cork, along with a more robust community at the end of the Dingle peninsula in Co. Kerry. The community on Clear Island off the south-west coast of Cork (Ó Buachalla 2003) contains very few native speakers.

Map 5: *Areas in which Irish was still spoken in the early twentieth century but where it has since disappeared.*



⁷ The officially recognised Gaeltacht area around Ráth Chairn in Co. Meath arose through the re-settling of families primarily from the Conamara Gaeltacht in the early years of the Irish Free State (early 1930s).

Irish in Mayo receded dramatically in the second half of the twentieth century. The most vibrant communities today are found in coastal South Co. Galway and on the two smaller Aran Islands, Inis Meáin (Inishmaan) and Inis Oírr (Inisheer) and in the western part of the main island Inishmore – Árainn, as well as that on Toraigh (Tory Island) in Donegal and the mainland opposite it, the area around Gaoth Dhobhair (Gweedore). The tip of the Dingle Peninsula in Co. Kerry still has a community of native speakers, but somewhat smaller than that in the Co. Galway and Co. Donegal Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking area).

The present-day dialects show further differentiation beyond the basic tripartite division into North, West and South. There are subareas in each of the major divisions and some of the former do not quite conform to the pattern of the area in which they are contained. For instance, the north-west of Mayo is geographically part of the West but, linguistically, it has more in common with the North than with Irish spoken in South Mayo.

Map 6: *Main dialect areas in present-day Ireland*



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6 English

The English language was taken to Ireland with the settlers from Britain who arrived in the late twelfth century. Since then the fate of English has been closely linked with that of the Irish language which it came largely to replace in the late modern period. In addition, the interaction of existing forms of English with the Scots imported in the early seventeenth century into the north of the country led to a linguistic division arising between Ulster, the most northerly province, on the one hand and the rest of the country to the south on the other.

The following map shows the dialect regions for varieties of English in Ireland. There is a certain correlation with Irish inasmuch as Ulster is a separate area here as well. The large west and south-west English dialect area corresponds to the region which contains Western and Southern Irish.

Map 7: *Dialect regions of English in Ireland*



For the many varieties of English on the island of Ireland there are different designations. *Irish English* is the simplest and most convenient term.⁸ It has the advantage that it is parallel to the labels for other varieties, e.g. American, Australian, Welsh English and can be further differentiated where necessary.

In the north of the country terms are used which reflect historical origins, e.g. *Ulster Scots* for the English stemming from the initial Lowland Scots settlers, *Mid-Ulster English* for geographically central varieties which are largely of a northern English provenance. The label *Contact English* is used occasionally to refer globally to varieties spoken in areas where Irish is also spoken.

⁸ *Hiberno-English* is a learned term which is derived from the Latin term *Hibernia* 'Ireland'. The term enjoyed a certain currency in the 1970s and 1980s but in the 1990s many authors ceased to employ it, as it contributes nothing in semantic terms and is unnecessarily obscure, often requiring explanation to a non-Irish audience or readership.

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

6.1 History

The history of Irish English can be divided into two broad periods. The first period starts in the late twelfth century with the arrival of the first English-speaking settlers and finishes around 1600 when the second period begins. The main event which justifies this periodisation is the renewed and vigorous planting of English in Ireland at the beginning of the seventeenth century. During the first period the Old English, as the original settlers are called in the Irish context, came increasingly under the influence of the Irish. The Anglo-Normans who were the military leaders during the initial settlement had been completely absorbed by the Irish by the end of the fifteenth century. The progressive Gaelicisation led the English to attempt planting the Irish countryside in order to reinforce the English presence there (Palmer 2000). This was by and large a failure and it was only with James I that successful planting of (Lowland Scottish and English) settlers in the north of the country tipped the linguistic balance in favour of English in the north. The south of the country was subject to further plantations along with the banishment of the native Irish to the west during the Cromwellian period (in the 1650s) so that by the end of the seventeenth century Irish was in a weak position from which it was never to recover.

During the seventeenth century new forms of English were brought to Ireland, Scots in the north and West/North Midland varieties in the south (where there had been a predominantly West/South-West input in the first period). The renewed Anglicisation led to the view, held above all by Alan Bliss (see Bliss 1979, 1984), that the forms of English from the first period were completely supplanted by the varieties introduced at the beginning of the modern period. However, on the east coast, in Dublin and other locations down to Waterford in the south-east, there is a definite continuation of south-west English features which stem from the varieties imported in the first period (Hickey 2001).

The dialect of Forth and Bargy, spoken in the south-east corner of Co. Wexford until the early nineteenth century is the only complete survival of English from the first period. This was the subject of antiquarian interest in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and glossaries of it were published, e.g. Barnes (1867). This material has been re-edited recently (Dolan and Ó Muirthe eds, 1996 [1979]) and a linguistic analysis is contained in Hickey (2007, section 2.4).

6.1.1 The medieval period

The documentary record of medieval Irish English consists for the most part of the 16 poems of Irish provenance in British Museum Harley 913 which are known collectively as the *Kildare Poems* (Heuser 1904, Lucas 1995) after one of the poems in which the author identifies himself as from the county of Kildare to the south-west of Dublin. The collection probably dates from the early fourteenth century. The language of these poems is of a general west midland to southern English character. There are many features which can be traced to the influence of Irish phonology (Hickey 1993). Note that it is a moot point whether the *Kildare Poems* were written by native speakers of Irish using English as a H-language in a diglossic situation and whether indeed the set was written by one or more individuals.

Early loans from English into Irish There are some early English loanwords in Irish which are recognisable as they have vowel values which stem from the period before the shift of English long vowels which began towards the end of the Middle English period (1100-1500). These loans show ME /i:/ (= ModE /ai/), e.g. *faoitín* /fi:t^hi:n^h/ ‘whiting’, ME /a:/ (= ModE /e:/) and ME /u:/ (= ModE /au/), e.g. *bácús* /ba:ku:s/ ‘bakehouse’ as well as ME /au/ (= ModE /ɔ:/), e.g. *seabhac* /s^hauk/ ‘hawk’.

6.1.2 The early modern period

Apart from the *Kildare Poems* and other minor pieces of verse (see McIntosh and Samuels 1968 for a detailed list) there are attestations of English in the first period among the municipal records of various towns in Ireland (Kallen 1994: 150-156), especially along the east coast from Waterford through Dublin and up as far as Carrickfergus in the north. But such documents are not linguistically revealing. However, at the end of the sixteenth century attestations of Irish English begin to appear which are deliberate representations of the variety of the time. These are frequently parodies of the Irish by English authors. The anonymous play *Captain Thomas Stukeley* (1596/1605) is the first in a long line of plays in which the Irish are parodied. The stage Irishman, later a figure of fun, was to be added, establishing a satirical tradition that lasted well into the twentieth century (Bliss 1976, 1979; Sullivan 1980). Most of the satirical pieces stem from English authors so that one is dealing with an external perception of Irish English at the time. Nonetheless, this material can be useful in determining what features at the beginning of the early modern period were salient and hence picked up by non-Irish writers.

Apart from satirical writings some writers, especially in the nineteenth century, attempted to indicate genuine colloquial speech of their time. The first of these is probably Maria Edgeworth whose novel *Castle Rackrent* (1801) is generally regarded as the first regional novel in English. Other

significant writers here are the northern William Carlton (1794-1869) and the brothers John Banim (1798-1842) and Michael Banim (1796-1874).

6.2 The language shift

The shift from Irish to English began in earnest in the early seventeenth century and had been all but completed by the late nineteenth century. It was undertaken by a largely uneducated population (the romanticised hedge schools (Dowling 1968 [1935]) notwithstanding) who acquired English as adults in a non-prescriptive environments. The Irish learned English from other Irish who already knew some, perhaps through contact with those urban Irish who were English speakers, especially on the east coast and through contact with the English planters and their employees. This latter group plays no recognisable role in the development of Irish English, i.e. there is no planter Irish English, probably because this group was numerically insignificant, despite their importance as a trigger in the language shift process. What one can assume for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in rural Ireland is a functional bilingualism in which the Irish learned some English as adults from their dealings with English speakers. By the early nineteenth century (Daly 1990) the importance of English for advancement in social life was being pointed out repeatedly, by no less a figure than Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), the most important political leader of the early nineteenth century.

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

For phonology and syntax the matter is quite different. Speakers who learn a language as adults retain the pronunciation of their native language and have difficulty with segments which are unknown to them. This can be seen in the use of stops (dental or sometimes alveolar, depending on region) in the THIN and THIS lexical sets in Irish English, i.e. [t/tm] and [d/dɪs]. A more subtle case would be the lenition of stops in Irish English, e.g. *cat* [kæɾ], which while systemically completely different from lenition in Irish could be the result of a phonological directive applied by the Irish learning English to lenite elements in positions of maximal sonority.

In syntax there are many features which either have a single source in Irish or at least have converged with English regional input to produce stable structures in later Irish English. To begin with one must bear in mind that adult speakers learning a second language, especially in an unguided situation, search for equivalents to the grammatical categories they know from their native language. The less they know and use the second language, the more obvious this search is. A case in point would involve the habitual in Irish. This is a prominent aspectual category in the language and generally available by using a special form of the verb 'be' and a non-finite form of the lexical verb in question *Bíonn sí ag léamh (gach maidin)* [is she at reading (every morning)]. There is no one-to-one correspondence to this in English, formally and semantically, so what appears to have happened (Hickey 1997) is that the Irish availed of the afunctional *do* of declarative sentences which was still present in English at the time of renewed plantation in the early seventeenth century (especially if one considers that the input was largely from the West Midlands) to produce an equivalent to the habitual in Irish. This use of an English structure in a language contact situation to reach an equivalent to an existing grammatical category in Irish depends crucially on a distinction between the existence of a category and its exponence. If one separates the presence of a category in a grammar from its exponence then one can recognise more clearly the search for equivalence the Irish undertook in acquiring English and one can understand the process of availing of means in English, present but afunctional, i.e. declarative *do*, to realise an existing category in their native language. This habitual category in Irish English is usually expressed by *do + be + V-ing*, e.g. 'She does be worrying about the children', Irish: *Bíonn sí ag déanamh imní faoi na leanaí*, lit. 'be.HABITUAL she at doing worry about the children'.

The move away from Irish towards English happened earliest in the east of the country, in the area from just north of Dublin down to Waterford. The western seaboard is the region where the Irish language survived longest. From Co. Donegal down to Co. Kerry there are still pockets of Irish native speakers (see section on Irish above), remnants of a much wider distribution in the west which existed up to the end of the nineteenth century.

The shift in language for the majority of the Irish-speaking population has been viewed by many linguists as the chief source of non-standard features in Irish English though some scholars attribute these to inherited regional and/or archaic features of English or to independent developments (Filppula 2003). The case for contact has been discussed extensively in the literature (see the review in Hickey 2007: section 4.2 and the references in Filppula 1999 and Corrigan 2010).

Table 1: *Suggestions for sources of key features of Southern Irish English*

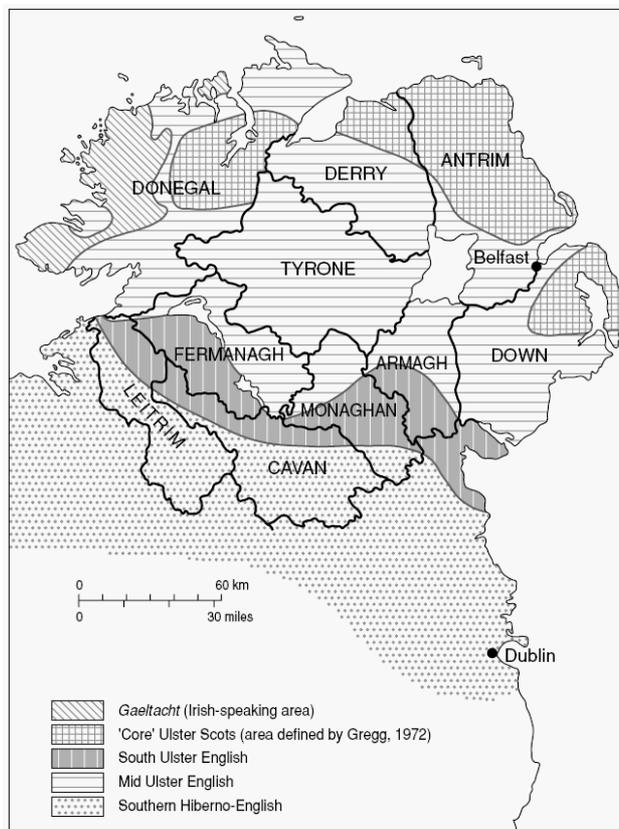
| <i>Phonological features</i> | <i>Possible source</i> |
|--|---|
| Dental/alveolar stops for fricatives | Transfer of nearest Irish equivalent, coronal stops |
| Intervocalic and pre-pausal lenition of /t/, <i>cat</i> [kæɫ], <i>pity</i> [pʲiː] | Lenition as a phonological directive from Irish |
| Alveolar /l/ in all positions | Use of non-velar, non-palatal [l] from Irish |
| Retention of [ɹ] for <wh> | Convergence of input with the realization of Irish /f/ [ɸ] |
| Retention of syllable-final /r/ | Convergence of English input and Irish |
| Distinction of short vowels before /r/ term # turn | Convergence of English input and Irish |
| <i>Morphological features</i> | <i>Possible source</i> |
| Distinct pronominal forms for the second personal singular and plural | Convergence of English input and Irish |
| Epistemic negative <i>must</i> | Generalization made by Irish based on positive use |
| <i>Them</i> as demonstrative | English input only |
| <i>Syntactic features</i> | <i>Possible source</i> |
| Habitual aspect of the type: <i>He does be out drinking at the weekends</i> | Convergence with South-West English input on east coast, possibly with influence from Scots via Ulster. Otherwise transfer of category from Irish |
| Immediate perfective aspect with <i>after</i> <i>She's after spilling the milk</i> | Transfer from Irish |
| Resultative perfective with OV word order, e.g. <i>He has his dinner eaten.</i> | Possible convergence, primarily from Irish |
| Subordinating <i>and</i> , e.g. <i>He went out and it raining.</i> | Transfer from Irish |
| Variant use of suffixal -s in present (non-standard verbal concord) | South-west input in first period on east coast |
| Clefting for topicalisation, e.g. <i>It's to Galway they're gone.</i> | Transfer from Irish, with some possible convergence |

| | |
|--|---|
| Greater range of the present tense | Transfer from Irish, with some possible convergence |
| Negative concord (multiple negation) | Convergence of English input and Irish |
| <i>For to</i> infinitives indicating purpose | Convergence of English input and Irish |
| Reduced number of verb forms | English input only |
| <i>Be</i> as auxiliary | English input only |
| Single time reference for <i>never</i> | Transfer from Irish, English input |

6.3 The north-south split

The dialects of the northern province, Ulster, are quite different from those in the south. The main reason for this is that they derive from Lowland Scots and forms of northern English which were taken to Ulster during the plantations of the seventeenth century.

Map 2. *Dialect divisions in the north of Ireland*



These varieties led to easily recognisable forms of English in the north to this date. However, the English of the two main ethnic groups in the north, Protestants and Catholics, are not usually distinguishable by their English (but see McCafferty 2001 for some differences with regard to innovation and conservatism in the respective communities).

Ulster speech has been treated in many publications, some of these book-length, such as Adams (ed., 1964), an early collection of articles or Mallory (ed., 1999), a more recent volume. In Ulster, the status of Ulster Scots is a topic of considerable controversy, not only among linguists (see dedicated chapter in this volume). Treatments of it as a separate language are Fenton (2006), a lexical study, and Robinson (1997), a more general one.

6.4 Scholarly research on Irish English

Modern Irish English studies began with P. L. Henry's 1957 monograph (there had been some earlier studies, notably P. W. Joyce (1910) – a popular book on vernacular English in Ireland – and Hogan (1927) – an academic study with an historical slant). Alan Bliss revitalised the linguistic study of Irish English in the late 1960s and 1970s and is best known for his work on the representation of Irish speech in literature, see Bliss (1979). In this field one also finds Duggan (1969 [1937]), an early study, Wall (1995), a lexical guide, and Amador-Moreno (2006) is a detailed study of a single author. In the sphere of translation the main work is Cronin (1996).

A number of edited volumes have appeared in the past few decades which cover a broad range of themes, e.g. Ó Muirthe (ed., 1977), Dolan (ed., 1990), Kallen (ed. 1997), Cronin and Ó Cuilleánáin (eds, 2003), Boisseau and Canon-Roger (eds, 2006) and the four volumes of conference proceedings which appeared as Tristram (ed., 1997, 2000, 2003, 2005). A guide to other literature, in both book and article format, can be found in the sourcebook Hickey (2002). A recent overview geared towards newcomers to the field can be found in Amador-Moreno (2010).

6.5 Present-day issues and future trends

Traditionally, there are many lexical studies of Irish English, a tradition which has been continued, e.g. by Moylan (1996) for Kilkenny and Beecher (1991) for Cork. More general treatments can be found in Dolan (2004 [1998]), Share (2003 [1997]) and Ó Muirthe (1996, 2004) all of which contain much local vocabulary which derives from the Irish language and/or from archaic forms of English which survived in Ireland. Todd (1990) is a lexical study dedicated to English in Northern Ireland. The language of travellers in Ireland is the subject of Kirk and Ó Baoill (eds, 2002), see following section.

The grammar of Irish English is the area which has received special attention by linguists as is attested in the very many articles devoted to this

field. Results of grammatical research have also appeared in monograph form, e.g. in Henry (1995), Filppula (1999), and in the relevant chapters of Hickey (2007) and of Corrigan (2010). See also the chapters by McCafferty and Corrigan, this volume.

The phonology of Irish English has been dealt with in many articles, e.g. by James and Lesley Milroy (on Belfast English) and in monograph form by J. Milroy (1981), Harris (1985) and L. Milroy (1987 [1980]). Hickey (2004) is a sound atlas with coverage of all regional varieties of Irish English along with a DVD which provides the sound files. Hickey (2005) is a sociolinguistic investigation of recent changes in Dublin English.

The spread of Irish English during the colonial period (1600-1900) and the question of Irish input to overseas varieties of English has been examined in Hickey (ed., 2004). Issues of language and politics have been treated in depth by Tony Crowley, in the sourcebook, Crowley (2000), and in the monograph Crowley (2005).

A number of new research avenues have been opened up in recent years. One is the exploitation of corpora for the description and analysis of standard Irish English, a research agenda associated first and foremost with John Kirk and Jeffrey Kallen (see their contribution in this volume). These scholars have been responsible for the compilation and publication of *ICE – Ireland* (Kirk and Kallen 2008), the Irish component of the *International Corpus of English*. Another new avenue is represented by the extension of research into media studies, e.g. the language of film, as shown by Walshe (2009).

The most recent research avenue is the pragmatics of Irish English: several studies have appeared based on data collected in the past few years, for instance by researchers working at the University of Limerick. The collection by Barron and Schneider (eds, 2005) offers a good overview of this area. A collection of articles representing the main trends in Irish English can be found in Hickey (ed., 2011).

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7 Shelta

There is much mystery surrounding Shelta. Partly because of the closed nature of the communities which are reputed to use it and partly because of the lack of information about it. Awareness of Shelta arose in the 1880s as a result of Charles Leland's *The Gypsies* (1882) in which he mentioned a language, older than Romani, and spoken by Irish travellers (Binchy 1994: 134f.). This sparked off interest, particularly with the English scholar John Sampson and the German Celtologist Kuno Meyer who were among the first to attempt a description (see Sampson 1890 and Meyer 1891). Both of these relied on the speech of one individual, John Barlow (born in 1811) to describe Shelta (Ní Shuinéar 2002: 37). R. A. Stewart Macalister, the author of *The Secret Languages of Ireland* (1937,) even admitted that he had never heard Shelta spoken. Nonetheless, the glossary which Macalister has in his book (1937: 174-224) is the main source for all the forms of Shelta quoted since (see Ní Shuinéar 2002 for a good overview of scholarship on Shelta).

The uncertainty about Shelta is reflected in its name (Hancock 1984: 385). It is also referred to as Sheldru, a related form which, however, poses certain difficulties in terms of interpretation. The labels *Gammon* and (*Tinkers'*) *Cant* (< Irish *caint* 'talk')⁹ are also found.¹⁰ The term *Shelta* may well be connected with Irish *siúl* [ʃuːl̪] 'walk', especially in the phrase *lucht siúil* 'the walking people'. The verbal adjective *siúlta* [ˈʃuːl̪tə] is phonetically quite close to *Shelta*, but this form does not occur in the phrase just quoted so there is a grammatical difficulty with this interpretation.

The numbers for Shelta speakers in Ireland vary, but the figure of 6,000 is quoted frequently, above all in the various websites concerned with Shelta. Given the fact that demographic research is lacking, it can be assumed that what sources there are have all copied from one another, hence the general agreement on the numbers of speakers. The suggested number of 6,000 is at most a quarter of the 20,000 to 25,000 Travellers in Ireland (north and south) which means that on any interpretation only a fraction of these use Shelta. Furthermore, even if the figures were based on actual surveys, the question of just what constitutes a speaker of Shelta would still have to be addressed (see Ó Baoill 1994: 156f. for a discussion of these issues).

Shelta can hardly be described as a language, but is more a jargon. It consists of a grammatical base, here Irish English, with words, phrases and idioms of its own which derive from Irish. This fact supports the assumption that Shelta has existed for a few centuries at least, because there must have been sufficient exposure to Irish, or bilingualism on the part of Travellers, for the Irish words to have been integrated. Indeed it is conceivable that Shelta started out as a form of Irish, before the historical language shift in Ireland, and that later generations, who had switched to English, retained the Irish lexis to ensure that Shelta was not easily comprehensible to outsiders. Unfortunately, there are no means of ascertaining how much of its special lexis is presently in use among Travellers who speak the jargon and none of the scholars working in this area have addressed the question of currency. Ó Baoill (1994: 161-164) is aware of this and shares the suspicion of the present author that active Shelta vocabulary among Travellers is considerably less than is commonly assumed. Certainly, it is very doubtful whether the several hundred items contained in Macalister (1937) are in everyday use among speakers of Shelta today. In the sound archives of the Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin, there are a few recordings, made in the 1960s, of travellers talking about Shelta. These speakers had difficulties recalling words of their jargon (one of them could not remember

⁹ In this context *cant* is probably from Irish. The general use of *cant* is more likely to derive from Old French (deriving ultimately from Latin *cantare* 'to sing') and not from Irish *caint* 'talk' (although both derive from the same Indo-European root).

¹⁰ One of the informants on an archive tape of the Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin claimed when asked that *Nackers' Gammon* or *Nackers' Cant* are terms used by the Travellers themselves rather than *Shelta*.

the word for ‘son’, ‘brother’ or ‘sister’), though given time they did manage to recollect a certain amount.

The basic principle of Shelta lexis is transposition, the deliberate switching around of consonants from syllable onset to syllable coda, what is also called ‘back slang’, a type of metathesis. There are also other kinds of rearrangement, including insertion and deletion. Certain sound patterns are typical, such as final /-g/ or /-k/, frequently preceded by /ʌ/ or /ɪ/. The general sound shape of words, even those demonstrably from Irish, led to them becoming unrecognisable to the uninitiated, hence the view that it is a secret language. Because of the limited numbers of basic terms available, certain compounds were formed as equivalents to single lexical items in English, e.g. *fay* ‘bacon’ + *bleeter* ‘sheep’ = *bleetersfay* ‘mutton’.

Table 2: *Selected lexical items supposedly typical of Shelta*¹¹

I *Items with an identifiable Irish source*

| Shelta | Irish | gloss | Shelta | Irish | gloss |
|--------------------|------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|
| 1) <i>garéad</i> | <i>airgead</i> | ‘money’ | 2) <i>rodas</i> | <i>doras</i> | ‘door’ |
| 3) <i>groomkra</i> | <i>siúcra</i> | ‘sugar’ | 4) <i>lackeen</i> | <i>cailín</i> | ‘girl’ |
| 5) <i>srochar</i> | <i>eochair</i> | ‘key’ | 6) <i>cam</i> | <i>mac</i> | ‘son’ |
| 7) <i>camra</i> | <i>madra</i> (?) | ‘dog’ | 8) <i>skiock</i> | <i>uisce</i> | ‘water’ |
| 9) <i>mogue</i> | <i>muc</i> | ‘pig’ | 10) <i>soorck</i> | <i>gruaig</i> (?) | ‘hair’ |

II *Items without an identifiable Irish source*

| Shelta | gloss | Shelta | gloss |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------------|----------|
| 1) <i>feenathah</i> | ‘man’ | 2) <i>bjore</i> | ‘woman’ |
| 3) <i>nishkeen</i> | ‘father’ | 4) <i>nadrum</i> | ‘mother’ |
| 5) <i>njuck</i> | ‘head’ | 6) <i>grug</i> | ‘nose’ |
| 7) <i>gushig</i> | ‘kettle’ | 8) <i>gillymucks</i> | ‘shoes’ |
| 9) <i>tugs</i> | ‘clothes’ | 10) <i>nacker</i> | ‘tinker’ |

Mention should be made here of diaspora Travellers. There are groups in Britain and North America who both seem to have maintained Shelta lexis for internal communication (Binchy 1994: 139 confirms that the lexical items are more or less the same as in Ireland). The American branch stems from emigrants to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, as a result of the Great Famine, and who settled in the south. Exact numbers are difficult to come by, but scholars who have studied these groups maintain that there are many thousands of them, in fact more outside Ireland than within. The speech of Irish-American Travellers has been studied in the past

¹¹ From recordings of travellers in the sound archives of the Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin.

few decades, see Harper and Hudson (1971, 1973). The speech of both American and British Shelta speakers has become increasingly anglicised. The latter group are responsible for the well-known Shelta word in English: *bloke* ‘man’, a borrowing comparable to *pal* ‘friend’ from Romani.

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Appendix: Ethnic and religious groups in Ireland

Not every ethnic group which was in Ireland established its own language alongside existing ones. Some groups came and assimilated fairly quickly. Some groups are doing this right now. In present-day Ireland there are many foreigners who migrated recently to the country or at least in the past few decades. The Chinese in Belfast are a good example of a group which now is quite established. In the south of Ireland there are large numbers of West Africans, above all Nigerians, who came during the 1990s. After the accession of several of the former communist block countries to the European Union in 2004, many of their inhabitants decided to move to the west in search of better-paid jobs. For Ireland, a result of this movement has been the arrival of something in excess of 200,000 Poles along with other east

Europeans, such as Latvians and Lithuanians. By 2010 close on 10% of the population of Ireland was not born in the country.

The factors which determine whether the language of a migrant group survives in a host country are many. There must first of all be an identifiable and coherent speech community which initially speaks the background language. Then the younger generation in this community must wish to speak the language of their parents and regard this as part of their identity despite now living only in the host country. Furthermore, this country must accept that the immigrant language be spoken and maintained alongside its own language or languages.

If an immigrant group abandons its own background language then one of two situations can arise. Either the group shifts to one of the already established varieties of the host country's language or it develops its own variety of this language, usually by mixing elements from the immigrant language with that of the host country. This language shift variety must furthermore have a clear profile to be recognised by the following generation as a distinct variety of the host language and thus be maintained and passed on to further generations. Whether this will happen with the English spoken by Polish people in present-day Ireland is uncertain. There are Polish-influenced varieties of Irish English but whether the Polish immigrants will (unconsciously) choose to maintain these varieties and pass them on to their children is not clear at the moment. A factor militating against this is that many of the Poles do not intend to stay in Ireland and hence do not need a specific Polish variety of English to give their identity in Ireland a clear linguistic focus.

In order to speak of an ethnic group the immigrants to Ireland must have had a clear profile and come in reasonable numbers (this may happen for religious reasons, see the historical cases discussed below). Furthermore, they must have formed an identifiable community or communities in Ireland after their arrival. Some groups do not qualify on these grounds. For instance, there has always been a slight trickle of Welsh immigrants to Ireland, but these never formed a separate community within Ireland so that they cannot be regarded as an ethnic group in this country. The same is generally true for immigrants from other European countries such as France, Spain or Germany, but there are one or two exceptions in these instances which are commented on in the following.

Presbyterians

The Presbyterian church rests on a particular theological tradition that resulted from the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. The tenets of Presbyterianism¹² can be traced to the thinking of the Swiss

¹² The term 'Presbyterian' derives from Greek *presbuteros* 'elder', the comparative of *presbus* 'old'.

Reformationist John Calvin (1509-1564) from Geneva. Calvin wished to establish a church which would be governed by elders as indicated in the New Testament.

With the Plantation of Ulster in 1610 (Robinson 1994 [1984]) substantial numbers of Scottish Presbyterians transferred to Ireland and formed the base of this, the largest group of Protestants in Ireland. In general the Presbyterians were anti-Catholic but they were excluded from public office by the 'sacramental test'. This was first introduced in England in 1673 and required that those holding offices under the crown should show their eligibility by taking communion in the Anglican church. Such an act was anathema to religious dissenters like the Presbyterians and when it was extended to Ireland by a clause added to the anti-Catholic act of 1704 (one of the penal laws) it caused great consternation among the Ulster Scots.

Emigration of Scottish Presbyterians to Ulster continued throughout the eighteenth century. Two groups in particular sought refuge in Ulster. The Seceders were dissenters who seceded from the Church of Scotland in 1733 because of general dissatisfaction with the Williamite church settlement of 1690 and the general liberal trends within the Church in Scotland. The Covenanters were a group of Presbyterians who adhered to the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, which was a religious-political pact between Scottish and English opponents of Charles I. Their goal in Scotland was the suppression of Catholicism and their discontent grew when the Williamite settlement failed to be fully implemented and when the church became somewhat more liberal in the early decades of the eighteenth century, leading to immigration to Ulster by many Covenanters.

Within Ulster there were two conflicting factions of Presbyterianism: the Old Lights were conservative Calvinists and the New Lights were slightly more liberal and disagreed with the requirement of subscription which demanded that ministers and ordinands subscribe to an orthodox confession of faith drawn up by the Westminster Assembly in the seventeenth century. In general the Seceders joined forces with the Old Lights in Ulster and the split in the Synod of Ulster was not resolved until 1840 with the formation of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church which unified the vying factions. The Ulster Covenanters on the other hand remained outside the Irish Presbyterian church. Both Seceders and Covenanters were major sections of the Ulster population immigrating to the New World in the course of the eighteenth century.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (Erskine 1998) is represented today in both political halves of Ireland but has by far the greatest following in Northern Ireland with well over a quarter of a million members there (www.presbyterianireland.org). As Irish Presbyterians are descended from seventeenth-century Scottish settlers it is obvious that the majority are speakers of Ulster Scots, usually, however, in a non-vernacular form which merges imperceptibly with supraregional Ulster English in Northern Ireland.

Holmes (2000) and Kirkpatrick (2006) are two accessible histories while Spencer and Wilson (eds, 2006) consider the situation of those Presbyterians who emigrated to the USA and Canada in the past few centuries.

Huguenots

The Huguenots were French Protestants, mainly Calvinists, and were viewed with suspicion by the Catholic monarchy of France. Although religious toleration was granted to them with the Edict of Nantes in 1598, many of them decided to leave France in the following century and with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 they were formerly expelled from France. Several thousand of them came to Ireland in the 1690s, mostly from the area around La Rochelle and settled in various towns of Ireland, including Waterford, Youghal, Cork and Portarlington in Co. Laois where they were granted land. One reason to come to Ireland was that there was a colony of Huguenots in Swords near Dublin which had been found in 1590. Indeed this colony had gained a degree of official recognition in the seventeenth century, for instance with the assignment of the Protestant St Mary's Chapel to them for their services in 1666. The grant which allowed them to use this church continued until 1816 after which services in French were discontinued. In present-day Ireland, one occasionally finds genuine Huguenot names, such as Pomfret or Guerin, but one should not confuse these few names with the many earlier ones of Norman origin such as Butler, Barron, Nugent, Power, Roach, etc.

Quakers

The Quakers are members of the Religious Society of Friends which was founded by George Fox (1624–91). They were active in many English colonies, most notably in the early United States where William Penn, a Quaker, founded the state of Pennsylvania and offered religious toleration to all groups who wished to settle there. This was one of the reasons why the Presbyterian Ulster Scots emigrated there in the course of the eighteenth century. The Quakers have always been helpful to the Irish — without proselytising — and undertook measures to alleviate the suffering of the poor. During the Great Famine (1845-8) they organised relief for the hungry by establishing soup kitchens in many places. As opposed to other 'Soupers', the Quakers did not attempt to bribe the native Irish into abandoning their Catholic faith. The practise of other divisions of Protestantism led to the phrase 'to take the soup', i.e. to convert to Protestantism. The term 'souper' also refers to a Catholic during the Famine who converted to Protestantism in return for food. Today, there are many Quakers in Ireland but they do not speak a variety different of Irish English from the areas in which they live. There is a dedicated website for this group at <http://www.quakers-in-ireland.ie/>. Two relevant books are Grubb (1927) and Hatton (1993).

Jews

In early Irish history there are occasional references to Jews. But in 1290 the Jews were expelled from the dominions of the English crown. Later, in the sixteenth century, many Sephardic Jews left Spain and Portugal to escape persecution by the Catholics there. By the latter half of the seventeenth-century Jews had begun to reappear in Ireland. By 1700 Dublin had a rabbi and shortly afterwards a Jewish cemetery was opened. Cork also had a community which developed in the eighteenth century. However, by the end of this century the community in Dublin had been largely assimilated to the native Irish by conversion and marriage to Catholics. Many of the Jewish merchants who had moved from London to Dublin returned to that city. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the number of Jews in Dublin was insignificant, but later on some Ashkenazi Jews of Polish and German origin came to Ireland through England and practised typical professions such as goldsmiths, watchmakers or jewellers. In the latter half of the nineteenth century there was a continuous trickle of Jews from Eastern Europe, mostly from Russia, seeking to escape persecution there. By the turn of the 20th century they were several thousand Jews in the country. This led to a certain amount of tension in various cities, notably in Limerick in the early 20th century which at one stage led to a boycott of Jewish traders in the city. Today, there are just less than 2,000 Jews in Ireland (according to the 2006 Census). More information can be found on the website http://www.haruth.com/Jews_Ireland.html. The main sources of information on Jews in Ireland are Shillman (1945), Hyman (1972), Keogh (1998) .

Irish Palatines

The Palatines form a small religious group – the same as the Amish in rural Pennsylvania – who are related to the anabaptists and who left the region of Rheinland-Pfalz in the south-west of Germany at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Palatines were mostly of farming stock, as opposed to the Huguenots who preceded them, and they mostly settled in Co. Limerick where they were assimilated to the local population before long. There is an Irish Palatine Museum and Heritage Centre in Rathkeale in Co. Limerick, see <http://www.irishpalatines.org/heritagecentre.html>. Information on the Irish Palatines can also be found in O'Connor (1989) and Jones (1990).

Despite the presence of Palatines and of some German-speaking or Yiddish-speaking Jews from Eastern Europe, the German language never established a foothold in Ireland (Fischer 1993). Nonetheless, the connections between Ireland and Germany are of interest and have been studied in detail, see the contributions in Fischer, Holfter and Bourke (eds, 1998). There is a centre for Irish German studies at the University of Limerick which can be reached via the following internet link: <http://www.ul.ie/~lcs/Irish-German>.

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