



FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA

DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOLOXÍA INGLESA E ALEMÁ

Origin and development of Irish English dialectal varieties

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Grao en Lingua e Literatura Inglesas

Liña temática: Sociolingüística Inglesa

2018/2019



FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA



CUBRIR ESTE FORMULARIO ELECTRONICAMENTE

Formulario de delimitación de título e resumo

Traballo de Fin de Grao curso 2018/2019

APELIDOS E NOME:	Salvado Míguez, Yassmina
GRAO EN:	Lingua e literatura inglesas
(NO CASO DE MODERNAS) MENCIÓN EN:	
TITOR/A:	Luis Iglesias Rábade
LIÑA TEMÁTICA ASIGNADA:	Sociolingüística inglesa

SOLICITO a aprobación do seguinte título e resumo:

Título: Origin and development of Irish English dialectal varieties

Resumo:


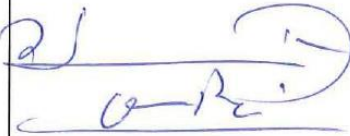

I intend to study the characteristics of two regional dialects and examine their differences and similitudes from a morphosyntactic point of view. For that purpose, I will analyse the works of two playwrights who attempted to represent the speech of early twentieth-century inhabitants. One of them is Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*, which is set in Dublin and the other is John Millington Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*, set on the West Coast of County Mayo. The reason of this selection is that drama texts usually contain more evidences of colloquial features than other literary works.

It was not until the 17th century that the influence of British English (BE) reached a crucial moment in Ireland. At that time, the Cromwellian Settlement gave a solid impulse to the dispersion of BE. Dublin had always been the area where the influence of BE never ceased, whereas in the rural Ireland BE had no presence until the modern period. The late 18th and the early 19th centuries, were more decisive from the point of view of the formation of the Irish English grammar. After the Great Famine, English became the language of social advancement, whereas Irish was increasingly associated with poverty. Irish speakers shifted to English, and this fact caused the emergence of different dialectal varieties. The grammar of the western rural dialects was the most influenced by Irish, and the eastern dialects, especially the urban, were the closest to standard British English. In the present day four varieties of Irish English can be distinguished: Ulster English, West and South-West Irish English, Dublin English and the Supraregional Southern Irish English.

My aim is to cover the dialectal varieties of Ireland, focussing my work on two of them: West and South-West Irish English and Dublin English. Thus, I will provide a socio-historical background of the linguistic situation in Ireland and the causes that led Irish English to its current state. Furthermore, I will analyse the two fictional

works previously mentioned by establishing a comparison based on the information gathered beforehand.

Santiago de Compostela, 05 de novembro de 2018.

<p>Sinatura do/a interesado/a</p> 	<p>Visto e prace (sinatura do/a titor/a)</p> 	<p>Aprobado pola Comisión de Títulos de Grao con data 16 NOV. 2018</p>  <p>Selo da Facultade de Filoloxía</p>
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SRA. DECANA DA FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA (Presidenta da Comisión de Títulos de Grao)

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INTRODUCTION

English has coexisted with Irish for over eight centuries. This language contact situation caused the emergence of a new variety: Irish English. There are authors who use the terms Anglo-Irish or Hiberno-English to designate this dialect. In this work, the label Irish English will be employed, as it is the most neutral term and has been frequently used in research. Irish English refers to those varieties of the English language found in Ireland. It is parallel to the names of other varieties of English, such as Welsh, Australian or American English. I have chosen this topic because of my interest in English varieties. I wanted to learn more about the variety of English spoken in Ireland and I was especially curious to know its origin, evolution and main features. The choice of studying the verbal area is due to the fact that the verb is one of the main defining characteristics of this variety and Irish English grammar is too broad to cover every aspect.

The reason for the selection of these plays for the corpus is mainly because drama is the genre which contains more examples of Irish English features. Two of the main representatives of this dialect are considered to be Sean O'Casey and John Millington Synge. These are two complementary authors, as Synge reflects the speech of western rural Ireland and O'Casey the speech of urban Ireland, specially Dublin.

The aim of this work is to study two dialectal varieties of Irish English from a morphosyntactic point of view. More precisely, I intend to examine the differences and similarities in the use of verbal structures between East and West/South-West areas through the analysis of two plays. In addition, I intend to determine whether it is possible to associate a given feature with a specific dialectal area.

For that reason, I will describe Irish English verbal features and search for occurrences in Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* and John Millington Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*. After reviewing all the characteristics, I will check if the structures are present in my corpus and their recurrence.

Section 2 provides an outline of the socio-historical context of English in Ireland. It focuses on the linguistic situation from the 12th to the 20th century. It will cover the introduction of English varieties into Irish territory, language contact between Irish and English and the decline of the Irish language. It serves as an introductory chapter to contextualise the circumstances in which Irish English emerges and develops.

Section 3 encompasses the language shift process which led to the creation of Irish English. I will also explain the language contact which derived into a widespread

bilingualism. Furthermore, the periods of Irish English history and its varieties are comprised in that section as well. Ulster varieties are dealt with in a different subsection because they belong to a different socio-historical context which is not going to be covered in this work.

Finally, in section 4, the development of Irish English grammar as a setting for the analysis of the corpus will be described. The main features of the Irish English verbal area will be listed and exemplified in that section. As mentioned above, the instances will be taken from O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* and Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*.

2. Socio-historical background: English in Ireland

In this section I am going to provide a broad overview of the introduction of the English language in Irish territory and its development over the centuries, particularly from the 12th to the 20th century. The contact between Irish and English languages is fundamental when considering the growth of a new variety resulting from this coexistence. Even though the introduction of English in Ireland and the contact between both languages are not the core elements of my work, I consider it necessary to contextualise the situation in which Irish English occurs, as well as other information which may help understand its current grammatical features. It would not be appropriate to analyse the grammar of any language without taking into account its historical journey, and also the factors which may have modified it throughout its path.

For that reason, I will talk about the situation of English and Irish in different centuries, as independent languages which came into contact in a given time. The origin and evolution of the language which emerged from this contact, along with its different stages will be analysed in the following section which will be dedicated exclusively to the situation of British English and Irish in Ireland.

The English language was introduced in Ireland for the first time in the 12th century. And, although the late Middle Ages witnessed several attempts on the part of the English government to establish their tongue, these measures were completely unsuccessful. It was not until the seventeenth century when the language shift took place. That was considered the first moment in which English started being influential in Ireland, even though Irish maintained its position as the main language of the nation until the mid-nineteenth century (Van Hattum, 2012: 46).

2.1 The late Middle Ages (1155–1536)

In 1155, after noticing the religious conflicts that were taking place in Ireland, Pope Adriano IV gave the King of England, Henry II, power to intervene in Ireland and control the religious situation. It was not until fourteen years later that Henry II decided to use the permission given by the Church. Taking advantage of that, an Irish local lord required his help to fight against the then king of Ireland and Henry II allowed him to recruit people from England and Wales (Ranelagh, 1999: 42-43).

Two years later, in 1169, a group of English and Norman adventurers arrived in the east coast of Ireland. After a crucial battle, the Anglo-Normans took the city of Dublin in 1170. The province of Leinster –the richest in Ireland- was under their control (Ranelagh, 2012: 43). The Norman invasion had started, and with that “the introduction of English and of Norman French to the country” (Hickey, 2004: 82).

The Anglo-Norman were given permission by King Henry II to occupy the lands of the former king of Ireland, as long as they kept them in the name of the English crown (Ranelagh, 2012: 44). When, Henry’s son John became king (in 1199), the Irish lordship was merged with the English kingdom (Kramer, 2007: 45).

After the invasion, the Anglo-Normans started to build castles to safeguard their lands where the population concentrations were. This included locations such as Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny and Dublin (Hickey, 2007a: 31). The first castle they built was started by King John in 1204 in Dublin, which later become the “seat of English government in Ireland”. The villages laid down were in flourishing areas in the eastern part of the country (Ranelagh 2012: 45).

In the following century, the Normans seized control of approximately all Leinster’s province and areas of Ulster and Munster. (Filppula, 1999: 4). However, the Norman people rapidly gaelicised, that is, they integrated Irish language and customs. By contrast, English, as “the language of the tenants of the Norman lords, was at first more fortunate than Norman French” and it gained extension throughout the thirteenth century. Even though, it would gradually suffer a decline (Filppula, 1999: 4).

It is important to take into account that the expansion of English in Irish territory has not been progressive. During the late Middle Ages there were only settlements in the east and south-east of Ireland. Due to the fact that Dublin was already the administrative centre of the country, it was more likely to be taken by the English. (Hickey, 1993: 214).

By 1250, “three-quarters of the country was under English control, with only the rocky lands of Connaught and west Ulster not penetrated” (Ranelagh, 2012: 45). A few years later, the majority of Ireland’s clergymen were Norman and they secured loyalty to the English Crown. The first Irish Parliament was established in 1264, and it resembled the English prototype. This parliament had Anglo-Irish representatives (Ranelagh, 2012: 45- 46).

The first adventurers who arrived in Ireland were only searching for loyalty to the English crown. However, the Irish population was becoming increasingly independent and the scarce visits of the king to Ireland in order to state his influence did not result

very effective. The visits of the king were also a way to restrict the power of English nobility. As a consequence of the loss of bonds with England, there was a rapprochement between the original English and the native Irish. That led inevitably to “the decline of English in Ireland in the late 14th and 15th centuries” (Hickey, 1993: 214), (Filppula, 1999: 4), (Ranelagh, 2012: 48).

The Anglo-Norman colony suffered a decline in the 14th century on account of a series of economic and political difficulties. As a consequence of this, the following generations of the Anglo-Norman population became assimilated by the Gaelic Irish (Barry 2000: 113). Hogan¹ describes the language situation in the 14th and 15th centuries:

Irish came down again into the plains and up to the walls of the towns. With the exception of those who carried on the Dublin government, or lived in or near the Pale, the great Norman families, never having been English, now became thoroughly Irish. The English yeomen and small freeholders steadily forsook the land, going to England or the Pale.

(Hogan 1927/1970:23)

The English rulers, seeing that their language was under increasing pressure (in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), attempted to stop the aforementioned process of “gaelicisation”. For that purpose, they established a number of measures, among those are the Statutes of Kilkenny. This document was enacted in 1366 by the Parliament of Kilkenny. The statutes “sought to turn the tide by imposing heavy penalties on those who were found using Irish” (Filppula, 1999: 5). Despite the government's efforts to prevent the population from speaking Irish, these measures had no effect, and Irish kept overtaking English, even in Dublin.

The government liable for the Statutes of Kilkenny was only effectual in a zone of Leinster named the Pale. The Pale turned into the refuge for English law and customs, and within it there was a continuous political influence from England (Ranelagh, 2012: 48), (Hickey, 1993: 214). In Alice Stopford’s words:

Three hundred years later, when Henry VII in 1487 turned his thoughts to Ireland he found no conquered land. An earthen ditch with a palisade on the top had been raised to protect all that was left of English Ireland, called the “Pale” from its encircling

¹ Quoted by Filppula (1999: 4).

fence. Outside was a country of Irish language, dress and customs. Thirty miles west of Dublin was “by west of English law”. Norman lords had married daughters of Irish chiefs all over the country, and made combinations and treaties with every province.

(Stopford Green, 1911)

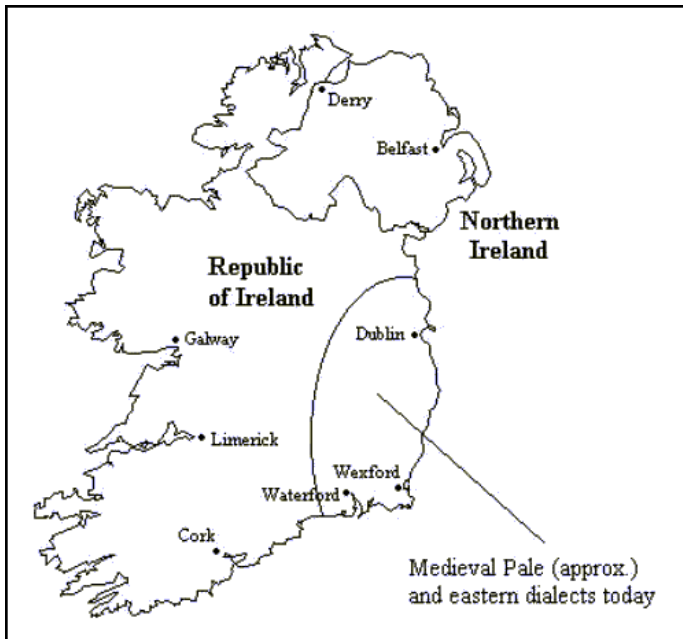


Figure 2.1. Source: https://www.uni-due.de/IERC/IERC_Language_in_Ireland--Anglo_Norman.htm

Outside the towns, English had almost no effect. This is important when considering its impact on rural Ireland during the late medieval period. Thus, Anglo-Norman and English were the two competing languages and, of course, they were also in connection with Irish (Hickey, 1993: 214).

At the end of the 15th century, King Henry VII took his first measures towards the restoration of the authority of the English crown in Ireland, trying to go beyond the boundaries of the Pale. (Ranelagh, 2012: 52). He considered that Ireland needed to be exploited. His aim was “to anglicise and subdue the land by settling large numbers of loyal colonists” (Kallen, 2012: 26). In 1494, a king’s Deputy soon tried to reduce the strength of the Anglo-Irish without any result. It was in 1496, when the Earl of Kildare named Garret Mor FitzGerald swore to the king that he would not threaten the Tudor

dynasty. Thus, during the next 38 years, the FitzGerald² ruled in Ireland without the intervention of the English Crown (Ranelagh, 2012: 53).

2.1.1. Language contact

To sum up the linguistic situation of the late medieval period, it involved two monolingual societies with unintelligible languages and whose communication was very limited. The English members of nobility had a completely isolated life from the rest of the Irish population, because they had their own masters of ecclesiastical ceremonies. The military men, who were the intermediaries, dedicated themselves to asking people what the nobles wanted. Furthermore, the influence of the English King did not change the linguistic field, because he only wanted the loyalty of nobility. The nobles were the ones in charge of controlling the Irish community. However, they were not successful in accomplishing their task.

When Anglo-Norman and English soldiers and settlers arrived in Ireland, they established a colony in the east coast. Nonetheless, English suffered a precarious situation in Ireland for the next centuries, as the Anglo-Normans became gaelicised. By the 14th century, both the English and the Anglo-Normans assimilated Irish language and culture. Even though English rulers enacted laws to reinforce the use of English, the language's status would not change until the seventeenth century (McCafferty, 2011: 17).

2.2 The sixteenth century

In political terms, the sixteenth century was marked by the rebellion of the Irish. The revolt was triggered by the Protestant Reformation in 1534, through which the English government embraced a new Church legislation. Henry VIII became “the only Supreme Head on Earth of the whole Church of Ireland” (Ranelagh, 2012: 55). The reform was taken to Ireland three years later by the administration under the order of King Henry VIII. By 1541, Ireland changed in status from a Lordship to a Kingdom³.

Nonetheless, this policy did not change public opinion in Ireland, and Roman Catholicism continued to be the religion of the vast majority. Both Gaelic Irish and Anglo-Irish related Anglicanism to the English language, since both were identified as an alien

² Also known as the Geraldines.

³ Ireland was assigned the condition of “Lordship” in 1199, when John I became king of England.

power. As a consequence of this, English was rejected and the Irish language turned into the symbol of Catholic religion (Van Hattum, 2012: 41).

In 1541, the King applied several measures to expand his authority beyond the Pale and enacted the policy of “Surrender and Regrant” in Ireland. As a result of this, all lands in Ireland were considered property of the King, and he would “regrant” them to those faithful to him (Ranelagh, 2012: 56).

In 1536 the Parliament of the Irish Reformation had approved a law to foster “English Order, Habit and Language”. The Gaelic usages and language were banned. And, a few years later, in 1549, the celebration of the mass would also be prohibited. The Book of Common Prayer was imposed upon the Irish Church. However, the book was written in English and the ecclesiastical members spoke only Gaelic (Ranelagh, 2012: 57).

The 16th century is characterised by the “revival of English colonial interests” (Kallen, 2012: 26). Henry VIII was the king who set the guidelines for the initial settlements in Ireland, though the plantations began in the mid-sixteenth century (from 1556 onwards) under the reign of Mary I, and continued under Elizabeth I. The counties of Offaly and Laois were the first to be settled. These plantations were the reason for the setting up of a large number of English people all over the country. (Van Hattum, 2012: 42). In general terms, the settlements were planned and approved by the English administration. The Munster and Ulster plantations were the most salient ones in this period. Evidently, the Englishmen assumed the leading role and recruited loyal English settlers. Thus, the native Irish were not allowed to have lands of their own. Nevertheless, the Munster plantation did not succeed. The main reason for this was the rebellion of the Irish in 1598 (Hickey, 2007a: 35-36).

The settlements achieved the expansion of the English authority beyond the Pale, but they caused the dispossessed landowners to revolt against the new colonists. At that time, the Anglo-Irish and the native Irish had a common adversary and they rose up against the English for a decade (Van Hattum, 2012: 42).

The revolt concluded in the battle of Kinsale in 1601, with the English forces being victorious. As a consequence of this, the native leaders⁴ of Ulster were exiled from Ireland in 1607 and their political positions were occupied by the English. This fact

⁴ The so-called Flight of the Earls, referring to Hugh O'Neill, Rory O'Donnell and their followers.

explains the rejection by the English settlers, because they felt more identified with the native Catholics (Hickey 1993: 215) (Filppula, 1999: 6).

2.2.1 Language contact

In linguistic terms, it is correct to say that the English language continued to decline in this century. This was mainly due to the Reformation legislation, for the Irish language was associated with the Catholic religion, and thus English became the language of the enemy especially in the rural zone, where people were “Irish-speaking and Irish-speaking only”⁵ (Ó Cuív, 1951: 14). There were several authors who collected a distinctive moment in Irish history in order to show how English was understood by hardly anyone. One of them was Stopford (1911), who explains “Irish speech was so universal that a proclamation of Henry VIII in a Dublin parliament had to be translated into Irish by the earl of Ormond”. Hickey also refers to this moment:

[...] 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.

(Hickey, 2007a: 34)

Written English was dedicated to official matters, and it resembled in its form to that of England. For that purpose, it was used by both English and Irish speakers. Nonetheless, spoken English language was almost reduced to the recent English foreigners, whereas Irish won the favour of the “Old English”, becoming their main language⁶ (Van Hattum, 2012: 44).

2.3 The seventeenth century.

After the victory of the English in 1601, the government confiscated the lands of the Earls and, in 1610 settlers from Scotland and England were asked to colonise the “new” domains. The native Irish were dispossessed of their lands and the evicted inhabitants

⁵ Quoted by Filppula (1999: 5).

⁶ The “Old English” had been bilingual for years.

were only permitted to live in specific areas. The guilds of London “were granted the towns of Derry and Coleraine and the lands around” (Ranelagh, 2012: 62).

These plantations were finally successful and they would attain great stability during the seventeenth century (Hickey, 1993: 215). However, at the beginning there were two main problems. The first one was the shortage of local labour to work the lands. The second was that the settlers were afraid of the natives, so they lived with insecurity. As a consequence, many native Irish came back to work the lands that had been theirs, but this time as tenants (Ranelagh, 2012: 63).

In 1642, the catholic clergy, the Old English front men and the native Irish established the “Confederation of Kilkenny”. By means of this, they declared their opposition to parliamentarians. The confederation promised loyalty to King Charles and they militarily opposed the Long Parliament during the English Rebellion. Most of the militants’ objective was to recover the lands of their families, which they had lost during the colonisation (Kramer, 2007: 87).

The Irish confederates and royalists were defeated in 1649 when Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) together with the “New Model Army” invaded Ireland. Cromwell’s conquest was the most sanguinary military strife that had ever happened in Ireland. He arrived there willing to establish the authority and the government of the English “Commonwealth” of the Long Parliament in Ireland. He killed the members of the royalist garrison, and all the possible defenders of the former king (Ranelagh, 2012: 71-72).

The English parliament put the Act for Adventurers into effect in 1642 for the purpose of raising funds to fight the Irish rebellion. The government confiscated about two and a half million acres of the rebel’s lands in order to sell them (Hickey, 2007a: 38). Cromwell, influenced by this system, executed a land settlement after his military victory. Hence, in the 1650s, to compensate his army, Cromwell donated Irish land since “the state finances in England at the time did not permit direct payment for services rendered” (Hickey, 2007a: 38-39).

Additional laws ordained the relocation of the Irish landlords further west, more specifically in Connaught. Their properties were taken by the parliamentary English soldiers and adventurers. Not all the native population left, many stayed to work as labourers and bandits (Ranelagh, 2012: 74).

After the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, some royalists got their lands back, but Charles II rejected the modification of the Cromwellian plantations. The Confederation's members who stayed in Ireland had their lands seized. During this period, all the Irish Catholic landowners were completely destroyed, as well as the institutions of the Catholic Church (Kramer, 2007: 94).

In 1689, James II disembarked in Kinsale. He soon gathered an Irish army formed by royalists willing to fight the British government. James II and William III faced each other in 1690. James was defeated and he had to escape to France (Ranelagh, 2012: 76). William's victory caused the power of Ireland to be in the hands of the Anglican class or "Ascendency". This was a group which had experience of government in Ireland and also had powerful connections with English leaders (Ranelagh, 2012: 77).

In 1695, the Irish parliament started to elaborate the anti-Catholic legislation named the 'Penal Laws'. They were finished by 1727 and they were in force for more than a century. The Penal Laws were intended to exclude Catholics from society and politics (Van Hattum, 2012: 46):

Catholic clergy was banished from the country. Catholics could only attend Protestant schools; they were not allowed to have firearms; they were not allowed to marry Protestants; they were excluded from the practice of law; they were induced to convert to Protestantism by the grant of ownership of their father's lands; and they were excluded from voting.

(Van Hattum, 2012: 46)

Religion was, in this way, used to uncover the economic expropriation. At first the Irish parliamentarians accepted this, because they were settlers, and the only thing they wanted from Great Britain was legal and military support to accomplish their exploitation plans (Hickey, 2007a: 41).

By 1701 the country had been invaded. The wars, military campaigns and plantations affected the main part of the country. They accomplished the establishment of British laws and government in every region, because the majority of the Irish nobility who still considered themselves Gaelic abandoned their country forever (Ranelagh, 2012: 78).

2.3.1 Language contact

The linguistic situation in the seventeenth century was marked by the increasing influence of the English language on the native Irish, since they were exposed to its presence mainly through the planters (Hickey, 2007a: 38). The language shift started at this time and continued until the nineteenth century. It took place when, after being defeated in the battle of the Boyne, Catholics, mostly Irish speakers started to change from Irish to English (Van Hattum, 2012: 46). The reasons for this are diverse. On the one hand the implementation of the Penal Laws (set up in 1695), which punished the use of Irish language and tradition. And on the other hand, the fact that a great number of natives turned to English, for the acquaintance of the language offered them social and economic benefits. (Hickey, 2007a: 37-38).

It is also important to say that, even though English acquired significance in Ireland during the seventeenth century, it does not mean that this language was the dominant one among the population of Ireland. While it is true that Irish was prohibited in public life, it remained being “the main language of the country” (Van Hattum, 2012: 46).

2.4 The eighteenth century

During the eighteenth century there were several prohibitions aimed towards the Catholic Irish due to the Penal Laws. Ranelagh mentions these restrictions:

The first Penal Law laid down that no Catholic might possess ‘gun, pistol or sword, or any other weapon of offence or defence [...]. The 1697 Banishment Act ordered all Catholic bishops, priests and monks to leave Ireland. Catholics might not inherit land from Protestants; take leases of more than thirty-one years; buy land or enjoy mortgages. Catholic landowners were required to will their lands to all their sons equally unless one of them became a Church of Ireland Anglican, in which case he would inherit the whole estate. [...] Other Acts forbade Catholics to enter a profession or receive a formal education. In 1727 they were denied the vote in parliamentary elections.

(Ranelagh, 2012: 79)

These laws accomplished to repress the Irish country by means of religion. The Anglican Church of Ireland represented just a minority, about one-sixth of the population, and it was totally identified with the governing class of the Ascendancy. It made few endeavours to convert people, because their members were content to be a minority, as long as they could govern the country (Ranelagh, 2012: 82). Besides that, since Catholics were a greater number, it was not possible to control their life. For that reason, they continued to worship in stables, barns or in open fields (State, 2009: 133).

The nobility of England constituted a model to the Ascendancy. It was the aforementioned constraint to Catholics and the desire to be like the English society that encouraged Irish inhabitants to conform. At the beginning of the 18th century, some Catholic lawyers converted to the Anglican Church, and with them the scarce remaining Catholic landowners (State, 2009: 143).

Under the reigns of the Hanoverians George I, George II and George III, Ireland remained closely connected to Britain. Thus, the Irish economy assimilated the still developing English mercantile capitalism, and Ireland underwent a demographic and financial expansion. There was also an increase of the roads and stagecoaches that connected Dublin with the country's main towns. As a consequence, Irish society came to be more and more anglicised (Ranelagh, 2012: 100), (State, 2009: 134).

Since the Penal Laws forbade education to Catholics, "hedge schools" expanded during the eighteenth century. There, the schoolmasters, often poets and the successors of the old brehons taught mainly rural dwellers (Ranelagh, 2012: 97-98). The groups were educated in different subjects, including the basics of English or Classical languages. English language was important, particularly if the native population intended to progress at a social level. The classes were private, sometimes outdoors to prevent being arrested by the authorities (Hickey, 2007a: 41).

Life conditions were very diverse in 18th-century Ireland. On the one hand there was a privileged society, consisting of the members of the Protestant sector who had a quite prosperous life and "experienced growth and prosperity mainly due to the expansion of woollen textile trades, dairy farming and beef production, and agriculture" (Van Hattum, 2012: 46-47). On the other hand, the Catholic Irish lived in misery, without political power and clinging to the only thing they could; their language and traditions. They also suffered the consequences of famine, specially in 1740, that affected them severely (State, 2009: 142), (Hickey, 2007a: 41). Catholic's main ways of obtaining wealth were through working the lands. However, they were denied the possession of

land, and they were exposed to other grievances, such as rural unemployment, high rents, tithes or the enclosure of common lands. For this reason, several disturbances occurred in the decades of the 1760s and 1770s (State, 2009: 134).

The displacement of the Irish brigades to the American colonies (1770) implied that the government had less resources at their disposal. As a consequence of this, there was a conciliation process regarding the reform. In 1779, the government of George III agreed to withdraw many of the taxes that impeded the Irish commerce and they also slightly loosened the Penal Laws (Ranelagh, 2012: 90-91). Additionally, in 1783, Parliament passed the Renunciation Act, relinquishing its rights to legislate for Ireland. Since then, Ireland was an independent kingdom and solely shared the monarchy with Great Britain (State, 2009: 152).

Nonetheless, the new political system was not functioning, because the British government still had control over Ireland. As a consequence of the economical differences between the Protestants and the Catholics, some societies were created. Their purpose was to search for religious equality, as well as, a political reform. One of these groups was the Society of United Irish, formed in 1791. The United Irish caused a significant rebellion in 1798, as they were fighting for full independence. The government took measures and five months later the revolt had finished (State, 2009: 158-159).

The rebellion of 1798 proved that Ireland needed political action. For that purpose, William Pitt the Younger (1759- 1806), the British prime minister, decided that the solution was to create a union between the Irish and the British parliament (Ranelagh, 2012: 102). After bribing most of the members of the Ascendency to vote in favour, the Act of Union was passed in 1800. The Act establishing the United Kingdom came into force in 1801 (State, 2009: 162).

2.4.1 Language contact

The language shift which started in the 17th century continued during the 18th century. In respect of the linguistic situation in this period, it is important to highlight that due to London's cultural influence and the impositions over Catholic population, there was a significant increase in English speakers. At the beginning of the century, the majority of rural people spoke nothing or almost nothing of English (Hickey, 2007a: 43). Irish continued to be spoken in the private domain until the end of the 18th century, especially in rural areas. According to Filppula, there was a social division in Ireland, because the

Irish nobility became anglicised by the late 18th century and, in most eastern areas people did not know the Irish language (Filppula, 1999: 7).

Nonetheless, the middle and upper positions of Catholic and Protestant society acted as agents of change, and towards the end of the century, as a result of the commercial and communication relations, a connection with Great Britain was forged. As of that moment, there was a growing “conformity to English middle-class standards of speech and manners” (State, 2009: 143). Bilingualism gradually extended throughout this period. In short, the 18th century facilitated the adoption of English as a second language (Filppula, 1999: 7).

2.5 The nineteenth century

The nineteenth century started with the union of England and Ireland. As the political debate and decision making moved to London, the fate of the country was taken away from the Irish (Hickey, 2007a: 45- 46). This fact brought about repeated attempts to achieve some national power. Two groups stood out, one formed by the radicals, who considered the use of violence as necessary in order to accomplish their aims. And, with the opposite thought, the moderates, who followed the legal path to force the Government (State, 2009: 163).

William Pitt the Younger had promised Irish people that after the union the government was going to pass the Emancipation Act. However, King George III refused to accept this act, in order to not compromise his vow of defending the Protestant faith (State, 2009: 176). The Catholic population continued to fight for their independence. In this aspect Daniel O’Connell (1775–1847) stands out, as the leader of the moderate group. In 1829, he achieved the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act, which granted some well-off Catholics the right to vote and the option to be chosen for Parliament (Ranelagh, 2012: 99-100).

At the beginning of the 19th century hedge schools were still present. Catholic people attended these schools to receive basic education. Nonetheless, as a consequence of the emancipation, in 1831 the central government established a system of primary schools. These schools turned out to be satisfactory for Catholics, so hedge schools were consequently abandoned (Van Hattum, 2012: 47). Teachers were paid and supported by local governors, and the language of instruction was English. Due to these national

schools, there was a significant reduction of illiteracy in Ireland by the end of the 19th century (Hickey, 2007a: 46).

The Ascendancy continued to be the ruling class, and the Protestant Church controlled public administrations “from the central executive in Dublin on down to town corporations” (State, 2009: 164). The important positions in law, commerce and finance were occupied mainly by Protestants. They were also the head tenants who maintained, together with the landowners, the authority over Catholics. These formed about 80 percent of the total population, and they were rural inhabitants (State, 2009: 168).

Thus, Ireland’s population kept growing⁷ in an agricultural-based economy, being increasingly dependent on the rural regime for their livelihood (Van Hattum, 2012: 47-48). The potato was ideal for this context, because it was cheap to grow and it could provide food for months. By the 1830s the potato became almost the only food for the poorest. In the mid-nineteenth century, more specifically between 1845 and 1849, a fungus named *phytophthora infestans* affected the potato plantations, destroying the Irish population’s crops (Hickey, 2007a: 46). This period was known as the Great Famine, owing to the strong impact that this had on the country, which changed completely. Roughly one million people died and over two million emigrated, which caused a great decline in population. The Great Famine was due to the fact that 70 percent of the rural population was made up of small labourers whose diet consisted mainly of potatoes. For this reason, the west and southwest of the country were the most affected areas by the famine. The government spent more than 7 million pounds in subsidies and loans to feed the victims (Ranelagh, 2012: 129). Private charitable organisations, often arranged by the Quakers, also helped. Having said this, it must be noted that they used this as a medium to convert Catholics to Protestantism, seeing that they were in a desperate situation (State, 2009: 188).

The consequences of the Great Famine were diverse. The most notable was the tradition of migrating, mainly to the United States, England and Australia (Van Hattum, 2012: 49). The famine also ended with the extended use of the Irish language. The Gaelic, which was “the natural language of 4 million Irish people in 1841, ten years later was spoken only by 1.7 million; in 1911 by only 527,000” (Ranelagh, 2012: 132). Speaking

⁷ In 1841, the population of Ireland reached 8.2 million (Irish census, 1841). *Source:* [http://www.histpop.org/ohpr/servlet/PageBrowser?path=Browse/Census%20\(by%20geography\)/Ireland&active=yes&mno=356&tocstate=expandnew&tocseq=500&display=sections&display=tables&display=pageseq=first-nonblank](http://www.histpop.org/ohpr/servlet/PageBrowser?path=Browse/Census%20(by%20geography)/Ireland&active=yes&mno=356&tocstate=expandnew&tocseq=500&display=sections&display=tables&display=pageseq=first-nonblank)

Irish had been associated with poverty, peasantry, famine and death. In the last decades of the 19th century, even those who spoke Irish joined priests and teachers to force their children to speak only English. The English language was identified with success and well-being (Van Hattum, 2012: 48).

After the Famine, peasants conducted a fight to gain land ownership rights. One of the organisations who fought for the property rights was Young Ireland. The members of Young Ireland believed that violence was the means for getting reformations. These times were different from O'Connell's and they needed more radical methods. Thus, the group organised rent strikes to combat the evictions during 1848 and 1849 (State, 2009: 182).

As a consequence of the strong problems in agriculture in the decade of the 1880s, the Land League was created to claim for the tenant's rights. The weapons employed were rent strikes and a lot of violence. Finally, the British government agreed to reduce the price of rents and to accept the main requests of the Land League. This proved that the Ascendency's interests would not be considered as primary in the Parliament anymore (Ranelagh, 2012: 152-155).

The most conciliatory measure took place in 1898, when Gerald William Balfour (1853-1945), as the Chief Secretary of the Conservative party, implemented a Local Government Board. This provided Ireland with the British system of Local government, which contributed to definitively transferring the political power of the country from the Ascendency to the majority of farmers and merchants (Ranelagh, 2012: 170).

2.5.1 Language contact

Since the late 18th century, the Irish language had already started to decline, but it was in the 19th century when the use of English acquired a further extension, leaving only a few thousand Irish speakers. Maureen Wall⁸ describes the linguistic situation of the beginning of the 19th century in these terms:

By 1800, Irish had ceased to be the language habitually spoken in the homes of all those who had already achieved success in the world, or who aspired to improve or even maintain their position politically, socially or economically. The pressures of six hundred years of foreign occupation, and more particularly the complicated

⁸ Quoted by Hickey (2016: 46).

political, religious and economic pressures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had killed Irish at the top of the social scale and had already weakened its position among the entire population of the country.

(Wall, 1969: 82)

The linguistic field suffered an important change in the nineteenth century due to a number of factors. First of all, the introduction of the National School System in 1831, whose compulsory language was English. Although these schools were advantageous in reducing illiteracy in Ireland, they also helped to spread the use of English among primary school students (Hickey, 2007a: 48). Secondly, the increasing commercialisation and urbanisation of the country, together with the diffusion of newspapers. And the most important phenomenon, the consequences of the Great Famine in the late 1840s. Being that the result of a mass decline of Irish speakers due to death or emigration in this period. The Great Famine affected most of the country's western regions where Irish was broadly spoken (State, 2009: 171). Even political leaders like O'Connell promoted the use of English as he saw it necessary for social advancement. Even though the Irish admired Gaelic traditions and culture, English was their language (Hickey, 2007a: 46).

2.6 The twentieth century

At the beginning of the 20th century the fight for Ireland's autonomy was starting to yield results. The Ulster situation became harder, as they opposed any kind of Independence. Therefore, in 1912 the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was created. This was a group of more than 100,000 members, whose purpose was to impede the creation of an Irish Autonomy Statute. The nationalists' response to that was the creation of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 (State, 2009: 288), (Ranelagh, 2012: 195-196).

While most of the army's members were fighting in the First World War, two small groups marched in Dublin on Easter Monday 1916, declaring Ireland a Republic. After less than a week, the rebels surrendered and some of them were killed. This event triggered a radical change in public opinion and support towards Republicans altered dramatically (Curtis, 1961: 406-407).

In the 1918 elections, the Republicans under the Sinn Féin party, won most of the Irish seats. Ignoring the Parliament of London, where they were supposed to work, of Sinn Féin's new deputies declared Irish Independence and formed the first "Assembly or

Irish lower house” with headquarters in Dublin and led by Eamon de Valera (1882-1975). The Volunteers of Ireland became the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and they were authorised to fight against the British troops in Ireland (State, 2009: 237).

Thereupon the Irish Independence War started, which lasted two and a half years. In 1921 a truce was signed, followed by intense negotiations between both sides. A few months later in the same year, a treaty was agreed creating the Free State of Ireland (Curtis, 1961: 410). The new state was composed of 26 of the 32 counties of Ireland, 6 of them continued as part of the United Kingdom. The treaty was an imperfect document, and thus provoked divisions among the nationalists: the ones who believed the agreement as a necessary step for full Independence and the ones who saw it as a submission to the British (Ranelagh, 2012: 248-249).

The treaty was confirmed after some debate in December 1921. However, the opposite forces supported Eamon de Valera, who refuted a few clauses, particularly, the oath of allegiance to the British monarch. Two weeks later a civil war between the anti-treaty and the pro-treaty started (Curtis, 1961: 411).

The civil war concluded in 1923 with the victory of the pro-treaty side, which governed the new State until 1932. Defeated but obstinate, Eamon de Valera founded a new party in 1926 named Soldiers of Ireland and he obtained the majority of votes in the 1932 elections. In the meantime, Eamon de Valera wrote a new Constitution in 1937 which ended with the oath of loyalty and claimed the six counties in Northern Ireland. In 1948 Ireland officially abandoned the Commonwealth and it became a Republic (Ranelagh, 2012: 266), (State, 2009: 279).

The new Irish State was heavily influenced by the Roman Catholic Church. The constitution declared the equality of religions, but it is true that the Catholic Church maintained a “special position”. Even though the rights of the Protestants were respected, by the 1960s this section of the population had been halved due to massive emigration (State, 2009: 289).

Eamon de Valera was replaced by Sean Lemass (1899–1971) as Prime Minister in 1959. Lemass’ economic politics reduced emigration and brought a new prosperity to the country in the following years. This period was characterised by “the decline in unemployment and the development of a robust export trade, as well as (...) weakening even the Catholic Church” (State, 2009: 247), which had always had great control over the Irish population. In 1966, free secondary education was introduced.

At the beginning of the 1990s, European funds helped to achieve economic growth. Great amounts were invested in education and infrastructures, and the politic of low Corporation taxes made Ireland a very attractive country for technology companies which wanted to enter the European market. In less than ten years, Ireland moved from being one of the poorest countries to one of the continent's richest ones (Ranelagh, 2012: 284), (State, 2009: 332).

2.6.1 Language contact

The process of the Irish language shift was practically finished by the beginning of the 20th century, with the majority of people having adopted the English language. There were only 543, 511 Irish speakers, against 2,428,481 non-Irish speakers according to the 1926 census. Even though there was an attempt on behalf of the Irish State to promote “the use and diffusion of Irish”, they did not succeed in changing the extensive use of English, which was the language generally employed (State, 2009: 265).

Several initiatives were carried out in the last century to reinforce the position of the Irish language. For example:

[I]n the 1940s the Irish government ordered the development of a standard of the Irish language, and in 2003 the *Official Languages Act* was implemented, which seeks to provide a statutory framework for the delivery of public services in Irish.

(Van Hattum, 2012: 50)

These initiatives had some success, because in the 2006 census the number of Irish speakers reached 1.6 million. Nonetheless, the use of Irish is reduced to education, because outside that field, only 53,130 people speak the language. It is true that Ireland's first official language is Irish and English is the second official language. Furthermore, Irish is the main language used for the publication of the government's official documents (State, 2009: 316).

3. The emergence of Irish English

3.1 Language shift: Bilingualism

In this section I am going to cover the features of the language shift which took place in Ireland during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the linguistic situation of Ireland prior to this language shift. Furthermore, the coexistence of two languages in different domains throughout centuries derived into an extended bilingualism which started to develop from the 18th century onwards. The connection between the Irish language shift and bilingualism will also be studied in this chapter.

The language shift (also called language replacement or language transfer) was a gradual process by which Irish speakers started to change their language in favour of English. The knowledge and use of another language offered Irish people a better standard of living, which caused the near extinction of Ireland's vernacular language at the end of 19th century (Van Hattum, 2012: 46). It is important to take into account that the development of the language shift was not even. There were external events which hastened the pace, such as famines or waves of emigration (Hickey, 2007a: 122).

As explained in the previous section, the expansion of the English language in Ireland was not continuous. The settlements of the 12th century took place first in the east coast of the country, and for some time, the Pale was the only area ensuring the presence of English in the region. In the rural areas, English had little impact (Van Hattum, 2012: 40). The descendants of the first settlers who were English and Anglo-Norman, so-called "Old English", gradually acquired the Irish language and customs. That is the reason why the English language suffered a decline in the 14th, 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries. As Hickey remarks:

The lowest point in the spread of English is to be found in the first half of the sixteenth 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 sixteenth century led by necessity to the recession of English influence.

(Hickey, 2004: 85)

Before the 17th century, English was spoken mainly by a small fraction of settlers, who lived in the cities of the east coast. The majority of the population who was in the countryside had almost no contact with the English language. The situation changed when

the “New English”⁹ arrived in Ireland during the plantations of the 17th century. English achieved a prevailing position at the beginning of this century and, from then on, the language enjoyed a dominant status. (Hickey, 1993: 3) The 16th century plantations did not change the linguistic configuration of Ireland because, originally, the plantation scheme was not successful. It was meant to take place in the central and south-western area of the country. This was different in the North, since the settlers from Scotland could maintain a livelihood in Ulster and found no resistance on behalf of the natives (Hickey, 2007a: 37).

At first there were informal interactions between Irish and English speakers, the latter being employed only by a small number of English settlers, their descendants and a reduced group of native Irish. (Van Hattum, 2012: 45-46). However, in the late 17th century, after Cromwell’s plantations, the English language established itself in the south of Ireland. The reason for this is that the English mercenaries who settled in the country maintained their language and transmitted it to following generations (Hickey, 2007a: 139). The conveyance of English to the successive generations was not only owed to the settlers. The Irish citizens also acquired English through self-learning or by contact with other Irish citizens who knew (imperfect) English (Van Hattum, 2012: 74).

From then on, English progressively acquired a strong position in Ireland. Its highest point would be after the Great Famine, since the ones who died during the famine were mostly Irish speakers from the rural regions. The language shift is considered to have finished by the second half of the nineteenth century, when the percentage of Irish speakers was remarkably low: 18.3 percent of the total population (except Northern Ireland), according to the 1926 census. There was none left in the cities and towns of Ireland, only in some rural areas of the west and southwest coast (Hickey, 2007a: 47-48).

The causes of the language shift were multiple. Scholars argue that one possible reason for the decline in the use of Irish could be that English was established as the language of instruction in the national education system, as well as, the “*de facto* official language of the Church” in Ireland since the late 18th century (Filppula, 1999: 9). The Catholic College, St Patrick’s in Maynooth chose to establish English as the official language due to the royal patronage. The institution of the Church resisted using Irish in

⁹ Hickey (2007a: 433) uses this label to refer to the Protestant English settlers who arrived in Ireland in the 16th and 17th centuries. This group was different from the previous one (named “Old English”) formed by Catholic English settlers who had entered the country in the late Middle Ages.

religious ceremonies or teaching. In fact, Sunday sermons were an important Anglicising force that affected Irish-speaking areas (Gilmartin, 2004: 2).

Another cause for the lessening of Irish speakers could have been the preference for English as the most suitable language for emancipation. Leaders like Daniel O’Connell argued that English was necessary for social advancement, and the use of Irish was perceived as “an economic handicap” (Gilmartin, 2004: 2), (Hickey, 2007a: 46).

The most evident reason would be the Great Famine. It lasted about five years (1845-1850) and, during this period more than one million Irish speakers died or emigrated. After the Famine, English became the representation of success and Irish was becoming associated with poverty (Gilmartin, 2004: 3). Villagers could speak Irish but they did not want to, because it was regarded as bad luck. Besides, Irish speakers felt the necessity to learn English to be prepared for possible emigration (Hickey, 2007a: 123). According to de Fréine¹⁰, the rejection of the Irish language was the result of “a social self-generated movement of collective behaviour among the people themselves” (Filppula, 1999: 9).

The Great Famine had such an impact on society that after the event children were punished for using Irish. Indeed, a number of authors wrote about the “scoreen”, which was a tally stick parents and teachers marked every time a child spoke Irish. The punishment would equal the amount of marks on the stick. Irish speaking parents forced children to speak English, since they thought that would improve their children’s probability of success. This meant that families switched to the dominant language within two generations, instead of the normal three. Sometimes the shift was so quick that children were unaware that they spoke another language (Gilmartin, 2004: 4).

Even though many academics consider that schooling contributed to the diffusion of English among the local population, Terence Odlin¹¹ (1997) believes that its role was rather minimal after the founding of the National School System. He analysed the situation in detail by straddling data from different sources, such as the 1851 census or the percentage of bilingual population. Odlin claims that his results do not support the idea of schooling as a reason for the acquirement of English by the Irish population. In fact, he maintains that the opportunities provided by hedge schools during the 18th century did not influence the majority of children. Odlin says that the system of transference of English was mainly ‘naturalistic’ (Filppula, 1999: 19-20).

¹⁰ Quoted by Filppula (1999: 9)

¹¹ Filppula (1999) quoting Odlin (1997).

The question of bilingualism is another significant point to consider. The approach in this work will be based on the basic meaning of the term which, according to Suleiman (1985:3) is: “the ability of an individual who has a native-like control of two languages”, considering that the bilingual person may not be totally linguistic independent and the two languages may not be kept completely detached by the bilingual speaker. Language-contact situations constitute various degrees of bilingualism. Thus, bilingualism defines the native speaker who uses a second language, no matter whether this use is partial or imperfect (Suleiman 1985: 3).

The Irish language shift was a long process, and bilingualism was a required transitional phase. Irish was initially the secondary language during this evolution, but eventually it was replaced by English. According to Filppula, the different stages were: “Irish only → Irish and English → English and Irish → English only” (Filppula, 1999: 10). During the period of the language shift, two groups can be differentiated: the one of younger learners and the adult group of English learners. For the first, English would have been assimilated rather early, in contrast with the latter, which would have acquired the language much later (Hickey, 2007a: 124).

At the beginning of the 17th century, the majority of the population was Irish monolingual. English became prevailing in large towns, however, in Connaught and Munster, people were almost completely Irish-speaking. The introduction of plantations meant a change for the position of English, because, planters established contact with the countryside people (Filppula, 1995: 33). Hickey describes the situation as the following:

The native language for the majority of the population was initially Irish. English would have been used in contact with English speakers (administrators, bailiffs or those few urbanites who only spoke English, Kallen 1994: 156–63). There was also considerable interaction between the planters and the native Irish, certainly in the countryside where this group of English speakers had settled. Indeed there may be grounds for assuming that a proportion of the planters by the mid seventeenth century would have had at least a rudimentary knowledge of Irish. They would have been a source of bilingualism for the native Irish population, at the interface between themselves and those planters without any Irish.

(Hickey, 2007a: 122)

In the grammatical transfer of language-contact situations there is normally a broad shifting group and extensive bilingualism. In the Irish context, this was the case, particularly in the first half of the 19th century. Both languages remained in a stable balance during the 18th century, since it meant a period of stability between English and Irish. However, bilingualism started to spread in Ireland, especially during the first half of the 19th century. At this moment, the strength of the language shift completely changed the linguistic situation, which would become transformed by the end of the century (Filppula, 1995: 31-32). There were numerous initiatives to support and reinforce the use of Irish. Two outstanding organisations created to preserve the Irish language were The Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language (SPIL) and The Gaelic League. Nonetheless, these did not have much success (Gilmartin, 2004: 5).

The language shift was more evident in the eastern regions of the country, because it began earlier in time (before 1600). For that reason, the percentage of Irish monolinguals was higher in the western areas. Moreover, there was an “urban-rural split” due to the language shift, because the population of the east coast adopted English earlier than the rural inhabitants of the western coast. There is documentation which proves the decline of the Irish language and the “gradual retreat of the language to the western seaboard” (Hickey, 2007a: 121), as shown in the following map:

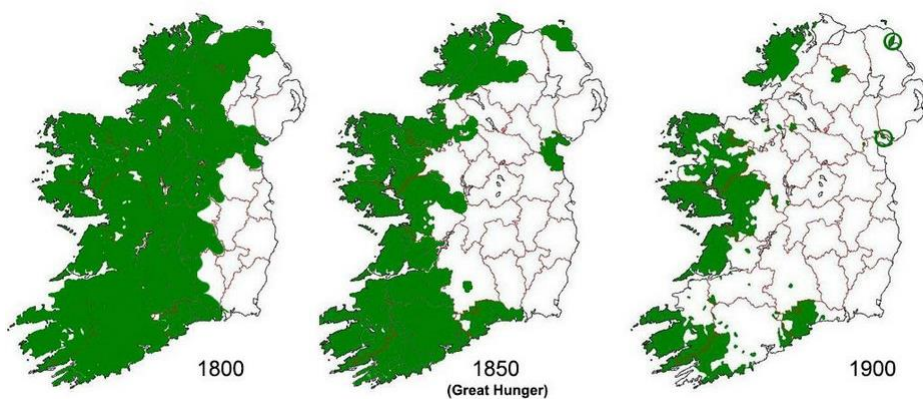


Figure 3.1. *Source:*

https://www.google.com/search?q=decline+of+irish+speakers+map&safe=active&rlz=1C1WPZC_enES815ES815&tbn=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=4FQmpCRC_OgfWM%253A%252C9-LamCATg0SPLM%252C_&vet=1&usg=AI4_kQyYvBIGmfCJ5CWjVSAzluaAnDekA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjEm82mp_3gAhVQx4UKHWITBIEQ9QEwAHoECAyQBA#imgrc=4FQmpCRC_OgfWM

The percentage of bilinguals in different times is very difficult to estimate, because the ciphers are not exact. Scholars such as Hindley, O' Cúiv¹² or Filppula noted that the 1851 census statistics are inaccurate in terms of the number of Irish speakers. The resulting number is 1,525,286 Irish speakers in 1851, which they consider to be underrated. Filppula favours Dr Whitley Stokes's statistics, for his studies had been more precise than others of the same period. According to Dr Whitley Stokes¹³ (1799), there were 1,600,000 bilinguals of 5.4 million of total population (Filppula, 1999: 8-9). The monoglot Irish speakers were 800,000 in 1799, and by 1851 they had fallen to 300,000. In the present-day, the remaining bilinguals are from the Gaeltacht (or Irish-speaking areas). They are speakers of Irish who also speak English. Currently, there are no monoglot Irish speakers, and only about 50,000 people have Irish as their habitual language (Gilmartin, 2004: 3).

Hickey (2009: 65) considers that long-term diglossia did not develop in Ireland. Diglossia, meaning two languages which are employed in a determined society in two different spheres: the private (L variety) and the public (H variety). A situation of diglossia is given when a personal connection with the L variety takes place. The distribution of both languages (Irish and English) has never been functional in Ireland, therefore, diglossia could not be established.

The fact that a solid diglossia could not settle in Ireland has its cause on the language shift of the 19th century. After the Great Famine, a large part of the population changed their language, dropping Irish and speaking only English. After this moment, the English language became fundamental. Thus, Irish speakers of English had access to a better position in society and a decent level of education. This change occurred very rapidly, and there was no time for diglossia to extend to a general level. Children of the following generations after the famine spoke only English. Therefore, the stage in which they were supposed to alternate both languages could not take place (Hickey, 2009: 65-66).

In conclusion, it was very difficult for diglossia to set up in Ireland, because, due to the growing authority of English in the 17th century, Irish had little chance to survive in the public sphere. The shift took more than two centuries to develop, and it has been proved that bilingualism existed, especially in the city of Dublin. But, due to a number of causes, such as the absence of education in Irish or the political native leaders urging

¹² Filppula (1999) quoting Hindley (1990) and O' Cúiv (1951).

¹³ Filppula (1999) quoting Stokes (1799).

people to shift to English, stable bilingualism was not a feasible scenario for the Irish population (Hickey, 2011: 4).

3.2 Origin of Irish English

The history of Irish English is considered to have two distinct periods. The first comprises about four centuries. It begins with the introduction of English in Ireland in the late 12th century and finalises in the early-17th century. The second commences with the first successful plantations in the 17th century and is still ongoing. There are different points of view regarding this matter, because there is not a consensus on the terminology and length of the periods among the scholars. The stages in the history of Irish English, along with its main characteristics will be widely covered in the following paragraphs. Since these do not correspond to the British English periods, a brief comparison will be made.

Then, according to Hickey (2007a: 433-434), there are two periods in the history of Irish English. The first period (1200-1600), named “Period 1”, begins in the late 12th century and ends at the beginning of the 17th century approximately. The English language was introduced in the east and south-east of Ireland with the Anglo-Normans coming from West Wales. The leaders were Anglo-Norman military chiefs, though there were also English speakers involved. The Anglo-Normans and the Irish were established in the countryside. The English set up mainly in towns on the eastern coast “in a band from Dublin down to Waterford” (Hickey, 2018). But, due to the increasing “gaelicisation” in the following centuries (14th, 15th and 16th), the extension of English was reduced to the major towns, and Irish regained part of its former status. The Anglo-Normans were integrated completely into the native population, and in a short time they could only speak Irish. The Pale (in Dublin) was the only area where English had a greater influence during medieval times (Filppula, 1999: 4-5).

The second period is subdivided into two different periods (“Period 2a” and “Period 2b”). It began in the 17th century and continues today. With the defeat of the Irish in the battle of Kinsale (1601), the position of the English was reinforced. It affected especially the north of Ireland, because Ulster was settled by Scottish incomers in the early 17th century. This demographic movement formed the groundings for the subsequent split in the population of the north “into an Irish and a Scottish/English section” (Hickey, 2018). The second wave of plantations, which took place in the south later in the same century, was more successful than the previous one (of the 16th century).

The British settled on lands confiscated from the Irish. At the end of the 17th century, English acquired a firm position in Ireland. The Irish language gradually declined due to various hindrances, especially the Great Famine in the mid-19th century, and it was progressively reduced to the western seaboard (Filppula, 1999: 6).

Period 1	<i>Time</i>	Late twelfth century
	<i>Source</i>	West and south-west of England
	<i>Destination</i>	East and south-east of Ireland
	<i>Languages</i>	Anglo-Norman, English

Period 2a	<i>Time</i>	Early seventeenth century
	<i>Source</i>	Western Scotland
	<i>Destination</i>	North-east of Ireland (Ulster)
	<i>Language</i>	Lowland Scots

Period 2b	<i>Time</i>	Mid-seventeenth century and later
	<i>Source</i>	North-west and west of England
	<i>Destination</i>	Chiefly centre and south of Ireland
	<i>Language</i>	Dialects of English typical of source areas

Table 3.1. *Source:* https://www.uni-due.de/IERC/IERC_Historical_Divisions.htm

Nonetheless, there is still much discussion on whether there is a continuity between these two periods or not. Academics like Jeremiah Hogan or Alan Bliss¹⁴ do not believe in a clear continuity between late middle English and early modern English (Hickey, 2018). But, most scholars, such as Raymond Hickey, Jeffrey Kallen or Markku

¹⁴ Hickey (2007, 2018) quoting Hogan (1927) and Bliss (1976).

Filppula defend the idea that the “Old English” of Ireland survived during the medieval period, indicating that there is a continuum between the two stages of Irish English (Filppula, 1999: 29).

The terminology for the stages of Irish English and their extension vary depending on the author. For instance, Kallen (1997) names them “Old English” and “New English”. For Kallen, there is a continuity between both stages, he considers that it is “more plausible to assume that some English continued to be spoken throughout the sixteenth century”. Filppula names them Medieval Hiberno-English (MedHE) and Modern Hiberno-English (ModHE). He clarifies that “Old English” may have survived especially in towns, and thus provided one of the elements which would fuse with the kinds of English emerging in the early modern period. Hogan¹⁵ (1927) uses the term “Anglo-Irish” to refer to the English spoken in Ireland, and it is divided into “Medieval or Middle Anglo-Irish” and “Modern Anglo-Irish”. Nevertheless, he does not assume that there is continuity between the two (Filppula, 1999: 34).

Patrick Henry¹⁶ (1977) is the most distant author in this respect, as he considers that Irish English had a late development. Henry uses the terms “Anglo-Irish” and “Hiberno-English”, but these have a broader meaning. According to Henry, the first term refers to the rural variety formed in the 19th century and which is a mixture of Irish and English (or Irish and Scots in the case of Northern Ireland). “Hiberno-English” refers to “the urban, more standard variety which derives from British settlers in Ireland” and which was developed in the 17th century. Henry explains that Anglo-Irish is the most similar to Irish (Filppula, 1999: 34).

My perspective in this work is going to be based on the continuity between the two periods of Irish English because, even though there is not much documentation regarding this matter, Hickey has analysed texts from the 14th century written in the Irish English dialect. English language had a minor presence in Ireland during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, but it was spoken in a small area in the Western part of the country. Furthermore, there is evidence attested in the *Kildare Poems* (and other pieces from the 14th century), that the glossaries for the extinct dialect of Forth and Bargy “are archaic in character and represent a continuation of medieval Irish English into the early nineteenth century” (Hickey, 2018). This fact proves the continuity between both stages.

¹⁵ Filppula (1999) quoting Hogan (1927).

¹⁶ Filppula (1999) quoting Henry (1977).

The chronological development of Irish English (IrE) does not correspond to the same time frame of neither “English English” (EngE) nor Irish. They all have their own periods, and these do not necessarily coincide with one another. Although the switch from one stage to the following is a gradual progress, some delimitations need to be made. According to Van Hattum, the subdivisions of the Irish language are: Old Irish (OIr), Middle Irish (Mlr), early Modern Irish (eModIr) and Modern Irish (ModIr). Broadly speaking, the divisions of the English language are: Old English (OE), Middle English (ME), Modern English (ModE) and present-day English (PDE) (Van Hattum, 2012: 24).

As shown in the figure below, the OE period comprises from the 5th century to the 12th century. It can be split into early Old English (eOE) and late Old English (IOE). ME covers from the 12th to the 15th centuries approximately. It can also be subdivided into early Middle English (eME) and late Middle English (IME). ModE comprehends a lapse of time from the 16th to the last decade of the 20th century. It is usually separated into early Modern English (eModE) and late Modern English (IModE). PDE is used to refer to the period from the 1990s to the present time (Van Hattum, 2012: 25).

OIr			Mlr	eModIr		ModIr		
PrIr	eOIr	cOIr						
400	600	800	1000	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000
eOE			IOE	eME	IME	eModE	IModE	PDE
OE			ME		ModE			
400	600	800	1000	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000
MlrE				ModIrE		PDirE		
				eModIrE	IModIrE			

Table 3.2. *Source:* Van Hattum, 2012: 25.

Van Hattum considers that Hickey’s division of Irish English (IrE) periods is correct, but he does not take into account the development of IrE after the 17th century. She chooses other terms to call Irish English periods: “Medieval Irish English” (MlrE), which comprises from 1169 until approximately 1600. The beginning of the first stage corresponds to the initial English settlements in Ireland and the end coincides with the Ulster and Cromwellian plantations. “Early Modern Irish English” (eModIrE) is the period from about 1600 until 1850. It finalises in 1850, since in the first part of the 19th century there was a dramatic rise in the abandonment of Irish as an everyday means of communication. “Late Modern Irish English” (IModIrE) ranges from 1850 to

approximately 1990. “Present-day Irish English” (PDIrE) is parallel to EngE, and began roughly twenty years ago (Van Hattum, 2012: 25-26).

3.3. Dialectal Varieties of Irish English

In present-day Ireland there is a common division of Irish English varieties between north and south. The four distinguishable IrE dialect divisions are: The *East Coast* area, the *West* and *South-West*, *Ulster Scots* and *Mid-Ulster English*. The first two belong to the south of Ireland, and the latter correspond to the north (Hickey, 2018).

3.3.1 The southern Irish English dialects

The dialectal varieties corresponding to today’s Republic of Ireland (formed by the provinces of Leinster, Connacht and Munster) are named “southern IrE”. The ones that are spoken in the province of Ulster constitute the “northern IrE”. The boundary is marked roughly “from County Sligo in the west to County Louth in the east” (Hickey, 2018). The term south of Ireland often refers to the Republic of Ireland. Thus, the association of this with the geographical southern region is rare.

Figure 3.2 shows the *East Coast* area and the *West and South-West* area. The *East Coast* was the first location in Ireland where English was introduced in the late 12th century. It expands from Waterford to a region beyond Dublin. The dialect of Forth and Bargo (now extinct) was an archaic variety of English, which survived until the early-19th century. It derived “from the late medieval period of settlement in Ireland” (Hickey, 2007a: 432). Forth and Bargo are two baronies located in Co. Wexford, in the south-east endpoint of the county (Van Hattum, 2012: 46). The *West* and *South-West* of Ireland are the regions where Irish has been spoken for a longer time and present characteristics (mainly in syntax) which derive from the language shift. This area was the most influenced by the Irish language. In the north of Ireland there is a group of *Ulster-Scots* varieties in the coast, along with the *Mid-Ulster English* spoken in the centre of this province. Apart from these, there are “border areas”, that is, transitional zones between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland with their transition features (Hickey, 2018).

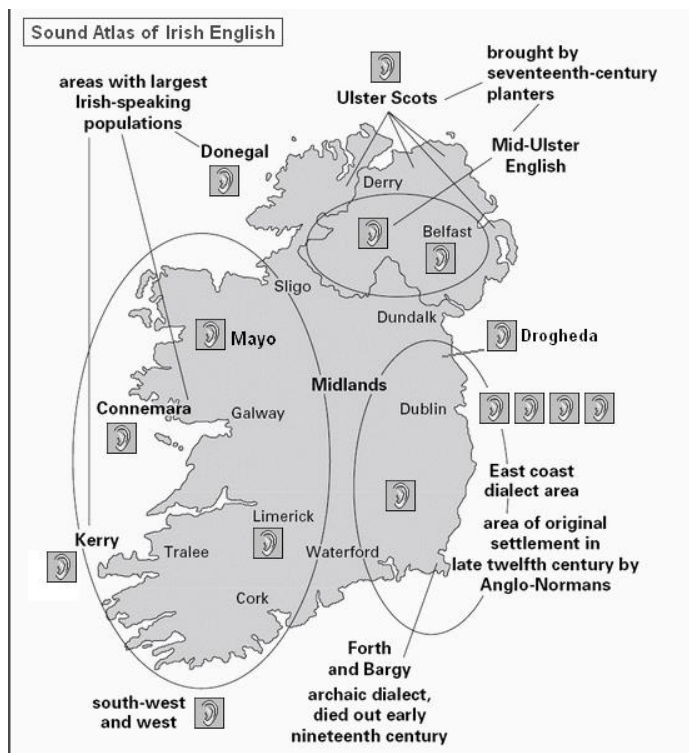


Figure 3.2. Source: <https://www.uni-due.de/IERC/>

Regarding southern IrE (or HE), the subdivisions are not very precise, but many scholars identify a general split into urban and rural dialects. The urban-rural split is due to the fact that the exposure to English has varied from town to countryside. In the cities of the east coast, mainly in Dublin, English had a higher degree of survival. The consequence of this is the clear difference which exists in the present day between the eastern urban varieties and the rest of the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore, bilingualism in towns, especially in Dublin, was very extended during the 18th century (Van Hattum, 2012: 73). The urban dialect has been said to comprise some remnants of medieval characteristics, though it has also been more exposed to outer influences. Even though academics like Bliss (1977), Adams (1977) or Barry (1982)¹⁷ claim that southern IrE is relatively uniform, it is apparent that among southern dialects there are certain differences at the grammatical level. These are described in terms of degree instead of kind. As Filppula (1999: 33-34) says, according to his studies, there is a “distribution of some syntactic features in HE dialects”. He also states that there are “qualitative grammatical differences between HE dialects”, being the western rural dialects the most influenced by Irish as opposed to the eastern urban dialects. Thus, here we are handling the approach of

¹⁷ Filppula (1999) quoting Bliss (1977), Adams (1977) and Barry (1982).

(geographical) dialect continua, meaning that these are not discrete dialects. In the words of Chambers and Trudgill:

[...] dialects on the outer edges of the geographical area may not be mutually intelligible, but they will be linked by a chain of mutual intelligibility. At no point is there a complete break such that geographically adjacent dialects are not mutually intelligible, but the cumulative effect of the linguistic differences will be such that the greater the geographical separation, the greater the difficulty of comprehension.

(Chambers & Trudgill, 1998:5)

Due to the language shift, the majority of the Irish population became native speakers of English in the late 19th century. When the language shift was completed, Irish English underwent a process which Hickey named “supraregionalization”. This event marked the linguistic configuration of present-day Irish English. Supraregionalisation is “an historical process whereby varieties of a language lose specifically local features and become less regionally bound” (Hickey, 2007a: 309). It is considered to have been the outcome of two factors: the introduction of general school education and the growth of a native middle class. This supraregional variety involves a standard form of Irish English which is not necessarily counterpart of the Standard English from England. Irish society accepted the supraregional IrE as their standard form of English in Ireland. However, it did not undergo the process of standardisation, so it does not have “a codified written form for official purposes” (Van Hattum, 2012: 78).

3.3.2 The case of Ulster

The reason for the treatment of Ulster in this section is owed to the special situation of the province. Ulster is located in the north of Ireland. It is formed by nine counties: Donegal, Monaghan, Cavan, Antrim, Armagh, Down, Tyrone, Derry and Fermanagh. But Northern Ireland is only comprised of the counties which belong to the United Kingdom, more precisely, all of them except Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan, which are part of the Republic. They are all considered to be “linguistically northern”. The term Ulster also refers to the part of the United Kingdom in Northern Ireland. It arose with the partition of Ireland in 1921 (Hickey, 2007a: 85).

Due to the introduction of Scots and northern English forms in Ulster during the 17th-century plantations, the varieties of this area turned out to be quite different from the southern ones of Ireland. Besides, there has also been language contact between English and Irish (as in the south) which increased the linguistic complexity in the area (Van Hattum, 2012: 44).

As regards to the historical background, it is worth mentioning that the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland also affected Ulster. After the conquest, several Norman families set up bases in the province. The most successful were the de Burgh and de Lacy families. These kept the earldom of Ulster during the 13th and early 14th centuries. As in the south, the gradual Gaelic revival set in during the 14th and 15th centuries. In the late 15th and 16th centuries there were constant battles between the English and the major Gaelic clans (such as the O'Donnells and the O'Neills). This was due to the Tudor policy of "surrender and regrant" by which the English rulers compelled the native lords to renounce their lands which would "be restored to them under conditions dictated by the English" (Hickey, 2007a: 86-87). The O'Neill clan regained its position in Ulster by the late 16th century. Shortly after, a strong Gaelic opposition to English rule arose in the province which led to a rebellion. Its highest point was the Nine Years War (1594-1603), where Hugh O'Neill (ca. 1550-1616) and his followers fought against the English. The Spanish army intervened in Ulster in 1601 to support O'Neill. However, the English forces besieged them, and both Irish and Spanish were defeated in the battle of Kinsale in 1601. The rebellions of Ulster were ultimately repressed. So, by 1603 the native leadership of the province was broken, as the Gaelic lords were deprived of power (Van Hattum, 2012: 42). In 1607 a number of Gaelic leaders left Ireland seeing that their political situation was untenable. This was so-called in history as the Flight of the Earls. The action had significant consequences "for the power structure of Ireland". It facilitated the way for more fruitful plantations (Hickey, 2007a: 87).

The 17th-century settlers from Scotland and England changed the linguistic configuration of the province of Ulster. The first plantations of this century established the roots for the north-south split of the country (Van Hattum, 2012: 44). Due to the Cromwellian seizures, Old English landlords were transferred to Connacht, and new West-Midland English and lowland Scottish proprietors arrived in Ulster. The Scottish spread to the southern and western parts of Ulster, providing the English of that area with a combination of Scots and English. The plantations caused diverse varieties of English

to establish contact with the native Gaelic spoken by the local population (Amador-Moreno, 2010: 54).

The counties of Antrim and Down had a special position at that period. Officially, these were outside the plantation system, but most Scots established there (because of their proximity to Scotland). In the third decade of the 17th century, most Scottish settlers started to voluntarily go to Ulster. Thus, the English and Scottish areas became strengthened by more immigration. From a linguistic point of view, this resulted in the development of distinct areas of English, Scots and Irish speech (Hickey, 2002: 19-20).

After the 17th century, the history of Ulster has been linked to England. The 18th century was a period of development in this province as a result of the improved trade relations within Ireland and also to Britain which linked the central places to remote regions, especially the rural areas. In addition, there were also agrarian and industry enhancements. The 18th century meant wider language contact, as the interaction between the rural and urban populations was raised. The linen industry fostered interaction between the planters and the native population who were involved in the same activity. As Corrigan (2010: 121) explains: “there were tangible incentives for urban and rural Catholic alike to conform and assimilate to the socio-cultural and linguistic norms of the linen capitals”. But, the Catholics of southern Ulster refused to do so and that led to a rebellion in 1798. These events probably facilitated the diffusion of Scots and English across the area, now defined as mid Ulster English (Corrigan, 2010: 121).

In Northern Ireland (as in southern Ireland) the Irish language underwent a process of decline in the number of speakers since the Cromwellian plantations. Before the 17th century, Irish was the native language for the majority of Ulster’s population. Nonetheless, the English and Scottish settlements in the province brought about shifts in the Irish-speaking areas, as native Irish had to move from their lands into areas of Ulster with no British immigrants. There is evidence which suggests the presence of a small number of Irish speakers in these areas which persisted beyond 1945 (Corrigan, 2010: 126). Corrigan states that:

there existed graduated buffer zones where balanced bilingualism predominated, intervening between areas of complete loss and those in which Irish monoglottism and Irish-dominant bilingualism persisted [...] None the less, Gaeltacht regions

within Ulster were now completely isolated from one another and both MUE and SUE¹⁸ were increasingly restricting their geographical extent.

(Corrigan, 2010: 127)

In linguistic terms, Northern Ireland has been traditionally divided into three areas: Ulster Scots, mid Ulster English and South Ulster English (see figure 3.3). Ulster Scots dialect is located in the north and north-east of the province. It derives from the Scottish immigrants of the early 17th century plantations and their descendants. As explained before, this was more intense in the coastal regions of counties of Ulster, that is, north Derry, north Down, Antrim and Donegal. In the course of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries there was much mixing and assimilation, especially in the region of Belfast (Hickey, 2007a: 93). In Belfast there is a combination “of Ulster Scots and mid Ulster English inputs along with independent developments of its own” (Hickey, 2002: 433). Mid Ulster English is a term used to designate the central varieties which stem from Northern-England immigrants who arrived in Ulster in the 17th century. It is also the language of the native Irish who switched to English during the language shift. Mid Ulster English and Ulster Scots are the two main language groups in Northern Ireland (Hickey, 2002: 433). South Ulster English includes the varieties found mainly in the south of the province and possibly in the counties of Armagh and Tyrone. South Ulster English varieties are transitional between the north and south of the country (Van Hattum, 2012: 44). They show characteristics which arose in the language shift from Irish to English. Within this group another subtype which is known as *contact Ulster English* is also distinguishable. This variety is found in regions where Irish is also spoken, and it shows influences from native-speaker Irish. Contact Ulster English is not highly relevant nowadays, but during the formative period (17th and 18th centuries) there was significant transfer from Irish to English in Ulster. South Ulster English “does not show the clarity of profile of the first two” (Ulster Scots and Mid-Ulster English), that is why there is some debate about whether south Ulster English is an independent variety (Hickey, 2007a: 93-94).

It is clear that Ulster is an area with a complex dialect pattern. However, due to external events during the late 19th century and the following century (first the Famine, and then the improvement in communications and employment opportunities in the city

¹⁸ These abbreviations stand for mid Ulster English and South Ulster English.

of Belfast), Ulster Scots speakers have been significantly exposed to mid Ulster English. In this way, Irish English varieties of Ulster, which were more widespread in the past, are generally recessive today, and “may be losing their distinctive profile” (Hickey, 2018).

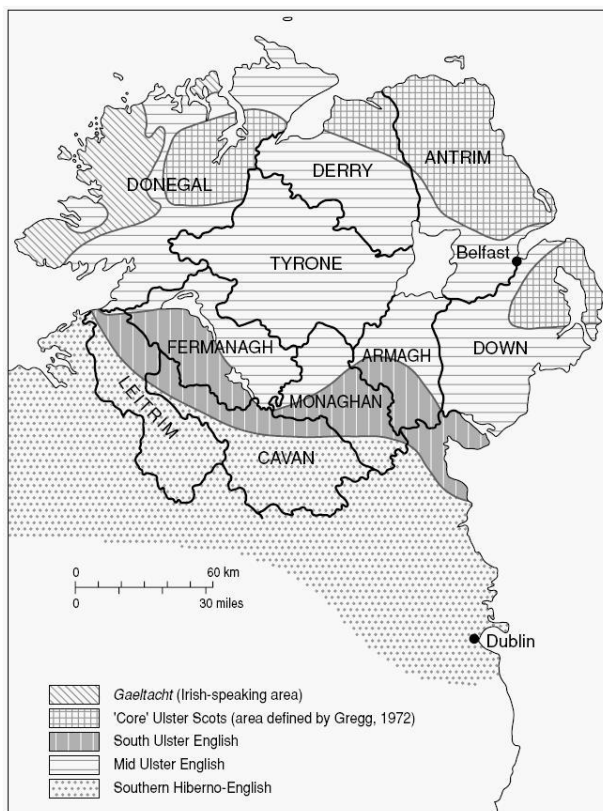


Figure 3.3. Source: https://www.uni-due.de/VCDE/VCDE_Ulster_English.htm

4. The grammar of Irish English

When people are exposed to the imperfect knowledge of a language, the result is the creation of a new variety which has its own grammar. Since the urban inhabitants were in a different context than the rural population, they were in dissimilar conditions when acquiring a language and this originated dialectal differences. These distinctions are nowadays reflected in grammar due to the late incorporation of English into the western areas of the country.

Before exploring the features of Irish English, it is necessary to briefly describe the formation stage of Irish English grammar. Most scholars agree that Irish English grammar started to develop from the 17th century onwards. However, there is a difference in terms of the development of Irish English between the rural and the urban areas.

English speakers in Ireland were concentrated mainly in the towns. Therefore, English in the east, especially in Dublin, had a higher degree of survival, in addition to a larger degree of bilingualism. Exposure to English in the countryside was belated and less intense, which caused an urban-rural split (Hickey, 1997: 7).

The cause of the genesis of Irish English grammar may be due to the fact that the Irish acquisition of English was very slow, and this altered the acquisition process. Christiansen states that the linguistic group who probably transferred the characteristics from Irish into English would have been the segment of Irish-speaking population who switched from one language to another during the language shift, that is, between the 17th and 19th centuries (Christiansen, 2009: 65).

It is likely that the source of English for the larger part of the rural Irish population were the planters. This situation probably took place in an extended manner during the 17th century. Nonetheless, the transfer of English to the descendants of Irish speakers was on the one hand on the part of the settlers, and also, the Irish must have learned English from other Irish who had been in contact with the language in the 18th and 19th centuries. Having said this, the kind of English they had been in contact with was imperfect, as they received little if any formal instruction¹⁹ (Hickey, 1997: 8).

It is widely recognised that the varieties of English introduced in Ireland, particularly from the 17th century, were nonstandard and dialectal. The social circumstances of the English soldiers, planters and administrators were diverse (Filppula, 1999: 17). But, the character of Irish English is directly associated with the fact that most of the Irish were adults when they acquired English. This unguided learning caused “the common malapropisms and the unconventional word stress” shown in Irish English (Hickey 2005: 24). The idiosyncrasies became rooted in the language, because Irish speakers probably had little access to standard forms of English. Thus, they would speak to other people with a similar range, and “subject to the same subliminal linguistic forces” (Christiansen, 2009: 66).

4.1 Morphosyntactic features: Corpus-based study

The following paragraphs will be dedicated to listing and describing the most significant verbal features of Irish English varieties, more precisely in west/south-west and eastern

¹⁹ The reason for this is that native Irish were primarily of Catholic ascendancy. And Catholics were forbidden the access to education under the Penal Laws (from the late 17th to the end of the 18th century) (Hickey, 2007a: 123).

areas. Therefore, some instances will be taken from O’Casey’s *Juno and the Paycock* and Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World* to exemplify each structure²⁰.

The titles and technicalities of each subsection will be named after Hickey’s (2007) *Irish English History and Present-day forms*. Examples will be also taken from this same author, only when a given feature does not occur in the plays. As O’Casey and Synge are two authors from different regions of Ireland (east and west respectively), both dialectal varieties will be compared using their texts as a reference. It is worth noting that some of the characteristics are island-wide, while others belong to a particular dialect area. Features which are exclusive from the north of Ireland will not be considered in this analysis.

The verbal area of Irish English is the “furthest from standard forms of English”, as their form and syntax reveal many non-standard structures. These features will be classified into four main categories: verbal concord, infinitives, modals and tense and aspect. Those characteristics which could be shared with other non-standard varieties of English (that is, they are not exclusive from Irish English) and which occur in the aforementioned plays, will be analysed at the end (Hickey, 2007a: 173).

Before the explanation of the Irish English verbal area, it is necessary to clarify that there are three points of view in regard to Irish English grammatical inputs. First, the “retentionist view” which considers that regional English input had a considerable weight in Ireland. It implies that the role of Irish in the formation of Irish English was not central. Second, the “substratist view”, which is a perspective in Irish English research where the focus is on Irish structural transfer into English. This implies that English input was less significant in the origin of Irish English. And third, the “universalist view”, which complements both of them. It ascertains that “there are universals of unguided adult second-language acquisition which [...] are assumed to be responsible for many of the specific structures, such as aspectual distinctions, which arose during the language shift from Irish to English” (Hickey, 2007a: 433-435). It is important to note that adult speakers who are learning a second language in an unguided manner search for parallels to the grammatical categories of their native language (Hickey, 2005: 25).

²⁰ O’Casey’s *Juno and the Paycock* was first published in 1924, and Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World* in 1907. Although in this work examples will be taken from subsequent publications of these plays: 1930 and 2003, respectively.

4.1.1 Verbal concord

Many varieties of standard English show a deviation from the standard English structure of subject-verb concord. The most common, according to Filppula, is “the extension of the third person suffix *-s* to other, and most often, all persons, whether singular or plural”. This derives from two main sources: on the one hand, the differences between Irish and English, and on the other hand, the dialectal divisions among regional dialects of English. As regards S-V concord, Irish English dialects present a combination of elements which do not seem to have a relation with their sources (Filppula 1999: 150). Second person plural pronouns commonly block verbal *-s*, so it is rare for verbal *-s* to appear in first and second person plural forms. The most common is the third person plural pronoun, since this admits non-standard marking (Hickey, 2007a: 182).

In southern Irish English the verbal *-s* tends to appear in the third person plural. But “[t]he weight of the subject (pronoun, noun, noun phrase) and the distance between subject and verb in a sentence also influence the occurrence of verbal *-s*” (Hickey, 2007a: 179-180). From a retentionist point of view, this feature of Irish English is likely to stem from south-west Britain. It was introduced in Ireland during the English settlement and it was spread from the east to other parts of the country, particularly the west and south-west. From a substratist perspective this type of structure has its origin in the Irish language. In Irish, the use of plural subjects with singular verbs is not as restricted as in St.E, because third person singular verbs occur with co-ordinate nouns only when the nouns are nominative. The use of plural subjects with singular verbs in Irish English could be directly related to the fact that the verb *to be* in Irish (i.e. *tá*), is translated in Standard English as *is* or *are*, so it can be singular or plural (Estévez, 1998: 9), (Hickey, 2007a: 179-180).

Hickey (2007a: 181-182) distinguishes different kinds of verbal concord as regards the subject: (i) Single noun subject (*But Ray, the years flies, don't they?*), (ii) Noun phrase subject (*Lots of the girls works*), (iii) Deleted coreferential subject in second verb phrase (*After I do me work, I go out and rickles me turf*), (iv) Third-person-plural pronoun (*And they calls them small*), (v) series of verbs (*People keeps and sells them*), (vi) In relative clauses (*There're big people now that has a lot of money*).

The examples of this structure found in my corpus are the following:

- (1) *maybe you know more about the pains in me legs than **meself** that **has** them?*
(O'Casey, 1930: 22)
- (2) *it's **yourself** that **has** yourself the way y'are.* (O'Casey, 1930: 52)
- (3) *What in glory **has you** here at this hour of day?* (Synge, 2003: 39)
- (4) *for the like of **you**, that **has** such poet's talking.* (Synge, 2003: 64)

There are not many instances of verbs with suffixal –s, because occurrences with the verb to *be* were not considered here, as they will be provided in 4.1.1.1 *Forms of be*. But, Filppula concludes that:

As regards differences between the individual HE dialects, no clear differences could be ascertained between Clare, Kerry, and Wicklow, whereas in the Dublin sample the percentage of nonconcord with pronoun subjects remained lower than in the rural dialects

(Filppula, 1999: 156)

This means that there are less records of this type of construction in Dublin than in rural areas.

4.1.1.1 Forms of *be*

Irish English shows a unique patterning of *be* with respect to other varieties of English. The usage of *be* in Ireland is not categorical, it is variable, and it changes between regions of Ireland. According to Hickey (2007a: 183), there are three patterns attested in south-east Irish English: non-standard inflected *be*, standard inflected *be*, and invariant *be*. The examples of forms of *be* included in my corpus are as follows:

Standard inflected *be*:

- (5) *his **cousin is** foreman o' the job.* (O'Casey, 1930: 11)
- (6) ***Scientists are** beginning to think that what we call [...]* (O'Casey, 1930: 56)
- (7) *let you not forget the sports and racing when the **noon is** by.* (Synge, 2003: 42)
- (8) *It's true all **girls are** fond of courage and do hate the like of you.* (Synge, 2003: 48)

Non-standard inflected be:

- (9) *Isn't all religions curious; if they weren't, you [...]* (O'Casey, 1930: 56)
(10) *people is always far more comfortabler here than they are in their own place.*
(O'Casey, 1930: 14)
(11) *Don't tell your father and the men is coming above.* (Synge, 2003: 18)
(12) *the peelers in this place is decent, drouthy poor fellows.* (Synge, 2003: 26)

Invariant be:

- (13) *Then me bonny blue-ey'd lad, if me heart be true till then.* (O'Casey, 1930: 26)

Pursuant to these examples it may be assumed that both non-standard and standard inflected *be* are present in eastern and western varieties of Irish English. Even though Hickey says that invariant *be* is common in the south-east (and in the north) of Ireland, there is only one example of this in *Juno and the Paycock*. In the case of non-standard inflected *be*, it is more common in Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* than O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*, because in the former there are several instances throughout the text of plural nouns followed by *is* (Hickey, 2007a: 183).

Regularisation of *be* paradigms

As regards the regularisation of *be* forms in the past, Anderwald²¹ (2001) recognises three strategies in her analysis of the *was/were* variation:

- a. *Was*-generalisation
- b. *Were*-generalisation
- c. A combined type distinguished by clause polarity instead of the standard number distinction.

The regularisation can be "absolute or context-dependent" (Hickey, 2007a: 184). When it is context-dependent, it applies specially to the setting after existential *there*. In Irish English *was* has been extended to the plural (especially in the third person), as it was the dominant pattern. According to Hickey, this feature is more characteristic of the east coast dialect (Hickey, 2007a: 184). And, it may be confirmed through the following

²¹ Hickey (2007a) quoting Anderwald (2001).

examples that there are no occurrences of this feature in *The Playboy of the Western World*. However, in *Juno and the Paycock* there is non-standard use of *was/were*. It is also true that in the majority of cases in the play, they follow the standard pattern.

(14) *the pair of yous wasn't collogin' together here* [...] (O'Casey, 1930: 36)

(15) *Them was days, Joxer, them was days.* (O'Casey, 1930: 33)

(16) *the priests was always in the van of the fight for Irelan's freedom.* (O'Casey, 1930: 48)

(17) *as if he were always repressing* [...] (O'Casey, 1930: 12)

Verb forms after *there*

This is a feature of extended use across the country. There seem to be higher acceptance levels “of regularised *was* after *there* in the east and north along with the general prominence of *was* in plural contexts on the east coast” (Hickey, 2007a: 184). The reason for this may be that the English settlement is older in the east, so this regularisation was an English input to that area. Conversely, the west/south-west is an area where Irish has been spoken the longest. Inasmuch as it was exposed to late varieties of English which may have exhibited a degree of supraregionalisation, the distribution of *is/are* and *was/were* is like standard English. Nonetheless, it is not clear whether there is a noteworthy “levelling of *was/were* variation according to clause polarity” (Hickey, 2007a: 185). *Was* in positive clauses seems to be very extended, but with respect to negative clauses, the distribution of *was/were* in these is uneven. The following examples taken from the corpus illustrate the regularisation of inflected *be* after existential *there*:

a. *Is* (positive and negative) with plural reference

(18) *There's some people able to dhress.* (O'Casey, 1930: 60)

(19) *There's two o' them here still.* (O' Casey, 1930: 82)

(20) *There's lots surely to hurt me.* (Synge, 2003: 19)

(21) *There's many wanting.* (Synge, 2003: 22)

b. *Was* (positive and negative) with plural reference

(22) *For there was great news this day.* (Synge, 2003: 43)

(23) *and there was many a fine Sunday [...]* (Synge, 2003: 57)

Although Hickey (2007a: 185) states that *is* and *was* with plural reference is more common in the eastern area, the instances provided in my corpus show the occurrence of non-standard uses of *was* in plural contexts in the western area. The cases where *there is* is followed by a plural noun are higher in Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*, even though I selected only two instances of each to illustrate the presence of this feature in both plays. Besides, there are no examples of *was* with plural reference in O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*.

4.1.2. Infinitives

Scholars date the appearance of *for to* as an infinitive marker to the Middle English period. Although, as Hickey (2007a: 186) clarifies, *for to* infinitives “lost their connotation of purpose, so that *for* in *for to* did not then have to be understood prepositionally. In non-purposive clauses it came to be reinterpreted as a compound infinitival marker”

Retentionists, such as Harris²² (1993), point to archaic forms of English as one of the precursors of the non-standard infinitive complement in Irish English. An example of a non-purposive *for to*-infinitive clause from medieval Irish English would be: *He dredith no deth for to deye*. However, if English varieties in Ireland were the basis of *for to*-infinitives in Irish English, it would be expected to appear as a compound infinitival marker, that is, without the meaning of purpose. But there are attestations in the nineteenth century which could be understood as indicating purpose. For example: *I will arrive for to emigrate* could be seen as parallel to *I will arrive for my ticket* (Hickey, 2007a: 186-187). Therefore, this construction can be treated as a survival from older English usage ‘*for to* + non-finite complement’ on the one hand, and it can be considered to be a literal translation from Irish preposition *le* or *chun* (‘for the purpose of’) on the other (Estévez, 1998: 9).

To distinguish between purposive and non-purposive instances of *for to* in Irish English, Henry²³ (1992) suggests the division between ‘strong’, where purpose is not

²² Hickey (2007a) quoting Harris (1993).

²³ Hickey (2007a) quoting Henry (1992).

implied, and ‘weak’ instances, i.e. equivalent in meaning to *in order to*. ‘Weak’ attestations of *for to*, which occur before a non-finite verb, are equivalent to the St.E infinitival clause. An example of this would be: ‘He bought wood to make a table.’ [Irish: *Cheannaigh sé adhmaid chun bord a dhéanamh* ‘bought he wood in-order-to table COMP make-VN’] (Hickey, 2007a: 187).

Examples of the two, purposive and non-purposive *for to*-infinitives, can be found in *The Playboy of the Western World*. However, this construction does not show occurrence in O’Casey’s *Juno and the Paycock*.

a. Purposive

(24) *the way she’d have a sup of goats’ milk for to colour my tea.* (Synge, 2003: 38)

(25) *I’m going abroad on the hillside for to seek Pegeen.* (Synge, 2003: 49)

b. Non-purposive

(26) *there isn’t anything that would be worth your troubling for to run from now.* (Synge, 2003: 24)

(27) *Is your right hand too sacred for to use at all?* (Synge, 2003: 39)

Hickey’s study shows that respondents both from eastern and western areas assessed that *for to*-infinitives constituted ‘no problem’, that is, they understood the meaning of this construction in context. In fact, the east scored higher than the west and south-west. Besides, it is also noteworthy that Mayo and Galway had the lowest score, since they are the two counties in which Irish has been spoken the longest (Hickey, 2007a: 188). This fact contrasts with the results obtained from the study of O’Casey’s and Synge’s plays, as there are numerous instances of *for-to* infinitives in *The Playboy of the Western World* and a lack of these in *Juno and the Paycock*.

4.1.2.1 Unmarked infinitives

This construction occurs when “the infinitive does not take any marker preceding it” (Hickey, 2007a :189). It is the case with modal verbs which do not require *to* before the infinitive. In Irish English the infinitive marker is sometimes dropped before some verbs like *help, allow* or *come*.

There are no examples of this structure neither in O’Casey nor in Synge. In fact, in *Juno and the Paycock* there are uses of the verb *allow* with *to*, e.g. *Is a man not to be allowed to leave his house for a minute* (O’Casey, 1930: 30). And in *The Playboy of the Western World* the only instances found are also of verbs followed by the infinitive marker, e.g. *the like of the man beyond, was judged to be hanged, quartered, and drawn* (Synge, 2003: 23) or *It’s true the Lord God formed you to contrive indeed* (Synge, 2003: 33). Some examples provided by Hickey are:

(28) *M . . . helped him wash the car after all.* (Hickey, 2007a: 189)

(29) *They used take the barrels on the lorries themselves.* (Hickey, 2007a: 189)

4.1.2.2 Infinitival complements

A remnant from Irish transfer can be seen in this infinitival complement (previously called the “Kiltartan infinitive”), which is found receding in rural areas. An instance of this provided by Hickey (2007a: 190) would be: *You’d say you’re sorry they to be sick* [Irish: . . . *iad a bheith tinn* ‘they to be sick’]. However, this type of complement does not occur in the plays.

4.1.3 Modals

4.1.3.1 Perfective use of *can*

The modal verb *can* is used in the present tense to indicate “ability or possibility”. To express the same meaning in the past, standard varieties of English use the phrase *be able to*, e.g. *He can get a loan if he wants to* versus, *He wasn’t able to get a loan for years* (Hickey, 2007a: 191). Irish English varieties regularly use *cannot* with past reference, as in *A . . . cannot get a loan from the corporation for more than six year now* (Hickey, 2007a: 191). However, there are no instances of this use of *can* in the plays. The only example of *cannot* occurs in *The Playboy of the Western World* and refers to the present time:

(30) *Sure he cannot hurt you, if you keep your distance from his teeth alone.*
(Synge, 2003: 75)

4.1.3.2 Epistemic negative *must*

In St.E, epistemic *must* is negated with *can't/cannot*, e.g. *He **can't** be from France if he doesn't speak French*. However, in Irish English epistemic *must* is used in the negative. The sentence *He was born here so he **mustn't** be Scottish* was recognised as having a high acceptance among Irish English speakers. This feature is also shared with Scottish English (Hickey, 2007a: 191). Nonetheless, there are no instances of the epistemic negative *must* in the plays.

4.1.4 Tense and aspect

This area has received much attention from scholars, since it is a large field which comprises three factors: 'input varieties of English', 'transfer from the Irish language' and 'the nature of the language shift situation'. These elements will be considered below, as well as their influence in the creation of Irish English aspect. According to Hickey, tense "refers to the point in time relative to a discourse" and aspect "conveys information beyond tense, typically about the manner in which an action took or takes place or about whether it has been completed or whether it is repeated at regular intervals" (Hickey, 2007a: 192).

In this section the focus is on fixed verbal structures which do not require specific adverbs for their particular semantics. For example, the *after* perfective carries a temporal component, as it expresses that something had occurred recently. Moreover, it conveys that something was unexpected or that it has high informational value, as in *They're after catching the criminal*. On the other hand, the resultative perfective informs that the planned action has been finished. For instance, *Sheila has the article written* versus *Sheila has written an article*. The former is goal-oriented, therefore the resultative perfective is used with the definite article, and with the indefinite article in the latter. Aspect here is "realised by contrast with another structure", which is also common in standard varieties of English (Hickey, 2007a: 192).

1. Information: repetition <i>Subdivision of habitual</i> progressive punctual	Aspect: habitual <i>Types</i> durative iterative
2. Information: completion <i>Subdivision of perfective</i> very recent completion completion of planned action	Aspect: perfective <i>Types</i> immediate perfective resultative perfective

Table 4.1 (Hickey, 2007a: 193)

Hickey regards aspect as “a component of verbal expressions which goes beyond tense and conveys some ‘extra information’.” The two kinds of information are concerned with repetition and completion. They can be further subdivided into: ‘progressive’ and ‘punctual’ (for repetition) or ‘very recent completion’ and ‘completion of planned action’ (for completion). When a habitual action lasts a certain length of time, it is called ‘durative’. On the contrary, when the habitual action is more occasional in nature, it is named ‘iterative’. The durative-habitual is distinguished in several varieties of Irish English by the use of *do(es)*, and the iterative-habitual is distinguished in Irish English by using a non-standard –s inflection (normally in the first person singular). The examples recorded by Hickey are: *I gets* [iterative-habitual] *grumpy with them all sometimes when they do be tormentin’ me* [durative-habitual]. The other two terms reflected in the table ‘immediate perfective’ and ‘resultative perfective’ refer to “the additional aspectual components of these structures and reflect a usage found in previous treatments by [Hickey]” (Hickey, 2007a: 193).

James McCawley²⁴ (1976) distinguishes four types of perfect: ‘universal’ perfect, ‘existential’ perfect, ‘hot news’ perfect and ‘stative’ perfect. According to Hickey (2007a: 194), the ‘hot-news perfect’ is regarded by some scholars, such as Harris and Kallen²⁵, as a semantic counterpart of the ‘immediate perfective’ of Irish English. The term refers to the use of the present perfect in English to convey new information. Other authors denominate this the ‘*after* perfect’, in reference to the adverb which is key to this aspectual structure. ‘Resultative perfect’ is a term used to denote the completion of an action which was planned. Filppula (1999: 107) uses the label ‘medial object perfect’ for

²⁴ Hickey (2007a) quoting McCawley (1976).

²⁵ Hickey (2007a) quoting Harris (1993) and Kallen (1989).

this type, because it emphasises the word order. By contrast, the term ‘resultative perfective’ gives a classification of semantics.

It is also important to distinguish between ‘perfect’ and ‘perfective’, and the meaning of these terms in the Irish English verbal system. In this work, the label ‘perfect’ is going to refer to tense, and the label “perfective” to aspect. For instance, *Sheila has the article written* embodies a ‘perfect’, since the action is placed in the past and has finished. But it is also a ‘perfective’, for it contains aspectual information, such as that the action has an explicit goal. So, verbal structures are better understood when tense and aspect are distinguished, even if both categories are combined in actual examples (Hickey, 2007a: 194).

In Irish English, the perfective tends to occur with a fixed time reference, because it emphasises the completion of an action and carries information about the intentionality (resultative) or the novelty of the event (immediate). For instance, *He’s after crashing the car this morning*. The perfect can occur in the progressive, but that is not the case in Irish English, e.g. **She’s been after breaking the glass*. Moreover, if the syntactic structure of the resultative perfect was used with the progressive, it would have a causative interpretation in Irish English; contrast *We were having the work done (by a firm of decorators)* [causative] with *We had the work done (before lunchtime)* [resultative] (Hickey, 2007a: 194-195). In the following paragraphs, I will proceed to identify three components of tense and aspect:

4.1.4.1 The ‘indefinite anterior’

Filppula uses the term ‘indefinite anterior perfect’ and exemplifies this with the sentence *Were you ever in Kenmare*. Nonetheless, Hickey considers the terminology not appropriate for Irish English “when viewed from the language shift perspective”. Filppula notes that this is an overrepresentation of the English ‘indefinite anterior’ (Filppula, 1999: 91-92). Though, according to Hickey, if that was the case, Irish speakers should have had both verb constructions as a reference, one with *have* and another without *have* to realise the contrast between them, i.e. *Were you ever in Kenmare?* and *Have you ever been in Kenmare?* But as this choice was not possible, it is not right to speak of ‘indefinite anterior’ in Irish English. There is only one way to express the past in Irish, as in Irish English. What is more likely is that in the language shift, Irish speakers would have

imitated the way of expressing past in Irish: *An raibh tú riamh sa Neidín?* [INTERROG were you ever in Kenmare] ‘Were you ever in Kenmare?’ (Hickey, 2007a: 195).

English *have* in present perfect constructions was not an option during the language shift. In the tense formation of Irish English, *have* was only found with a possessive meaning. English *have* was presented to Irish speakers who were in a language-shift situation, as a form without a counterpart in their native language. In Irish, the possessive sense of *have* is expressed using the form *tá* ‘is’ with another compound form created from the preposition *ag* ‘at’. E.g. *Tá culaith bhán agam*. [is suit white at-me] ‘I have a white suit.’ (Hickey, 2007a: 195).

In my corpus there are examples of this feature, where preterite forms have a participial function and vice versa (Estévez, 1998: 10). There are various instances in both O’Casey’s *Juno and the Paycock* and Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World*:

(31) *Did you ever know me to twist; did you ever know me to twist?* (O’Casey, 1930: 92)

(32) *I’d hardly believe I ever had a pain in me legs.* (O’Casey, 1930: 16)

(33) *I’m thinking I seen him.* (Synge, 2003:51)

(34) *Well, I never seen to this day a man with a looking-glass held to his back.* (Synge, 2003: 39)

4.1.4.2 Extended *now*

This is a construction of Irish English in which “the present tense is used in contexts where the time span is from some point in the past to the present”. For instance, *I know M . . . and A . . . for many years now*. In this context, standard English would use the present perfect, e.g. *I have known M . . . and A . . . for many years*. This feature has spread throughout the entire island (Hickey, 2007a: 196).

The origin of the extended *now* is difficult to know. It had probably existed in the varieties of English which served as input during the Irish language shift. And, as Hickey indicates, Irish speakers would have ignored the ‘indefinite anterior’ as the auxiliary *have* does not have a formal counterpart in their native language. In Irish, the equivalent verbal construction to present perfect would be expressed quite differently as in: *Tá aithne agam ar M... agus ar Á... le blianta anuas anois*. [is knowledge at-me on M... and on A... with years down now] (Hickey, 2007a: 196).

According to Hickey's analysis, in the present-day, extended *now* shows more acceptance in the south-east. This may be due to "the very early settlement of the east coast and before the present perfect had become established in English" (Hickey, 2007a: 196). However, this structure does not occur in my corpus. Although the adverb *now* is repeated many times in both *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Juno and the Paycock*, (there are about 80 instances in each play) it does not occur in the context of stretching back into the past, but as a regular adverb indicating time. In some cases, it may be understood as a textual connector, as can be seen in the following examples:

(35) *Are you sure, now, you wouldn't like an egg?* (O'Casey, 1930: 14)

(36) *How much would a top-coat like that be, now?* (O'Casey: 1930: 86)

(37) *You know he's gone to England, an' God knows where he is now.* (O'Casey, 1930: 94)

(38) *He said his father was a farmer a while since, and there's himself now in a poor state.* (Synge, 2003: 23)

(39) *There's her boots now, nice and decent for her evening use.* (Synge, 2003: 36)

(40) *It's the last turn! The post's cleared for them now!* (Synge, 2003: 60)

In (35), (36) and (39) *now* could be interpreted as a speech linker used to emphasise the message given. It could be removed, and the sentence would have the same meaning. However, in (37), (38) and (40) *now* is understood as an adverb of time. In fact, there is a contrast of time references in (37) and (40), because there is a present perfect (*he's gone*, *post's cleared*) and *now* in the same sentence.

4.1.4.3 *Be* perfects

Again, as in the previous cases, the use of *be* as an auxiliary in these sentences is partly explained by the lack of *have* with the function of present perfect in language shift varieties, e.g. *The kids are gone to the strand today* (Hickey, 2007a: 196). Another possible source also considered by Filppula (1999: 111), to which Irish speakers were exposed is, of course, English. The auxiliary *be* was typical with "verbs of state and motion" (Hickey, 2007a: 196). Taking into consideration the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* (1640–1710), Filppula states that *be* was "the preferential auxiliary with intransitive

verbs [in] the eighteenth century, but that this situation was quickly reversed in the nineteenth century”. This preference for the auxiliary *be* in the eighteenth century was confirmed by a collection of personal letters from Dublin, e.g. *I am just come . . .* (1763). For verbs of motion this was maintained until the nineteenth century (Hickey, 2007a: 196-197).

This feature does not occur in the plays, because O’Casey and Synge, for example, use *have/has* as the present perfect auxiliary in verbs of motion and in intransitive verbs.

(41) *Mary, and I have come to you. ...I have come to tell you, Mary.* (O’Casey, 1930: 102)

(42) *...the miracles of God that have brought you from the south today.* (Synge, 2003: 65)

4.1.4.5 Immediate perfective

This structure has been discussed recurrently by scholars researching Irish English. The immediate perfective in present-day varieties “consists of a compound verb phrase comprising *be* + *after* + continuous verb form”. Nowadays, it only expresses a past reference, yet it can be used as the future perfect in some cases (Hickey, 2007a: 197).

The ‘after perfect’ is equivalent to the constructions of present perfect with *just* from St.E. Since, as mentioned in previous sections, there are no “specific lexical entries for the St.E. verb *to have* in Irish, there is no perfect tense corresponding to the St.E. one”. Thus, in Irish, there are two periphrastic constructions for the St.E. perfects: ‘*tá* + *ag*’ and ‘*tá* + *taréis*’. They “refer to the completion of the action. However, the ‘*tá* + *taréis*’ construction adds the meaning of recency”. For instance, *Tá sé tréis leitir a scríobh* (‘He’s after writing a letter’ = ‘He has just written a letter’). It follows the word order: ‘*tá* + subject + *taréis* + (object +) verbal noun’, but it cannot occur in negations. The Irish form corresponds to the standard English ‘subject + have + just + past participle (+ object)’. There is no disagreement among scholars about the origin of this construction, because they all believe it derives from the Irish ‘*tá* + *taréis*’ (Estévez, 1998: 11).

According to Filppula (1999: 99), it refers to an action which has taken place “in the more or less recent past but the effects of which persist some way or other into the present moment or [...] into a secondary point of time orientation in the past, which makes

them equivalent to StE past perfects”. The action is considered to be completed, even though its effects continue into the moment of speaking.

The *after*-perfective appeared in Irish English at the end of the 17th century, and it seemed to have had future reference. However, it is not clear whether this structure always had past reference, or whether it underwent a development during the 18th and 19th centuries. Hickey’s view is based on the concreteness of the temporal reference of the immediate perfective, as it could have had a less specific temporal reference before the mid-19th century (Hickey, 2007a: 198).

The past or future reference choice for the *after*-perfect constructions seem to have lasted until the early nineteenth century. During the transition, those attestations with future reference would probably recede, if they were compared to those with past reference. As Hickey (2007a: 204) states, “those [writers] imitating the speech of rural inhabitants in the west (Gregory, Synge) have abundant examples of the *after* + V-ing structure, all of which have past reference only”.

In the present-day, the *after* perfective is found almost uniformly in the Republic of Ireland. This was due to the fact that language shift varieties of English were spread to the population of the south of the country. According to Hickey (2007a: 206), “[t]here are no discernible differences in the syntax or semantics of the *after*-perfective in different parts of present-day Ireland. The quantitative differences which do exist can be recognised along the north–south axis.”

There are several attestations of the immediate perfective in both O’Casey’s *Juno and the Paycock* and Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World*. They are as follows:

(43) *He wore out the Health Insurance long ago, he's afther wearin' out the unemployment dole, an', now, he's thryin' to wear out me!* (O’Casey, 1930: 7)

(44) *U-ugh, I'm afther gettin' a terrible twinge in me right leg!* (O’Casey, 1930: 21)

(45) *and I'm after feeling a kind of fellow above in the furzy ditch* (Synge, 2003: 17)

(46) *I'm after meeting Shawn Keogh and Father Reilly below, who told me of your curiosity man* (Synge, 2003: 31)

4.1.4.6 Resultative perfective

This structure has received several labels. Greene²⁶ (1979), as Hickey explains, used ‘PII’ for the resultative perfective and ‘PI’ for the immediate perfective. Filppula (1999: 107) termed this ‘medial object perfect’, referring to the characteristic word order of this structure. Hickey (2007a: 208) uses the label ‘resultative perfective’ in order to match the term ‘immediate perfective’ and to, intentionally, indicate a connection between them. In Irish English, the resultative perfect is “used to denote that a planned action has been completed”.

This word order, ‘object + past participle’, is employed in St.E to designate that something was prompted by the subject, e.g. *We had the front of the house painted*. This usage is also found in Irish English, but its meaning could be resultative e.g. *We had the front of the house painted before the winter came*. It varies depending on context (Hickey, 2007a: 208).

Nonetheless, the examples from my corpus do not correspond to this use of the resultative perfective. They refer to finished actions, but they were not instigated by the subject. (47) and (49) are understood as something made by the subject itself. (48) and (50) refer to an action which has been executed by an external agent and it negatively affects the subject.

(47) *Amn't I afther tellin' you that **he had them whipped up** an' was gone [...]*

(O'Casey: 1930: 87)

(48) *Mrs. Travers that **had her son blew up** be a mine in Inchegeela.* (O'Casey, 1930: 71)

(49) *And it's lies you told, lettin' on you **had him slitted**, and you nothing at all.*

(Synge, 2003: 70)

(50) *for I met him a while since telling a rambling tale of a tinker **had him destroyed**.* (Synge, 2003: 58)

Get and the resultative perfective

The verb *get* is used in vernacular varieties of Irish English as a quasi-auxiliary with the meaning of ‘become’. For example, *[t]he separator came on the scene and the cream tub **got finished***. This may be connected to the wider sense of *get* “to express a resultative

²⁶ Hickey (2007a: 208) quoting Greene (1979).

perfective, as this denotes a state which has been reached”, e.g. *And when he got her gone, he looked at the parcel* or *When he had the breakfast got* (Hickey, 2007a: 208).

There are no instances of this construction in my corpus. Even though *got* appears in the plays, it does not convey that meaning: *and I got a drouth upon me and a cramping leg* (Synge, 2003: 57) or *It's nearly time we got a start, anyhow* (O'Casey, 1930: 15).

4.1.4.7 Habitual aspect

Another aspectual distinction found in Irish English vernacular forms is the habitual, i.e. “a grammatical category used to express an action which occurs repeatedly”. It can be subdivided into ‘durative habitual’ and ‘iterative habitual’. On the one hand, the durative habitual describes a repeated action which lasts for a certain period of time. On the other hand, the iterative habitual occurs when the stress is focussed on the repetition of an action and duration becomes secondary. This is found in standard English varieties, e.g. *He often breaks the speed limit with his sportscar*. In Irish English the iterative habitual is marked by verbal –s, as in *[w]hen I looks down them stairs, I gets dizzy*. Both the iterative and the durative are encoded in standard English “by the simple present and the progressive respectively”, though an encoded habitual aspect does not occur in standard English (Hickey, 2007a: 213). In the following section I am going to continue with different categories of habitual aspect:

a) Suffixal -s and the iterative habitual

The iterative habitual marked by verbal –s is very common in the east coast varieties of Irish English, especially in Waterford and Dublin. Although it is also found in western and south-western varieties, as they historically derive from easterly varieties. As Hickey (2007a: 214-215) clarifies “South-eastern Irish English is particularly appropriate for examining an iterative habitual marked by verbal -s because present-tense verbs, especially *be*, *have* and non-lexical *do*, show no inflection here.” For example, *[s]he haves someone come in the morning to help her* or *[h]e only haves his birthday every four years (boy born on 29 Feb)* are two clear instances where the inflection indicates an iterative usage.

Suffixal -s mostly occurs with the first person, typically in the singular, but not exclusively, e.g. *That's what we calls it* or *We gets it brought to us*. It is also found in

narrative contexts, mainly in the first person singular. This occurrence may be connected with its prevalence in south-west England (Hickey, 2007a: 215).

The expression of the iterative habitual with suffixal –s appeared in letters from the early nineteenth century. There are attestations where someone used inflected first person singular to express an iterative habitual, e.g. *I hopes the [] family are well . . . , I hopes you will except [sic!] my thanks for the same . . .* This usage is still present in east coast varieties of Irish English (Hickey, 2007a: 216).

The instances found in my corpus are scarce, since there are only a few cases of the suffixal –s in the iterative habitual. Those cases are with the verbs *do* and *say* as shown in the following²⁷ examples:

(51) *Them sentiments does you credit.* (O’Casey, 1930: 34)

(52) *so wan day I says to her, “You should ha’ been called Juno”.* (O’Casey, 1930: 40)

(53) *‘You will not if I can help it,’ says I. ‘Go on,’ says he, ‘or I’ll have the devil making garters of your limbs tonight.’ ‘You will not if I can help it,’ says I.* (Synge, 2003: 40)

b) Durative habitual

b₁) Unstressed *do* + lexical verb

b₂) *Do(es) be* + V-*ing*

In the remaining cases, the term ‘habitual’ will be used with the meaning of ‘durative habitual’. Normally, *do* is the verb associated with the durative, and this is seen in sentences such as *[h]e paints in houses for a few bob, you know, he does painting in the houses*, where the speaker seems to “exploit the option of *do* to mark habituality”. The durative habitual will be covered in this section (Hickey, 2007a: 216).

In Irish English there are two primary means of conveying a durative habitual: (i) *do(es) be* or (ii) *be(es)*. The former is found in the south of Ireland whereas the latter is restricted to the north and Co. Wexford (Hickey, 2007a: 216).

²⁷ Even though *says* could be understood as indicating past time reference, it occurs in the same text as the word *said* (past participle).

b₁) Unstressed do + lexical verb

Hickey (2007a: 216) also mentions a further manner of expressing a durative habitual, which is “a remnant of unstressed *do* + lexical verb”. This is found in vernacular rural varieties in the south of Ireland and shows occurrence in Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World*:

(54) *and I was down this morning looking on the papers the post-boy **does have** in his bag* (habitual, i.e. non-emphatic). (Synge, 2003: 43)

(55) *Her like **does often change***. (Synge, 2003: 71)

b₂) *Do(es) be + V-ing*

It is assumed that *do(es) + be + V-ing* is the most prevailing means of realising the habitual in southern Ireland. It is attested in both eastern and western regions. Nonetheless, there are certain extensions to this type of habitual, as is the case of *be*, *have* and a past habitual. *Be* in the habitual occurs when the “following lexical verb is lacking [and] [t]he latter is probably an extension of the present habitual and would seem to be homophonous with it” (Hickey, 2007a: 217).

The input from south-eastern English dates back to the late Middle Ages and it was strongest in the eastern area of the country. This input would have later spread from the east to the west of Ireland, partially mixing with other forms. The lack of inflection in auxiliary verbs is reflected in the *do be* as a habitual in contemporary south-eastern Irish English. There are plenty of attestations of the periphrastic *do* in Dublin in the 18th century (Hickey, 2007a: 218).

Filppula²⁸ (1999) discusses the view that “adult learners of English in the language shift situation would have been confronted with both a simple present and one in which *do* acts as tense carrier, as in *I see* and *I do see*”. Thus, this led to a reinterpretation of periphrastic *do* + verb as a habitual. There are different points of view as regards the reason of such reanalysis (Hickey, 2007a: 220). Hickey (2007a: 222) states that the use of periphrastic *do* as a habitual is due to the fact that learners of English during the language shift would have sought for a parallel to the habitual in Irish and would have

²⁸ Hickey (2007a: 220) quoting Filppula (1999)

chosen the afunctional periphrastic *do* for expressing the habitual in English. Therefore, “a pattern in Irish was transferred to Irish English and spread to produce the type of habitual exponence which can be observed [...] from the mid nineteenth century onwards” (Hickey, 2007a: 222). Both substratist and retentionist basis could be considered to explain the source of Irish English *do be* (Estévez, 1998: 13)

There are no instances of the *do(es) be + V-ing* habitual in O’Casey’s *Juno and the Paycock*. But it is quite recurrent in Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World*. Some attestations of this are:

(56) *Is it often the polis **do be coming** into this place, master of the house?* (Synge, 2003: 21)

(57) *and won’t be the like of the clumsy young fellows **do be ploughing** all times in the earth and dung.* (Synge, 2003: 36)

(58) *There’s harvest hundreds **do be passing** these days for the Sligo boat.* (Synge, 2003: 50)

(59) *the times sweet smells **do be rising**, and you’d see a little, shiny new moon.* (Synge, 2003: 64)

The structure *do + be* in the negative imperative was found in the works of authors from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its use was, and is, quite common in Irish English. The source of this structure seems to be the Irish habitual form *bí* ‘be’, which always occurs in the imperative. Moreover, “the habitual in Irish [...] requires a continuous form of the lexical verb it governs”. There is also an equivalence between Irish and Irish English constructions, since both have two stressed syllables at the beginning, as in *Ná bí. . .* [' '] and *Don’t be. . .* [' '] (Hickey, 2007a: 223). The sentences below are attestations of *do + be* in the negative imperative taken from my corpus:

(60) *Ah, wear whatever ribbon you like, girl, only **don’t be botherin’** me.* (O’Casey, 1930: 7)

(61) *an’ **don’t be actin’** as if you couldn’t pull a wing out of a dead bee.* (O’Casey, 1930: 22)

(62) *Go on, I’m saying, and **don’t be waking** this place with your noise.* (Synge, 2003: 27)

(63) ***Don't be lettin*** on to be shy, a fine, gamey, treacherous lad the like of you.
(Synge, 2003: 39)

For the speakers of Irish, *do + be* could have been understood as a counterpart of the negative imperative of Irish. It had probably established itself in Irish English by the last decades of the eighteenth century. The negative imperative habitual had extended to the indicative in the early nineteenth century, as the following instances show: (i) ***Don't be worrying*** about the children (negative habitual imperative), (ii) ***I do be worrying*** about the children (habitual indicative) (Hickey, 2007a: 223).

c) Inflected *be* as habitual in south-eastern Irish English

This form is not considered overly significant, because there are not many instances of *be's* habitual in south. Hickey (2007a: 231) only recorded one attestation in the eastern area: ***They bees*** out fishin' of a Saturday. But the usual expression of the habitual in that area is with *do be*. In *A Linguistic Survey of Ireland*, he recorded the inflected habitual *be* for informants in Co. Wexford, who were all elderly rural males, e.g. ***The week-day be's*** a quiet day or [t]he cows ***they be's*** milking in stages. There are no instances of this use in my corpus. The only example found in Hickey's recordings may be a remnant of a previous, much extended usage of *be's* in the area.

d) Past habitual with *were to*

A further use of the past habitual not remarked on by scholars, was found in contact areas of the west of Ireland. This is the case of *were to* as a past habitual. It seems to be local to west Connemara, as it was not found elsewhere. The origin of this form is not clear as "Irish does not provide any ready pattern which could have been the model" (Hickey, 2007a: 232). It is likely that modal uses of the verb *be + to* were extended to the past and interpreted as habitual. Since it is from a specific region, it is understandable that there are no instances of this type of structure in the plays. Therefore, I will exemplify this feature with Hickey's attestations:

(64) ***They were to*** make it in the old days . . . (Hickey, 2007a: 232)

(65) ***They were to*** cut it and burn it and make kelp of out it. (Hickey, 2007a: 232)

(66) *They **were to** take iodine and soap out of this kelp.* (Hickey, 2007a: 233)

e) Past habitual with *used (to)*

The past habitual with *used (to)* is a regular characteristic of Irish English. It is “a formal equivalent to the *do(es) + be* habitual of the present” (Hickey, 2007a: 233). Nonetheless, this feature can be found in both habitual and stative contexts, which is not very frequent in the present. The verb *use* in the past is followed by “an infinitival complement without *to*” (as *allow, help*, etc. in Irish English) (Hickey, 2007a: 233). The following examples are taken from Hickey (2007a: 234), since there are no instances of the past habitual with *used (to)* in my corpus:

(67) *We **used to** go to the Royal Bar of a Saturday, but we've gone off it a bit now, you know it's got very loud.* (Habitual)

(68) *The park **used be** great fun, usen't it?* (Habitual)

(69) *The parcel office **used be** down on the quay but they're out off the Cork road now.* (Stative)

In *The Playboy of the Western World* there are no occurrences of this. However, in *Juno and the Paycock* there are two attestations of *used to* which may imply a habitual meaning:

(70) *He ofen took tea with us here, in the oul' days, an' Johnny, there, an' him **used to** be always together.* (O'Casey, 1930: 70).

(71) “That's th' father of Mary Boyle that had th' kid be th' swank she **used to** go with; d'ye know, d'ye know?” (O'Casey, 1930: 96).

4.1.5. General non-standard features

In this last section of the analysis of the verbal area, non-specifically Irish English formal features will be listed. These have a great importance, as some of them appear very recurrently in the corpus. However, they will not be described here. They are as follows:

- a. Non-standard verb forms (preterites and past participles):
- (i) *Who has **kep** th' home together for the past few years—only me.* (O'Casey, 1930: 100)
- (ii) *I just **riz** the loy and let fall the edge of it on the ridge of his skull.* (Synge, 2003: 25)
- b. Number of verb forms:
- (i) *An' who **done** it then?* (O'Casey, 1930: 83)
- (ii) *I was passing below, and **I seen** your mountainy sheep eating cabbages in Jimmy's field.* (Synge, 2003: 46)
- c. Variation with prepositional and direct objects: *So that's what **happened her** after going to England* (Hickey, 2007a: 174). No tokens found in my corpus.
- d. Uninflected forms of third person-singular present tense: *I suppose **she be** lonely on her own too sometimes* (Hickey, 2007a: 175). No tokens found in my corpus.
- e. Deletion of *be*:
- (i) *If he has, he'll be rightly hobbled yet, and **he** \emptyset [**is**] **not** able to say ten words without making a brag [...]* (Synge, 2003: 56)
- (ii) *he'll be having my life, and **I** \emptyset [**am**] **going** home lonesome in the darkness of the night.* (Synge, 2003: 21)
- f. *Be* as auxiliary: *The amusements **are gone** quite expensive* (Hickey, 2007a: 178). No tokens found in my corpus.
- g. Verb contractions:
- (i) ***Amn't** I nicely handicapped with the whole o' yours!* (O'Casey, 1930: 10)
- (ii) ***Amn't** I after saying it is himself has me destroyed.* (Synge, 2003: 51)
- h. Use of *shall* and *will*:
- (i) ***I'll** wait for it, **will** I?* (O'Casey, 1930: 90)
- (ii) *Let me out now and **I'll** slip down the boreen.* (Synge, 2003: 62)

i. Overuse of the conditional:

(i) *If anything **ud** [would] happen to poor Johnny, I think I'd [would] lose me mind.* (O'Casey, 1930: 108)

(ii) ***Would** you have me think a man never talked with the girls **would** have the words you've spoken today?* (Synge, 2003: 45)

The following Table shows the tokens of variable types:

Verbal features	<i>Juno and the Paycock</i>	<i>The Playboy of the Western World</i>	TOTAL
Verbal concord	2	2	4
Forms of <i>be</i>	19	17	36
Regularisation of <i>be</i> paradigms	6	0	6
Verb forms after <i>there</i>	3	8	11
Infinitives	0	18	18
Unmarked infinitives	0	0	0
Infinitival complements	0	0	0
Perfective use of <i>can</i>	0	0	0
Epistemic negative <i>must</i>	0	0	0
The 'indefinite anterior'	25	18	43
Extended <i>now</i>	0	0	0
<i>Be</i> perfects	0	0	0
Immediate perfective	35	28	63
Resultative perfective	0	0	0
<i>Get</i> and the resultative perfective	0	0	0
Suffixal <i>-s</i> and the iterative habitual	2	3	5
Unstressed <i>do</i> + lexical verb	0	10	10
<i>Do(es) be</i> + <i>V-ing</i>	0	7	7
Inflected <i>be</i> as habitual	0	0	0
Past habitual with <i>were to</i>	0	0	0
Past habitual with <i>used (to)</i>	2	0	2

Table 4.2 Occurrences of variable types.

CONCLUSION

In this work an attempt has been made to study the typical features of the Irish English verbal system. The focus has been on analysing the degree of similarity between eastern and western varieties. As shown, Irish English is somewhat different from Standard English. Through these attestations it has been confirmed that Irish English grammar is unique due to the two elements combined in the language contact. On the one hand, the Irish influence and, on the other, the input from dialects of English. Furthermore, the language shift process also had an important role in the linguistic configuration of Ireland, as it caused individuals to forge their variety of English.

The influence of the English language in Ireland was not continuous. There were peaks of rise and decline caused by different factors. English was introduced in Ireland in the 12th century. Nonetheless, due to the gaelicisation of the Anglo-Norman, by the 14th century the influence of English had been practically reduced to the Pale. With the religious Reformation in the 16th century, English reached its peak of decline, because it became associated with Anglicanism, and the religion of the majority of the Irish was Catholicism. When the 17th century-plantations were established, the language shift started, changing the linguistic situation. The Irish became influenced by the settlers, who were English speakers. Also, due to the Penal laws, speaking Irish was punished and the use of English offered the possibility of achieving a better economic and social position. The late 19th century was the highest point for English and the completion of the language shift, which ended with the decline of Irish. Several causes are considered to be behind the decrease of Irish, but the most evident is the Great Famine. Due to the language shift there was a late adoption of English in the rural areas of the west, because it started first in the eastern area. With these dissimilar conditions of rural and urban populations when acquiring English, it was likely that dialectal distinctions were reflected in Irish English grammar.

Nevertheless, there are no significant differences as regards the verbal area, because the evidence shows that, generally speaking, the same structures occur in both dialects. The constructions which are only present in the East area are ‘regularisation of *be* paradigms’ and ‘past habitual with *used (to)*’. And the structures only present in the West are ‘infinitives’, ‘unstressed *do* + lexical verb’ and ‘*do(es) be + V-ing*’. The features which only occur in one of the areas could be defined as markers of that particular variety,

i.e. ‘regularisation of *be* paradigms’ and ‘past habitual with *used (to)*’ could be associated with the East area and ‘infinitives’, ‘unstressed *do* + lexical verb’, ‘*do(es) be* + *V-ing*’ could be identified with the West area. Although, there is not an important deviation between both varieties except for those characteristics. Therefore, the results obtained confirm that there are almost no differences at a morphosyntactic level in these Irish English varieties.

Synge and O’Casey have served as a basis for the comparison of both dialectal varieties. Even though it is important to take into account that these are fictional works, therefore language in literature may not be as precise as Irish English spoken by a real person. However, the selection of these authors was based on their accuracy at representing this language. Hickey (2007c: 109) states that “this genre [drama] is likely to contain most examples of specifically Irish English features given that it is written speech. The two main authors here are John Millington Synge and Sean O’Casey”.

Finally, to improve the reliability of this study, further investigation on Irish English needs to be done. Future research could examine other morphosyntactic aspects of this variety, such as the nominal or the prepositional area. It would also be interesting to extend the analysis to other fields, for example phonology or semantics, as those would complete the grammatical study of this dialect. Additionally, as half of the verbal features of Irish English do not occur in this corpus, it would be interesting to compare other authors, e.g. Lady Gregory and Dion Boucicault, to see if their representations are more accurate.

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