Title	Preface
Authors(s)	Migge, Bettina, Ní Chiosáin, Máire
Publication date	2012-11
Publication information	Migge, Bettina, and Máire Ní Chiosáin. "Preface." John Benjamins, November 2012. https://doi.org/10.1075/veaw.g44.
Publisher	John Benjamins
Item record/more information	http://hdl.handle.net/10197/6020
Publisher's version (DOI)	10.1075/veaw.g44

Preface

Bettina Migge and Máire Ni Chiosáin

The articles in this volume primarily represent a selection of papers that were presented at the Conference *New Perspectives on Irish English* which was held in March 2010 at University College Dublin. The aim of the conference, and now the volume, was to assess the directions of research on varieties of English spoken on the island of Ireland since the publication of *Focus on Ireland* which was edited by Jeffrey Kallen in 1997, and highlight how that research has developed in the last fifteen years. Comparing the articles in this volume to those published in *Focus on Irish English* two broad differences emerge that are worth highlighting.

   i. Topics of investigation: Pioneering work by scholars such as Kachru (1985, 1988, 1992) and Görlach (1990) focused on classifying varieties of English spoken around the world, describing their linguistic features, understanding the diachronic and synchronic relationships between them and, especially in the case of Kachru, removing the social stigma that was attached to non-metropolitan varieties of English. In line with this research agenda in the 1980s and 1990s, much of the research on Irish English (and other varieties of English) at the time dealt with the description of the distinctive features of Irish English and an exploration of their origin (see for example, Harris 1993; Filppula 1999). Researchers initially focused on the impact of varieties of Irish (Gaelic) on varieties of Irish English (Filppula 1999) and later also considered in more depth the impact of British varieties of English (Harris 1993) and universal influences (e.g. Corrigan 2009). In *Focus on Ireland* this broad line of research is well represented as three of the twelve papers in the volume deal with the influence of Irish on varieties of Irish English

and four papers describe specific structural features that appear to be unique to Irish English or at least differ from equivalent features found in the varieties of English that functioned as inputs to Irish English. A number of the contributions in the current volume also deal with distinctive features and with their origins. However, only two of the contributions explicitly invoke the possibility of an Irish influence. Diamant, for instance, examines the influence of the Irish responsive system on the emergence of the responsive system of Irish English as part of her description of the latter. Clarke argues, based on data from Newfoundland varieties of English, that the *after*-perfect construction most likely emerged due to influence from Irish while the emergence of other 'divergent' perfect constructions such as the medial object perfect in Irish English appears to have emerged due to influence from other varieties of English. Other contributions in this volume that identify distinctive features, by contrast, argue in favour of the importance of what can be called usage-based factors such as pragmatic transfer between related constructions (Sullivan), the relaxation of semantic constraints and colloquialisation (Filppula), and increasing literacy rates and mainstreaming of vernacular features (McCafferty & Amador Moreno).

Due to the mostly structural focus in earlier linguistic research on varieties of English, the *Focus on Ireland* volume included only one paper that had a distinctly sociolinguistic focus. By contrast, the current volume features a total of seven papers that investigate sociolinguistic issues. Six of the papers (Sells; Peters; Nestor, Ní Chasaide & Regan; Corrigan, Edge & Lonergan; Schweinberger; Beal) follow a broadly quantitative sociolinguistic approach investigating the social and linguistic distribution of specific linguistic features, while Migge explores language attitudes to Irish varieties of English among people who came to Ireland during the recent economic boom. In addition to these papers, this collection also includes three

papers that follow the research agenda on variational pragmatics (Schneider & Barron 2008) with specific reference to Irish English (Barron and Schneider 2005). Clancy & Vaughan examine the function and distribution of the element *now* in Irish English, and Murphy & Farr explore the uses of vocatives in the Limerick corpus. Diamant examines variation in the kinds of responses to Yes/No questions. Finally, Sullivan continues the tradition of intonational studies on varieties of English, extending the data base and analysis of the characteristic rising intonation of Belfast English.

The varieties spoken by members of the Irish diaspora communities around the world have long been an integral part of research on Irish English and this research was also represented with two papers in the 1997 volume. The three papers in the current volume differ from those in the previous volume in two respects. First, they focus not only on the much discussed North American varieties but also include a paper on the little known Argentine Irish community (Amador Moreno). Second, the paper on Newfoundland varieties of English (Clarke) examines how research on diaspora varieties can provide valuable insights into the development and origin of features of Irish varieties of English. The current volume also reflects the social changes that Ireland has undergone since the publication of the *Focus on Ireland* volume. In the interim Ireland changed from being a country emigration to becoming the destination of immigrants from around the world. Two of the papers in the volume (Nestor, Ní Chasaide & Regan; Migge) focus on issues of language among people who have immigrated to Ireland during the years of the recent economic boom popularly known as the Celtic Tiger.

ii. Data and analytical approaches: Earlier research on varieties of English (and other languages) followed a largely descriptive linguistic approach where researchers mostly elicited linguistic data from one or a few language consultants basing their descriptions on relatively

small data sets. Since William Labov's pioneering work in the 1960s and more recently the emergence of Corpus Linguistics, an important focus of linguistic research is to assemble large corpora and to base linguistic research on these data. This trend is striking in the current volume. Most of the papers rely on corpora for Irish English (and other varieties of English), some of which are publicly available. Moreover, three of the contributions deal explicitly with the issues surrounding the construction of linguistic corpora. Amador Moreno presents the data that will be part of the Irish-Argentine corpus that she is constructing and discusses preliminary insights it provides. McCafferty & Amador Moreno present the CORIECOR corpus (A *Corpus of Irish English Correspondence*) which consists of letters sent between Ireland and many of the places the Irish migrated to, and Corrigan et al. talk about how methods of socio-syntax and perceptual phonology can be usefully applied to construct a corpus of vernacular data for Ireland that is comparable to others for the UK. Apart from corpora specially put together by individual researchers for the purpose of their research or for future publication using a variety of methods of data collection such as sociolinguistic interviews (Peters; Sells; Nestor, Ní Chasaide & Regan), more general interviews (Amador Moreno, Migge), attitudinal surveys (Hickey), morpho-syntactic and phonological questionnaires and production data (Corrigan, Edge, Lonergan), experimental intonational data (Sullivan), natural/spontaneous data from a variety of sources (Clarke), letters of Irish emigrants (McCafferty & Amador Moreno), the contributors to the volume also draw on data from more widely known corpora such as the International Corpora of English, especially the International Corpus of Irish English (ICE-Ireland, Kirk & Kallen 2008), the Limerick Corpus of Irish English (Farr, Murphy & O'Keeffe 2004), Oceans of consolation: personal accounts of Irish migration to Australia (Fitzpatrick 1994), Tape Recorded Survey (TRS, Hickey 2004), the British National Corpus, the Old Bailey Corpus.

Another aspect that is noteworthy with respect to the papers in this volume is the fact that a number of them have a comparative focus. With the greater availability of corpus data for a range of varieties of English, several of the papers not only describe features of Irish English, but compare their use across two or more varieties of English. This is done for two main reasons: first, to determine the relationship between varieties of English and the conditions in which they emerged (Bael; McCafferty & Amador Moreno) and (ii) to identify the origin of particular features and/or to provide evidence of similarities or differences between related varieties of English with a view to understanding issues of language contact and language development (Clancy & Vaughan; Filppula; Schweinberger; McCafferty & Amador Moreno; Amador Moreno; Corrigan, Edge, Lonergan; Diamant).

A final noteworthy difference between the 1997 volume and the current volume are naming conventions for the varieties of English spoken on the island of Ireland. While the earlier volume noted a diversity of terms that were then used to designate these varieties of English, no such issue arose in the context of the current volume. All authors, without any guiding input from the editors or the conference discussions, make use of the terms Irish English, suggesting that it has become accepted and mainstreamed in academic usage – though possibly not to the same extent in local usage.

The papers in this volume fall into five broad categories. Three of the articles deal with the social distribution of linguistic features in varieties of Irish English. Corrigan et al. reports on a pilot project that investigates Hickey's (2005) claims about language change in Dublin and Irish English based on perception and production data from a small number of speakers of vernacular varieties of English in Dublin. They show that contrary to claims made in Hickey (2005), there does not appear to be a significant difference in language use between men and women and

people belonging to different generational groups. Peters reports on a pilot study on phonological variation and change in the Bóthar Mór district of Galway City. Using a quantitative sociolinguistic approach, he shows that some variables such as prenasal /e/-raising and dental fricatives are subject to intergenerational change, while other variables appear to be involved in stable patterns of variation. Sells explores the social and linguistic conditioning and distribution of schwa epenthesis based on a corpus of spoken English involving people from Galway city. Her quantitative study shows that schwa epenthesis is receding in formal speech and in the speech of younger people and nowadays appears to be mainly found in the word *film*. Sullivan's paper examines the phonetic nature of rising intonation in statements in Belfast English in a corpus involving three Belfast speakers and evaluates two hypotheses on the potential source of this phenomenon. Her analysis provides evidence in favour of the so-called Transfer Hypothesis which argues that rising intonation on statements is due to pragmatic transfer from question intonation.

The volume includes four papers that explore the syntax and semantics of morphosyntactic structures. Filppula provides a comparative analysis of the use of modal auxiliaries with the progressive form in corpora of standard and non-standard Irish and British English. The analysis reveals a higher incidence of such structures in varieties of Irish English suggesting that the two sets of varieties are developing in partially different ways, possibly due to being differently affected by socio-pragmatic processes such as colloquialization. Drawing on several types of data sets for Newfoundland English, Clarke revisits the syntax and semantics of the different constructions used for expressing the equivalent of the English perfect. Her analysis of data from both the Irish-descent and English-descent communities in Newfoundland provides new insights into the on-going debate about the meanings and origin of these constructions in Irish English. It

suggests that the so-called *after*-perfect construction which is most likely modelled on an equivalent Irish construction was used to encode a wider range of meanings than hitherto presented in the literature. By contrast, the medial object perfect, which has often been described as a distinctive feature of Irish English, appears to have emerged from other varieties of English and from processes of grammaticalization rather than having been modelled on Irish. Employing Reichenbach's (1947) framework, Van Hattum investigates the relationship between expressions of past time in combination with modal verbs in three constructions based on data from several corpora of 18th and 19th century Irish English. The three constructions include the now perfect with the modal verb CAN, constructions in which a past tense modal is followed by an infinitive and counterfactuals in which a past time modal is followed directly by a past participle. She shows that constructions involving CAN with past time reference are indeed best analyzed as instances of the extended-now perfect rather than as a distinctive use of perfective CAN. The second type of construction does not appear to be an instance of the Indefinite Anterior Perfect. Based on comparative analysis of *it*-clefts in different parts of the International Corpus of English data, Beal revisits Irish *it*-cleft constructions. She shows that *it*-clefts are not unique to Irish English but are found in other post-colonial varieties of English. However, their frequency and nature are influenced by various linguistic factors and social factors that pertain to the historical development of these varieties.

Four of the papers in the collection deal with pragmatic aspects. Schweinberger examines the social and structural distribution of the discourse maker *LIKE* in the ICE-Ireland corpus and compares it with that found in other varieties of English. He shows that *LIKE* is undergoing change in its various uses in many varieties of English and that its use decreases with rising speaker age. Diamant describes the patterns that make up the responsive system of Irish English

and explores their origins showing that there are important similarities to the responsive system in Irish which suggests that the former was modeled on the latter. Murphy & Farr and Clancy & Vaughan are less concerned with the structural aspects of vocatives and the discourse particle *now* respectively but focus their exploration on usage-based issues. Murphy & Farr explore the use of vocatives across a range of contexts in Irish English showing, on the basis of an in-depth analysis of three vocatives types in the Limerick corpus of Irish English, that they are strongly associated with informal contexts and that their use is stratified by age and gender. Clancy & Vaughan examine the distribution of the element *now* confirming lay reports that its uses in Irish English are in part distinctive. Comparing its use in the Limerick corpus with that in the British National Corpus, they show that it has a higher frequency in Irish English due to its use as a deictic presentative and as a pragmatic marker in that variety.

Two of the papers are concerned with issues of corpus building and the insights that such corpora can provide into the development of Irish English locally and in the diaspora. McCafferty & Amador Moreno present the Corpus of Irish English Correspondence (CORIECOR) which includes mostly letters sent between Ireland and many of the well-known destinations for Irish emigrants in the 18th, 19th and early 20st century. They highlight, based on an examination of the development of the progressive, the kinds of insights that such a corpus can provide into the development of specific features in Irish English and those varieties that were affected by it. By comparing progressive forms in this corpus and in similar corpora for other varieties of English to which Irish varieties functioned as important input, they show that the progressive was not very frequent until the mid 19th century in Ireland and only developed gradually due to increasing rates of literacy. Amador Moreno presents the kinds of data that are available for the Argentine-Irish community and shows that despite contact with British varieties

of English and Spanish, many of the features described for Irish varieties of English in the literature are also robustly present in the varieties spoken by the descendants of Irish immigrants to Argentina.

The final set of papers explores issues of language and identity in contemporary Ireland. Migge discusses newcomers' linguistic integration into Ireland and their views about and attitudes to varieties of Irish English using material collected in semi-guided interviews with over seventy newcomers to Ireland. She demonstrates that while immigrants have similar views and understandings about the sociolinguistic structure of Irish varieties of English, there are clear differences with respect to attitudes to Irish English. These differences appear to be conditioned by factors such as a person's national origin, their relationship to other English-speaking countries and populations, attitudes to Ireland and contact with speakers of Irish English. Nestor et al. examines the use of the element *LIKE* in the speech of Polish immigrants to Ireland. Their investigation suggests that their use of *LIKE*, as in the case of local Irish people, is conditioned by age and gender. However, other factors such as contact and exposure to Irish people and notions about what constitutes good speech seem to impact equally on the use and distribution of *LIKE* in the speech of Polish speakers of Irish English.

References

Barron, A. & Schneider, K. P. 2005. *The pragmatics of Irish English*. Berlin /New York: Mounton de Gruyter.

Corrigan, K. 2009. Irish daughters of Northern British Relatives: Internal and external constraints on the System of relativization in South Armagh English. In *Vernacular universals*

and language contacts: Evidence from Varieties of English and Beyond, M. Filppula, J. Klemola & H. Paulasto (eds), 133-162. New York: Routledge.

Farr, F., Murphy, B. & O'Keeffe, A. 2004. The Limerick Corpus of Irish English: design, description and application. In *Corpora, Varieties and the Language Classroom. Special Edition of Teanga 21*, F. Farr and A. O'Keeffe (eds), 5-29. Dublin: IRAAL.

Filppula, M. 1999. *The grammar of Irish English: language in Hibernian style.* London: Routeledge.

Fitzpatrick, D. 1994. *Oceans of consolation: personal accounts of Irish migration to Australia.* Cork: Cork University Press.

Görlach, M. 1990. *Studies in the history of the English language*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter.

Hickey, R. 2005. *Dublin English: Evolution and Change*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Hickey, Raymond. 2004. *A Sound Atlas of Irish English*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Harris, J. 1993. The grammar of Irish English. In *Real English: The Grammar of English Dialects in the British Isles,* J. Milroy & L. Milroy (eds), 139-86. London: Longman.

Huber, M. under construction. *Old Bailey Corpus.*<http://www.uni-giessen.de/oldbaileycorpus/index.php> (November 2009).

Kachru, B. B. 1992. The other tongue: English across cultures (2nd Edition). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Kachru, B. B. 1988. The sacred cows of English. *English Today* 16: 3-8.

Kachru, B. B. 1985. Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: the English language in the outer circle. In *English in the World: Teaching and learning the language and literatures*, R. Quirk & H. G. Widdowson (eds.), XX. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kallen, J.L. & Kirk, J.M. 2008. *ICE-Ireland: A User's Guide*. Belfast: Cló Ollscoil na Banríona.

Schneider, K. P. & Barron, A (eds). 2008. *Variational pragmatics*. John Benjamins.