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Raymond Hickey (ed.). *Sociolinguistics in Ireland*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Pp. xxii + 424. ISBN 9781137453464.

Reviewed by Joan O'Sullivan, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick

I was heartened to hear of the publication of this book. I saw it at one level as a complementary work to other recent publications in the area, for example Migge & Ní Chiosáin's (2012) volume, *New Perspectives on Irish English*, but providing a more specific focus on the sociolinguistics of this variety; at another level, it would allow for the treatment of other varieties of English used in Ireland, as well as the Irish language itself (which was of course outside the scope of the *New Perspectives* volume). Generally speaking, the book has lived up to my expectations. An acid test on the value of the book is the number of times I have found myself referring to it and also recommending it to my students (both undergraduate and postgraduate), and indeed a number of contributions in particular have been very useful in this regard. Although the book does not name a specific audience, the preface (p. x) mentions that the glossary and general references are provided with those unfamiliar with the area of language and society in Ireland in mind, as well as those with an interest in Irish history, literature and culture. The book has a good mix of chapters with more general coverage of issues (for example, Crowley; Shields) and those which focus on very specific studies (for example, Ní Laoire; Walshe; Barron & Pandarova) and which can serve as a model for both novice and more experienced researchers in linguistics in the Irish context. The volume is broad in its scope and covers a good range of sociolinguistic topics, using the Irish context to explore key sociolinguistic issues, such as language variation and change, language and the media, language shift, language death, language and identity *inter alia*. The volume is divided into three parts, part I 'Language and society in contemporary Ireland', part II 'Language and society in Irish history' and part III 'Sociolinguistic interfaces.'

In part I, the opening chapter by the editor, Raymond Hickey, entitled 'English in Ireland: Development and varieties', provides a short review of research in Irish English and a usefully succinct history of Irish English; this is followed by an account of the language shift in Ireland, incorporating a description of key terms

such as *supraregionalisation*, *vernacularisation* and *enregisterment* as they apply in the Irish context. A description of general features of Irish English is provided before a narrowing of the focus to a discussion of contemporary Dublin English. For a student new to the field, this discussion provides a concise overview of Hickey's very informative *Variation and Change in Dublin English* website and could serve as an introduction or companion to this resource. In his treatment of contemporary Dublin English, Hickey proceeds to hone in on one specific linguistic feature (that of short front vowel lowering) more recently appearing in 'non-local Dublin English' accents. In doing this, the account gets very technical very suddenly, which may be a little intimidating for the novice researcher in this field. However, such detail can be justified by Hickey's aim, which is to establish the influence of American English on this feature. Hickey puts forward explanations, based on both internal and external influences, for the appearance of this feature in Irish English (pp. 30–1). It is somewhat perplexing, however, that in relation to earlier features of this 'new pronunciation' which appeared in the 1990s, he remains adamant that they were not influenced by British or American English. I find this contention rather too definitive and somewhat unconvincing. Hickey argues that the 'many obvious differences' (p. 27) between Irish English and the American variety preclude the American influence from being an acceptable explanation. However, as Bell (1991: 143) points out, accommodation with regard to linguistic features may involve a small number or even just one variant. Hickey admits (p. 29) that short front vowel lowering is not identical to that found in North America so it is not clear why he accepts the American influence for this feature and not for the earlier ones. That said, overall I found the chapter to be insightful and informative and a comprehensive introduction for those new to the field.

Ó Catháin's chapter on 'The Irish language in present-day Ireland' has some interesting parallels with chapter 1 in that it looks at the history of the Irish language and language change, citing reasons for the language shift (pp. 46–8) and highlighting changes in spoken Irish in relation to L1 as well as L2 speakers. In part III ('Sociolinguistic interfaces'), Tina Hickey and Nancy Stenson's chapter on the role of reading in the acquisition of Irish as a second language takes up and develops issues touched on but not fully explored in Ó Catháin's chapter; these include the emphasis on oral language development at the expense of literacy in Irish and the education system and the role of teacher education as a factor contributing to the lack of emphasis on literacy in Irish second language acquisition, an issue which is very topical in contemporary Ireland.

Returning our focus to part I, chapter 3 ('The Irish language and the media'), by Iarfhlaith Watson, will be very useful for those interested in ideological studies in that it chronicles the different ideological periods over the past 100 years through the lens of Irish language media. Watson's insightful treatment concludes that the Irish language should be protected 'in the interests of humanity' as a whole (p. 77), rather than solely in the national interest, and this forms part of what he terms the 'cosmopolitan ideology'. It would have been interesting, however, in the discussion of this latter ideology and also in the following chapter on Irish-English codeswitching

by Siobhán Ní Laore, to see some discussion, or at least mention, of the concept of *translanguaging*, which has come to prominence in research on the sociolinguistics of bilingualism and multilingualism (see, for example, Garcia & Wei 2014) and how it might apply in the Irish context in relation to Irish, English and other languages. Ní Laoire's chapter on Irish-English codeswitching ('Irish-English code-switching: A sociolinguistic perspective'), nevertheless, provides interesting results on triggers for codeswitching based on two datasets, the codeswitching of adult L1 speakers of Irish in Irish social settings and on regional Irish language radio and codeswitching on an Irish language radio soap opera. This chapter also reflects on perceptions of codeswitching.

Looking back briefly to the opening chapter by Hickey, the chapter begins with a reference to the way in which immigration has introduced a proliferation of both European and non-European languages to Ireland. Given these remarks, and indeed Hickey's mention in the Preface of how increasing immigration adds 'a further dimension to the interface of language and society' (p. x), the reader might reasonably expect some treatment of the relationship of these new languages and their speakers to Irish society or of the variety of English these speakers are using. These topics might be suggested by the title of the final chapter in the section from Barron & Pandarova, 'The sociolinguistics of language use in Ireland'. However, the focus of this chapter is much narrower than the title implies; it would seem that a more appropriate title would be 'The sociolinguistics of language use in *Irish English*' as a variety rather than in the more general linguistic landscape of Ireland. While the corpus study which forms part of this chapter is very useful in showing how region interacts with gender, the title here would suggest a broader focus, in which the language use of immigrants might be dealt with. In the review of research, when discussing the macro-social factor of ethnicity, reference is made to Brian Clancy's (2011) insightful research on Irish Travellers (p.112); however, the review makes no mention of Maria Rieder's (2015) work in this regard (although its relatively recent publication might explain this). As the chapters were specially commissioned, it would have been interesting to see among them a bespoke chapter on this important ethnic minority as well as a similar chapter on the language of newcomers to Ireland, for example, its linguistic effects on Irish English or the extent to which these speakers are acquiring Irish English features and their attitudes to this variety (see Migge 2012).

Part II of the volume focuses on language and society in Irish history. Chapter 6, 'Language relations in early Ireland', by Patricia Ronan, attempts to map Irish-English language contact in Ireland onto Schneider's (2003) Dynamic Model of the spread of New Englishes. Exploiting fascinating extracts from the Annals of Ulster and the Annals of the Four Masters, Ronan traces Irish English relations and linguistic outcomes of the contacts. In chapter 7, 'From early modern Ireland to the Great Famine', Liam Mac Mathúna establishes the language shift from Irish to English as occurring over the three centuries from the mid 1500s to the mid 1800s; he views the failure to see bilingualism and accommodation with English as a major cause of the shift. Drawing on macaronic verse, accounts from travellers and diarists and lectures throughout these centuries, texts which, as he puts it, are 'more enlightening

than any array of statistics could ever be' (p.171), Mac Mathúna brings the concepts of bilingualism and language shift to life.

In chapter 8 ('Language shift and language revival in Ireland'), Regina Uí Chollatáin discusses the Irish language revival period in the early twentieth century and the methods used to cultivate the revivalist ideology. This essay nicely complements Watson's chapter (which deals with media of the spoken word) in that it examines Irish language revival in print journalism. The author's closing statement on Irish-speaking communities 'reasserting the status of the Irish language in a global context' (p. 194) resonates with Watson's notion of the 'cosmopolitan ideology' referred to above (chapter 3).

The notion of the failure to see bilingualism as a workable option in the Irish context (raised in Mac Mathúna's chapter) is brought up again in chapter 9 ('Language, politics and identity in Ireland: A historical overview'), by Tony Crowley (p. 204). Crowley highlights why language is such an important factor in the 'complex social relations' in the island of Ireland as a whole (p. 215), tracing relations between language, politics and identity from the Statutes of Kilkenny in 1366 right up to the Belfast Agreement in 1998.

In chapter 10, under the umbrella of historical sociolinguistics, Kevin McCafferty introduces CORIECOR, the *Corpus of Irish English Correspondence*, highlighting how letters can be used in diachronic studies of Irish English; in 'Emigrant letters: Exploring the "grammar of the conquered"', McCafferty examines 'the kinds of questions that might be asked of CORIECOR data' (p. 220), data which provide a fascinating insight into the intimate discourse of the mid eighteenth to mid twentieth century. This chapter highlights key sociolinguistic phenomena such as change led by women. Hickey's second chapter in the volume (chapter 11, 'Society, language and Irish emigration') traces varieties of English taken from Ireland overseas. The chapter is enlightening and comprehensive in its scope, dealing as it does with varieties of English ranging from the far-flung Caribbean to neighbouring Liverpool. In discussing evidence for these transported varieties, Hickey (p. 247) refers to CORIECOR, the corpus on which the previous chapter is based. However, it is somewhat surprising that there is no cross-reference between these chapters in the volume.

Part III ('Sociolinguistic interfaces') opens with a chapter by Tina Hickey and Nancy Stenson on the sociolinguistic context of Irish language acquisition in contemporary Ireland, focusing on the role of reading ('Second-language acquisition of Irish and the role of reading'). This is a topical and practical discussion in light of the current emphasis on oral language and provides interesting attitudinal data as well as developing aspects of Ó Catháin's chapter from part I, as discussed earlier. In chapter 13, 'The language of Irish writing in English', Amador-Moreno discusses how the 'non-specialist' perceptions of Dublin English by fiction writers in Irish English can reflect contemporary language use and variation, based on variables such as gender and class and how they play a key role in the process of enregisterment. This chapter is also useful in showing how corpus linguistics can be used in sociolinguistic study (a topic which is developed in Vaughan & Clancy's chapter).

Shane Walshe (chapter 14, 'Irish society as portrayed in Irish films') takes a different angle on the topic of language and the media and examines to what extent Irish films reflect language use. The chapter usefully outlines problems of carrying out an 'all-encompassing' sociolinguistic study (p. 337) with regard to variables of class, gender, age, etc. In chapter 15, 'Translation and society in Ireland, 1900–present', Kathleen Shields explores how translations can mirror social and cultural change and reflect ideologies. Her comprehensive and informative study traces translation over four periods, the poetry and fiction translations of the 1930s, O'Connor's translation of Merriman's *Midnight Court* (*Cúirt an Mheán Oíche*) as well as Thomas Kinsella's *Táin* and finally, subtitling for television on TG4, the Irish-language TV channel.

In the final chapter of the volume, 'Sociolinguistic information and Irish English corpora', Vaughan & Clancy provide a useful introduction to the use of corpus linguistics in sociolinguistics. They describe Irish English corpora 'available and suitable' for research (p. 370), provide examples of the use of particular corpus linguistic tools, such as frequency (including practical information on how to normalise) and concordance, descriptions of sociolinguistic case studies using corpora, all of which are very practical and useful for students and novice researchers in this area.

As attested to by the classification of the contributions into three broad categories, *Sociolinguistics in Ireland* is broad in its range of topics. That said, there were some notable gaps; as well as dealing more specifically with the language of ethnic minorities in Ireland (e.g. the travelling community) and of newcomers to Ireland in light of the country's changing linguistic landscape, as already discussed, it would have been interesting to see some coverage of the topic of authenticity as an ideological construct in relation to both the Irish language and Irish English, and indeed other varieties of English spoken in the Irish context. Walshe, in his chapter on Irish film, briefly refers to Coupland's (2009) notion of 'the mediated performance of vernaculars' and how he believes in not limiting the study of mediated vernaculars to issues of 'vitality' (p. 320). I would have liked, however, to see a chapter which goes deeper into Coupland's work on new representations of what constitutes 'authenticity' and to investigate this, both in relation to Irish English and to the Irish language itself, given the changes in these varieties discussed in chapters 1 and 2 of the volume. Also, the relationship between stylised performances of Irish language (see for example, Kelly-Holmes & Atkinson 2007) and of vernacular Irish English in media contexts, and how this stylisation can allow reflexivity for its speakers, would have added another dimension to those provided in the chapters on language and media.

On a pragmatic note, I think the value of the book would be enhanced through more cross-referencing, as there were many overlapping themes throughout the chapters (e.g. references to CORIECOR). A more detailed index would also help. Overall, however, the volume makes a valuable contribution to the field of sociolinguistics in the Irish context and more generally to that of Irish Studies. It features a good balance of more broadly based discussions of sociolinguistic issues, often drawing on fascinating historical data, and those based on more focused studies, which provide a wealth of

ideas for parallel or complementary studies for novice and experienced researchers alike. Despite its publication date, my copy is already well thumbed and is rapidly establishing itself as one of my ‘old reliables’.

Reviewer's address:

Mary Immaculate College

South Circular Road

Limerick

Ireland

joan.osullivan@mic.ul.ie

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