

Jeffrey L. Kallen

Irish English

Volume 2: The Republic of Ireland

Dialects of English

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Preface

Anyone who is interested in the English language in Ireland is faced with a range of approaches to the subject. From the perspective of the history of English, Irish English has a special position as the oldest overseas variety of the language. Its early establishment has in turn influenced English in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere. In a regional perspective, though, Irish English can also be seen within the spectrum of local dialects and links across Scotland, England, and Wales. Some elements of Irish English clearly reflect historical influences from varieties of British English and Scots. In other cases it appears more likely that developments in Ireland have been transported to parts of England and Scotland. Sometimes it may be impossible to ascertain a direction of flow, and it may be more realistic to think in terms of shared areal features. The long history of contact between the Irish language and English in Ireland has given rise to a further perspective on Irish English, within the field of contact linguistics. Here the insights from studies of language creolisation, code-switching, linguistic borrowing, and other contact effects put a different emphasis on what we can learn from the study of Irish English.

Turning from the formal aspects of language to the life of language in society, we also see that Irish English offers insights as a language which has developed over centuries of language conflict that point to wider conflicts, contacts, and accommodations in the social and political world. In saying that Irish English is not just a “regional” variety of English but also a “national English”, we immediately raise questions as to the relationship between Irish English and concepts of nation, state, and community. As an element of Irish culture, Irish English has also functioned as the medium of expression in a wide variety of literature, whether written by speakers of Irish English such as Oscar Wilde and Samuel Beckett who have fashioned their literature largely outside of Ireland, or by writers such as John Millington Synge and Roddy Doyle, who have chosen different forms of Irish English as a focus for their artistic portrayals of speech in the local community. Though the scope for exploring all these aspects of Irish English in one volume must be limited, the treatment which follows is designed to touch on each of them. In so doing, we may be able to develop a three-dimensional view of Irish English, comprising aspects of form, culture, and use.

This book is designed to follow *Irish English, Volume 1 – Northern Ireland* by Karen P. Corrigan (Corrigan 2010). The decision to divide Irish English into two areas based on the political division between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland was not made lightly. The strong presence of the Scots element in Ulster makes an obvious case for treating Ulster English, and its connections with Ulster Scots, as a separate topic from English in the rest of Ireland. O’Rahilly

(1932: 17) declared that “historically there were but two main dialects in Irish, a Northern and a Southern”, and details (pp. 161–191) both the historic influence of Scottish Gaelic on Ulster Irish and a lesser reverse flow from Ulster Irish into Scottish Gaelic. Such a division in Irish dialects could also motivate a parallel division in the treatment of Irish English on purely linguistic grounds. When we start to examine the evidence in linguistic detail, though, the fixing of a linguistic border becomes elusive. There are, for example, many distinctive features of Irish English which can be found throughout the entire island: a tendency to use non-velarised or “clear” /l/ in all word positions, dentalisation of /t/ and /d/ before /ɪ/ or /æɪ/, use of the *after* perfect (as in *My friend’s car is after breaking down*), and the use of discourse expressions such as *don’t be talking* are but a few such cases. It is often true, too, that features which are strongly associated with Ulster English, such as the use of *aye* ‘yes’ or *wee* ‘little’, are nevertheless variably to be found in other parts of Ireland, depending on the social networks and experience of speakers.

Using a simple North–South linguistic division would also risk downplaying variation that exists within each area. As Corrigan (2010) makes clear, there are many linguistic divisions even within the six counties of Northern Ireland; if we were to add the traditional Ulster counties of Donegal, Cavan, and Monaghan to this mix – or to go one step further and include Louth, which O’Rahilly (1932: 18) includes in the zone of Ulster Irish – the increased diversity of our data would require a more complex treatment. It would also be misleading to suggest homogeneity for any area we might wish to label as the ‘South’: local varieties of English spoken in Cork are markedly different from those in Galway, Dublin, or the midlands. Given, in short, the permeability of any North–South linguistic border which we might wish to suggest as a linguistic demarcation, and given the complexity of possible variation on either side of an idealised dividing line, the question of a North–South border on purely linguistic grounds is, I suggest, best thought of as a research agenda rather than as an organising principle for a volume of this kind.

The political division between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, on the other hand, admits of no such ambiguities. The social life of language in each of these two jurisdictions is visibly different. For the most part, road, traffic, and other public signage in the Republic is consistently bilingual in Irish and English, while the same kinds of signs in Northern Ireland are almost invariably monolingual in English. Nearly every school child in the Republic studies Irish, and most will study it until they finish second-level education; provision and take-up of Irish in Northern Ireland is considerably less. Legal instruments, the civil service, and a wide range of public functions (from parking meters to tax forms) in the Republic work within a bilingual framework that contrasts strongly

with most comparable functions in Northern Ireland. These differences are not accidental, but stem from historical and political developments, many of which are discussed in Chapter 1.

These differences also affect our understanding of Irish English in its social context. When we talk about the role of English in society, or about people's everyday experiences with the Irish language in relation to English, we describe, for most people, very different linguistic environments on each side of the political border. It is, I suggest, possible to discuss linguistic life in the Republic in a coherent way which reflects the foundation of the state on principles that include linguistic nationalism and which explain much of what happens in education and the public domain; these principles, in turn influence private language use in particular ways. It is equally possible to discuss linguistic regimes and relationships in Northern Ireland, but here the variables are different. As long as the political border exists, then, it remains as a well-defined, fixed point of reference. Not at the level of local dialect and linguistic features, but at the more abstract level of language and society, this point of reference forms what I take to be the preferable way of capturing what we can be sure of with regard to the North–South division in contemporary Irish English.

One practical consequence of this division of labour is that less will be said here about the counties of the Ulster dialect zone which lie within the Republic than might be desirable. In broad terms, the phonology of this area shares much with the Ulster English phonology of Northern Ireland. Henry (1958: 154–155), for example, shows that the raising and fronting of /u/ in Co. Antrim, which yields forms such as [hyk] 'hook', [ʃkʲɪpɪd] 'stupid', and [hy:] 'how', is also characteristic of Monaghan [ʃky:l] 'school', [hyk] 'hook', and [sy:z] 'shoes'. These forms contrast in Henry's account with [ru:ts] 'roots' and [gu:s] 'goose' in Co. Leitrim in Connacht. Yet there is also evidence to differentiate these more outlying counties from other parts of the Ulster dialect zone. Again comparing the /u/ vowel, Adams ([1950] 1986: 99–100) contrasts the use of [ü] in "standard east Ulster speech" with the south Donegal vowel transcribed as [ʊ]. Adams describes the Donegal vowel as having "more lip-rounding and a more retracted tongue position" than [ü], but not being equal to the [ʊ] of "southern English". Barry (1981b: 87–95) presents maps based on dialect evidence which could be used to set the southern boundary of the Ulster dialect zone, but these maps raise many more questions which require more detailed investigation, particularly with regard to details within the border counties. Detailed discussion of the Ulster counties within the Republic, therefore, runs the risk of either duplicating a certain amount of description which is equally true in other parts of Ulster (for which we refer naturally to Corrigan 2010), or requiring a more detailed local description that would bring this book beyond its size limitations. Faced with this practical choice, the practice in

this volume will be to make use of information from all counties of the Republic, but in the interests of space limitations, there will be less discussion of Ulster English within the Republic than there might otherwise be.

Despite the importance which I would attach to the role of Irish in conditioning the social life of English in the Republic, I would also stress that this book is designed as a book about English. Though it would be impossible to treat Irish English comprehensively without discussing Irish – whether in its historical role as an influence on Irish English or in its contemporary role as a source for code-switching and bilingual effects in language use – the focus in this volume is intentionally on English itself, rather than on an extensive discussion of the possible effects of Irish on the development of Irish English. While it is something of a tradition in the study of Irish English to engage in debate on the “substratum” effect of transfer from Irish or the “superstratum” effect of British English, and while we will at times touch on matters of language contact and transfer, I consider this debate to be a matter for another day. My approach to contextualising features of Irish English will also at times lean towards other varieties of English, seeing Irish English in the context of world Englishes. Therefore in this volume where the discussion focuses on English without discussing comparable facts in Irish, there is no necessary implication that Irish would be irrelevant to a more detailed treatment: I simply keep to the principle that this is a book about English.

Irish English material for this book comes from four main sources: (1) the published record for the linguistic description of Irish English, sometimes augmented by unpublished original theses and reports; (2) literary representations of Irish English, which have been used sparingly to illustrate – rather than provide the primary evidence for – particular uses; (3) linguistic corpora, most notably the International Corpus of English, Ireland component (ICE-Ireland), described in Kallen and Kirk (2008) and below, and (4) my own notes, which include transcripts of recordings as well as notes of incidental conversations, radio broadcasts, and the like; some of these notes have been reliably reported to me by others. Most of these sources are cited in conventional citation form; data from the last source will contain the note (JK) together with the provenance of the speaker where known.

Acknowledgements

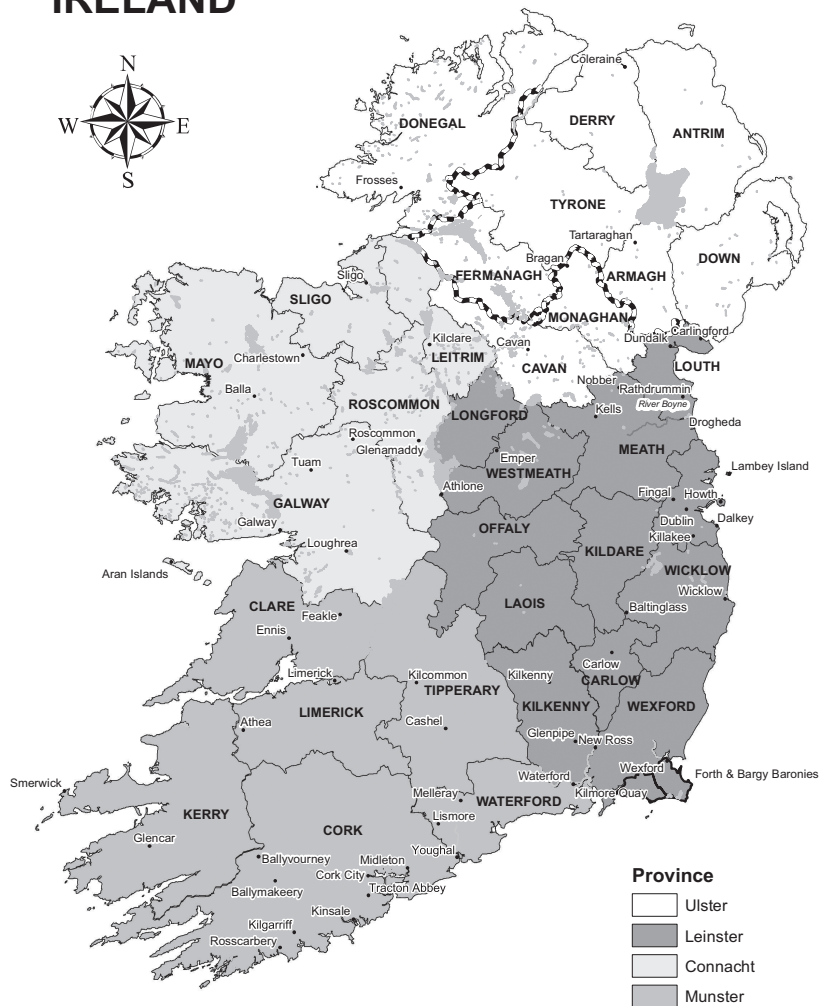
No work of this kind can be completed without the help of the many speakers of Irish English – family members, neighbours, students, colleagues, friends, speakers on radio and television, and chance conversationalists of many kinds – who have contributed raw data and linguistic intuitions on which much of this book is based. I consider myself fortunate to have learned about the diversity of Irish English from them, and hope that they will recognise Irish English as they know it in this book.

Formal thanks are extended to the *Irish Times* for permission to reproduce ‘The brother says there’s a black market in turps’ by Myles na gCopaleen, which is found as sample text 5 in this volume. Sample text 3, from *The Real Charlotte* by Somerville and Ross, also appears by kind permission of the copyright holders.

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IRELAND



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List of abbreviations

In keeping with common practice, many dictionaries and glossaries which are frequently referred to here are denoted by short abbreviations. The following table lists the abbreviations along with their corresponding references.

Abbreviation	Reference
BDI	Byrne (2004)
CUD	Macafee (1996)
DAI	Ó Muirithe (1996a)
DARE	Cassidy and Hall (1985–2012)
DCS	Beecher (1991)
DHE	Dolan ([1998] 2004)
DHS	Partridge ([1961] 1972)
DIL	Quin ([1913–1976] 1983)
Dineen	Dineen ([1927] 1934)
DNE	Story, Kirwin, and Widdowson ([1982] 1990)
DSL	<i>Dictionary of the Scots Language</i>
EDD	Wright (1898–1905)
EDG	Traynor (1953)
FGB	Ó Dónaill (1977)
JPG	Barnes (1867)
LQ	‘Lexical questionnaire’ in Kallen (1996, 1997)
MED	<i>Middle English Dictionary</i>
NPD	Dalzell and Victor (2006)
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>

1 Geography, demography, and cultural factors

In some counties in Ireland, many of the poorest labourers and cottagers do not understand English, they speak only Irish, as in Wales there are vast numbers who speak only Welsh; but amongst those who do speak English we find fewer vulgarisms, than amongst the same rank of persons in England. The English which they speak is chiefly such as has been traditional in their families from the early settlers in the island. During the reign of Elizabeth and the reign of Shakespeare, numbers of English migrated to Ireland; and whoever attends to the phrases of the lower Irish may, at this day, hear many of the phrases and expressions used by Shakespeare. Their vocabulary has been preserved nearly in it's [sic] pristine purity since that time, because they have not had intercourse with those counties in England, which have made for themselves a jargon, unlike to any language under Heaven.

– Edgeworth and Edgeworth ([1802] 1803: 151–2).

1.1 Introducing Irish English

Richard Lovell Edgeworth – scientist, engineer, educationalist, and essayist – and his daughter Maria – best known for her novel *Castle Rackrent* and other literary works – thus described the language environment in Ireland at the start of the 19th century. At this time, Irish was the dominant language for a majority of the ordinary population, and the Edgeworths could still plausibly associate the everyday use of English among members of the “lower” classes with those whose ancestors came to Ireland in Elizabethan times and (allowing for the Edgeworths’ poetic licence) subsequent settlements in the first half of the 17th century. Before the close of the century, however, the antiquarian, clergyman, and explorer Abraham Hume would argue (1858: 51) that a national version of English in Ireland, itself “not much older” than the 19th century, had become what he later termed “the recognised language of the country” (Hume 1877–78: 103).

As the different viewpoints of the Edgeworths and Hume suggest, the 19th century was pivotal in the development of Irish English, especially in that part of Ireland which now constitutes the Republic. Yet in order to understand the position of Irish English today, it will be necessary both to look backward at the time before the 12th century, when speakers of Middle English first settled in Ireland, and to look towards the future of linguistic relations within the Republic in an era of increasing European unity and linguistic globalisation. In this perspective, we can see Irish English in several different ways: as the oldest of the “overseas” varieties of English, as a complex of geographically- and socially- defined variation with links both to the dialects of British English and Scots and to the Irish language, and as a distinctive national variety of English.

One enduring constant in this history is the linguistic division of labour known as *diglossia*. Classic diglossia as defined by Ferguson ([1959] 2003) refers to the distribution of two distinct language varieties within a single language, each variety being associated with a particular domain of usage. Those varieties (such as Classical Arabic or *Katharevousa* in Greek) which are associated with notions such as prestige, power, and formality – usually acquired with formal education – are referred to as H (“high”) varieties, and those (such as colloquial Arabic or Greek *Dhimotiki*) which are less formal, often less prestigious, and associated with first language acquisition are referred to as L (“low”) varieties in this analysis. (It should be noted that Greek diglossia, which was one of Ferguson’s original paradigm cases, has changed considerably with the development of Standard Modern Greek following the official ending of diglossia in the language reform of 1976: Frangoudaki 1992 provides a review.) Though Ferguson’s (2003: 345) definition of diglossia explicitly excluded “the analogous situation where two distinct (related or unrelated) languages are used side by side throughout a speech community”, other analysts have developed the idea into what Fasold (1984: 53) calls “extended diglossia”, in which it is possible to examine any combination of socially stratified language varieties (languages, dialects, or other linguistic codes) which are separated by their domains of usage. In addition to this notion of extended diglossia, we will also make use of a distinction which has been developed by Fishman ([1967] 2003), who argues (pp. 362–3) that “bilingualism is essentially a characterization of individual linguistic behavior whereas diglossia is a characterization of linguistic organization at the socio-cultural level”. This account leads to a four-way combination of factors, by which, for example, a state may be diglossic without bilingualism, if two languages are spoken within its borders but the individuals within the state are not for the most part bilingual, or bilingual and diglossic when individuals are bilingual but the codes which they command are separated by domain of usage. As we will see in this chapter, there are many periods in Irish history in which diglossia without bilingualism is the predominant mode. The situation in the Republic today, however, is one in which government policy for the most part aims to create a society in which Irish-English bilingualism is widespread, but without diglossic stratification or separation of function for the two languages.

1.2 First contacts

Taking a conventional approach and discounting the period before the 12th century will have an effect on how we view Irish English. Not only can the introduction of English appear as an abrupt and isolated event, almost accidental in

view of the low official status of English in 12th century England, but we will fail to answer questions about the historical and linguistic context for the establishment of English: what other languages had been spoken in Ireland, by whom, and for what purposes – in short, how did English fit into the existing linguistic order in Ireland? An overview of this early time brings into focus the crucial position of Ireland in the sea lanes of western Europe. This position has brought with it lines of communication, commerce, political allegiance, and population movement, all of which have been crucial in the development of Irish society and thereby provide a context for the development of Irish English. We thus start by looking at what we know of the cultural and linguistic regime with which English was to make such a long-lasting and intimate encounter.

Thousands of years of human habitation pass in Ireland before we have any indication as to what languages were spoken. The earliest human artefacts come from mesolithic settlements which date to at least 9,000 years before the present time (BP). We do not know where these first settlers came from: Mitchell and Ryan (1997: 116) point out similarities between Irish artefacts from this period and others found in Denmark, while Duffy (2000b: 10) suggests that the first settlers travelled from Britain. The earliest evidence of agriculture dates to the neolithic period roughly 6,000 years BP. This period shows the clearance of forest, though the most enduring evidence of human activity is in the construction of megalithic tombs. Sheridan (1994: 50–1) points out a range of archaeological finds which suggest contact at this time with communities in Scotland, the Orkney islands, Britain, and the Iberian peninsula. Stout and Stout (1997: 35) also offer evidence of shared features of passage tomb art in western Iberia, western France, and scattered parts of Britain.

Bronze age civilisation came later, approximately 4,500 years BP, at which time too we find a form of pottery whose most distinctive element is a particular type of beaker. Mitchell and Ryan (1997: 193–4) point out that this pottery is found from “Poland to Iberia”, reflecting trade relations with other parts of Europe and “a fashion adopted by the cosmopolitan rich and powerful everywhere”. Irish metalworking from this period includes distinctive decorative goldwork, in which Cahill (1994) sees the possible reflection of Mediterranean and Scandinavian influences (see also O’Kelly 2005: 128–129). This metalwork provides a basis for import and export: Mitchell and Ryan (1997: 236) note the substantial import of amber from Jutland or the Baltic area during this time. Further evidence of cultural exchange is seen in the distribution of halberds, implements which include a blade mounted on a wooden shaft and attached by rivets. O’Kelly (2005: 124) points out the widespread distribution of the halberd “from southern Italy to Scandinavia”, and notes that approximately 40% of known halberds have been found in Ireland. This distribution suggests that the implement may have origi-

nated in Ireland and spread elsewhere, but this point is still open to debate. What is relevant for us is the evidence which these and other archaeological patterns give us of Ireland's involvement, whether by trade, population movement, or a combination of the two, with the European culture of the time.

Coming closer to historical time, the Iron Age civilisation known to archaeologists as the La Tène culture, so named from the discovery of archaeological remains at the La Tène site in Switzerland, is generally taken to have arrived in Ireland no less than 2,300 BP. We have no direct evidence of the language spoken by those who brought this civilisation to Ireland, but the La Tène culture which developed on the European mainland roughly two centuries earlier was, according to Raftery (1994: 107) “emphatically Celtic” and corresponds to that of the *Galli* or *Galatae* described by Roman commentators. Raftery (2005: 145) points out, though, that while La Tène civilisation was widespread on the European mainland, La Tène material is only sparsely distributed in Ireland, suggesting that “we can scarcely speak of a great, sweeping change of population” at this time. The limited nature of this material suggests instead a period of social stratification, in which, as Raftery (2005: 161) points out, “a significant part” of the La Tène material “reflects the trappings of an aristocratic élite” and in which “large sections of the contemporary population are unrepresented” by this archaeological evidence.

Due to the connection between La Tène civilisation and attested evidence for continental Celtic language use, the advent of La Tène cultural artefacts is often taken to represent a plausible date for the first arrival of a Celtic language in Ireland. Since we know nothing of the languages spoken by civilisations predating La Tène culture in Ireland, this supposition has always been conjectural. Recent controversy has been generated by the “Celticization from the West” hypothesis, which Cunliffe and Koch (2010: 1) explain to hinge on the proposition that “Celtic probably evolved in the Atlantic Zone during the Bronze Age”: the “Atlantic zone” includes “Armorica and the north and west of the Iberian peninsula”. If the hypothesis is borne out by the linguistic, archaeological, and genetic evidence which is being used to test it, the rise of a Celtic language in Ireland would date from an earlier time and a different source than the La Tène account would have it. It follows by implication that any speakers of a Celtic language who came to Ireland in the La Tène expansion would have found another Celtic language already established on the island. Because of the time gaps between the archaeological evidence and the first evidence we have of writing in Irish, we do not know if the earliest stage of the language we know as primitive Irish was brought directly from the European mainland, or if it was forged in Ireland from contact between Celtic-speaking immigrants and the people they encountered on coming to Ireland.

What we do know, though, is that relations between early Irish-speaking society and Roman civilisation provide subsequent points of linguistic and cultural contact. Iron Age archaeological items from north Africa, such as the skull of a Barbary ape found at Navan fort, Co. Armagh (the ape perhaps being brought as a gift), and an Egyptian gold bracelet found in Co. Derry, cited by Warner (1994: 112–3), are indicative of early contacts with the Mediterranean world. A frequently-quoted passage from Tacitus, a Roman historian who wrote in the late 1st century, gives a view of Ireland in which, as Stout and Stout (1997: 43) cite, “the interior parts are little known, but through commercial intercourse and the merchants there is better knowledge of the harbours and approaches”. As Warner (1994: 115) and Duffy (2000b: 15) show, the map of Ireland which can be reconstructed from the description given by the 2nd century Alexandrian geographer Claudius Ptolemaius, better known as Ptolemy, provides a very recognisable outline of the physical geography and population of Ireland, the details of which sometimes correspond well with known historical evidence.

Though Ireland was never part of the Roman empire, we have archaeological evidence of Roman presence, and of trade with Roman civilisation, through Romanised Britain and directly with the European mainland. Warner (1976: 274), for example, interprets the cremation burial site in Stoneyford, Co. Kilkenny, which dates to ca. 2,100 BP, as evidence of “a strong and secure Roman community”. The 1st century Roman burial site on Lambay island near Dublin is attributed by Raftery (2005: 175) to “north Britons whose material culture was strongly influenced by Rome”. Mitchell and Ryan (1997: 246–247) point out that this burial site includes “brooches of Roman-British style and a local imitation of them”, and that on the nearby mainland at Drumanagh, Co. Dublin, artefacts and copper ingots of a Roman type suggest the manufacture of “high status objects” indicating the position of Drumanagh as “an important entrepôt” between Ireland and Roman Britain. Evidence of changes in fundamental features of Irish daily life are also suggested in Mitchell and Ryan’s view (1997: 248–9) that new methods of ploughing and dairy culture which came about as a result of Roman influence had a major impact on the development of Irish society around this time.

Turning to language matters, it is from the 4th century that we find inscriptions in Irish using the ogham writing system. Writing in ogham is based on a system of lines and notches made along a central axis, and though it therefore does not visually resemble the Roman alphabet, its means of relating sound to writing follows what McManus (1991: 27) describes as “the classification of the letters of the Latin alphabet found in the works of the Latin grammarians”, modified to reflect distinctive features of Irish. Ogham inscriptions have been found in Ireland especially in Munster, and in Wales, Cornwall, and scattered parts of Scotland: for maps, see Ó Murchú (1985: 13), McManus (1991: 46, 48), Stout and Stout (1997:

44), and Edwards and Hourican (2005: 126–7). Commentators such as Jackson (1953), McManus (1991), and Russell (2005) note that it is not certain if ogam originated in Ireland and was brought to Wales, or if it originated in the Irish colonies of what Russell (2005: 415) calls the “Latinized milieu” of Wales in the late 4th or early 5th century. This indeterminacy is itself further indication of cultural links and networks of communication that encompassed Ireland and Britain in the late Roman period.

The adoption of Christianity in the 5th century drew Ireland into new political and social relationships with other parts of Europe. A key date in this historical phase is the year 431, which saw the mission of Palladius “to the Irish believing in Christ”. This description of the mission presupposes an existing Christian community, well before the coming of St. Patrick later in the 5th century (see Ó Cróinín 1995: 14–23 for a review). The development of these relationships gave rise to a further role for Latin in Irish society. Picard (2003b: 47–55) gives evidence that the Irish attachment to Latin continued long after the collapse of the Roman empire in Britain, noting (p. 47) Bede’s comment in the *History of the English People* from the 660s that “many English youths, both from the nobility and from lesser classes, travelled to Ireland to get instruction”, and citing (p. 49) the early use in Irish education of the 7th-century *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville as evidence that “Ireland was in touch with the rest of the Roman world and kept up with the latest scholarship”. Irish adoption of Christianity also brought about important changes in settlement patterns, with the growth of monastic or other ecclesiastical sites: Stout and Stout (1997: 512) document the wide range of establishments, while Duffy (2000b: 20–21) links the influence of “secularization, wealth and lay-patronage” during this time to the development of illuminated manuscripts and the arts of metal and stonework.

Literary developments in Irish at this time point towards the elaboration of a system of diglossia. The number of texts in Old Irish is limited, and the major sources for Classical Old Irish, dating from the 8th and 9th centuries, consist of short passages and glosses on Latin religious and grammatical works: Thurneysen (1946: 4–11) gives a clear account. By the end of the 9th century, Classical Old Irish was developing into what is now referred to as Middle Irish, but it is frequently noted, as reviewed by Russell (2005: 412–414), that Middle Irish texts contain archaic language which suggests a composition date in the Old Irish period. As shown in Russell’s (2005: 440–450) review of variation in Old and Middle Irish texts, writers developed what Russell (2005: 443) terms “an elite register spoken by the nobility as well as poets, churchmen, and judges, and presumably also by those who aspired to high status”. We can also associate this period with the development of extended diglossia, by which Latin

became a H domain language used for religion and formal education. As we will see in Chapter 4, the lexicon of Irish by this time started to adopt a wide range of Latin terms, some of which have in turn become elements of Irish English. The production of important Latin manuscripts in Ireland appears to have reached a high point in the 9th century, before coming to what Ó Cróinín (2005a: 404) describes as “a sad end” in the 12th: for details see also Lapidge and Sharpe (1985).

Ireland’s connections with Scandinavia took a new turn at the close of the 8th century. The first known Viking raid took place in 795, on Lambay Island, a monastic site in Dublin Bay. Though reviews such as those of Ó Cróinín (1995: 260–5), Clarke, Ní Mhaonaigh, and Ó Floinn (1998), Byrne (2005), and Valante (2008) show considerable controversy as to the precise impact of the Viking presence on Irish society, some elements must be taken into account in the linguistic history. Particularly important is the Viking establishment of urban settlements in coastal areas: 9th century foundations in Dublin, Wicklow, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, and Limerick are all directly related to Norse settlements. Scandinavian links between England and Ireland also suggest the possibility of a linguistic conduit in the region. We may note, for example, archaeological evidence of the similarity between the 10th century layout of streets in Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, and Limerick and towns in Mercia and Wessex, which Bradley (1988b: 70) interprets as an indication that “the Scandinavians successfully transferred to Ireland the concept of the early tenth century town as seen in the south and west of England”. The settlements themselves did not bring about a very large change in the population, but they did form centres of wealth, power, and trade relations. Hiberno-Norse cities such as Dublin were involved in lively trade relations with the northwest of England, Northumbria, York, Chester, Bristol, ports of France, and further afield. Ó Corráin (1972: 107) notes that “English pennies circulated fairly widely in Ireland” during most of the 10th century; following the establishment of an Irish mint in 997, according to Wallace (2005: 838), Irish coins from this period have been found “in hoards as far away as Iceland, the Faeroes, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Russia, the Baltic States, northern Germany, and even Rome”. Artefacts with English connections which have been found in Dublin from this period include not only hoards of Anglo-Saxon coins and a variety of personal objects, but a knife sheath with an Anglo-Saxon inscription and what Wallace (2008: 174), citing work by Elisabeth Okasha and John Bradley, describes as a “leather scrap with the first letters of the alphabet in Anglo-Saxon script”.

Relations of this kind are bound to have an impact on language. We have little direct evidence of linguistic practice in the Viking cities of Ireland, though Johnson (2004: 84–85), who notes runic inscriptions on a variety of personal

objects that have been found in Dublin, states that the languages of Dublin in the Viking era included “Norse, Irish, Anglo-Saxon, church Latin and perhaps some French (through trading contacts with Rouen)”. We do know that Old Norse had a linguistic influence on Irish, notably in the addition of vocabulary related to trade and seafaring. We may cite Irish words such as *margad* (modern Irish *margadh*) ‘market, marketplace’ (derived by Greene 1976: 79 from Old Norse *markaðr* and described by DIL as a “late loan word” with sources in Old Norse and Latin *mercatus*); *marg* ‘a march, boundary’; *fuindeóc* (modern Irish *fuinneog*) ‘window’, derived by DIL from Old Norse *vindauga*; *langa* ‘ling’ (the fish *Molva molva*); *trosc* ‘cod’ (fish such as *Gadus morhua*), from Old Norse *þorskr*; *pónair* ‘beans’, for which Greene (1976: 79) cites Old Norse plural *baunir*; and *bát* (modern Irish *bád*) ‘boat’, for which DIL favours an etymology from Old Norse *bátr*. A number of place names in Ireland are also derived from Norse. Among the best known are Lambay itself (‘lamb island’), for which Ó Muirthe (2010: xxv) cites a derivation from *lamb-øy* or *lamba-øy*; Wicklow (given by Room 1994: 127 as ‘vikings’ meadow’, from *vikigr* ‘viking’ and *ló* ‘meadow’); and Smerwick in Co. Kerry, derived from Old Norse *Smjör-uík* ‘butter bay’; see further Byrne’s (2005: 630–634) review of Oftedal’s (1976) early suggestions. In general, place names from Old Norse have entered English directly rather than via an intermediate incorporation into Irish. Oftedal (1976: 127–129), however, also points out that a further group of names (including the provinces of Ulster, Leinster, and Munster) are intermediate in mixing both Irish and Norse elements. The name *Ulster*, for example, combines the Irish tribal name *Uladh* with the Old Norse genitive -s and what Oftedal (p. 129) terms “appellative *tír* borrowed from the Irish *tír* ‘land’.” Oftedal also argued that it is Old Norse *Ulaðstir* which entered English in the form *Ulster*.

How place names of Norse origin entered English independently of Irish is a matter of some concern for Irish English. Greene (1976: 81) deduced that “Norse must have survived as a spoken language in Dublin and some other settlements up to the time of the English invasion of 1169”, but Byrne (2005: 631) argues that many of these names entered the English language, “through trading contacts a century or more before the Anglo-Normans arrived in Ireland”. The late survival of Old Norse in Ireland and its use in contact with Britain are not mutually exclusive, but if Byrne’s account is correct, it implies a high enough degree of contact between speakers of English in Britain and speakers of Old Norse in the Scandinavian kingdoms of Ireland for the former group to incorporate Irish place names into their version of English. At the same time, Ó Corráin (2009: 69) argues that Irish elites of the 11th and 12th centuries also spoke Old Norse, and views literacy in Old Norse as “well established”. Language contact is implied in what is probably a late 10th century Irish text which lists, among “useless or

pointless things”, the *gíc-goc Gallgaidhel* or ‘*gíc-goc* of the Hiberno-Norse’ and the *gib gab na gcennaigh*, which Ó Corráin (2009: 65) translates as “the cant of the hucksters”. Ó Corráin’s discussion of work by Carl Marstrander suggests that, in these Irish texts, *gíc-goc* is a Norse phrase, while *gib gab* is derived from Anglo-Saxon. Citing literary evidence, Ó Corráin (2009: 72) pushes the date for the continued use of Old Norse “in what were coherent Hiberno-Norse communities” as far as the middle of the 13th century. How the details of contact involving Irish, Old Norse, and English would have worked at this time remains a subject for further research.

The defeat of Viking forces at a battle in Clontarf, near Dublin, in 1014 weakened the Scandinavian position, though it did not bring about an end to Scandinavian influence. Historical identities established in the Viking era continued well past the time of Viking political power: even as late as 1263, according to Edwards and Hourican (2005: 38), “a number of Irish chiefs offered the crown of Ireland to King Haakan IV of Norway” as an unfulfilled part of the resistance to Anglo-Norman rule. Curtis (1919: 234) notes the case of Maurice MacOter in 1289 who petitioned that he and his clansmen be treated as English, rather than Irish, on the basis of their Scandinavian descent. Legal proceedings from 1295 (see Mills 1905: 59) show a dispute between William le Teynturer against Henry and John le Norreys. The latter parties complained that they should not have had to answer to le Teynturer since he was said to be *hibernicus* [Irish] and “of servile condition”. The reply from le Teynturer was that he was in fact *Houstmannus* (an ‘Ostman’, as the descendants of the Vikings were then known), having received, at the instigation of his mother, “the liberty of the Ostmen” in Limerick.

The 11th century also gives many examples of what Richter (1985: 329) refers to as “horizontal loyalties” with the rest of Europe held by “small though significant groups” in Irish society. Among these we may consider the refuge taken in Wales by the Scandinavian king of Dublin, King Sitric, following his banishment from Dublin in 1036 (see Duffy 1997: 38), and the consecration of Irish bishops in England. The consecration in 1096 by the Archbishop of Canterbury of Máel Ísu Ua hAinmere as the first bishop of the Hiberno-Norse city of Waterford (see Flanagan 1989: 20) was particularly important; Duggan (2007: 121) notes that six Irish bishops were consecrated at Canterbury between 1074 and 1140. We may also note the activities of Harold and Leofwine, sons of Godwin (earl of Essex), who came via Bristol to Ireland in order to raise a fleet which subsequently attacked coastal areas in England in 1052. Harold’s own sons came to Ireland for help following his death during the Norman conquest of England in 1066 (see Richter 1985: 336 and Flanagan 1989: 59)

1.2.1 The first settlement of English

Viewing Ireland in its position in the seaways of western Europe, we can understand the arrival in 1171 of the English king Henry II as part of a continuing story of contacts and allegiances. Richter (1985: 328) argued that “the coming of the English to Ireland from 1169 onwards was less of turning point than it is generally regarded”, while Martin (1987: 44) discusses the term “invasion” to describe this event by concluding that “there was no intrusion or intervention on such a scale, or of such a nature, as to merit it being described as ‘invasion’. Nor was there a conquest. That was not achieved by England until 1603”. Nevertheless, since it is this episode that provides the basis on which the English language developed in Ireland, we will consider it here in some detail.

Both ecclesiastical and civil arguments could be advanced in accounting for the motivations underlying Henry’s interventions in Ireland. The Church in England had shown an interest in control over the Irish Church at least since the time of Lanfranc, who was appointed as the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1070. A proposal for the invasion of Ireland was discussed at the Council of Winchester in 1155, which was attended by important Church figures including the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; the proposal may have been fed, among other things, by opposition to the synod held in Kells in 1152, which had established a diocesan structure for the Irish church (discussed by Flanagan 1989: 38–42). The account of the Anglo-Norman settlement in Ireland written in the 12th century by Giraldus Cambrensis, known as *Expugnatio Hibernica* (see Scott and Martin 1978 for a recent edition), includes the text of a document of uncertain origin, now generally referred to as *Laudabiliter* (from the first words of the text, meaning ‘it is praiseworthy’). This document purports to give Papal authority for the intervention of Henry II in Ireland. Since there is no independent text of *Laudabiliter* that can be used to verify the Giraldus version, its status as genuine document or as a forgery has been a matter of historical debate. Detailed analysis by Duggan (2004: 140) concludes that the Giraldus text is best described as “an amalgam of accurate reporting and tendentious manipulation of the truth”. The main significance of this document, however, lies not in its a prior justification for action, but in its later use, as Duggan (2007: 156–8) explains, to “demonstrate the prophetic nature of Norman dominion both in Ireland and in Wales”.

While ecclesiastical motivations for the decision of Henry II to intervene in Ireland may be unclear, there can be no doubt as to the importance of political and military factors. The turning point in a series of historical events is the request which the Irish king Diarmait Mac Murchada made to Henry II for assistance in regaining his position following a military defeat at the hands of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair in 1166. The Scandinavian kings played a role, for it was, as Duffy

(1997: 58) points out, the Ostmen in Dublin whose recognition of Ua Conchobair's supremacy is mentioned in the Irish *Annals of the Four Masters*. Mac Murchada's first point of contact in looking for help was Bristol, where, according to Martin (1987: 63–4), Diarmait had a “trusted friend” in Robert fitz Harding, the provost of Bristol. Mac Murchada and fitz Harding shared a common interest, since they had supported the claims of the Empress Matilda and her son Henry in opposition to the position of king Stephen in the battle over the succession to the English throne following the death of Henry I in 1135. Such entanglements help to understand what Hays and Jones (1990) refer to as the “Irish sea diplomacy” which Henry II developed to secure his interests in Wales and Scotland and bring them into line with his interests in France. In suggesting that Henry may have self-servingly viewed Diarmait's request for troops as “an opportunity to siphon the discontented and bellicose Anglo-Norman knights away from Wales”, Hayes and Jones (1990: 297) bring to the fore the inter-connections of the various conflicts in Britain and the continent with which Ireland had become involved during Henry's reign.

Curtis (1919: 235) described the force of 300–400 soldiers allied to Dermot Mac Murchada who came in 1169 to Wexford as “a very motley crew”. Though this frequently-cited phrase accurately reflects the recruitment of soldiers whose backgrounds lay in various parts of Britain, France, and further afield, it would be misleading to take this description as a sign that the force was casual or poorly-organised. In fact, the arrival of the forces put together by Mac Murchada took place over a period of nearly three years. Mac Murchada returned in 1167 with a force which Duffy (1997: 62) describes as a “small band of people of Flemish origin who had settled in Pembrokeshire”. An initial military force came in 1169, and later reinforcements arrived in 1170. This latter group included Richard fitz Gilbert de Claire, who had supported Stephen in opposition to Matilda and Henry, and who is better-known in later accounts as Strongbow. The subsequent power and potential independence of colonial forces in Ireland posed a problem for king Henry, who was motivated to come to Ireland in 1171, as Duffy (1997: 69) puts it, “more to bring the pioneers there back into line than to conquer the Irish”.

The expedition of Henry II to Ireland in 1171 demonstrated a combination of military strength and relationship-building. A contemporary report describes an entourage of 400 ships, and Lydon ([1972] 2003: 42) estimates a force of 500 knights and 4,000 other soldiers. Though there were some military encounters along the way to Dublin, the relatively bloodless nature of the campaign helped Henry in a symbolic effort to “make an impact on the Irish”, as Lydon (2003: 45) notes, by shows of courtly magnificence which included “entertaining the Irish to a lavish feast at Christmas in the course of which they were introduced to many strange and exotic dishes”. Gilbert (1865: 27) records that Henry II “appears”

not to have known English, but to have used “French interpreters” to communicate with the English speakers below him. We see evidence of an awareness of language matters, however, since interpreters were used when dealing with Irish speakers during Henry’s visit, in order to ensure, according to Lydon (2003: 44–5fn.), that Irish people declaring fealty to Henry would fully understand “the resulting new relationship” with the English king. The outcome of these military and other activities was that a great number of the Irish elite, with some notable exceptions in Ulster, had sworn loyalty to Henry as lord of Ireland; Church leaders also expressed their loyalty to Henry following a council held in 1172.

The colonisation which followed had a profound effect on the social geography of Ireland. To illustrate the local effects of such settlements, we may cite Otway-Ruthven’s (1965) case studies of a number of early 14th century manors. Information is available from 1304, for example, about the population of the manor of Cloncurry, Co. Kildare. Distinguishing among the various classes of farmers and tenants, Otway-Ruthven (1965: 80) concludes that this manor included 191 people of English descent (made up of 112 burgesses and 79 other tenants) and 111 of native Irish descent, “almost all betaghs [low-ranking tenants] and cottagers”. Similar results are found in other areas, though in some cases, such as Moycarkey in Co. Tipperary, the balance was much more heavily tilted towards the English: here Otway-Ruthven (1965: 81) estimates the presence of 39 English tenants as opposed to just 9 of Irish descent. Summarising this period, Otway-Ruthven (1980: 109) argued that “the Norman settlement of Ireland was no mere military occupation supported by the settlement of English and French burgesses in a few towns, but a part of that great movement of peasant colonization which dominates so much of the economic history of Europe from the eleventh to the fourteenth century”. Details of such settlements lie outside the scope of this review, but see, among others, Glascock (1987) for a general review, and Simms (1986), Mitchell and Ryan (1997: 303–315), and Stout and Stout (1997: 53–60) for geographical perspectives and maps.

It is not surprising that many of the initial settlers came from south Wales and the southwest and southwest midlands of England. Otway-Ruthven (1965: 78) notes that Strongbow “seems to have enlisted men from all the lordships along the coast of south Wales”, but documents additional settler names from Devon, Cornwall, Exeter, and as far as Lancashire. Duffy (1997: 59) describes the settlement as one which “included people whose backgrounds lay scattered throughout Britain, northern France, and the Low Countries”. The mixed background of what we can describe, following Mufwene’s (2001) development of the term, as the “founder population” for Irish Middle English naturally paves the way for dialect contact and mixing, decreasing the chances that the fledgling Irish English would reflect any specific dialect of British English. Despite this diversity

in what we might see as linguistic or ethnic terms, however, it should be borne in mind that, in political terms, this settlement was English: as Lydon (2003: [7]) bluntly explains, “the people who settled in Ireland after the invasion were almost entirely English, and it is well to recognize that fact and not disguise them as Norman, Anglo-Norman or anything else”.

1.2.2 Linguistic relations in medieval Ireland

Two diglossic societies were brought together in 12th-century Ireland. In the native society, Christianity had already established the use of Latin as a H language, and Irish had developed a H language variety for religion, law, learning, and literature by the time of the late Middle Irish and Classical or Early Modern Irish period (the latter dating roughly from 1200). Linguistic practice among the new colonists, however, is a subject of some speculation. In England, the Norman conquest in 1066 had established French as a H domain language alongside Latin. This role for French did not, however, imply that English was in danger of being supplanted by French as the language of the general population. It is well documented that the Norman conquest was, as Kibbee (1991: 9) describes it, “not a national migration, but rather a military conquest”: Kibbee’s review of population figures suggests that the Norman element following the conquest was “roughly 1.3%” of the population. Studies such as those by Short (1980) show that even among the elite in English society, the use of French as a first language was declining by the 12th century: by the time the future King Henry II had married Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152, according to Kibbee (1991: 14), “the descendants of the first Norman French invasion were becoming totally assimilated”. We can thus think of the colonists who came to Ireland in terms of a social pyramid in which the top members may have spoken French or French and English as their native languages, but reserved Latin and French for H language domains, especially those in which writing was required: discussion and texts pertaining to French in medieval Ireland are provided by Bliss and Long (1987), Shields (1975–76), and Picard (2003b). Successively lower members of society were more likely to speak English. It is possible that Welsh or Flemish could have been spoken as L languages among those coming to Ireland on the early expeditions, but we have no direct evidence to this effect.

The new settlers were too few in number and lacking in resources to provide the basis for a self-sufficient economy. Two societies, native Irish (or Gaelic) and English (often now referred to – if problematically, as we have noted above – as Anglo-Norman, and referred to in later periods as Old English or Anglo-Irish) entered into a relationship in which each had reason to maintain its own iden-

tity and community boundaries. Between these societies, however, social, economic, and political ties were also necessary. We get one tantalising glimpse of contact between these two societies in the Norman French poetic work depicting the coming of the English settlement, long known as the “Song of Dermot and the Earl” (Orpen 1892), but now re-edited by Mulally (2002) as the “Deeds of the Normans in Ireland”. The early part of the text includes an account of its anonymous Norman author speaking directly with Diarmait Mac Murchada’s personal interpreter, Maurice Ua Riacháin, whose name is given in French as Morice Regan. As Mulally (1988: 328) points out, this poem is one in which “the English language does not impinge at all on our poet, though ‘the English’ are its heroes”. The picture of a Norman French speaking chronicler speaking to the interpreter for the Irish king Diarmait Mac Murchada suggests the kind of elite bilingualism that may have been characteristic of this period: French, Latin, and Irish commanded prestige in elite domains, with Irish and English at L domain level for the general Gaelic and Anglo-Norman populations respectively. These two societies did not, however, exist in a state of balanced parallel diglossia. Relationships were unstable, due to continuing conflicts over political and economic supremacy, and unequal, in so far as English in time became associated with colonial power while Irish became associated with a social definition of nationhood and tradition that was to take different forms over the succeeding eight centuries.

We can chart the rise of English in Anglo-Irish society following the earliest attestations in the records of the Dublin Guild Merchant Roll (Connolly and Martin 1992), which date predominantly from the first half of the 13th century. The guild roll is written in Latin and is largely a list of names and payments, so there is little opportunity for the development of any continuous English text. At times, though, the scribe uses English *of*, *the*, or the name of a trade, so that Connolly and Martin’s (1992) edition yields references such as *Torkaill of Kardif* (p. 7), *Gregory the Kene* (p. 15), and *Reginaldus the Letherkervere* (p. 52). Longer texts are found in the Great Parchment Book of the Corporation of Waterford from 1365–7 onwards (Gilbert 1885a). By the late 15th century, English had become the main language in the Statute book of Galway (Gilbert 1885b), and had started to supplant French in the statutes of the Irish parliament (Morrissey 1939). This period can be seen as one in which, as in England, the English language was supplanting French as a H language.

In Ireland, however, the rise of prestige for English was accompanied by a decline in the Anglo-Irish society which supported it. By the second half of the 13th century, English interests in Ireland had suffered from poor internal management, military conflicts with Gaelic society, and the neglect of Anglo-Irish economic interests in order to satisfy English military and political ends in Britain and France. Hand (1972) details ways in which the Irish version of English law

had started to diverge from English practice since the late 13th century, showing fragmentation between Irish and English legal systems as evidence that (p. 403) “the medieval conquest was not a process of displacement so much as of superimposition” of the English system. An early 14th-century complaint from the reign of Edward III provides insight into the way in which these separate societies operated at the time: “marcher law” has left behind little documented evidence, but refers to clear accommodations between the two systems. The text of the complaint, given by Mac Niocaill (1964: II, 336fn), is in French; it is followed by the translation given by Hand (1972: 413).

A de primes, pous le conquest ensa deuz maners dez gens ad este e est en Irlaunde, c'est a ssavoir Engleys e Yrois, entre queux trois maners des loys ad est[e] usee dount chescoun est contrariaunt a autre c'est a ssavoir commune loy, ley yrois e le de marche; e par la ou diversete de ley est, semble a nous qe les gens ne pount estre d'une ley ne de une commune.

Since the conquest there have been two kinds of people in Ireland and there still are – the English and the Irish – and amongst them three kinds of law had been used, each of which conflicts with the others – common law, Irish law and marcher law; and it seems to us that where there is diversity of law the people cannot be of one law or one community.

Concern at the possible loss of the English colony can be seen, for example, in a representation made in 1341 to Edward III, in which it is declared that one third of the original settlement territory “is now come into the hand of your Irish enemies and your English lieges are so impoverished that they can hardly live” (Watt 1987: 367). The plague epidemic which swept Europe between 1348 and 1350 came to Ireland in 1348 with devastating effect and persisted intermittently for years afterwards. The effect of the plague hit the Anglo-Irish community and religious enclosures hardest, due to their greater population densities, and seriously damaged the economy. A council in Kilkenny thus made representations to Edward in 1360, in which it is argued that the colony had been neglected in various ways and was “en poynt d'estre perdu” [‘on the point of being lost’] (Richardson and Sayles 1947: 19): their fears may have been realistic.

This combination of a new acceptance for English in H domains, together with the real possibility that people of English descent whose interests now lay primarily in Ireland might assimilate to the Gaelic majority in political or military allegiance as well as in language and other social practices, gave rise to a discourse over language in which English and Irish were seen in conflict as part of a wider struggle of national loyalties. A parliamentary tradition of complaint about the assimilation of English colonists to Gaelic society starts with a statute from 1297, written in Latin. This statute does not mention language specifically, but it does reflect the outlook of what Lydon (1987: 273) calls “a government unable

to cope with an increasing burden of defence and peace-keeping”, declaring, as translated by Berry (1907: 211), that

Englishmen also as degenerate in modern times, attire themselves in Irish garments and having their heads shaven, grow and extend the hairs from the back of the head and call them *Culan*, conforming themselves to the Irish as well in garb as in countenance, whereby it frequently happens that some Englishmen reported as Irishmen are slain.

Note here that use of the Irish word *culan* is a linguistic reflection of the cultural assimilation which the statute aims to suppress. Variations on the word *degenerate* are common in this tradition of complaint, and we should interpret them in the light of Duffy’s observation (1997: 142) that “*gens* is the Latin for a people, a nation; to become ‘degenerate’ is to lose a sense of belonging to that nation”.

Various such complaints, in Latin or French, continue through the 14th century: see, for example, Berry (1907: 211, 412, 417–8), Gilbert (1885a: 292), and Crowley (2005: 4–5). Statutes enacted at a parliament in Kilkenny in 1366, written in French, point to two elements of concern for the colony. In addition to measures directed against assimilation in various cultural practices, a statute directs that “every Englishman use the English language, and be named by an English name” (Berry 1907: 435). Here the opposition is between English and Irish, but a further statute (Berry 1907: 437) is aimed at enhancing cohesion within Anglo-Irish society, directing “that no difference of allegiance henceforth be made between the English born in Ireland, and the English born in England, by calling them English hobbe, or Irish dog, but that all be called by one name, the English lieges of our lord the King”. A similar statute from Waterford in 1384–85, written in English (Gilbert 1885a: 292), directs that a fine be payable “if any man dwelling within the lyberte of the same citie shal curse, diffame, or dispice ony citsayn of the saide citie in calling him Yrishman”.

Legislation in the 15th century continues the tradition of the 14th in trying to maintain community boundaries, as in the Dublin statute from 1457–58 which prohibited the lodging of Irish men or “men with bardys above the mouth” (Gilbert 1889: 280–81) or the 1466 regulation which required the use of Latin (which we may take to be an intended defence against Irish) in written communication with Irish merchants and those who “understandith not Englysh” (Gilbert 1889: 323). An ordinance from Waterford adopted in 1492–3 (Gilbert 1885a: 323) shows both an exhortation for those associated with the English colony to use English in court proceedings and a recognition that members of native Irish society (those “of the countre”) would naturally speak Irish, declaring that

no manere man [...] of the cite or suburbes duellers [dwellers], shall enpleade nor defende in Yrish tong ayenste ony man in the court, but that all they that ony maters shall have in courte [...] shall have a man that can spek English to declare his matier, excepte one party be of the countre; then every such dueller shalbe att liberte to speke Yrish.

Some indication of the difficulties in trying to enforce the legislative approach to efforts to maintain English may be seen from the acts of the Parliament of 1495, which reaffirmed the Statutes of Kilkenny but specifically excluded those statutes which pertained to “the language of Irish” (*Statutes* 1786: 77).

Broadly speaking, we can see 15th century Ireland as including three major elements: native Irish society, older English colonists who had now become more truly Anglo-Irish and whose loyalties to England could be tempered or set aside by local alliances with Irish society, and a small group who formed a loyal colonial presence. The attempt to fix social divisions geographically can be seen in the notion of the “English pale”, a term which was used to denote the territory in which colonial control was felt to be relatively secure. The origins of the Irish historical sense of *pale*, derived ultimately from Latin *pālus* ‘a stake’ (OED), are unclear. Lydon (2003: 200) points out a similar meaning in earlier English usage, as in the authorisation given in 1378 to the town of New Sarum (in the area of modern Salisbury) to construct “un grant Pale”, i.e., a “trench [...] and wooden fence” around it. Murphy and Potterton (2010: 265) conclude that the immediate sense in Irish usage derives from the “Pale of Calais”, which was designed to fortify the residual English stronghold at Calais. Grummitt (2008: 5) clarifies that the term “Pale” had been used since 1436 to denote the land at Calais held by the English king, though it was not in common usage until the 1490s. The connection between Calais and Ireland is direct in the person of Sir Edward Poynings, who had held high office in the administration at Calais in the early 1490s and took up the position of lord deputy in Ireland in 1494. Thus when one of the first acts of the parliament convened by Poynings in Drogheda in 1494–5 called, as quoted by Ellis (2007: 447), for “diches to be made aboute the Inglish pale”, we find not only a linguistic development in a colonial context, but the beginning of a culturally indexical notion which encapsulates in a single phrase the delimitation of an area where, in theory, English law and culture prevailed over native Irish society.

Though the ditch referred to by the act of parliament relied on private undertakings and was never fully constructed, many fortifications (including towers and castles as well as banks and ditches) played a role in delimiting core areas of the Pale in counties Dublin, Meath, Louth, and Kildare. It is a mistake to think of the Pale as simply an area surrounding Dublin, since, as Murphy and Potterton (2010: 264) point out, some of the market towns within the Pale owed their very

strength to their distance from Dublin and from each other. Maps given by Murphy and Potterton (2010: 266–275) connect the political design of the Pale with historical and archaeological evidence: further maps are given by Mitchell and Ryan (1997: 319) and Edwards and Hourican (2005: 80–81). Rather than thinking of the delimitation of the Pale in absolute terms, though, it may be best to see it in the terms given by Lyons (2003: 853), who describes it as “a shifting medieval frontier whose borders coincided with geographical, cultural, administrative, political, and military boundaries between English and Irish regions in Leinster”.

1.3 Irish English in transition

The reduction and geographical retraction of the Anglo-Irish colony, as well as the trend towards Gaelicisation which the medieval parliaments addressed, have led to a view in which Irish English is seen as a dead language at some point before 1600. Bliss (1977a: 26), for example, has stated that “by the end of the fifteenth century little English was heard except in the Pale [...] and in the towns”, and that “by the middle of the sixteenth century spoken English was in a state of almost total eclipse” (Bliss [1976] 1978: 546). Bliss (1977a: 26) also uses the early 17th century evidence of Fynes Moryson, which is discussed here below, to conclude that by Moryson’s time “through most of the country Mediaeval Hiberno-English was effectively extinct”. If Irish English had died, say, by the time of Henry VIII, we might be encouraged to ignore the earlier period of Irish English and start with, roughly speaking, the Elizabethan settlement referred to by the Edgeworths. Yet once we allow for the effects of diglossia in limiting the number of written texts in English which were compiled within the medieval colony, and when we consider the important economic and political role of the towns in colonial society, we come to a very different picture of the maintenance and modernisation of Irish English.

With regard to the role of towns in early Irish English, we should bear in mind that the account given by Thomas (1992) demonstrates solid archaeological or documentary evidence for no less than 56 such walled towns. Allowing for towns where the evidence is not definitive, the total possible number is over 100. These towns form a clear network of settlements, especially in the east and south, with other walled towns as far west as Galway and as far north as Coleraine. The map given by Whelan (1997: 183) demonstrates what he describes as “a curtain of walled towns” which, by 1350, “ringed the Pale and the south-eastern river valleys”. If we understand these towns as focal points for networks of English speakers with common political and economic interests as well as a common language, we can suggest that they had a stronger linguistic significance than their

strict population numbers would imply. We may, then, find a clearer guide to the development of Irish English in the view of Canny (1980: 169), who, citing “the remarkable resilience of the anglicized community in Ireland”, argued against Bliss’s portrayal and found it “probable that Hiberno-English culture was experiencing a revival rather than a decline in the decades approaching 1534”.

Admittedly, the picture of the “state of Ireland” which was given to Henry VIII in 1515 was not encouraging (see *State Papers* 1834, II, iii: 8). The only areas counted as “subgett unto the Kinges lawes” were parts of the counties of Louth, Meath, Dublin, Kildare, and Wexford, and even in these counties, it was stated that “all the comyn peopple [...] that obeyeth the Kinges lawes, for the more parte ben of Iryshe byrthe, of Iryshe habyte, and of Iryshe langage”. Outside these loyal areas, it is said that the English people are “of Iryshe habyt, of Iryshe langage, and of Iryshe condytions, except the cyties and wallyed tounes”. Here we note the reference to cities and walled towns as reserve areas for English. Despite the pessimistic nature of this report, we should not take it as indicative of the total assimilation of the Anglo-Irish community; the report also opined that “thEnglyshe folke” of the counties which lie outside the King’s control “wolde be right gladdes to obey the Kinges lawes” if the king could provide them with sufficient protection.

Changes subsequently instigated by Henry VIII sought to eliminate the tripartite division – linked by unstable and changeable allegiances and practices – of Gaelic society, Anglo-Irish society, and English rule. Henry’s initial efforts were not particularly successful, and from 1534 onwards, we see a strengthening of the legislative tradition of fighting Gaelicisation across a wide range of activities, including language. A directive in 1536 from Henry VIII to the town of Galway (Hamilton 1860: 17), for example, instructs the citizens to sell goods only in market towns, “to shave their lips, to let their hair grow over their ears, and wear caps”, not to give protection to the king’s enemies, and “to learn English”. The values associated with English and Irish are made explicit in “An Act for the English order, Habite, and Language” passed by the Irish parliament in 1537 (*Statutes* 1786: 119–125; note also Crowley 2000: 21–23). Based on the assumption that “there is againe nothing which doth more conteyne and keep many of his subjects of this his said land, in a certaine savage and wilde kind and maner of living, then the diversitie that is betwixt them in tongue, language, order, and habite”, the parliament directed that “the said English tongue, habite and order, may be from henceforth continually (and without ceasing or returning at any time to Irish habite or language) used by all men that will knowledge themselves according to their duties of allegiance” (*Statutes* 1786: 120). This association of loyalty and the use of English, and the desire to build a stable community around these values, is further seen in the direction (pp. 121–122)