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A preliminary study to interpret structural nativisation in Irish English syntax through cultural conceptualisations

Fergus O'Dwyer

1. Introduction

Structural nativisation (Schneider, 2004: 227) occurs when varieties of English develop or select and adopt distinctive linguistic features or structural innovations of their own. I will argue that the cultural conceptualisation (CC) found in the belief that phenomena such as various physical and mental sensations, states or processes can be placed upon a person is a contributory factor as to why the 'on' dative of disadvantage (e.g. it is not a common sickness on *him*) feature was "selected", "transmitted" or "propagated" (Mufwene, 2002) in Irish English (IrE). More specifically this preliminary study will generally, in a small way, aim to explain why particular linguistic features enter the pool in a language contact situation and then later explain the conventionalisation of those features when new contact varieties arise. There will be an emphasis that the CC component is one possible component in the dynamic systems of selection in a features pool of language contact. IrE and specifically the 'on' dative of disadvantage feature will be assessed in these terms.

The paper first provides a background to IrE, cultural conceptualisations and the nativisation of English. The thesis is then placed in a wider framework referring to the features pool theory and the dynamic systems theory. I present a preliminary list of possible linguistic and extralinguistic components in the dynamic systems of

selection of linguistic features within a linguistic system. A discussion of cultural conceptualisations in Ireland and IrE leads to an examination of the 'on' dative of disadvantage feature from the perspective of the linguistic inputs, and the linguistic transfer from Irish to Irish English. This develops the point about the transfer of the cultural conceptualisations underlying the feature along with the linguistic structure. The paper concludes with a tentative outline of possible methodology for a systematic investigation of this research question.

2. Irish English Background

The sociohistorical background and the social ecology of language contact in Ireland will be discussed so as to serve as an introduction to IrE. Irish Gaelic, or simply Irish, is the indigenous language of Ireland but the usage of the English language in the island is long. Large scale movements of English people and the English language to Ireland began in 1170 when people from the west and south-west of England moved to the east of Ireland. In the 1600s there was a large plantation of people from western Scotland to the north-east of Ireland, and from the north of England to south Ireland. From 1100-1900 Irish was the dominant language, but from 1900 onward English became the dominant language. One of the predominant reasons for this was the Great Famine which struck Ireland in 1847. The main results of the famine were large decrease in the population through death and emigration, and the decline of the Irish language and customs. In 1835, the number of first language (L1) Irish speakers was estimated at four million- in 1851, only 2 million spoke Irish as their L1. While Irish is now considered to be the first official language with English the second, L1 speakers of Irish in Ireland make up approximately 3% of the population (Hickey, 2007; Johnston, 2010).

To overview the influence of the Irish language on IrE I use the following quote

from an Irish government paper:

> The Irish language is an integral part of our culture..through Irish we can retain a lively sense and understanding of the unique and essential elements of the Irish character..English of course has contributed to our national heritage but the English we speak bears the imprint of attitudes of mind and modes of expression which prevailed when Irish was the language of general use. (*Athbheochan*, 1965 cited in Kallen, 1994:186)

Kallen (1994) mentions two research 'paradigms' in the study of IrE: 'substratist' as against 'superstratist' or 'retentionist' views. The concepts of language universals and convergence, previously largely ignored, have also come to prominence in recent years.

Siemund (2006: 291) notes the situation seems to match many of the general characteristics of language shift in Thomason (2001), more specifically 'language shift with normal transmission"[1]. The language shift situation in Ireland between around 1700 and 1900 featured a high number of bilinguals as well as a high degree of imperfect learning. It appears it frequently happened that children in the acquisition of English as a L1 were confronted with deficient primary data (i.e. parents who had no L1 competence in English). Low levels of literacy and schooling are also thought to have played a role in the language shift. The prevalence of migratory labour in 1800s may have also contributed to this language shift (Odlin, 1992; Hickey, 2007; Siemund, 2006).

In order to carry out a thorough investigation Thomason (2010: 34) would assert it is necessary to be quite explicit, and rigorous, about criteria for establishing contact-induced change using the following criteria.

1. To consider the proposed receiving language (English) as a whole, not a single piece at a time: the chances that just one structural feature travelled from one language to another are vanishingly small.

2. Identify a source language (Irish). Many speakers of Irish need to have shifted to English so that is, or was, in sufficiently intimate contact with English to permit the transfer of structural features.

3. Find some shared features in Irish and English. They need not be identical in the two languages, and very often they won't be, because transferred features often don't match in the source and receiving languages. They should, however, belong to a range of linguistic subsystems, e.g. both phonology and syntax, so as to rule out the possibility of structurally linked internal innovations.

4. Prove that the features are old in Irish – that is, prove that the features are not innovations in Irish.

5. Prove that the features are innovations in English, that is, that they did not exist in English before English came into close contact with Irish

For the sake of brevity we can say that these criteria can be met when analysing IrE and will return to some of these criteria later in the paper.

Several distinctive features of IrE have developed over time, including second person pronouns, a-prefixing, reduced infinitive *have*, cleft sentences, unbound/ untriggered *self*-forms, embedded inversion, subject-verb agreement, habitual constructions, various lexical and lexico-grammatical idiosyncrasies (Hickey, 2007; Siemund, 2010). It is in these syntactic, lexical and lexico-grammatical idiosyncrasies that I will search for connection to CC and will introduce relevant language features as needed.

3. Cultural conceptualisations

The cultural conceptualisation (CC) approach argues that Englishes (and other linguistic systems) should not only be examined exclusively in terms of linguistic features but also as emergent systems that are adopted to express the CC- cultural schema, categories, and metaphors that embody cultural beliefs and experiences- of their speakers (Sharifian, 2009a).

The study of metaphorical concepts can reveal the cultural model of a society. From the perspective of cultural cognition, many view that cultural conceptualisations originated from traditional medical/philosophical traditions, but develop an emergent (macro-level) existence, which is the result of the "negotiation" and "renegotiation" of the conceptualisations by speakers in their communicative interactions across generations and thus across time and space (Sharifian, 2009a: 169). For example the abdomen, heart and brain regions are viewed as emotional and mental centres in world languages (Sharifian, Dirven, Yu and Niemeier, 2008). In English emotional activities are generally assigned to the heart while mental activities the head/brain. We can be kind-hearted (sincere) and cool-headed (calm under pressure) (Niemeier, 2008). However Siahann (2008) notes a translation of the English phrase a 'good heart' in present day Indonesain is *hati yang bersih* (clean liver). In the case of the conceptualisation of the *HATI* (LIVER) AS THE SEAT OF INNER THOUGHT in Indonesian, we can seen that this cultural model is based on old traditions and ancient religion- predominantly the ancient Indonesian ritual of liver divination (in which the liver is regarded as the seat of life and fates were believed to be written on the livers by gods or divine spirits) and in ancient Indonesian cultural belief (the living soul was believed to be located in the liver). These traditions and beliefs are no longer practiced and long forgotten in modern life and have been replaced by world religions. Nevertheless, this cultural

model is still preserved in the language and thus it can be argued that the cultural model influences the speakers' ways of thinking. An example more relevant to syntactical features is centeredness as both a cultural and grammatical theme for Mam (Maya) speakers. Centeredness is realised in cultural and grammatical themes, and conceived of and reflected in talk and life lived out among the Mam themselves. Collins (2010) continues that language and culture are "interconstitutive, through overlap and interplay between people's cultural practices and preoccupations and the grammatical structures they habitually employ".

My thesis argues that CC should be considered when hypothesizing what principles regulate feature selection in a language contact situation. The following section will place this thesis in a wider framework referring to the features pool theory and the dynamic systems theory.

4. A dynamic systems of selection in the features pool of language contact

Selection plays a role in language evolution with the feature pool providing the possible outputs (Mufwene, 2001, 2002). The features pool (graphically represented below, see <http://humanities.uchicago.edu/faculty/mufwene/feature_pool.html> for more information) can be interpreted in various ways. The top tier represents input linguistic systems, which contribute features to the feature pool, in the middle tier. The lowest, third tier shows the output systems.

Assuming that the input and output varieties are all idiolects, Mufwene (2002) would urge us to figure out what principles (having to do with specific but varying ecological conditions of human interaction and with structural factors) regulate the selection of specific features into the output idiolects. Markedness factors must be assessed relative to the ecology in which a language is spoken, articulating
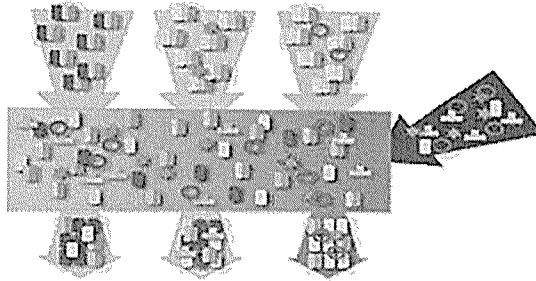
Figure 1 A graphic representation of the features pool

those factors that matter to speakers, such as what option is the most common or most frequent, or the most transparent, or the most regular, the most salient, not semantically empty, or the most economic etc. bearing in mind that what may be unmarked in a particular ecology may be marked in another, and only subsets of these factors apply in different cases (Mufwene, 2002: 55, Siegel, 1997: 141).

It is possible the dynamic systems theory (DST) adequately describes the system of selection of features. The DST is used to explain complex systems that have many interacting components. The main tenet of DST is that because components are interrelated and yet also have independent development life their behaviour cannot be described in a linear, cause-effect way (e.g. high motivation equals achievement in language learning). Dörnyei (2010) goes on to state that we must acknowledge everything depends on the overall constellation of factors. Sometimes a large amount of input produces minimal change (language learners who do not show improvements in proficiency, a-prefixation passed on from earlier dialects of English to IrE), and sometimes a smaller event can have a huge impact (a coincidence leads to a worldview change and notable improvement in language proficiency for a language learner, the after perfect feature in IrE with substrate

influence). A double pendulum is an example of a 2-dimensional system with two variables; it is difficult to describe the dynamic trajectory of the whole arm in mathematical terms. The task is even more daunting with more than two dynamic variables; a situation which is more representative of a language contact situation. DST provides a set of ideas and a wide range of tools to study complex systems. We can no longer work with simple cause-and-effect models in which the outcome can be predicted, but we must use case studies to discover relevant sub-systems and simulate the process (surely IrE is a good case study for contact linguistics). Key aspects of DST include sensitive dependence on initial conditions (i.e. systems are sensitive to specific input at one given point in time and some other input at another) as well as a non-linear nature of development, self-organisation, and co-adaptation (De bot et al. cited in Dörnyei, 2010: 100).

That is the framework I see to explain a language contact situation. More specifically this preliminary study will generally, in a small way, aim to explain why particular linguistic features enter the pool in a language contact situation and then later explain the conventionalisation of those features when new contact varieties arise. Below you can find a preliminary and far from finite list of possible linguistic and extralinguistic components in the dynamic systems of selection of linguistic features within a linguistic system. By definition there is obviously interplay between specific components within the system. The list could extend the contextual and linguistic factors affecting selection presented by Siegel (1997: 144).

In language contact the social ecology as a whole does have a say as to what kind of contact-induced change takes place, if any. Winford mentioned to me that the feature pool is a pool of linguistic choices and that I seem to be more interested in the social ecology of the contact, which Mufwene sees as a set of constraints on the selection from the pool of linguistic choices. I will not deal with that here but for

Linguistic components

Universal markedness Degree to which features are integrated into the linguistic system, Typological distance between source and recipient languages (Thomason, 2001:60) 3 Universals: -Universal Grammar, Principles and parameters. -Typological and implicational universals (statistical generalisations which refer to tendencies rather than indispensable or necessary features. Functional grammar may be important.) - SLA in language contact situations. Some part subsumed under sphere of the universalist principles and parameters school (Filppulla, 1999)

Extra-linguistic components

Sociolinguistic and (socio) historical: The nature of the contact (demographics, community settings, patterns of interaction, language attitude and ideology, identity prestige, and choices of identity) Aspects of the social context: degrees of bilingualism, differences in language dominance, linguistic dominance relationships (balanced bilingualism versus unequal bilingualism as in language shift situations) etc. (personal communication with Donald Winford, 2010) Cultural conceptualisation component: Cultural models provide templates for understanding in certain aspects of life (Sharifian, Dirven, Yu and Niemeier, 2008)

Figure 2. List of possible linguistic and extralinguistic components in the dynamic systems of selection of linguistic features within a linguistic system

now say the CC component is part of the extralinguistic component, in a sense, but should be treated separately from the sociohistorical and sociolinguistic components. The CC component is a possible contributory factor in the selection of linguistic

features within a linguistic system. It is argued DST or any other language contact framework should incorporate all of these elements, and its aim should be to explain why particular linguistic features enter the pool in the contact situation and later explain why these features are conventionalized when new contact varieties arise. This involves explanation of the "constraints", which are linguistic, psycholinguistic, social etc. in nature. This a tall order for this paper to achieve, so I need to narrow things a bit. Furthermore in order to do this germ of an idea justice you would have to look at more than one feature at a time (I will return to this in the final section).

This paper will now not focus on all the myriad aspects of an explanation of contact induced changes but focus on the CC component and main thesis about cultural transfer. This leads to the nativisation of English, which I will briefly deal with in the following section.

5. Nativisation of English

Human languages need to be viewed as capturing and storing cultural conceptualisations such as cultural schemas and categories (Sharifian, 2009a: 165). This is central to the concept of "nativisation" of languages like English to fit the world view of the speakers who learned it as a second language (L2). Kachru (2008: 360) notes that English as used in South Asia is absorbing the social and cultural values of the region. This interaction of language and sociocultural conventions is a vast area of research waiting for a more sustained research effort.

A number of major Asian languages such as Hindi, Japanese, Korean, and Thai, have grammaticized devices at the phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic levels, in addition to discourse strategies, to signal respectful and polite verbal behaviour (Kachru, 2006: 368). This is related to the concepts of "face"

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and resulting polite behaviours based on family, community and group loyalties; notions of social hierarchy that in turn link up with concepts of power and status. Such concepts can be seen to transfer to L2 English. Kachru (2008: 348) cites the example *What is your command?* in India (*What can I do for you?* in standard English). Other examples from letters of formal request from Indian writers with affective elements which highlight this include *I request you very humbly to enlighten me of the following points* (Kachru, Yamanu, 2006: 376) and *I respectfully submit the following few lines for favour of your kind consideration* (Parasher, 2001 cited in Jenkins, 2003).

We can also find examples of cultural conceptualisations and the nativisation of English in other regions. Some tribes install their chief on a stool or clothe him in an animal skin; so in Ghanaian English we find the lexical items of *enstool* and *enskin*. Also in Ghanaian English the word 'divine' is used to capture a cultural schema that involves contact with the "unseen world" to discover reasons behind a mishap, misfortune, etc. (Sharifian, 2009b). 'Senior brother' is more appropriate than 'elder brother' in Nigerian English as elder brothers have far greater responsibility for and power over younger siblings than elsewhere (Kirkpatrick, 2007: 106). Kinship terms often generate nativised terms, with Aboriginal English providing further examples. Aboriginal languages are characterized by noun class markers appearing before the noun (a famous example of a noun class cited by Lakoff, 1990, is the noun class denoting "women, fire, and dangerous things."). An example from the Arabana Aboriginal language is the noun class marker *Arnanthara* which denote "we, who belong to the same matrilineal moiety, adjacent generation levels, and who are in the basic relationship of mother, or mothers' brother and child". Research by Sharifian (2009a) on Aboriginal English has revealed how even everyday words of this indigenized variety of English instantiate related Aboriginal cultural schemas and categories that are largely distinct from those associated with Standard

Australian English. For instance, the word 'mum' in Aboriginal English may refer to someone who is culturally in the same category as one's biological mother, such as one's mother's sister. On the other hand, 'home' may be used by Aboriginal English speakers to refer to wherever their "extended" family members live. The last example is the conceptualisation of LAND AS KIN in Aboriginal English. For the Aboriginal people, the land has a spiritual connection; it's their mother. The human spirit is born from the land and returns to it upon death. They feel their ancestor beings are part of the land, they are part of the ancestor beings, therefore they are part of the land. So in Standard Australian English, which has a strong connection to colonialism, the typical phrase of *This land is mine* is *This land is me* in Aboriginal English (Sharifian, 2006, 2009b). Having exemplified how CC originating in the culture of a region and found in the indigenous language can be seen to have an influence of the nativised English, let us move onto IrE and related cultural beliefs.

6. Relevant cultural conceptualisations in Ireland

The inner passages of the Newgrange passage tomb, dating from 5,000 years ago, are illuminated by the rays of the sun once a year on the morning of the longest day of the year, the winter solstice. This shows the long history in the island of Ireland of beliefs related to the land, nature, and the elements etc. I argue that the 'on' dative of disadvantage and the belief that phenomena such as various physical and mental sensations, states or processes can be placed upon a person can be traced back to old beliefs prevalent in early Irish society. Classical and Irish sources mention three religious and learned classes: druids, bards and seers. The druids had a strong divinatory role, were often called to interpret dreams and even facilitate the selection of rightful king-elect. They were accredited with the ability to transform themselves, or others, into the form of certain animals. Natural phenomenon obeyed dictates of the druid- winds, fires, mists yielded to their commands. Irish druids were associated

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with taboos and bonds placed upon prominent people and which they had to obey or perish; it was believed they could bring about death by enchantment (Green, 1993; Danaher, 2003; Rose, 1995). The retelling of the Irish legends can be used for illustrative purposes: Cuchulain, the great legendary hero who had just killed his own son due to trickery, stood up and faced all the men of Ulster "There is *trouble on Cuchulain*" said King Conchubar, the King of Ulster "for he is after killing his own son, and if I and all my men were to go against him, by the end of the day he would destroy us all. Go now" he said to Cathbad, the Druid "and make him to go down to the sea, and to give three days fighting against the waves of the sea, rather than to kill us all". So the druid Cathbad put an *enchantment on* Cuchulain, and made him to go down to sea. Cuchulain took the sword in his right hand and fought with the waves three days and three nights, till he died from hunger and weakness (Gregory, 1902, emphasis added by author). The druids were accredited with many powers as you can see with the ability to place mental and physical states etc. 'on a person' being important here. The druid class were outlawed in 8th century but role continued through *filid* (scholarly poets) and the *brehon* (judges). When Christianity became prominent saints were accredited with such powers. Later still the blacksmith judged to have magical powers. There is a corpus of spells, prayers for protection, incantations and charms in Scottish Gaelic in early 1900s (Rose, 1995: 424). The belief continued in folklore and habits of the people. Writer John Millington Synge (1907, 1992: 14) notes upon a visit to islands off the west coast of Ireland "As I sat in the kitchen several men came in to talk to me, usually murmuring on the threshold, 'The blessing of God on this place'". The folklorist O'Suilleabhan (1978) notes the soul was considered as some kind of concrete entity, capable of moving about independently of the body to which it belonged, and assuming different shapes at will (e.g. emigrants who died abroad returning as seagulls). Where medical knowledge had not advanced most aliments were attributed to the action of unfriendly powers: evil spirits, fairies, ghosts and so on. Man's main weapons

against them was magic, and his efforts gave him comfort, even if did not always bring relief. The practice of passing the patient through an opening (e.g. under a stone), by which he was supposed to leave his ailment at the other side, was not uncommon. Children were pushed through some kinds of opening (clefts in trees) to cure rickets. It was believed that if you rubbed a slug to a wart and then impaled it on a whitethorn bush, the wart was banished (Danaher, 2004: 69). O'Suilleabhain (1978: 209) asserts the answer as to why beliefs about fairies (the people outside us) and other such ideas should have ever arisen would seem to be that the existence of the fairy world helped to solve, in a kind of sensible way, problems which were beyond explanation in a purely rational way. People always looked for causes for everything that happened, and if some otherwise unexplainable occurrence could be ascribed to fairy agency (the people outside us) they felt relieved and comforted. The fairies and other such beliefs were a reality for our ancestors. The writer for one fully believes in them also and asks them to return all the misplaced belongings they have hidden from me over the years!

It can be taken that there was the belief that physical and mental states (sadness, madness, sickness) could be placed on a person and this would be reflected in the language of the people. These beliefs, in this case of mental and physical sensations being placed upon a person, have been negotiated and renegotiated over time. As language is a means of storing cultural conceptualisations such as cultural schemas and categories (Sharifian, 2009) to produce the 'on' dative of disadvantage found in IrE. Some examples:

You···make trouble *pon my poor shelf* (Bliss, 1979) [taken from a literary text dated 1727]

At present he has a sort of a hard cough *on him* [Hamburg Corpus of Irish Emigrant Letters, ChandJ01, 1775]

It is not a common sickness *on him* (Bliss, 1984)

The mad *was on me!* What the hell is mindin is *on em!* Twill be money *on you!* The'oul television is gone *on me*. (Moylan, 1996: 342)

He would put the day astray *on you*. You get no satisfaction *on him* (Odlin, 1991)

In the next section I will examine this feature from the perspective of the linguistic inputs, the linguistic transfer from Irish to Irish English, with further examples, and develop the point about the transfer of the cultural conceptualisations underlying the Irish construction along with the linguistic structure

7.1 The 'on' dative of disadvantage

The penultimate of Thomasons' (2010) 5 criterion for establishing contact-induced change is to prove that the feature is not an innovation in Irish. In Irish Gaelic the preposition *ar,* serves a host of different functions Filppula (1999: 219-226). The Irish for 'what is your name?' is *Cén t-ainm atá tu ort?* (What name is upon you?, here *ar* changes to *ort* due to the context, other variations include *air* and *orm*). Irish *ar* is often used to express relevance and indicate detriment or disadvantage of various kinds, for example: *Theip an scéim nua air* [*failed the scheme new on-him*], *Thit an dréimire orm* [*fell the ladder on-me*]. So for the sake of brevity we can say the feature is not an innovation in Irish. To move onto the last of Thomasons' criteria: to prove that the features *is* an innovations in English, that is, that it did not exist in English before English came into close contact with Irish. This can be debated. It seems most of the uses of *on* in such contexts are peculiar to IrE but are found in other varieties (Filppula, 1999:223) *Oh that news was on the newspaper yesterday* attested in some Southwestern BrE dialect (from the English Dialect Dictionary, EDD cited in Filppula, 1999: 70). EDD records *on* in the sense of disadvantage only in Scotland English and IrE. Sabban (1982: 459

cited in Hickey: 2007) notes patterns of *on* (possession, psychological and physical states: *the pain would come on me,* datives incommodi: *Lock the door on him, he's not getting in)* derive from Gaelic and must not be confused with some other, superficially similar patterns such as *tell on (somebody), or walk out on (somebody)* , which are of English ancestry.

Hickey (2007:247) asserts it is obvious that *on* + personal pronoun feature is used to express a negative effect on the person referred to. This usage is known from varieties outside Ire: *They stole the car on him.* Here the use of on is often an alternative to the possessive pronoun which might not be appropriate or accurate in every context, e.g. where the car is not the speakers but one which he/she was responsible for. It is the option of indicating relevance, but not necessarily possession, which givers justification to the use of *on* + personal pronoun. Other languages have similar devices to realise similar semantics. German, for example allows use of the dative to indicate relevance *Er ist mir abgehauen* (he is me-DATIVE run-off, He ran away on me). The use of *on* with the experience of an action is established in English and can be seen with such verbs as *impose on someone, have mercy on someone, inflict something on someone, call on someone.* Historically, there were verbs which took *on, like wait on, do on, look on,* which have either changed their preposition (*look on* – look at), dropped it (believe on – believe) or lost their compound meaning (*wait on* = serve, attend, to, *do on* = do wrong to). The latter example is still found in IRE where more standard varieties of English would have *do to* e.g. *What did she do on you?* 'What did she do to you?' Hickey concludes that it is safe to say IrE usage has its roots in the corresponding Irish system.

Sabban (1982: 447-54 cited in Hickey, 2007) considers *air* 'on' in Scottish Gaelic and possible transfer to English during language shift. Her conclusion is

that substrate is most probably the source of the wider range of uses in which *on* + personal pronoun occurs in contact English. Further supported by the fact that the preposition occurs in contexts in which other elements point to Gaelic influence, e.g. use of the verb of motion and a definite article in a sentence like *Thainig an t-acras orra* 'The hunger came on them' (1982: 448). Scottish Gaelic and Irish Gealic share many similarities, for example the former sentence in Irish is *Tháinig an t-ocras orthu*. Such convergence would then favour the use of on dative in post-shift IrE. Certainly by the late 1800s/early 1900s the feature was a widespread means of expressing negative relevance, for example *He's after dying on me* (Hickey, 2007: 248).

Filppula (1999: 219-26) found that like its Irish Gaelic counterpart *ar*, the preposition *on* has come to serve a host of different functions in IrE: it is a 'preposition of all-work'. The 'dativus incommodi' expressions imply a disadvantage of some or other from a point of view of the referent of the pronoun acting as the complement of the preposition: So he took the fields and the night time fall came in *on him* (Filppula, 1999:219). This is a simple verb followed by a preposition and its complement, the same relation of disadvantage can also be conveyed by a combination of verb + particle + preposition: The fire went out *on him*.

The second major function of *on* in IrE is to express various physical and mental sensations, states or processes. Most often negative involving physical process or states: The breath was getting short *on him*. They have a quite a drop of drink *on them*. The heart was bad *on him* (he had a weak heart) (Henry, 1957: 148 cited in Filppula, 1999: 220)

Negative mental states or sensations are equally said to be, go or come 'on a person' : the climate is a fright *on you*, the nerves went *on him*, you could see the vexation *on him*. That's the only dread that's *on me* (Bliss, 1984a: 149). Though

much more infrequent, positive states or sensations also occurred: The strength often came *on him* and he said, 'What the hell are you doin?' Hickey (2007: 247) notes that the transfer of *on* + personal pronoun led to usages which are largely negative in meaning. Furthermore, there are cases where there may well have been different usages previously (to put a welcome on him).

Winford (2003: 247) defines constraints on L1 influence as one linguistic constraint in language shift: psycholinguistic processes with learners manipulating L1 and L2 inputs to interlanguage grammar. Hickey (2007) notes an explanation with recourse to the language-shift situation. The L1 speakers of Irish, who were acquainted with uses like *Theip an sceim air* [The new scheme failed on –him], transferred this to the English they were learning by adding the prepositional phrase expressing relevance to existing sentences structures in English. This is a case of *additive transfer* where an element from the outset language is added to the target providing a further semantic feature, in this case of an action to a person in the discourse. Furthermore, this additive transfer took place to express negative or positive relevance of an action to an individual. This explains why in the 1800s there are instances of *on* + personal pronouns which are literal translations from Irish and positive in connotation. But later the use of *on* + personal pronoun settled down to the expression of negative relevance in the 1900s, much as the after-perfective had settled down to past reference some time before.

A note aside based on my opinion founded from growing up in Dublin is that the *on* + personal pronoun with a usage negative in meaning did not enjoy high prestige. Current usage in my Dublin English is positive in many contexts, examples heard upon my last visit to Dublin in March 2010: *I have a great buzz on me, I have a bit of a goo on me* (both meaning I am feeling good), *Look at the fresh head on ye!* (You look very fresh this morning!). This is a possible renegotiation of the 'on'

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dative of disadvantage feature. In any case we can see this feature is relevant to speakers of modern IrE as seen by the following examples taken from the spoken component of the International Corpus of English (ICE)-Ireland.

⟨S1A-011$C⟩ My girls would never do that *on me*

⟨S1A-053$B⟩ (It was a beautiful plant) but somebody killed it *on me*

⟨S1A-052$B⟩ No that 's fine I haven't gotten around to listening to that tape yet. My little brother saw it and nicked it *on me*

Freddie sold four hundred ⟨S1A-069$C⟩ Mm yeah there 's loads of profit *on them*

⟨S1A-021$D⟩ Provincetown north of Boston. This guy brought us there. Uh he was plying drink *on us*

⟨S1A-038$B⟩ that 'll not be fair *on them*

⟨S1A-021$F⟩ Who 's this that had played the trick *on you*

Some would argue we need a more valid measure: modern language should also be analysed in terms of the relevant linguistic features. While this animistic belief is based on old traditions and ancient religion, no longer widely practiced, nevertheless it is claimed that this cultural model is still preserved in the language and thus influences its people ways of thinking. In order for this research to be viable it should have relevance to people living in today's Ireland. The Survey of Irish English Usage (Hickey, 2004) consists of a questionnaire with 57 sample sentences, each of which contains a structure which is known to occur in some form of Irish English. The relevant surveyed sentences are *The fire went out on him* and *He crashed the car on her*. Informants were asked to give their reaction ("no problem", "a bit strange" or "unacceptable") to each sentence as it might be used in casual speech among friends. There are over 1,000 questionnaires, from throughout the island, which were acceptable. *The fire went out on him* had mean of 79 percent (answer "no problem",

no significant geographical variation). *He crashed the car on her* mean of 61 per cent lower value accounted for its potential ambiguity (did he crash her car into an object/person or did he crash a car on her/hit her with a car?). So we can still see the 'on' dative of disadvantage feature is transparent for modern IrE speakers.

7. Future considerations

I argue that the CC found in the belief that phenomena such as various physical and mental sensations, states or processes can be placed upon a person has been negotiated and renegotiated to be seen as a component in regulating the selection of the 'on' dative of disadvantage in IrE. As noted by Thomason in order to establishing contact-induced change (Thomason, 2010: 34) it is necessary to consider the proposed receiving language (English) as a whole, not a single piece at a time: the chances that just one structural feature travelled from one language to another are vanishingly small. In order to do this germ of an idea (the cultural conceptualization component in a dynamic system of selection in the features pool of language contact) justice you would have to look at more than one feature at a time. I will briefly present some possible options that should be considered if this line of research is continued.

7.1 Other language feature options

In it

This feature indicates location in the metaphorical sense i.e. existence in the general sense, it is of a mental nature, some examples: The dog will train himself if the goodness is *in him*. The roguery is *in em* (bred into them) There is a bit of a rogue *in you*. Tis some kind of kink *in her* (she has some kind of kink of personality) (Moylan, 1996: 337; Filppula, 1999: 235).

Agentive function of *with*

This feature includes the use of with to indicate the means or instrument with which an action is performed, some examples: He must of got hit *with* a car. They' re supposed to be takin' *with* the devil and going for disturbance through the world. (Filppula, 1999: 234; Odlin, 1991:179).

Devil (Divil) as a syntactic device

Divil a farthin they got that time. *Divil* a one ever I seen. The *divil* I doubt it (Odlin, 1995, 1997).

These are possible options to explore among several other options. I will conclude this paper by outlining possible methodology for a systematic investigation of such features in terms of CC.

7.2 Way forward

As I noted this is a preliminary study with the aim to explain why particular linguistic features enter the pool in the contact situation and why the features are later conventionalized when new contact varieties arise. There is an emphasis that CCs are one possible component in a dynamic system of selection in the features pool of language contact. I am currently leaning toward focusing more on the idea of cultural continuity in language change and how CCs can maintain integrity over time better than individual items. One benefit of working through this project to present at International Associations of World Englishes (IAWE) conference in Vancouver in July 2010 and writing this paper was that I feel I have narrowed the topic down to a feasible research scope. I know specifically what I wish to investigate (centring on the research question "Is the CC component one possible component in the dynamic systems of selection in the features pool of language contact?") and can now attempt to progress in a structured way. The next step in one research design methodology

(Hatch & Farhady, 1982) is to review the literature as completely as possible.

I will briefly run over some of the literature that I feel should be attended to, in the immediate beginning with much more to follow I am sure, if the project is continued. Trudgill (2004) proposes that the emergence of an English, and of isolated new dialects generally, is purely deterministic i.e. it can be explained solely in terms of the frequency of occurrence of particular variants and the frequency of interactions between different speakers in the society. My research would directly question this. Using mathematical modeling of theories and of empirical data for the study of New Zealand English and language change the results of Baxter et al. (2009) indicate that determinism cannot be a sufficient mechanism for the emergence of a new dialect. So there are other components in the system of dialect emergence with CC as one possible component. Pennycooks' conception of performativity as a way "of thinking about language and identity within globalization" (2007: 13) may also be relevant. Bernstein's theory of language code shows how the language people use in everyday conversation both reflects and shapes the assumptions of a certain social group. Furthermore, relationships established within the social group affect the way that group uses language, and the type of speech that is used. The concept of *code*, as a set of organizing principles behind the language employed by members of a social group, may be relevant here (Littlejohn, 2002: 178). It will be useful to examine in detail ideas approached by Lakoff (1990), such as the cognitive model theory and the concept of basic-level categories.

Once I have carried out this literature review as thoroughly as possible I can reformulate the research question if necessary and state hypothesis about expected outcome of the research (e.g. it can be said to a certain degree of probability that the CC component is a component in the dynamic systems of selection in the features pool of language contact). The next step is to systematically investigate the question.

In order to do this I will need to consider which approaches will be most efficient in giving answers to the research question. I don't pretend to have developed a comprehensive and definite methodology right now; the remaining is written in order to preliminarily tease out this step.

Basically I am trying to prove a relationship between language and culture. Collins (2010: 29) would see this as nigh unto impossible but the aim is "not proof, but pattern" and the illumination of "covert categories".

It remains true that for the vast majority of known linguistic changes there is no adequate explanation. Thomason (2010: 43) asserts the best explanation for any linguistic change will take all discoverable causal factors into account, both internal and external. The best historical explanation might well have to appeal to both causes. Filppula (199: 274) notes establishing the sources of each of the features (from a substrate and superstrate perspective) investigated with any degree of certainty can be extremely complicated. In an examination of several features of IrE Filppula would conclude in many cases that it is "highly probable" that either the substrate or superstrate is exerting an influence on the IrE feature (and often notes the reinforcing nature of the opposing paradigm). So in this research attempting to interpret language contact through CCs it gets even more difficult to ascertain to absolute certainty the influence of a component upon a language feature. Furthermore the negotiation and renegotiation of relevant beliefs over time may be a hindrance to the research. We must work toward hypothesising assertions to a reasonable amount of probability rather than extreme assertions.

The search for reasons of language contact itself is illuminating (Thomason, 2010). What I will work toward is a basic methodological framework to hypothesize and test how the CC component contributes to the unmarkedness, salience,

transparency and selection of a specific feature in a language contact feature pool. Bejoint (1983: 723-5 cited in Kallen, 1997: 140) makes the point that fieldwork is especially useful in filling gaps in the corpus of a language, in establishing usage, in determining attitudes to usage, and in refining questions of definition and folk taxonomy. These needs are very much to the fore in researching IRE. There needs to be a combination of historical and synchronic methods, fieldwork methods and a global analytical perspective.

A simple outline of language features and examples of related underlying CC is insufficient. One possibility is to conduct a systematic syntactic comparison with other Englishes using the International Corpus of English (ICE) (and also possibly Kortmann et al., 2004). The work of Schneider (2004) could be a useful reference with an analysis of features for 1. Incidence and frequency of use of features: In respect to quality (range of distinct forms, i.e. types, found in a given variety) and quantity (the token frequencies of occurrence). Tries to answer the question "Are features in general, or certain features in particular, preferred in an English?" 2. Structural behaviour. Is there evidence for particular features being used and categorized grammatically different varieties? 3. Productivity range: Is propensity to coin new features stronger in some varieties than others, or are certain features characteristic of any specific variety? ICE as a corpus (and many other standard corpora) though is rather small for inquiries that deal with low- or medium-frequency lexical items (Schneider, 2004: 246). The work of Ho and Platt (1993)- with an explicit database of participants, isolation of certain features along descriptive and developmental lines, scaling of reliable patterning in various contexts and a final VARBUL analysis to ascertain which features are favoured amongst which groups- is worthy of further investigation.

I feel it will be promising is to look at Celtic Englishes and Celtic-influenced varieties of English. We can see that the 'on' dative of disadvantage is used

in Irish and Scottish English. Both these varieties have similar forms in the substrate language. Welsh language also has such a form but yet the 'on' dative of disadvantage is not widely noted in Welsh English (personal communication with Daniel Davis). Daniel suggests that the high level of industrialization in Wales in the 1900s may have been a factor here (i.e. the influence of the extralinguistic social component). Newfoundland English, with a strong influence from Irish English, may also be a suitable variety to refer to.

Modern language should also be analysed in terms of the relevant linguistic features. The Survey of Irish English Usage (Hickey, 2004) can determine if a feature (the 'on' dative of disadvantage or any other feature) is transparent and salient for modern IrE speakers.

It is claimed that this cultural model is still preserved in the language and thus influences its people ways of thinking. We could empirically test some of the key questions in the *it's impossible for language not to shape thought/ it's impossible for language to shape thought* debate (Boroditsky, 2009).They tried to check how much the language feature and the underlying cultural conceptualization is embedded in the cognition of speakers. Boroditsky (2009) tested how individuals think differently about time by giving people sets of pictures that showed some kind of temporal progression (e.g., pictures of a man aging, or a crocodile growing, or a banana being eaten) and asking them to arrange the shuffled photos on the ground to show the correct temporal order. If you ask English speakers to do this, they'll arrange the cards so that time proceeds from left to right. Hebrew speakers will tend to lay out the cards from right to left, showing that writing direction in a language plays a role. They also asked the Kuuk Thaayorre, like many other Aboriginal groups in Australia, who use cardinal-direction terms to define space. This is done at all scales, which means you have to say things like "There's an ant on your southeast

leg" or "Move the cup to the north northwest a little bit. The Kuuk Thaayorre spontaneously used this spatial orientation to construct their representations of time by arranging the pictures from east to west (even though the subjects were never told any of which direction they faced). This would support the argument that it's impossible for language not to shape thought.

To test my hypothesis that the cultural conceptualization of MENTAL AND PHYSICAL STATES PLACED UPON A PERSON influences speakers way of thinking it is proposed, using pictures signifying mental and emotional states and people etc., to empirically test how subjects view emotion . Details of this have to be worked out over time but basing assumptions on a soft form of the Whorfian Hypothesis/linguistic relativity is useful in it suggestions that there is a tendency for the individual to think along avenues that have been defined by the language

We must think of what exactly we want to measure. The work of Lakoff (1990) may guide possible future directions of the research. We need a methodology that comes between, or combines elements of Lakoff, the Survey of Irish English Usage (Hickey, 2004) and the Boroditsky (2009) methodology to empirically test some key questions in the *it's impossible for language (not) to shape thought* debate while focusing more on the idea of cultural continuity. The focus should be on the CC component as a contributory factor in the selection of linguistic features within a linguistic system.

These are some of the things, amongst several others, that need to be firmly decided before proceeding. I am not fully sure if and how these concepts can be empirically tested but I do strongly feel the underlying thrust of the thesis does hold enough promise for me to progress with this line of research.

Notes

1) Language shift without transmission, or abrupt creolization, would refer to creoles that arose in the context of the European slave trade in Africa, the Caribbean area, and several islands in the Indian Ocean (Thomson & Kaufman, 1988: 148).

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