Celtic and English language contact and shift

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1 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE CONTACT

transfer = 'the replication of some feature (vocabulary item, linguistic structure etc.) in one language on the model of another language'

borrowing = 'the incorporation of foreign features into a group's native language by speakers of that language: the native language is maintained but is changed by the addition of the incorporated features' (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 37)

• the native language is maintained but is changed by the addition of the incorporated features
• begins with borrowed words (no bilingualism required)
• may in the long term extend to structural features if there is extensive bilingualism e.g. adoption of loan phonemes
• extensive structural borrowing requires centuries of contact or is impossible
• 'scales of borrowing' have been proposed

Japanese has borrowed many English words (e.g. *geemu setto < game and set, sarada < salad, sangurasu < sunglasses, songu < song*) but there is virtually no structural impact at all.

imposition =
• learners carry over some features from the native language to their target language
• they fail to learn some features of the target language (learners' errors)
• integration of the learners and native speakers may result in a compromise amalgam of the learner variety and the native variety (accommodation)
• this often happens in situations of **language shift**, but language shift is not necessary
• begins with phonology and syntax e.g. adoption of retroflex consonants from Dravidian into Indic languages of India, despite few loans from Dravidian into Indic
• the target language may adopt few words from the shifting speakers' language
• shift may be complete in a generation and interference is stronger the quicker the shift takes place

Example of imposition
German-speaking Austrian students showed impositions in their English (Nemser 1991)
• German lexical items e.g. *grammatik* for *grammar*, *brills* for *glasses*
• imposed German meanings on English words phonologically similar to a German word e.g. using *meagre* to mean 'thin' (German *mager* 'thin') and *guilty* to mean 'valid' (German *gültig* 'valid')

• loan translations based on German models e.g. *ill-car* for *ambulance* (German *Krankenwagen*) and *alp-dream* for *nightmare* (German *Alptraum*)
• derived new words on German patterns e.g. *nervosity* (German *Nervosität*), *respectless* (German *respektlos*) and *unguilty* (German *unschuldig*)
• imposed German argument structure on English verbs e.g.

(1)   Explain me something. (German *Erklär mir was.*)
(2)   You just **finished to eat**. (German *Du hast gerade* ***aufgehört zu essen***.)
(3)   I would suggest **him to go**. (German *Ich empfehle* ***ihm zu gehen***.)

• imposed German word order on L2 English:

(4)   All of a sudden will be coming too much [ketchup] out.
(5)   She took a woman away her husband.
(6)   Went you home?

1.1.1   Agentivity
Van Coetsem (1988, 2000) and Winford (2005): 'borrowing' and 'interference' are results not processes; the relevant process distinction is between:
• recipient-language agentivity (borrowing)
• source-language agentivity (interference)

A related important distinction is between social and linguistic (psychological) dominance:
• a language is socially dominant in a community if it is the prestige language e.g. used in formal settings
• a language is psycholinguistically dominant in an individual is more proficient in that language (linked, but not straightforwardly, to whether it is that individual's first language (L1) or second language (L2))
• speakers preserve the more stable components (phonology and grammar) of the language in which they are most proficient, while changing the less stable components (lexicon)
• this explains why borrowing is mostly lexical, and imposition is mostly grammatical

1.1.2   Mutual influence
Borrowing and shift-induced interference may occur at the same time e.g. Spanish–Quechua contact in Peru:

• Quechua borrows more lexicon and less structure from Spanish (borrowing)
• Spanish borrows less lexicon and more structure from Quechua (interference)

1.1.3   Asia Minor Greek: extensive borrowing or reversal with imposition?
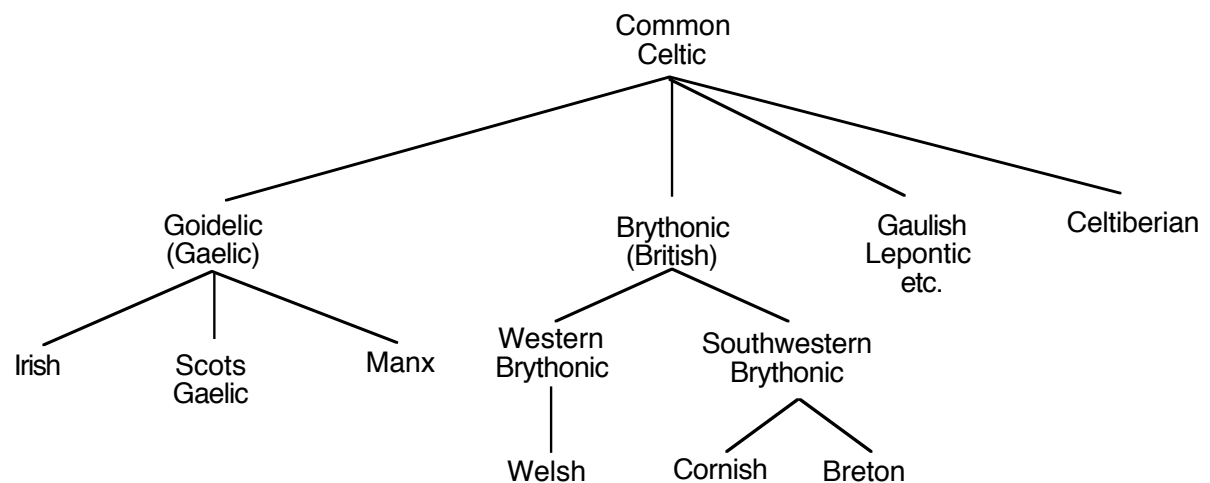Language dominance is not the same as language maintenance: a language may be maintained even though many of its speakers have adopted another language as their primary language. These speakers may cause change in the maintained language, and this change involves source-language agentivity (Winford 2005).

• Asia Minor Greek shows extreme structural changes under the influence of Turkish

• Turkish is the socially dominant external language
• the ancestral language (Greek) was maintained (to a degree)
• generally assumed that this is borrowing (Thomason and Kaufman say level 5 borrowing) because the Turks did not shift to speaking Greek, i.e. it is assumed that changes in maintained languages must be due to borrowing
• however, many bilinguals were probably Turkish-dominant i.e. both types of agentivity occurred: Greek-dominant bilinguals implemented recipient language agentivity, while Turkish-dominant bilinguals (children?) implemented source-language agentivity. This is mostly imposition (adaptation of Greek to Turkish), not borrowing.

Reversals in dominance relations occur when speakers gradually lose competence in their ancestral language. This allows Asia Minor Greek to be united with cases of interference through shift (e.g. Irish English).
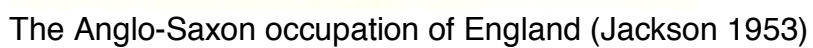
1.2   The Celtic languages

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                          Common
                          Celtic
          ┌─────────────────┼──────────────┬──────────────┐
          │                 │              │              │
      Goidelic          Brythonic       Gaulish       Celtiberian
      (Gaelic)          (British)       Lepontic
          │                 │             etc.
   ┌──────┼──────┐     ┌─────┴──────┐
   │      │      │     │            │
 Irish  Scots  Manx  Western   Southwestern
        Gaelic        Brythonic   Brythonic
                         │        ┌────┴────┐
                       Welsh   Cornish   Breton
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2   EARLY CONTACTS BETWEEN THE CELTIC LANGUAGES AND ENGLISH

2.1   Was there language shift in Anglo-Saxon England?

• Roman withdrawal from Britain in 410 AD
• economic and social decay preceded and followed
• traditional tale (Bede, Gildas): British leader Vortigern invited Saxons under Hengist and Horsa in to help
• full-scale Saxon invasion began around 450
• permanent settlement begins in the second half of the fifth century (Kent, Sussex, East Anglia, Deira) and continues in the sixth century (Essex, Middlesex, Thames Valley, Bernicia)
• push westwards in the second half of the sixth century (Wessex) culminating in Battle of Dyrham in 577
• rest of the southwest absorbed into Wessex between c. 650 and c. 850
• battle of Chester 613–16

• northern British kingdoms (Elmet, Rheged, Strathclyde) survived into the seventh century

The Anglo-Saxon occupation of England (Jackson 1953)

Distribution of Celtic river names in England (Jackson 1953, Poussa 1990)

'Did the Anglo-Saxons get rid of the Britons, or did the Britons stay and cultivate the land as they always had done, but under Anglo-Saxon overlordship?' (Coates 2007: 3)

The traditional view:
• the written sources (Gildas's *De excidio et conquestu Britanniæ*, Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle) suggest a military invasion followed by rapid 'replacement' of population e.g. the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle contains accounts of massacres of local Britons
• the existence of the Bretons is evidence for the partial flight of Brythonic-speakers
• vocabulary borrowing is a prerequisite for borrowing of grammatical features
• little vocabulary borrowing suggests low-intensity contact = borrowing of placenames and terms denoting landscape (cf. Australia)

More recently / alternatively:
• the traditional view is grounded in nineteenth-century ideas about ethnic purity
• Old English *wealh* 'speaker of a non-Germanic language; Briton' came to mean 'slave'
• English placenames in *wal-* and *brit-* (e.g. *Wallingford*, *Bretby*) suggest Brythonic enclaves
• archaeological evidence of continued use of Brythonic funerary customs
• DNA evidence from burials and existing populations
• evidence for continuation of farming practices and religious customs

The linguistic evidence:
• the English took over many Brythonic placenames (*London*, *Thames*, *Devon, Lichfield, Malvern*, *Berkshire*, *Penge*, *Chetwode*, *Ross*), and they took over more the further west and northwest they spread (NB *Chetwode* implies they understood the name!)
• they took over practically no vocabulary: *brock* 'badger' (Welsh *broch*), *coomb* 'small valley' (Welsh *cwm*), *tor* 'rocky peak' (Welsh *twr* 'heap'), *crag* (Welsh *craig* 'cliff'), *bogey(man)* (Welsh *bwg*), *gull* (Welsh *gwylan*)

'the natives learned Anglo-Saxon thoroughly and accurately, so accurately that they had to mangle their own names to suit the new language rather than the new language to suit their own sound-system …. [i]t is impossible to point to any feature about Anglo-Saxon phonology which can be shown conclusively to be a modification due to the alien linguistic habits of the Britons .... they must have learned the new phonology very completely.' (Jackson 1953: 242)

'given the dearth of lexical influence from Celtic in English, I find assertions that that the locative and progressive have their sources in substratal retention or superstratal influence difficult to sustain, particularly in light of what similar case studies have shown regarding the ordering of lexical and grammatical borrowings (Thomason & Kaufman 1988)' (Smith 2007: 224)

The new view suggests that there was substantial language shift, and that the linguistic effects of language shift (interference) should be evident. Some grammatical features have been claimed as manifesting Brythonic Celtic influence:
• preposition stranding (*the rock we sat down on*)
• Northern Subject Rule (dialectal: *They go in and sit**s** down*)
• progressive (*We are standing*)
• do-periphrasis (dialectal *We do go there every year*; standard *We don't go there*)

2.2 *Do*-periphrasis (Klemola 2002, Van der Auwera and Genee 2002)

Modern English has periphastic *do* in negatives, interrogatives and for emphasis:

(7)   I don't want any ice cream.
(8)   Do you want any ice cream.
(9)   I DO want some ice cream.
(10)   *I do want some ice cream.

• earliest attestations of periphrastic *do* are from thirteenth-century (south)western Middle English:

(11)   His sclauyn he dude dun legge.
       'He laid down his pilgrim's cloak.'   (*Horn* 1057) (c. 1300 (?c. 1225))

• periphrastic *do* began to decline in affirmative declarative clauses in the second half of the sixteenth century and had more or less disappeared by 1700 in standard English; the modern distribution emerged 1600–50
• unstressed periphrastic *do* survives in some dialects (west of England, centred on east Somerset and west Wiltshire):

(12)   When they do meet they do always fight.   (Stogursey, Somerset)

'the origin of the do-construction … has to be sought in the central and western parts of the south, from where it spread eastwards and northwards' (Ellegård 1953: 164)

2.2.1 The standard story
Standard theory has periphrastic *do* develop from causative *do*:

(13)   Þe biscop of Wincestre … dide heom cumen þider.
       'The bishop of Winchester … had them come there.'
                        (*Peterborough Chronicle* 1140.22) (c. 1155)
A variant had an unexpressed subject of the infinitive:

(14)   Ðis   hali mihte ðe   dieð   ilieuen ðat…
       this holy virtue that causes believe that…
       'This holy virtue that causes one to believe that…'
                        (*Vices and Virtues* 25.10) (a1225 (c1200))

This second case was reinterpreted with *do* being semantically empty. Some cases are ambiguous:

(15)   Henry … þe walles did doun felle, þe tours bette he doun.
       Henry   the walls did down fell   the towers beat   he down
       'Henry … felled the walls, he beat down the towers.'
                        (Mannyng, *Chron. Pt. 2* 97.22) (?a1400 (a1338))

Problem: periphrastic *do* shows up first in the southwest, where causative *do* was rare.

2.2.2 The contact hypotheses

Version 1 = contact triggers change (Poussa 1990)

(i) language contact favours the development of auxiliaries

(ii) pre-thirteenth-century English and Celtic were in contact longest in the west of England

(iii) *do* periphrasis first appears in the west in the thirteenth century

(iv) this can be explained by (i) and (ii)

Version 2 = Celtic contact / substrate

There are models for periphrastic *do* in all Brythonic languages:

(16) Gwyssyaw **a**   oruc   Arthur   milwyr   yr   ynys   honn.
       summon.INF PRT do.PAST.3S Arthur   soldiers the   island   this
       'Arthur summoned (did summon) the soldiers of this island.'
                                        (*Culhwch ac Olwen* 922–3) (Middle Welsh)

• English and Brythonic formed a linguistic area in which the *do*-periphrases reinforced each other (Tristram 1997)

• Brythonic influenced English: the *do*-periphrasis is attested earlier in Welsh than in English, and is associated with the southwest of England, suggesting a Welsh–Cornish origin (Preusler 1938: 181–3)
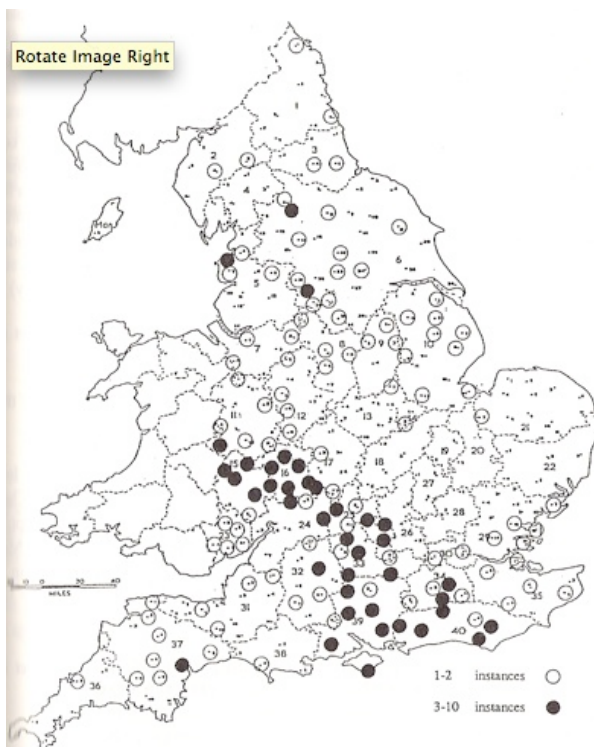

Problems:

• lack of textual evidence to support these claims

• lack of exact correspondence between the Brythonic and any of the English forms

• time gap between contact and attestation

• existence of parallels in German (*tun*) and Dutch (*doen*) (mostly historical or dialectal)
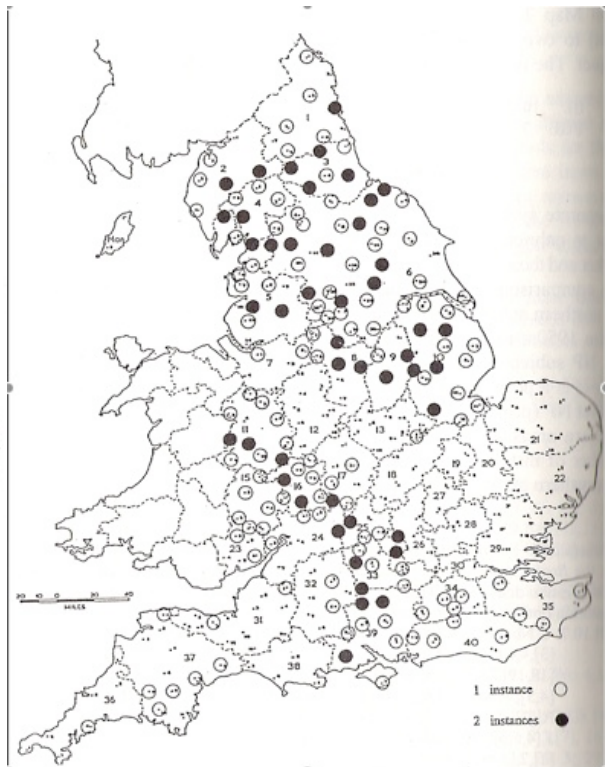

2.3 Northern Subject Rule

Various non-standard subject-verb agreement patterns are found in English dialects:

(a) generalisation of -ø form (southwest / East Anglia): *I / you / he / she / we / they read*

(b) generalisation of -s form (south/southwest): *I / you / he / she / we / they reads*

(c) ending -*s* everywhere except if there is an adjacent non-third-person-singular pronoun (the 'Northern Subject Rule') (north and north midlands):

(17)   They peel them and boils them. (Ihalainen 1994: 221)

Map 1. Inflectional marker -s with adjacent pronominal subject in the *Survey of English English dialects* Basic material (3rd person singular excluded) (Klemola 2000: 334–5)

Map 2. Inflectional marker -s with full NP plural subject in the *Survey of English dialects* Basic Material (Klemola 2000: 334–5)

• the Northern Subject Rule is well attested in northern Middle English and Middle Scots
• this is a strange agreement system > where did it come from?
• proponents of a Celtic source cite the parallel of Brythonic Celtic
• in Welsh, the verb agrees with the subject only if there is a subject pronoun:

(18)   **Maen**   nhw 'n   dysgu   Cymraeg.
       be.PRES.3P   they PROG   learn.INF   Welsh
       'They're learning Welsh.'   (King 1993: 137)
(19)   **Mae**   Kev a   Gina   yn   dysgu   Cymraeg.
       be.PRES.3S   Kev and Gina   PROG   learn.INF   Welsh
       'Kev and Gina are learning Welsh.'   (King 1993: 137)

• this system is not identical to the Northern Subject Rule, but is 'remarkably similar' (Klemola 2000)
• Northern Subject Rule could be due to a substrate effect from Cumbric or Strathclyde Brythonic (Hamp 1975–6: 73)

Problem:
• the similarity is hardly overwhelming ('Lack of "point-by-point identity" must … not be taken to mean that an innovation is not due to foreign influence' (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 62)

2.4   Periphrastic progressive

Contact with Celtic has been suggested as an origin for the English progressive (Braaten 1967, Filppula 2003, Mittendorf and Poppe 2000, Poppe 2003)

The Modern English progressive (*he was singing*) may be a hybrid of two Old English constructions:

(20)   he wæs singende
        'he was singing'
(21)   ic wæs on huntunge
        'I was hunting.'   (Braaten 1967: 173)

In the second case *I was on hunting* < *I was a-hunting* (> *I was hunting*). This could be modelled on Celtic (Braaten 1967):

(22)   Mae John   yn   hela.
        is   John   in/PROG hunting
        'John is hunting.'   (Welsh)

Problems:
• this requires the claim that the construction developed in colloquial Old English and later entered the written standard after the collapse of the Old English literary tradition with the Norman conquest
• other Germanic languages innovated incipient progressives, but rarely developed them:

(23)   Ich   bin   die   Zeitung   am   lesen.
        I   am   the   newspaper   at   read.INF
        'I'm reading the newspaper.'   (Rhineland German) (Poppe 2003: 74)

• the parallels in use between Welsh and English progressive are not absolute e.g. stative verbs:
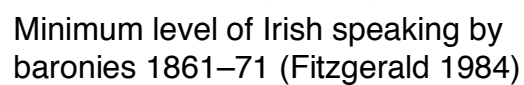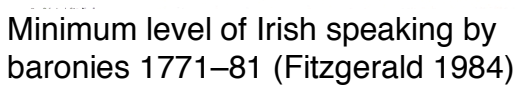
(24)   Mae   John   yn   gwybod   yr   ateb.
        be.PRES.3S   John   PROG   know.INF   the   answer
        'John knows the answer (NOT John is knowing the answer).'   (Welsh)

3   LANGUAGE SHIFT IN IRELAND

3.1   Historical progression of language shift

• 1169 Norman invasion of Ireland under Henry II; English settlement in the east and southeast (the Pale) (Wexford, Waterford, Kilkenny, Dublin), introducing English and Anglo-Norman into Ireland
• English settlers increasingly assimilated during the later Middle Ages: Statutes of Kilkenny (1366), composed in Anglo-Norman, encouraged use of English among the Anglo-Norman and Irish populations

• Renewed English influence came with the plantations in the sixteenth century (Munster plantation in north Kerry, Limerick, north and northeast Cork and west Waterford) onwards
• Scots settlement was encouraged in Ulster in the early seventeenth century: Scots tended to settle along the coast of Ulster, while settlers from northern England settled Mid Ulster. Less dense settlement in southern Ireland occurred later in the seventeenth century.
• migration of Scots led to the emergence of Ulster Scots as an independent variety
• main shift from Irish to English occurred from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries
• system of National Schools for primary education with instruction in English introduced in 1831
• Great Famine of the late 1840s > waves of emigration to North America, England and Wales

Minimum level of Irish speaking by baronies 1771–81 (Fitzgerald 1984)

Minimum level of Irish speaking by baronies 1861–71 (Fitzgerald 1984)

3.2   Linguistic effects of language contact

3.2.1 Medieval period
• Large number of Anglo-Norman loanwords in Middle Irish e.g. *páiste* 'child' < *page*, *garsún* 'boy' < *garçon*. Hickey (2007: 51): Anglo-Normans used these words when speaking Irish and then this variety was 'imposed' on the native Irish, but borrowing seems more likely.

3.2.2 Modern period
Main factors influencing development of Irish English:
(1) conservatism (retention of ealier mainstream features)

(2) contact with other varieties of English, especially Scots
(3) contact with Irish
(4) universal features associated with language shift

'The scenario at the beginning of the early modern period is one in which a small number of English speakers conveyed the language to the native Irish. This would also explain why the language of the planters had apparently been so strongly influenced by Irish. The quantitative relationship was skewed in favour of the Irish, so that the English planters could not but have been influenced by the numerically superior, albeit socially inferior, Irish' (Hickey 2007: 124)

'The persisting of bilingualism within the shifting group is another important factor in language shift ... there were large numbers of illiterate bilinguals in nineteenth-century Ireland, judging from the figures of the 1851 census. It is reasonable to assume also that childhood bilingualism was quite common, and that bilingual children played a role in the regularization of Irish English grammar. These factors would have favoured the retention of Irish features in the English of such speakers.' (Winford 2003: 253)

Thomason (2001: 79): 'the shifters were numerous relative to the original native speakers of English in Ireland', hence their variety manifested a strong influence overall. Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 129): large amount of phonological and morphosyntactic interference from Irish contrasts with the comparative lack of lexical transfer; the lexical transfers may in fact have been introduced by English speakers confronted with Irish anyway.

Features of Irish English resulting from imposition/interference through shift:
(i) the *after*-perfect ('immediate perfect') modelled on Irish *tar éis* 'after':

(25) You're after ruinin' me. (Dublin: M. L.)
      'You have (just) ruined me.'   (Filppula 2004: 75)
(26) Tá   siad tar éis   an   obair a   dhéanamh.
      be.PRES they after   the   work   PRT do.INF
      'They have (just) done the work.'   (Hickey 2007: 136)

For this to happen, the category marker in the 'outset' language must be identifiable (here, *tar éis* expresses perfectivity). The immediate *after*-perfect has no model in other English varieties (Filppula 1999: 99–107).

(ii) the medial-object perfect (resultative perfect) (focuses on the result or resulting state of an action rather than the action itself):

(27) I have it forgot. (Wicklow: T. F.)
      'I have forgotten it.'   (Filppula 2004: 75)
(28) Tá   an   obair déanta acu.
      be.PRES the   work   done   at.them
      'They have finished the work.'   (Hickey 2007: 137)

Here it is the word order that marks the semantic category, so this must be carried over to the English.

(iii) The progressive *-ing* form is used more widely in Irish English than in standard British English, for instance with stative verbs and to express habitual aspect (= *used to*) etc.:

(29)   I was knowing your face. (North Roscommon, Henry 1957: 169)
(30)   Well, of course, Semperit is a, an Austrian firm… They are not caring about the Irish people, they are only looking after their own interest… (Dublin: M. L.) (Filppula 2004: 77)
(31)   They were going there long ago but the roads got the, like everything else, they got a bit too-o rich and… (Kerry: M. C.)   (Filppula 2004: 77)

Free use of progressive forms derives from Irish, helped by the increasing use of these forms in other varieties of English. Other Celtic varieties have similar uses of progressive forms (Welsh English, Hebrides English) due to substrate effects from Welsh and Scots Gaelic.

(iv) Irish English shares negative concord with other varieties. Other features are:
(i) failure of negative attraction

(32)   Any country couldn't stand that. (Kerry: M. C.)
        'No country could stand that.'   (Filppula 2004: 82)

This is more characteristic of southwest Ireland, and seems to be a substrate effect from Irish (*ní … aon*).

(v) Irish English can use *and* to introduce a subordinate clause:

(33)   I only thought of him there and I cooking my dinner. (Dublin: P. L.)
        '…while I was cooking my dinner.'   (Filppula 2004: 87)

This is also found in Scottish English and has its origins in Irish and Scots Gaelic.

(vi) Along with Welsh and Scottish English, Irish English uses inverted word order in indirect questions (embedded inversion):

(34)   I wonder what is he like at all. (Clare: M. V.)   (Filppula 2004: 94)

Irish makes no distinction between word order in direct and indirect questions.

4   LANGUAGE SHIFT AND DISPLACEMENT IN WALES

4.1   Historical background

• military conquest of Wales (1282–3) under Edward I
• Acts of Union (Laws in Wales Acts) (1535, 1542): required courts / public administration to be carried out in English
• translation of Bible into Welsh (1567, 1588, 1620)

• development of the south Wales coalfield and concomitant industrial expansion led to massive immigration in the nineteenth century

4.2   Migration

• industrialisation limited emigration and led to a revitalisation of Welsh culture in the industrial valleys (Jones 1987)
• earlier migration more likely to be from within Wales, later migration more likely to be from from England or Ireland
• Welsh migrants more clustered in inland valleys, English/Irish migrants more clustered on the coast (Jones 1969)

Nationality	1891			1911		
	Coalfield	Non-coalfield	Total	Coalfield	Non-coalfield	Total
Welsh	98,569	24,396	122,965	126,169	24,963	151,132
	58%	30%	49%	47%	27%	42%
Non-Welsh	71,687	57,597	129,284	141,464	68,033	209,497
	42%	70%	51%	53%	73%	58%
Total	170,256	81,993	252,249	267,633	92,996	360,629

Table 1. Lifetime in-migrants enumerated in Glamorgan in 1891 and 1911 by nationality and district of residence (Jones 1969: 87–9, Williams 1990: 34)

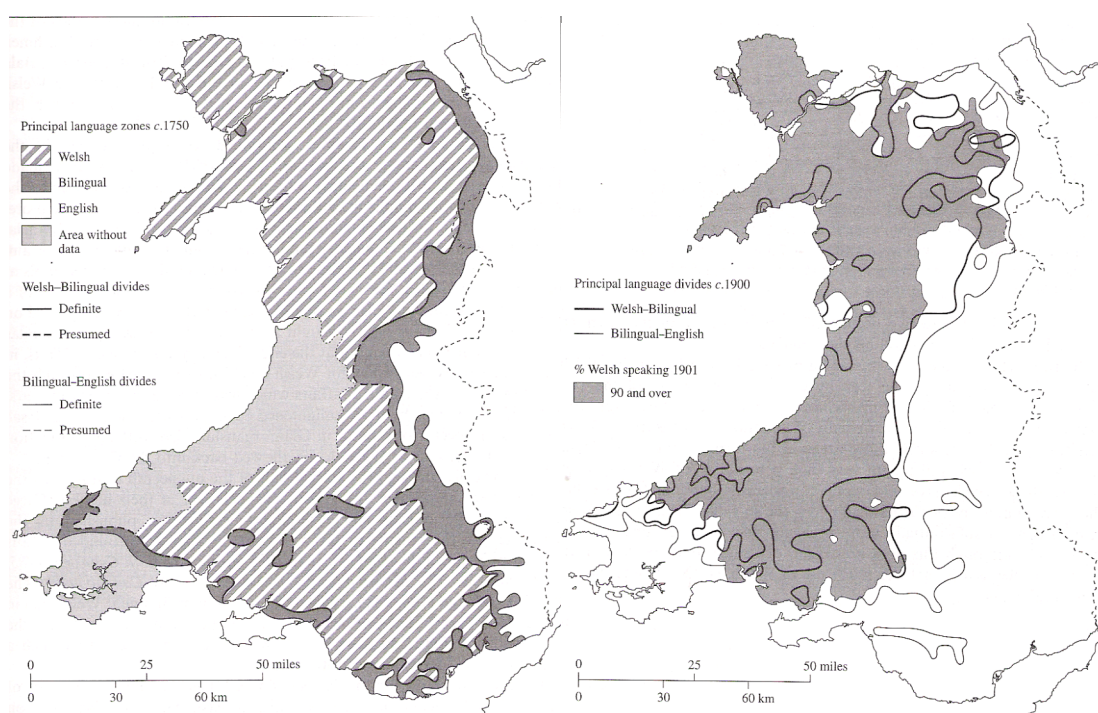|	population	% increase
1801	70,879	
1811	85,067	20.0
1821	102,073	20.0
1831	126,612	24.0
1841	171,188	35.2
1851	231,849	35.4
1861	317,752	37.1
1871	397,859	25.2
1881	511,433	28.5
1891	687,218	34.4
1901	859,931	25.1
1911	1,120,910	30.3
1921	1,252,481	11.7

Table 2. Population growth in Glamorgan in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

4.3   Education

• 1847 Education Report (the 'Blue Books')
• Educations Acts of 1870 and 1889 enforced English as the sole medium of education
• marginalisation of Welsh in public life

evidence for language shift
• language used in Anglican churches

Principle language zones *c.* 1750
(Jones 1998, Pryce 1978)

Principle language zones *c.* 1900
(Jones 1998, Pryce 1978)

	1800	1891	1911
monoglot English speakers	c. 10	45.5	55.2
bilingual	c. 20	24.1	35.9
monoglot Welsh speakers	c. 70	30.4	8.7

Table 3. Language ability in Wales 1800-1911 (%) (Jenkins 1998)

• language revitalisation from the 1970s, mediated primarily through the education system

Language ability	1990/91	2001/02
Speak Welsh at home	6.9	6.2
Do not speak Welsh at home but who can speak it with fluency	7.0	10.5
Speak Welsh but not fluently	14.1	31.2
Cannot speak Welsh at all	72.0	52.0

Table 4. Primary school pupils aged 5 and over, ability to speak Welsh (%) (Schools in Wales: General Statistics 2006)

4.4 Linguistic features of Welsh English (Penhallurick 2004, Thomas 1984, 1985)

(i) use of *do* and *be* as habitual auxiliaries:

(35) He goes to the cinema every week.
(36) He do go to the cinema every week.
(37) He's going to the cinema every week.

• *do* is dominant in Gwent, Glamorgan, Brecknock and east Radnorshire
• *be* is dominant in Pembroke, Cardigan and west Radnor

This reflects the distinction between early and late bilingualisation / Anglicisation:
• early intrusion of English involved diffusion of English dialect forms
• later *be* forms are due to Welsh substrate effects:

(38) Mae   fe   'n   mynd   i 'r   sinema   bob   wythnos.
     be.PRES.3S he PROG go.INF to the cinema   every week
     'He goes (lit. is going) to the cinema every week.'

(ii) focus fronting

(39) Coal they're getting out, mostly.
(40) Singing they were.

These correspond to pseudoclefts or clefts in other varieties of English:

(41) What they're getting out mostly is coal.
(42) It's now that they're going.

clearly interference from Welsh:

(43) Glo maen   nhw   'n   tynnu   mâs gan fwyaf.
     coal be.PRES.3P they PROG pull.INF out by   most
     'Coal they're getting out mostly.'
(44) Canu   roedden   nhw.
     sing.INF be.IMPF.3P they
     'Singing they were.'

(iii) generalised *isn't* (also *is it* and *yeah*) as tag questions:

(45) Let's finish this off, isn't it.

This minics Welsh tags: northern positive *ie*, negative *ynte*; southern positive *efe*, negative *yntefe*.

(46) Awn   ni yn ôl,   ie / efe.
     go.PRES.1P we in back   TAG
     'Let's go back, isn't it.'

(iv) expletive *there* corresponds to *how* + adjective / adverb in other varieties:

(47)   There's tall you are!
(48)   How tall you are!

These are due to interference from Welsh:

(49)   Dyna   dal   wyt   ti!
        there's tall   be.PRES.2S you
        'There's tall you are!'

(v) indirect questions have inverted word order:

(50)   I'm not sure is it true or not.

• in Welsh the order in an indirect question is always the same as in a direct question. Absence of *if* / *whether* may also be due to Welsh.

Some problems:
• phonological influence of Welsh on Welsh English phonology is extensive
• there are comparatively few grammatical features of Welsh English derived from Welsh

'It is clear, and not unexpected, that linguistic systems //more effectively resist interference and more nearly retain their integrity at the higher level of organisation within the grammatical level.' (Thomas 1985: 219–20)

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