

'Language, Migration and Identity on the Island of Ireland Through Time and Space'

Karen P. Corrigan

Newcastle University

Abstract:

A major debate that has evolved in research addressing Englishes which potentially arose through contact with Indigenous languages is the extent to which they should be considered 'Colonial', 'Settler Colonial' or indeed 'Postcolonial' varieties (Denis & D'Arcy 2018, 2019, 2022; Deterding 2008:233). This granular view runs counter to Schneider's (2003, 2007) 'Dynamic Model' which assumes an identical evolutionary pathway for the colonial Englishes of New Zealand and Kenya despite their rather diverse socio-political histories and language ecologies articulated in Hay et al. (2008) and Buregeya (2019), respectively. Denis & D'Arcy's (2018: 3) "alternative epistemological standpoint" is embedded within anthropological and sociological models in which Colonialism and Settler Colonialism are viewed as polar opposites. The former involves the domination of an Indigenous population which is exploited by the coloniser whereas the latter refers to settlements in which *terra nullius* already obtains or which can be made thus by the "elimination" (in the terms of Wolfe 2006) of local ethnolinguistic groups (*cf.* Manning 2018; Osterhammel 1997; Taylor 2021; Veracini 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014; Wolfe 1999, 2001 *inter alia*).

Accounting for this dichotomy allows Denis & D'Arcy (2018) to make what they consider to be more robust predictions regarding the linguistic differences typifying 'Settler Colonial' *versus* 'Colonial' or 'Postcolonial' Englishes. Colonists of the settler type who are oriented primarily to the appropriation of new territories have little truck with the "mutual negotiation" (Schneider 2007:45) required to develop a shared variety. In these circumstances, Indigenous languages (often legislated against) play only a minor role. They are rarely, if ever, the source of grammatical innovations or explicit contact-transfer effects. By contrast, Indigenous languages are not side-stepped when it comes to Colonial English varieties which do consistently reflect the L1s of the colonised populations.

Although Denis & D'Arcy's position paper is restricted to interrogating the relatively recent settlement histories of Australia, Canada, India and Singapore, they argue that it is applicable "to colonial contact situations in the more distant past as well" (2018:23). In this talk, I test this proposal by exploring the impacts of migratory movements into and out of England's first colony, the island of Ireland, as they relate to matters of language and identity across both temporal and geographical space (see Nic Dhaibhéid *et al.* 2021; Rahman *et al.* 2017). I review the historical and linguistic records for different phases of the region's colonisation to assess whether it is indeed possible to determine if the resultant Irish-Englishes were of the Colonial or Settler Colonial type. The talk also examines the potential contribution which the Irish diaspora subsequently made to the development of Settler and Colonial Englishes across the rest of the British Empire (Corrigan 2020a). The paper concludes by showcasing the potential impact on contemporary Irish-English of new twenty-first century contexts for language contact across the island which has become home to unprecedented numbers of global immigrant and refugee populations, offering opportunities for the formation of new dialects

– particularly in “superdiverse” (Vertovec 2014) urban spaces (Corrigan 2020b; Corrigan & Diskin 2020).

References:

Buregeya, A. 2019. *Kenyan English*. Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Corrigan, K.P. 2020a. ‘From Killycomain to Melbourne: Historical Contact and the Feature Pool’, in Beaman, K., Buchstaller, I., Fox, S. and Walker, J.A. (eds.) *Advancing Socio-Grammatical Variation and Change*, pp.319-340. New York: Routledge.

Corrigan, K.P. 2020b. *Linguistic Communities and Migratory Processes: Newcomers Acquiring Sociolinguistic Variation in Northern Ireland*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Corrigan, K.P. and Diskin, C. 2020. ‘“Northmen, Southmen, comrades all?”: The Adoption of Discourse *Like* by Migrants North and South of the Irish Border.’ *Language in Society* 49(5): 745-773.

Hay, J., Maclagan, M. and Gordon, E. 2008. *New Zealand English*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Denis, D. and D’Arcy, A. 2018. ‘Settler Colonial Englishes Are Distinct from Postcolonial Englishes.’ *American Speech* 93(1): 3-31.

Denis, D. and D’Arcy, A. 2019. ‘Deriving Homogeneity in a Settler Colonial Variety of English’ *American Speech* 94(2): 223-258.

Denis, D. and D’Arcy, A. 2022. ‘*American Speech*, Settler Colonialism, and a View from a Place Currently Called Canada.’ *American Speech* 97(1): 44-50.

Deterding, D. 2008. ‘Review of *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the World*, by Edgar W. Schneider.’ *English World-Wide* 29(2): 232–35.

Manning, S.M. 2018. ‘Contrasting Colonisations: (Re)storying Newfoundland/Ktaqmuk as Place.’ *Settler Colonial Studies* 8(3): 314-331.

Nic Dhaibhéid, C., Akhtar, S., Hassett, D., Kenny, K., McAttackney, L., McBride, I., McMahon, T.G. and Ohlmeyer, J. 2021. ‘Round Table: Decolonising Irish History? Possibilities, Challenges, Practices.’ *Irish Historical Studies* 45(168): 303–332.

Osterhammel, J. 1997. *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers.

Rahman, A., Clarke, M.A. and Byrne, S. 2017. ‘The Art of Breaking People Down: The British Colonial Model in Ireland and Canada.’ *Peace Research* 49(2): 15-38.

Schneider, E.W. 2003. ‘The Dynamics of New Englishes: From Identity Construction to Dialect Birth.’ *Language* 79(2): 233–81.

- Schneider, E.W. 2007. *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, L. 2021. 'Four Foundations of Settler Colonial Theory: Four Insights from Argentina.' *Settler Colonial Studies* 11(3): 344-365.
- Veracini, L. 2008. "'Emphatically Not a White Man's Colony": Settler Colonialism and the Construction of Colonial Fiji.' *Journal of Pacific History* 43(3): 189-205.
- Veracini, L. 2010. *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Veracini, L. 2011. 'Introducing *Settler Colonial Studies*.' *Settler Colonial Studies* 1(1): 1-12.
- Veracini, L. 2012. 'Settler Colonialism: A Global and Contemporary Phenomenon', in Hinkson J., James, P. and Veracini, L. (eds.) *The Settler Colonial Present*, pp.322-326. Melbourne: Arena Publishers.
- Veracini, L. 2013. 'Constructing "Settler Colonialism": Career of a Concept' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41(2): 313-33.
- Veracini, L. 2014. 'Understanding Colonialism and Settler Colonialism as Distinct Formations.' *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 16(5): 615-33.
- Vertovec, S. 2014. *Superdiversity*. London: Routledge.
- Wolfe, P. 1999. *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event*. London: Cassell.
- Wolfe, P. 2001. 'Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race.' *American Historical Review* 106(3): 866-905.
- Wolfe, P. 2006. 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.' *Journal of Genocide Research* 8(4): 387-409.