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VARIETIES OF ENGLISH: DUBLIN ENGLISH

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Abstract

The present paper gives a description of phonetic and morphosyntactic features that make Dublin English distinct from other varieties of Irish English. The English language has been present in Ireland since the twelfth century, and Dublin is the only place where the language persisted without a break from that century on. As the language was brought to the island by different settlers and it evolved in an independent way from other English varieties and with the influence of the native language of Ireland, different varieties of Irish English can be found in the country.

Concerning Dublin English, the English language here has changed and different varieties can be found within the city. As it is the capital city of the Republic of Ireland and it has economic power and international relations, some speakers have started to modify their speech so as to bring it closer to standardised forms of the language. For the same reason, Dublin English can also work as a standard for some speakers taking into account the prestige of the city. The purpose of this paper is to describe the phonetic characteristics that make the different varieties of Dublin English distinct, as well as to present some of its key morphosyntactic features. The changes in pronunciation are mainly motivated by sociolinguistic factors, and this issue is also explained in this work. For this reason, opinions of native speakers of Dublin English on some of its distinctive variables are presented.

For a better understanding of how these new varieties arise in Dublin, some important notions that lead to their development will be introduced –*supraregionalisation*, *vernacularisation* and *dissociation of the language*–. Finally, after going over these notions, Dublin English and its different varieties will be introduced, as well as their distinctive features and the *Dublin Vowel Shift*.

Keywords: Irish English, Dublin English, language change, language variation, sociolinguistics.

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1. Introduction

In this paper I will present the phonetic and morphosyntactic features that are part of the different varieties of Irish English that are spoken in the city of Dublin. Even though there are different terms to refer to the English language spoken in Ireland - *Hiberno-English*, *Anglo-Irish* and *Irish English* – I will use the term Irish English to refer to the English language in the country. However, this term does not infer that Irish English is the standard variety, as it makes a reference to the different Englishes that are part of Ireland. Scholars do not agree on the existence of a standard variety in the country, because standard varieties usually eliminate the most salient features of the language, and in Ireland what makes Irish English different from other Englishes (such as British English) is the salient features that are often taken from the native Irish language, also known as Gaelige.

The English language has been present in Dublin since the twelfth century, and different varieties of Dublin English can be distinguished within the city nowadays. These varieties are associated to different groups of people and they have a different prestige as some are associated to the higher class, whereas others are associated to speakers from the lower class. Furthermore, changes in the pronunciation which are sociolinguistically triggered can also be observed in Dublin, as some speakers are changing their pronunciation to make it distinct from what is perceived as the typical speech of Dublin. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to describe the different varieties of Dublin English and to present the morphosyntactic and phonetic features of these, as the different pronunciations in the city are important for the distinction of the English varieties here.

For this purpose, the paper is organised as follows: in the first section I will give a brief historical background to explain how the English language was brought to the country, as the fact that it was brought by different settlers is a key factor for the distinct varieties that can be found in different areas of Ireland. In the next section, the different varieties of English in Northern Ireland and Ireland will be introduced. Then, in order to understand how different varieties can originate, an explanation of some key processes that lead to linguistic changes will be provided, and the issue of the existence of a standard variety of English in Ireland will also be discussed. After having defined these important notions, in the next section Dublin English and its different varieties will be presented. First I will summarise some key morphosyntactic features that are general characteristics

of Dublin English and then I will introduce the phonetic features of the distinct Dublin English varieties as well as the *Dublin Vowel Shift*.

2. Historical background

The history of Irish English in the south of Ireland can be divided into two periods, the first one starting with the arrival of the first English-speaking settlers, also known as the Old English in the Irish context, which took place in the late twelfth century (Hickey, 2011). When this first period ends around the year 1600, the second period begins with the planting of English in Ireland. The first settlers in the first period were not successful in imposing the English language, as the Anglo-Normans who were the military leaders at the time were absorbed by the Irish, and that is why the planting of English in Ireland was not successful until the settlers that were in the north of Ireland successfully made English the dominant language in that area (Hickey, 2011). In this first period three languages were present in Ireland: Anglo-Norman, a variety of medieval English and Flemish (Hickey, 1993). However, the languages that were in contact at the time were English, Anglo-Norman and Irish, and Flemish had no influence in the development of Irish English.

Therefore, in the twelfth century the development of English in the country was not continuous, because the language did not survive in Ireland, but Dublin had already gained certain status in that first period because of its favourable position in the middle of the east coast. Moreover, as the city was occupied by the English, their language has existed in the city without a break since the twelfth century (Hickey, 1993). The reason for this is that in Ireland English had the strongest effect in the places where its political influence was present, and England had a political influence in Dublin and its surroundings.

Regarding the second period of the planting of English in Ireland, settlers were successful in imposing the language after the second half of the seventeenth century, that is after Oliver Cromwell's¹ military victory (Hickey, 1993). At that time more English settlements took place and these settlers kept their English² language in Ireland and passed it to the next generations. Therefore, in the seventeenth century the Irish language

¹ Oliver Cromwell was a military and political leader. His military victory in Ireland took place in 1649/50 and the Irish rebels were conquered then (Hickey, 2005).

² It has not been clarified what varieties these settlers spoke (Hickey, 2005).

was already in a weak situation from which it would not improve, and accordingly the previous position of the language was never going to be recovered (Hickey, 2011). During this period, new English forms were also brought to the country: Scots in the north and west/north Midland varieties in the south. Consequently, the Irish English found in the south of the country and the one found in the north are distinct varieties of English (Hickey, 1995).

The history of English in Ireland demonstrates that along with internal change within the English brought to the country in the twelfth century and the influence from Irish throughout the period from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth one, there was also a broad amount of superimposition and endorsement of standard English forms caused by the exposure to British English (Hickey, 2007a). This superimposition has also led to the process of supraregionalisation, a process that will be explained in section 4.1.

3. Varieties of English in Ireland

3.1. Varieties of English in the north of Ireland

Taking into account that the names given to the English varieties in Northern Ireland are related to their historical origin, Hickey (2017) defines these varieties as follows:

- *Ulster-Scots*: Forms of English stemming from the initial Lowland Scots settlers (17th century).
- *Mid-Ulster English*: Geographically central varieties, largely of northern origin. This variety derives from immigrants, mostly from the north of England, who arrived around the same period as the Scottish immigrants, that is the seventeenth century.
- *Contact English*: This term is found globally to refer to areas in which Irish is also spoken. Moreover, Hickey (2007a) also points out that the variety called *contact Ulster English* shows influence from native speakers of Irish.

3.1.1. Some phonetic features of the English of Northern Ireland

These are the specific features of Northern Irish English according to Hickey (2004):

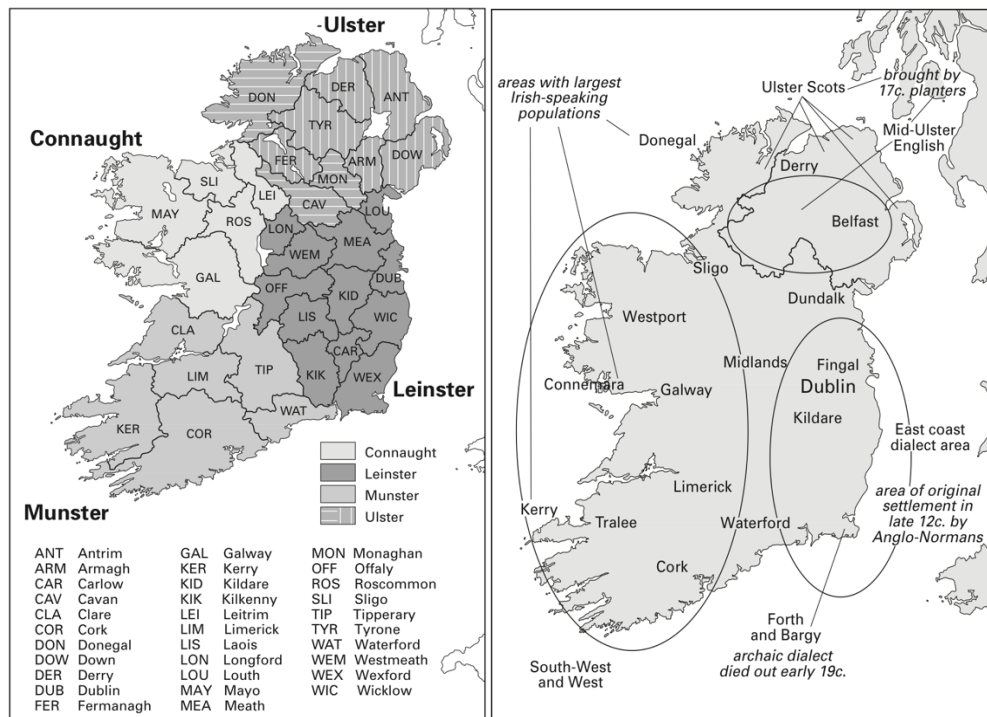
- Northern vowel fronting in the GOOSE lexical set³: [gʊːs] for *goose*
 - This fronting affects the realisation of the /au/ diphthong, so words in the MOUTH lexical set have an [ʊ] endpoint.
- Lowering of short vowels which affects the KIT lexical set.
- Retraction of the TRAP lexical set vowels when preceding labials: this vowel is fronted before velars and retracted before labials.
- Palatalisation of velars when preceding the TRAP lexical set vowel.
- Breaking of vowel in the FACE lexical set: the vowel is diphthongised with a [ə] offglide.
- The onset of the vowel in the PRICE lexical set is raised.
- A flap realisation of intervocalic /-t-/.
- Deletion of intervocalic DH /ð/.
 - In Derry this sound can be realised as /l/, but this is an ongoing change.
- Lack of phonemic distinction in the length of vowels.
 - Particularly in the English of Scots origin.

3.2. Varieties of English in the south of Ireland

In the south of the country or the Republic of Ireland, the distribution of the varieties in this area has not been researched as much as it has in the north, but the major division here is between the east/south-east and the rest of the country as it is illustrated in map 2. below (Hickey, 1999). Taking this into account, Hickey (2004) explains that the first and oldest dialectal area is the one from the east coast which goes from Waterford to beyond Dublin, possibly to Dundalk and beyond in its original extension from 1600. The other dialectal area on the other hand, that is the one from the south-west and west, is the area in which the language shift from Irish to English happened the last. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that in this area we can find places in which the Irish language has not died out yet: Kerry, Connemara and Donegal. Another important point that the author makes concerning the dialectal distribution is that there are some places which show features both from the south and from the north. Finally, in the centre and north-central area of the country there is a region in the Midlands that goes from southern Offalaly and Laois

³ According to Hickey (2007a), a lexical set is a group of words that contain the same realisation for a certain sound in a given variety.

to Cavan and south Leitrim, and this region is dialectally indeterminate and diffuse (Hickey, 2004).



Map 1. Provinces and counties of Ireland (Hickey, 2007a).

Map 2. English dialect regions in Ireland (Hickey, 2007a).

3.2.1. The East Coast dialectal area: phonetic features

As stated before, Dublin is part of the East Coast dialectal area (see map 2. above), where the English settled from the late twelfth century on. Hickey (2004) lists the following East band features that go from Dundalk to Waterford including Dublin:

- Fortition of dental fricatives to alveolar stops: [tɪŋk] for *think*.
- Lack of low vowel lengthening before voiceless fricatives: [pat] for *path*.
 - This feature does not happen in Dublin.
- Front onset of the diphthong /au/: [tæʊn] and [tɛʊn] for *town*.
- Centralised onset of the diphthong /ai/: [kwæɪt] for *quite*.
- Breaking of long high vowels: [kliəɪn] for *clean*.
 - This happens especially in Dublin.
- Fortition of alveolar sibilants in a pre-nasal position: [ɪdɪt] for *isn't*.
- No lowering of early modern /u/: [dʊn] for *done*.
 - This feature only happens in Dublin

- Glottalisation of lenited /t/: [fot] → [fot̚] → [fɔʔ] → [foh] for *foot*.
 - This feature happens especially in Dublin.

3.2.2. The South-West and West dialectal area and the Midlands: phonetic features

In this dialectal area the English language was developed in the second period as English did not survive in the first period here. Hickey (2004) lists the following features of the south and west that go from Cork through Limerick and to Galway and Mayo (see maps 1. and 2. above):

- /ɛ/ → /ɪ/ before nasals.
- Tense and raised articulation of /æ/.
- Considerable intonational range.
- Dental stop realization in THINK, BREATHE lexical sets.
- Low central onset for /ai/ and /au/: [kwaɪ] for *quite* and [taʊn] for *town*.
- Shift of /tj/ to /k/ in word internal position: [ˈfɔrkɪ:n] for *fortune*.

4. Processes that lead to changes in the varieties of English

In this section I will present some processes that are related to changes in pronunciation. Therefore, in the context of Dublin English, these procedures give rise to the different varieties in the city.

4.1. Supraregionalisation

The superimposition of more standard forms of English in Ireland led to the process of supraregionalisation in the country (Hickey, 2007a). Supraregionalisation is a historical process by which a variety of a language loses local features in order to become less regionally bound and this way, the variety becomes more acceptable to a non-vernacular community (Hickey, 2016). Therefore, we can say that supraregionalisation is the process by which vernacular features of the speech are replaced by more standard ones. A clear example of this phenomenon in Irish English can be seen in the disappearance of the lowering of /e/ before /r/. Nevertheless, this can still be found in some rural varieties in the north. *Mainstream* Dublin English is an example of supraregionalisation too, because speakers from this variety are part of the middle class

and Hickey (2016) argues that in Ireland, supraregionalisation is linked with education and the middle class, and therefore we can find it in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nevertheless, supraregionalisation is not the same as standardisation because with the first one there is no explicit codification. A supraregional variety usually does not have a codified written form used for official purposes, these kinds of varieties are essentially spoken forms of a language (Hickey, 2012).

4.1.1. The supraregional variety as a standard

Even though supraregionalisation is not the same as standardisation, it would seem that in Ireland the supraregional variety of the south works as the standard form of the language. The reason for the development of a supraregional variety in Ireland is linked with the rejection of British accents (Hickey, 2005). Apart from the Supraregional Irish English, it is important to note that the variety of English that has the highest prestige in the Republic of Ireland is the English that is spoken in Dublin, and this variety is the linguistic model that many Irish people aspire to (Hughes, Trudgill & Watt, 2012). But some Dublin English features are also part of the supraregional variety. For instance, “the mainstream accent of Dublin English has functioned throughout the 20th century as the supraregional accent of English in the south of Ireland” (Hickey, 2005, p. 28).

But concerning standard Irish English, authors do not agree on the existence of one standard form as it can be the case in the United Kingdom with Received Pronunciation, also known as RP English. Nevertheless, RP is not a variety but rather an accent. Hughes, Trudgill & Walls (2012) point out that even if many authors do not make a distinction between *accent* and *variety*, they are two different matters: “A dialect, in the strict sense of the word, is a language variety distinguished from other varieties by differences of grammar and vocabulary” (Hughes, Trudgill & Walls, 2012, p. 3), whereas accent on the other hand refers to the variation in pronunciation. But in the context of Ireland, this pronunciation is not the standard one. For instance, Hickey (2011) points out that in Ireland RP English is not a speech model that people opt to imitate, he also explains that “the special relationship with England has also meant that for most Irish people English accents from Britain are not regarded as worthy of emulation, certainly not anything close to Received Pronunciation” (Hickey, 2017, p. 162). Mac Mathúna (2006) also supports this idea by saying that the use of RP in Ireland is linked with the colonising nation and therefore educated Irish people do not aspire to it nor is it taught in Irish schools either.

However, Wells (1992) states that cosmopolitan-minded people in Dublin have adopted many features from RP English, both consciously or unconsciously.

Therefore, even though the existence of a standard variety might be implied when talking about different varieties of a language, it would seem that in Ireland this is not the case. Fippula (1999) for instance hesitates “whether HE [Hiberno-English⁴], or any of its regional or social subvarieties for that matter, is indeed ‘consciously and explicitly’ deemed to be a prestige variety and hence a standard” (p. 21). Usually, the process of standardisation in English means the elimination of loanwords and the rejection of the influence from other languages, some contexts or uses being an exception (Latin in education and law for instance), but in Irish English the influence and features taken from the Irish language are clear (Kirk & Kallen, 2006). The Irish language has had such an influence in Irish English because it gives rise to code-switching, it has a cultural and historical significance, and its official role in the Republic of Ireland puts the language in a different position from other languages in the country. The bilingual situation in Ireland between Irish and English also causes the phenomenon known as “interlingual lexemes”. Wigger (2000) describes this as the mutual infiltration and coexistence of the two spoken languages and Kirk & Kallen (2006) support this idea by pointing out that words can go back and forth from English to Irish and vice versa.

4.2. Vernacularisation

On the other hand and opposed to supraregionalisation, we have another process which is known as *vernacularisation*. To understand this process better, Hickey (2011) says that even if supraregionalisation erases salient features of the language, these salient features might be assigned to vernacular varieties. Therefore, a certain feature of the language that is not part of the supraregional variety becomes vernacular, or assigned to a vernacular variety, and this is what vernacularisation consists of. Hickey (2012) observes that this is why speakers often know when and how to switch to a vernacular variety to sound more local. A typical example of a vernacular feature in Irish English would be the use of *youse* or *yez* as the plural form of the second person plural (which would be “you”). Even if this feature is avoided by non-local speakers, they can opt to use it when they choose to switch to a vernacular form (Hickey, 2011). Another example that

⁴ Another term for Irish English.

Hickey (2011) notes for the phenomenon of vernacularisation is the Middle English /ɛ:/ as in *beat* /bɛ:t/, which is part of strongly local varieties where supraregionalisation has not happened. Therefore, a vernacular feature can become supraregional by being expanded throughout the country, or said feature can be omitted by most people and used in certain areas, making it a vernacular one. As will be explained in section 5.2., *local* Dublin English keeps these vernacular features because the typical accent of the city is important for speakers of this variety, so therefore instead of supraregional characteristics, this variety or accent will have vernacular ones.

4.3. Dissociation of the language

Another important instance of language change that happens in Ireland is the one that comes from the process of *dissociation of the language*. This process is the opposite to the linguistic bonding that is typical of closely united social groups, so we are dealing with an alteration in the speech of a community that is in contact with another one (Hickey, 2012). The *dissociation of the language* implies that there is a variety that has features which are recognisable by others and therefore the speakers of said variety develop strategies to distance themselves from these strong features (Hickey 2012). Nevertheless, dissociation of the language does not end with the avoidance of the salient features of a variety. On the sound level, to achieve dissociation the speaker will choose a realisation of a certain sound that is maximally distinct from the one that they are trying to dissociate from (Hickey, 2012). So apart from the avoidance of salient features, speakers also choose realisations of sounds that are very different from the ones they want to dissociate from. For instance, in Dublin English we can find a case of dissociation that arose in the last two decades of the twentieth century as fashionable speakers (*New* Dublin English) began to make their speech different from their perception of *local* Dublin English (Hickey, 2011). This has happened because “the increase in wealth and international position has meant that many young people aspire to an urban sophistication which is divorced from strongly local Dublin life” (Hickey, 2007a, p. 335). For instance the rounding of front vowels such as in [bø:d] for *bird* is stigmatised as this pronunciation is not the usual one in English.

5. Dublin English

It is important to remember that the English language has been present in Dublin since the twelfth century. Furthermore, Dublin is also the capital city of the oldest English colony outside Britain, and as the language has been present in the city for over 800 years, it has evolved in an independent way from other English varieties (Hickey, 2000). Moreover, the English language here has developed a standard in an implicit way without the influence of another national standard variety as it is the case with British English. Additionally, Dublin has been the political and cultural center of Ireland during the whole development of Irish English, and from the twelfth century onwards the city was military and politically under the control of the English, their language being established there (Hickey, 2002). Even though there were resurgences of the native culture and languages, English never died out in Dublin.

Taking these factors into account, Hickey (2016) states that all changes in pronunciation in the south of Ireland come from Dublin, and these changes become general across the whole country. Such changes which are sociolinguistically motivated are part of *non-local* Dublin English, and many of them have become part of the Supraregional Irish English variety. For instance Hickey (1998a) argues the speech of the middle-class community in the city tends to show supraregional characteristics, making their sentence structures simpler than the ones that can be found in local varieties.

5.1. Morphosyntactic features of Dublin English

In this section I will present some morphosyntactic features that take place in Dublin English⁵. However, these features are not restricted to the varieties of English spoken in the city, as they are part of Irish English and they might also take place in other vernacular varieties.

Related to the phenomenon of vernacularisation, Dublin English shares a feature that other vernacular English varieties also acquire. This characteristic is the use of plural forms for the second person pronoun. According to Hickey (1998a), this feature is also associated to the *lower class Dublin accent* that is *local* Dublin English:

⁵ “Dublin English” refers to the English spoken in the city, these morphosyntactic characteristics are not restricted to a certain variety here, they are part of the English language in Dublin.

- The agglutinative plural for the second person pronouns: *youse* or *yez* (archaic *ye* + the productive plural suffix {S}).
 - Corrigan, Edge & Lonergan (2012)⁶ also claim that Irish English preserves the distinction between the singular and plural for the second person pronoun *you*. Concerning these plural forms of *you*, in the study *yous(e)* seems to be a frequent feature of the Dubliners that took part in it, but the younger males believed that these forms are not really used in the area. On the other hand, older males and all females were more accepting of these forms, the older females being the ones who accept these pronouns the most, but all in all the speakers' perception of this feature was a positive one (Corrigan, Edge & Lonergan, 2012).

Moving on to syntactic features, according to Hickey (2005), the most marked syntactic characteristics of Dublin English are the ones related to the area of aspect. This author claims that three types of aspectual distinctions can be recognised in this variety and he lists them as follows:

- 1) Immediate perfective:
 - a. After + V-ing: (1) *He's after breaking his leg* (=He has just broken his leg)
- 2) Resultative perfective:
 - a. O + PP (Object + Past Participle): (2) *They have the boat built* (= They have built the boat).
 - b. PP + O (Past Participle + Object): (3) *They have built a boat with the money.*
- 3) Habitual perfective:
 - a. Do + be + V-ing: (4) *She does be worrying about the children.* (=She worries about the children)
 - b. Bees + V-ing: (5) *She bees worrying about the children.*

⁶ In a study conducted by Corrigan, Edge & Lonergan (2012), they analysed the speech of citizens from The Liberties in Dublin, an area where the *local* Dublin English is spoken, and they found different opinions towards typical features of the speech of Dublin English. Four males and four females took part in the study, in each group there were two older speakers (between the ages of 67 and 73) and two younger ones (between the ages of 18 and 22), but all of them were part of the working class. These participants were interviewed and they also completed a questionnaire in order to analyse their perception of the typical Dublin English phonological and morphosyntactic features.

The immediate perfective is found in all varieties of Irish English including those varieties from Northern Ireland too. Such perfectives as the one in (1) are used to describe an event or activity which has taken place in the recent past, and it is one of the most distinctive features of Irish English which makes it different from British English (Fippula, 1999).

The second perfective, i.e. the resultative perfective, is a highly accepted form and it entails that the action has been planned and accomplished as it is illustrated in constructions (2) and (3) (Hickey, 2005). The O + PP construction is used to focus on the end-point or result of the action instead of the action itself, and the subject is usually viewed as the agent of the action that is expressed by the verb phrase (Fippula, 1999). Hickey (2005) claims that resultative perfectives such as the one in (2) come from earlier forms of English that were brought to Ireland in the seventeenth century, and that this word order of O + PP is also the order used in the Irish language. On the other hand, constructions of PP + O like the one in (3) are usual in all varieties of English, so here the key feature would be the use of the object before the past participle (O + PP).

Finally, the habitual perfective is part of all vernacular varieties of Irish English, but the status of its use is unsettled. Constructions of this perfective with *bees* such as the one in (5) are not very accepted in Dublin and this use is probably lost in the city and limited to the varieties of English in Northern Ireland (Hickey, 2005). For instance, Sean O Casey's plays which best reflect the conservative aspects of Dublin English do not enclose the use of *bees*, but there are a lot of instances of the use of *does be* in his literary works. It is not clear where this structure comes from but Hickey (2005) suggests three possible sources: the influence from the Irish language, the influence from input varieties of early modern English and lastly the independent origin that comes from the acquisition of the language by adults with no instruction. Nevertheless, Hickey (2007a) observes that the habitual perfective is stigmatised and therefore not found in the supraregional variety of Irish English.

Another key syntactic feature of Dublin English is the *for to infinitive*:

- (6) *And there was always one man selected for to make the tea* (Fippula, 2008)
(= And there was always one man selected to/in order to make the tea)

The phenomenon consists of forming infinitival clauses expressing purpose with *for to* instead of *in order to* or *to* as it can be observed in (6). Henry (1992) distinguishes two uses of this variant: the weak *for to* which would only be used in purpose clauses; and the strong *for to* which would be used as a substitute to *to* in most infinitive types. Corrigan, Edge & Lonergan (2012) found out that both forms of the *for to* infinitive might be dwindling in Dublin English. However, the younger participants in the study believe that the strong variant is unacceptable and that the weaker one is more accepted, and the older participants find the strong form to be almost typical of their speech while the weak form is in their opinion categorical of their speech (Corrigan, Edge & Lonergan, 2012).

According to Fippula (1999), the *for to* + infinitive has been considered to be part of Irish English grammar, and some aspects of its use might come from the Irish language. However, Corrigan, Edge & Lonergan (2012) argue that this infinitive used to be a general feature of the English language and that it was introduced to Irish English from speakers of regional Scottish and English dialects that colonised Ireland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

5.2. Dublin English: evolution and changes in the accent

To talk about the linguistic changes that are happening in Dublin English, we have to note first that the English language has been present in the capital since the twelfth century. In the history of Irish English, Dublin is the only place where English survives without a break since the language was first brought to the country in the twelfth century with the arrival of the first English-speaking settlers, known as the Old English in the Irish context (Hickey, 2010). Since then, the language has evolved and different varieties have arisen within Dublin English.

Hickey (2016) divides these varieties or accents into four groups. On the one hand, we have the variety known as “local” Dublin English. This term is used to refer to the popular form of English spoken in the city, and the speakers of this group show the strongest identification with the traditional life in Dublin, where the local accent is part of the lifestyle.

On the other hand, and as the opposite of *local* Dublin English, we can find the term “non-local”. *Non-local* Dublin English refers to the group of speakers who do not identify with the previously mentioned local culture and accent. Finally, this second group can be

subdivided into two other varieties which would be *mainstream* Dublin English and *New* Dublin English. The term *mainstream* makes a reference to the English variety used by the middle-class and suburban speakers.

The second subgroup, which is also known as *Fashionable* Dublin English, includes features that did not exist up to twenty-five years ago in Dublin English (Hickey, 2007a). This group is mostly made up of females and even if it is a small group, this variety is the one that undergoes all changes in the accent that can be seen in Dublin nowadays (Hickey, 2016). Hickey (2000) also points out that this subgroup rejects what is associated with low-prestige Dublin. One of the main changes we can find in *New* or *Fashionable* Dublin English is the *Dublin Vowel Shift* which will be explained in section 5.2.2. However, this variety's pronunciations are shifting into the *mainstream* one, and many features that were part of *fashionable* Dublin English up to fifteen years ago are part of the *mainstream* variety now, especially for the younger speakers (Hickey, 2004).

To understand the previously mentioned changes that are happening in the pronunciation of Dublin English, we must take into account that the city underwent a big growth of population, and it has also undergone an economic boom (Hickey, 2000). Because of these events, many young speakers aspire to an urban sophistication which is the opposite of *local* Dublin English. Therefore, the changes that are happening in *New* Dublin English could be interpreted as a reaction against *local* Dublin English (Hickey, 2004).

According to the same author, the distinction between dental and alveolar plosive realisations separates the *local* speech from the *non-local* one in Dublin:

<i>Local Dublin English</i>	<i>Non-local Dublin English</i>
[tæŋk] for <i>thank</i> and <i>tank</i>	[t̪æŋk] for <i>thank</i> and [tæŋk] for <i>tank</i>

Hickey (2000) points out that this merger of dental and alveolar stops to alveolar positions that can be seen in the lexical sets of THANK and TANK is very stigmatised. This issue of stigmatisation can also be seen in other mergers when the merger is not associated to higher-status varieties. In the case of Ireland, this happens when the feature

is not part of the supraregional variety. Therefore, if the merger is not supraregionalised it will be stigmatised.

Moreover, Dublin English⁷ also consists of some characteristics that are typical Irish traits (Hickey, 1998a):

- The weakening of alveolars in an intervocalic or word-final position: [nait̪] for *night*, [fai̯t̪ɪŋ] for *fighting*.
- Yod-dropping after alveolar sonorants: [nu:z] for *news*, [nu:ɹə] for *neuter*.
 - Yod-deletion after non-sonorants ([stu:pɪd] for *stupid*) is considered a deliberated imitation of an American accent.

5.2.1. Phonetic features of *local* Dublin English

In this section I will present the phonetic features of *local* Dublin English. *Local* Dublin English is the variety of Dublin English that is spoken by the working class in the city. This variety keeps the conservative features of the language that were probably brought to the country before 1200, therefore in the first period of English in Ireland (Hickey, 2005). These traditional characteristics have survived in the language even after the superimposition of more standard forms of English in the country. So even if standard forms were imposed in the city, this variety kept its features instead of adapting new ones.

According to Hickey (1998a), the procope of pre-stress syllables or the reduction of consonant clusters are part of what non-Irish people perceive as Irish English and a slurred pronunciation. Therefore these features are part of *local* Dublin English:

- Procope of unstressed syllables: 'member [ˈmɛmbə] for *remember* and 'where [ˈwɛə] for *come here*
- Consonant cluster simplification: [ˈrɛkənaɪz] for *recognise* and [mʌns] for *months*

Furthermore, the author associates the following features to the *lower class Dublin accent* or *local* Dublin English:

- Centralisation of /ai/
 - *Time* [təɪm] ---- [təjəm]

⁷ Dublin English here also refers to the English language spoken in the city, therefore these features are part of the Englishes in Dublin.

- Fronting of /au/
 - *Down* [dɛʊn] ---- [deʊn]
- Over-long vowels with frequent disyllabification
 - *School* [sku:ɹl] --- [sku:əl] --- [sku:wəl]
 - *Mean* [mi:n] --- [mi:ən] --- [mi:jən]
- Realisation of historically short vowels before /r/
 - *Circle* [sɛ:kɪ]
 - *First* [fɪ:s(t)]
- Early Modern English short /ʊ/
 - *Dublin* [dʊblən]
- The simplification of stops after fricatives or sonorants:
 - *Pound* [pəʊn(?)]
 - *Last* [læ:s(?)]
- The lenition of /t/ in a weak position above the initial stage of apico-alveolar fricative to /r/ and later to /h/ with final deletion:
 - /t/ → [t̪] → [ɹ] → [h] → ø
Motorway [mot̪ə-we] [mo.ɹə-we] [mohə-we] [mo:(ɹ)wə]
- The retraction of the dental stops to alveolar position (this is noticeable by the speakers and therefore stigmatised as low-prestige speech):

Educated speech (<i>non-local</i> Dublin English)	Lower-class speech (<i>local</i> Dublin English)
<i>thinker</i> [t̪ɪŋkə]	<i>thinker, tinker</i> [tɪŋkə]
<i>tinker</i> [tɪŋkə]	
<i>breathe</i> [bri:ð]	<i>breathe, breed</i> [bri:d]
<i>breed</i> [bri:d]	

Hickey (1998a) also lists the following characteristics for *local* Dublin English, but he also argues that these features are not related to social markers and speakers are not very aware of these changes:

- The lengthening of low back vowels: [lɔ:st] for [lɒst] in *lost*

- This feature leads to the merger of pairs such as *horse* and *hoarse* [ho:rs]
- Rhotacism: prestige varieties in Irish English are rhotic and *non-local* Dublin English keeps the syllable final /r/, but *local* Dublin English is non-rhotic: [pʌʊtə] for *porter*
 - Even if Hickey (1998a) claims that the working class Dublin English is non-rhotic, Corrigan, Edge & Lonergan (2012) suggest that this group of speakers should be defined as “weakly rhotic” instead of “non-rhotic”. This suggestion comes from the perception of the speakers of their study, as the eight participants affirmed that they do produce the /r/. Furthermore, when they were given minimal pairs to see if they distinguished them, they all claimed to make a contrast between both words in each pair.
 - Moreover, related to the issue of rhoticity, there is the phenomenon known as intrusive /r/ which consists of producing /r/ in places where <r> is not present. This phenomenon is interesting in *local* Dublin English because of the uncertain status of the previously mentioned rhoticity (Corrigan, Edge & Lonergan, 2012). To test to which extent intrusive /r/ is accepted in Dublin, the subjects in the study were given minimal pairs to rate if they pronounced them the same way. The answers of the subjects suggest that intrusive /r/ is not judged by the speakers of the city, and most of the participants believe that the phenomenon is possible in their dialect. Additionally, the data collected in the study regarding this variant shows that speakers’ views do not change according to their gender or their age.
- A retroflex [ɹ] instead of a valarised r like in the rest of the country: [fo:ɹ] instead of [fo:r] for *for*.

Even though Hickey (1998a) does not mention the phenomenon of *T-to-R*, Corrigan, Edge & Lonergan (2012) analysed this phenomenon as part of *local* Dublin English. They describe this as the realisation of /t/ as /r/ as in /gɛrɛʊ?/ for *get out*. Many authors like Hickey (2005) have suggested that this is a feature of *local* Dublin English, and in order to see the participants’ opinions on this issue, they were given sentences with the T-to-R phenomenon as in “*My dad caughtra fox in our garden yesterday*” (the T-to-R instance happening in “caught a”). The judgement that Corrigan, Edge & Lonergan (2012) received for this feature suggested that most speakers do not accept it, and this was a general answer from all participants, although in reality they did produce this sound

change. This is why the scholars note that it is not the same to perceive a change and to produce it, and they also suggest that this feature is not frequent in Dublin.

Finally, Hickey (1998a) declares that the conservative character of these characteristics of *local* Dublin English is recognisable, and that these salient features were established in the first period of English in Ireland⁸.

5.2.2. *New Dublin English: The Dublin Vowel Shift*

Hickey (2011) states that the major linguistic changes happen in the shift in linguistic pronunciation in Dublin English. Additionally, Hickey (2016) claims that all changes in pronunciation that happen in the south of Ireland come from Dublin, and this has been happening in the past too. This shift in the pronunciation that is happening in the city is denominated the *Dublin Vowel Shift*, but before moving on to this phenomenon, one must understand the sociolinguistic situation of the capital city of the Republic of Ireland, as Hickey (2000) states that this vowel change is motivated by social factors in the city rather than by external influence of the language. Even if there are different varieties of Dublin English, this change in vowels started to happen in *New*⁹ Dublin English. Hickey (2007b) also uses the term ‘*Dartspeak*’ to refer to this variety, although he points out that it is not widely accepted. This last term comes from DART which is the acronym for Dublin Area Rapid Transport, the suburban railway line that runs along the Dublin Bay, and ‘speak’ which has connotations of jargon terms, ‘*Newspeak*’ being an example of this in George Orwell’s 1949 novel called *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Another name for this accent is *Dublin 4* usually shortened as “D4”, but this term was used before *Dartspeak* arose. The name comes from the postal code area in the south of Dublin, a place which is “regarded as more residentially desirable” (Hickey, 1998a, p. 4). In this area we can also find key places such as The Royal Dublin Society, the national television studios RTE and the national university, University College Dublin. It is essential to mention that in the 1980s, when the *Dublin 4* term arose, the speakers from this group were the ones who started to reject the traditional views of Irishness (*local* Dublin English), and this group is an example of *dissociation of the language* (Hickey, 2005). The varieties of English around this area are the ones which show the vowel shift

⁸ This first period is the one that goes from the 12th century to the end of the 16th one (Hickey, 1998a).

⁹ *New* Dublin English has different names: *fashionable* Dublin English, *advanced* Dublin English, *Dartspeak* (or “*dortspeak*”) and *Dublin 4* (D4).

to the greatest extent, and speakers who have more mainstream varieties tend to mock this speech. However, when speakers from other varieties do not perceive these realisations of the vowels as overly exaggerated, they tend to start realising the vowels the same way too (Hickey, 1998b).

In the 1990s, when Ireland went through an economic prosperity, Dartspeak became less popular, and salient features of this pronunciation were avoided by young people (Hickey, 2005). Nevertheless, some of these features were kept, such as the raising of non-rhotic back vowels and the retraction of /ai/, and these aspects are defining elements for the *Dublin Vowel Shift*.

This vowel shift started less than twenty years ago, and it has not been phonologically established yet, but the principal movements of it involve the retraction of diphthongs that have a low or back starting point and the rising of low back vowels. Moreover, diphthongs that are specifically affected are those that can be found in the TIME and TOY lexical sets as well as the monophthongs in the lexical sets of COT and CAUGHT (Hickey, 1998a).

This is how Hickey (2011) describes the principal movements of the present day *Dublin Vowel Shift*:

- a) The retraction of diphthongs with a low or back starting point:

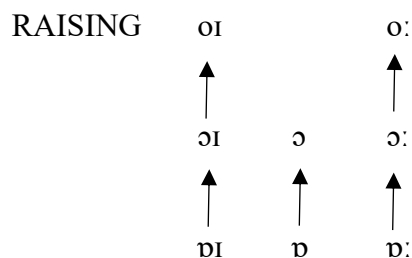
Time [tʌɪm] → [tʌɪ̠m]

Toy [tɔɪ] → [tɔɪ̠], [tɔɪ̠]

- b) The raising of back vowels

Cot [kɒt] → [kɔ̠t]

Caught [kɒ:t] → [kɔ̠:t], [kɔ̠:t]



RETRACTION aɪ → aɪ̠

According to Hickey (2007b), this new pronunciation has become mainstream for most citizens in Dublin who are under twenty five. This vowel shift is what makes *New Dublin English* different from *Mainstream Dublin English*, because when this variety started to arise it contrasted with old-fashioned forms of Dublin English that are present in *Mainstream Dublin English*. Furthermore, Hickey (1998b) states that in *New Dublin English* low and back vowels are raised, and this phenomenon is the opposite of the usual pronunciation in rural varieties. Therefore, we can see that these new forms that have started to take place in *New Dublin English* are also related to the conservative changes we can find in *Mainstream Dublin English*, as they occur as a reaction to these sound shifts (Hickey, 2007b):

<i>Mainstream Dublin English</i>	<i>New Dublin English, 'Dartspeak'</i>
Velarised /r/	Retroflex /r/
Alveolar /l/	Velarised /l/
Central Onset in MOUTH set	Fronted onset in MOUTH set
Retracted /a/ before /r/	Fronted /a/ before /r/
No T-flapping	Some T-flapping
No FOR/FOUR merger	FOR/FOUR merger
Unrounded vowel in SQUARE set	Rounded vowel in SQUARE set

According to Hickey (1998b), the most obvious aspect of the *Dublin Vowel Shift* is that it moves in the opposite direction of the historically substantiated unrounding and lowering of the vowels. He claims that the urban realisation of [ai] would be enough to make a distinction between the speech of educated Dubliners and those Dubliners from the working class¹⁰ as they realise said sound as [əi]. Nevertheless, these speakers retract the diphthong onset to [a] in order to make their sound realisation even more distinct from low-prestige forms of English in the city (Hickey, 1998b). That is why Hickey (1998b)

¹⁰ Educated Dubliners are speakers of *non-local* Dublin English, whereas speakers from the working class are speakers of *local* Dublin English.

believes that the shift that has started as a feature of educated speakers in the city might spread all over the capital, and this way the distinction or delimitation between the speech of the lower class and the speech perceived as the prestigious one will be lost. Another important point that Hickey (1998a) makes is that even if the middle-class speakers are called “educated” the term is not accurate in this context because according to him:

The determining factor for active participation in the Dublin Vowel Shift is the extent to which speakers espouse urban sophistication. This can be seen as a rejection of an all too local identification with Dublin and a conception of self as a player on a (fictional) international stage. Such an understanding of the motivation explains why the Dublin Vowel Shift is found among groups which have not enjoyed tertiary education and who are not necessarily among the more prosperous. (p. 9)

Moreover, the same way that the shift in vowels starts in one place and can be spread throughout the city and the country, the change also starts in some words first and then it spreads to others. Hickey (1998b) for instance claims that after analysing some speakers he found out that the first word to show the *Dublin Vowel Shift* was *Ireland* and also *Irish*, the latter deriving from the name of the country. In the context of Irish English, the name of the country, that is *Ireland*, and the people from this country, the *Irish*, are keywords for speakers to adapt the change in pronunciation, as both words contain a vowel which is “a potential input to the Dublin Vowel Shift” (Hickey, 1998b, p. 20).

5.2.2.1. The variable (ai) in Irish English

The Dublin Vowel Shift probably started with the (ai) pronunciation that can be found in words like *Ireland* and *Irish*, words that are relevant and frequent in the Irish context. Hickey (1998a) explains that the conservative pronunciation of this diphthong would be [əɪ], and this is kept in *local* Dublin English. It is interesting to mention that this realisation has been historically documented as that of the middle classes in the late eighteenth century in Ireland, then being confined to the stereotypical Irish accent (Hickey, 1998a). However, the supraregional variety for the south of Ireland has the variants [aɪ] or [æɪ], which have a mid or low starting point, and this is significant taking into account that non-regional varieties of Irish English tend to have a non-central starting point (Hickey 1998a). So the scholar then concludes that the realisation for this diphthong

has probably developed in an independent way in the capital city of Ireland, or that it has maybe been adapted from more rural forms, who probably used the [aɪ] realisation. Finally, Hickey (1998a) also notes that apart from the [aɪ] and [æɪ] realisations, middle-class speakers in the city are using a back starting-point, which means that in a word like *style* they would say [staɪl] rather than [stɑɪl], especially when the diphthong precedes /r/, which would result in [ɑɪlənd] instead of [aɪlənd] for *Ireland*. Therefore, the pronunciation of /ai/ would be released as the following in each variety of Dublin English:

<i>Local</i> Dublin English	<i>Mainstream</i> Dublin English	<i>New</i> Dublin English
[əɪ]	[aɪ]	[ɑɪ]

6. Conclusions

As presented in this work, the phonetic features of Irish English and, in this case, those of Dublin English are important for the distinction of the varieties of English in the city. While *local* Dublin English keeps the most salient features of Irish English, *non-local* Dublin English goes through phonetic changes in order to avoid vernacular features. This is interesting in the context of Ireland: even if the English language in the country has evolved in a different way from the English language in the United Kingdom, the influence from the latter can still be seen as some speakers in Dublin adapt more standard-like forms in order to dissociate themselves from salient Irish English features. This is an interesting issue because even if scholars agree that in Ireland standard British English is rejected, with the elimination or avoidance of salient Irish English features, some speakers are already adapting RP English forms. Wells (1992) for instance does not clarify whether this is done on purpose or not, so it would be interesting to analyse why speakers are picking up features from British English considering the relationship and the history between the two countries.

As the English language was brought to Ireland by different settlers, Northern Irish English and Southern Irish English are different varieties of Irish English. Moreover, the English language in the west of the Republic of Ireland was established in the seventeenth century whereas in the east, specifically in Dublin and its surroundings, it was established in the twelfth century, so different phonetic features can be found in these areas too.

Therefore, in Dublin the *local* variety and the *non-local* one present different phonetic features, because while the former keeps the realisations that were established in the twelfth century and during the first period of the planting of English in Ireland, the latter rejects and changes these conservative characteristics. Through the process of supraregionalisation, some salient features have been spread throughout the country, making them more accepted and part of the supraregional variety of the south of Ireland, which works as the standard variety or a moderate accent. Furthermore, as Dublin is a prestigious city in the country and it has economic power and international relations, it is not surprising to see that some features of the supraregional variety in the south of Ireland are taken from the capital city. Dublin has the power and the prestige for the creation, spread and establishment of these phonetic features.

As with vernacularisation the vernacular or salient features of the language are assigned to vernacular varieties, in Dublin it is the case that salient features like the use of *yous(e)* or *yez* is kept in *local* Dublin English, the vernacular variety. Then, the dissociation of the language has given rise to *non-local* Dublin English varieties, as speakers of these varieties avoid the vernacular features of *local* Dublin English. In particular, *New* Dublin English speakers avoid and change salient phonetic features in order to dissociate themselves from *local* forms, and this has led to the *Dublin Vowel Shift*, which is a reaction against the vernacular realisations of the vowels. This vowel shift is recent, but young speakers in the city and speakers who do not perceive the new realisations as extremely distinct from the old ones are already acquiring them. Therefore, taking into account the prestige of Dublin and the fact that the changes in pronunciation that happen in the city are spread through Ireland, these new realisations will probably become part of the supraregional variety and they will be spread all over the country.

On the other hand, concerning the morphosyntactic characteristics of Dublin English, its features are more general to the English language in the city and in the country. This differs with the different phonetic realisations assigned to each accent of Dublin English. So once again, the importance of the different pronunciations is proven, whereas similar morphosyntactic instances can be found in all varieties in Ireland. Nevertheless, as these morphosyntactic features are salient and different from the standard forms of English, they will most likely be assigned to vernacular varieties such as *local* Dublin English. However, morphosyntactic features are relevant for the distinction of Irish English from other varieties of English, and most of these

characteristics come from the influence of the Irish language. Even if from the seventeenth century on Irish lost its power and the language started to get lost, its influence is very much present in the morphosyntactic features of Dublin English and Irish English.

Due to space-related issues, I have not analysed the lexical features of Dublin English, but influence from the Irish language can also be seen in this area. However, scholars do not seem to assign different lexical features to the different Englishes of Dublin. In further researches it would be interesting to see if lexical features also vary from *local* Dublin English to *non-local* Dublin English. And, if these characteristics are general to all Dublin Englishes or even to Irish English, it would be interesting to see why speakers avoid salient features in pronunciation but not in the lexicon.

Finally, it will also be intriguing to see to what extent the new phonetic features of *New* Dublin English are spread throughout the city and the country, as these new pronunciations could put the *local* Dublin English at risk. If all young speakers start dissociating themselves from the typical features of *local* Dublin English and they opt to adapt standardised forms, the marks of the Irish language and the older forms of English in the city could be lost. Therefore, if Dublin loses the typical features of Irish English, the avoidance of these features could also be spread through the whole country, and the most salient features that make Irish English a distinct variety of English could then be lost at least in the pronunciation.

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