



**Amador Moreno, Carolina P. *An Introduction to Irish English*. London: Equinox, 2010. pp. 191.**

Carolina P. Amador Moreno's *An Introduction to Irish English* is the latest addition to the Equinox Textbooks and Surveys in Linguistics series, and a fine addition it is too, proving to be very accessible to both linguists and non-linguists alike. Drawing on her research and teaching experience at both the University of Extremadura and University College Dublin, Amador Moreno has compiled an indispensable handbook, filled with insightful examples and amusing anecdotes which keep the reader engaged throughout. While there have been overviews of Irish English before, most recently Raymond Hickey's *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (2007), this is the first book of its kind which was expressly written to be used as a textbook and thus it comes complete with exercises and is perfectly pitched for the uninitiated reader.

The book is clearly structured into nine relatively short, but by no means superficial chapters, each of which introduces a different aspect of Irish English. In addition to the theoretical background provided in the main body, each chapter includes a selection of activities to be completed in class or at home. Such tasks require the reader, for example, to search texts for Irish English features, to look up the etymology or meaning of lexical items, or to listen to and comment on online speech samples from a variety of internet sources. Answers to the activities are offered at the end of each chapter, together with an extensive list of suggested further reading on each of the topics addressed.

Chapters 1 and 2 set the scene by introducing key notions and terms and outlining the history of the English language in Ireland. As in the entire book, Amador Moreno writes clearly and concisely, confidently guiding the reader through the arrival of English on the island, its gradual spread during various plantations and, finally, its replacing Irish (Gaelic) as the majority language. The author also addresses the spread of Irish English to foreign shores, highlighting areas that have received relatively sparse attention in the past, such as Argentina, an area she herself has examined in previous research.

These introductory sections are followed by three chapters which focus on the core aspects of Irish English, namely its grammar, lexicon and phonology. In each case, the author draws attention to the salient features that set the variety apart from others spoken around the world, illustrating them with pertinent examples. Special praise should be given to Amador Moreno's judicious use of space in these chapters. Although the nature of survey textbooks invariably dictates that space is limited and

some omissions are unavoidable, it is to the author's credit that linguistic features that could not be addressed directly or in detail in the main body of these chapters still make an appearance elsewhere, either in exercises or examples, thus exposing students to a larger number of features than may seem evident at first sight. What is more, the author's frequent use of cross references is pedagogically sound as it serves to remind readers of the features that they have encountered previously.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are the highlights of the book, as they offer students the chance to apply the knowledge which they have gained from the previous chapters, by having them search for features in linguistic corpora or literary texts. Chapter 6, for example, examines fictional representations of Irish English and includes a variety of activities related to portrayals of Irish speech in literature, ranging from Shakespeare's early portrayal of an Irishman in *Henry V* (c.1599) to the representation of contemporary Dublin speech in Roddy Doyle's *The Snapper* (1990) and Ross O'Carroll-Kelly's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nightdress* (2005). The interdisciplinary nature of such tasks will be particularly appealing to students and will create a greater awareness not just of the linguistic features at hand but also of the motivations behind a writer's use of such features, be it for realism, humor, etc.

Chapter 7 provides some very interesting insights and addresses a field which until recently had not received much attention, namely the pragmatics of Irish English. Since Amador Moreno has already conducted research in this field and is a frequent collaborator with linguists in Ireland and abroad, she is able to provide numerous exciting new examples from recent or previously unpublished research. Although such examples will, of course, all be new to students unfamiliar with the variety, they are even more welcome and refreshing for those already working in the field.

Chapter 8 focuses on corpora of Irish English, another recent development in the field. Using examples from the one-million-word Irish component of the International Corpus of English (ICE) and from the similarly large Limerick Corpus of Irish English (LCIE), Amador Moreno illustrates the possibilities that these wonderful resources offer to students. More importantly, though, rather than just encouraging students to use these existing sources of Irish English, the author motivates them to compile their own corpora, as she herself has done (using literature and correspondence) and to test out their own theories.

Chapter 9 brings the book to a close, focusing on the implications of Irish English for teachers and learners of English as a foreign language. It addresses potential misunderstandings which may arise for students when faced with unknown structures or pronunciations and provides exercises "designed to raise awareness among non-native learners of English with an interest in IrE" (156).

In terms of layout and presentation, this book is very user-friendly, with sections logically divided and clearly numbered, and with the numerous activities presented inside boxes to make them stand out from the rest of the text. Indeed, the only weakness is with the occasionally poor quality reproductions of images and tables from other sources.

For example, the reproduction of the screen grab indicating the concordance output from O’Keefe (2007) is very small and faint, as is the image of the most frequently used words in the LCIE. The poor legibility of these examples is all the more unfortunate, as O’Keefe’s paper has not been published and the LCIE is not yet widely available for use by scholars and thus the average reader is unlikely to be have another opportunity to access them.

On the whole, however, these are very minor complaints about what is otherwise an excellent publication; one in which the scholarship is first-rate, the prose clear and engaging, and the coverage of the field very broad. *An Introduction to Irish English* is essential reading for anyone with even a passing interest in Irish English or Irish culture.

*Shane Walshe*