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Any defensible cross-disciplinary study needs to be securely anchored in the individual disciplines involved, in the hope that researchers will inform and enhance each other's understanding of the individual disciplines and lead to new insights into the subject matter under investigation. Such reciprocity is also intended to provide the representatives of each discipline with a deeper and broader understanding of their own discipline and how it fits into wider scholarship. Our project on the politics of the representation of Irish and Scottish dialects of English in eighteenth-century literature was intended from the outset to be a multidisciplinary venture. Its aim is to combine three primary approaches, sociolinguistic, literary historical and critical editing, to provide a comprehensive examination and interpretation of the choices made by writers, editors and publishers in the portrayal of Irish and Scottish English speakers in this period. Its further objective is to provide a comparison between the treatment of Scottish English and Irish English and between the socio-political and publishing contexts in England, Ireland and Scotland. The work of certain eighteenth-century writers provides an immediate locus for such investigation, including, in Ireland, Maria Edgeworth (1768−1849) and William Carleton (1794−1869) and, in Scotland, Robert Burns (1759−96), James Hogg (1770−1835) and Walter Scott (1771−1832). As far as we are aware, there is no study which looks at the implications of the linguistic choices of all of these authors and their editors comparatively.

In this paper, I wish to set the sociolinguistic framework of the project, examining linguistic notions of literary dialect and dialect literature, the received theory of literary dialect in the sociolinguistic literature, as well as the major potential contributions and limitations of a linguistic approach. As a partial road map for the larger study, this paper therefore necessarily focuses on description and exemplification, rather than on the interpretation of findings in the wider context of the project, which will emerge more gradually, as manuscripts and editions are analysed and synergies develop through the combined approach to Irish and Scottish literature in English. It will thus

intentionally raise more questions than it answers, with the ambition to stimulate further inquiry.

To serve the expository purposes of this paper, and because a re-examination of her work is the starting point for the project as a whole, I will for the most part provide examples of the concepts and linguistic features highlighted in this paper from recent editions of the works of Maria Edgeworth, particularly *Castle Rackrent*. These must be taken at face value, however, as they represent only examples and not interpretations or reinterpretations of her oeuvre: these will ultimately emerge from a comparison of editorial practice with manuscript sources, which will be the focus of a later paper.

It is necessary to begin with a few basic definitions. The term *literary dialect* generally refers to 'the representation of nonstandard speech in literature that is otherwise written in standard English and aimed at a general readership'.[1] This is the major focus of our project. *Dialect literature*, on the other hand, refers to 'works composed in dialect and aimed at a readership speaking the vernacular', often with the more overtly social or socio-political function of promoting a dialect and, with it, a social group, or as Taavitsainen and Melchers more colourfully assert, with the aim 'to strengthen patriotism and solidarity'.[2] There is clearly some overlap in the intentions of the authors included in our study (Burns being an obvious example) and this will need to be examined more closely as the work progresses. We include both dialect and non-standard language (slang, jargon – see below) within the term literary dialect, and as a sociolinguist, I would argue that such analyses of literary dialect can be included in the broadest conception of variation studies. I agree with Roger Fowler that 'variation in language correlates regularly and intricately with factors in the social circumstances within which the discourse occurs,' and, with him, I take as a basic premise that:

> There is a dialectical relationship between language and social structure: the varieties of linguistic usage are both PRODUCTS of such factors as power relations, occupational roles, social stratification, etc. and PRACTICES which are instrumental in forming and legitimating these same social forces and institutions.[3]

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[1] Gunnel Melchers and Irma Taavitsainen, 'Introduction' in Gunnel Melchers, Irma Taavitsainen and Päivi Pahta (eds), *Writing in Non-Standard English* (Amsterdam, 2008) 13.

[2] Ibid..

[3] Roger Fowler, *Literature as Social Discourse: The Practice of Linguistic Criticism* (London, 1981), 21.

We already run into intractable problems when we attempt to define standard and non-standard English, and we need to bear in mind that many of the preconceptions and agreed conventions which modern linguists and literary scholars take for granted were only just being formed – often controversially – in the eighteenth century. Taavitsainen and Melchers point out that the standard is for some 'a monolith, with more or less strict rules and conventions [;] for others it is a range of overlapping varieties'.[4] And, echoing Leith, they argue that the growth of the standard involves an element of engineering, i.e. 'a conscious, deliberate attempt to cultivate a variety, as well as a desire to have it recorded and regularised, to eliminate variation, and, if possible, change'.[5] Such attitudes and desires were the object of often heated debate in the Enlightenment period, and we must therefore take this into account in our interpretation of the choice of both standard and non-standard forms. Furthermore, we must also be careful to weigh national political considerations regarding authority in language in the period, questioning, for example, which standard is being portrayed or promoted, that of London, Dublin or Edinburgh, and which norms of speech are influencing authors and the presses, Irish, Scottish or English?[6]

It is axiomatic when talking about the written representation of dialect to point out that the orthography of English is the orthography of standard English (and is etymological, rather than truly phonemic in character), making it more difficult to render non-standard pronunciation into written form. The notion of standard spelling must also be treated with caution in the eighteenth century, however, as norms of spelling were also still unstable and subject to considerable socio-political manoeuvring and debate.[7] Indeed, such debates will be among the most interesting issues to revisit when considering developments from authorial manuscript to editorial practice and printing house conventions, as can be seen in the successive novels of the Edinburgh edition of Scott's Waverley novels.

A basic – though perhaps somewhat obvious – difference between the

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[4] Melchers and Taavitsainen, 'Introduction', 1.

[5] Leith (1983, 32 – 3. See also James and Lesley Milroy, *Authority in Language. Investigating Standard English* (London, 1985). Melchers and Taavitsainen, 'Introduction', 2.

[6] Tony Crowley (ed.), *Proper English: Readings in Language, History and Cultural Identity* (London, 1991) contains some excellent discussion of the relation between standard and usage.

[7] For discussion of the standardisation of Scots and issues of Scots spelling see, inter alia, Charles Jones, 'Scottish Standard English in the late Eighteenth Century', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 91 (1993), 95 – 131.

study of literary dialect and the study of naturally occurring dialect must also be acknowledged here. Authors are not field workers and fiction is not fact: in other words, literary dialect is not a direct reflection of speech, but is the author's interpretation of it. The function of literary dialect is both mimetic and symbolic,[8] but it is essentially fiction, which 'need not reflect real life as such, but may, e.g. typicalise and condense speech acts'.[9] This is the case for a variety of reasons, many of which were enumerated in Sumner Ives's classic essay 'The Theory of Literary Dialect', first published as long ago as the 1950s. They bear brief rehearsal here in the form of part of a summary paragraph from the revised, 1971, article:

> The literary artist must make up his own selection of [dialect] features which will serve his purpose of presenting a character who is real but who is likewise a recognizable social type. In this process, he is likely to regularize the speech of his character. Thus, the frequency of occurrence of particular 'dialectal' forms may be somewhat different in the literary dialect from the frequency of their occurrence in the speech which is being represented. Moreover, some exaggeration of the more striking peculiarities may result from their very noticeableness, and further exaggeration may result from the fact that authors may employ 'eye' or visual dialect. On the one hand, some of the genuinely distinctive characteristics of the represented speech will not be given. Both the author's desire to keep his representation within readable limits and his difficulties in finding suitable spelling devices will inhibit his portrayal of a speech type. Any literary dialect, therefore, will necessarily be a partial and somewhat artificial picture of the actual speech. It is the analyst's task to eliminate the spurious and interpret the genuine.[10]

Furthermore, Ives also points out that in interpreting the function of literary dialect we need to consider the author's *own* speech and what s / he regards as standard and dialectal (or substandard), as it may not accord with others' views. In contemporary terms we would say that a good analysis of literary dialect needs to take into account, where possible, the linguistic attitudes of

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[8] cf. John M. Kirk, *Corpora Galore: Analyses and Techniques in Describing English* (Amsterdam, 2000), 59.

[9] Melchers and Taavitsainen, 'Introduction', 13

[10] Sumner Ives, 'A Theory of Literary Dialect' in Juanita V. Williamson and Virginia M. Burke (eds.) *A Various Language: Perspectives on American Dialects* (New York, 1971), 158–9.

the author. With Maria Edgeworth, this has been possible, as in her notes she has provided rather frequent and fulsome (if often perplexingly contradictory) direct and indirect indication of her attitude to Irish English dialect (and the use of dialect in general).[11] It also means that commentators on a writer's depiction of dialect need to consider carefully whether variation in a character's dialogue can be attributed to the author's lack of consistency, or whether it is in fact an indicator of more discerning metalinguistic awareness.[12]

Ives' 'theory' provided a valuable approach to literary dialect, which was much used in America from the 1950s to the 1970s and even into the eighties. However, it is influenced overwhelmingly by dialect geography, which involved, inter alia, the plotting of isoglosses and dialect boundaries and the drawing up of dialect atlases. This approach concentrated on regional dialect variation and on recording direct formal variants (lexical, morphological and phonological), largely ignoring elements at or above the sentence level, and providing relatively scant information on social stratification or interpretation of the variation encountered. Since the 1970s a much broader conception of sociolinguistics has developed which encourages ethnographic study and the correlation of variants with social demographic characteristics and with socio-psychological aspects of behaviour (such as in identity negotiation and language attitude studies).[13] Given that this paper is an attempt to provide a linguistic framework for our study, I attempt here to update Ives' summary by devising a brief outline of the wider range of formal and sociolinguistic aspects of linguistic behaviour which will drive an analysis of literary text.[14]

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[11] See *An Essay on Irish Bulls* for an indication of her attitude towards what sociolinguists might nowadays call 'linguicism'. Maria Edgeworth, 'Little Dominick' in *Tales and Novels*, IV (Charlestown, South Caorlina, 2006). For a very fine overview of her use of and attitudes toward language see Brian Hollingworth, *Maria Edgeworth's Irish Writing: Language, History, Politics* (New York, 1997).

[12] In a highly insightful discussion of *Castle Rackrent,* for example, Brian Hollingworth argues that Edgeworth uses dialect features 'very sparingly indeed' and that this indicates that, despite her claims about the 'accidental nature' of the dialect writing, she is anything other than 'artless' in her approach. He goes on to point out that she is careful not to alienate her reader by overdoing the dialect features. Thus, Hollingworth does not dismiss Edgeworth's dialogue as inconsistent, but recognises it as what I would term justifiable artistic impressionism. Hollingworth, *Maria Edgeworth's Irish Writing*, 87–9.

[13] For a readable overview of the development of the larger field of sociolinguistics, see, for example, Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*, 4th edition (Harmondsworth, 2000); Ronald Wardhaugh, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (Oxford, 2005).

[14] As the confines of the present paper render it impossible to provide detail for each

1   Regional variation
    a   Phonology / orthography
    b   Morphology
    c   Syntax
    d   Lexicon
    e   Semantics
    f   'Discourse accent'

2   Social variation
    a   Class / social status
    b   Age
    c   Gender
    d   Occupation
    e   Power relations
    f   Language attitudes

3   Historical information
    a   Historical influences
    b   Language contact
    c   Socio-political constraints

4   Situational variation
    a   Plot
    b   Character
    c   Theme – affecting tone, register
    d   Setting

5   Character development: language develops along life / plot trajectories
    a   Stages from childhood to maturity to senility
    b   Reflecting education / life experience
    c   Influence of interaction with other characters (e.g. Rackrent régimes)

6   Interplay between voice of narrator and protagonists

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item on the list, we must content ourselves here with commentary on those perhaps less obvious or less frequently encountered in the analysis of literary text.

7　Dialogue / conversational style
　　a　Power / solidarity dyads
　　b　Interruptions / overlaps
　　c　Cooperative principles

8　Attitudes of characters towards other characters' language

9　Indications of author's linguistic attitudes and sensibilities

The first two headings are fairly predictable, as they include consideration of regional and social variation, but as well as the normal surface features in (1) (a–c), we need to consider less obvious features, such as what I refer to as 'discourse accent' (adopting the use of a term broadly used in research in intercultural communication – this will be illustrated below). The third heading, historical information, proposes as expected a consideration of the recoverable historical influences and socio-political constraints on the language in the work in question. It provides the macro-context which influences the micro-context of the novel and ultimately the realisation of the linguistic features chosen by the author. Note that it includes consideration of contact situations – either language or dialect contact (something that is particularly important in the Scottish and Irish context). Headings (4) – (9) are an attempt to marry linguistic considerations with authorial intention and practice, plot structure and the general constraints and opportunities presented by the act of fiction writing, which are not always manifested overtly in linguistic features, but are clearly essential considerations in an analysis of *literary* dialect. It is in these moments, I would argue, that linguistic, literary historical and textual editing coalesce and promise mutual enrichment. Within the confines of fiction, headings (5) – (7) allow us to look at broader discourse phenomena, that is, features at or above the level of the sentence, bringing insights into the interactional aspects of character dialogue and development.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this essay, Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* provides an obvious (if not necessarily easy) starting point for the analysis of literary dialect. Written sometime in the mid to late 1790s and published in January 1800, it is generally regarded as the first novel narrated in the vernacular voice. There is much debate about the function of dialect in *Castle Rackrent* and about Edgeworth's ambivalence towards Irish English dialect at a time when the Union with Britain was the overwhelming preoccupation of Irish and British alike. We do know that her writing had a profound effect on

Walter Scott, by his own admission,[15] and directly influenced the Waverley novels (though it is also clear that there are both considerable similarities and considerable differences in the ways in which each author employed literary dialect).[16] Edgeworth's linguistic choices in *Castle Rackrent* are intended here to illustrate some of the narrower features that form the core linguistic framework for our larger study.[17]

10.a   Regional spelling / pronunciation
          pin (for *pen*, 45)[18]
          Jasus (73)
          sacret (75)
          plase (93)
          prefarred (93)
          shister (for sister) 82, 83, 84, etc.)

10.b.   Regional lexicon
          Banshee (17)
          gossoon (53, 90)
          sarrah (75)
          shebean house (83)
          . . . a fine <u>whillaluh</u> (11, 78)
          cratur (49)
          kilt (84)

10.b   Dialect morphology
          . . . he <u>sung</u> it that night as hard and as hearty as ever (11)
          childer (18, 39, 78, 79, etc.) [19]

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[15] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, P. D. Garside (ed.) (Edinburgh, 2007), 364.
[16] For a discussion of Edgeworth's influence on Scott, see, for example, Kit Kincade, 'A Whillaluh for Ireland: *Castle Rackrent* and Edgeworth's Influence on Sir Walter Scott' in Heidi Kaufman and Christopher J. Fauske (eds.) *An Uncomfortable Authority: Maria Edgeworth and her Contexts* (Newark, 2004), 250–69.
[17] For initial critical accounts of the work the reader is directed to Hollingworth, *Maria Edgeworth's Irish Writing*; Marilyn Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* (Oxford, 1972); idem (ed.), *Castle Rackrent and Ennui* (Oxford, 1995); Kaufman and Fauske, (eds.), *An Uncomfortable Authority*; and Susan Manly, *Language, Custom and Nation in the 1790s: Locke, Tooke, Wordsworth, Edgeworth* (Aldershot, 2007).
[18] Page numbers in parentheses refer to Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent*, George Watson (ed.) (Oxford, 1995).
[19] See Edgeworth's own note on this 'pronunciation'.

them things, those things (19)

10.c   Dialect (morpho) syntax
       I remember to hear them calling me 'old Thady', and now <u>I'm</u>
       <u>come to</u> poor Thady (7)
       Now that the master <u>was sailed for</u> England (20)

11.   Historical lexicon / specialist / occupational terminology
       duty yarn (13)
       duty fowls and duty turkies and duty geese (14)
       herriots (14)
       cousin german (9)
       weed ashes (17)
       cart(r)ons (59)

Edgeworth was remarkably sparing in her use of dialect spelling as in the examples in (10) (a), though there is evidence to suggest she held back more in the first part of *Castle Rackrent* than in the later parts of the text, which reflects her growing self-consciousness about the use of dialect in the work, and for some, is an indication of the considerable speed with which she finished the novel.[20]

The examples in (10) (b) illustrate regional dialect lexicon. It is worth comparing these few general dialect words with the greater array of specialised occupational vocabulary displayed throughout the novel (some of those dealing with estate management are reproduced in (11), though there are others, for example, reflecting legal and financial discourse). Hollingworth suggests that the fact that Edgeworth used only about half a dozen general dialectal terms, and significantly more vocabulary dealing with estate management, was intended to ensure that English readers were not distracted from her economic and political message.[21] One might also venture to suggest that she might have been more confident with occupationally-based terms than with more socially-based Irish English dialect, given her own status and likely patterns of social interaction with Irish speakers. On the whole, then, the major contrast in vocabulary in the work seems to be between a specialist and general lexicon, rather than between regional and standard terms.

The first example under (12) (a) below I have chosen to classify as discourse accent, since it does not reflect any difference in syntax from the standard, but

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[20] Hollingworth, *Maria Edgeworth's Irish Writing*, 88.
[21] Ibid., 88–9.

certainly reflects a particular kind of logic: it reflects a particular idiom, though it may well also be regarded as an 'Irish bull'. The second example could also be considered as discourse accent, or if we accept that the reduplication is influenced by Irish Gaelic speech patterns, it could just as well appear under the heading of contact effects (12) (b). Such characteristics have not to my knowledge been explored in any great detail, but are deserving of attention in an examination of Edgeworth's portrayal of the linguistic 'manners' of the time.[22]

12.a   Discourse accent
        Out of forty-nine suits which he had, <u>he never lost one but seventeen</u> (15)
        . . . made it their choice, <u>often and often</u>, . . . to sleep in the chicken house (9)
        He was always <u>driving and driving, and pounding and pounding, and canting and canting, and replevying and replevying</u> (14)

12.b   Contact effects
        . . . to see all the women even in their red cloaks (11)
        . . . he could not see that to be sure when he married her (12)

While the examples above have largely illustrated individual features at the sentence level, those that follow are representative of the 'bigger picture' of literary dialect, and can be seen in the light of considerations (4) – (9) above. The constant ejaculations as in (13) reveal important characteristics of the narrator. They are remarkable not in their quality, which is not nonstandard in any way, but in their quantity, marking Thady as a man of simple beliefs and total abject loyalty to his Rackrent masters.

13   Character development / idiolect
        Long life to him! (10)
        long may he live to reign over us! (21)
        God bless him! (20, 25, 75)

And when we look at the conversational interaction in (14), we receive strong signals of the power-solidarity relations between master and servant, which

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[22] See a number of the works of Karen Corrigan for a discussion of the residual effects of contact with Irish on contemporary Irish English dialect.

are particularly marked by the forms of address 'Old Thady' and the hyper-bolic 'your honour's honour':

14.   Dialogue / Conversational style
       'Old Thady', said my master, just as he used to do, 'how do you
       do?' 'Very well, I thank your honour's honour', said I . . . (25)

Example (14) demonstrates that if we restrict our discussion of linguistic dia-lect to the regional features that were the primary focus of Ives' attention, we will miss some of the sociolinguistic devices that provide information about the interaction of characters. On an even broader level, *Castle Rackrent* is emi-nently useful as a text to illustrate authorial sensitivities, whether they be social, political, historical or aesthetic, as Edgeworth has provided us with both a glossary and commentary on the work. It is well documented that she wished to educate the English about the Irish and modify their, in her opinion, anti-quated view of the country, in the hope of developing mutual understanding and respect, and that she had the potential consequences of the Union with Great Britain firmly in mind when publishing this novel. The example in (15) could not be clearer in its political intent, while those in (16) provide us with an account of the linguistic approach of the author.

15.   Socio-political considerations
       When Ireland loses her identity by an union with Great Britain, she
       will look back with a good humoured complacency at the Sir Kits
       and Sir Condys of her former existence. (5)

16   Authorial sensitivity
       We cannot judge either of the feelings or of the characters of
       men with perfect accuracy from their actions or their appearance
       in public; it is from their careless conversations, their half-finished
       sentences, that we may hope with the greatest probability of suc-
       cess to discover their real character (1)

       The editor . . . had it once in contemplation to translate the lan-
       guage of Thady into plain English, but Thady's idiom is incapable
       of translation, and, besides, the authenticity of his story would
       have been more exposed to doubt if it were not told in his own
       characteristic manner (4)

Thus we have unique and direct insights into Edgeworth's objectives, her literary method and her linguistic attitudes, which, though occasionally contradictory, nevertheless provide us with a context for the interpretation of literary dialect in the period. It will be interesting to consider her surviving literary manuscripts and interrogate them for further indications of editorial and authorial conventions and attitudes, and then compare practice between authors and between Ireland and Scotland, and we will no doubt develop other significant literary and linguistic questions along the way.

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