Pragmatic Markers in Irish English: Introduction

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1. Introduction

In some respects, the study of Irish English (henceforth IrE)\(^1\) is both venerable and wide-ranging, with a long tradition of published work describing the characteristics of IrE lexis, syntax and phonology. There is also an older tradition of dialectology and a newer sociolinguistic strand of research that grew out of dialect study. The study of pragmatic markers (PMs) in IrE, as in other varieties of the language, is a relatively new but growing field of study. In recent years there has been an encouraging increase in scholarly work that surveys IrE thoroughly and thoughtfully. Hickey (2007), Amador-Moreno (2010a), Corrigan (2010) and Kallen

\(^1\) The variety of English spoken in Ireland has been variously termed Anglo-Irish, Hiberno-English and Irish English (see for example discussion in Hickey 2007: 3–5). We agree with Hickey that Irish English has the advantage of being more contemporary, and more in line with World Englishes nomenclature.
(2013) are volumes which comprehensively survey scholarly studies of IrE for the interested reader, situating the history of IrE and scholarly approaches to this variety of English.

A strong lexical line of enquiry on IrE can be traced as far back as the mid-1500s. Along with more serious, academic work on the phonetics and phonology, syntax and grammar of IrE, there has been, since then, a slew of publications aimed at a more general audience on the idiosyncrasies and peculiarities of the variety. Some of this, as in the case of P.W. Joyce’s *English as we speak it in Ireland* (1910), contains very accurate observations on the way the Irish communicate. While these types of publications may have their detractors, they do afford insight into the culture of the variety and perceptions of it outside the academic arena – a perspective on language that is not often valorised within that sphere but perhaps should be. These sorts of more-or-less casual observations on language-in-use can provide useful starting points for academic study. Indeed, much of what we intuit as distinguishing a particular variety of a pluricentric language like English stems from this very kind of observation. Joyce’s commentaries on “Affirming, assenting and saluting”, “Asserting by negative of opposite”, “Exaggerations and redundancy”, etc., in a sense paved the way for modern pragmatic studies of this variety. Many of Joyce’s observations prefigure the kinds of speech act categories that would come to form the core of later pragmatic studies of IrE.
As regards syntax, Markku Filppula’s *The Grammar of Irish English: Language in Hibernian Style* (1999) is notable as one of the first comprehensive analyses of the grammar of IrE (though see Henry 1957), and also one of the first to draw examples from oral data gathered through interviews with informants from different parts of Ireland, some of which had formed the basis of an earlier study (Filppula 1986). Apart from this and a few other exceptions (e.g. Harris 1984, 1991), however, the majority of the seminal studies on this variety were based either on written sources, many of them literary (e.g. Taniguchi 1972; Bliss 1972, 1979; Sullivan 1980), intuitions and/or personal observation. It was not until the 1990s that the need to start looking at real spoken data for grammatical study too (Corrigan 1997) began to become increasingly evident.

This trend towards using real data then expanded beyond the research fields of sociolinguistics and dialectology, and language text corpora compiled to represent aspects of IrE as a variety, or, more ambitiously, to be representative of the variety itself, began to be built. Most of the existing or developing corpora of IrE are the basis for some of the studies that form part of the present volume. These corpora (and representative studies based on them) include: the *Northern Ireland Corpus of Transcribed Speech* (Kirk 2004), based on the conversations recorded for the *Tape-Recorded Survey of Hiberno-English Speech* (TRS); the *Hamburg Corpus of Irish English* (Pietsch 2007, 2009), which contains mainly emigrant letters; the *Corpus of Irish English* (Hickey 2003), which is a
compilation of, for the most part, dramatic texts; and the *Corpus of Irish English Correspondence* (McCafferty and Amador-Moreno in preparation), a corpus of letters covering the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries. Two corpora that deserve special mention here are the Ireland Component of the *International Corpus of English*, or *ICE-Ireland*, and the *Limerick Corpus of Irish English*, LCIE.

As part of the *International Corpus of English* (ICE) project, John M. Kirk, from Queen’s University, Belfast, initiated *ICE-Ireland* in 1990, and was soon joined by Jeffrey L. Kallen, from Trinity College, Dublin, as co-director. The general purpose of the ICE project was to establish a machine-readable corpus of standard English from around the world which included both spoken and written language samples. The development of *ICE-Ireland* took place over a period of approximately 14 years, and was followed by *SPICE-Ireland*, an annotated version of *ICE-Ireland* in which pragmatic, discourse and prosodic features of the *ICE-Ireland* corpus are tagged (Kirk and Kallen 2008a, 2008b).

In the late 1990s, a collaborative project between Mary Immaculate College and the University of Limerick began to give shape to what would become the *Limerick Corpus of Irish English* (LCIE), a one-million-word spoken corpus of IrE (Barker and O’Keeffe 1999; Farr, Murphy and O’Keeffe 2004). The project reached completion in the early 2000s under co-directors Fiona Farr (University of Limerick) and Anne O’Keeffe (Mary Immaculate College). The principal aim of LCIE was to gather naturally
occurring spoken data from everyday Irish contexts, replicating as it did so the design matrix used for the *Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English* (CANCODE; see McCarthy 1998), in order to allow for comparison across similar context-types. The corpus represents a variety of discourse contexts and speech genres across different speaker relationships and, together with *ICE-Ireland*, has opened the way for new empirical analyses of real spoken IrE. By the mid- to late-2000s, therefore, there had been a fairly radical change in terms of sources of information on the characteristics of IrE.

At the same time, a shift in terms of how varietal research was conceptualised in general was taking place. In 2005, a ground-breaking volume, *The Pragmatics of Irish English*, was put together by Anne Barron and Klaus Schneider with the aim of addressing what up to the late 1990s had been a considerable gap in the study of IrE: the pragmatic perspective. The volume gathered a number of articles dealing with different language use situations in the private, official and public spheres of Irish life, and provided an initial response to what the editors identified as the need to focus on “language in (inter)action”, as part of a broader field within the area of pragmatics, “at the interface of pragmatics and modern dialectology” (Barron and Schneider 2005: 12), i.e. variational pragmatics. Research focus on this interface is relatively new and addresses an important gap in the study of regional pragmatic variation. Barron and Schneider note the major concentration, due in no small part to the prevailing wind in varietal research in general, of course, on
the “central levels of the language system, i.e., on pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, whereas language use in terms of communicative functions, linguistic action and interactive behaviour has been almost completely ignored” (Schneider and Barron 2008: 3). To some extent, since Barron and Schneider (2005), there has been a fairly substantial revision of the research agenda for IrE in different discourse domains to include the pragmatic perspective. Vaughan and Clancy (2011) present a summary of this research and suggest an agenda for future (pragmatically orientated) research. In this view, IrE, rather than being conceptualised as a ‘hybrid’ variety, or only in terms of contact with the Irish language (though undoubtedly an important perspective), is increasingly being seen as a variety worth studying in its own right (O’Keeffe 2011), as Barker and O’Keeffe called for in 1999. This sets the scene for the current volume.

2. Why this volume?

This volume situates itself at the intersection of the emergence of this hitherto neglected pragmatic perspective on IrE (and other varieties, too, of course), and argues that this entails an interest in the ‘small items’ in spoken varieties as key to their uniqueness. The potential for new lines of investigation presented by PMs in IrE was first highlighted in one of the articles contained in Barron and Schneider (Amador-Moreno 2005; see also Amador-Moreno 2002), and was then the topic of a plenary talk by Kallen at the 16th Sociolinguistics
Symposium, which took place at the University of Limerick in 2006. Since then, an increasing interest in the research community in investigating these features in more depth has gathered pace (see Hickey 2007: 374–376; White 2008; Siemund, Meier and Schweinberger 2009; Amador-Moreno 2010a, 2010b, 2012; Corrigan 2010: 98–102; Murphy 2010; Clancy 2011a, 2011b; Clancy and Vaughan 2012; Höhn 2012; Nestor, Ní Chasaide and Regan 2012; Schweinberger 2011, 2012). The present volume represents, therefore, an attempt to bring together some of those scholars who share an interest in traditional and non-traditional PMs in IrE. Our aim was to provide a solid catalogue of studies that future researchers can consult when investigating this and related aspects of IrE.

Some chapters in this volume approach particular items as having an identifiable and specialised connection with IrE, in the sense of showing specific patterns of usage based on empirical evidence over time (see chapters by Amador-Moreno and McCafferty, Wilson and Walker). Other chapters are case studies of items that have the potential to act as PMs across different varieties of English (see, e.g. chapters by McCarthy, Barron, Schweinberger, Farr and Riordan, Kallen, Kirk), investigating them in context to identify how strong their relationship with IrE is, as well as critically examining the nature of this relationship (O’Sullivan, Murphy, Clancy, Corrigan, Hickey). Others again take a slightly different slant, asking what corpora of IrE can add to the description of PMs in general (Kallen). The volume includes empirical analyses of stance markers such as
actual}ly (Kallen), hedges such as sort of and kind of (Kirk), turn openers (McCarthy, Farr and Riordan), tag questions (Barron), vocatives (Clancy), and other PMs such as sure (Amador-Moreno and McCafferty, Millar, Murphy, O’Sullivan), like (Amador-Moreno, Corrigan, Millar, Murphy, Nestor and Regan, Schweinberger), so (Corrigan, O’Sullivan), now (Migge, Millar), well (Palma-Fahey, O’Sullivan), right/roysh (Amador-Moreno), just (O’Sullivan), you know (Palma-Fahey), initial ach/och (Corrigan), ah (O’Sullivan), final but (Corrigan), and emoticons as a new development within Computer Mediated Communication (in the chapter by Millar).

In short, in putting the volume together, our goal was to compile a comprehensive collection of papers on the topic of PMs, in order to show that the study of these features can make a contribution not only to research on IrE, and to the study of PMs in general, but also to the field of variational pragmatics, which investigates pragmatic variation across geographical and social varieties of a language (Schneider and Barron 2008). Equally, we were aware of a substantial body of up-to-date and authoritative research on PMs (e.g. Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen 2011; Foolen 2011; Pichler 2013; Aijmer 2013). In this research, questions of definition and identification of what we class as ‘pragmatic markers’ are perennial themes. The methodological and theoretical conundrums raised by these most intriguing of ‘small’ linguistic items are addressed in each of the papers that make up the volume, and before providing an overview of the papers themselves, we consider these issues briefly.
3. Pragmatic Markers in an Irish English context

Many writers have noted the plethora of terms that exist in relation to what we are calling PMs; Brinton (1996) provides an exhaustive list. Foolen (2011: 218) asserts that ‘pragmatic marker’ is a term that may be used without a “specific theoretical stance”, and it is for this reason, and also because our focus is the pragmatics of IrE, that it is the preferred term in this volume. Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen (2011: 223) point out that “the number of elements which are treated as pragmatic markers is growing and there is more interest in pragmatic markers which are less prototypical”, noting in support of this that it is “not unusual to describe connectives and vocatives” as PMs (cf. also Fraser 1996).

Broadly speaking, then, we understand PMs as “a class of items which operate outside the structural limits of the clause and which encode speakers’ intentions and interpersonal meanings” (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 208). IrE has a number of distinctive PMs, as the chapters in the present volume highlight.

Each contribution to this volume stakes out its territory in relation to how it conceptualises the items under study. There is a strong correspondence in these conceptualisations with the list of features extrapolated from Brinton (1996) by Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen (2011: 226), which is presented here as Table 1.
Table 1. Features of PMs (after Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen 2011: 226)

| Phonological and lexical features | - short, phonologically reduced  
| - form a separate tone group  
| - difficult to place in traditional word classes |
| Syntactic features | - restricted to sentence-initial position  
| - occur outside of syntactic structures or have a loose association with it  
| - optionality |
| Functional features | - little or no propositional meaning |
| Sociolinguistic and stylistic features | - feature of oral rather than written discourse  
| - high frequency items  
| - stylistically stigmatised  
| - gender specific |

We can add some detail in relation to some of the above for this volume. All of the authors in one way or another acknowledge the polysemous nature of items treated as PMs (cf. Aijmer 2002). In fact, some of the features presented are not just “short and phonologically reduced” items (Aijmer 2002; Brinton 2010), but sometimes strings of words, or chunks (e.g. *you know*), or even items that can be considered canonical in that they contribute to discourse coherence, and therefore meet Schiffrin’s (1987) original criteria for what she termed ‘discourse markers’. However, the very nature of this discourse coherence shows a pragmatic turn by “doing other-attentiveness”, as Bolden (2006; cited in Foolen 2011: 219) usefully puts it. In other words, pragmatic or discourse markers foreground an interpersonal approach to (spoken) discourse coherence. Our orientation to what constitutes a PM is flexible, including as it does not just individual items like *sure* or *actually*, but also turn-initial items, vocatives and tag questions, though in general we see in the chapters published
here an adherence to the characteristics established in the literature to date and summarised in Table 1. Our position, then, could be said to be a primary orientation towards function over form, potential in relation to pragmatic marking, as well as the traditional or classical inventories of PMs. The nuances of what constitutes the ‘pragmatics’ of a language variety can be difficult to pin down. They do not follow neat, easily categorised form-to-function trajectories.

Language changes, new registers and forms of communication emerge, boundaries blur, requiring adaptability and flexibility, both theoretically and methodologically. Our response to this is to sequence the volume so that it first positions the nature of the relationship between the pragmatics of IrE and the pragmatics of Irish. The two major varieties of IrE on the island of Ireland – Southern and Northern Irish English IrE – are addressed within the first two chapters also. This sets the scene to discuss the nature of the relationship between methodological orientation and PMs, as well as an expanded view of what sort of items we can study within that designation. Given how PMs can guide the process of interpretation (Watts 1988), we include non-traditional phenomena within this designation, namely turn-openers, and turn-initial items, as well as tag questions and vocatives. As researchers investigating PMs are likely to find it difficult to locate them under any one term, we have deliberately left them as ‘pragmatic markers’ in the volume title, but allowed each author to use whichever term they preferred. Terms proliferate for many reasons – a preference, a need to sharpen a definition, or a desire to stake a new territory, to name the most obvious. We hope that this catholic orientation in
the terminology will make these and other related articles easier to find, and the larger picture of what we now talk about when we talk about PMs more coherent and visible.

4. The contributions in this volume

The majority of the chapters that make up this volume use either large or more specialised corpora, covering a wide range of written and spoken data. This includes the Irish advertising context, blogs, Irish soap operas, contemporary Irish writing, family discourse, male and female discourse, casual conversation among friends, service encounters, the discourse of immigrants in present-day Ireland, private correspondence, witness testimonies by Irishmen and women concerning their experiences during the rebellion of the Catholic Irish in 1641, as well as more specific data drawn from sociolinguistic interviews, or included as part of larger projects such as the ICE-Ireland corpus and the Limerick Corpus of Irish English (LCIE), mentioned above.

The volume opens with a chapter by Raymond Hickey which compares the use of certain PMs in IrE and Irish. The chapter starts by highlighting the fact that Irish (Gaelic) and English are used as vehicles of communication by speakers who belong to the same cultural environment, and states that “common cultural norms for the population of Ireland, at least for the south of Ireland, are reflected in common pragmatic
conventions”. This leads on to the question of whether or not the pragmatics of the Irish language and of IrE are identical and, if not, to what extent they are different. Certain pragmatic categories in Irish, such as the vocative case, the author claims, do not have exact equivalents in English, whereas other features, such as the marker *now* or the use of *tag is it?* seem to have parallels in Irish. Although a more exhaustive analysis of data would be needed in order to establish whether these parallels are due to Irish influence on IrE or vice-versa, Hickey’s identification of pragmatic features, particularly in Irish, suggests an interesting avenue to be explored in the context of contemporary spoken Irish. This might also be an area of interest to those working with different corpora in the language.

With a view to exploring the potential origin and development of some PMs generally associated with Northern IrE, Karen Corrigan’s chapter discusses the possibility of linguistic contact between the Irish language and earlier forms of English and Scots. Corrigan’s is the only chapter in the volume (but see Amador-Moreno and McCafferty, this volume, whose corpus contains mostly data from Ulster) to focus exclusively on the Northern Ireland context, by drawing on results obtained from a specialised corpus of sociolinguistic interviews conducted in 2008. The chapter considers eight different PMs generally associated with English as spoken in Northern Ireland. While some of those markers (e.g. *arrah, musha* or *mar-yah*) are not present in the corpus, others, such as *but, like, so, ach* and *och* are frequent and display very specific pragmatic functions.
The chapter also examines the distribution of these PMs amongst different age and gender cohorts. Although, as the author indicates, this is an aspect of the analysis that needs to be investigated further in future research, it is certainly clear that there is a relationship between frequency of use of some PMs dealt with in the chapter and the age of female speakers, with young women being especially frequent users.

Bróna Murphy’s chapter sets out to combine elements of the approaches of corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics and variational pragmatics to study frequently used PMs in IrE: like and sure. More specifically, Murphy explores how these PMs behave from a sociolinguistic perspective, comparing her own Corpus of Age and Gender – Irish English (CAG-IE) with two other corpora. Her findings reveal that the recent PM like shows greater age and gender differentiation than the older IrE PM sure, which she suggests is due to the latter being longer established in this variety and more integrated. Like emerges as a marker of younger speakers’ IrE, while sure occurs more evenly across age and gender groups. From a variational pragmatics perspective, Murphy suggests a relationship between topic and use of hedging like, in that like is especially connected with self-disclosure and the personal involvement of the young females during their conversations, especially in comparison to the older groups.

John Kirk reports on the SPICE-Ireland corpus, a project which marks up the original ICE-Ireland corpus in terms of speech acts and adds specific prosodic information. Discourse markers, or pragmatic discourse
markers (PDMs) as Kirk prefers to call them, are tagged, where PDMs are primarily defined as items that occur outside clauses and phrases, and convey the speaker’s attitude towards the propositional content of the relevant utterance. The chapter discusses the items kind of and sort of. Kirk investigates these items in relation to their structural environment, showing that in both the Northern Irish and Southern Irish data represented in the corpus kind of and sort of tie themselves to verb and noun phrases in line with the corpora used for comparison, i.e. the London Lund Corpus and Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language (COLT) (see Aijmer 2002). Quantitative and qualitative data are analysed to establish patterning also in relation to functional characteristics and the ‘geopolitical zones’ (Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland), as well as comparing the totality of the corpus against other varieties of English represented in corpora.

**Martin Schweinberger** also draws on the ICE suite of corpora, focusing on comparing like in IrE and south-eastern British English (SE-BrE) using data from the Irish and British components of ICE as well as COLT. Like is one of the PMs that performs so many linguistic functions that analysing its specifically pragmatic functions is a challenging and time-consuming sort-and-sift operation, to adapt Ādel’s (2003) term. One of the major benefits of comparing two varieties of English within a single study is that the same classification and methodological considerations can be applied to both. Extrapolating information and insights from disparate studies can be problematic, as Schweinberger notes. Functional frameworks
can be generated by iterative interaction with the literature and data, and this is certainly a significant strength of the study reported. Similar observations about the value of comparability across data based on corpora built according to the same design matrix have been noted by Farr and O’Keeffe (2002) and O’Keeffe and Adolphs (2008).

A comparative orientation is also evident in Jeffrey Kallen’s chapter, which focuses on the use of actually as a discourse marker in IrE and four other varieties (British, Canadian, New Zealand and Jamaican English), based on data from the relevant components of ICE. In English generally, the word actually is found initially, finally and internally within the clause, and expresses various semantic and pragmatic functions. Kallen suggests that it may be undergoing change from older adverbial uses into a discourse marker. His analysis shows that there are differences in the syntactic distribution of actually across Englishes that shed light on the development and diachronic change in the use of actually. The overall frequency of actually in IrE is similar to that found in BrE and NZE, while Canadian and Jamaican English use it less often. In IrE, actually does not show the same tendency to occur in sentence-initial position with clausal scope (referring to the sentence as a whole), compared to some other varieties, notably Canadian English. Kallen shows actually to be a robust feature of IrE discourse that places this variety in a specific position relative to other Englishes.
Turning from individual item PMs to the pragmatic marking potential of aspects of conversation, Michael McCarthy’s chapter compares turn-openers in informal IrE and BrE. Following his previous work on differences in single-word lexical response tokens between BrE and North American English (NAmE), this chapter shows how turn-initial response tokens possess an important pragmatic dimension. It also expands the repertoire of items that realise pragmatic marking in IrE. His analysis of variety-specific items in their role as turn-initial PMs suggests that the uses of words such as grand, mad, brutal, desperate, and religious interjections such as Jesus, Christ, and God, distinguish IrE from other varieties. “Their pragmatics”, he says, “may be said to reflect (for the outsider looking in, at least) a culture where intensity and intimacy (or even pseudo-intimacy) generate an expressiveness that belongs to and helps to define the variety”. The chapter uses corpus linguistic techniques in order to analyse spoken data extracted from the five-million-word CANCODE and LCIE, which contains one million words of spoken IrE. The chapter shows how conversational analysis can be fruitfully combined with corpus linguistics to reveal patterns in pragmatic marking.

Fiona Farr and Elaine Riordan’s study is also a corpus-based examination of turn-initiators, but in the context of Language Teacher Education discourse. The authors examine some of the pragmatics at play in interactions between student teachers and tutors. Their data comes from both face-to-face interactions and online communication, and their analysis
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concentrates on the functions of PMs at the beginning of speaker turns. The authors argue that while the regional origin of the speakers certainly has a strong influence on language use, so too does the specific context of use in terms of its communicative function, participants, and mode of interaction. Their results show that the face-to-face contexts analysed in their chapter are interactive and cooperative, while the online modes require explicit references and social cues to maintain harmony, politeness and social presence. From their analysis, they conclude that the pragmatic functions of turn-initiators differ depending on speaker relationships, speaker identities, and context (formal and assessed versus informal and non-assessed), as well as mode of communication (face-to-face or online).

Anne Barron’s chapter is a detailed analysis of tag questions, a feature that has not received much attention to date (see also Hickey, this volume). Barron’s study focuses on the specific context of naturally occurring service encounters in Ireland as compiled in her Irish English Retail Corpus. The chapter presents a formal and functional analysis of tag questions in the light of previous research on these features in IrE, BrE and AmE. The chapter begins by asking questions such as: “What canonical tag questions are used in service encounters in IrE?”, and “Are the invariant tags is it? and isn’t it? and also sure-tags employed in the IrE retail corpus?” These and some of the other questions posed by Barron open the way for future investigation of these features not only from a variational pragmatics perspective, but also from a discourse analysis angle focused on genre-
specific contexts such as service encounters. The chapter provides an overview of the research to date on tag questions in IrE and tag questions in variational studies in general. The findings from Barron’s IrE retail corpus are compared to data from other corpora such as ICE components which contain examples of everyday conversation in IrE, BrE and AmE.

Brian Clancy’s chapter focuses on the use of vocatives as PMs in a specific context: family discourse. His study uses two corpora representing the intimate genre collected in the home/family environment; one from a middle-class Irish family and one from a family belonging to the Irish Travelling community, a section of Irish society which has been under-investigated due to the difficulty in accessing data. The chapter argues that in this context, vocatives operate as PMs in order to offset the influence of factors such as the family power structure. In the settled family corpus, vocatives are shown to be more ‘key’ to family discourse than traditional PMs such as like, actually or well. Comparing linguistic features like vocatives at this local, intra-varietal level generates the real possibility that, as well as finding divergence between the interactional styles of the Traveller and settled communities, convergences can also be identified at the level of community of practice (in this case the practice of “being a family”). This, Clancy argues, may lead to better understanding of a hidden subculture within Irish society.

As previously mentioned, a variety of data sources are used in the chapters that make up the volume, where the possibilities presented in
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digital collections of historical data are also explored. John Wilson and Heather Walker’s chapter makes fascinating use of data from the digitised depositions taken after the 1641 rebellion in Ireland to analyse the use of a small number of adverbs as anchors of discourse that open windows on the values and emotions of speakers even at some historical distance. The depositions are described by the authors as “one of the bloodiest events in Irish history, when the mainly indigenous Catholic Irish rebelled against British, and mainly Protestant, settlers”, and their linguistic value is clearly made evident in this chapter. The study highlights a pragmatic distinction between legal and therapeutic disclosure, and shows that the depositions were achieving both legal aims – ensuring that their evidence was given enough weight to proceed with prosecution or make the authorities pursue wrongdoers – and therapeutic aims, such as expressing hurt done to or witnessed by deponents. The analysis focuses on markers of evidentiality which are categorised as factuality (e.g. specifically commonly vs. credibly reported/heard), belief (e.g. verily and undoubtedly), time (e.g. immediately and presently), and perception (e.g. cruelly and grievously).

A historical perspective is also provided by Carolina Amador-Moreno and Kevin McCafferty in their analysis of the use of like and sure in the Corpus of Irish English Correspondence (CORIECOR), a corpus that mainly contains letters written to and from Irish emigrants between 1750 and 1940. Framing the study is the question of the extent to which the orality of letters can be established empirically through analysis of items
characteristic of the spoken mode, such as *like* and *sure*. The study highlights how valuable corpora such as CORIECOR are for diachronic investigation of varieties, and argues that even small datasets can be illuminating, a position that is increasingly being taken up in this type of empirical pragmatic work (see, e.g. Vaughan and Clancy 2013). The type of data the chapter focuses on represents, in fact, an important link in the chain of evidence for the development and variegation of linguistic features, providing useful “testing grounds for the grammaticalisation hypothesis that assumes a move from strictly textual to more interpersonal and pragmatic meanings”, and also showing that diachronic corpora are worthy of more regular and sustained attention.

The corpus used by Sharon Millar is much more contemporary, using data sourced online, from an Irish beauty website <www.beaut.ie>. The forum itself represents an ‘emergent genre’, to use the terminology imported by Herring (e.g. 2001) into the linguistic study of computer-mediated communication (CMC). The chapter explores PMs in cyberspace and focuses mainly on the use of four PMs (*sure*, *like*, *now*, and smiley emoticons) in order to explain the role these features play in online interaction. Millar shows how *sure*, *now* and, most especially, emoticons are employed by participants for the purpose of what she calls “banter management”, a form of rapport building “where [participants] index non-seriousness and may tone down the impolite aspects of insults, jibes and criticisms”. However, Millar points out that:
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Although such rapport building and maintenance can be interpreted in terms of politeness (solidarity strategies, mitigation strategies), a wider conceptualization of rapport as general relational work or rapport management helps to identify the role of PMs for both polite and impolite behaviours. This broader understanding is especially useful for the analysis of emoticons.

The chapter highlights the need for systematic corpus construction that will allow for more detailed quantitative and qualitative analyses of issues seen to be central to a new agenda for sociolinguistic and pragmatic research on new media, including different types of CMC settings and users.

In the realm of media discourse in Ireland, Joan O’Sullivan’s chapter draws on Kallen’s (2006) discussion of pragmatic elements that index ‘Irishness’ to isolate items that she can then investigate in her corpus of contemporary radio advertising. Attention to the generic structure of the discourse, using Sussex’s (1989) distinction between ‘Action’ and ‘Comment’ components of advertisements, enables O’Sullivan to observe fine details in relation to the PMs she discusses. A relatively low occurrence of just in the ‘Action’ component corroborates previous findings (Kirk and Kallen 2009), and O’Sullivan suggests this is due to its limited capacity to index a specifically ‘Irish’ identity. Another important aspect of this chapter is that it addresses a mediated (or mediated) location of language and invokes Kelly-Holmes’ (2005) conception of heteroglossia in this context as “linguistic fetish”. The conception of the data in these terms is highly salient in the analysis that follows. Combining a critical, generically nuanced and empirical view opens a unique window not only on what characterises IrE as a variety, but how aspects of this variety are indexed, as evidenced in
public, again in Barron and Schneider’s (2005) terms, or institutional discourse.

Fictional renderings of IrE are dealt with in two chapters. The first, by María Palma-Fahey, focuses on the use of well and you know as PMs in Fair City, a popular Irish soap opera. Using a corpus of dialogue from the soap, she sets out to determine the manner in which these PMs are strategically exploited in Irish fiction to create a representation of IrE. A comparison between the Fair City corpus and the LCIE leads the author to the conclusion that the use of well and you know does contribute to the creation of spokenness in the fictional corpus, by mirroring the syntactic positions and pragmatic functions that these markers serve in IrE. Drawing on spoken features such as PMs, Palma-Fahey argues, adds a sense of authenticity to the fictional dialogues, and makes them acceptable to the Irish audience they are aimed at. In terms of politeness, she finds that the use of you know, and also well, have similar mitigating and downgrading functions in fiction and in real spoken conversation. Overall, Palma-Fahey’s exploration of both PMs shows the way in which these features are employed in IrE fiction to construct dialogues that convey aspects of IrE politeness that can be recognised by the audience. Palma-Fahey finds that the politeness norms encoded in these items are congruent with findings based on naturally occurring data, adding weight to the argument that there are compelling reasons to collect and analyse fictional data, an argument which is also made by Amador-Moreno in her chapter on writer Paul
Howard’s fictional narrator of the Celtic Tiger and its aftermath, Ross O’Carroll-Kelly.

What is interesting about Carolina Amador-Moreno’s dataset is that Ross O’Carroll-Kelly is a particular type of construct: a character to whom the writer gives voice, and a very specific voice at that. As an observer (by his own account) of contemporary Dublin English, Howard interlards O’Carroll-Kelly’s narration with quotatives, such as like, and DMs such as roysh (right), “to lend credibility to the voice of the narrator” as Amador-Moreno points out. The dataset, the novel The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nightdress, also contains phonetic representation and this redresses, to a certain extent, an acknowledged limitation of much analysis of PMs: the fact that they have phonological idiosyncrasies that are not always captured in orthographically transcribed, naturally occurring data, idiosyncrasies that potentially add valuable shading to their analysis (see also Kirk, this volume). Corpus analysis of the patterning of like in the data points towards the tendency for like to follow the verb be as a quotative, and the quotatives involved in general form part of the overall analysis. What emerges reveals a close correspondence with patterns reported in the literature as well as interesting divergences from reported work on like. The value of this type of data for investigation of sociolinguistic identities and indices of community is underlined.

The volume closes with two chapters focusing on the use of PMs by recent immigrants to Ireland. Bettina Migge’s chapter investigates
Migge’s study uses quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis to examine how levels of use of *now* correlate with newcomers’ feelings of belonging to Ireland. Migge analyses the newcomers’ use of *now* drawing on Clancy and Vaughan’s functional framework for this item, which they argue is “emblematic” of IrE (2012: 234), and tests some of their hypotheses. The chapter also discusses the broader implications arising for research on the relationship between linguistic variation and social integration.

The question of language as an important indicator of integration is also discussed in Niamh Nestor and Vera Regan’s chapter, which investigates the use of PMs in the English spoken by Polish immigrants in Ireland. They use as data the speech produced by the informants in sociolinguistic interviews aimed at eliciting spontaneous speech. The study includes adult and young speakers who have settled in both rural and urban locations, and they investigate the degree to which age and place of residence influence patterns of usage. The triangulation of linguistic data with qualitative and survey data from the same participants allows the authors to provide a preliminary overview of the use of discourse *like* in the
English spoken by Polish people in Ireland. Their results show Polish L2 like patterns to be similar to L1 IrE, and suggest that place of residence may be a significant factor: rural speakers follow rural L1 patterns, and urban ones replicate urban L1 patterns. In terms of age, the authors conclude that there seems to be a tendency among younger speakers to favour urban (and global) clause-medial discourse like over traditional clause-marginal IrE like, which shows that the youngsters are participating in the global change in like patterns. The results obtained in this study raise questions about language use and the language practices of L2 speakers in relation to PMs, and provide interesting insights into the possible effects of migrant speech on IrE speech in the present and future.

All in all, the chapters in this book reflect the potential richness of the study of PMs in IrE, an area that remained terra incognita just over a decade ago. They also reflect significant social and technological changes in Ireland: studies of immigrants’ attitudes towards and use of IrE would have been unlikely research topics not long ago, when Ireland had few immigrants; the use of corpora and the Internet has become widespread in recent decades, altering the way we do linguistics, throwing up new research topics and agendas, and making both new and older data sets more readily accessible and easier by far to search and study.

Some of the PMs analysed in this volume have been around long enough to become typical – even stereotypical – features of IrE, appearing in fictional representations of this variety as far back as the eighteenth
century, as is the case with *sure*. Some of them are part of the repertoire of linguistic forms that have been socially recognised, or ‘enregistered’, to use Agha’s term (2003), as indexical of Irishness for a long time. Others, like *musha*, or its related forms *maise/wisha*, seem to be no longer in use in contemporary spoken IrE, while other features such as the use of *now, so, or like* seem to have particular pragmatic functions with analysis also revealing interesting patterns of usage in terms of age, gender, or geographical origin of the speaker in present-day IrE.

This collection of articles represents only the second volume dedicated exclusively to IrE pragmatics (after Barron and Schneider 2005), and therefore we hope that the studies presented here will provide the basis for future research and fruitful scientific debate on both IrE pragmatics and PMs in general.
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