Conceptions of Welsh English and the factors of time, space, and linguistic identity

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Welsh English (WelE) comprises a number of spoken varieties of English in Wales, varying regionally and socially from highly Welsh-influenced contact varieties to standard British English (e.g. Garrett et al. 1999). Apparent-time research on the use of contact-induced features of syntax reveals considerable leveling (Paulasto 2006, 2013). However, the regional dialects have sufficient covert prestige that wholesale standardization is unlikely to take place; rather, the forms and functions of the dialect features approach those of spoken British English (e.g. Paulasto 2013).

The present paper will examine linguistic variation in WelE through the social and linguistic identities of the bilingual Welsh and monoglot English speakers of the dialect (see, e.g. Coupland 2006). The roles of Welsh, English, and WelE were a central topic in the interviews conducted by Rob Penhallurick (in the 1980s) and the present author (1995, 2000, 2012) in different parts of the country, but the views that the informants express on these subjects have not hitherto received attention. The interviews are analyzed along the dimensions of knowledge, affiliation and practice in order to examine the interplay of linguistic (Welsh/English) identity and social identity, and the potential role that these factors play in the observed regional and sociolinguistic variation.

References


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