

Resilient or Yielding?

Features of IrE Syntax and Aspect in early Australia

Abstract

The author is currently working on a thesis on the development of Australian English between 1788 and 1900. COOEE, a self-collected and -edited corpus of two million words, forms the basis of the study.

Included in COOEE are 164,000 words by Irish immigrants. These can be compared to 47,000 words written in Ireland between 1791 and 1906 which were collected alongside the compilation of COOEE. This comparison is intended to provide insights into the development of the language of speakers of Irish English in Australia. Moreover, the influence of IrE on an emerging AusE can be traced.

Unbound uses of reflexive pronouns and the expression of the perfective and the habitual aspect are investigated. Some structures were found to be resilient, others yielding. An influence on developing AusE seems doubtful.