Universität Regensburg

Early Australian Letters

A Linguistic Analysis

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I INTRODUCTION

This study of Australian English in general and the language of letters from nineteenth century immigrants in particular developed from two different interests. The first was incited through an intriguing study at the chair of English linguistics at the University of Regensburg that dealt with a historical letter corpus of American English. The second was a stay in the antipodes and frequent visits of the Mitchell Library in Sydney where many interesting documents and letters are collected and preserved.

In the letters and diaries to be found there the fascinating lives of convicts, the lonesome toil of farmers and the daily experiences of city dwellers could be evidenced. But apart from the personal and historical interests that are connected with these testimonies the language of the letters also seemed to be worthwhile studying. This is intended in the present analysis.

The study of Australian English is still a rather neglected topic of linguistic research especially if it is compared with the work done on the American and British varieties of English.[1] This situation has improved since the days of the pioneering works of S. Baker, Mitchell and Delbridge but outside Australia there is virtually only a handful of studies to be found.[2] Notable exceptions are the works of Dabke (1976), Görlach (1991) and Leitner (1984, 1989, 1990). Lentzner (1888, 1891) studied Australian English in the nineteenth century.

The first works on Australian English focused on the origin of the particular Australian pronunciation, the mixing of dialects and the vocabulary of settlers and convicts. The main protagonists of this period were S. Baker (1959 [D],[3] 1965 [D], 1966) Blair (1975), Eagleson (1964a, 1964b, 1965), Gunn (1965a [D], 1965b [D], 1971 [D], 1972a, 1972b), Hammarström (1980, 1985), Langker (1980 [D], 1981 [D]), Ramson (1963a, 1963b, 1964a, 1964b, 1965a, 1965b, 1966, 1970) and Turner (1960, 1966, 1967).[4]

But in the 1970s the interest in the historical study of Australian English declined rapidly and gave way to studies of present-day usage with special attention devoted to the language contact situation of Aborigines and immigrants, sociolinguistic variables and differences and similarities between the usage of English in Australia and other parts of the world. Among the most prominent names and works are D. Bradley (and M. Bradley 1992), Bryant (1989a, 1989b, 1991), Clyne (1989, 1992), Collins (1978, 1988, 1989, 1991a, 1991b, and Blair 1989, and Peters 1988), Eisikovitz (1991a, 1991b), Horvath (1985), Mitchell (1946, and Delbridge 1965a,b), Newbrook (1992), Peters and Delbridge (1989), Pauwels (1991), Poynton (1989) and Romaine (1991).

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[1] The author is aware that there is great variation in what here is unifyingly termed British or American English but these varieties, though often referred to, will not be presented in a way that would necessitate further differentiation. When such a differentiation seemed to be contributing to the comprehensibility of the argument it has been made. The following abbreviations will be used in the present study: Australian English: AE; English English: EngE; American English: AmE.

[2] Special mention must be made of Baker's book *The Australian Language* first published in 1945. Though its rather pompous title, probably a reflection of A.L. Menken's contemporary work *The American Language*, may not yet have reflected linguistic reality in 1945 it still was an invaluable contribution to the study of Australian English. It not only furthered and to a large extent created interest in the study of English as it was spoken in Australia but it also showed Australians that their linguistic 'inferiority complex' was unfounded.

[3] The list of the works cited has been divided into four different sections. The first contains the two books that provided material for the corpus [C], the second contains the dictionaries [D], the third all writings on Australian English [A] and the fourth all other writings [O]. To make it easier for the reader to find a reference a C, D, or O in square brackets is given after the date. The references of the category [A], which proved to be the most numerous, were chosen to go unmarked.

[4] These names and the titles mentioned are of course only a personal selection that is not intended to be comprehensive but rather aims at giving a broad overview.

The codification of an antipodean lexis is of long standing. In contrast to this is the fact that to date no grammar of Australian English has been written or is likely to be published in the foreseeable future.

The first dictionary of Australian usage was *The Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux, Including a New and Comprehensive Vocabulary of the Flash Language* first published in 1819. Vaux's little dictionary was based on his earlier experiences as a prisoner of Mother England in Australia and gives a superb account of the slang used by the convicts. Despite the fact that it contains very little of what can honestly be counted as uniquely Australian it still is very useful as an account of what kind of English was spoken in the colony.[5]

The next major dictionary to appear was Karl Lentzner's (1891) *Colonial English: a Glossary of Australian, Anglo-Indian, Pidgin English, West Indian and South African Words.* This and Cornelius Crowe's (1895) *Australian Slang Dictionary* are scolded by Baker for their inaccuracies.[6]

Then follow Morris's *Austral English* (1896) and Joshua Lake's *A Dictionary of Australian Words. The Australasian Supplement to Webster's International Dictionary* (1898). The first is the earliest comprehensive attempt at a codification of what was distinctly Australian using the standards set by the compilers of the *Oxford English Dictionary*.[7] *Austral English* also includes some curious references e.g. *Christmas*. This is reprimanded by Baker but Turner counters:

> "[Morris's] quotations [...] show, the climatic connotations of the word in Australia are so diametrically different that it serves as a good example of the inevitability of linguistic change in a changed environment, in connotations if not in lexicon. There is a further difference, a difference in collocations; *Christmas* enters into compound names for summer flowering plants *Christmas bells, Christmas bush, Christmas tree* [...]."[8]

The *Australasian Supplement to Webster's* is uniformly praised by all who discuss it. Even the always critical Baker admits:

> "This supplement, compiled by Joshua Lake, of Cambridge, ranks as one of the best of its kind yet published. It gives a representative cross-section of Australasian speech, avoids overloading with flora and fauna, and - although it is not always correct - gives us a much better taste of indigenous slang and colloquialism than Morris does."[9]

The next dictionaries of any substance were Baker's works *Australian Slang Dictionary*, which appeared in 1959 and *The Drum: Australian Character and Slang*, which was published in 1965.

Today's most important dictionaries of Australian English are without doubt *The Australian National Dictionary* (Ramson 1988a), which provides the history of many Australianisms[10], and *The Macquarie Dictionary* (Delbridge 1981a) containing current

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[5] Cf. S. Baker (1966: 14).

[6] S. Baker (1966: 15f) quotes two newspaper reviews of the respective books. Here is the *Bulletin's* comment on Lentzner:

> "The illustrations given of Australian slang are very funny for the most part, and where they are exact and authentic, the source, in nine cases out of ten, is inaccurately stated."

> Crowe gets a more severe beating in the same newspaper:

> "*The Australian Slang Dictionary* is an amazingly ignorant production. The author has mixed up an olla podrida of linguistic scraps picked up everywhere - most of which are either not Australian or not slang - and enriched it with little bits of his own. The spelling is atrocious and the definitions are worse."

[7] Cf. Morris (1896 [D]: IXf).

[8] Turner (1994: 313).

[9] S. Baker (1966: 18).

[10] Hughes' (1989 [D]) *Australian Words and Their Origins* is simply a downsized version of this.

Australian usage and proudly and rightly boasting with the subtitle *An Australian Achievement* on its cover.[11]

To the best of my knowledge there is no historical study on Australian English that went beyond the topics of phonology, the mixing of dialects and lexis.[12] The presentation of an extensive history of Australian English, the compilation of a grammatical profile of present-day Australian English, the formal and linguistic investigation of a corpus of nineteenth century letters and diaries that comprises about 140,000 words and an attempt to link the features found there with present-day usage should therefore be a valuable contribution both to the historical study of Australian English as well as to the study of current Australian English.

The study starts with a comprehensive account of the history of Australian English from its beginnings to the present-day which will be combined with remarks on the general history of Australia.[13]

In the first section of that chapter an account of the settlement history up to the gold rushes in the mid-nineteenth century will be presented. Then the period from the 1850s up to World War I will be looked at. The last part of the first chapter shows the development of Australia and its language from 1914 to the present day. Various theories regarding the origins of AE will be presented and discussed. A new theory of dialect mixing will be forwarded and the history of AE will be explained in that context. The chapter closes with the sketch of a grammatical profile of present-day AE.

The next chapter is introduced by a short history of letter writing. The different traditions governing the composition of letters will be shown. The changes in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, which are directly relevant for the discussion of the letters in the corpus, will receive prominent consideration.

This is followed by an explanation of the editing of the corpus and by the presentation of a detailed description of the corpus at large. After that the family histories of the people who make up the lion's share of the data will be presented.

After the establishment of the social and historical context of the letters the study proceeds with a discussion of stylistic and linguistic properties of the corpus. Questions of formal qualities, lexis and morphosyntactic variables will be presented and discussed.

The next section of this chapter investigates the attitudes towards knowledge that two individual female writers evidence. This psycholinguistic analysis will show the individual

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[11] The role the *Macquarie Dictionary* played in the formation of an established and distinct Australian variety of English can hardly be exaggerated and will be further discussed later. *The Macquarie Dictionary of New Words*, published by Butler in 1990, also deserves mentioning in this context.

[12] It should be noted, though, that a general history of Australian English is currently being prepared by A.G. Mitchell.

[13] The pronunciation of English as it was spoken in nineteenth century Australia and the pronunciation of today's Australian English will not form a major part of this study since this topic has already been exhaustively dealt with. Relevant works on this topic are: S. Baker (1966), Blair (1975), Cochrane (1989), Mitchell (1945, and Delbridge 1965a,b) and Turner (1960 and 1966).

For the same reason Australian lexis and occupational terminology will not be discussed in great length. This is probably the best researched field in Australian linguistics. Hence, a complete enumeration of the titles will not be possible. Nevertheless, some important ones will now be listed: Baker S. (1959 [D], 1965 [D] and 1966), Cooke, McCallum and Eagleson (1966 [D]), Eagleson (1964a, 1964b and 1965), Fielding and Ramson (1971), Goodman (1988), Greenway (1958), Gunn (1965a [D], 1965b [D], 1971 [D], 1972a, 1972b, 1985, 1989 and Levy 1980), Ramson (1963a, 1963b, 1964a, 1964b, 1965a, 1965b), Sharwood (1982 [D], and Gerson 1963), Turner (1966).

systems[14] of these two people to be widely different throwing light on the heterogeneousness of AE in the nineteenth century.

In a last section the use of modal verbs in the corpus will be compared with their use in present-day Australian English. This part of the study aims at the establishment of a potential kinship between the language of the letters and today's usage.

The next chapter deals with questions of orality and literacy in the letters. This is intended to explain the syntactical oddities that are so prominent in some parts of the corpus in a unified and comprehensive way. The notions of *shared knowledge*, *comprehensibility* and *ambiguity* will be discussed. It will be hypothesized that many letter writers were either unaware of the traditional patterns reserved for written language or that they were unwilling to follow these. This claim will be furthered and strengthened by numerous examples from the corpus.

Finally, the findings of this study will be summarized and the conclusions drawn from these will be presented. Possible follow-up studies will be suggested.

Three leading questions will be addressed repeatedly in this study:
(1) The investigation of the linguistic situation of nineteenth century Australia with special attention devoted to the question of the purported homogeneity and the evidence for the heterogeneity of the use of the English language.
(2) Possible links between the language of the letters and current Australian usage.
(3) Aspects of spoken and written language and the interpretations of these categories by the individual writers.

The basic notion underlying the interpretation of all discussed phenomena is the hypothesis that the site of language is in the individual and not in society. For that reason, all the presented features are, first of all, considered to be expressions of unique individual systems, which are nevertheless comparable with each other. In this sense, it is not possible for a dialect, a variety or a sociolect to 'possess' certain features but only for individual speakers.

The terms *dialect, variety* and *sociolect* are then understood to mean a speech community defined by the fact that there are a number of individuals that share certain features. The extra-lingual categories of region, social class and social indentification that are traditionally used to define these terms do no categorically apply here. Thus the following defnitions can be proposed:

A sociolect is a speech community made up of speakers with individual systems that are similar in just the features considered to be typical for that sociolect. These speakers correspond to some greater or lesser extent to the members of a certain socially defined group but their socialization is not the defining criterion.

A dialect/variety is a speech community made up of speakers with individual systems that are similar in just the features considered to be typical for that dialect/variety. These speakers correspond to some greater or lesser extent to the inhabitants of a certain region/country but their place of residence is not the defining criterion.

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[14] The term individual system encompasses all linguistic fields like lexis, phonology, morphology syntax, etc. in which an individual person can differ from another person and which is peculiar to that person.

II From English in Australia to Australian English

1. The Colonial Period - Settlers and Convicts
1.1 Introduction
Görlach sketches the fields where a transplanted language is likely to change and provides reasons for these changes:

"1. a characteristic make-up of the social and linguistic profiles of the emigrants, which can differ substantially from that of those staying back home;
2. the necessity of naming objects, institutions and events that materially differ from those in the old home, and for which no words and phrases are readily available;
3. changed linguistic norms that will affect the acceptability, prestige and connotations of lexical items and possibly syntactic constructions and are likely to lead to different options, for instance in the productivity of individual word-formation patterns;
4. different language contact situations, either involving unknown languages or old languages in new contact situations [...].
5. different mixes of the population and their regional and social dialects which lead to typical *ausgleichssprachen* in which the extreme dialect forms (which have little communicational value) tend to be avoided; and
6. complementary to the efforts to create a new vocabulary, terms which refer to objects and institutions left behind will come to be disused - or found only in older written texts, or those written in imitation of them, as in literature."[15]

All of these points apply to the situation the first convicts and settlers encountered in Australia and will therefore be discussed under various headings. Görlach's point 1 will be investigated under 1.3, his points 2 and 6 under 1.5. Points 3, 4 and 5 will be looked at in sub-chapter 4. This procedure should lead to the presentation of a comprehensive picture of early Australian English.

1.2 The Origins
The incident most often cited as marking the beginnings of contemporary Australia is the landing of the First Fleet at Port Jackson on 26 January 1788.[16] This event and the consequent foundation of a penal settlement had its origin many years earlier in Britain and, surprisingly enough, in the American Declaration of Independence in 1776.

The England of the eighteenth century saw a great rise in poverty and crime that was caused by the massive changes the Industrial Revolution brought about.

"Mass unemployment in England at the time [i.e. the eighteenth century] - one person in seven was jobless[17] - led to a great deal of crime and harsh penalties were introduced by the country's legislators to discourage the dispossessed from making a fuss about starving to death."[18]

Hence, an idea arose in England to the extent that "by expelling all the wicked, England would become the model of virtue to all nations".[19] Consequently, a model of transportation was devised that aimed at the resettling of convicts in the British colonies. But this idea did not appeal to the American colonies. There were legislative acts to ban this

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[15] Görlach (1991: 145f).

[16] The word "contemporary" was carefully chosen to make clear that this chapter deals only with the European settlement from 1788 onwards. This is not intended to imply that the Aboriginal settlement, which had taken place some 40,000 years earlier, does not form an important part of Australian history.

[17] That is an astonishing 14.3%!

[18] S. Baker (1966: 4).

[19] Quoted in Turner (1994: 313) from a nineteenth century source.

forced immigration.[20] This seems like a noble act but in fact America did not need the cheap labour the convicts provided since they already had another source for this: the slave trade.

Finally, with the War of Independence transportation to the United States came to an absolute halt and another outlet for the high numbers of convicted criminals was sought for. At first it was attempted to use the hulks of out-of-service ships as prisons but "the hulk-occupants began dying in vast numbers and allowed the floating prisons to become potential sources of epidemics."[21] As a result, a committee of the House of Commons recommended in 1779 that a penal settlement should be established in a distant part of the globe. Nine years later the ships of the First Fleet arrived in New South Wales.[22]

1.3 THE EARLY COLONY

The Australian settlement was a huge experiment unique both to the history of England and to the history of English. Hence, special care shall be devoted to the description of the initial set-up of the colony and its inhabitants in order to establish how these people used language and what languages they used.[23] Nevertheless, we have to bear in mind Turner's observation that functions as both a caveat and an encouragement:

> "We are [...] handicapped by the absence of exact information about the regional and social origins of the first settlers. [...] It is said that for the student of American English the most important period of immigration to America is the first. The speech of all later settlers adapted itself to this original pronunciation."[24]

Unlike the situation in America where the convicts never formed a large or coherent group[25] in Australia the convicts and their language played a major part in the make-up of early Australian society. The First Fleet comprised a total number of 1,487 sailors and prisoners only 1,030 of which were intended to remain in New South Wales. Out of these 1,030 persons the number of convicts was 753, or 77.6 per cent!

Since most of the relevant court records are lost we do not know the exact total number of convicts transported to Australia. Likewise, we have only little information about their social and linguistic backgrounds.

Fielding and Ramson (1973) give a figure of 150,000 convicts transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land[26] and another 18,000 transported to Western Australia.[27] Out of the total number of 168,000 only 25,000, or 14.9 per cent, were women. About 40 per cent of the male convicts came from heavily urbanized areas like the London area, the Dublin area, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Warwickshire and Surrey. Two thirds of the convicts were tried in England and about one third in Ireland. Scotland does not appear prominently in the

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[20] Cf. Gunn (1992: 207).

[21] S. Baker (1966:4).

[22] The terms First Fleet and First Fleeter are established historical names for the first ships that brought convicts to Sydney Cove, New South Wales, and for their convict occupants, respectively.

[23] English was not the only European language spoken in the early colony. A substantial number of the Irish convicts and immigrants still spoke Irish (i.e. Irish Gaelic) among each other. This is not surprising if one takes into consideration that English was a minority language in Ireland well into the nineteenth century. Among the pidgin and creole languages that developed in Australia there are even some based on Irish rather than English, although these are threatened by extinction (cf. Troy 1992).

[24] Turner (1960: 33).

[25] The total number of convicts transported to America did not, according to S. Baker (1966:4), exceed 50,000 which is a trifle compared with the total population.

[26] This is today's Tasmania. It changed its name in 1850.

[27] Fielding and Ramson (1973: 200). Transportation to New South Wales stopped in 1840, to Van Diemen's Land in 1852 and to Western Australia in 1868. The state of South Australia never received any convicts and the remaining two states of Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory, were formally established only later.

records.[28] The fact that only one third of the convicts were tried and sentenced in England does not necessarily mean that only one third of the convicts were of Irish origin since many Irish who had emigrated to England and Scotland committed crimes there for which they were sent to Australia.

For the proportion formed by the convicts and emancipists[29] in Australian society only tentative figures have been given. Fielding and Ramson (1973) claim that in New South Wales the proportion of convicts in the 1820s was about 50 per cent and in the 1840s, despite large numbers of 'illegal'[30] immigrants, still some 20 per cent.[31] Gunn (1992), however, states that up to 1830 the convicts outnumbered the free settlers by four or five to one which seems to be an exaggeration. But he rightly mentions that "One must keep in mind that at this time about 40 percent of the free citizens in the colony were ex-convicts and that most of the remainder had convict connections."[32] Probably the most reliable figures are given by Troy (1992). For the period from 1788 to 1800 she states the proportion of the convicts to be 98 per cent of the total population.[33] The Census of 1821 then revealed a number of 45 per cent and in 1841 this number was down to 21 per cent.[34] In conclusion, it can be said that, whatever the actual numbers were, the convicts were in a clear majority in the first years and even decades of the Australian settlement and so their language, supposing it was at least to some extent uniform, should have had great bearing on the formation of Australian English.

According to Gunn (1992) the sociology of the convicts was as follows: 85 per cent of the transportees were male and their average age was twenty six. Most of these were unmarried and had spent a considerable time of their life in London which was also the place where most of the convicts were tried and sentenced. The overall majority did not belong to any religious denomination but those that did were mostly Protestants.[35] Legal protocols showed them to have worked as labourers or farm workers before they started their criminal career. The most frequent sentence passed was seven years. Theft and burglary were the crimes most often cited in the records.[36]

1.4 CONVICTS VS. SETTLERS

In the thriving colony many established social barriers broke down. Everybody who was willing and able to work was respected and a high status was assigned to the successful and not necessarily to those of noble birth. The notion of everybody being equal, so prominent in American history, was also a much discussed fact in nineteenth century Australia. The common migrant experiences and the solidarity among hard-working people were the obvious cause for that. Evidence of this can be found in the corpus in a letter John Maxwell wrote home in the year 1884:

> "I saw M. Hawthorn today. He was telling me he had got a situation. [...]. He [Mr. Hawthorn, his social superior] is very sociable here and stops and shakes hands with either Hugh or I when he meets us but Australia and the crossing of the line makes a great change on people's sociability."[37]

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[28] Fielding and Ramson (1973: 200).

[29] The convicts who had served their entire sentence and remained in Australia were called Emancipists.

[30] The people who were not transported to Australia as part of their sentence and thus had no 'legal' reason to be there were often jokingly referred to as 'illegal' immigrants. The convicts preferred to call themselves 'legal' immigrants or 'Government men'.

[31] Cf. Fielding and Ramson (1973: 200).

[32] Gunn (1992: 209).

[33] This number can only be understood when it is taken into consideration that the government officials and the soldiers are not counted as belonging to the total population.

[34] Cf. Troy (1992: 462).

[35] That of course changed when Irish convicts, the overwhelming majority of which were Roman Catholics, were transported in great numbers.

[36] Cf. Gunn (1992: 209).

[37] The designation in the corpus is *Iri 136*. In the following this will be shortened to CD: *Iri 136*.

The very elucidating comments by O'Farrell, which touch on salient points, provide an explanation for this process of social amalgamation:

"Another way of exploring the migrant mind is through the reaction to an experience common to all immigrants, the voyage out to Australia. The accounts included here of shipboard life, 1838-1884, suggest that the mixing and physical proximity of people on board to some extent dissolved their old social relationships and disposed them to accept more readily the egalitarian and tolerant Australian environment: the ship was, in some important ways, the colony in microcosm. It prefigures the erosion of class and religious barriers, and the length of the voyage disrupted traditional life patterns and hastened the collapse of old practices, particularly in relation to religion and social authority. In contrast with the shorter trip to America, the interminable voyage to Australia wrought subtle sea-changes in the migrant disposition."[38]

Still there were many social conflicts from early on. One of the most important was caused by the rise of emancipated convicts up the social ladder. Many convicts decided to stay in Australia after their sentences had expired. Australia, for them, was a country of unlimited opportunities where hard-working men and women could own land and would never again be hungry. Many convicts attempted to persuade their wives to join them in New South Wales and saw their only future there. Following are excerpts from the corpus written by convicts dealing with this topic. In 1825 Dennis Mahoney, a convict from County Cork, Ireland, wrote home:

"Therefore my dear wife I expect you will be not in any ways daunted in coming to this country for I assure you if you were in this colony we were never happier at home than you would be here as for the passage you need think nothing of it from the first week and I expect as I can't go to you that nothing will keep you from me."[39]

This is a universal theme in the convict letters. Eleven years later Thomas Made, also from County Cork, implored his wife:

"Don't you fail in keeping yourself in readiness as if you had been here with me I should never see a poor day either yourself or myself and I hope that you will use the utmost of your power in trying to have my sentence mitigated as I expect you won't fail in this request before you come out to this country. This is a very fine country not a finer in the world and a very wholesome climate [...]"[40]

The last excerpt is from Thomas Fallon who in 1835 praised the opportunities Australia held in store for everybody:

"Der mary, I never work one day but fourteen days for myselfe since I been in this cuntry because it is not allowed by Government but if i wonst got my liberty I cud [...] ten shillings per day Der mary let me know in youre next letter is my fathere live or know or did my sister go to meracar or know Der mary this is fine cuntry is there is in the wourld for ateing and drinking Der mary if you wore in this cuntry you cud be worth pound per week but by owne labour [...]."[41]

From this it can be observed that the emancipated convicts vigorously tried to make their way in Australia. This was of course scorned by those who had come there as free settlers. Debates on the status of the emancipists were heated. In a letter dated 1823 the Australian born George Reibey, whose mother in fact was an emancipist but who did not know about that, explains to his cousin David Hope in Glasgow:

"[...] the real cause is a jealousy of the increasing importance which the superior wealth of this class of the community is daily giving to them no hesitation is made in saying that a fellow who has been a convict should not be allowed to hold property and they would fain make it appear that in virtue of their condescension in coming among such vile refuse - the distance, too, considered - all

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[38] O'Farrell (1989 [C]: 2).
[39] CD: *Iri 10*.
[40] CD: *Iri 11*.
[41] CD: *Iri 13*.

the Loaves and Fishes should be wrested from the creatures and given as a compensation for the honour done the place by their presence / this feeling was carried so far as to be broached in one of our Courts of Justice the Judge of which is a person I have mentioned, /He took great pains to search for and examine musty old statutes and succeeded in finding one which provided that no subject once convicted of a Felony shall at any after time be allowed to possess Property in his own right/ this has never been acted upon here, but was delivered with great emphasis to a crowed court as the Law of the Land. The great proportion of the people are here for Offences do not come within this statute - therefore the sensation excited by such a declaration was not very great, however upon being more maturely considered it was received as a dangerous point gained that might lead to something more comprehensive - the whole body of what are termed the Emancipists took the alarm, called a general Meeting and came to the resolution of appealing to the British Parliament."[42]

Transportation came to a halt in New South Wales in 1840. Soon afterwards free settlers outnumbered convicts and emancipists and most of the latter tried hard and often succeeded in concealing their origins.[43] Consequently, the conflicts of the 1820s and 1830s quietly passed away as time went on.

1.5 A New Vocabulary
1.5.1 General Remarks

Australia is a continent with a unique fauna and flora. Everything the first convicts and settlers saw and encountered demanded a new name making an expansion in the vocabulary absolutely necessary. For the same reason, many words they brought with them, for instance *meadow, copse, thicket, brook and village,* fell into disuse.[44]

It was not only the environment that had changed but also the way of living. The convict system was one of the principal 'word generators' in the first decade, although most of these were of short existence. But some of these words lived on and were applied to different spheres of life, e.g. *muster* which originally was used in the sense of the daily inspection of the convicts. Later it was applied to any counting of cattle and sheep.

Australia's wide and open spaces and its fruitful soil made it perfectly suitable for farming. Unfortunately, the great majority of convicts and settlers were townspeople and, as Governor Hunter observed, "[were] unfitted for farming either by inclination or ability."[45] Apart from that, tillage and cattle raising in Australia were widely different from what they meant in Europe. This and the above stated fact that the great number of immigrants didn't even know the British farming terminology because most of them were from urban areas necessitated another rush of 'new' words.

From what was said above we can deduce that the major areas where life in Australia forced an expansion of the vocabulary the immigrants brought with them were the following:

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[42] CD: *Reib 8.*

[43] One can imagine how uncomfortable emancipists must have felt when their convict past was discovered or likewise free settlers when they came under the suspicion of having been 'government men'. Evidence of this can be found in a letter from 1847, which is unsigned and undirected:
> "A strong belief has arisen both in Australia and England that the person whose History is related by Mr. Cobbold under that designation [i.e. Margaret Catchpole] [...] is now a rich widow named Reiby at Sydney. [...]. Mrs. Reiby [who was in fact an emancipated convict but who had long succeeded in concealing that fact] is exceedingly grieved and annoyed at this opinion, & has commissioned the Bishop of Tasmania to use his best endeavours to contradict it, officially, and upon clear documents, and he wishes to be placed in communication with Mr. Cobbold." (CD: *Catch 5*)

[44] For a more detailed list cf. Baker (1966: 20ff).

[45] Quoted from Ramson (1963b: 51).

fauna and flora, landscape, the convict system and farming. Indeed, if we look at the words that are considered to be uniquely Australian they mostly fall into these categories.

This need for new expressions had to be satiated. For this two main 'techniques' were used. One was the semantic generalizations or extensions of the meanings of already existing words. An example of this has already been given with the word *muster,* others include *creek, paddock,* etc. Another was the formation of descriptive compounds like *native-bear* for the koala.

In addition, the early Australians took over aboriginal words for animals, plants and places. The *kangaroo* is only the most prominent of these.[46] But their total number probably does not exceed 220 words.[47]

British regional dialects also provided a number of words which came into general use in Australia. Prominent examples of this are *fossick* 'to dig' and *mullock* 'the refuse of earth or rock left over in mining', which were used by Cornish miners in South Australia and then were included into the vocabulary of Australian English.[48]

Thus, the immigrants to Australia needed new terms from the very beginning and created these from various sources, giving Australian English some of its distinct flavour.

1.5.2 THE FLASH LANGUAGE

Although many convicts were shipped to America in the eighteenth century nobody, to the best of my knowledge, has ever attempted to trace the linguistic influence this group had on the formation of American English. But this neglect is justified if the respective figures for America and Australia are compared.

The language of the Australian convicts seems to have been most influential in the field of vocabulary. For this reason most studies dealing with this topic are primarily concerned with the slang or flash vocabulary purportedly used by the convicts.[49] Since genuine convict language never made it into writing linguists have to rely on word lists or dictionaries compiled by contemporaries.[50] Gunn (1992) downgrades the importance of the lexical influence of the convicts by stating that only a few of the terms listed in these would have been of particular significance in the Australian context, because "Vaux's early

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[46] Oddly enough this word, which Captain Cook noted down when he landed in Australia in 1770, was mistaken by the Aborigines at Port Jackson in 1788 for an English word. The explanation is simple. The Aborigines Cook had met eighteen years earlier were speaking a different language and therefore the meticulously compiled word-list was useless to Sir Phillips, the first Governor of the penal colony. These misunderstandings between the white settlers and the Aborigines must have been frequent since there were literally hundreds of different Aboriginal languages. Most of these are nowadays threatened by extinction, though. The following quote, which is taken from Ramson (1966: 110), by J.D. Lang in 1847 provides us with a deeper insight into that phenomenon:

> "A considerable number of words of the Sydney Aboriginal dialect known to the convicts or other white persons, in the earlier period of the penal settlement in Moreton Bay, were naturally enough made use of in attempting to hold communications with the black natives. These words, which were quite as unintelligible to the natives as the corresponding words in the vernacular of the white man would have been, were learned by the natives, and are now commonly used by them in conversing with Europeans as English words. Thus, *corrobory*, the Sydney word for a general assembly of natives is now commonly used in that sense at Moreton Bay; but the original word there is *yanerville*."

[47] Cf. Ramson (1964a: 50).

[48] Cf. Ramson (1981b: 39).

[49] This special vocabulary has been termed *slang, flash, kiddy* and *cant* by various writers.

[50] The case of Vaux's memoirs is worthy of mention here since it is typical of convict writing in the nineteenth century. The memoirs are written in impeccable English, displaying no deviation whatsoever from the standard. Those convicts who published their memoirs, and there were a great many who did, either were themselves men of letters or found a benevolent editor who wrote the books from the notes the convicts had made. There is a whole genre of convict literature with moralizing overtones. An outline of this can be found in A. Baker (1984).

nineteenth-century list of about 750 entries [...] was based as much on his London life as on his experiences as a transportee." [51] Still, out of the 64 flash terms listed by Langker (1980) a considerable 40 are qualified as being current usage in AE. Examples of this are: *cove* 'fellow' or 'chap', *fence* 'a receiver of stolen goods', *jemmy* 'a crow-bar' and *lush* 'liquor' or 'drink'.

Langker, whose books *Flash in New South Wales 1788-1850* (1980) and *The Vocabulary of Convictism in New South Wales 1788-1850* (1981) are the standard reference sources for convict vocabulary, explains the origin of the flash language by going back hundreds of years. He states that *cant* only differs from Standard English in the vocabulary used. This vocabulary was derived from English dialects, Celtic languages, Latin, Yiddish and Romany.[52] The flash language was used among the convicts "in order that those *on the square* should not comprehend what was said by those *on the cross*."[53]

The first detailed account of the use of slang words in Australia was given by Captain Watkin Tench, an officer in the First Fleet, in 1793:

> "A leading distinction, which marked the convicts on their outset in the colony, was a use of what is called the *flash* or *kiddy* language. In some of our early courts of justice, an interpreter was frequently necessary to translate the deposition of the witness, and the defence of the prisoner. This language has many dialects. The sly dexterity of the pickpocket; the brutal ferocity of the footpad; the more elevated career of the highwayman; and the deadly purpose of the midnight ruffian, is each strictly appropriate in the terms which distinguish and characterize it."[54]

Langker concludes from that statement that *cant*, i.e. its a special vocabulary, was used among men and women of every profession alike.[55] This contention may be relying too much on the account of a single witness who, being an officer and a government official, probably did not have full insight into the daily lives and the social hierarchies and diversifications of the convicts. Still a strong lexical input into early AE can be ascertained.

But the dominant use of the terminology of the flash language among a considerable number of speakers, if this was ever reality, was short lived. As more and more free people came to the settlement in New South Wales the rules of social behaviour changed considerably. The new 'illegal' immigrants of course never wanted to be tainted by the use of thieves' cant. Likewise, all the emancipated convicts and the children and relations of convicts tried hard to extinguish everything in their language that could possibly identify them as felons, which, of course, included the avoidance of lexical items that were considered to be cant.

Again, Langker provides us with the most reasonable explanation which is that the high wages paid in the colony - labour was very scarce - were an enticing incentive to integrate into the social and linguistic sphere of the farmers. There was also "a very natural wish neither to follow the lifestyle of their parents nor to be treated as they had been."[56]

Langker then quotes contemporary sources that confirm his contentions about the social break between the convicts and their progeny and the following disuse of slang vocabulary. Commissioner Bigge, who had been sent to Australia to report on the state of agriculture and trade, remarks in 1823 about the currency[57] youths:

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[51] Cf. Gunn (1992: 212).

[52] Cf. Langker (1980 [D]: 1).

[53] Langker (1980 [D]: 3).

[54] Quoted from Langker (1980 [D]: 3).

[55] Langker (1980 [D]: 4).

[56] Langker (1981 [D]: 7).

[57] Those who were born in Australia were called currency lads in contrast with the youths born in Britain who were called sterling. This refers to the distinction between the many colonial currencies and the British gold pieces called sterling. Cf. S. Baker (1966: 26).

> "[...] and I only repeat the testimony of persons who have had many opportunities of observing them, that they inherit neither the vices nor feelings of their parents."[58]

Peter Cunningham, surgeon in the Royal Navy, observes in the 1820s:

> "The open manly simplicity of character displayed by this part of our population [which was] little tainted with the vices so prominent among their parents! Drunkenness is almost unknown with them, and honesty proverbial."

John Dunmore Lang concludes in the early 1830s:

> "I am happy indeed, to be able to state, as a result of ten years' extensive observation, that drunkenness is by no means a vice to which the colonial youth of either sex are at all addicted. Reared in the very midst of scenes of drunkenness of the most revolting description and of daily occurrence, they are almost uniformly temperate [...]."[59]

Thus, the use of the vocabulary of the kiddy language was not more than a passing phenomenon in the development of an Australian variety. Its influence did not survive the change from a penal colony at Port Jackson to a free settlement. Therefore, the 1827 comments by Wakefield, who had never been to Australia personally, are more like a nostalgic remembrance than a truthful description of the state of English in contemporaneous Australia:

> "The base language of English thieves is becoming the established language of the colony. Terms of slang and flash are used, as a matter of course, everywhere, from the gaols to the Viceroy's palace, not excepting the Bar and the Bench. No doubt they will be reckoned quite parliamentary, as soon as we obtain a parliament. [...] Dear old Franklin tried in vain to establish the best English in America. Had he lived till now, experience would have taught him that, whilst in old countries modes and manners flow downwards from the higher classes, they must, in new countries, ascend from the lowest class. [...] Hence, bearing in mind that our lowest class brought with it a peculiar language, and is constantly supplied with fresh corruption, you will understand why pure English is not, and is not likely to become the language of the colony."[60]

1.6 THE IRISH AND AUSTRALIA

Since the number of letters written by Irish immigrants form such a large portion of the corpus on which this study is based, it was considered justified to discuss this group in more detail than others. The facts presented were those considered to be the most relevant for the description of the social and sociolinguistic situation of the Irish and are not intended to provide a comprehensive picture of either Ireland in the 1800s or of the Irish in Australia.

1.6.1 THE SITUATION IN IRELAND

Nineteenth century Ireland was overflowing with strife and hardship. Poverty was a universal curse with approximately two million or more (out of a population of seven million in 1821, and over eight and a half million in 1845) people below the poverty line. Especially the Great Hunger in the 1840 wreaked havoc on the Irish countryside and forced about 2.1 million Irish to emigrate to other parts of the world between 1845 and 1855. Probably another million died of starvation and plagues in the same period.

Various acts in the late seventeenth and the early nineteenth centuries prohibited Catholics from having school masters. This naturally meant that the Irish countryside had an educational deficit, despite the widespread existence of hedge-schools.[61] The Catholic

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[58] Quoted from Langker (1981 [D]: 6).
[59] Both are quoted from Langker (1981 [D]: 7).
[60] Wakefield (1929 [O]: 51).
[61] Hedge-schools were unofficial schools in the Irish countryside that were continually suppressed and forbidden. Nevertheless, many parents sent their children there so that these could acquire basic skills and were willing to

emancipation in the late 1820s changed that considerably. Most important was the introduction of the 'Irish national system of education' in the early 1830s providing free schooling for everybody. Thus, it is not surprising to notice that the literacy rates grew steadily. Nevertheless, only a minority, namely 37 per cent of males and 18 per cent of females, could read **and** write in 1841.[62] Also, great regional differentiation has to be taken into account to the extent that literacy rates were twice as high in the western counties of Wicklow and Wexford than in the eastern and northern counties of Mayo and Kerry.[63]

The rate of illiteracy, i.e. counting everybody who could neither read nor write, declined from 53 per cent in 1841 to 47 per cent in 1851, 39 per cent in 1961 and 33 per cent in 1871.[64] This facilitated the massive emigration of the Irish from countryside to town in Ireland or to Britain or its colonies.

Since the primary medium of education, even in the hedge-schools, was English and since English was considered to be a prerequisite for getting on in life the use of Gaelic, both in its spoken and its written form, steadily declined in the course of the nineteenth century. Only in the extreme eastern and northern parts of Ireland, Gaelic continued to be used as the primary medium of communication. In 1851 the precentage of the population who were able to speak Irish was a mere 23.3. In 1861 this had fallen to 19.1 per cent and ten years later to 15.1 per cent.[65] Nevertheless, Irish substratal influence on the English spoken in Ireland was still considerable and in the western counties, where most of the Irish overseas immigrants came from, Gaelic is still a living language.

The United States and Great Britain were the countries where most of the Irish went, although many of them also turned to the lesser well known colonies of Australia and New Zealand. This is despite the fact that a passage to Australia cost five times as much as a passage to the North America.[66]

The question who emigrated from Ireland Fitzpatrick answers in the following way:
"It seems likely that most Irish emigrants from the famine onwards were surplus offspring of farmers and rural labourers, drawn from a broad band of social strata but largely excluding both strong farmers and destitute squatters or beggars. [...] Emigrants were less likely to have basic writing skills than their contemporaries at home [...]. Yet this over-representation of illiterates among emigrants applied to men more than women, a contrast that was to become more marked later in the century as persistent overseas demand for literate female servants encouraged Irish girls to prepare for departure by attending to their primary education."[67]

1.6.2 THE IRISH IN AUSTRALIA

The first convicts sent directly from Ireland, 133 males and 22 females, arrived from Cork in 1791 aboard the *Queen*. From the 1820s onwards there was a steady influx of Irish convicts of about 1,000 per year. Thus, they formed about one quarter of all convicts and accounted for 90 per cent of all Irish in the colony.

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pay for that education. Some of these schools taught also higher subjects like modern and ancient languages, but these were in a clear minority.

[62] If, however, the people that can read but were unable to write are included in this figure, then the literacy rate can be given as 53 per cent for the year 1841. The great regional difference in these figures can be inferred from the fact that in Connacht, i.e. in the western counties of Ireland, the literacy rate rose to over 50 per cent only in the 1870s (cf. Comerford (1989[O]): 391).

[63] Cf. Ó'Gráda (1989[O]): 117.

[64] Cf. Akenson (1989[O]): 536.

[65] Cf. Akenson (1989[O]): 537.

[66] Cf. O'Farrell (1989[O]): 670.

[67] Fitzpatrick (1989[O]): 577.

The Irish spoke mainly Gaelic among themselves, which caused considerable resentment especially among many officials fearing an uprising.[68] Although the majority were rural Catholics from the west and north of Ireland there were also great social and educational differences between them.

A system of paternalism evolved where many Irish were included in a social structure to some extent apart from other social structures of society. This was furthered by the fact that many immigrants came in family groups, or from the same town or county. They frequently settled together and a great proportion of single immigrants were in fact members of families that had already settled in the antipodes, were employed by them and frequently married within the group. Many of these had large families which led to great concentrations of closely knit Irish groups as initial farms were divided or adjacent land was acquired.[69]

The 1840s saw a great acceleration of Irish free migration culminating in the virtual flood of immigrants in the 1850s and 1860s. Despite this fact the proportion of the Irish element in the Australian population declined in these years. This, however, was not the popular perception and led to the "hostility, sometimes verging on hysteria that greeted Irish migrants."[70] An attempted assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh by an Irishman in 1868 and consequent political agitation roused anti-Irish sentiments in Australia. "'No Irish need apply' became a familiar addendum to advertisements for job vacancies."[71] This situation eased in the course of time and the Irish became a well accepted part of Australian society in later years.

2. FROM THE GOLDRUSHES TO THE GREAT WAR
2.1 THE NEW IMMIGRANTS

Up to 1850 the European settlement of Australia was a modest enterprise with the number of immigrants not exceeding a few hundred thousand people. This changed dramatically when the first gold was found in mines in Victoria and in South Australia which set loose a frenzied gold rush similar to that in California in the previous decade. This meant a sudden influx of thousands of immigrants, a great number of which did not hail from the British Isles. Most of these adventurers came to Australia from America, and it is in this period that the first influence of American English can be evidenced in Australia.

The goldrush disrupted the settled farming patterns and induced a new wave of high individual mobility which, as was stated above, was very conducive to the formation of a unified variety of Australian English. Moreover, new walks of life were introduced in Australia and many prospecting and mining terms found their way into Australia at that time. All of this helped in the formation of a distinct Australian variety of English. In this context Ramson observes:

> "If the Colonial Period is marked, then, by growth within an accepted British-oriented framework,
> the Goldrush Period, by contrast, is one of sudden acceleration and freedom in growth, vigorous

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[68] Cf. O'Farrell (1989[O]): 663.

Taylor (no date: 16f) quotes Clare Dunne, an Irish Australian freelance writer, on the question to what extent Irish was still spoken by Irish immigrants in Australia:

> "Many of the early Irish who came to Australia spoke Irish. They weren't encouraged to do so by
> the authorities. By 1817 speaking Irish in this country carried a punishment of fifty lashes. Yet in
> 1820 Father Philip Connolly, writing to a friend in Ireland on the kind of priest needed in
> Australia, said 'a missioner should speak the Irish language without which he would be at a loss to
> hear confessions.'"

[69] Cf. O'Farrell (1989[O]): 672f.

[70] O'Farrell (1989[O]): 671.

[71] O'Farrell (1989[O]): 680.

but undisciplined, essentially colloquial, and therefore an expansion of the vulgar element which the earlier colonial administration had so deplored."[72]

Through extensive contact with new immigrants Australia for the first time became aware that its use of language differed from the standard EngE use. It was also at that time that the portrayal of AE in literature became more realistic.

Ramson (1981a) convincingly shows what a difference the goldrushes made in the establishment of the use of Australian English in literary language. He compares Alexander Harris's *The Emigrant Family* (1849), which represents the Colonial Period, with C.R. Read's *What I Heard, Saw, and Did at the Australian Goldfields,* which appeared in 1854. The English Harris used he classifies as a balance between refined and colloquial English, Read's English, on the other hand, he evaluates as being 'racy'. He says:

"[Read's] style [is] capturing something of the linguistic exuberance of a social situation which is similar to that of soldiers in war, in that both are characterised by impermanence, herding together of men, camaraderie, relative freedom from normal social restraints, and use of a language primarily spoken rather than written and so free from the restraints of the latter."[73]

Here the placing of a caveat is necessary. All of this does not mean that Australian English changed dramatically. Undoubtedly, its use gained in social acceptance. Nevertheless, the language used in official documents or in highly literate writings does not exhibit the slightest trace of a change. The influence of the linguistic model of England was still all powerful and could not yet be challenged in these areas. Baker quotes a revealing statement by McGregor in 1883: "Australasia is the depository in the east of the language of Shakespeare and Milton."[74] Ramson critically comments on the conventional diction used in much of Australian poetry before 1890. He declares it to be imitative, bookish and old-fashioned, even in descriptions of typically Australian life.[75] Consequently, a look at the literature of late nineteenth century Australia should reveal more about obsolete EngE use than about linguistic reality in Australia.

2.2 THE NATIONALIST PERIOD

After 1890 the picture began to change and Australian public opinion and writing took on more and more nationalistic overtones. *The Bulletin* became the paragon of Australian nationalism drawing on an ever widening source of talented Australian writers. Baker comments on its role:

"It was a mouthpiece for the lusty desire of Australians at the close of the last century to use words no matter for what purpose. Even more than this, it became a home-base for all those multitudinous snippets and trifles that form the true basis of Australiana. [...] the material on bush lore, slang and idiom collected by thousands of writers in 'Bulletin' pages is irreplaceable."[76]

The most famous writers of Australian literature at that time started their careers writing for that journal. Among these are Henry Lawson, Steele Rudd, Joseph Furphy and Banjo Paterson, the author of the famous ballad *Waltzing Matilda*. All of these were immensely popular in Australia and certainly brought Australians a little closer to accepting that the language they were speaking was not simply 'bad English' but a variety in its own right. Still, genuine colloquial Australian was not yet considered literary. Johnston states in his article on the language of Australian literature:

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[72] Ramson (1981a: 32).
[73] Ramson (1981a: 32).
[74] S. Baker (1966: 413).
[75] Cf. Ramson (1966: 42f).
[76] S. Baker (1966: 410).

> "[Even] in the prose of Joseph Furphy an uneasy co-habitation of the colloquial and literary is clearly to be seen [...]. Lawson was like Furphy, extremely self-conscious in his use of the vernacular. [...] Neither Lawson nor Furphy, then, did for Australian prose what Twain did for American prose."[77]

It is not surprising that it was in this period that Morris and Lake edited and published the first comprehensive dictionaries of English as it was spoken in Australia.

Although state parliaments had been long in existence in nineteenth century Australia, the British Parliament still held considerable sway over Australian politics. This appeared to be an unbearable situation in *fin de siècle* Australia. Criticism of British legislation was common in the colony. One example from the corpus shall suffice here. John Maxwell, an Irish immigrant to Victoria, writes home in 1886:

> "Our present government is formed of a coalition of conservatives and liberals who act and work very well together, attending to the making and amending of laws with far greater dispatch than your English parliament. Your parliament is made too much a debating society. Its members are too fond of their own aggrandizement to look after the interests of the people who the govern. Our parliament is made up of members who are paid £300 a year for making our laws and if a member returned by an constituency does not endeavour to forward the interest of their constituents, he is not re-elected and his place is taken by a candidate who will. Our parliamentary term lasts only three years not seven like yours."[78]

In 1901 the British Parliament finally approved of the formation of a Commonwealth of Australian States with a national parliament of its own, factually ending British rule in Australia. But this was only a first step towards true independence since the emotional, economical and political ties between Australia and the mother country were still considered inseparable.

The Great War, as the war of 1914-1918 is commonly called, and especially the experiences of the ANZAC[79] soldiers in Gallipoli contributed a lot to the rise of a feeling of national identity in Australia as well as in New Zealand. ANZAC day, which is celebrated on April 25 and is probably the highest ranking holiday in Australia and New Zealand, is commemorated as the day of the landing of Australian and New Zealand troops on Gallipoli in 1915. There the soldiers came under fierce fire and put up a hard fight against the overwhelming Turkish forces. In the trenches a unique feeling of solidarity arose among the soldiers. Because their fight was so brave and the fact that they had to fight on their own for a considerable time a very understandable feeling of national pride in this achievement arose. There are many who see this military operation as the true start of Australian nationalism.

The confrontation with other forms of English spoken by soldiers from Britain, Canada and America reinforced the awareness of difference in the Australian servicemen and also fostered a sentiment of nationalistic feeling.

3. THE MODERN PERIOD

Up to the Second World War Australia remained rather isolated in a world context. The Japanese conquests in the Pacific and the consequent American intervention then changed this picture irreversibly.

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[77] Johnston (1970 [O]: 199f).
[78] CD: *Iri 151c*.
[79] This is an acronym for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

With a looming Japanese invasion in the making, American GIs rushed to Australia and brought with them their language, their music and ways of life and thinking that had been unknown to the ordinary Australian. From then on the status the British variety of English enjoyed in Australia was considerably downgraded and Australia opened up to multifarious influences from all over the world.

Part and parcel of this process were the increased facility of world-wide travel, the immediacy of communication by radio, television and film as well as the mass circulation of newspapers, journals and books. Other influences came from the internationalization of the sciences, internationally spreading occupational inventions, e.g. jogging, and powerful campaigns, e.g. for women's lib or gay lib.

Through all of this Australia came into contact with many varieties of English as they were spoken world-wide. The consequences were twofold. Firstly, the Australian use of English became more widely known abroad and, secondly, Australian English became more receptive to the influence of other varieties of English, especially American English.[80]

This openness of Australia posed a problem since there was no established standard. The British standard had lost its leading function and the American standard was also recognized as alien. A distinct Australian standard was needed for practical reasons and for reasons of national identity. There undoubtedly was something like an Australian variety of English but it had not yet been sufficiently codified.

Leitner (1984) investigated and exemplified this problem by looking at the language policies of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), which was modelled on the BBC. Set up in 1932 initially a substantial number of its announcers were of British origin or came directly from the BBC. Staff exchanges and the common use of programmes contributed to the good relations between the ABC and its 'godfather'.[81]

For the first ten years educated Southern English was the unchallenged standard at the ABC. When complaints about 'corrupt' language use filed up the *Pronunciation Advisory Committee* was established in 1944 which advocated a prescriptivist approach.

But in the course of time the ABC was forced to acknowledge that the persistent use of EngE pronunciation on Australian radio was tantamount to pedantry and did not reflect linguistic reality. Another committee with A. G. Mitchell at its head was set up that believed that "consistency or uniformity should be aimed at by all speakers" and that "decisions must be based on the English spoken in Australia."[82] In 1971 Mitchell was succeeded by his pupil Delbridge. There were changes in the policy to the extent that the committee no longer recommended a single, most acceptable pronunciation for every word but allowed for variation. As well, the basis of comparison was no longer "acceptable, educated Australian speech" but "acceptable styles of educated speech".[83] The last step was to replace Daniel

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[80] The internationalization of AE is highlighted in a short article published in *The Australian*, a major Australian newspaper, in late August 1995. The report states that the youths of Milton Keynes, a London satellite town, were found to talk with expressly Australian English pronunciations and with specifically Australian words. The explanation given was as surprising as it was simple. There are many popular Australian soap operas which are broadcast every weekday in Britain. Since these satellite towns are dialectal 'no-man's-land' the children would be very susceptible to extensive linguistic influence from television. Apart from that they could probably identify to a large extent with the youthful and sunburnt characters. The exact reference is unfortunately lost.

[81] Leitner (1984: 60).

[82] Quoted from Leitner (1984: 70).

[83] Quoted from Leitner (1984: 73). There are still many discussions of what, then, can be considered an 'acceptable' pronunciation. Cf. Peterson (1995).

Jones's *English Pronouncing Dictionary* by *The Macquarie Dictionary* as the primary source of reference.[84]

      The publication of *The Macquarie Dictionary* can be seen as a final step towards the recognition of Australian English as a variety of English in its own right, or, in more elevated wording, as Australia's declaration of linguistic independence. This codification of a lexis and pronunciation that is distinctly Australian meant the establishment of a new standard from which its speakers undoubtedly have gained in self-confidence.[85]

      Delbridge, the general editor of this dictionary, explains its guiding principles in the following comment:

> "The Macquarie Dictionary offers an account of Australian English. It is the first general reference dictionary ever to present a set of entries for a comprehensive word list in which all the pronunciations, all the spellings, and all the definitions of meaning are taken from the use of English in Australia, and in which Australian English becomes the basis of comparison with other national varieties of English. [...] Its objective is to give the Australian community carefully assembled information about its own use of English within the tradition that began here about 150 years ago."[86]

      This statement can be regarded as the final comment on the status of Australian English. What began as a transplanted language with a Southern English basis is today a distinct variety in its own right. This difference of AE is most obvious in the fields of lexis and pronunciation but it is also possible to point at some grammatical characteristics of current Australian English. This shall be done in the next sub-chapter.

4. DIALECTS IN CONTACT

This sub-chapter will present, compare and evaluate several theories on the possible origins of AE. First, Trudgill's (1986) theory of dialect mixing will be presented. This is followed by three theories that focus on the early stages of AE and a discussion of the question of sociolects in early AE. Then a new approach to the problem of dialect mixing will be proposed and the possible origins of Australian English will be presented.

4.1 TRUDGILL'S THEORY OF DIALECT MIXING

In this section a general theory of dialect mixing, as proposed by Trudgill (1986) in his book *Dialects in Contact* will be presented.

      He asks the intriguing question how exactly linguistic forms are "transmitted from one geographical area to another *at the level of the individual speaker*",[87] i.e. what happens when speakers of different dialects are confronted with each other. How do these people cope with this situation and in what way do they adapt their language? Moreover, are there any rules that would enable the linguist to predict the outcome of such a contact situation?

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[84] In this context it has to be mentioned that the pronunciations given in this dictionary are those of Cultivated Australian, which shows that even *The Macquarie Dictionary* has a bias against Broad Australian.

[85] That there are still some people that hold the view that English as it is spoken in Australia is somehow 'inferior' to British Standard usage can be seen in the following quote, taken from Horvath (1985: 22). It is an excerpt from an address delivered by a professor at a graduation ceremony. He tells the 1982 graduates of a university in New South Wales:

> "English is the common language of Australia but I know of no country in which it is so poorly spoken by native speakers. We tolerate a general level of inarticulacy and slovenliness in speech which does us no credit here or abroad."

[86] Delbridge (1981b: 12).

[87] Trudgill (1986 [O]: 39). The italics are taken over from the original text.

Trudgill's reasoning is that speakers in face-to-face interaction accommodate their dialects to each other by avoiding those features that are different in the two dialects and by each adopting features from the other speaker's dialect. If the contact between the two dialects is continuous and frequent these accommodations may in time become permanent, especially when this is favoured by attitudinal factors.[88] In time then, these permanent accommodation processes may change the original dialects of some speakers and a new dialect will be 'born'.

This theory Trudgill then tests on the example of Høyanger, an industrial town in western Norway that was 'created' in the early 1920s. Large numbers of people from all over Norway moved there greatly outnumbering the 'native' population. They all spoke different dialects and thus the situation in Høyanger can be considered to be a prototypical dialect mixing situation. Trudgill contends the individual steps of the mixing to have been the following: The first generation of newcomers still spoke their native dialects to a considerable extent. The second generation, i.e. those that were born in Høyanger or came there as little children, showed a mixed dialect which was still very much influenced by the dialect of the parents but also displays much individual variation. Only today's third generation speaks what

can be called a relatively unified and distinctive Høyanger dialect.[89]

Then he goes on to describe the probable chronological development of the dialect mixing in this town in greater detail. First in line was a massive immigration wave and a marginalization of the regional dialect. The consequence was a situation in which many different dialects of Norwegian existed side by side. Through a series of *accommodation* processes, complex because there were a great number of different dialects to accommodate to, the differences between the dialects were levelled. Trudgill considers it to be likely that in this phase the accommodation involved more the reduction of the numbers of features unique to certain dialects than the adoption of features from other dialects. The second generation of the new-town inhabitants spoke a dialect whose development was influenced from two sides. On the one hand, the respective dialects of their parents seemed to play a great role; on the other hand, the mixture of dialects around them also had an impact. The individual speakers showed great variation in their speech but all in all, the idiolects had become more similar to each other. In the third generation this inter- and intra-personal variation was very much reduced and the result was a relatively unified new regional dialect.[90]

This seems to be an ideal dialect contact situation where a number of dialects are in constant interaction, accommodate to each other and ultimately form a new and uniform dialect. This goes hand in hand with a reduction of the linguistic variability between the original dialects and a reduction in the number of differnt linguistic items used. Trudgill then explains the process of *koinéization* through which new dialects are formed, giving reasons why a certain linguistic item is favoured over another expressing the same or a similar meaning. Koinéization encompasses two different principles, namely those of *levelling* and *simplification*.

Levelling is the reduction of the number of *marked* variants, i.e. variants which are unique to a certain dialect. Trudgill remarks that the levelling process in Høyanger affected mainly features that were either very unusual or in a minority in Norwegian as a whole.[91] But markedness is not only attributed to linguistic items that are infrequently used but also to forms with high social and linguistic marking.[92]

[88] Cf. Trudgill (1986 [O]: 39).
[89] Cf. Trudgill (1986 [O]: 95).
[90] Cf. Trudgill (1986 [O]: 96).
[91] Cf. Trudgill (1986 [O]: 98).
[92] Cf. Trudgill (1986 [O]: 101).

Simplification, on the other hand, means that items that are simpler will be preferred over items that are more complex, even if the latter should be more frequently used. There are two main types of simplification. The first is an increase in the self-similarity of the morphological and phonological systems, including a loss of inflectional endings and an increase in invariable word forms. The second type refers to an increased use of "regular correspondence between content and expression".[93] This is conducive to a greater transparency in morphology and lexis. Trudgill here cites the example of German *Zahnarzt* ('tooth doctor'), which is more readily comprehended than the English word *dentist*.

Through the process of koinéization the number of variants that are used in the original dialects are reduced. The variants that survive this process do so because they are re-allocated to express a stylistic function they did not originally possess. This means that former regional variants can become social-class, stylistic variants, etc. in the new dialect.

Trudgill's findings can now be summarized as follows: In a dialect contact situation first generation speakers will show great variability in their language use. When confronted with each other the speakers of different dialects will *accommodate* their language and *interdialect* forms may appear. In the course of time the number of variants will be *reduced*, i.e. *focusing* will occur. The process through which some items are eliminated and others are favoured is called *koinéization*. It comprises *levelling*, i.e. the loss of linguistically or socially marked items, and *simplification*, i.e. the favouring of forms that are linguistically simpler. Variants that are not eliminated are then *re-allocated* in their meaning.[94]

4.2 THEORIES ON THE ORIGINS OF AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

The fact that Australian English has a distinct pronunciation and lexis and that it is a variety of English in its own right is undisputed. But exactly how, when and where Australian English was 'born' is still a matter of intense debate.

There are three main approaches opposed to each other. The first states that it developed independently all over Australia into a uniform dialect from the same set of 'ingredients', the second that it developed in England and was only later transplanted, and the third that it was shaped in Sydney and then spread from there all over the continent. The biggest problem, all the different theories struggle hard to grapple with, is the most unusual regional uniformity of Australian English all over the continent and as well as in Tasmania.[95]

4.2.1 UNIFORM DEVELOPMENTS IN SEVERAL PLACES

The first approach is clearly a minority view. Nevertheless, its 'father' Bernard (1969) is respected enough to have been chosen to write the introductory chapter on Australian pronunciation in *The Macquarie Dictionary*, which testifies to his scholarly reputation. Uncontested are his claims that a distinctive Australian pronunciation arose very early in the colony. He cites the example of visitors to New South Wales that found a pronunciation "sufficiently unusual and interesting to warrant their comment".[96] He likens the process of the establishment of Australian English pronunciation to "a heterogeneous mixture of the

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[93] Trudgill (1986 [O]: 103).

[94] Cf. Trudgill (1986 [O]: 126).

[95] Of course, this is not intended to mean that there is no regional variation in Australian English at all. This statement is to be understood only as a comparison with the linguistic situation in Britain and in America.

The study of regional variation is a subject of increasing interest (cf. Bryant (1989a, 1989b, 1991 and 1995), Knight (1988) and Bradley (1989)), Peters (1995), Ramson (1988). It is notable that even South Australia, which never had any convicts transported to its shores and which had the greatest influx of American adventurers during the gold rush period of the 1850s is not known to differ substantially from the rest of Australia.

Although there is next to no regional variation, there is, however, social variation in Australian English. This will be discussed in section 2.2.4.

[96] Bernard (1981: 19).

deracinated social and regional dialects from the whole of Britain"[97] primarily by second generation speakers.

His explanation why Australian English shows so little regional variation is the following. He directs attention to the fact that settlement radiated from only a small number of seaports. That means that there was only a very restricted number of cities and towns where the mixing of dialects was taking place. All of these initially received the same mixture of dialects and in approximately the same proportions. "The ingredients of the mixing bowl were much the same, and at different times and in different places the same process was carried out and the same end point achieved."[98]

In his article from 1969 he also claims that the contact between the different Australian sea-ports and a feeling of solidarity among settlers and convicts against the British administrators helped in the development of a unified dialect.[99] This seems to be rather unlikely and indeed has been rejected by a number of linguists, although it is interesting to note that Bernard's theories have been discussed and refuted many times and are still alive.

4.2.2 THE 'COCKNEY THEORY'

The second theory has more supporters in the literature. Its most forceful propagator is Hammarström in his 1980 booklet *Australian English: Its Origin and Status*. His guiding theory and the method with which he investigates early Australian pronunciation are as follows: He contends that the problem of the origin of Australian English can be solved by looking at phonetic evidence. He compares features of the pronunciation of Australian English with the same features in English dialects. The English dialect most similar to Australian English then can be assumed to be the original dialect of the first convicts and settlers in Australia.[100] All of this is, of course, based on the hypothesis that Australian English is not the result of a mixing of dialects but simply a relatively unchanged transplanted British dialect. He concludes that a detailed phonetic comparison between today's Australian English and today's British dialects shows Australian English to be most similar to the London dialect or perhaps the dialects of south-eastern England. His evaluation is based on similarities between the respective vowels and consonants. On this basis he confidently excludes the possibility that Irish, Scottish and dialects from other parts of Great Britain could have had any influence on Australian English.[101]

He then sets out on a meticulous comparison between Cockney and today's Australian English pronunciation. His findings are convincing. Except for their prosodic structures, where Cockney and Australian English are relatively different, the two dialects of English are shown to be very much alike in their phonology. In order to explain the difference in the prosodic structures Hammarström suggests that it is the Cockney prosodemes that changed considerably since colonial varieties of European languages are known to be rather conservative. He adds that his hypothesis would be strengthened if any dialect pockets should be found in the near London area that display 'Australian English' prosodemes and in this represent older stages of Cockney.[102]

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[97] Bernard (1981: 19).

[98] Bernard 1981: 20f.

[99] Cf. Bernard (1969: 63-67).

[100] Cf. Hammarström (1980: 2).

[101] Cf. Hammarström (1980: 4). It must be mentioned that all the discussions dealing with a comparison of the Australian vowel system with British vowel systems centre on the pronunciations of Broad Australian.

[102] Hammarström (1980: 28f). In his 1985 article he states that he had contact with speakers from such dialect pocket areas outside London. The glottal stop, another feature of pronunciation where Australian English and Cockney are known to differ, he argues to be a rather recent invention in London speech (cf. Hammarström (1985: 370-71)). Hammarström is not alone in claiming that today's London English and Australian English share the same phonological system. Cochrane (1989: 178f) concludes after a lengthy discussion that

After establishing that today's Cockney and today's Australian English are very much alike Hammarström proceeds to explain the link between London speech in the late eighteenth century and Australian English.

His next pieces of evidence come from the comments of nineteenth century travellers in Australia. If the way Australians spoke in the early nineteenth century was next to identical to London speech of the same time this should be reflected in the literature of these travellers. This should be either in the form of remarks that it was very much like London English or by statements that openly applauded the 'pure' use of English in the colony.[103] This, of course, in contrast to rural use in England and, most certainly, in contrast to the pronunciation of American English. Instances of this indeed abound in travel literature from 1800-1850.[104]

Hammarström then quotes a number of such comments on early Australian English, the most interesting of which will now be presented here.

James Dixon, writing in 1822, says the following:

"The children born in those colonies and now grown up speak a better language, purer, more harmonious, than is generally the case in most parts of England. The amalgamation of such various dialects assembled together seems to improve the mode of articulating the words."

Peter Cunningham notes in 1827:

"[...] the London mode of pronunciation has been duly engrafted on the colloquial dialect of our Currency youths [...]."

George Bennet then states in 1834 that in Australia

"[...] the English spoken is very pure." [105]

Samuel Mossman observes in 1852:

"The Cockney drawl of the hucksters, selling fish and fruit, sounds so refreshing on the ear - so thoroughly English - that we stop in amazement [...]."[106]

J.A. Froude remarks in 1873:

"The first thing that struck me - and the impression that remained during all my stay in Australia - was the pure English that was spoken there. [...] In thought and manners, as in speech and pronunciation, they are pure English and nothing else."[107]

His conclusion is that early Australian English is identical with London speech of the same time and consequently English as it was spoken in Australia in the nineteenth century was simply a transplant of late eighteenth century London or south-east of England speech and

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"[...] at the level of segmental phonology [there is] almost total system congruence between London English and Australian English. Vowel for vowel and consonant for consonant they match with only an occasional marginal difference. [...] At the level of realisation there is a most striking congruence of Australian and London English in socially relevant variation."

[103] London English and the use of Cockney were not yet stigmatized in the early 19th century.

[104] Here it must be mentioned that there are also many statements denigrating Australian pronunciation in the nineteenth century. The most prominent of these is the report of a NSW school commission (quoted from S. Baker (1966: 431)) from 1854-55 which states:

"Little care is apparently taken to correct vicious pronunciation [...] this inattention has a tendency to foster an Australian dialect which bids fair to surpass the American in disagreeableness."

Hammarström explains this and other examples in a two-pronged approach. He first says that remarks like these are comments on sociolects rather than comments on general Australian English (cf. Hammarström (1980: 35f)). Later he states that Australian pronunciation came more and more under attack from purists since there was a change in what was considered to be standard in England (cf. Hammarström (1980: 58)).

[105] All three quotes are from Hammarström (1980: 31).

[106] Hammarström (1980: 32).

[107] Hammarström (1980: 33).

definitely was not formed in the antipodes.[108] He claims further that today's Australian English retained the 'old-fashioned' pronunciation because it was very conservative, as many colonial varieties are. From his point of view the theory that Australian English is based on a single dialect and not on an amalgam is the only reasonable explanation for the most unusual uniformity of Australian English today.

Hammarström's evidence seems very convincing, but the conclusions he draws appear to be too categorical. It seems unlikely that London English should have been the only source of input into Australian English, especially since the number of genuine Londoners, at the most, did not exceed a third of the total.[109] Although Hammarström did establish that Australian English pronunciation is *similar* to Cockney and London speech in the late eighteenth century it does not mean that they were *identical*. Moreover, he does not take into account lexical and grammatical features. Still, his contributions can not be disregarded.

4.2.3 THE SYDNEY MIXING BOWL

The previous approaches and the one that will now be presented agree in some aspects but differ in their respective viewpoints and conclusions. Since Cockney, as Horvath has stated, is itself the result of a mixing of dialects the previous theory and the following only disagree about the *when* of the mixing but not about the process itself.[110] They differ, though, in their opinion of *what* was being transported, a single dialect or a number of dialects.

The theory corresponds very much with Trudgill's theory of dialect contact as presented above. It contends that Australia was settled by speakers of many different dialects. Through processes of accommodation and koinéization these dialects rapidly amalgamated into a single Australian dialect, i.e. when settlement was still confined to a small area around Sydney. Everybody who went there later tried to adapt to that new dialect as quickly as possible in order to gain social acceptance.[111] Adaptation here refers to the uniform use of lexis and pronunciation.

It was already well into the nineteenth century when settlements were established outside today's borders of New South Wales. These were built up mostly by experienced colonials who took with them the patterns of pronunciation and lexis they had learned in Sydney.[112] In this way the original Sydney amalgam was spread throughout Australia. Indeed, this high individual mobility in Australia seems to have been the most influential factor for the establishment of a uniform Australian English dialect.[113] Although this theorizing is similar to Bernard's approach, it differs in a very important way. While Bernard contends that the

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[108] Hammarström (1980: 52ff).
[109] Cf. Gunn (1992: 209).
[110] Horvath (1985: 29).
[111] An interesting documentation of this phenomenon can be found in Turner (1966: 4). He quotes the Reverend A. Polehampton, who observes in 1862:

> "It was and is a constant source of ambition among 'new chums', especially the younger ones to be taken for 'old hands' in the colony, and they endeavour to gain this point by all manner of expedients, [...]; but their efforts to appear 'colonial' are not always so harmless, and as swearing is an unusually common habit among the colonists, new arrivals often endeavour, and most successfully too, to become proficient in this easily acquired art, and soon add the stock of oaths peculiar to the colony (and *very* peculiar some of them are) to the 'home' vocabulary."

[112] Cf. Horvath (1985: 33) where she states that the new settlements in Australia differed in their initial mix in that many settlers there were Australians and did not come directly from the British Isles. This is indeed very likely since these would be the only people with enough antipodean experience to enable the new colonies to prosper in a very short time as they are known to have done. 'New chums', i.e. newcomers from Britain, were certainly more inclined to start their careers in Sydney which then was by far the most civilized part of Australia.
[113] Among the first propagators of this theory were Mitchell and Delbridge (1965a). They liken it to the development of a similar uniformity in the American West in the same period.

process of of dialect mixing happened independently in several places with the same result derived from the same input the emphasis here is on the singularity of the 'mixing bowl'.

O'Farrell provides us here with some enlightening remarks on the necessity of mobility comparing the gaping differences between the sedate life in Europe and the quick flux of fortunes in Australia:

> "But frequently family members drifted apart, lost each other in the colonies, neglected to write home, failed to receive letters, particularly in the turmoil of the gold rush period. The constant, often frantic mobility of that time, made it very difficult to maintain contact within the colonies: people and settlements came and went."[114]

Later in the book he says:

> "John Maxwell was not the only one of the Ulster migrants [...] who was restless and mobile within a couple of months. Frequent changes of location and employment were the rule, not the exception among the newly arrived."[115]

This approach convincingly explains today's AE regional uniformity very well, but still does not go far enough in investigating how and when this 'mixing' came about.

4.2.4 BROAD, GENERAL AND CULTIVATED AUSTRALIAN

It is curious that the discussion of the three acknowledged sociolects of AE, namely Broad, General and Cultivated Australian, receives such scanty mentioning in the studies that deal with the possible origins of an Australian variety of English. In fact, socio-historic and socio-linguistic questions hardly ever appear in these writings. This shall be remedied to some extent in this sub-section.

Present-day Australian English can be roughly divided into three general varieties which commonly are called Broad, General and Cultivated Australian and which are distinguished by their different pronunciation patterns.

Broad refers to a way of speaking that is considered to be very 'Australian' in pronunciation and is also associated with low social status. For the same reason it is also described by listeners of several linguistic surveys as being trustworthy. Cultivated Australian, on the other hand, closely resembles Southern English use and is confined to a relatively small group of high social status. Recordings of Cultivated Australian speech then did not elicit the same positive reactions among listeners surveyed. By far the most speakers of Australian English described themselves as using General Australian which lies in an only hazily defined in-between.

These categories were established by Mitchell and Delbridge in their revolutionary works on Australian pronunciation and have ever since been accepted terminology.[116] Their data they drew from 9,000 three-minute-interviews with pupils. According to them 34 per cent used Broad, 55 per cent used General and only 11 per cent Cultivated, but they were unable to attribute these three sociolects to clearly defined social groups.[117]

The question then remains exactly how and when Broad, General and Cultivated Australian came into existence. Horvath (1985) claims that there were two different varieties

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[114] O'Farrell (1989 [C]: 49).
[115] O'Farrell (1989 [C]: 130).
[116] Cf. Mitchell (1946), Mitchell and Delbridge (1965a, b).
[117] Horvath (1985: 11) has suggested that their database might be skewed by the choice of the testees, namely children that are sitting for the leaving-certificate. These can be considered to be from higher social status families than the pupils who had left school earlier. Studying Inner Sydney English she also is able to allocate the use of Broad, General and Cultivated to distinct social groups. Moreover, she proves that there is a variable use of the vowel systems of all three sociolects in the speech of individuals. Cf. Horvath (1985: 174).

Apart from Horvath's observations, it is not surprising that the members of a linguistically defined group do not coherently and unifyingly correspond to a social group.

from the start, which she calls high and low prestige varieties. Of course, the use of the respective sociolects corresponded to the social status of the speakers. The high ranking officers and government officials would have used a language that was not in any way deviant from the highest accepted standard in Britain and later developed into Cultivated Australian.[118] The ordinary soldiers, the convicts and the free settlers, on the other hand, spoke a number of low prestige varieties of English, which later developed into Broad Australian. Despite these differences both varieties shared a Southern English basis, since the overwhelming majority of the early convicts, i.e. up to 1820, were from the Greater London area, and were accordingly not as different from each other as, for instance, Scottish English and Cockney are.

From these two initial sociolects General Australian would finally emerge as an accommodated form of the two initial sociolects. This process was favoured by the fact that many of the emancipated convicts achieved important positions. The case of Mary Reibey, who came to Australia as a convict and ended up being one of the most influential, richest and respected persons in the colony, is surely exceptional. But this upward social mobility of the ex-convicts certainly contributed to a greater fusion of the two sociolects than would have been imaginable in Britain. From this it is clear why General has become the dominant variety in the twentieth century.

Gunn does not agree with this explanation of the development of the three present-day sociolects in Australia. His view is that Broad was spoken by the overwhelming majority of people in Australia and that Cultivated "developed later out of attempts to speak Standard English."[119] But this denies the fact that there is a clear and unbroken tradition of spoken and written Standard EngE from the very beginning up to the present-day in Australia.

Horvath puts forth the interesting claim that the spatial and social separation of men and women in early Australian society explains the fact that Cultivated is spoken mainly by female speakers, whereas Broad seems to be the particular domain of male speakers.[120]

By way of summary the following can be stated: There is an undeniable tradition of Standard English in Australiafrom the time of the first fleet up to the present day. It was propagated at first by the upper social echelons in the penal colony and then reinforced by various men of letters, recent arrivals from the mother country and an overall tendency to regard EngE as the only linguistic standard of higher social standing. On the other hand, there was the language of the convicts and the ordinary settlers that certainly differed to some greater or lesser extent from standard usage. With the passage of time the formerly very distinct layers, which corresponded to strictly divided social groups, became more and more permeable and, accordingly, the two sociolects began to merge, forming what later was to be called General Australian.

4.2.5 A REVISION OF THE THEORIES PRESENTED

Trudgill (1986) is primarily concerned with proving that the number of variant forms which express the same or a similar meaning is reduced after a mixing of dialects has taken place.[121] This he terms *focusing* which is achieved through processes of *koinéization*. The two principles of this are *levelling* and *simplification*.

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[118] Horvath (1985: 34) mentions the fact that the children of the ruling elite were educated by tutors or sent to England at least up to the 1830s. After that time exclusive private schools ensured their 'linguistic impeccability'. This means that the two sociolects were widely separate in the beginning and any convergence would have been slow to happen.

[119] Gunn (1972: 36).

[120] Cf. Horvath (1985: 35f). The ratio of single males to single females was 38:1 in the countryside but only 2.4:1 in urban areas.

[121] The claim that the number of variant forms is reduced is only true if the speech community as a whole is looked at but not for the individual speaker.

Levelling is the reduction of the number of marked forms. According to Trudgill (1986) forms are marked if they are either rare, linguistically marked or highly socially marked.[122] The first two criteria for markedness can be said to be governed by the same factors, namely the factor of *comprehensibility*. The criterion of social marking is, however, very different from the first two. It says that forms are preferred that do not attribute certain social connotations to either of the conversants. This is an attitudinal explanation for the use of a certain form.

The process of simplification as explained by Trudgill (1986), i.e. the use of forms that are shorter and less complex, does not seem to apply to the situation in Australia. It seems logical to assume that the loss of morphological endings, the greater use of invariant word forms and other processes that can be grouped under the heading of simplification will only appear to a considerable extent when the individual systems involved in the contact situation greatly differ in these respects. This is clearly not the case in Australia. Trudgill himself acknowledges that simplification is a phenomenon that is more likely to be found in contact situations that involve different languages than in situations that involve speakers of the same language.[123]

Since Trudgill's attention is focused on the processes that reduce the number of variable forms little attention is devoted to the *re-allocation* of forms, i.e. the fact that some forms may survive which express the same or a similar meaning but exhibit different social or stylistic connotations. This would necessitate a functional approach.

By way of summary, it can be contended that Trudgill's approach overemphasizes the argument that the number of variants in a speech community as a whole is reduced. He does not give the attitudinal and functional factors that favour the use of a certain form over another form their due. The examples of levelling and simplification that he presents in his general section, which he takes from studies of Norwegian and Fiji, do not seem to have a bearing on the linguistic situation in Australia. It is telling that Trudgill (1986: 129-46) in his discussion of the possible origins of AE gives only two phonological examples of levelling, which are not very convincing, and no example of simplification. All in all, his approach seems too general to be applicable to the linguistic situation in early Australia.

The approaches presented under 4.2 fail to answer some important questions that are extremely relevant to the question of the purported dialect mixture.

First, they do not define the term dialect and whether it includes phonology, lexis or grammar or any combination of these.[124] This is relevant since most studies do not go further than to simply compare the phonological systems of Broad Australian and some EngE dialect. The results of these comparisons then form the basis for very far-reaching conclusions including the contention that a certain 'dialect' or a certain mixture of 'dialects' is the sole 'parent' of AE.

Second, all theories presented share the implicit assumption that there is only a single unified Australian English variety. This assumption is derived from the alleged uniformity of AE in the fields of lexis and pronunciation. *Cum grano salis,* this is true. But there is also the undeniable fact that AE has three different sociolects, which are known to be distinct at least in the field of pronunciation. Moreover, it has been shown by Bryant (1991), Knight (1988) and others that there is, at least to some extent, a regional vocabulary. The question of the grammatical uniformity of AE has never been addressed and would indeed be very difficult to answer.

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[122] Cf. Trudgill (1986: 101).

[123] Cf. Trudgill (1986: 147).

[124] Dialect, in our terminology, means a speech community composed by individual speakers that share features that are considered to be typical of that dialect. These features can be phonological, lexical and grammatical.

In order to avoid this problem many studies base their investigations on Broad Australian and do not address the question how the two other sociolects of AE do fit into the proposed framework.

On the basis of phonological and lexical investigations almost all studies categorically discount any Irish influence. This seems doubtful in view of the large numbers of Irish immigrants and convicts.

4.3 DIALECT MIXING REVISITED

Any theory of dialect mixing has to consider the following questions before it can be advanced:

(1) What are the *preconditions* for a possible mixing of dialects?
(2) *How* does this process work?
(3) In what *directions* and to what *extent* does accommodation take place?
(4) In what *order* do the items accommodate?

4.3.1 PRECONDITIONS FOR DIALECT MIXING

Accommodation will only take place when there is a definite linguistic and/or social need to do so. Otherwise, no accommodation will occur.[125] This process is a very conscious move by individual speakers changing their linguistic norms if the speakers involved have already a fully established individual norm. For children this process is mostly unconscious.

A linguistic need would be constituted if the unambiguous decoding of a statement expressed in a certain dialect is rendered difficult or impossible. Then it is likely that the encoder will try to change this statement in a way that he/she believes makes it more readily comprehensible.

This difference in features can belong to the fields of phonology, lexis or grammar or to any combination of these. Consequently, if the comprehensibility of a statement is endangered because of a certain pronunciation the pronunciation is likely to be altered. But this does not necessarily include that the grammars and the lexis have to accommodate as well. Moreover, if the differences in the individual systems do not pose a problem either for the encoder or for the decoder of an utterance there is no linguistic reason why these differences should be levelled.[126]

Social needs are at work when a speaker or a group of speakers try to change their use of language in order to achieve a certain social goal. In most cases, this would be social integration in a community. To achieve this, the speakers would try to adopt the speech norms they consider to be typical of that community.

Another factor is the contact situation, which has to be frequent and and lasting for any accommodation to be felt necessary by a speaker.

4.3.2 THE MECHANISMS

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[125] Cf. Dorian (1994[O]). There she investigates linguistic variation in a very small and isolated community. It is at first sight surprising that there should be any variation at all and that there are hardly any levelling effects to be found. For this interesting linguistic fact she has, however, a convincing sociolinguistic explanation: Since every member of this small community has a strictly defined social status and since everybody is very aware of this, the use of language by a particular person does not contribute to the definition of its social standing. Differentiation in language use is therefore condoned and no need is felt to adapt ones language.

[126] It is, of course, possible that these differences will be levelled for extra-linguistic reasons, like attitudinal factors.

When the above criteria are met a mixing of dialects, i.e. the accommodation of individual systems towards each other, is possible and likely. Now the question of how such a process might work will be addressed.

It is uncontested that two speakers whose individual systems are very different and who are communicating with each other are likely to use forms they assume to be more readily comprehensible. These forms are then alternatives for the forms the speaker would normally use. If the contact situation is frequent and permanent enough the 'new' forms are likely to become the preferred mode of expression and, as a consequence of this, an individual system may change. This, in effect, makes the individual systems of the speakers more similar to each other. In this process forms are favoured that have little linguistic marking. A form can be considered to be linguistically unmarked if it is readily comprehensible to any possible decoder of an utterance.[127]

The comprehensibility of a certain form is not the only criterion that judges its usefulness in an act of communication. There are also *functional* and *attitudinal* factors that determine what forms are preferred and what other forms are neglected. Thus, forms can be used because they have certain functional and attitudinal advantages over other forms. Therefore, it is likely that the use of such forms will spread in a community on the expense of other, individual, forms.

A form can be said to be more functional than another form when it enables the speaker to express a certain meaning more easily or more clearly or both. This explains why a number of Cornish dialectal mining terms, like *fossick* and *mullock*, were taken over into AE at the time of the gold rushes when mining formed a very important part of Australian life.

There are many forms in language that are associated with certain attitudes about their use. These attitudes are always socially defined. If, therefore, a speaker wants to avoid the social connotations connected with the use of a certain form, he will choose a different form that either has no or at least different social connotations. An example of this is the use and then the disuse of flash vocabulary in Australia.

It is characteristic of a language contact situation,[128] the preconditions of which have been outlined above, that the systems of individual speakers become more similar to each other. This is achieved through the common use of forms: These forms are selected on the basis of the following factors: *comprehensibility*, *functionality* and *attitudinal marking*.

For the individual speaker this means that certain parts of the individual system will be less frequently used while other parts will be used more frequently. As well, new forms will be adopted.

4.3.3 THE DIRECTION AND THE EXTENT OF ACCOMMODATION

The aim of accommodation is a relative uniformity and homogeneity of the use of language within a speech community. This can be achieved either by two systems accommodating to each other (bi-directional accommodation)[129] or by one system trying to change in the direction of another system (uni-directional accommodation). The direction of the accommodation to a large extent corresponds to the origin of the original impetus. If the aim is mutual comprehensibility, i.e. if there is a linguistic stimulus, the process is likely to be bi-directional. If, however, the motivation is social, i.e. one speaker or a group of speakers try to blend in with a certain community, the process is likely to be uni-directional.

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[127] This notion of markedness is at variance with Trudgill's (1986) definition.

[128] In this context the term 'language contact situation' is intended to mean the contact between speakers of the same language who evidence different individual systems and not the contact between speakers of different languages.

[129] Trudgill's (1985) description of the dialect mixing in Høyanger would be a prototypical example of bi-directional accommodation.

Bi-directional accommodation will only take place when the groups involved in this process are of relative social and/or numerical strength. If these preconditions are violated, then any accommodation occurring is likely to be uni-directional. Bi-directional changes are always slow and in most cases are only completed by the children or grandchildren of the original groups as shown by Trudgill (1985).

The accommodation of individual systems or whole dialect groups does not necessarily affect all parts of the individual/dialectal grammars. Even after uni- or bi-directional accommodation the speakers of the original groups are likely to have retained certain linguistic features which will only very slowly erode. In a uni-directional accommodation process the speakers accommodating their use of language will only do so to a certain extent. They will only change as much as they think is necessary to show that they identify with the social group they want to conform to.

An illustrative example of this comes from a hitherto unpublished study by Wolfram. He discusses the case of Julius Bryant,[130] who lived on the island of Ocracoke off the coast of North Carolina as part of a very small community. The islanders form a very closely knit community and have, until recently, lived relatively isolated lives. Julius was one of three African Americans in a community of ca. 400 whites. He was well accepted by the community playing poker and going fishing with the men. Preliminary research suggests that

he adopted a salient phonological feature, namely the pronunciation of /aɪ/ as /ɪ/, but did not change in grammatical features that marked him as speaking African American Vernacular English (AAVE). It is obvious that for him there was no reason to change more of his individual system since the above mentioned phonological feature is very prestigious and gave him the credit of truly belonging to the island community.

Another intriguing case is reported by Labov (1980). Carla, a thirteen year old white girl, lived in an African American neighbourhood in New Jersey. She was obviously accepted and liked by African American youth and sounded like an African American to both white and African American listeners. When her speech was examined in detail, however, it was found that her morphosyntactic system was not in accord with the morphosyntactic system of AAVE. This means that she was considered to be African American and accepted by African Americans because she had adapted her phonological and lexical system. Any further accommodation was obviously unnecessary either for linguistic or for social reasons.

Another reason that speaks against a complete take-over of linguistic features in a uni-directional change are memory limitations.[131] In a bi-directional accommodation process these limitations are outweighed by the fact that there are successive generations of linguistic groups accommodating towards each other.

The last reasoning to be presented here that argues against a complete change of the linguistic systems of individual speakers is what can be called the *home-ties-principle*, which mostly applies to dislocated immigrants who for some reason or other were forced to leave their homes. The social need to blend in linguistically with the surrounding speech-community would be counter-acted by the feeling that one's original dialect should be preserved because it creates in invisible bond between the individual and the speech-community he/she originally belonged to. Moreover, people in such a situation show a tendency to form close relationships with people from similar backgrounds as, for instance, the Irish are known to have done.

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[130] Wolfram (1996): 43f.
[131] Wolfram (1996): p.c.

4.3.4 THE PRINCIPLE OF ORDERED ACCOMMODATION

Lexis, phonology, morphology and syntax are the main components of a grammar. Every language system can differ in these from other language systems. Two dialects of English might for instance share the same lexis, morphology and syntax and yet be distinguished by their respective phonology. In order to find out in which components two language systems in an accommodation situation have to change it is necessary to establish in which components they differ and in what parts of the components the difference lies.

THE FORMULATION OF THE PRINCIPLE

In an extended contact situation two language systems will try to accommodate their differences uni-directionally or bi-directionally. There will be a gradual movement from the initial heterogeneity of the two systems to their ultimate homogeneity. This process affects first differences in the lexical systems, then differences in the phonological systems. Only after an extended period of time will it affect differences in the morphological and syntactical systems. This can be called *The Principle of Ordered Accommodation*.

THEORETICAL SUPPORT FOR ORDERED ACCOMMODATION

In Rickford (1985) it is suggested that lexical items are most easily accommodated to because they are relatively independent from structural constraints. Above that, they are easily learned, contain much information and are very obvious to both speaker and listener. Therefore, if any accommodation is taking place, either for linguistic or social reasons, lexical items are the most likely to be affected first.

Phonology, as presented above, is a factor which often marks membership in a certain group. The presence of a highly salient feature, like the pronunciation of the diphthong /aɪ /

as / ɪ /, can alone be sufficient to be counted as belonging to a group. Moreover, features of phonology are highly conspicuous and often remarked upon.[132] Thus, the adoption of certain features of phonology are primary in trying to establish oneself in a social group. The fact that the use of a different phonological system can lead to misunderstandings is a linguistic reason arguing for accommodation. Nevertheless, it seems to be impossible for grown-up speakers to change their 'accent' into a different one. Therefore, it can be concluded that, although there is social and linguistic pressure to change one's phonological system uni-directionally, this does not happen often in the first generation but seems quite successful in later generations.

The question of the accommodation of morphological components of a grammar does not lend itself easily to such clear-cut answers. The use of *y'all* in the American South could be counted as a morphological or a lexical feature. It is, however, easily adopted by Northerners moving to the South and therefore could be seen as a lexicalized morphological variant. Other features of morphology are on the borderline between morphology and phonology. These, then, are less easily modified. Genuine features of morphology are hardly ever accomodated to in the first generation, despite the fact that such features can be very obvious. Examples of this are, for instance, *invariant be* in AAVE.

Without doubt syntax is the component of an individual grammar that is least likely to be accommodated to. This is due to the following reasons: First, syntactic structures are the major building-stones of an individual grammar and thus cannot be changed easily without affecting a grammatical system to a great extent. Second, the use of a particular syntactic structure is hardly ever thought of as an identifier marking the membership in a speech

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[132] A good example of this are the sheer overwhelming number of Australian jokes making fun of phonological features of New Zealand English.

community leaving no social reason for accommodation. Third, it has been shown time and again that syntactic structures that a listener/reader is unfamiliar with are sub-consciously re-interpreted by him/her in familiar terms with remarkably reliable results. Since speakers are then very often not aware of differences in syntactic systems and since there is no strong social or linguistic stimulus for accommodation any change in an individual system is very unlikely to occur except in cases where the differences are very great.

SUPPORT FROM CASE STUDIES

Rickford (1985) looked at two speakers, one white and one African American, that grew up in the same community and share a comparable social status. His findings indicate that lexical and phonological items are much more likely to be taken over than morphosyntactic ones.

This stance is supported by Wolfram (1974) where he suggests that whites show only selective rather than full assimilation of features typical of AAVE which he attributes to structural factors.

The above mentioned cases presented in Labov (1980) and Wolfram (unpublished) also suggest that phonological and lexical features are far more likely to be accommodated to than morphological and syntactic features.

For the present study this means that any accommodation evidenced in the letters is likely to be of phonological or lexical status. Changes in the morphological or syntactic systems of the individual writers should not appear to any greater extent. Moreover, it has to be taken into account that the input varieties of the writers do differ to a much greater extent in the lexical and the phonological components of their grammar than in the morphological and syntactic components.

4.4 THE ORIGINS OF AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

In the following, a new approach to the explanation of the emergence of Australian English and its sociolects will be proposed. The historical periods from 1788-1820 and from the 1820s onwards will be discussed separately since different criteria apply to these.

4.4.1 THE EARLY PERIOD

First, it is necessary to establish whether there was such a thing as a language contact situation in late eighteenth century Australia. Recapitulating the above set preconditions the following can be stated: There were a substantial number of people involved over a considerable time. The contact they had was frequent and permanent, but there were from the beginning two very distinct social strata that allowed substantial contact only within but not across the strata. Hence, both strata have to be considered separately.

The officers and government officials, and later the gentleman farmers and the men of letters, were of relative equal social 'strength' among themselves. But their language was a very uniform Standard Southern EngE dialect. Consequently, any accommodation was unnecessary.

On the other hand, the convicts and emancipists, the assisted immigrants and the common soldiers formed another closed social stratum. They were not of equal social and numerical 'strength' but the dialects they spoke were very close to each other, namely a relatively uniform urban lower class dialect with a Southern EngE basis. This rendered any greater accommodation processes for linguistic reasons in this group unnecessary. On the other hand, the use of flash vocabulary certainly underwent a great change in that most of it fell into disuse when the colony began to be predominated by free settlers, emancipists and their progeny.

From the above we can draw the following conclusions: English as it was spoken in early nineteenth century Australia was from the beginning very uniform in its pronunciation among each of the two social groups. Moreover, the favoured pronunciations among the two groups both had a Southern EngE basis and so were not widely different.

The use of lexis was undoubtedly extremely unified from very early on. For this there are two reasons. First, the lexical parts of the individual systems of the speakers involved was not very different within the two proposed social groups. Second, there were functional restrictions on the use of many words since the new environment, the convict system and the new work methods made the use of a specially designed vocabulary obligatory.

Thus, the following hypothesis can be advanced: There was no mixing of dialects in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Australia. The unification of pronunciation did not happen in Australia and the unification of the vocabulary was not necessitated by processes of accommodation but by functional factors. The morphological and syntactical systems of the speakers involved were not different enough for any accommodation to be discernible.

4.4.2 THE LATER PERIOD

The first convicts and settlers came from very similar social and regional backgrounds. This relative uniformity changed from the 1820s onwards when larger numbers of Irish convicts and immigrants poured into Australia and when settlers from all over the world, especially in the gold rush period in the 1850s, came in increasing numbers to Australia.

The linguistic situation did not change for the upper social stratum in Australia. The linguistic systems of high ranking officers and government officials were constantly reinforced in their use of Standard EngE either by gentlemen newcomers or by freshly appointed administrators. It was only the slow weakening of the social barriers and the gradual development of a national identity in Australia that eventually put some pressure on the language use of this group. But it is definite that their use of language, apart from lexical items, remained relatively unchanged in the course of the nineteenth century.

The linguistic situation was different for the lower social strata speaking an early version of Broad AE. The new arrivals, especially the Irish, had individual systems that were to some extent different from those of the established settlers. Moreover, the number of people coming to Australia in the 1820s and onwards was very high in comparison with the resident population and contact between the two groups was frequent and permanent.

Since life in Australia was extremely different from life in Europe the factor of colonial experience to a great extent determined the social standing of a person. Hence, there was great social pressure on the 'new chums' to blend in with the 'old hands' as quickly as possible. This favoured uni-directional accommodation processes among the newcomers. This is most obvious in the adoption of colonial pronunciation features, for attitudinal reasons, and of colonial vocabulary, for attitudinal and functional reasons by these groups.

The dialectal grammar that the Irish brought with them was certainly different from the grammatical system of the first convicts and settlers. But the differences were not great enough for any major accommodation processes to become necessary either for functional or attitudinal reasons or to ensure the comprehensibility of a statement. Furthermore, the distinct Irish use of English had been known and understood in England very well ever since the repercussions of the Industrial Revolution had swept hundreds of thousands of Irish to the great urban centres of England and Scotland from the eighteenth century onwards. Another reason that makes a grammatical accommodation unlikely is the fact that many of the Irish

settlers lived in relatively closed communities and so the need for linguistic accommodation probably was not very urgently felt.[133]

By way of summary it can be said that there was no dialect mixture in Australia in the period after 1820 but an adoption of prevalent features of lexis and pronunciation by the newcomers.

4.4.3 CONCLUSION

Considering the above mentioned facts and reasonings it is possible to advance the following hypothesis:

Australia did not evidence a mixing of dialects in the sense that a number of different dialects accommodated to each other. There were from the beginning two distinct social groups that experienced different linguistic developments. Each group had a distinct and unified pronunciation which corresponded to what later was to be called Broad and Cultivated Australian. Both groups were early unified in their use of lexis, which was greatly furthered by functional requirements. The later social developments enabled the two distinct language uses to become mixed and to form what is now called General Australian.

The arrival of many Irish from the 1820s onwards and of many others from the 1850s onwards did not fundamentally change the situation. For functional and attitudinal reasons the pronunciation and lexis of English as spoken in Australia were uniformly adopted by the large majority of the newcomers. This uniformity in the fields of lexis and pronunciation was also greatly furthered by the immense mobility of nineteenth century Australia.

There certainly was no unified use of grammar within the lower social stratum in Australia in the sense that some of the new immigrants, like the Irish or the Cornish in South Asutralia varied in their syntactical systems from their fellow Australians. This hypothesis is confirmed by the apparent grammatical differences that the individual letter writers in the corpus investigated in this study show.

Therefore, the term *Australian English,* if applied to nineteenth century Australia, is misleading. It does not denote a unified standard of English spoken but is a cover term for the different kinds of English that were spoken at that time in Australia.

In view of this, this study will focus on the variability of AE as evidenced in the corpus. It will not be claimed that the language used in the letters are representative manifestations of 19th century AE in the sense that there was a uniform variety and that they are typical examples of it. On the contrary, it will be claimed that the letters are representative of AE in the last century exactly because they show such a varied use of the English tongue.

Therefore, Cultivated Australian is not and cannot be the subject of this study. Rather it is the speech community of 19th century Broad Australian speakers and the development of Broad Australian from an early homogeneity to an intermediate heterogeneity, when this speech community incorporated the different grammatical systems of the new arrivals. Over time, the speech community using Broad then became increasingly similar again in their individual systems with features of lexis and phonology leading the process. Features of morphology and syntax followed only much later.

Since the convergence of Broad and Cultivated Australian to form General Australian took place approximately at the same time, the complexity of the process was thereby greatly enhanced.

Finally, the term Australian English can be defined as follows:

The term Australian English, if used to describe the linguistic sintuation in 19th century Australia, denotes a varitey of English spoken by people in Australia who share to a

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[133] It is known that some of the Australian Irish did maintain their distinct brogue at least until the 1930s, making them a linguistic group of their own well into the twentieth century. Cf. Troy (1992: 472).

great extent features of lexis and pronunciation but can evidence differences in their morphological and syntactic systems.

5. A GRAMMATICAL PROFILE OF PRESENT-DAY AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a profile of present-day Australian English usage shall be sketched. Since a comprehensive grammar of this antipodean variety has never been written the evidence has to be culled from various articles.

As an introductory note two quotes from Turner will be given that summarize the opinion, which was and still is espoused even by a number of linguists, namely that Australian English grammar does not differ from the grammar of any other variety of English:

> "Pronouns, conjunctions, verbal forms and grammar do not vary from the forms of colloquial English. A description of what is peculiar to the Australian variety of English is concentrated on the description of an accent and on the development of special vocabulary, words, and expressions which do not form the most frequently used part of Australian English, [...] and are accordingly used by many speakers only in situations where local colour is felt to be appropriate."[134]

Later in the same book he goes on to say:

> "Grammar in Australia does not differ from that used in England. Not all speech accords with the precepts of school grammar teachers, but deviations are those current in England. There is no local grammar. The only local usage which comes to mind, and is not widespread, is the use of *but* as an adverb at the end of a sentence, an equivalent of *however*."[135]

This opinion has changed considerably since the pioneering studies of Eisikovitz, Horvath and Collins. Although a whole grammar of Australian English is nowhere in sight, the study of grammatical variation has undoubtedly gained in reputation.

The overall picture to be got from the literature is that Australian speakers are linguistically less conservative than speakers of the American or British varieties, i.e. that in the areas where linguistic change seems to be in progress it is typically more advanced in Australia.[136]

The discussion starts with a look at the use of modal verbs in AE and is then followed by a presentation of selected morphological and syntactical features. AE will be shown to differ from other varieties of English in these respects to at least some extent.

5.2 MODALITY

Modality is presented in a separate section since this topic has been dealt with extensively in the works of Collins (1978, 1988, 1989, 1991a,b). He primarily investigates divided and debatable usage of modal verbs in Australia and draws comparisons with the use of modal verbs in America and Britain.

5.2.1 *NEED* AND *DARE*[137]

After extensive testing[138] Collins observes that in negative and interrogative sentences the lexical form of *need* (with *do* periphrasis and the *to*-infinitive) is strongly favoured over the modal form. Collins states that this usage is closer to AmE than to EngE.[139]

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[134] Turner (1966: 36).

[135] Turner (1966: 113).

[136] Cf. Collins (1989: 148f).

[137] The variables which Collins (1978: 434) uses in order to classify lexical and modal uses of *need* and *dare* are:
   (1) the presence or absence of *do* (for the formation of questions or negations)
   (2) the presence or absence of *to* (i.e. if they take the bare infinitive and have no third person singular -s ending).

[138] In the first test students had to transform sentences which contained equal numbers of lexical and modal variants of both *need* and *dare*. In a second test the students had to ascribe acceptability ratings to sentences containing these verbs.

[139] Cf. Collins (1989: 143).

In sentences containing *dare* the lexical variant is also much preferred. In transformation tests the testees showed consistent preference of the *do*-form with the bare infinitive over the form with the *to*-infinitive. This is at variance with both AmE and EngE usage.[140]

5.2.2 CAN, COULD, MAY AND MIGHT

In his 1988 study Collins presents the frequencies of *can, could, may* and *might* in a corpus of spoken and written Australian English that comprises altogether 225,000 words. This he compares with findings in the linguistic literature on the use of these modals in the British and American varieties of English. His main distinctions are those between root modality (Ability (A), Permission (PE), Root Possibility (RP)), which is used to express various types of potential for the occurrence of an action, and epistemic modality (Epistemic Possibility (EP)), which is used to express a speaker's reservations about the truth of the proposition. Another theoretical issue is the differentiation between a core meaning and peripheral meanings.[141]

The total figures for the respective modals in the Australian corpus and in the studies of American and EngE are presented in the following table.

Table II.1: Raw frequencies of *can*, *could*, *may* and *might*[142]

	can	could	may	might	Total
AE	648	352	169	157	1326
EngE	431	387	436	191	1445
AmE	146	120	66	33	365

Can he states to have mainly root meaning, with the epistemic meaning only occurring in negated sentences. His conclusions are that AE differs most from EngE and AmE in that *can* in the PE function is much more popular in the first than in the two latter.

Table II.2: *Can*: meanings in AE, EngE and AmE[143]

	PE	RP	A	EP	I	Total
AE	74	343	196	6	29	648
EngE	18	277	98	-	38	431
AmE	3	102	36	5	-	146

Can and *may* Collins states to have very little semantic overlap, observing a difference in formality even where there seems to be one. He postulates that the greatest difference lies in the relative infrequency of the PE meaning for *may*, which corresponds to the preferred PE use for the modal *can* in AE.

Table II.3: *May*: meanings in AE, EngE and AmE[144]

	PE	RP	EP	I	Total
AE	16	28	111	14	169
EngE	60	46	290	31	436
Am E	13	21	32	-	66

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[140] Cf. Collins (1989: 143).
[141] Cf. Collins (1988: 264f).
[142] Cf. Collins (1988: 267). Collins gives for Australian English the figures for *could* and *might* as 321 and 102 respectively but does not state a reason. He has corrected the numbers in his following tables and therefore the 'corrected' numbers are presented here. The abbreviation I means Indeterminate.
[143] Cf. Collins (1988: 271).
[144] Cf. Collins (1988: 275).

Collins observes that the modal *could* can be used both as a marker of past time and as a marker of hypotheticality. The first use encompasses both cases. His evaluation of the data shows that the use of epistemic *could* is much more frequent in AE in comparison with AmE and EngE. Moreover, AE has relatively more instances of *could* expressing Ability and shows a relative infrequency in the meaning RP.

Table II.4: *Could*: meanings in AE, EngE and AmE[145]

| | Past | | | | Hypothetical | | | | | | |
	PE	RP	A	EP	PE	RP	A	EP	PEP	I	Total
AE	12	64	69	12	6	108	20	8	30	23	352
EngE	9	109	83	-	6	144	14	-	22	-	387
AmE	-	40	41	-	4	19	13	1	-	-	120

The modal *might* is, like *may*, primarily used to express EP, i.e. Past EP, Hypothetical EP and Present EP. Collins suggests that *might* is superseding *may* as the prime modal used to express epistemic meaning and that, accordingly, its uses as root meaning become less frequent. This change he sees well advanced in AE.[146]

Table II.5: *Might*: meanings in AE, EngE and AmE[147]

| | Past | | | Hypothetical | | | | | |
	PE	RP	EP	PE	RP	EP	PEP	I	Total
AE	-	1	17	1	22	19	95	2	157
EngE	1	2	31	2	36	46	73	-	191
AmE	1	3	6	-	2	10	11	-	33

Collins draws the following conclusions about the state of modal verbs:
(1) The expression of Epistemic Possibility is undergoing a sweeping change with *might* becoming the main modal used. *May* is restricted in this use to formal contexts. *Could* has developed into a third alternative.
(2) *May* can be used as a hypothetical epistemic modal and as a past epistemic modal in AE. Neither use is recorded in the studies of EngE or AmE that Collins cites.

5.2.3 NECESSITY AND OBLIGATION
For the investigation of the modals of necessity and obligation Collins used the same corpus of AE as described in the previous sub-section. Each modal verb can express an Epistemic Meaning (EM) or a Root Meaning (RM). The first includes notions of Certainty and Epistemic Necessity and the latter notions of Obligation and Compulsion.

Table II.6: Raw frequencies of *must, should, ought, need, have to* and *have got to*[148]

	must	should	ought	need	have to	have got to	Total
AE	176	160	12	5	149	98	600
EngE	436	366	245	-	-	-	1047
AmE	68	77	-	-	-	-	145

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[145] Cf. Collins (1988: 281). The abbreviation PEP reads: Present Epistemic Possibility.
[146] Cf. Collins (1988: 282f).
[147] Cf. Collins (1988: 283).
[148] The frequencies are culled together from various parts of Collins' (1991a) paper. Unfortunately, the numbers Collins gives are again not very clear, which explains why it was refrained from giving frequencies for EngE *need* and *have to* and for AmE *ought*.

From a comparison of the data Collins is able to say that *should*, *ought* and *need* have considerably lower frequencies in AE than in AmE or EngE. He concludes from the number of tokens that *must*, *have (got) to* and *should* are the only modals that can reasonably studied.

The RM meaning for *must* is strikingly infrequent in AE, especially in comparison with EngE and AmE usage, but Collins admits that this may be due to the differences in the databases used.[149] It may, however, be the case that the emphasis placed on an egalitarian approach in human interactions in Australia is responsible for the low frequencies of meanings like Obligation or Compulsion. There is also evidence for an epistemic use of *mustn't* corresponding to *can't* in Standard EngE. This feature is also evident in Irish English.[150]

Table II.7: *must*: meanings in AE, EngE and AmE[151]

	RM	EM	I	Total
AE	63	106	7	176
EngE	259	166	11	436
AmE	51	16	1	68

Collins observes that *have got to*, unlike *have to*, is modal-like in its formal properties. He further claims that it is semantically indistinguishable from *must*.[152] Collins, contrary to the study of EngE he quotes, finds that root *have got to* can be performative and that it can have a habitual sense.[153] It is realized sometimes with *be* rather than *have* and in one example with *and* rather than *to*.

Table II.8: *have (got) to*: meanings in Australian English[154]

	RM	EM	I	Total
have to	142	6	1	149
have got to	98	0	0	98

The findings that are notable for *should* are the dominance of RM, the rarity of the quasi-subjunctive meaning and the unpopularity of EM contrasting with the use of the modal in EngE and AmE.

Table II.9: *should*: meanings in AE, EngE and AmE[155]

	RM	EM	Quasi-subjunctive	I	Total
AE	135	16	6	3	160
EngE	201	64	57	44	366
AmE	56	4	12	5	77

All the modals of obligation discussed exhibit differentiation into RM and EM. *Must* is the only modal that strongly favours EM, i.e. it is the primary modal for the expression of Epistemic Necessity. *Have (got) to*, on the other hand, is the primary modal for the expression of Root Obligation. *Should*, which also strongly favours RM, is differentiated from *have (got)*

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[149] Cf. Collins (1991a: 154).
[150] Cf. Newbrook (1992: 4).
[151] Cf. Collins (1991a: 154).
[152] Cf. Collins (1991a: 146f, 157).
[153] Cf. Collins (1991a: 157f).
[154] Cf. Collins (1991a: 157).
[155] Cf. Collins (1991a: 161).

to in terms of subjectivity, i.e. it is used in sentences where the speaker expresses advice, whereas *have (got) to* expresses an obligation binding on the speaker.[156]

5.3 MORPHOLOGY

5.3.1 WORD-FORMATION

Reduplication and *she*-compounds are productive word-formation patterns in Australian English.[157] *He-* and *she*-prefixes are mainly used for the naming of plants, e.g. *she-oak*.

Reduplication Dabke finds to be a very frequent phenomenon in Australian place-names whereas "not a single reduplication was found in a corpus of approximately 10,000 place names from Great Britain and approximately 7,000 from the United States."[158] Dabke assumes that this pattern was originally found by Australian settlers in words borrowed from Aboriginal languages. Later it was re-analysed as a productive word-formation pattern especially for place-names.[159] Examples are: *Bon-Bon* (SA), *Mogil-Mogil* (NSW) and *Murrin-Murrin* (WA).

Other productive word-formation patterns include the endings *-ee* /iː/, *ie* (or *-y*) /ɪ /, *-o*

/«ʊ / and *-aroo* /«ruː/.

For the prominent occurrence of the first pattern Dabke has the following explanation. Derivations with *-ee* were productive mainly in legal language. Much of the daily talk in Australia probably centred on the convicts and the convict system which required increased use of legal language. The frequent use of words ending in *-ee* then made it possible for *-ee* to be analysed as a productive suffix.[160] Hence, we frequently encounter words like *assignee*, *addressee*, etc.

Examples for word-formation with the suffixes *-ie*, *-y* and *-o* abound *(surfy* 'a surfer', *wharfy* 'a wharf labourer', *footie* 'football', *fleece-o* 'wool-shed', *garbo* 'garbage man', etc.).[161] There is, however, no convincing explanation why a certain word should take either the *-y* or the *-o* form. Leitner has suggested that the first suffix is used when the word expresses something good or pleasing and the latter suffix when it is something bad or unpleasant but there are also counter-examples to this.[162]

The *-aroo* suffix is, like the reduplication in place-names, derived from aboriginal languages. It undoubtedly has its origin in *kangaroo*. A prominent example from the corpus would be *jackaroo*, or a man of all works.

5.3.2 VERB MORPHOLOGY

Eisikovitz's studies in the verbal morphology in Inner Sydney English (ISE) showed that there is no variation in the base form of verbs and the *-ing* participle. Additionally, there is only little variation in the third person singular and in the past tense forms of regular verbs.[163]

Variation, however, does occur in the past tense and past participle forms of irregular verbs. Most of the examples of variation occur with either *do*, *see*, *come*, *give* or *run*. Age and

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[156] Cf. Collins (1991a: 164).

[157] Cf. Dabke (1976: 17).

[158] Dabke (1976: 23). It must be mentioned in this context that there is the example of *Walla-Walla* in Washington State which seems not to have been included in the corpus Dabke looked at.

[159] Cf. Dabke (1976: 24).

[160] Cf. Dabke (1976: 36).

[161] In colloquial Dublin speech the *-o* suffix is also used for endearing abbreviations (Thomas => Thomo, Breffni => Breffo; personal experience).

[162] Cf. Leitner (1990: 186).

[163] Cf. Eisikovitz (1991a: 124ff).

sex of the speaker as well as style and context seem to play a role in these variable uses. There are six patterns of variation:

1. The form reserved for the *-ed* participle is used for simple past.
2. The form reserved for simple past may be used with a perfective or a passive auxiliary.
3. The uninflected form can be used either to form the past tense or with a perfective or passive auxiliary.
4. The use of an ambiguous form, especially where the simple form and the past participle share the same form.
5. The regularization with an *-ed* suffix.
6. A 'coined' form following the pattern of another irregular verb.[164]

Eisikovitz suggests the following implicational scale for these patterns:[165]

| Coined form/ | > | base form for past / | > | past form for | - > | *-ed* participle for | > | ambiguous |
| Regularized form | | *-ed* participle | | *ed* participle | | past | | form |

According to Eisikovitz (1991b) there is also variation in the subject-verb agreement patterns in ISE with auxiliary *do + not* and with *be* used as a copula and as an auxiliary.

Although third person singular *-s* is not normally deleted in ISE *do* in its functions as an auxiliary allows this if it is followed by *not*.[166] This feature has a high frequency among 17/40 of Eisikovitz's informants and for three it is categorical. Invariable *don't* occurs in ISE in negative statements or tag questions.[167] Occurrence of this feature is mainly linked with male speakers. Age also seems to play a role since older speakers have higher frequencies than younger speakers do.

ISE allows alternative forms of *be* which 'violate' the rules of concord. Tense does not seem to play a role in this but the nature of the subject does. The use of the singular verb form in the structure *There + be + NP (pl)* is almost categorical making it the local standard form.[168] As with the deletion of third person singular *-s* in *do + not* the non-standard form is more frequent with males and with older speakers.

Singular concord is very often recorded for collective proper nouns. This is in marked contrast to EngE usage which prefers plural concord in these cases.[169] Singular concord is also reported for New Zealand English.[170]

There are several interesting morphological features mentioned in Collins (1989: 144-48). He lists, for instance, the use of *neither - nor*, *either - or* with a plural verb, the use of *none* with a plural verb and maintains the objective use of *who* is not ungrammatical but a stylistic marker.

Australian English seems to distinguish between a singular and a plural use of *you*, marking plurality by the suffixation of *-s*. Taylor attributes this use to Irish, in which the pronouns *tu* and *sibh* differentiate between the singular or plural of the second person. About actual usage he says:

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[164] Cf. Eisikovitz (1991a: 126f).
[165] Cf. Eisikovitz (1991a: 132).
[166] Cf. Eisikovitz (1991b: 236). In this ISE is in accordance with the results of studies of other varieties of English but interestingly not with those of other studies on AE.
[167] Cf. Eisikovitz (1991b: 237).
[168] Cf. Eisikovitz (1991b: 244).
[169] Cf. Newbrook (1992: 5).
[170] Cf. Bauer (1988 [O]: 257).

> "[...] *yous* and *you* are effectively in free variation as plural forms (but *not* as singular forms) and one can only predict with any certainty that an initial use of *yous* will be triggered if there is the risk of unwanted ambiguity through exclusive use of the *you* form unmarked for plural."[171]

Taylor also observes that *us* can be used in a singular sense in imperative environments and that generic *they* is used even when the gender of the person talked about is obvious.

> "'The Bible says *a husband* must love *their* wife.' (Charismatic Church minister from Queensland on radio)"[172]

According to Trudgill and Hannah (1985) the pronoun *she* can be used to refer to inanimate nouns and in impersonal constructions.[173]

5.4 SYNTAX

The investigation of syntactic structures peculiar to AE is next to non existent which reflects the fact that there do not seem to be any such peculiarities.

5.4.1 CONJUNCTIONS AND CO-ORDINATION

In a short article Cattell suggests the use of *which* and *that* as loosely connecting conjunctions in sentences he heard from three elderly women. The examples he gives are:

> Referring to a television programme: "It's about something that I don't know what it is"
> To her teenage son: "Are there any teachers that you haven't had that you don't know what they're like."
> "If we want air in our bedroom which I'd like to have the window open [...]."[174]

Such usage seems to be very infrequent and, as Cattell points out, has been reported for EngE.[175]

The use of *like* as a conjunction has been suggested in Eagleson (1972) but this, again, is not attested to be of any significant frequency or of being restricted to Australian English.

Additionally, the interpretation of *all/both + not* to mean none/neither is mentioned in Newbrook (1992) and linked with usage in south-east Asia.[176] Very interesting is the statement that there is a tendency in AE to co-ordinate items more freely than in other varieties. He quotes the following written example:

> "No tossing coins or drinks on tables."[177]

5.4.2 ADVERBS AND INTRODUCTORY PHRASES

Leitner (1989) mentions eight different phenomena which can be observed in AE. Most of these are also very common in EngE dialects as he himself admits.[178] Interesting is the use of adverbial *but*, which is also testified for Irish English, that he reports. His example is:

> "Mossies are bad in here but."[179]

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[171] Taylor (no date: 15).
[172] Taylor (1994: 22).
[173] Cf. Trudgill and Hannah (1985 [O]: 20).
[174] Cf. Cattell (1985: 341f).
[175] Cf. Cattell (1985: 345).
[176] Newbrook (1992: 15).
[177] Newbrook (1992: 21).
[178] Cf. Leitner (1989: 147).
[179] Leitner (1989: 143).

Newbrook (1992) presents a whole set of interesting constructions that he encountered in Australia. Two of these will now be given.

He reports the use of *as well* without a following *as* which occurs sentence initially, which is considered standard in Canadian English.[180]

He also comments on the use of *unlike* to introduce an object of comparison.[181] Newbrook gives the following example:

> "Unlike the first chemical, the second is more toxic. (meaning: 'more toxic than the first', not 'than a third')"

5.4.3 ABSENCE OF RELATIVE PRONOUNS IN SUBJECT FUNCTION

There seems to be grammatical variability in Australian English in the possibility for the relative pronoun to be absent even if it serves as the subject of the following clause. This use has been denigrated by many traditional grammarians like, e.g., Jesperson but actually is a very old phenomenon in English.[182] A typical example from Shakespeare is given. It is taken from Richard III, act V, scene III:

> "There is no creature loves me; and if I die, no soul shall pity me: [...]."

Shnukal found in her study of the country town of Cessnock, New South Wales, the relative pronoun to be variably absent in 31.4 per cent of all possible occurrences.[183] There are four matrix sentences she presents that show the following frequencies of deletion:

Table II.10: Matrix sentences that favour deletion

Matrix sentence	# of deletions/Total	Percentage
there + *be* + NP	55/104	52.9
NP + have + NP	11/52	21.2
it + *be* + NP	6/35	17.1
NP + *be* + NP	2/45	4.4

5.4.4 VARIA

Other examples of newly-observed phenomena Newbrook (1992) sees in the increasing acceptance of multiple negation and the disfavouring of backshifting in remote conditionals and reported speech. He remarks on the interpretation of the construction SUPERLATIVE + since:

> "'At 30 degrees it was the hottest March day since 15 March 1958 when a temperature of 32 was recorded.' The newly set mark is here described as being the nearest approach to the old mark that has been achieved since the mark was set, but *not* as being an improvement on the old mark."[184]

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[180] Newbrook (1992: 6f); Trudgill and Hannah (1985: 67).

[181] Newbrook (1992: 7f).

[182] The deletion of a relative pronoun in subject position can also be found in many contemporary American writings, e.g. in Hemingway and Ginsburg, and in colloquial Dublin speech (personal experiences).

[183] Cf. Shnukal (1989: 70).

[184] Newbrook (1992: 10).

This ends the presentation of a suggested profile of present-day usage in Australian English. As shown above, AE has a number of morphological and syntactical variables that deserve further study. Together with the uncontested distinctness of AE in the fields of lexis and pronunciation they strengthen the claim that AE is a variety of English in its own right. Admittedly, none of the features discussed have been investigated on a continent-wide scale. Therefore, although it is possible to say that they are remarkable instances of grammatical variability, the claim that they are features that are typical of Australian English in the sense that they are widespread in the Australian variety of English as opposed to their appearance in other varieties, has yet to be validated.

With this the theoretical historical part and the presentation of a profile of present-day Australian English usage is concluded. The corpus of nineteenth century Australian letters, which forms the basis for this study and which are early instances of the English spoken in Australia, will be investigated in the following chapters. The examples found in the corpus will be compared with the findings about the historical development of Australian English. Moreover, it will be attempted to link some of the features of the language of the letters with present-day Australian usage.

III THE CORPUS - LETTERS AND DIARIES

This chapter serves to provide essential information about the corpus as a whole. Detailed stylistic and linguistic analyses will be made later.

First, a history of letter writing will be presented. This is intended to clarify the socio-historic context of the letters and their writers. Then various data about the corpus as a whole will be discussed. This is followed by a more detailed introduction into smaller sections of the corpus.

A complete listing of all individual letters together with their dates, the sex of the writer and the recipient,[185] the place of origin and the residence of the writer, the residence of the recipient and the style of the letter is given in the appendix.

1. A SHORT HISTORY OF LETTER WRITING

The history of letter writing starts in ancient times. Among the Greeks and Romans letter writing, like rhetoric, became an art with fixed rules that everybody had to adhere to. *Salutatio*, *Exordium*, *Narratio*, *Petitio* and *Conclusio* were the prescribed parts of a letter. This tradition survived the demise of the Roman Empire and was preserved throughout the Middle Ages.

To be able to speak and write Latin carried with it a considerable prestige and was the prerogative of the ruling classes. Writing in the vernacular European languages was next to unknown in this period and where it was practised the Latin alphabet was used. Hence, writing was perceived by the medieval societies as being a particular property of the Latin language. All of this meant that Latin writing and ancient literary traditions had an immense influence on the development of standards for a written vernacular in the various states. Their fledgling national literature at first only aimed at an imitation of the prestigious Latin model. In order to ensure that the Latin standards were adhered to letter writing manuals were devised that strictly regulated the forms and functions of a letter. Therefore, letters from this period, e.g. the Paston letters - the correspondence of a family of merchants in fifteenth century England -, do not reveal very much about actual language usage in contemporary England.

The predominance of the Latin model eroded slowly and was only considerably weakened in the eighteenth century. By then the art of writing was practised not only by priests and the bureaucracy but also by many 'ordinary' citizens. Letters were used by the rising middle classes to express their growing self-confidence and the art of letter writing was exempted from the burden of its ancient tradition.[186] During the Age of Enlightenment and the Romantic period letters were used to convey feelings and experiences and became personal and intimate. The language used in these 'new' letters reflected the individual and dialectal use of the writer.[187]

From the eighteenth century onwards the practice of letter writing greatly expanded. Now it was not only the rich and powerful that corresponded with each other but also many common people. This was due to several reasons. For one, the spread of literacy enabled a greater number of people to read and write. Then, the expansion of the national postal systems made it possible for anybody to send letters instead of having to rely on somebody that

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[185] The more complex term *recipient* was chosen over the more simple term *reader* since the latter too strongly indicates that the addressed persons would actually read the letter themselves. We do, however, know that this is not true in all cases and that there often were situations when letters were read out aloud to members of the family that were unable to read or write.

[186] Cf. Nickisch (1991[O]: 44 and 49f).

[187] The Latin tradition, however, lived on in the official letters, which were and still are strictly structured. In order to distinguish between these the former shall be called 'personal letters' or letters in a 'personal style' and the latter 'formal letters' or letters in 'formal style'.

happened to travel to the particular destination.[188] The last reason to be presented here is the social dislocation that was brought about by the Industrial Revolution and its manifold repercussions. Before that the great majority of the people lived in small and effectively closed communities where there was no need for letters. It was only when these communities broke up and its members were scattered over great distances that the need for writing letters arose among these people. About this need O'Farrell says:

> "In Australia the immigrant letter seems to have filled needs in the writer other than those of boastful justification of his migration. [...], isolation within the colonies was added to the separation of the migrant situation, so that letter writing became a substitute for direct human society: it was an affirmation of membership at a vast remove of a valued and familiar kinship and as such could tolerate neither suppression or dishonesty."[189]

The majority of the people that only recently had learnt to read and write and for whom the writing of letters was something new was unaware of the Latin origins of the art of letter writing and of its conventions. This is reflected in the letters in the corpus and will be extensively discussed below.

2. THE CORPUS AT LARGE

This corpus of early Australian letters and diaries comprises altogether 143,565 words in 359 letters, diaries and various excerpts. The number of unique words is 10,320. Out of these 359 letters only 12 are written in a formal style or at least in a formal context. All the others are written in a personal style.

The data for the corpus come from three different sources. First, there is a number of unedited letters from the Mitchell Library in Sydney, New South Wales. These can be further divided into three groups, namely letters from the Campbell family, letters by and about Margaret Catchpole and letters to John Piper.

The second source is a collection of all extant letters of the Reibey family. They are edited in Nance Irvine's book *Dear Cousin: The Reibey Letters*, which was first published in 1992.

The last and by far the largest part of the corpus comes from Patrick O'Farrell's book *Letters from Irish Australia 1825-1929*. He is a social historian who collected letters from Irish immigrants to Australia. The bulk of these he found in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and the State Paper Office in Dublin. Unfortunately, he never prints the letters in full length but his excerpts are most often long enough to warrant their inclusion in this study.[190]

2.1 THE EDITING OF THE CORPUS

The original letters from the Mitchell Library were photocopied in Sydney. The copies then were brought back to Germany and transcribed twice with the second transcription not relying on the first one. The two separate transcriptions of the letters then were checked against each

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[188] The 'Penny Post' was introduced in Great Britain in the 1840s.

[189] O'Farrell (1989[C]: 4).

[190] Another book that deserves mentioning in this context is David Fitzpatrick's *Oceans of Consolation* (1994 [O]). He edited a great number of letters written by Irish immigrants whose ancestral homes were more evenly distributed in Ireland than the homes of the informants in O'Farrell's book *Letters from Irish Australia 1825-1925* (1989[C]). Moreover, he quotes all the letters in full length and in the appropriate context. Most importantly, he performed hardly any editing on the letters, making them reliable linguistic testimony. The advantage of O'Farrell's book is that he has collected a greater number of letters which, taken together, contain more linguistic data. Nevertheless, the letters from Fitzpatrick's book are also well worth studying and will be included in the present corpus in follow up studies.

other and against the originals. In a last stage the transcripts were keyed in and converted into text files.

The letters in the two books were converted into text files with the use of an optical scanner. These files were then proof-read several times.

After the completion of the computerization of the corpus the individual letters, diaries and letter excerpts were each given a special Corpus Designation (CD). For the Campbell, Catchpole, Piper and Reibey letters the designations consisted of an abbreviated name plus a serial number, e.g. *Camp 1, Catch 1, Piper 1 and Reib 1*. For the letter excerpts from the book by O'Farrell a different naming procedure was chosen. Their designations all start with the letter combination *Iri* which is followed by a number which is identical with the number of the page on which the particular letter excerpt is printed. If the excerpt stretched over several pages the number of the first page was chosen. If there were several different letters on a page an *a, b, c,* etc. was added after the page number.

The last stage of the editing consisted in the indexation of the whole corpus and its subsequent conversion into a *Word Cruncher* file. This program is capable of handling large text files and makes them more accessible. In particular it counts the total number of words and the number of unique words. Then it generates an index of unique words that can be looked up in a user-defined context size. It is also possible to look up combinations of words though there is the major drawback that these can not be converted into text files.

2.2 SOCIOLOGICAL AND OTHER DATA

In this section sociological data of the writers and recipients of the letters shall be given and evaluated. The data were chosen to be presented in the form of figures rather than in the form of tables since the general trends were considered to be more apparent in the former.

Tables III.1 shows the number of letters for a particular period. This reveals a preponderance of letters from the late nineteenth century which is to some extent countered by the greater average number of words letters from earlier decades have. Nevertheless, this imbalance has a bearing on the corpus, because it reveals mostly linguistic data from a period when the formation of a unified pronunciation and lexis of AE had already taken place. Since most of the letters in the corpus were written not by seasoned Australians but by recent arrivals from the British Isles they can be expected to reflect more the individual and dialectal standards of the immigrants than the contemporaneous Australian pattern.

Figure III.1: The dates of the letters
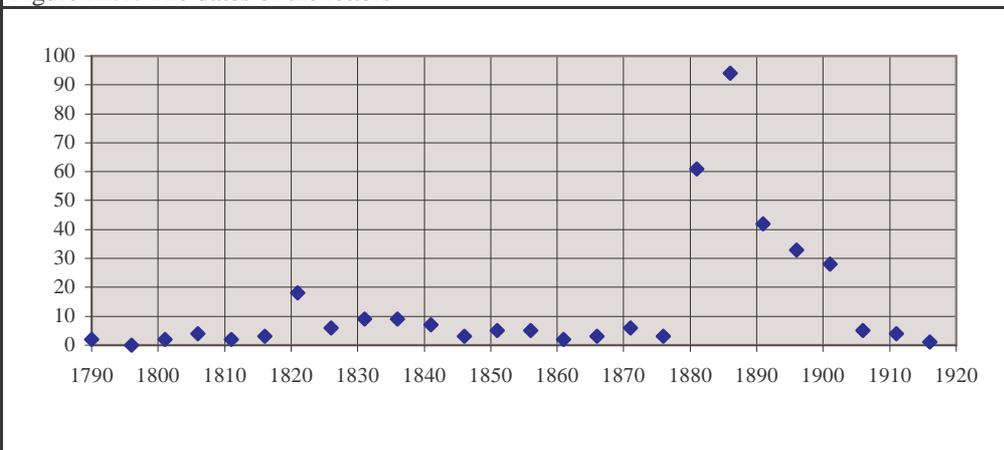
Figure III.2 shows the number of letters that are to be found in the relevant section of the corpus. All of these will be discussed in greater detail and in the same order below.[191]

In Figure III.3 the ratio of unique words to the total number of words in a certain section of the corpus is shown.[192] This interesting figure reveals that there are great differences in the letter styles of each of the sections. Obviously, the letters in the Piper section and all the formal letters exhibit a much higher ratio of unique words than, for example, the letters from the Catchpole and the Elizabeth and Alexander section. This leads us to suspect that the respective letter writers vary greatly in their use of language. This shall be taken up again later.

Figure III.2: The # of letters per corpus section	Figure III.3: The ratio of unique words
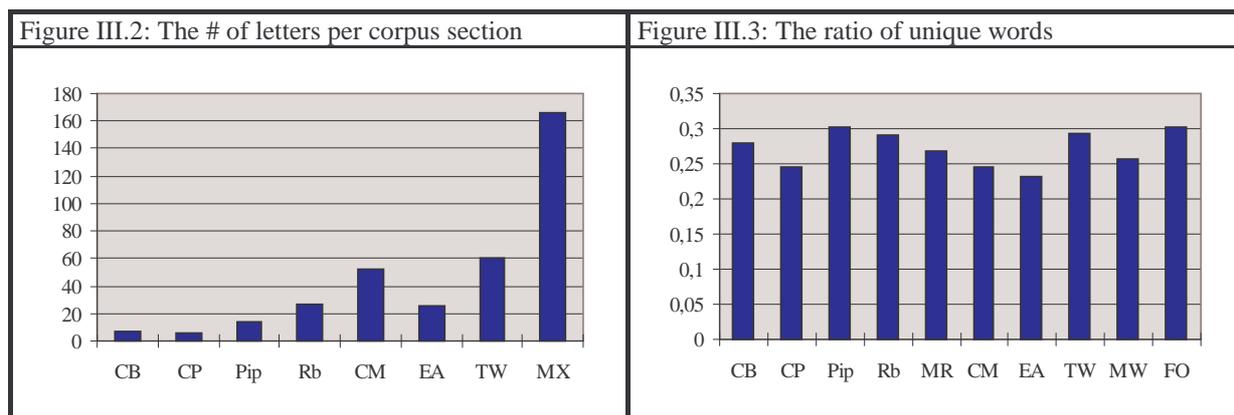
The next two tables reveal sociologically interesting data. Of the 359 letters, diaries and letter excerpts of the corpus 323 were written by men and only a trifling 35 by women, which is a mere 9.8 per cent.[193] For this there are two possible explanations. The first is that the rate of literacy was much higher among men, which is not likely. The second is a sociological reason. The majority of men led solitary lives. They immigrated on their own, worked on their own and lived on their own. Accordingly, they would have to rely entirely on letters to keep up the communication with their friends and relations in Australia and with their home. On the other hand, women, for the most part, came to Australia as part of a family and usually stayed with the family. Consequently, their need for postal communication would be lesser.

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[191] The abbreviations read: CB = Campbell, CP = Catchpole, Pip = Piper, Rb = Reibey, MR = Mary Reibey, CM = Cameo, EA = Elizabeth and Alexander, TW = Twigg, MW = Maxwell and FO = Formal.

[192] Since the corpus sections are all of a different size a comparison of such a ratio is very difficult as corpus sections with a very large total number of words always have a lower ratio than sections with a small total number of words. Therefore, in order to make the numbers comparable, all sections were reduced to the size of the smallest of these, namely the size of the Campbell section, by means of random deletions of letters and excerpts. This new corpus then formed the basis for Table III.3.

For this table the corpus has been subdivided into two more categories. First the letters written by Mary Reibey are separated from the rest of the correspondence of the Reibey Family and second all the formal letters were put together in a separate section.

[193] There is one letter where the sex of the author is not known.

The fact that literacy among women was indeed high can be adduced from the second column of Figure III.3. The percentage of letters which were addressed to females is 19.85 per cent. The numbers for male addressees and families as recipients are 43.7 per cent and 36.6 per cent, respectively.

Figure III.4: Genders of Writers and Recipients	Figure III.5: Relation of the genders between writers and recipients
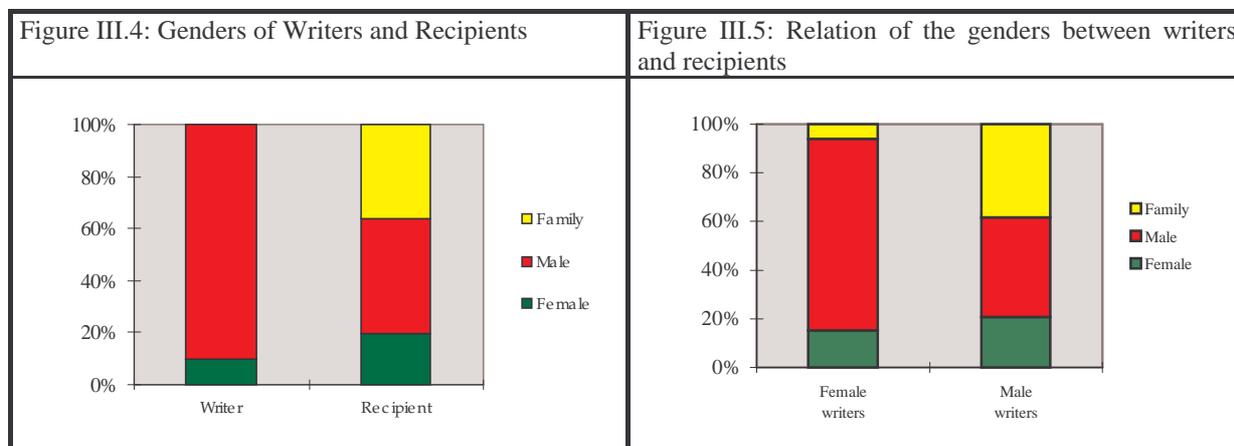
The relations between the genders of the writers and the recipients are given in Figure III.4. They show that female writers addressed an overwhelming 78.8 per cent of their correspondence to men and only 15.2 per cent to women. This correlation is due to the great number of love letters written by women in the corpus. The astonishing fact that women hardly ever wrote letters to families also can be easily explained. Letters to families were always letters back to the country where the immigrant had emigrated from. They were thus considered to be 'official' news from the part of the family that had emigrated to the part of the family that had stayed. As such they had to be *signed* by the head of the emigrant family, even if they might have been *written* by someone else. Since most women lived in such families they hardly ever had a chance to sign such letters themselves.

A much greater balance in this is evident from letters written by men. Most of their correspondence is addressed to males (40.9 per cent), closely followed by letters to families (38.4 per cent) and considerably trailed by letters to women (20.6 per cent). The latter number is due to the fact that it was only permitted for men to write letters to women if they were either relations or prospective marriage partners.

The next four tables show the origins of the letter writers, the states where they lived in Australia, the Australian residences of the recipients and the overall residences of the recipients.

Figure III.5 reveals that the overwhelming majority of the letter writers in the corpus came from Ireland. This is, however, somewhat counterbalanced by the fact that the letters from Irish immigrants are only excerpts, whereas all the other letters and diaries are in full length in the corpus. To be more specific, the number of words in the Irish letters is 89,622 compared to a number of 53,943 words for the other letters. Nevertheless, the Irish component is predominant in the corpus.

Figure III.6: Origins of the letter writers	Figure III.7: Australian residences (writers)[194]

Bar chart (Figure III.6): Australia ~15, England ~15, Ireland ~300, Scotland ~5, ? ~30.

Bar chart (Figure III.7): NSW ~63, QuL ~5, VDL ~10, Vic ~177, WA ~72.

Figure III.8: Australian residences (recipients)	Figure III.9: Residences of all recipients

Bar chart (Figure III.8): Norfolk ~1, NSW ~26, QuL ~1, VDL ~2, Vic ~27, WA ~11.

Bar chart (Figure III.9): Australia ~68, England ~12, Ireland ~256, Scotland ~20, ? ~6.

Figure III.6 shows that most of the letters that were written in Australia come from the state of Victoria, where the Maxwell family settled. The states of New South Wales and Western Australia are also fairly represented. Letters from the other states are either not in the corpus, e.g. South Australia, or only in small numbers, e.g. Van Diemen's Land. This fact makes an investigation of regional differences for the states of New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia possible.[195]

A similar picture can be formed from Figure III.7 showing the Australian residences of the recipients of the letters that were sent either to or within Australia. The only difference lies in the number of letters sent either to or within NSW. This reflects the fact that the letters written in Western Australia and Victoria were mostly written home and not sent to another part of Australia.

Finally, Figure III.8 indicates that most of the letters of the corpus were sent to Ireland. This and the other columns, with the exception of the column for Australia, neatly relate to the origins of the letter writers. Of course, the increased number of Australian letters is due to intra-colonial correspondence.

3. THE CAMPBELL FAMILY

We do not know much about the Campbell family. There are only a few notes written up by a descendant of that family in 1971 that were archived in the same box as the letters. According to these notes John Campbell is believed to have arrived in NSW in 1821 with the greater part of his family. Three of his sons, John, William and Alexander, stayed in India and never came to NSW. John Campbell settled in Singleton, NSW. His family still seems to live in the Sydney area.

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[194] The abbreviations read: NSW = New South Wales; QuL = Queensland; VDL = Van Diemen's Land; Vic = Victoria; WA = Western Australia.
[195] This was not attempted in the present study but could be addressed in a follow-up study.

There are seven letters which were all written by men and directed to men. The first dates from the year 1824 and the last from 1842. There is one formal letter. All the others are personal in nature. Four of the letters were sent from India to NSW, one from India to England, one from NSW to India and the remaining letter was sent within NSW. The language of the letters is Standard English. The total number of words in this part of the corpus is 3,579 and the number of unique words is exactly 1,000.

4. MARGARET CATCHPOLE

Margaret Catchpole's life represents a success story in nineteenth century Australia. Her personal history was transformed into the novel *The History of Margaret Catchpole, A Suffolk Girl* by Richard Cobbold (1852). Although many of his details are doubtful it is possible to get a fair sketch of Margaret Catchpole's life, especially if her letters are adduced for further evidence.

She was born in Ipswich in the county of Suffolk, England, sometime in the 1760s and transported as a convict to Australia ca. 1800. In her first extant letter she expresses her stark dislike of the country in the following words: "for i niver for i niver whish no one to com hear in to such a wicked # country to God in heaven."[196] But her opinion of the country improved because she seems to have been treated as an equal by all her employers. Her letters reveal that she always longed to go back to England.

Her work as a nanny brought her in contact with many kind families and so her situation improved. She petitioned to Governor Bligh[197] to achieve the status of an emancipist. When she succeeded, she slowly rose up Australian society. But she always realized that "all my aquantences are my Betters".[198] About the rest of her life nothing but the fictional account of Mr Cobbold, one of her employers, is known. It has already been mentioned that she was confused with Mary Reibey.

In this part of the corpus there are six letters. Four of these are written by Margaret Catchpole dating from 1803 to 1811. There are two other letters relating to her, one from 1847 and one from 1896, the latter being formal. All the other letters are personal in style. Catchpole's letters show her to have been a person that was unaware of Standard EngE letter, grammar and spelling conventions. The remaining letters are written in this standard. The total number of words is 4,776, the unique words were counted as being 1,165.

5. JOHN PIPER

John Piper was a distinguished member of early Australian society. He seems to have wielded considerable influence and to have had connections with the administration both in NSW and in Norfolk Island. His family probably had its origins in Scotland.

The sixteen letters that were chosen for this corpus only represent a small proportion of John Piper's correspondence, which has been edited in several large size books. The dates range from 1803 until 1842. There are two letters which are not dated and accordingly were not included in Figure III.1. It seems very likely that they were written in the 1830s.

The fact that he was often petitioned to intervene on behalf of some poor or elderly person explains why seven of the sixteen letters are formal in style. Only two of them were written by a women. John Piper obviously had many friends and acquaintances that wrote letters to him from such various places such as Scotland, India, London, Van Diemen's Land and New South Wales. He, on the other hand, seems to have remained in NSW for the rest of his life. These sixteen letters have a total number of 8,849 words 2,031 of which are unique.

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[196] CD: *Catch 1*. The '#' marks a word or a letter that was unreadable.
[197] This is the same Bligh who was captain of the ship Bounty when the crew mutinied.
[198] CD: *Catch 3*.

6. THE REIBEY LETTERS

A 'rags to riches story' is the best epithet for the personal history of Mary Reibey, whose personal and family history is meticulously documented in Irvine's book *Dear Cousin*.

Mary Haydock, her maiden name, was born in 1777 in Bury, near Blackburn, Lancashire. Her family seems to have been of some standing in England. Orphaned from an early age she was reared by her mother's family and received some schooling. After a break with her family she joined up with some vagabonds in the Blackburn area. She was transported to Port Jackson in 1792, after a conviction for horse stealing at the tender age of thirteen. There she married a free settler, Thomas Reibey, two years later. In 1811 her husband died leaving her alone with seven children and his business.

Her shrewd sense of acumen and her great personal qualities enabled her to live through that period and she finally emerged as one of the most influential business persons in NSW. She succeeded in leaving behind the spectre of her convict past. Probably her children never knew that their mother was an emancipist. She died in 1855 leaving behind a big and influential family and prospering business enterprises.

There are twenty six letters and one diary collected in Irvine's book. Nine of these were written by Mary Reibey herself, the others by her relations and progeny. The first letter was written in 1792 and the last in 1901. Almost half of the writings of this section, namely thirteen, were composed by women, the rest by men. Nineteen of the letters were directed to John Hope, a relation of the Reibey family in Glasgow. There are twelve letters by writers born in Australia. Nine of these come from NSW and three from Van Diemen's Land.

Only three of the letters are written in a formal style, all the others are personal in nature and reveal great personal involvement. Mary's language is the most interesting of all. She seems never to have got rid of her typically Lancashire accent and reveals this through frequent phonetic spellings. Her letters and her diary also are the most interesting as regards features of morphology and syntax. The language of the other letters is very close to Standard English. The total number of words for the letters of Mary Reibey is 13,760 with a number of unique words of 3672. For the rest of the letters the numbers are 22,979 and 3,672, respectively.

7. LETTERS FROM IRISH AUSTRALIA

These family letters collected by Patrick O'Farrell's in his book *Letters from Irish Australia* (1989) illustrate Irish migration to Australia in the nineteenth century. However, his selection of letters greatly overrepresents Irish Protestants from Ulster. This imbalance he explains by stating that the immigrants from the South, who far outnumbered those from the North, were mainly illiterate. Another reason he provides is the following:

> "The social structures governing the massive emigration from the South and South-west of Ireland were often such that not only whole families but whole districts emigrated: there was no one to write back to, or circumstances of poverty, eviction, or subsequent migration destroyed any continuity with the present that may have allowed the preservation of family correspondence. In the North, a greater locational stability and the fact that some family members more often remained, favoured more likely preservation [...]."[199]

Nevertheless the letters he presents certainly do not provide a complete picture of Irish immigration to Australia in the 1800s and need to be complemented when general matters of immigration are looked at.

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[199] O'Farrell (1989 [C]: 5).

7.1 CAMEO PORTRAITS

O'Farrell chose the term 'Cameo Portraits' for the presentation of various lives of convicts and immigrants. In the first three chapters of his book he collected letter and diary excerpts ranging in dates from 1825 to 1899 from 40 people. The topics of these letters are manifold. Most prominent among these are discussions of the life on board of the emigrant ships and of the sorrows and needs of convicts and emancipists. The fragmentary nature of these excerpts are very typical of the nature of the surviving correspondence. Leaving aside a few exceptional families we do not know very much about the personal histories of the ordinary immigrants. The view we have is at best partial, highlighting a particular event but leaving us with no information about the contexts.

There are 52 letter excerpts and diaries which altogether comprise 19,720 words. The number of unique words is 3,283.

7.2 ELIZABETH AND ALEXANDER

The 25 letter excerpts of this part of the corpus, which were all written in the years 1881 to 1883, are a vignette of the heart-warming love story between Elizabeth Mathews in Victoria and Alexander Crawford in Western Australia. Their personal backgrounds and experiences are widely different. Alexander's harsh and remote pioneering life left its mark on his letters both in style and in content. In contrast with this are Elizabeth's letters that reveal a quieter and more stable life.

Alexander's home is Belfast, Northern Ireland, and probably Elizabeth's family is also from the North. The total number of words in these letters amounts to 8,281 of which 1,512 are unique.

7.3 JAMES TWIGG

James Hamilton Twigg of Cookstown, County Tyrone, emigrated to Western Australia in 1891 at the age of seventeen. Like many Irish migrants he initially established himself with the help of relatives and friends. His ultimate dream was to own a farm and lead an independent life but this proved to be very difficult. After many years of hard drudgery and constant wandering he finally lost his fighting spirit and in 1907 went to the British colony of East Africa where he expected to succeed.

There are 60 excerpts of Twigg's letters given in O'Farrell's book. Twelve of these he directed to female relatives, mainly his sisters and cousins, and the remaining 48 he wrote back to his brothers and his father. It goes without saying that all of the letters are written in a personal style. There is a total of 20,472 words in the excerpts and 2,998 of these are unique.

7.4 THE MAXWELL BROTHERS

By far the largest section in O'Farrell's book is devoted to the biography of the Maxwell family. Their extensive correspondence, starting in 1883 and going up to 1920, was mainly conducted by the four brothers Hugh, William, James and John. The letters and O'Farrell's comments provide us with insights into diverse subjects and show the typical ups and downs of immigrant life. In order to improve the communication between the brothers and with their family in Ireland a special system for the distribution of the letters was devised by Hugh and John, the first brothers to emigrate. They wrote to each other within Australia and then sent these letters on as enclosures in their letters home. Moreover, they sent each other the family replies. This means that all the letters had multiple addressees.[200]

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[200] That this should have a bearing on the letter style was an early hypothesis which, however, failed to be substantiated by the data. The fact that the letters had multiple addressees would logically require that only topics that would be readily comprehensible to all potential recipients could be discussed. This would have necessitated

There are only 4/166 excerpts that were not written by the brothers, and only two of these four were written by a woman. Of the remaining 162 letters 29 were written by William, 36 by James, 38 by John and 59 by Hugh. The bulk of the letters, namely 154 are directed to their home farm in County Down. The remaining twelve letters the brothers sent each other within Victoria. Since all the letters were directed to family members their style is personal. Altogether, the total number of words is 41,149 of which 4,150 are unique.

Tables III.8 - III.12 below show the number of letters written in a particular period of time for the larger sections of the corpus.

Figure III.10: Dates of the Reibey letters

Figure III.11: Dates of the Cameo letters

Figure III.12: Dates of the Eliza and Alex letters

Figure III.13: Dates of the Twigg letters

Figure III.14: Dates of the Maxwell letters
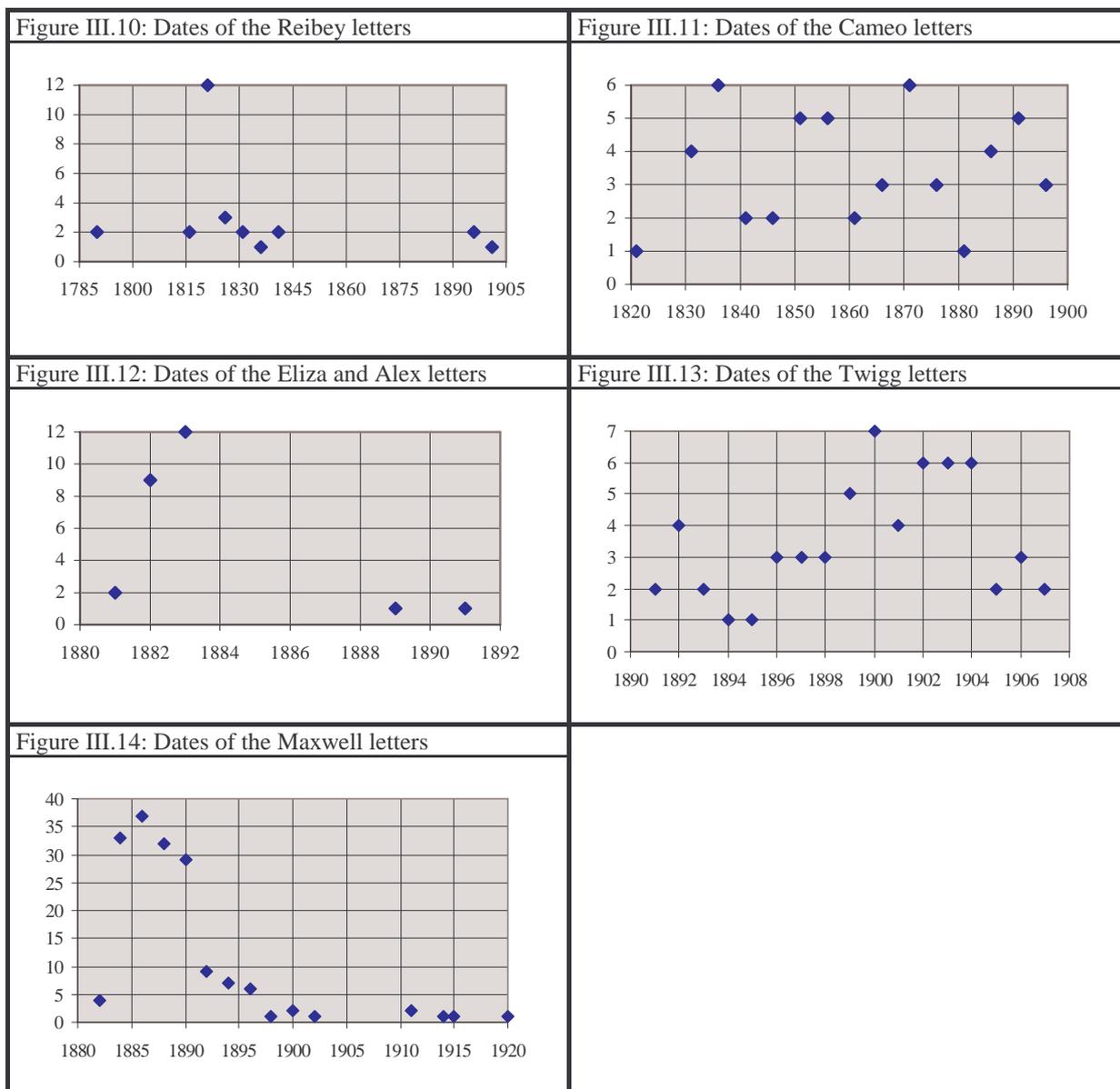
a great deal of attention devoted to the crystal-clear description of the topics that were written about together with a great deal of emphasis put on the transition points of the topics in the letters and on the ongoing argument. As it will be shown, however, this is not the case. Obviously, the Maxwell brothers do not vary in their style of writing because their letters had multiple addressees as is evident from a comparison with other letters in the corpus that had only a single addressee.

A possible explanation might be that all the people involved in this epistulary exchange were sufficiently well known to each other to justify the continued use of a very intimate and personal style. This fact then seems to have had greater weight in the minds of the letters writers than the possibility that some of the presented information could be misinterpreted or even not understood by some of the recipients.

IV Stylistic and Linguistic Analyses

The features presented in this and the following chapter are considered to belong to the individual systems of the respective writers. Consequently, the examples given reflect the linguistic competence and the grammatical system of a particular speaker. Such examples where a performance error could be suspected were therefore excluded from the study.

This chapter does not contain a comprehensive overview of all the features present in the corpus but rather highlights some which were considered to be interesting. Further study of the grammatical variables that the corpus exhibits should prove very rewarding.

As was shown in the second chapter, Australian English was unified in its lexis and pronunciation from very early on. On the other hand, the accommodation of the different individual grammatical systems can be assumed to have happened very slowly. This and the fact that the overwhelming majority of the letters in the corpus were written by recent immigrants to Australia explains why the features presented in this study are very often testimonies of English as it was spoken in Australia at that time and, apart from lexical items, not testimonies of an early unified Australian English usage. That is, they are not interesting because they are linguistic data of an early stage of a unified variety AE or because they are homogeneous prefigurations of present-day usage but because they show the variability in using the English language in Australia in the last century. Since the linguistic situation was very hetergeneous back then, the letters can be considered to be 'representative' examples of language use precisely because they do not evidence patterns that are valid for all the letter writers.

Another aspect that has to be addressed in this context is the question of the linguistic reliability of the letters, i.e. in how far they can be considered to be true expressions of the individual and dialect grammars of their writers.

In answer to this it can be said that there is no evidence for the self-editing of the letters after they were written. In the letters that were transcribed from the original there was no instance of a crossed-out word. This could lead to the assumption that these letters were written over and over again until no more 'mistakes' were found by its author. This is, however, contradicted by various statements in the letters that show that the letters were sent on immediately after their writing.

The question whether the letters in the corpus were written by those that signed it or by some other person can not be categorically answered. It seems, however, unlikely that the latter should be the case since no evidence for this was found in the letters. Apart from that, the handwriting in the original letters shows many individualistic signs and is typical for a certain writer. On the other hand, the handwriting of professional scribes would certainly have shown less individualistic and more conservative traits.

1. Stylistic Qualities

1.1 A Discussion of the Formal Letters in the Corpus

In this section the formal qualities of twelve letters from the corpus will be discussed. All of these letters have been classified as formal in style. Their corpus designations are: *Camp 1, Catch 6, Piper 2, Piper 4, Piper 5, Piper 11, Piper 12, Piper 13, Piper 14, Reibey 1, Reibey 17 and Reibey 18*.

Formal letters are distinguished from personal letters in that the conveying of a particular piece of information is always the only reason why they have been sent. Consequently, all formal letters have a certain topic that is prominent. This focusing on a

special topic can be seen in the high frequencies of words like *country* (13), *money* (8), *pay* (9), *poor* (6), *power* (9), *present* (7), *situation* (7) and *state* (12). All of these refer to some pressing circumstances that required the writing of a letter. The most frequent topics are *money* and *power*. In accordance with this is the frequent occurrence of the word *send* (28), which is used in contexts where the sending of the letter is justified or when some item had been sent along with the letter. This item then was the only reason for the sending of the letter.

The language of these letters is wordy, as can be deduced from the relatively high number of unique words, namely 1,497 in comparison with the total number, namely 5,499. This means a ratio (number of unique words : total number of) 0,303 which is remarkably high if it is, for instance, compared to the ratios of 0,183 for the Eliza and Alex section and of 0,245 for the Catchpole section.[201]

The formality of the language is also evident from the frequencies of formal forms of address like *Mr* (35), *Mrs* (10), *respect* (13) and *Sir* (28), which indicates that the relationship between the writer and the recipient of the letter is formal and not friendly. Moreover, they do not share friends whom they could address with their first names and therefore whenever someone else, apart from the writer and the addressee, is mentioned in the letter this person has to be named as 'Mr X' or 'Mrs Y'.

An investigation of the use of the pronouns also proves very interesting. The numbers for the first person pronouns (*I, my, me, our and we*) are conspicuously low (166, 66, 14, 13, 52). In fact they are considerably exceeded by the respective numbers in the Catchpole section (209, 80, 2, 1, 59) and are only slightly higher than those for the Campbell section (140, 70, 12, 11, 35). These numbers have to be brought in relation with the number of total words in these sections which are 5,499, 4,776 and 3579, respectively. This shows that the formal letters in the corpus tend to avoid constructions that require the use of first person singular pronouns. The letters are for the main part not motivated by a personal interest but by some outward necessity. If there was a personal interest it was always disguised.

The formal letters are all structured according to the following pattern: They all start with a formal address that ranges from *Sir* (5) and *Dear Sir* (5) to *Hon'ble Sir and Sirs* (1) and *Gentlemen* (1). This then is followed immediately by the statement why the letter has been written and why it has been written by this particular person:

> "Dear Sir,
> The painful task has devolved upon me of apprizing you of the death of your gallant and lamented Brother, Alexander, who was desperately wounded about eight days ago in an attack on a Stockade at some little distance from this." [Camp 1]

If a letter is a reply to another letter, the exact date of the first letter is given and a short summary of it is presented. Every effort is made to ensure that the relationship between the two letters is exactly clear. The paragraphs of the first letter are then answered in an ordered way:

> "In your second Paragraph you state, that altho you had permission for the building a vessel [...]. In your fourth paragraph you state that you have been obliged to have recourse to the Salted Pork intended for the settlements, & of your issuing mutton; but as you have omitted to send me a state of the settlement including all provisions belonging to the Crown; I am prevented from knowing exactly what you have; [...]. Your letter of the 7th is fully answered by my preceding paragraphs, and I hope the supplies now sent you will be a seasonable relief, which with what you have already may enable you to go to full allowance." [Piper 2]

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[201] Actually the ratio for the Catchpole section would be even higher if the many orthographic variants found in the Catchpole letters would not be counted as unique words. These ratios, of course, refer back to Figure III.3 in the previous chapter. Their calculation is also explained there.

After everything relating to the situation that occasioned the writing of the letter is stated and all the questions of the previous letter are answered, some petition is presented that requires the recipient to undertake a certain duty or send back some desired information:

> "i therfore Hon'ble Sirs look up to you for assistance hoping you will enable me by an order from your Hon'ble Board to receive my pay as second officer of the above mentioned Vessel during the time of my imprisonment to furnish myself with such necessarys as i am immediately in want of/ trusting in the Generosity of the Hon'able Board." [Reib 1]

The letters close with non-committal formulas like "Your most obedient, humble servant" [Piper 2] or "Thanks for disinterested kindness" [Reib 16].

1.2 OPENINGS AND CONCLUSIONS - FORMAL VS. PERSONAL

For this section all letters that are complete were adduced, viz. the Campbell letters, the Catchpole letters, the Piper letters and the Reibey letters. Altogether, they amount to a total of 55 letters.

The degree of formality of the address correlates with the personal relation of the letter writer and its recipient. The explicit naming of an addressee is significant since most formal letters refrain from this, especially when the actual reader of the letter is unknown. This can be the case when the letter is directed to an office or a bureaucratic institution.

The address with the first name, e.g. "My Dear Patrick", is undoubtedly the most personal of all and reveals an intimate relationship between the writer and the recipient of the letter. An even greater intimacy can be assumed when the first name is modified with an adjective, e.g. "My Dear old Lottie". Similarly intimate are the addresses that state how the writer and the recipient are related, e.g. "My Dear cousin".

The adjective *dear* is used ambiguously. On the one hand, it can indicate that the addressee is cordially regarded, e.g. in "My Dear Cousin", or it is used as a faded phrase of esteem that can be used in every context, e.g. in "My Dear Sir".

The closing formulas of the letters can also show how the relationship between the writer and the reader relate to each other. In personal letters the conclusion is very short, e.g. "Yours truly" and does not form a complete sentence. It can even be wholly omitted and the letter ends then very abruptly with the signature:

> "My dear aunt I hav sent you a Lock of my Darkest of my hair.
> Margaret Catchpole" [Catch 2]

Other criteria are the sending of greetings and blessings. Typical adjectives for the concluding formulas in personal letters are *loving* and *affectionate*.

In contrast to this are the qualities of the closing sentences in formal letters. They tend to be longish and always form a complete sentence:

> "With every feeling of sympathy for your loss, I am, dear Sir, your faithful and obedient servant,
> Peter Knox, Assistant Surgeon, 1st Btn Pioneers." [Camp1]

It is significant that the writer of the above letter states his official position here. By this he justifies why he has written the letter. There are no greetings and blessings to be found and typical adjectives are *humble, faithful* and *obedient*.

In conclusion it can be said that the opening and concluding formulas of a letter to a great extent mirror the relationship between the letter writer and its recipient. This relationship decides in most cases whether a letter is personal or formal, which has a bearing on its style and on its content. Personal letters, in contrast to formal letters, exhibit more dialectal and idiosyncratic use of language and are not only information-oriented but also serve other purposes.

2. LEXIS

This sub-chapter aims to give a broad overview of the vocabulary used in the corpus. It is not intended to be comprehensive but to suggest the 'flavour' of the letters. It was decided to group the words in semantic fields, which are, again, not intended to be comprehensive.

2.1 MALAPROPISMS AND ARCHAISMS

The words in this section are either performance errors or malapropisms. Following are a few typical examples.

> "Provided they are always ready & willing on all occasion to *imply* with the demands." [Piper 2][202]
> "[...] he is rather too voilent in the pulpit I am afraid it will *Ingure* his lungs." [Reib 14]
> "Now this is ever since 1st of april when he first *ingaged* that the ship should sail." [Diary]
> "The weather is very warm now about 112 degrees in the shade today and the sun is *fearful.*" [Iri 97b]
> "You doubtless know that his partner was *broken.*" [Iri 100a]
> "[...] which I had *bespoken* previously and the best I could get." [Iri 120]
> "[...] and I may be able to *assure* again some time." [Iri 202]

Since the letters of the corpus were for the most part written by 'ordinary' people hardly any archaisms can be found. Some of these had only learned to read and write relatively recently and thus were better acquainted with the spoken language of their time than with the literary traditions of English. Nevertheless, two examples were found and are printed here.

> "[...] *me thinks* it would strike them [...]." [Reib 8]
> "[...] there is nothing almost in any of the settlers' heads but some half dozen things, *to wit* sheep, wool, bullocks [...]." [Iri 41]

2.2 AUSTRALIANISMS

There is a large number of Australianisms in the corpus. They were ordered according to which spheres of life they refer to. The lists below are not complete but are intended to show how deeply the vocabulary of Australian English is ingrained in the individual vocabularies of the writers. The Australian environment forced every newcomer to adopt a large number of new words and accept that other words he already knew were used with widely different meanings. The words *bush, creek, paddock,* etc. are only the most famous of these examples. Nevertheless, the 'new chums' quickly fell into the colonial use of these words as is evident in the corpus. Thus, John Maxwell's remark on this to his brother is partly an apology and partly an explanation:

> "I have to *graft* just as hard as him - there is get out of it (please excuse slang for you will pick it up in spite of yourselves)."[203]

THE BUSH

The word *bush* is deservedly one of the most famous Australian words. It has acquired many different connotations and its combinations with other words are manifold. In the corpus we have instances of *bush life, bush fire, bushranger, bushing, bush food, bush fashion, bush farmer, bush track and bushwhacker.* Another word that epitomizes bush life in Australia and that appears in the corpus is *swag.* This is a bundle of clothes that is carried by the vagrants

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[202] The relevant words in quotes from the corpus were always italicized in order to highlight them. This was also done in all the following quotes.
[203] CD: *Iri 168a.*

which were wandering the bush in nineteenth century Australia. It acquired an almost mythical aura especially since its apotheosis in Paterson's *Waltzing Matilda*.

There are also a number of words relating to the fifth continent's unique flora and fauna. Names for the members of the first sphere are *gum tree, bardie* (a kind of grub) and *poison weed*. The latter sphere is represented in words like *laughing jackass, cockatoo, morepork, rosella, blow fly, dingo, possum* and the various names for Australia's most famous animal, the kangaroo. These are *tamar, brush or grey kangaroo, wallaby* and *boomer*.

MONEY AND WORK

These are two categories with which many of the letter writers are preoccupied. It is therefore not surprising that there is a relatively high number of dialectal words for money like *stiver*, a small Dutch coin, *pounds, beans* and *boodle*. An employment is often referred to as a *crib,* a *situation* or a *billet*, the employer being the *governor*. The last word certainly derives from the title of governor that the highest ranking representative of the British Empire held in Australia.

Hard work is called *graft* and mistakes are called *bloomers*. There is a peculiar use of the word *found* in the sense that meals and dormitories are provided for the workers.

> "My wages for a start are £1 per week and myself and horse found in all but clothes (the horse clothes himself)." [Iri 90a]

Wages are called *screw* and an incentive for a salesperson is *spiff*. Strike-breakers work as *blackleg* labourers and groups of workers are organized in *gangs*. This also relates back to the early days of the colony when chained gangs of convicts worked to build roads, etc. A very rare EngE word denoting a person who is working to make roads and canals is contained in the following quotation:

> "When I was navvying the navvies used to call me Jimmy the pony I was such a little stickler." [Iri 98]

There is a host of typically Australian words to be found in the corpus that deal with the farming experiences of the settlers. One of these is *ring-barking*. This is a practice by which the trees are killed so that the farmers had more space to put cattle or sheep on. These were herded together in *paddocks* and *runs*. A paddock, contrary to the connotations this word has in Britain, can be an extremely large field.

The new arrivals had to *peg out* some land for *selection* and had to register their claim before it was approved by the government. Other very frequent words in this context are *prospect* and *improvements*. The latter term means that the settlers were required to improve the farming suitability of the land they had bought from the government and in exchange would have to pay less for it.

The specialization into sheep farming brought with it a necessary lexical expansion in this field. Therefore, sheep of every age have special names, like, for instance *teg*, which denotes a ewe with two teeth. The quality of the wool and its accurate categorization also was of great importance. Consequently, we find words like *earthy backs* (coarse wool) and *broken fleece* (best wool). A harvest of wool, or any kind of harvest, was called a *clip*.

Horses were also extremely important in the life of Australia's outback pioneers and good riders were admired:

> "I can ride like a bushwhacker and jump my horse over fallen timber. Geoff rides a buckjumper. He is a toff at riding" [Iri 81]

The different names for horses are legion. In the corpus we have words like *nag, hack, draught stamps* or *medium draughts, cobs, colt, jibber* and *buckjumper,* which all denote horses of different sizes, ages and qualities.

HOUSE AND LIVING

The letter writers were also using distinct Australian words in the fields of eating and drinking. *Grub* and *tucker* for food are the most frequent ones and also the best known. Famous dishes were the *damper bread* and *sago burgoo porridge*.

Small hutlike buildings were called *shanties*. This could also be applied to normal houses when talked about jokingly. The verb most frequently used in the corpus to express the staying and living in a particular place which was not one's own is *to stop*.

Children can be called *nippers* and a man who deliberately lives without a wife is described as *going baching*.

CONVICT EXPERIENCES

The convict system and the flash language also added words to the stock of Australian English. These, however, are rather rare in the corpus. Unique are the uses of the verb *cadge*, which is a flash term, for begging and of the adverb *swell* meaning 'beautiful' or 'refined'. Another interesting word is *abscond*, a term previously used to decribe the flight of convicts from the settlements. *Hut-keeper, superintendant* and *overseer* are all related to the respective terms in the hierarchies of the early penal settlement. Other words that have some frequency in the corpus are *transportation, convict* and *emancipation*.

IDIOMS

Australians have a great reputation for their idioms and idioms abound in the corpus. The most colourful of these are listed below.

"[...] while they know my property is the fountains." [i.e. very rich; Reib 22]
"[...] togged up to the nines." [i.e. dressed very neatly; Iri 90a]
"[...] we took the bush for it." [i.e. to take the opportunity; Iri 93b]
"In fact it is Hobson's choice." [i.e. no choice at all; Iri 97b]
"A teaspoonful neat after meals and before going to bed will shift old Nick." [i.e. will drive away the devil; Iri 104]
"[...] to buck in [...]." [i.e. to use great force; Iri 107a]
"[...] they are tarred with the same stick." [i.e. to suffer from the same cause; Iri 131b]
"[...] she is a bit on the shelf." [i.e. a spinster; Iri 166c]
"[...] the lecture was on gossip or Mrs Grundy and her friends." [taken from the 1798 play *Speed the Plough* by Morton; Iri 177a]
"Victorian people are on the saving lines at present or in other words are whipping the cat." [i.e. they are parsimonious; Iri 197c]

ABORIGINAL WORDS

The aboriginal languages did not leave many traces in Australian English. There are, however, some words in the corpus most of which bear some relation to Aboriginal culture. Examples include *Gingie*, an evil spirit, *corroberie*, a traditional dancing ceremony, and *wana*, a digging stick. Of considerable interest were also the weapons of the Aborigines like the famous *boomerang*, which is also called *corvak* or, in Western Australia, *kylie*. A *womera* is a hollowed stick which aided the throwing of spears. Aboriginal sources also appear for place

names like *Echuca* /«tu:k«/, which means the meeting of the waters.

Aboriginal women were called *gin* or *jin* by the settlers and the males were called *bucks*. The word *bung* is derived from Australian pidgin and means that something is 'broken'

or 'finished'. Other words that were taken over into English were *humpy*, a small hut, which is derived from the Aboriginal word *yumbi*, and the verb *cooee* which is used for a long cry.

OTHER WORDS

Some interesting words do not fall into any of the above mentioned categories and, moreover, are very rare or even unique in the corpus. Among these are *show* for chance, *speal* for glib talk, usually with the aim of persuading somebody, *bunk* for bed, *crooked* for dishonest, *crammers* for lies and *sharpers* for liars and deceivers.[204]

There are also a number of Irish words and Irish related expressions to be found in the letters. There is *cruit*, which is a jug or a jar, and the *sprigs of scheilleagh*, a blackthorn stick. Another word that seems to be of Irish origin is *scobe* for a small and slim person.[205] An expressions that sounds as if it had been directly translated from Irish into English is:

"He wants to know if Mary *has mind* of the time when she learned him to knit." [Iri 143b][206]

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[204] Some of these words may be Americanisms in Australia, e.g. *bunk* or *crooked*.

[205] The word *scobe* could not be found in any of the major dictionaries. Only Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* contained a reference to a verb 'scobe' coming from the Irish language and meaning 'to hollow out'.

[206] The Irish construction expressing the meaning *remember* is *is cuimhne le*. It literally translates: 'There is memory with somebody'.

3. MORPHOLOGY

In this sub-chapter conspicuous morphological variables found in the corpus shall be presented and attempts at their explanations will be made.

3.1 WORD FORMATION

Australian English has some distinctive word formation patterns but evidence for these is scanty in the corpus. Thus, only a few examples of traditional word formation patterns will be given before we delve into the more interesting subject of extensions of meaning.

3.1.1 TRADITIONAL PATTERNS

The letters show the whole range of traditional word formation patterns. Since these are all well known only a few examples will be presented.

CLIPPINGS

"But what *came* of your pound or 25s. per day?" [Iri 43]
"[...] hard to tell what the people will do *after*. [Iri 47c]

NOUNS INTO VERBS

"[...] the Capt of the ship was here i whould have *actioned* him but he sailed the day after i came home." [Reib 3]
"This morning *breakfasted* with Mr Walter Wood." [Diary]
"The country was then *boomed* by the Australind company. [Iri 106a]
"She has just *minded* about a black lustre apron a good size at about 14 or 16 pence." [Iri 171a]

Only the examples in *Reib 3* and *Iri 171a* deserve some further explanation. They are interesting because here the 'new' verb replaced a whole phrase ('to take action against' and 'to speak one's mind'). The apparent pattern is that the noun of the phrase changes its word class into a verb and then functions as a kind of *pars pro toto* for the rest of the phrase.

PARS PRO TOTO

"[...] enclosed them to me in a *frank*." [for 'envelope'; Reib 9]
"We found water by ranging out 5 or 6 miles from the line the *dray* took." [dray serves as a pars pro toto for 'road'; Iri 93b]
"I might say that at our *social* we had more ladies than gentlemen." [Iri 162a]

ADJECTIVES INTO NOUNS

"[...] and then to Be brushed to *dead*." [Catch 2]
"[...] a man Burnt a poor woman to *dead* he cut 2 or 3 holes in har head But it ded not a-Cason har death for he Burnt the poor Crater to *dead* [...]." [Catch 3]
"[...] every *necessary* of life most exorbitantly dear." [Piper 3]

VERBS INTO PRESENT PARTICIPLE

"[...] and *wright* paper and this is sum [...]." [writing paper; Catch 4]

SUFFIXATION

"[...] which I hope you will get yourself in readi*ness*." [Iri 10]
"Lil my darling little wiff*ie* I wish I could hear these magical words [...]." [Iri 72b]
"I am going fencing as jack*aroo* or man of all works [...]." [Iri 86a]

3.1.2 EXTENSIONS OF MEANING

There seems to be some differentiation in the usage of *none, never* and *nothing*. They all have extended their meanings and trespass on each other's territory. This suggests that their usage was ambiguous and that there was no unified standard governing their usage. For instance, *none* can be used to mean *neither*, *nothing, no one* or *nobody* as in:

> "[...] young and unprotected girls for *none* of us having a brother and knowing Papa was [...]." [Reib 21]

> "[...] it given to him will go without himself rather than let another who got *none* go without." [Iri 67]

> "There is *none* here whom I would take as an intimate friend." [Iri 22]

Never can be used in the sense of *not*:

> "I hope that I will *never* die till I see her again." [Iri 10]

Nothing is also used with the meaning *not* and *nobody*:

> "However James is *nothing* green and I wrote and I told him to [...]." [Iri 100]

> "There is room enough for a dozen persons to stand but *nothing* but the engineer is allowed in." [Iri 161b]

There are also other words that are used with extended meanings. Some of these, for instance, *learn* in the sense of 'teach', are common to many dialects. Others are not as easily explained. For instance the verb *to think* can be used in the sense of *consider* and *imagine*:

> "[...] you may *think* my anxiety." [Reib 4]

> "[...] and perhaps you will *think* me an egoist for saying so." [Reib 8][207]

This sense of *think* seems incompatible with its traditional meaning because of the great uncertainty implied. Nevertheless, its apparent relation to *consider* and *imagine* made the use of it possible.

The verb *to know* also shows many extended meanings. It can be used for words like *recognize*, *get to know* and *think*. Typical examples are:

> "You wouldn't *know* me now with a big hat and a Winchester [...]." [Iri 85][208]

> "[...] when he *knew* of me getting cold." [Iri 133]

> "[He] has got into a situation long since but I don't *know* that he likes the country." [Iri 179]

Again, the semantic fields into which *to know* intrudes here are very close to its own semantic field. It could be contended that they all belong to a single large semantic field made up by several distinct but closely related fields. The core member of the whole field then would be *to know*. If then there should be an uncertainty of which word would be the most appropriate in a certain context the overall core member *know* is the word that is most likely to be chosen.

Other examples of extended meanings can be found in the metaphorical phrases "broken time" (Iri 199c) meaning 'wasted time' and "to sound somebody" in the sense of 'to introduce somebody'. The same principle as above can be applied.

A curious kind of core member seems to be the word *love* which can be used in many different contexts that all deal with intimate relationships. Thus, it can replace the nouns *affection* and *kiss*:

> "You ask me if I forget the *loves* we used to have." [Iri 77]

> "[...] now before any other others come in and we gave each other such a real *love* that it's fresh yet." [Iri 77]

All of this proves that the extension of meanings of core members of a certain semantic field can be considered to be a productive pattern in the language of the letters. In order to explain why this pattern has some prominence in the corpus we first have to realize what this in effect means. This pattern makes the vocabulary of the speakers more self-similar since core

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[207] This sense of *think* is also reported for AmE.
[208] This sense of *know* could also be due to influence from AmE.

members of semantic fields are favoured and peripheral members are avoided in effect reducing the number of words that express a similar meaning. This apparently is the main function of this pattern, which is productive even if it does increase the lexical ambiguity of the core members.

3.2 PLURALIZATION

This section deals with different kinds of plural formation. There is no overall pattern to be discerned here and therefore only various examples can be listed.

The pronoun *you* is only seldom modified, in fact there are only three instances where it does not take its standard form. The form *ye* appears twice in the corpus. Both times it has a singular meaning and is reserved for very formal contexts. This form probably has been taken over from the King James version of the Bible which also explains its use in formal contexts. The other differing form is *yous* which appears only once in an Irish letter. Interestingly, this form is also used in a singular sense, contradicting the above statement that it is a distinctly Irish form expressing plurality. In this case it seems to lay special emphasis on the address. The example is given here:

> "Susanna: you must be very careful and not Catch cold again. You must not get overheated. You must not put your hands in cold water. You must not be out in the night air and *yous* must take outdoor exercise [...]." [Iri 139c]

There is one example of the formation of a plural with *-en*, which is in accordance with a previously productive pattern in the English language which produced plural forms like *ox-en*, etc. This example is *housen*. It appears in a letter by Margaret Catchpole.

Much more frequent is the occurrence of a zero-plural. There are a number of examples where the zero-plural is caused by the existence of a preceding numeral or quantifier.

> "I shall be worth By this time *two year* I hop *two hundred pound*." [Catch 3]
> "There is quite *a lot of kangaroo* and *wallaby*." [Iri 178d]

But there are also a few examples where the zero-plural is determined by a postponed uncountable noun as in:

> "I am happy to inform you that I am master of *sixteen head of cattle*." [Iri 17]

Interesting double plurals can also be evidenced in the corpus as "a par of shoses" [Catch 4] or in:

> "My Dear uncle I recived yours I hop you hav receved Letters *twices*." [Catch 2]

In conclusion it can be said that plural formation in the letters, if looked at as a whole, is not very deviant from what is considered to be standard. On the other hand, further inquiry is likely to show that Margaret Catchpole has an individual pattern of plural formation which is indeed different in some respects.

3.3 VERB MORPHOLOGY
3.3.1 MORPHOLOGY IN THE PRESENT TENSE

The low number of instances for the omission of *-s* suffixes in the third person singular suggests a variable rule. Also, there is a very high number of omissions of this in the Catchpole section of the corpus, which indicates that her individual system of verb morphology differs from all the other writers and from the standard.

There are also a number of instances to be found in the Cameo section. But since the number of words per writer is very small it is difficult to decide whether the omission of the *-s* is a performance error or not. The only systematic relationship in the Irish letters seems to exist between the use of negated *do* and the omission of the *-s* (*doesn't => don't*). This is in accordance with Eisikovitz's (1991b: 236f) findings for present day Inner Sydney English.

The insertion of a 'hypercorrect' *-s* was only found in the Irish letters and there mostly among two individuals, namely Sampson Lawrence from the Cameo section and John Maxwell from the Maxwell section. Altogether there are only thirteen examples of such an insertion. Six of these come from letters by Sampson Lawrence and another three from letters by John Maxwell.

The high number of instances in the Lawrence letters is indeed surprising taking into account the very small number of total words in his letters. For him the insertion of a hypercorrect *-s* seems to be categorical in the first person with verbs that simply add an *-s* in the third person singular. This excludes verbs like *be, have, can,* etc. which all appear in their standard form in his letter excerpts, namely *am, have* and *can*. In addition, the rule seems not to apply if the verb is modified in some way, i.e. when it is in the past, when it takes the future aspect, when it is preceded by a modal, etc.

It is more difficult to find a rule for the instances of hypercorrect *-s* in John Maxwell's letter excerpts. The only thing all three have in common is that they all appear in clauses that are introduced with *and*. But there are a lot of counter examples where such a verb does not take an additional *-s* and consequently the conclusion must be that these are performance errors.

The form *a* + present participle, which is considered to be typical of several English dialects, occurs only very infrequently in the corpus. Interestingly, however, this item appears in letters by both Margaret Catchpole and Sampson Lawrence. In the Catchpole letters it is relatively frequent, whereas only one instance of it can be found in the excerpts by Lawrence. The latter fact is probably attributable to the small size of the Lawrence section in the corpus. The cases in the Catchpole letters apparently serve the functions of expressing the actuality of a process, i.e. that something is happening right now and that it is in some way relevant to the speaker.

"My Dear uncle I tould you I was *a going* to a farm." [Catch 2]
"[...] as my Dear aunt must be *a Giten* into years for I do not grow younger myself." [Catch 4]

Again the individual language systems of Margaret Catchpole and Sampson Lawrence were shown to be different from that of the other speakers.

3.3.2 PAST AND PERFECTIVE ASPECT

There are several patterns of past formation that deviate from the standard ways of expressing past or perfective aspect but no significant frequencies of any of the phenomena presented below were found.

Simple past can be found to be expressed by a verb that occurs in its present tense form. Although this feature is not very frequent, it consistently occurs in contexts where there is another verb that is marked for the past tense in either the same sentence or the previous sentence.

"I inquired about that man Murdoch and *find* [...]" [Reib 8]
" We took the coach for Blackburn on the 6th where we arrived about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. John Hope *accompany* us." [Reib 14]

This, in essence means, that the marking for past tense of a verb is facultative in contexts where the tense has already been marked by the previous occurrence of another verb inflected for past.

There are only a handful of instances of a regularization of verbal past forms in the corpus. Most occur in Irish letters but their very low infrequency renders any further discussion impossible. Rather, it has to be stated that the verbal morphology concerning the formation of the simple past is almost the same as in Standard English.

The formation of the past participle deviates in some letters from the standard pattern. There are a great number of examples but no generalizations seem to be possible. This and the infrequency of non-standard past participle formations restricts the analysis to the listing of the relevant examples.

In a letter by Margaret Catchpole a unique occurrence of *a* + gerund, which we already observed in her formation of the present participle, can be found:
> "My frunt teeth and a good maney of the are *a Brokin* away [...]" [Catch 3]

Other patterns evident in the corpus are the use of the infinitive in a position where one would expect a past participle to occur:
> "France and Spain appear to be in a very *disturb* state." [Piper 4]
> "But you say you are *coloniz* and say what you think [...]" [Iri 44]

There are occurrences of the use of the form reserved for simple past in analytical constructions expressing the perfective aspect. There is also the possibility of a noun replacing the standard form:
> "[...] and would have been a judge by this time if he hadn't *took* to liquor." [Iri 96a]
> "[...] since he had *went* away." [Iri 194]
> "[...] for it is now nearly Eight years since we where first *marriage* [...]" [Reib 9]

A very interesting case is the formation of the perfective aspect with *be* rather than *have* as an auxiliary. According to Tobin, the auxiliaries *be* and *have* are in a non-random distribution in their respective uses with *be* being unmarked for either process or result and *have* consequently marked for result. This he derives from their invariant meanings.[209] Therefore, it can be expected that perfect like constructions with the auxiliary *be* favour a reading that is more process oriented than result oriented. This theory is confirmed in the examples:
> "i *am* at length arrived at this place distitute of every necessary [...]" [Reib 1]
> "i will Give you Further satisfaction when i Get there and *is* settled." [Reib 2]
> "What *is* come over you for the past two or three weeks?" [Iri 69]
> "[...] and after *being* joined a year members are entitled to [...]" [Iri 173a]

Since the instances of this are so few in number and are not in any way attributable to certain individuals a further investigation of this phenomenon is not possible. It is probably the case that the influence of the standard form and the fact that the perfective aspect itself is very much result-oriented marginalized the use of *be* in such cases.

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[209] Cf. Tobin (1993 [O]: 298ff).

4. SYNTAX

4.1 DETERMINERS

Determiners are a category that is worthwhile studying in the letters mainly because there is such a high number of determiners omitted in places where Standard English would place them. This phenomenon requires some explanation.

Definite articles are used by an encoder to refer to someone or something when it is known or assumed that the decoder understands what exactly is being talked about. Thus, definite articles are used for *specific* reference.

Indefinite articles, on the other hand, are used when the encoder of a message refers to something or someone of a particular type, without highlighting some individual thing or person. Thus, indefinite articles are used for *general* reference.

The language of the letters evidences usage that is different from the above outlined standard usage. There seems to be a different system present for some individual speakers. General as well as specific references can be expressed without the placing of any kind of determiner. Where a determiner *is* placed, then, it seems to serve some additional function.

In the following a few examples will be presented that express some general quality of a person and where apparently an indefinite article is omitted. This seems to be categorical for some speakers when the noun phrase is preceded by an '*as* of quality':

"[...] and which i believe is [a] resident thier." [Reib 3]
"[...] my Wife who was [a] Widow then." [Reib 9]
"I see by yours that you have taken a situation as [a] landsteward." [Iri 108b]

Similar to the above, articles can be omitted where the abstract general or specific qualities of something or someone are seen as more important than the fact that they correspond to real entities.

"The land is too hilly and I am too far from [a] market [...]" [Iri 108b]
"The paying it is not so heavy as the getting the right kind of land and in the right place not too far from [the] railway or [a] good market I mean." [Iri 135]

The next sentences show that the placing of an article or another determiner is not obligatory where the specificity or the generality of the noun phrase is obvious:

"[...] you had not received my Letter by [the] Minerva." [Reib 11]
"[...] the Consequence is that [the] Govt. at last took notice of it". [*Government* never takes an article when the colonial government, i.e. the obvious one, is talked about; Reib 15]
"[...] as also my cousins [the] McCormacks [...]." [Iri 12b]

It is also possible for a determiner to be omitted when there are two noun phrases the first of which has already been modified by some determiner and where this modification is regarded as applying to the second noun phrase as well:

"I have sent by Mr Broadfoot our last years Almanack and [our] last Sydney Gazzette." [Reib 10]
"The moment she sees anyone or [a] dog she runs into holes till she is sure of them being gone out of sight." [Iri 47c]
"[...] but the rise in price won't make up for [the] falling off in yield." [Iri 202]

Indefinite articles can also be omitted when there is no need to stress the fact that there is only one general item being talked about.

"After i arrived i took [a] hackney coach [...]." [Diary]
"During the time they was comeing to meet me (I had taken [a] Coach and drove off for his House [...]." [Diary]

4.2 PERSONALIZATION

The extensive use of *he* and *she* for animals and inanimate nouns in Australian English has often been remarked upon but has never been investigated. The intimacy of a relationship seems to play the decisive role in this. Hence, it is not surprising that horses, which played an important role in nineteenth century Australia, are often associated with 'human' pronouns.

There are also some other animals, e.g. kangaroos and snakes, that can receive such pronouns. Again, the obvious directness of the relationship makes the personalization possible:

"My first kangaroo I shot off hand at 150 yards. *He* stood nearly 6 feet high." [Iri 85]

"[...] I killed a big snake under my bunk last night. *He* skeared six months growth out of me." [Iri 92]

As regards inanimate nouns, ships are understandably the most likely candidates to receive *he* or *she* pronouns. But there are also two other examples, namely *gold mine* and *nature*. They are similar in that they denote the work places of a miner and of a farmer. Since both groups had to toil very hard to achieve something it is understandable that they should have formed an intimate relationship with their respective work places, which explains how these could be personalized.

Another example of personalization is the replacement of 'impersonal' pronouns like *one* and *you* by the gender marked pronouns *he* and *she*. This is a frequent phenomenon in the corpus in longer constructions that necessitate the use of more than one pronoun. If the sentence is meant to be general in its meaning it always starts out with an impersonal *one* or *you* and in every following slot where a pronoun has to be placed the personal pronoun *he* or *she* is inserted. The reason for this is not entirely clear but probably is to be found in the psyche of the letter writers. Some of these were ill-educated and writing was a new skill for them. Consequently, constructions that are typical for written language, in opposition to the constructions used in spoken language, were unavailable. Therefore, the unfamiliar impersonal pronouns were replaced by the more gender-marked pronouns after their first occurrence:

"*One* feels so lonely, so solitary, as in one step *he* leaves behind all *his* friends, new and old, and abandons all his prospects [...]." [Iri 22]

"[...] *one* hasn't got heart to cook an edible supper and just has some bread and butter (if *he* has butter) and goes to bed [...]." [Iri 103b]

"No doubt *one* could bring a considerable sum of money about *his* person in safety. [...]. When *one* has not the money about *him* (but sent on by the banking company) *he* has not the care of it on *his* mind. Of course *one* must carry enough to meet all expenses on the journey which often runs up more than *he* first counts upon." [Iri 155]

4.3 RELATIVE CLAUSES

There are a number of instances where a relative pronoun is absent even when it is the subject of the following clause.

Two instances of this can be found in the Catchpole letters and seven in the Mary Reibey letters and diary. The total number of instances is nineteen. These are clearly not performance errors but evidences of a different individual system.

Shnukal (1989), as was shown above, lists four types of matrix sentences where the deletion of the pronoun is possible even if it is the subject of the following clause. These are graded according to the frequency with which they favour the deletion. Seven examples from the corpus correspond to Shnukal's highest ranking matrix sentence, three to the third ranking and 6 to the fourth ranking. The other four examples do not fall into any of these patterns and do not appear to have anything in common. This result to some extent corroborates Shnukal's

findings, although it has to be admitted that the number of examples in the corpus is very low and that only two individuals in the corpus evidence this feature to some extent.

Table IV.1:

Shnukal[210]	Matrix sentence	Examples
1	*there* + *be* + NP	7
2	NP + *have* + NP	0
3	*it* + *be* + NP	3
4	NP + *be* + NP	6

Examples for such sentences are:

"Their is no person on this earth has a more sincere regard for his welfare than I have." [Matrix 1; Reib22]

"It was he engaged me and indeed [...]." [Matrix 3; Iri 137]

"I have just received a letter from her by a vessel arrived this Evening from Sydney." [Undecided; Reib 15]

A possible explanation of this phenomenon, which would have to be subject to further inquiry into the nature of deletion of relative pronouns in subject and in object position, would be the following: The writers do not seem to distinguish between relative pronouns in subject and object position but only between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses. That means that the relative pronoun can be omitted in restrictive clauses whereas it can not be omitted in non-restrictive clauses disregarding the function of the pronoun in the relative clause.

4.4 ABSENCE OF *DO*-SUPPORT

There is a tendency in the writings of Hugh and John Maxwell to avoid the use of periphrastic *do* in longer constructions. This could be explained as a device to simplify the formal constructions of written language. Another possible explanation which seems more likely is an Irish substratal influence in the language of these writers. Examples of this are also to be found in other letters but only in one instance was it used by a speaker with a non-Irish background, namely Mary Reibey:

"A selector of Government land *has not* to pay all the money at first [...]." [Iri 135]

"Although we *have not* a long day [...]." [Iri 138a]

"It requires capital and we *have not* that at our disposal owing to [...]." [Iri 160a]

4.5 TOPICALIZATION

The majority of the letter writers use syntax which often fails to correspond to the prescriptive rules of traditional grammarians. The syntax that can be found in the letters is extremely variable and seems to be adapted more to some immediate purpose than to an abstract norm.

Immediate purposes that are apparently strong enough to force a break-up of the 'normal' sentence patterns are the emphatic fronting of items or the adherence to a theme-rheme structure, which means that phrases that contain an already known information are fronted. Examples of this are extremely rare in Standard English but relatively frequent in the corpus:

"Mr P. Broadfoot I have not seen by reason of my being here when he [...]." [emphasis; Reib 9]

"Your Communication with Sir Thomas Brisbane respecting the Eclipse I am exceedingly obliged for." [emphasis; Reib 15]

"Hunting the kangaroo with dogs I never cared for." [theme-rheme; Iri 118]

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[210] The number given in this column refers back to Shnukal's grading number for the productivity of a certain matrix sentence. See also Table II.10.

The fronting of whole phrases for reasons of emphasis is a well-known though hardly ever used pattern. The fronting of phrases to express a theme-rheme structure in the sentence is less well known and even less frequent. Both have in common that whole phrases are fronted without changing anything in the structure of the fronted phrase.

In the corpus there are examples of fronting that occur *within* phrases and thus the items fronted receive special marking. Again, the function of this fronting can be either emphasis or the adherence to a theme-rheme structure.

> "It was a struggle to keep *money enough* together to pay for them [...]." [emphasis; Iri 202]
> "I have to *again recommend* you to try the leghorn fowls." [theme-rheme; Iri 205]
> "[...] as I intend *someday going squatting* [...]." [emphasis; Iri 209]

4.6 CONJUNCTIONS

The use of conjunctions in the language of the letters does not conspicuously differ from their standard use. Apart from the fact that there is a use of conjunctions that only superficially links two otherwise unrelated statement there are only particular uses of *and* and *so* that deserve a deeper probing.

The conjunction *and* serves, in the grammars of a number of writers, the function of logically combining two statements with the second statement expressing the reason why the first statement should hold true. In these cases it can be paraphrased as *since, if* or *in order to*.

> "I would greatly appreciate any kindness in the way of woollen socks and brown flannel shirts. The former can not be had in Australia; I mean such as I wore at home *and* I find the wool is unobtainable in that heavy quality." [Iri 102c]
> "It is people's own fault if they get treated with disrespect *and* their conduct the cause." [Iri 153]
> "John says quite coolly they have to watch *and* not kill any of them [...]." [Iri 158]

Apart from that, the conjunction *so* is used in the letter excerpts by William Quinn [Iri 55a,b] as a causal and temporal relator, but the temporal relation clearly takes precedence over the causal relationship between the two statements. The overall binding strength is not very great.

> "It was with the shipping that the strike first started as the sailors were all union men *so* then the ship owners got blackleg labour to run the boats, *so* the coal miners would not let the boats get coal, *so* steam boats and railways have been stopped." [Iri 55a]

There is a single example of the conjunction *that* used in the sense of 'if' or 'whether':

> "[He] has got into a situation long since but I don't know *that* he likes the country." [Iri 179]

4.7 CONCORD

The question of verbal concord is an interesting one to ask in this context since the corpus has many instances where the standard rules of concord are not observed. It is, moreover, possible to categorize and explain many of the examples.

There are diverse patterns that explain why there is no verbal concord in a particular sentence. The first to be presented here is the lack of concord in sentences which have instances of *there is/was/has*.

> "[...] *theire is* great alterations here." [Reib 14]
> "[...] was saying that *there was* no markets or fairs." [Iri 131b]
> "*There has* been about 1,500 men left the Hill since the strike." [Iri 55b]

As it is apparent from the examples the phrase *there is/was/has* seems to have been grammaticalized by these speakers. They no longer consider it to denote the existence of a

single item but as a general marker of existentiality, regardless of the number of the items that are spoken about. This is in accordance with Eisikovitz's (1991b: 242ff) findings for Inner Sydney English.

The rules of verbal concord are also not adhered to when the writer sees the nouns as being collective, i.e. when he emphasizes that they have something in common and consequently feels that they must be addressed in their entirety and not in their individuality:

"For the hole passingers *is* put into seventeen messes [...]" [Iri 20]

"[...] figs and reasons for those that *is* sick." [Iri 20]

"But Ireland is no place to make money though times *is* very good." [Iri 42]

"If my health keeps good I expect to have a bit more wages before *one twelve month* comes round." [Iri 139c]

This remarkable extension of what can be regarded as a collective noun in Australian English has already been hinted at in section II.5.3.2. Other prominent examples of collective nouns in the corpus are *government, family, places, pieces, country, party, aristocracy* and *stock*. There is an interesting example where the noun *colonial* is used as a collective noun for Australians and as denoting a single member of that collective:

"The *colonial* when training *thinks they* are doing great things when *they take* a fresh colt and mounts him [...]" [Iri 168b]

Some examples seem to lack concord since, despite the fact that there are several people mentioned, only one person is considered to be important and so the verb takes a singular ending and not, as would be expected, the plural.

"[...] he his mother and wife *was* up with us lately." [Reib 22]

"[...] that they were looking for a situation as a married couple and *is* stopping in Mr. Hanna's." [Iri 188]

"After all that James and Maggie *has* done for them she has not forgot to speak [...]." [Iri 195b]

In the letters of Mary Reibey many examples of a plural sense of auxiliary *was* can be found. It is evident that for her *was* is not marking the singular but only marking past:

"During the time *they was* comeing to meet me (I had taken Coach and drove off for his House [...]." [Diary]

"[...] and *they was* admitted and was confirmed with about 300 more males and females." [Diary]

"During the time we were at Blackburn *we was* divided betwixt [...]." [Diary]

5. EVIDENTIALITY - ELIZABETH AND MARGARET

This sub-chapter provides a detailed analysis of the way evidentiality is dealt with in the letters of Elizabeth Mathews and Margaret Catchpole. The writings of these two individuals were selected since they were judged to be rewarding in respect to the study of evidentiality. Apart from that they were considered to be comparable since they were about the same size, namely 3,317 words in Elizabeth's writings and 3,428 words in Margaret's writings.

The aim of this analysis is to show that the psycholinguistic individual systems of two individuals, that are comparable in many respects, can be radically different. This is intended to further the claim of the heterogeneity in the use of the English language in nineteenth century Australia. In this sense this investigation is a valid study of historical stages of AE and of AE in general.

Chafe (1986[O]) provides the theoretical basis for this part of the present study. He investigates different spheres of evidentiality. These spheres are: *Degrees of Reliability, Belief, Induction, Sensory Evidence, Hearsay Evidence,*[211] *Deduction, Hedges* and *Expectations*. All of these can be subsumed under the category of attitudes towards knowledge. Chafe's data come from a corpus of spoken dinnertable conversations and written academic writings.[212] From his findings he concludes that the two modes of communication do not differ in the frequency of expressing evidentiality but in what words and phrases were used to do this.[213] Since Chafe lists all the words that are used when a certain attitude towards knowledge is stated and then provides their mean occurrence per thousand words it was possible to compare the respective frequencies for these with the findings from the writings of Elizabeth and Margaret.

5.1 DEGREES OF RELIABILITY

Degrees of reliability are expressed by words like *maybe, certainly, might, may, possibly, surely, probably* and *undoubtedly*. As can be seen from Table IV.2 there is a great difference in the mean occurrence of such words between Elizabeth and Margaret. This shows Elizabeth to be much more concerned with qualifying the reliability of information than Margaret, who mainly writes about things she knows about very well. The mean occurrences for Chafe's corpus of spoken language (CSL) do not add to our understanding here.

Table IV.2: Words expressing degrees of reliability[214]

	Elizabeth	Margaret	Chafe
Total # of occurrences	21	6	-
Mean occurrence	6.33	1.75	4.6

5.2 BELIEF

Chafe lists the phrases *I think, I suppose* and *I guess* as indicating that a speaker knows something which is not solely based on evidence. Again, Elizabeth can be shown to have much higher frequencies indicating that for her matters of belief are more important than for Margaret. The latter is obviously less interested in the discussion of things she does not

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[211] The question of Hearsay Evidence has not been included in the discussion below since the overall numbers for the Elizabeth and the Margaret letters were too low to justify their evaluation.

[212] The written part of Chafe's corpus will be excluded from the discussion since the numbers Chafe gives for it did not seem to contribute to the explanation of the numbers from the Australian corpus.

[213] Cf. Chafe (1986 [O]: 262).

[214] The column 'Chafe' refers to the numbers Chafe (1986) gives for the occurrences of words in the dinnertable conversations.

exactly know. Surprisingly, both writers exhibit a lower mean occurrence than Chafe's numbers for his CSL. This means that both are less likely to talk about matters of belief than Chafe's informants and renders the very low frequency for Margaret even more striking.

Table IV.3: Phrases expressing belief

	Elizabeth	Margaret	Chafe
Total # of occurrences	9	2	-
Mean occurrence	2.73	0.58	3.6

5.3 INDUCTION AND DEDUCTION

The words that indicate that an inductive reasoning forms the basis of a statement are given by Chafe as *must, seem to, obvious* and *evidently*. Elizabeth has a very high number of these and even Margaret exhibits many occurrences, especially when these numbers are compared with the findings in Chafe's CSL. The comparison of the mean occurrences for Elizabeth and Margaret show that Elizabeth is much more inclined to make inductive reasoning the basis for a statement. This is in line with her preference for questions of reliability.

Table IV.4: Words expressing inductive reasoning

	Elizabeth	Margaret	Chafe
Total # of occurrences	19	7	-
Mean occurrence	5.73	2.04	1.3

Related to this is the expression of knowledge that is based on deductive reasoning, i.e. a prediction of what will count as evidence. Words that mark this are *can, could, would* and *presumably*.[215] Elizabeth is shown to excessively use deductive reasoning whereas Margaret is more in line with Chafe's findings. It is obvious that Elizabeth does not only very much differ from Margaret in her use of knowledge derived from deductive conclusions but that her preference for this sphere of evidentiality seems highly idiosyncratic. Her very high number of mean occurrences in this field becomes, however, better understandable if the contents of her writings are looked at. Her letters are love letters to Alexander Crawford and accordingly contain much writing about their common future in the form of:

"It will be very awkward to bring furniture so far, it would need to be very carefully packed." [Iri 75a]

Table IV.5: Words expressing deductive reasoning

	Elizabeth	Margaret	Chafe
Total # of occurrences	40	12	-
Mean occurrence	12.05	3.50	4.4

5.4 SENSORY EVIDENCE

Evidence in this sphere is based on sensory observations and consequent reasoning. Chafe's examples of words used in this context include *see, hear, feel, looks like, sounds like* and *feels like*. The relatively high frequency of such words in the letters of Elizabeth shows that she is very responsive to her natural environment. All eight instances occurred with the verb *feel* showing that her heart is her primary 'sensory' organ.

Margaret shows a very high number of words referring to sensory evidence. Most of these (10) are related to what she read in the letters she received. Evidence gathered from such correspondence seems very important to her.

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[215] Only those instances of *can, could* and *would* were counted that related to a deductive reasoning.

Table IV.6: Words expressing sensory evidence

	Elizabeth	Margaret	Chafe
Total # of occurrences	8	14	-
Mean occurrence	2.41	4.08	1.1

5.5 HEDGES AND EXPECTATIONS

Hedges are words that express certain reservations about the matching of a piece of knowledge with a category. Typical words given by Chafe are *about*, *sort of* and *kind of*. The numbers for Elizabeth and Margaret are very small compared to Chafe's data from the CSL. This shows that whatever Elizabeth and Margaret are saying, they are very definite about its assignment to a certain category.

Table IV.7: Words expressing hedges

	Elizabeth	Margaret	Chafe
Total # of occurrences	5	3	-
Mean occurrence	1.51	0.86	3.6

The last attitude towards knowledge that will be presented here is the matching of expectations with knowledge. Words that signal such expectations are, according to Chafe, *of course, at least, even, only, but, however, nevertheless, actually, in fact* and *oddly enough*. It is evident that both writers do this to some extent but their numbers lag considerably behind Chafe's data.

Table IV.8: Words expressing expectations

	Elizabeth	Margaret	Chafe
Total # of occurrences	42	36	-
Mean occurrence	12.66	10.50	17

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

Elizabeth and Margaret were shown to be very different in their expression of evidentiality which allows an insight into their minds and, consequently, into their individual linguistic systems.

Margaret is a 'down-to-earth' person that hardly ever talks about potential or reasoning. She is preoccupied with the question of how to cope with the realities of her present life and shows little interest in future possibilities. The only kind of knowledge she is interested in is very exact and undeniable knowledge. Her family seems to be her major point of reference and knowledge about her family is eagerly sought for.

Elizabeth, on the other hand, is a 'dreamer'. She is not content with her present situation and is constantly looking forward to some rosy future potentialities. She is very interested in the establishment of knowledge and its reliability. This knowledge she then uses for predictions about her future. She is very sensitive to outside influences which she relates to her own feelings.

Both share the feature that they relatively infrequently rely on hedges to explain why some piece of knowledge does not exactly fit into a given category and that they seldom match their previous expectations with some later acquired knowledge.

These findings show that the expression of evidentiality is highly individualistic, which again provides counter-evidence to the erroneous assumption that AE had a grammatically unified system in the nineteenth century. This supports the hypothesis that AE was a dialect early unified in the fields of lexis and pronunciation but not necessarily in grammar.

6. MODALITY - A COMPARISON WITH PRESENT-DAY USAGE

In this sub-chapter a comparison of the features as outlined in II.5.2 with findings from the corpus will be presented. It was hypothesized that the congruence as well as the incongruence of features deserve close scrutiny since this should tell us whether and to what extent the English spoken in nineteenth century Australia prefigures present-day usage.

It will be shown that the use of modal verbs in the letters bear indeed some resemblance to Collin's findings. This suggests that this part of the grammatical system of AE was probably relatively uniformly used by speakers of English on Australian soil. This could be explained in two ways: (1) The use of modal verbs was relatively uniform among the various English speech communities from the beginning and thus did not have to adapt to any greater extent or (2) this part of the grammatical system is easily accommodated to by the majority of speakers and therefore relative uniformity was achieved at an early stage. An important proviso here is, however, that statistical studies like this can sometimes hide highly idiosyncratic usage and therefore the findings here must be complemented by studies of individual use.[216]

6.1 CAN, COULD, MAY AND MIGHT

In this sub-section the frequencies of the modal verbs *can, could, may* and *might* will be given and compared with Collins' (1988) findings.

The raw frequencies for the modals *can, could, may* and *might* in the corpus and in Collins (1988) are remarkably similar. Only the use of *may* is considerably less frequent today which is countered by a respective increase in the frequency of *can*.

In the following the different uses of *can* are listed. Significant changes in the frequencies of Permission (PE) and Ability (A) are apparent, with the former greatly extended in present-day usage and the latter respectively decreased. Collins[217] found this use of *can* as denoting PE found to be at variance with the findings in the British study he looked at. The rise of the frequencies for Root Possibility (RP) and Epistemic Possibility (EP) are only due to the higher number of instances of *can* in Collins (1988). The high number of Indeterminate Cases (I) suggests that there are many cases where it was not possible to attribute a definite meaning to an instance of *can*. This could hint at some possible ongoing change back then and nowadays..

Table IV.9: *Can*: meanings in the corpus and in Collins (1988)

	PE	RP	A	EP	I	Total
Corpus	5	212	183	2	23	425
Collins	74	343	196	6	29	648

The numbers in Table IV.10 suggest that the frequencies for the different meanings of *may* have stayed very stable. There is only a slight decrease in the numbers for PE, which is explicable through the fact that *can* is increasingly used in this function today, and a slight increase in the numbers for EP. The latter observation affirms that *can* was and still is the primary modal for the expression of Root Possibility ('it is possible for') and *may* the primary modal for Epistemic Possibility ('it is possible that'). Again, the high number of instances of indeterminate forms is notable.

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[216] This was not yet attempted in the present work but will be addressed in a follow-up study.
[217] Cf. Collins (1988: 272).

Table IV.10: *May*: meanings in the corpus and in Collins (1988)

	PE	RP	EP	I	Total
Corpus	30	33	125	19	207
Collins	16	28	111	14	169

Inspection of Table IV.11 reveals that the frequencies for the different uses of *could* in the corpus and in Collins' (1988) study of present-day Australian usage are also very similar. Still there are some notable findings. We can observe an increased use of *could* in the function of expressing PE, which is related to the numbers for *can*. The frequencies for the expression of A are, as in Table IV.9, very much reduced, an interesting phenomenon that the present study can not give an explanation for.

The increased numbers for Past RP do not seem to be significant since they correspond to a relative decrease in the numbers for Hypothetical RP. These differences only tell us that Collins' informants were more likely to refer to Past RPs than to Hypothetical RPs. The same holds true for the numbers of Past and Hypothetical EP. It is notable that the EP meanings have comparatively high frequencies in the corpus especially in comparison with the British and American studies Collins[218] quotes.

Table IV.11: *Could*: meanings in the corpus and in Collins (1988)[219]

	Past				Hypothetical					
	PE	RP	A	EP	PE	RP	A	EP	I	Total
Corpus	0	27	60	3	1	106	50	38	10	295
Collins	12	64	69	12	6	108	20	38	23	352

The findings for the frequencies of *might* are remarkable. Apart from the fact that the frequency in its uses for PE is very much decreased, which was to be expected, the frequencies in its uses for EP became predominant. It can be contended that *might* gave way to *can* and *could* in its denotation of RP and specialized in the expression of EP which is confirmed by Collins, who claims this to be further advanced in AE than in EngE.[220]

Table IV.12: *Might*: meanings in the corpus and in Collins (1988)

	Past			Hypothetical				
	PE	RP	EP	PE	RP	EP	I	Total
Corpus	2	2	1	10	26	44	5	90
Collins	0	1	17	1	22	114	2	157

In conclusion, it can be said that there are two trends to be discerned. First, there is an increased use of *can* and *could* for PE which corresponds to a decreased use of *may* and *might* in this function. Second, the modal *might* seems to increasingly specialize itself in expressing

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[218] Cf. Collins (1988: 279f).

[219] Since the distinction between the use of *could* as denoting a Hypothetical Epistemic Possibility and as denoting a Present Epistemic Possibility was not considered to contribute to the explanation of the apparent changes these two uses were subsumed under the category of Hypothetical Epistemic use. The same reasoning applies to Table IV.12.

[220] Cf. Collins (1988: 282f).

EP. The overall picture, however, seems to be one of remarkable stability. The use of epistemic *could* can be considered to be an early 'Australianism'.

6.2 OBLIGATION AND NECESSITY

The numbers from the corpus will be compared here with Collins (1991a). Again, it will be differentiated between an epistemic use (EM; Certainty, Epistemic Necessity) and a root use (RM; Obligation). A look at Table IV.13 reveals that all modal verbs presented evidenced a relative decrease in their usage due to the corresponding rise of the modal-like construction *have to*.

Table IV.13: Occurrences of *must, should, ought, need* and *have (got) to* in the corpus and in Collins (1991a)

	must	should	ought	need	have to	have got to	Total
Corpus	177	178	22	22	3	92	494
Collins	176	160	12	5	149	98	600

The next table shows the interesting fact that the frequencies of the different uses of the modal *must* in Collins (1991a) and in the corpus are very similar. The relatively low numbers of root usages in the corpus are attributable to the text genre. Collins tentatively claims that they are generally very low in AE because of the egalitarian approach Australians take.

Table IV.14: *must*: meanings in the corpus and in Collins (1991a)

	RM	EM	I	Total
Corpus	57	110	10	177
Collins	63	106	7	176

A very intriguing fact is revealed in Table IV.15. It shows that the use of the modal-like construction *have got to* rose from a very low frequency in the language of the letters to a very high frequency in today's AE. This 'intrusion' represents a remarkable success story, especially since there were already other modals like *must* and *should* that also represented RM. It can be assumed that the rise *of have got to* is related to the rise of *have to* because of their phenotypical similarities. This correlation was perhaps also the reason why the epistemic uses of *have to*, which are next to non-existent in constructions with *have got to*, decreased in frequency.

Table IV.15: *have (got) to*: meanings in the corpus and in Collins (1991a)

	Have to		Have got to			
	RM	EM	RM	EM	I	Total
Corpus	68	24	2	1	0	95
Collins	142	6	98	0	1	247

The last table shows that there was a remarkable change in the preferred uses of *should* from the language of the letters to present-day usage. Apparently, its use in expressing EM is very rare nowadays in AE. Remarkably high, on the other hand, are the frequencies for the use

of *should* in expressing RM. This surprising fact also contrasts with the findings in the British and American studies quoted in Collins.[221] No definite explanation for this phenomenon can be given. It might, however, be suggested that this glaring difference could be attributed to the differences in the text genres on which the corpora of the two studies are based. The correspondences were mostly conducted by socially equals making the expression of RM meanings unlikely.

Table IV.16: *should*: meanings in the corpus and in Collins (1991a)

	RM	EM	Quasi-subjunctive	I	Total
Corpus	56	115	3	4	178
Collins	135	16	6	3	160

Overall, a look at the modals of Necessity and Obligation shows two intriguing trends. First there is the rise of the construction *have got to* in present-day Australian usage and second there is the obscure fact that *should* changed its role from a modal that in most instances expressed an epistemic meaning to a modal that primarily denotes root meaning.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

The comparison of some modal verbs from the corpus with investigations of their usage in present-day AE yields some interesting results. Especially, if it is maintained that the modal system present in the letters are to some extent representative of the usage of modal verbs in nineteenth century AE.

There are several trends to be discerned. The most obvious is the rise of the modal-like construction *have got to* expressing primarily Root Obligation. This change, remarkably enough, did affected the frequencies of the other modal verbs expressing necessity and obligation but not their use. This outstanding phenomenon still demands a satisfying explanation.

Other interesting facts are the relatively high frequencies for a PE meaning of *can* and *could* and the low frequencies for a root reading of *must* which both studies share and which set them apart from present-day EngE and AmE usage. This argues for a close connection between the English the letter writers evidence and present-day AE.

Despite the obvious differences in the use of modal verbs in the language of the letters and in Collins (1988, 1991a), the modal systems evidenced in the two corpora seem to be relatively similar.

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[221] Cf. Collins (1991a: 161).

V THE LETTERS BETWEEN ORALITY AND LITERACY

This chapter discusses the question to what extent the writers of the letters were aware of the standards of written language and what standards they used when they wrote their letters. A comprehensive approach will be taken that is intended to uniformly explain the phenomena as evidenced in the letters. The sub-chapters 1, 2 and 3 form the theoretical basis for the presentation of the examples in sub-chapter 4.

1. ENCODING VS. DECODING

The principle of human efficiency states that a minimal effort will be used to achieve maximum results. This has implications for the encoder as well as for the decoder of an utterance. For the encoder this means a preference for linguistic signs and constructions that are very open, i.e. ambiguous, in their meaning. This, however, poses difficulties for the decoder, who prefers very closely defined signs and constructions. An utterance can then be said to follow the principle of human efficiency when it uses signs and constructions that are on the one hand easily encodable, because they are very open and familiar, and on the other hand easily decodable, because the signs and constructions used are sufficiently closely defined.

The application of this principle is modified by the amount of knowledge the participants of a conversation share. Thus, if, for example, the knowledge shared between the conversants is very great, it will be possible for the hearer/reader of an utterance to successfully decode an utterance even if the signs and structures used are relatively ambiguous and if it contains only minimal or no linguistic cues.[222] This means that a great amount of shared knowledge makes the ambiguous encoding of an utterance possible without endangering its comprehensibility.

It is the balanced equilibrium between the above mentioned principle and the amount of shared knowledge that governs the successful encoding and decoding of an utterance possible. Halliday and Hasan (1985) succinctly express this in the sentence: "[...] the text creates the context as much as the context creates the text."[223]

2. SHARED KNOWLEDGE

The amount of shared knowledge was shown to be a major factor in an act of communication. Two types will be distinguished here. The first is the previous knowledge of the conversants, the second is the knowledge that is situationally bound, which is tied in with the knowledge that is acquired in the course of a conversation.

2.1 PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

Previous knowledge about a particular topic is due to the factors of a shared *cultural* and a shared *personal knowledge*.

Two speakers can be said to share the same *cultural knowledge* if they were raised and educated in the same culture, e.g. the culture of Western Europe.

The second factor is the *personal knowledge* of the conversants about each other's lives. This sphere of knowledge is dependent on the intimacy and on the duration of the relationship between the speakers.

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[222] Such cues are, e.g. pro-forms, aspect markers, etc.
[223] Halliday and Hasan (1985 [O]: 47). Text in this sense is not only a written text but any linguistic encoding of a meaning regardless of its medium.

2.2 SITUATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The term *situation* is here meant to refer to two distinct planes of knowledge, namely the knowledge about the *context* and about the *co-text* in which the communication takes place.

Context in this sense means that the conversants share, to some greater or lesser extent, the knowledge about the reasons and the background that lead to the conversation. Moreover, it refers to knowledge about the natural environment in which the communication takes place, e.g. about the time of day and the space the two speakers may be in.

On the other hand, the term *co-text* here refers to knowledge that has been acquired by the speakers in the course of the communication.

3. SPOKEN VS. WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Spoken[224] and written language share the same principles that govern the formation of an utterance as outlined in V.1. They differ, however, in the weight they assign to these. This is due to the following historical and linguistic reasons.

The conditions governing the amount of shared *previous knowledge* are the same for both modes of communication. They differ, however, in their amount of *situational knowledge.* Knowledge of situational *context* is greater in face-to-face communication.

The encoding and decoding of an utterance can be assisted by extra-linguistic means in spoken language. This, in effect, can increase the amount of acquired *co-textual knowledge* and hence enables the encoder to be more ambiguous in the use of signs and structures and to omit otherwise necessary pro-forms. Since this is not possible in written language more effort is required to encode an utterance in a very clear and disambiguous way. Written communication also requires verbalization of all information to be conveyed.

In spoken language it is possible for the decoder of a message to immediately signal the encoder that a message has not been understood. This system of immediate checks, which also adds to the shared *co-textual* knowledge of an act of communication, makes it possible to use structures and signs that are possibly ambiguous or to place a minimal number of linguistic cues from which conclusions can be drawn, since the ultimate comprehensibility of an utterance is still ensured.

In sum, it can be contended that in written communication the amount of shared situational knowledge is generally smaller than in spoken communication.[225] This leads to the fact that written language has to place more linguistic cues, like pro-forms, existential markers, punctuation markers etc., and that it has to use signs and structures that are less ambiguous.

There is, however, another difference between spoken and written language. In face-to-face communication the ambiguity of the signs and structures used varies according to the amount of shared previous and situational knowledge. This is not the case in written language. Here the placing of the maximum amount of linguistic cues and the use of completely unambiguous signs and structures is obligatory, because the amount of shared knowledge,

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[224] It will not be attempted to provide a comprehensive overview of the differences between the standards of spoken and written language. Only those features will be listed that were considered to be of relevance to the explanation of the examples from the corpus given in sub-chapter 4.

What is being said about spoken language in this section refers only to face-to-face communication and is not intended to include spoken conversation by phone or by radio.

[225] This statement holds true only if the mode of communication is the sole distinguishing factor, i.e. that the same conversations between the same two people about the same topics are compared.

irrespective of its actual amount, is assumed to be minimal. This seems to be due to historical reasons.

Writing was an invention of a society that had a need for language to exist as a product apart from language that was only happening as a process. These societies needed texts that could be referred to over and over again. Therefore, the exact transcription of a text and the exact copying of formulas along with very careful wording were considered to be obligatory.[226] This function of written language necessitated a very strictly prescribed use of linguistic signs and structures as well as exact rules for the placing of linguistic cues.

Since modern Western societies, as has already been stated above, learned to write through Latin, it is not surprising that they also took over its literary conventions. These were known from many letter-writing manuals that taught proper writing. These books were the principal carriers of the Latin literary tradition, and it was in imitating the examples in these books in the vernacular languages that the literary tradition of the societies of Western Europe evolved.[227] Therefore, it is understandable why, apart from the inherent qualities of written language as discussed above, the use of unambiguous structures and the *when* and the *where* of the placing of linguistic cues are very strictly regulated for historical reasons.

4. EVIDENCE FROM THE CORPUS

The majority of the letter writers in the corpus evidence a use of language that reveals that they were unaware of the traditional conventions of written language or that they were at least unwilling to follow them. Some had probably only very recently learned to read and write and consequently had not been exposed to the standards of written language to a greater extent. This explains why the writers of the letters and diaries in the corpus imported many familiar structures from their use of spoken language to the unfamiliar written mode of communication.

The overall hypothesis that guides the explanation of the examples given below is the following: Spoken language has a more variable use of signs, structures and linguistic cues than written language. That means that the placing of pro-forms and existential markers as well as the use of more or less ambiguous signs and structures is not strictly prescribed by external rules but is related to the actual amount of shared knowledge. If, consequently, the amount of shared knowledge is very great and it is thus, for instance, possible to leave slots for pro-forms empty without endangering the comprehensibility of the statement, the placing of these pro-forms is facultative but not obligatory in spoken language. This is not the case in standard written language where such use is strictly regulated regardless of the amount of knowledge shared. The distinct quality of the language of the letters that brings it close to spoken language is that they show a variable use of these factors which are directly related to the amount of shared previous and situational knowledge. That means that the more knowledge is shared between the writer and the recipient of a letter the more ambiguous structures, signs and linguistic cues are used and *vice versa*. It can, thus, be stated that there is an *iconic* connection between the categories of *shared knowledge* and *ambiguity*.

There are three distinct qualities apparent in the letters that show the language used to be closer to the standards of spoken language than to the standards of written language. The first is the use of interjections and tag questions, the second the use of unembedded and content-dependent structures and the third the omission of linguistic cues that were considered

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[226] Cf. Halliday (1985 [O]: 39ff).

[227] This process was discussed by Ursula Schaefer in a guest lecture in Regensburg in the summer semester of 1995.

to be redundant. The latter two are directly related to the notions of shared knowledge and the logic of comprehensibility.

4.1 INTERJECTIONS AND TAG QUESTIONS

The fact that for many of the letter writers the norms of spoken communication were considered to be very close to the norms of written communication is evidenced by many interjections/direct addresses and tag questions in the letters. The use of these show that writing was considered to be more like a process than like a product, thus marking the breakdown of one of the major barriers distinguishing spoken and written language. This process-oriented view of written language is also supported by the fact that in the original letters there are next to no self-corrections to be found. Typical examples for the use of interjections are now presented:

"[...] you will send me sum of Lucesy and Charles, *hear*." [Catch 4]
"It is easy for me to write and advise easier far than to act I know, but *darling* it is for your good I write, [...], but I write in love to you, *Alick my own*." [Iri 77]
"I do pity David, *poor fellow*, he is badly mated." [Iri 192c]

The use of tag questions presupposes that an immediate reaction to a statement is expected. Since this is only possible in spoken communication, the use of tag questions again reveals that for many writers these two modes of communication were considered to have a single standard and not different standards. Typical instances of this phenomenon are:

"[...] rather absurd *is it not*!" [Reib 23]
"[...] but I love you very tenderly, you know this *don't you*, that I do not mean to be fault finding [...]." [Iri 77]
"He has been on the late shift this week and has not done till 11.30pm; pretty late *isn't it*?" [Iri 163b]

4.2 UNEMBEDDED AND CONTENT-DEPENDENT STRUCTURES

The standards of written language strictly require an author to use content-independent and embedded structures which allow the unambiguous decoding of a statement. The use of these is intended to ensure the comprehensibility of a statement but does not take into account that the shared knowledge between two conversants may be substantial.

Many letters in the corpus show the use of unembedded and content-dependent structures. This is not due to some lack in the writers' competence but reflects their reasoning that these structures are not ambiguous when the amount of shared knowledge is taken into account. Such a reasoning and the subsequent choice of more or less ambiguous structures according to the amount of shared knowledge is a peculiar quality of spoken language.

The amount of knowledge the writer and the reader share is, in most cases, very great. This is, firstly, due to the great amount of shared previous, i.e. personal and cultural, knowledge. Secondly, the language of the letters shows that very much contextual and co-textual knowledge is taken into account. This makes it possible for the writers to use the following unembedded and content-dependent constructions:

"[...] I was bled and blistered and both me and Eliza so ill [...]." [Diary]
"I assure you if you were in this colony we were never happier at home." [Iri 10]
"Der mary let me know in youre next letter is my fathere live or know." [Iri 13]
"She is so anxious to hear from you and see you if it was possible that so often dreams of you." [Iri 43]
"Another thing father did very wrong by sending David to Australia without giving him [...]." [Iri 189]

4.3 OMITTING THE REDUNDANT

It is a particular quality of the written mode of communication that every piece of information, when referred back to, has to be stated again or at least has to be represented by a pro-form. Likewise, it is obligatory for a writer to use particular aspect markers and auxiliaries to express particular meanings. These explicit linguistic cues make it easier for a reader to decode an utterance. The question where such cues are to be set and what they have to be like is rigidly prescribed in the standard form of written language. This rigidity does not allow for the fact that the reader and writer may share a great amount of knowledge and that the reader acquires a great amount of co-textual knowledge in the course of reading.

The omission of linguistic cues not considered to contribute to the comprehensibility of a statement is a very powerful principle in the language of the letters.

EXAMPLES OF OMITTED ASPECT MARKERS/AUXILIARIES

"[...] you [may] know long ere this that Eliza Foster was married to a Mr Pitman." [Reib 15]
"I have been in places where we [have] never seen a newspaper from one Christmas [...]."
[Iri 58c]
"[...] present while here we could do with the surplus water and [would] not hurt." [Iri 186d]

EXAMPLES OF OMITTED NOUNS

"I told you in my last [letter] , of them all comeing up on a visit to Sydney." [Reib 12]
"[...] there is another [possibility] you can place yourself on a piece of Government Land."
[Iri 12b]
"I suppose Hugh will attribute his high wages to his superior [standing] or I presume his father will." [Iri 144a]

EXAMPLES OF OMITTED PREDICATES

"i did not Lik that so i [went] to nurs one Mrs. Skinner." [Catch 2]
"He is married and [has] one Little Girl as I suppose Mother has informed you of." [Reib 5]
"It was very good and very instructive and one that any person could [take] advise from."
[Iri 177a]
"[...] and lodgers would soon [eat] her out of house and home." [Iri 178b]
"Our Cattle here jointly consists of about four hundred Head, about two thirds [are] my brothers."
[Reib 9]
"The attendance [was] very good." [Iri 22]
"Lord Delamere wife and children are living there and their stock [is] flourishing." [Iri 122b]
"[...] takes a great interest in his church and [is an] important office bearer." [Iri 216c]

In most of the examples in this category the verbs *to be* and *to have*, used as full verbs, were omitted. Both verbs are markers of existence and thus do little more than confirm the presence, actuality, etc. of what is already expressed in a sentence. Besides, they can also have a mere linking function without a particular meaning assigned to them. It would, accordingly, seem logical to attribute the frequent absence of these verbs to their invariant meaning.

EXAMPLES OF OMITTED PREPOSITIONS

"I would esteem it as a very great obligation done [to] me." [Piper 5]
"[...] my family here are all well [in] health." [Reib 10]
"The remainder of the party went by rail to Lilydale, [from] thence [by] coach to Fernshaw."
[Iri 166d]

EXAMPLES OF OMITTED PRONOUNS

"[...] and would marrey me if [I] Lik But i am not for marring." [Catch 1]
"[...] & never can bear to look over a Letter after having written it in order to Correct [it], [...]."
[Reib 9]
"We have about l00 large trees, father is going to cut [them] down and get [them] sawed for building purposes." [Iri 53a]

"[...]; [he] has got nothing to do but walk up and down a footpath." [Iri 157a]

4.4 CONCLUSIONS
4.4.1 FORMAL VS. PERSONAL LETTERS

The findings from the corpus were shown to be comprehensively explicable as an extrapolation of the standards of spoken language to the process of letter writing. This result is consistent with Violi's (1985) views on the particular qualities of different letter genres.

She argues that there are at least two distinct letter genres, namely the *formal* and the *informal letter*. The latter she relates to spoken language due to its process-like structure and the use of many devices of oral conversation:

> "Other personalizing effects, again generally relating to more informal letters, are constituted by the presence of features used in oral discourse. For example, co-ordination rather than subordination, the use of denoting expressions either without a 'real' referent or with an extremely generic one [...], and the use of personal oral devices such as 'anyway' or 'well' etc."[228]

Violi contends that informal letters have a very free discourse structure where a change of topics may come without a warning or an explanation.[229] In conclusion, she says that formal letters are much more inclined to make their background assumptions (in the terminology of this study, their shared knowledge) explicit whereas informal letters rely to a great extent on implicit structures because the amount of shared knowledge is taken into account.[230]

Her observations are clearly in line with the examples from the corpus and provide valuable criteria for the distinction between these two different traditions of letter writing. Her investigation, however, does not address two important questions. The first is an explanation why it is possible for these genres to be so distinct. The second is the question how and why these different standards evolved.

Considering the results of the present study it is possible to give the following, tentative answers to these questions:

There are two different traditions that govern the use of language in formal and in personal letters. The older tradition was taken over from Latin letter-writing manuals that greatly prescriptivized the use of language. The younger tradition was much less prescriptive in its approach and allowed for considerable variation. The defining notions were the true expression of feelings and of comprehensibility. As such they were close to spoken language.

The younger tradition is probably a mixture of two different evolutions. On the one hand, many learned citizens in the eighteenth century rejected the old traditions because they saw them as an impediment to the expression of their thoughts and feelings.[231] The other development that took place roughly at the same time was that millions of people from socially disadvantaged classes learned to read and write.[232] These did not receive any schooling in the old literary traditions and consequently 'created' new traditions for themselves. These two independent changes then slowly seem to have merged into what Violi comprehensively calls the 'personal letter'.

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[228] Cf. Violi (1985 [O]: 164).
[229] Cf. Violi (1985 [O]: 164f).
[230] Cf. Violi (1985 [O]: 165).
[231] Cf. Nickisch (1991 [O]: 49f).
[232] It has already been mentioned in sub-chapter III.1 that exactly these people also had new reasons for the writing of letters and that it was possible for them to post these.

4.4.2 IMPLICITNESS VS. EXPLICITNESS

Another result of this study is that many of the letter writers make use of a *logic of comprehensibility*. This reasoning enables them to decide how ambiguously their statements can be structured or what can possibly be omitted without endangering the ultimate comprehensibility of the utterance.

This phenomenon can also be expressed in the terminology of explicitness vs. implicitness, where explicitness refers to a sound unit or a combination of such units and implicitness refers either to a zero slot or a structural implicity, e.g. in word order.

Štícha (1996) distinguishes four types of implicitness. The first is *language system implicitness* which is typical for a particular language. An example of this is the English juxtaposition of two nouns expressing an attributive relation, e.g. *car door*. The second is *particular construction implicitness* which, for example, explains the phenomena of ellipsis. Štícha cites the example *She hung up the receiver* where *the receiver* can be omitted since it is implicitly expressed in the previous construction. A third kind of explicitness is *context implicitness*. By this Štícha means the context of situation in which the communication takes place. He distinguishes between items that are almost absolute context-independent and items that are almost absolute context-dependent. The last form of implicitness that Štícha mentions is *pragmatic implicitness*. This is defined as a cover term for all instances where neither the particular linguistic form nor the context alone determine the understanding of an utterance. This kind of implicitness can be decoded by knowledge that Štícha fuzzily calls 'world-knowledge'.

The first two types of implicitness have in common that they are expressed in an utterance. On the other hand, contextual and pragmatic implicitness refer to items that are not expressed in an utterance but where the meaning of a certain statement is inferable from knowledge about the context or knowledge about the world.[233] It is into these two types of implicitness that the present study provided a deeper insight.

The notion of context as used by Štícha was expanded and clarified. The knowledge about a context, which in essence makes it possible for something to be inferable even when it is not expressed, was shown to belong to two different categories. These are knowledge about the *background* and the *reasons* of a communication and knowledge about the *natural environment* in which the communication takes place. The first type makes it possible to interpret situational statements that are possibly ambiguous, e.g. the sentence 'What would you like to have?' has different implications when uttered by a judge or by a salesperson. The second type of knowledge aids in the correct identification of a referent when this referent is only generically or deictically referred to.

The notion of pragmatic implicitness is only hazily defined by Štícha. He contends that in some cases it is the world-knowledge of a speaker that makes it possible to infer an implicit meaning from an utterance. This world-knowledge corresponds to the above-defined cultural knowledge. The latter term is preferable since it expresses more clearly that such knowledge is tied to the education and the experiences of the individual speaker.

Moreover, Štícha does not take into consideration two other knowledge factors that clearly belong to the sphere of pragmatic implicitness. These are the previous personal knowledge the conversants have about each other's life and the co-textual knowledge they acquire in the course of the communication. Both factors would have to be incorporated into a pragmatical approach towards the topic of implicitness vs. explicitness.

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[233] Cf. Štícha (1996: 343).

VI SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND FOLLOW-UP STUDIES

This study of Australian English in general and a letter corpus of nineteenth century Australian letters in particular was divided into four main parts.

First, the historical development of the Australian variety of English was presented. Various theories regarding the development of new dialects and the origins of a typical Australian pronunciation and lexis were compared and evaluated. These were shown not be be powerful enough to explain the process of the formation of AE in a principled and unified way or to focus too much on a particular aspect of this process to the detriment of the explanatory value of this theory to other aspects. A new theory of dialect mixing was sketched and the possible origins of Australian English were presented. The term Australian English was shown to be a cover term for the many kinds of use of the English language in nineteenth century Australia. This variety was characterized in the nineteenth century by the fact that it was unified in lexis and pronunciation to a greater extent and in morphology and syntax to a lesser extent. The chapter closed with a grammatical profile of present-day Australian English.

The next part started with a brief history of letter writing. Following that, the letter corpus used in the present study was presented and relevant sociological and other data were discussed. The letter writers were shown to be mostly Irish male first generation immigrants. The individual family and personal histories of the writers were given.

The study of linguistic features found in the corpus made up the third part. Some stylistic qualities of the letters and questions of lexis, morphology and syntax were investigated, stressing the role of the individual. This point was furthered in a psycholinguistic analysis of the attitudes towards knowledge two individual writers evidenced. The last study was devoted to a detailed comparison of the modal systems of present-day Australian English and of the language of the letters. These systems were shown to be similar, which argues for an early convergence of the use of modal verbs in AE.

In the last part questions of orality and literacy were looked at. It was contended that many letter writers did not differentiate to a great extent between standards for spoken and written language. Questions of *shared knowledge* and *comprehensibility* were shown to be the relevant factors in the textualization of information. This hypothesis was used to explain the many examples of content-dependent and unembedded structures and the many instances of absent linguistic cues. Finally, a possible development of the genre of personal letters was sketched and Štícha's notions of *implicitness* and *explicitness* were related to the results of the present study.

In the introduction three main questions were presented to be relevant to this study. These were hypotheses about a theory of dialect mixing and the origins of AE, the question of kinship between the language of the letters and present-day Australian English and the relation of spoken language with written traditions. The conclusions that can be drawn from the results of this study are the following.

There is a need for a new theory of dialect mixing which includes the notion of *comprehensibility* and *functional* and *attitudinal* factors. Australian English is probably not the product of a dialect mixing process but rather stems from a relatively uniform Southern English urban dialect. AE seems to have been unified in the fields of lexis and pronunciation from very early on because of functional and attitudinal factors. There was no unified use of grammar in nineteenth century Australia. The term Australian English, then, can be only used as a cover term for all the kinds of English spoken in the antipodes in the 1800s.

The language of the letters bears some relation to present-day Australian English. Despite this fact, the letters allow an insight into many individual systems rather than a

preconfiguration of current usage. It remains unproven whether Australian English has a unified grammar today.

The learned literary traditions of the Western European cultures had little influence on the writing habits of most of the writers in the corpus. The logic of *comprehensibility* made it possible for them to leave many messages implicitly expressed rather than explicitly stated. There is an *iconic* connection between the categories of *ambiguity* and *shared knowledge* in the language of the letters.

There are many questions that deserve deeper probing and demand possible follow-up studies. Among these are:

(1) The grammatical variables investigated in this study were word formation by semantic extensions, plural formation, present tense morphology, the expression of past tense and perfective aspect, the use of determiners, the phenomenon of personalization, relative clauses, the absence of *do*-support, topicalization, conjunctions, verbal concord, evidentiality and modality. These variables could be used for a typology of an individual system in which individual language use would show presence or absence of some features or to have some features to a greater or lesser extent. It could then be attempted to cluster the individuals that share certain features. By this it would be possible to arrive at a purely linguistic definition of a speech community without having to rely on extra-lingual categories like sex, age, etc. in order to classify the speakers. This typology could be extended to other variables that could be found in further studies of this corpus. Implicational scales of 'Australianness' could be established.

(2) The study of the links between the language of the letters and present-day AE usage could be facilitated by having recourse to the *ACE* corpus, the product of the Australian Corpus Project, which will be published in the near future.[234]

(3) The question of individual systems could be further pursued by psycholinguistic analyses of the letters of particular writers.

(4) The questions of implicitness vs. explicitness and the logic of comprehensibility could be further investigated.

(5) The letters addressed to single persons could be compared in detail with letters addressed to whole families. A closer look at the kinds of topics written about, their developments and their transitions should prove very rewarding because the respective letters styles can be hypothesized to be quite different in these respects.

(6) The theories about language contact situations and the slow accommodation of dialects towards each other could be tested by looking at the Irish component of the letters corpus. This should provide fruitful results since Irish English is sufficiently different from EngE to make such processes traceable. A purely practical advantage is the fact that the number of such Irish letters is large enough to allow statistically reliable conclusions. The relevant stages for a study of this kind are now given:

- An investigation of the state of the English language in Ireland in the 19th century taking into account subtratal influences from Irish.

- A comparison of letters by immigrants from different parts of Ireland since Irish English, like Irish, shows great regional variation. Part of this is due to when and how the native Irish population learned the English tongue.

- A comparison of letters sent within Australia to letters written back to their ancestral homes which would establish to what extent the immigrants were aware of the changes in their language and what they were changing in their language in order to convince their relatives back home that they still identified with the Emerald Isle. This should also provide us with insights about the progress and the kind of change.

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[234] Cf. Collins and Peters (1988).

- A comparison of the Irish letters with letters by writers with non-Irish backgrounds to see where these differed linguistically. This should give us clues about the integration of the Irish as a speech community in 19th century Australia.

- A grouping of the letters into different time periods allowing insight into the temporal progression of the change. This would also inform us about what categories are affected first by such a change and what categories are affected only later.

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