In *English: history, diversity and change* Chapter 5, Reading A (pp.213-16), Ramson presents Australian English vocabulary as a distinctive symbol of a nation state. How does his account relate to the wider discussion of week 5 with regard to how colonial contexts and contact with other languages led to the creation of new forms of English?

Outline
- Introduction
- Background
- Language Contact in the British Isles and the Colonies
- The Australian Context
- Conclusion

Introduction
Throughout its history, English has come into contact with other languages, affecting and being affected by them. In its early stages, English developed from an intimate relationship with the other languages in the British Isles (Celtic, Latin and Germanic.) In the Middle English Period, it was influenced by the French language, following the Norman Conquest in 1066. It was revived in 1399 with the ascent of Henry IV, who was the first king of England since 1066 to speak English as his first language. During that period, language became associated with ideas of patriotism and also an emblem of cultural and national identity. We shall start by introducing the background to the concepts and ideas associated with views on language development. Then we will examine language contact in the British Isles and move on to discuss the situation of the colonies and post-colonial attitudes. The last section provides the conclusion.

Background
During the eighteenth century, Lemon claimed that the ground work of modern English is Greek from the viewpoint that Greek was one of Europe's most prestigious languages and that the Anglo-Saxons at that time were regarded little more than Barbarians (Graddol et al: 97). However, with the surge of ideas on national identity, nineteenth century English thinkers glorified the Anglo-Saxons and their language equating national identity with "Englishness". Language became an emblem for a nation state and no more just a mode of communication.

In Ireland, for example, language nationalism was fuelled by the fact that "English, not Irish, became the language of the two institution which claimed to speak on behalf of the Irish population: the Catholic Church and the independence movement" (Graddol, et al: 188).

Language Contact in the British Isles and the Colonies
By the late nineteenth century, the British Empire had stretched from the West to the East and colonized vast lands and countries. The growth of the Empire as a political power led to attributing high status to the culture and language associated with it. The linguist historian, Tony Crowley, points out that since 1840, the English language, "has become the proudest possession

of a great imperial nation". This perception was emphasized in the Newbolt Report of 1921 in the remark that, "the British people must learn as a whole to regard their own language, first with respect and then with a genuine feeling of pride and union – such a feeling for our native language would be a bond of union ... and would beget the right kind of national pride" (Cameron and Bourne, 1988). English, therefore, came to be identified with the state and national identity.

In the British context, nationalist reactions in Ireland, Scotland and Wales pressed for the maintenance of the Celtic languages and compromises were reached as regards incorporating the national Gaelic languages in the education system in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This nationalist reaction was due to both natural and political reasons.

By 1800, Irish remained the first language of only half the population, and is now the first language of only 2 percent of the population. This was due to political incorporation by the colonizers who made sure English (not Irish) was the language of universal education, and the Church. As expected, the Irish reacted by emphasizing their attachment and loyalty to their language, and later on they made it their first official language with English a second official language (Graddol, et al: 188.)

The real contact between English and Irish was at the end of the sixteenth century as a result of colonization efforts from England and Scotland, Irish aristocracy fled to the continent and English eventually became the language of the majority of the population (AC1, Band 5). As a result of this contact the vowel sound in modern Irish words written (ea) is pronounced [ei] not [i:] as in Modern English. **Beat**, **decent**, **Jesus** and **easy** are pronounced [beɪt], [ˈdeɪs∂nt], [ˈdʒeɪs∂s], and [eɪzɪ].

The effects of contact with other languages sometimes extended to syntax. An example of seventeenth century English surviving in Modern Irish English is the use of multiple negatives as in : "he didn't say nothing to nobody". Another good example of this is the Celtic influence on modern Irish English with regard to using different grammatical terms for time, and the use of **be**, as indicated below:

Modern Irish English	Modern English
I am after selling the boat.	I have just sold the bought.
She is sick.	She is sick **now**.
She (does) be sick.	She is in the habit of being sick.

(John Harris, AC1, Band 5)

With regard to language variation in Scotland, there are people who speak only Scottish standard English, those who speak only Scots, and a majority who code-switch between the two. We should note here that code-switching is usually from Scottish Standard English to Scots English, and is looked upon as an indicator of the speaker's cultural background and nationality. As Caroline Macafee (from the University of Aberdeen) says

"…for many people you can see that there is a well-motivated pattern of code switching…that people will throw a proverb in Scots or they'll emphasize the punch line of a story by switching

into Scots or when they are describing something that is striking they'll switch into Scots so that it tends to signal affect in someway…" (AC1, Band 4).

In concluding, this section we should point out that the flourishing of the Empire and its language led to ambivalent attitudes towards the colonies and their languages. In the colonial context, this was translated into patterns of political and economic privileges associated with the language of the colonizers. The colonial context put the varieties of the English language, spoken by settlers of different backgrounds, into contact with other languages, leading to the development of different cultural and linguistic attitudes to English. In Nigeria, language contact led to creolized forms of English that were heavily influenced by the African mother-tongue of the native speakers and hence deviated from producing the perfect form of the target language. Such "substandard" varieties were viewed from a negative interference and deviation perspective. Similar problems faced Indian varieties of English that were regarded at best as imperfect attempts of representing the English language. In Kenya, standard English has been adopted as a colonial legacy; an indicator of education and authority. In Quebec, language and identity issues are widely discussed in the last French bastion in a predominantly English Canada.

The Australian Context
In the Australian context, convicts were sent mainly from London and the south-east of England. Given the social background of the settlers, the variety that they took with them was that of the inner streets of London, Cockney. So what was regarded as slang in England became the language used in the Australian context.

In the *Introduction to The Australian National Dictionary* (AND), published in 1988, attempts are made to define the Australian variety of English as a distinctive symbol of a nation state. Australianisms reflected the life circumstances, culture, history, and fauna and flora of the population.

In the examples of entries from the *Australian National Dictionary*, Ramson identifies the words "business" and "clever" with Aboriginal English, emphasizing their distinctiveness and culture-specific reference and usage. He explains both words using the term "traditional lore" to relate the words to an assumed cultural heritage that was passed through observation and practice of rituals and not instruction through books. By choosing these terms, the author aims to enforce the authenticity of the words as of Aboriginal English descent.

Koori is the Aboriginal word used for **man** or **teenage girl**. *Koori* is another culture specific item that is only used in the Australian context. *Stock* became a significant word with many culture-specific associations; *boy* in the Australian context becomes "an aboriginal male employed to look after the stock". *Country* is an area in which stock-raising takes place. *Establishment* is a sheep or cattle farm. *Market* is a place where sheep and cattle are sold, and *water* is water suitable for stock. **Clever** means, among other things, a wise person learned in magic and the traditional lore. This is illustrated in the following examples taken from entries from the Australian National Dictionary given in the Reading by Ramson.
- Among those people, there was a class of 'clever' men who specialized in meditation, hypnotism…and seeing what was occurring at a distance.

- The 'clever feller' is a witch doctor, a rain maker, one who can cast spells.
- The two women, who were 'clever', and possessed a certain amount of magic 'power', had used a decoy
- The clever-feller-money-magicians (who are usually right) are predicting a further 0.2 percent cut in the long term bond rate.

The way the word **Business** is used is another very good example of how language use (vocabulary in this case) is indeed an indicator of the user's culture and national identity. As illustrated in the entries from the Australian National Dictionary it is used to refer to traditional lore and ritual as indicated in the following examples also taken from the Australian National Dictionary entries given in the Reading by Ramson:
- 'That not proper wind, but blackfellow business.' Blackfellow business! Some native in another tribe had cast some magic and sent this wind to destroy the tribe.
- The women…go off to 'dance', that is perform their secret corroboree, their 'Sunday Business.'
- Because of 'Sorry business' [sc. Mourning ceremonies] the people had moved from their normal site.

Conclusion
We have provided a critical survey of how colonial contexts and contact with other languages led to the creation of new forms of English. Our emphasis was on the use of language as an index to culture and nationality in a colonial-post colonial context. We provided relevant evidence from Australian aboriginal English, Irish, and Scots with reference to vocabulary, syntax, and sociolinguistics.

Bibliography

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