Jan Kochanowski University Press

Introduction

Marina Dossena
University of Bergamo

Over the last two decades the scholarly attention paid to Late Modern English (henceforth LModE) has greatly increased: several volumes, articles and book chapters have appeared on codification of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century usage, such as Görlach (1998), Mitchell (2001), Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2008) and Beal – Nocera – Sturiale (2008); phonology has been discussed in the works of Mugglestone (2003), Beal (2004), and Jones (2005); and more encompassing texts have been published by Bailey (1996), Görlach (1999 and 2001), Fitzmaurice (2000), Dossena – Jones (2003), Kytö – Rydén – Smitterberg (2006), Pérez-Guerra et al. (2007), Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2009), and Tieken-Boon van Ostade – van der Wurff (2009). Finally, the chapters in Bergs – Brinton (2012: section VI) provide a recent, comprehensive overview of the main features of LModE syntax, morphology, phonology, lexicon and pragmatic features, also devoting attention to sociolinguistic and geographical variation, and to standardization issues. The studies presented by Dossena – Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2008), Pahta et al. (2010), Hickey (2010), and Dossena – Del Lungo Camiciotti (2012) bear witness to the sociolinguistic interest of different text types. At the same time, a new approach to language history 'from below' (Vandenbussche – Elspaß 2007 and Elspaß 2012a and 2012b) has enabled scholarly interest to move beyond the usage of educated informants, recorded in literary and other printed documents, to consider the usage of partly-schooled writers – a large and previously ignored set of data: see for instance Fairman (2003) and Dossena (2007 and 2008).

Intriguingly, the increase in breadth and depth of LModE studies has coincided with the launch and growing pervasiveness of the World Wide Web as a tool of investigation and research. This has meant that resources have become more readily available to much broader audiences than in the past,

which has had an inevitable impact on teaching and research. Scholars are made aware of new scientific literature thanks to online library catalogues, specialized electronic *fora*, and can download ebooks and articles from publishers' websites. In addition, more widespread open-access repositories enable faster circulation of new findings among the academic community and beyond, thus increasing the visibility and impact of state-of-the-art research.

   Nor does this novelty only concern secondary sources. In recent years many libraries and archives have launched digitization processes thanks to which a growing number of manuscripts has become available to students and scholars alike. In addition to educational websites, such as the one set up and maintained by Raymond Hickey at the University of Duisburg-Essen, and websites of more general interest, such as George P. Landow's *Victorian Web*, electronic resources consist of a very wide range of materials. Among these, attention to geographical variation is given in two online corpora: the *Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing* (1700-1945), compiled at the University of Glasgow, and the *Corpus of Historical American English* (1810-2009), compiled by Mark Davies at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. These are supplemented by other collections – mostly, but not necessarily online yet, and – in a few cases, still in progress: we may for instance cite the *Corpus of Irish English*, also compiled by Raymond Hickey (14th–20th century), and the *Corpus of Irish English Correspondence*, which Kevin McCafferty and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno are currently compiling at the Universities of Bergen and Extremadura. At the University of Bergamo a Corpus of Nineteenth-century Scottish Correspondence (19CSC) is in preparation, for which the transcription of both business and familiar letters (including emigrant correspondence) has been undertaken, while geo-historical variation can also be studied in the *Corpus of Early Ontario English* and its pre-Confederation section, both compiled by Stefan Dollinger at the University of British Columbia, to which the *Bank of Canadian English* may be added, also hosted by the same institution. Similarly, numerous specialized corpora have appeared: alongside the *Zürich English Newspaper Corpus* (ZEN, 1661-1791) and the *Coruña Corpus of English Scientific Writing*, we now have the *Old Bailey Corpus* (OBC), which provides useful material for the investigation of legal language and of actual usage in depositions; finally, the *Salamanca Corpus* collects dialect literature and literary dialects of Northern and Southern England.

   These corpora supplement those with a more general interest and those with a specific focus on literary materials, such as the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts*, version 3.0 (CLMET3.0), compiled at the Catholic

University of Leuven, the *Corpus of English Dialogues* (CED, 1560-1760), compiled at the University of Uppsala, the *Corpus of Late Modern English Prose*, compiled at the University of Manchester, and of course the well-known, multi-genre *Representative Corpus of Historical Registers* (ARCHER), first constructed by Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan in the 1990s. Indeed, electronic collections of mostly literary texts have been in the catalogues of important publishers for many years now, but specific research groups and institutions, such as the *Charles Darwin Correspondence project*, and the collections of digitized documents in the websites of the British Library, the National Library of Scotland, the Library of Congress, and of numerous historical societies throughout the USA and Canada provide open-access materials. Even crowd-sourcing initiatives have been launched, in order to involve the general public and increase interest[1].

Manuscript digitization, however, is not a straightforward process: it implies accurate and consistent choices, in an attempt to preserve the integrity of the text and to provide as much metatextual information as possible. In addition, transcription also requires great accuracy and consistency, for instance in the representation of self-corrections, superscript, blank lines, word and line breaks. For this reason methodological issues are investigated in projects like the international one launched at the University of Coventry on *Digitising experiences of migration: the development of interconnected letter collections*, which aims to bring together historians, linguists, archivists and digital humanities experts from a range of institutions across Europe and the US, in order to discuss issues in digitisation, annotation and cross-disciplinary research. Indeed, blogs have been set up to accompany the creation of new critical editions and to increase awareness of the complexity of digitization processes – examples of these are in the blog relating to the new Edinburgh edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's complete works and in the blog concerning digital preservation practices at the Folger Shakespeare Library, titled 'The Collation'.

Within this framework dictionaries have also grown to play a significant role as electronic resources: the *Oxford English Dictionary* has been a landmark for many years now, but older dictionaries have recently been made available as electronic resources too: nowadays it is possible to find digitized versions of the dictionaries compiled by Samuel Johnson (1755) and Noah Webster (1828). In addition, specific research projects

---

[1] See http://manuscripttranscription.blogspot.it/2011/02/2010-year-of-crowdsourcing. html (accessed March 2014) for an overview of recent initiatives.

have enabled the digitization of John Jamieson's *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* (1808) and of Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* (1898-1905) – see Rennie (2012a) and Markus (2007) respectively. To these, we may add the important rediscovery of James Boswell's manuscript of a Scots dictionary – a project he had contemplated for many years, but was never completed, and which sheds significant light on eighteenth-century attitudes to Scots (see Dossena 2005: 74 and Rennie 2011 and 2012b).

Relying on such important new resources, the papers in this collection present valuable traits of novelty in relation to the problems under discussion: ranging from phonology to morphology and syntax, not least in specialized discourse, they all take a consistently solid methodological approach, convincingly combining quantitative and qualitative analyses. In addition, cohesiveness in the issue is enhanced by the fact that most contributions were first discussed at a conference at the University of Bergamo in August 2013, the fifth in a series of international events specifically devoted to LModE which has been running since 2001[2]. In what follows an outline of contents is offered.

The contributions in this volume

The volume opens with a paper on phonology by **Joan C. Beal** and **Marco Condorelli**: their main focus is the so-called cloth set (Wells 1982), and particularly the lengthening of ME short *o* to /ɔ:/ which begins in the late seventeenth century and in pre-fricative environment, yet then reverts to the short vowel in RP, but not in American English. The study discusses the entries for all the words in Wells's cloth set that appear in a range of pronouncing dictionaries, along with metalinguistic comments on the pronunciation of these words from the same dictionaries. The materials under investigation span the second half of the eighteenth century, and include dictionaries written by authors from various parts of the British Isles and from America.

The second paper, by **Massimo Sturiale**, discusses the role played by eighteenth-century orthoepists in the construction of standard spoken English when they are taken into consideration as a 'discourse community'.

The next papers deal with specialized discourse from different points of view. First of all, **Marina Dossena**'s contribution centres on instances of

---

2   Previous events were held in Edinburgh, 2001; Vigo, 2004; Leiden, 2007; and Sheffield, 2010.

knowledge dissemination in the nineteenth century and considers documents addressed to lay audiences, relying in particular on a specially-compiled corpus of articles published in periodicals both in the UK and in the US; special attention is given to titles, illustrations (where available), and intertextual references, i.e. to the textual features that may be deemed to play a significant role in the maintenance of the readers' interest.

Polina Shvanyukova presents two case-studies of nineteenth-century business letter-writing manuals and discusses the role played by specialised business epistolary guides in establishing, maintaining and strengthening transnational commercial networks by imparting rigid socio-cultural norms of proper business conduct.

The next two papers focus on the *Coruña Corpus of English Scientific Writing*. The first, authored by **Isabel Moskowich** and **Begoña Crespo**, discusses the expression of stance on the part of British and American authors and also across disciplines and genres, taking the orality or written nature of texts as a key feature in the analysis of adverbs. Data is drawn from the works of ca. 120 authors, both male and female, all writing in the nineteenth century, and come from three sections of the *Coruña Corpus*: the *Corpus of English Texts on Astronomy*, the *Corpus of English Life Sciences Texts*, and the *Corpus of Historical English Texts*. These latter two sections also form the basis of **Sofía Zea**'s contribution. The author focuses on eighteenth-century texts in order to discuss the frequency and use of attributive adjectives, and to identify differences in their use in relation to three variables: discipline (Life Science vs. History), sex of the author and genre or text-type (treatises, textbooks, letters, essays, etc.). The analysis also considers comparative and superlative adjectives, as well as compound adjectives and demonyms.

The following papers deal with syntax and morphology. In the first of these **Kevin McCafferty** takes a diachronic approach to the retention of the *be*-perfect with intransitive mutative and motion verbs, which is claimed to characterize Irish English (IrE). Relying on the *Corpus of Irish English Correspondence*, the author looks at uses of this construction across 240 years, finding that the *be*-perfect declined, and became lexically restricted to use with certain verbs, over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, IrE retained auxiliary *be* with a wider range of verbs than other varieties, and the verb types found most frequently with *be* are also seen to vary over time. Such variation may have been due to substrate influence from Irish, where the equivalent of the *be*-perfect is found with transitive verbs, and this places the article at the centre of extensive and interesting debate on the legacy of Celtic languages: see for instance Filppula – Klemola – Paulasto (2008).

In the next contribution **Nataša Stojaković** discusses the decline of the English subjunctive, which seems to have been temporarily reversed in LModE. Her study, based on texts ranging from the first half of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century, appears to confirm this; however, a closer investigation of plays and non-fiction texts shows considerable individual variation in different texts as far as morphologically distinct instances of the subjunctive are concerned. In particular, occurrences may be indicative of specific authors' stylistic preferences in relation to the use of archaic forms and constructions.

Daisuke Suzuki analyzes the historical development of modal adverbs *doubtless*, *indeed*, *maybe*, *no doubt*, *of course*, and *perhaps* from a functional perspective, showing that LModE can be viewed as a critical stage in their development from the point of view of modalization and pragmaticalization.

Finally, archaic usage is the object of investigation in **Ayumi Nonomiya**'s paper. The author analyzes uses of *you* and *thou* in eighteenth-century drama, concluding that *thou* still occurred in plays, despite its decreasing frequency, on account of its being a stylistic marker: indeed, eighteenth-century tragedies appear to employ *thou* even more frequently than Shakespearean drama in an attempt to imitate an older, higher style, though in many cases this simply reflected the authors' perception of such style.

The range of features investigated in these contributions is expected to elicit further interest in these same features and other linguistic traits; this issue is therefore offered to the academic community as a starting point for further debate.

* * *

REFERENCES

Sources

Jamieson, John

    1808   *An Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* […] *to which is prefixed a Dissertation on the Origin of the Scottish Language.* Edinburgh: printed at the University Press for W. Creech, A. Constable, and W. Blackwood.

Johnson, Samuel

    1755   *A Dictionary of the English Language.* London, Printed by W. Strahan, For J. and P. Knapton; T. and T. Longman; C. Hitch and L. Hawes; A. Millar; and R. and J. Dodsley.

Oxford English Dictionary, www.oed.com/ (accessed March 2014).

Webster, Noah

    1828   *An American Dictionary of the English Language.* New York: Converse.

Wright, Joseph

 1898-1905   *The English Dialect Dictionary.* Oxford: Henry Frowde.

Special studies

Bailey, Richard W.

    1996   *Nineteenth-Century English.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Beal, Joan C.

    2004   *English in Modern Times: 1700-1945.* London: Arnold.

Beal Joan C. – Carmela Nocera – Massimo Sturiale (eds.)

    2008   *Perspectives on Prescriptivism.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Bergs, Alexander – Laurel Brinton (eds.)

    2012   *HSK 34.1 – English Historical Linguistics – An International Handbook.* Berlin: De Gruyter.

Dossena, Marina

    2005   *Scotticisms in Grammar and Vocabulary.* Edinburgh: John Donald (Birlinn).

    2007   "'As this leaves me at present': Formulaic usage, politeness and social proximity in 19th-century Scottish emigrants' letters". In: S. Elspaß et al. (eds.) *Germanic Language Histories from Below (1700-2000).* Berlin: de Gruyter, 13-29.

    2008   "'Many strange and peculiar affairs': Description, narration and evaluation in Scottish emigrants' letters of the nineteenth century", *Scottish Language* 27, 1-18.

Dossena, Marina – Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti (eds.)

    2012   *Letter Writing in Late Modern Europe.* Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Dossena, Marina – Charles Jones (eds.)
    2003   *Insights into Late Modern English.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Dossena, Marina – Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade (eds.)
    2008   *Studies in Late Modern English Correspondence: Methodology and Data.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Elspaß, Stephan
    2012a   "Between linguistic creativity and formulaic restriction. Cross-linguistic perspectives on nineteenth-century lower class writers' private letters". In: M. Dossena – G. Del Lungo Camiciotti (eds.) *Letter Writing in Late Modern Europe.* Amsterdam: Benjamins, 45-64.
    2012b   "The use of private letters and diaries in sociolinguistic investigation". In: J.M. Hernández-Campoy – J.C. Conde-Silvestre (eds.) *The Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 156-169.

Fairman, Tony
    2003   "Letters of the English labouring classes 1800-34 and the English language". In M. Dossena – C. Jones (eds.) *Insights into Late Modern English.* Bern: Peter Lang, 265-282.

Filppula, Markku – Juhani Klemola – Heli Paulasto
    2008   *English and Celtic in Contact.* New York: Routledge.

Fitzmaurice, Susan M. (ed.)
    2000   *Rhetoric, Language and Literature: New Perspectives on English in the Eighteenth Century.* Special Issue of *Language Sciences* 22.3.

Görlach, Manfred
    1998   *An Annotated Bibliography of Nineteenth-century Grammars of English.* Amsterdam: Benjamins.
    1999   *English in the Nineteenth Century.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
    2001   *Eighteenth-Century English.* Heidelberg: Winter.

Hickey, Raymond (ed.)
    2010   *Eighteenth-Century English. Ideology and Change.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jones, Charles
    2005   *English Pronunciation in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kytö, Merja – Mats Rydén – Erik Smitterberg (eds.)
    2006   *Nineteenth-century English. Stability and Change.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Markus, Manfred
    2007   Wright's EDD Computerised: Architecture and Retrieval Routine. Dagstuhl Dec. 2006, at http://drops.dagstuhl.de/opus/volltexte/2007/1052/pdf/06491.MarkusManfred.Paper.1052.pdf (accessed April 2014).

Mitchell, Linda C.
  2001   *Grammar Wars: Language as Cultural Battlefield in 17th and 18th Century England.* Aldershot: Ashgate.
Mugglestone, Lynda
  ²2003   *'Talking Proper'. The Rise of Accent as Social Symbol.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Pahta, Päivi – Minna Nevala – Arja Nurmi – Minna Palander-Collin (eds.)
  2010   *Social Roles and Language Practices in Late Modern English.* Amsterdam: Benjamins.
Pérez-Guerra, Javier – Dolores González-Álvarez – Jorge L. Bueno-Alonso – Esperanza Rama-Martínez (eds.)
  2007   "*Of Varying Language and Opposing Creed". New Insights into Late Modern English.* Bern: Peter Lang.
Rennie, Susan
  2011   "Boswell's Scottish dictionary rediscovered", *Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America* 32, 94-110.
  2012a   *Jamieson's Dictionary of Scots: The Story of the First Historical Dictionary of the Scots Language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
  2012b   "Boswell's dictionary update", *Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America* 33, 205-207.
Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Ingrid (ed.)
  2008   *Grammars, Grammarians and Grammar-Writing in Eighteenth-Century England.* Berlin: De Gruyter.
Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Ingrid
  2009   *An Introduction to Late Modern English.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Ingrid – Wim van der Wurff (eds.)
  2009   *Current Issues in Late Modern English.* Bern: Peter Lang.
Vandenbussche, Wim – Stephan Elspaß (eds.)
  2007   *Lower Class Language Use in the 19th Century.* Special issue of *Multilingua. Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication* 26-2/3.
Wells, John C.
  1982   *Accents of English I: Introduction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.