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Cover image: *Palazzo del Podestà (12th century)*, Piazza Vecchia, Bergamo - © Marina Dossena
Plenary lectures

Laurel Brinton, University of British Columbia

*Studying verbal change in Canadian English in real-time:*

**The Bank of Canadian English**

As Trudgill & Watts (2005: 1) note, “Generally, histories of English have concentrated, as far as the modern period is concerned, on Standard English in England, with an occasional nod in the direction of the USA and with no acknowledgement of the simple fact that during roughly the last 200 years English has also been spoken, and written in a standard form, by sizeable communities of native speakers in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, to name only the three most populous areas”. The omission of transatlantic varieties in discussions of the history of English could, until quite recently, be attributed to the lack of readily accessible historical corpora. In respect to Canadian English (CanE, spoken by 22 million speakers), for example, the historical discussion of Brinton & Fee (2001) had few, if any, real-time studies to rely on.

However, we now have available to us for the first time a substantial body of historical CanE data that can be used for corpus-linguistic study. The *Bank of Canadian English* (BCE; Dollinger, Brinton & Fee 2006–) consists of approximately 2.4 million words of CanE extending from 1555 to the present. As a lexicographic database, the BCE seeks to illustrate the usage of selected headwords and does not constitute a balanced corpus, but from the onset, it was designed to serve as a tool for corpus linguistic study. Approximately one-half million words in the BCE date from the Late Modern English period (1700–1920), a period in which the first significant number of English-speakers came to Canada from the United States (the United Empire Loyalists, 1776–1790s), to be followed later in the mid-nineteenth century by a large contingent of immigrants from the British Isles (see Dollinger 2012: 1862). For the LModE period, the BCE can be combined with the small *Corpus of Early Ontario English, pre-Confederation* (CONTE-pC 1776–1849; see http://faculty.arts.ubc.ca/sdollinger/CONTE.htm) as well as historical newspaper databases.

This talk addresses some well-known changes in the verbal system of Modern English: the rise of the semi-modals (*have (got) to, need to, want to, be going to*), changes in the use and frequency of the mandative subjunctive, the loss of the subjunctive in *if/as if/as though*-clauses, and the rise of the progressive passive (see Leech et al. 2009). A pilot study of the subjunctive using part of the BCE (see Brinton 2008) found that the present subjunctive *be* was already in decline by 1800 and was virtually lost by 1900 in CanE, while the past subjunctive *were* held its own quite well even into the twentieth century. A more complete study of the rise of the progressive passive (see Brinton, Dollinger & Fee 2012) found that this form was already used in CanE from the 1830s onwards and could also be found in official correspondence in American English in the 1780s, thus showing that it cannot be seen as being spread by a small literary group in 1790s Britain (see Pratt & Denison 2000), a date coincidental with its appearance in these colonial varieties.

Studies of transatlantic varieties of English such as CanE not only rectify the “anglocentric” view of the history of English noted by Trudgill & Watts (2005: 2) but may also shed new light on change in Late Modern English and help to revise our understanding of our verbal change in the period.

References


The sociolinguistics of New Dialect Formation

The question of New Dialect Formation (Kerswill & Trudgill 2005) has been intensively discussed in the past decade or so with scenarios showing relatively new varieties, e.g. New Zealand (Trudgill et al. 2000; Trudgill 2004, 2008) and South Africa (Bekker 2012) often being a focus of attention. The deterministic approach by Peter Trudgill has been criticised for its neglect of social factors (Hickey 2003). Other approaches, which consider the role of language identity (Schneider 2003, 2007) offer alternative interpretations of the rise of varieties of English in former overseas colonies. Indeed the phenomenon has also formed the framework for some traditional studies of English English (Britain & Trudgill 2005) and that of large established overseas (Dollinger 2008) along with the rise of specific ethnic varieties (Wolfram et al. 2004).

The present paper will review the arguments for and against the role of social factors in New Dialect Formation and attempt to show where these factors can account for the shape of new varieties. Such issues as the demographic composition of input groups, their relative status in the then new colonies, the continuing influence of extra-national varieties and the role of prescriptivism and the processes of supraregionalisation and standardisation are all seen as relevant components in the complex linguistic and social process which has led to the particular forms which overseas varieties have attained.

References

The present paper deals with authorial stancetaking in the book *A Cheering Voice from Upper Canada: Addressed to All whom it may Concern in a Letter from an Emigrant, by J.C.*, 1834. The text contains information apparently written by a J. Churchill, an English immigrant settling in Canada. The published document is written in the form of a letter, which is addressed to his relatives and friends in England. The intention of the writer is to describe his present situation in these new lands. This includes geographical, social, economical and political issues. By doing this, he wants both to confirm and to refute information published in contemporary British papers. The author very often feels the urge to go against misconceptions about the situation of the colony. In doing so, he uses a rhetoric, which is packed with strategies seeking to show his attitude towards the information given. He believes that the experiences he has in his adopting land legitimise the majority of his claims: “I felt myself capable by means of some length of experience” (A2).

Our objective is to manually analyse and categorise these devices in *A Cheering Voice* following the model on stancetaking proposed in Marín-Arrese (2009). This model allows us to describe the writer’s point of view in terms of effective and epistemic strategies. The former are connected to notions of necessity, obligation and volition, while the latter concern value judgment as to the propositions framed by these devices. The conclusions of this paper will show that balance in the use of effective and epistemic stance strategies results from the writer’s aim to communicate his view of the colony in such a way that personal bias remains unseen. This means that the contents of the letter would find little opposition among his contemporaries.

**References**

The progressive as a symbol of national superiority in nineteenth-century grammars of English

The nineteenth century is still best known in the history of English as the century of prescriptivism, and indeed grammars of the time were openly normative, and frequently critical of constructions that we today regard as quite ‘harmless’ (e.g. the progressive passive: the bridge is being built, or indirect passives: She was given a prize). When one correlates what actually changed in the language at the time with critical attitudes in grammars, the expected case is that what is new, and what is undergoing change, is criticized. (Despite this criticism, new features eventually come to be accepted, perhaps grudgingly).

What is perhaps not as well-documented is the reverse case, a phenomenon undergoing change, but being praised (rather than criticized) in the process. The progressive active (e.g. a storm is gathering) seems to be one of these reverse cases. The progressive has long been known to rise rapidly in frequency over the course of the nineteenth century (Arnaud 1998; Hundt 2004; Smmitterberg 2005), and to become obligatory in contexts where it was optional before. As my survey of over 250 grammar books of the time can show, this rise in frequency (and concomitant grammaticalization) was never commented on in negative terms, but the progressive was regarded rather positively from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Towards the middle of the century, British grammars in particular even see the progressive as a symbol of national superiority, whereas such sentiments are not encountered in American grammars of the time. This does not only illustrate the development of distinctive national schools of grammar writing over the course of the nineteenth century, but it also links grammars with developments in politics and society more widely. In this way, quantitative historical grammaticography can throw interesting new light on aspects of Late Modern English language and society, both in Britain and beyond.

References

Joan Beal, University of Sheffield
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‘Cut from the same CLOTH’? Variation and change in the CLOTH lexical set

With reference to what Wells (1982) subsequently termed the CLOTH set in English, Barbara Strang stated “[I]t is difficult to know how far the recent history of words of the type cloth, lost, cross, off represents sound-change, and how far conflict of analogies and varieties” (1970: 85). Strang is here referring to the fact that, like the change from ME short a to present-day RP /a:/ in Wells’s BATH set, the lengthening of ME short o to /ɔ:/ in CLOTH words begins in the late seventeenth century and in prefricative environment, yet CLOTH words have subsequently reverted to the short vowel in RP whilst BATH words have not. Furthermore, CLOTH words have /ɔ:/ in US English, whilst BATH words have /a:/.

In this paper, we discuss the results of an examination of entries for all the words in Wells’s CLOTH set that appear in a range of eighteenth-century pronouncing dictionaries, along with metalinguistic comments on the pronunciation of these words from the same dictionaries. The dictionaries chosen cover approximately a fifty-year period, the second half of the eighteenth century, and include dictionaries written by authors from various parts of the British Isles and from America. This will reveal the extent and nature of the ‘conflict of analogies and varieties’ alluded to by Strang.

References
Ian Bekker, North-West University, South Africa

*Alloy of Gold: The role of the ‘Rand’ in the formation of South African English*

This paper will report on the progress of a book-length treatment focused on reconstructing the role played by the Witwatersrand (including Johannesburg) in the formation of South African English. It begins with a brief outline of a new model of the formation of this dialect, which hypothesizes that South African English is the product of a three-stage koineization process, the last (and most important) stage being the one contemporaneous with the establishment and development of Johannesburg and the ‘Rand’, the former having been founded in 1886 as a direct result of the discovery of gold. This paper then looks more closely at the evidence for such a dialect-mixing process. It draws on historical, demographic (census) data as well as a selective acoustic analysis of the speech of individuals born in the area before World War II. It also explores a number of complicating factors. These include the disruption of the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902); the role played by L2-English speakers in the koineization process, in particular L1-Afrikaans and L1-Yiddish speakers; and the fact that the different urban areas of the Witwatersrand were, at the time, geographically separate and different in terms of the demographic constitution of their populations.

Cristiano Broccias, Università degli Studi di Genova

*Eventive percepts in Late Modern English fiction: the case of visual and auditory perception verbs*

This presentation reports on ongoing research into the syntactic encoding of eventive objects of perception or percepts (Gisborne 2010) in Late Modern English fiction. Eventive percepts are usually discussed with reference to the alternation between bare infinitives and –ing participles, see (1):

(1) Tim watched Bill mend/mending the lamp. (Quirk et al. 1985: 1206) [Oinf/ing patterns]

However, other syntactic strategies exist such as hypotactic integration (see Fischer 2007). For example, in (2) and (3), the eventive percept is expressed by means of an as-clause:

(2) The rector […] watched her as she fetched a vase and arranged the freesias. (BNC) [Verb + Object + as-clause (VOas) construction/pattern]

(3) She pulled her jumper off and handed it to him, then watched as he spread it out and laid the dead animal on it. (BNC) [Verb + as-clause (V as) construction/pattern]

Further, almost minimal pairs such as (4) and (5) show that the difference in meaning between the non-finite patterns, see (1) and (4), and the as-clause patterns, see (2), (3) and (5), may be minimal if non-existent.

(4) Next came two ladies, and after talking to the charwoman they also moved forward, and as Sue stood reaching upward, watched her hand tracing the letters, … (Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*)

(5) Jude Fawley signed the form of notice, Sue looking over his shoulder and watching his hand as it traced the words. (Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*)

Alongside the non-finite patterns and hypotactic integration, further strategies may include the use of eventive nouns, eventive adjectives, relative clauses and small clauses, see (6)-(9) (all examples are from Dickens):

(6) […] she and her little companion watched [the opening of the gate]NP as usual […] (i.e. they watched the gate open)

(7) […] which made him […] watch the [falling]AP motes of dust […] (i.e. he watched the motes of dust fall)

(8) […] watched from the window the people [who passed up and down the street]rel (i.e. they watched the people pass up and down the street)

(9) He watched [him in and out of the Assurance Office]SC (i.e. he watched him go in and come out of the office)

The various strategies outlined above will be discussed in the case of the visual and auditory perception verbs see, watch, hear and listen to (although the last one obviously does not occur in the Oinf pattern), using data obtained from COHA. At the time of writing, the data on the visual perception verbs suggest that see is rather stable during the Late Modern English period, constantly favouring Oinf/ing. By contrast, watch exhibits much more variation and undergoes important changes. In more detail, there seems to be a decline in
the strategies illustrated in (5)-(9) and, correspondingly, a rise in less ‘nominal’ strategies such as Vas and the Oinf pattern. In particular, Vas seems to have established itself since the second half of the twentieth century and can thus be regarded as an emerging construction in the sense of Biber (2008). I will argue that possible causes for these changes include analogy, economy and construal and will extend my analysis to hear and listen to as well.

References

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Transatlantic perspectives on late nineteenth-century English usage:
Alford (1864) compared to White (1871)

Even though it is well known that lexis and grammar are closely interconnected, it is also a truism that in language description (and prescription as well) as found in reference works from ancient times until the present day there is a division of labour between grammars on the one hand and dictionaries on the other. While both types of reference books have a long tradition, usage guides as a new type of reference manual seem to have emerged in eighteenth- and, more particularly, in nineteenth-century Britain as a result of the linguistic insecurity of the newly emerging middle class. According to Beal (2004: 94) this development “would create a demand for prescriptive guides to ‘correct’ usage”.

In his article on the Fowler brothers’ The King’s English (1906) and Henry Fowler’s Modern English Usage (1926), Robert Burchfield (1991: 94) claims that these usage guides were “written in a tradition mainly inherited from two works of the nineteenth century, one British (Alford 1864) and the other American (White 1871). Even though research has shown that these two works were by far not the first ones on either side of the Atlantic, there are a number of points that call for a closer examination and comparison of both works, in particular:

1. both works (Alford 1864 and White 1871) stand in close temporal proximity to each other;
2. according to Burchfield (1991: 94) the works differ in length and presentation of the material, but both have in common that they attempt to seek out solecisms. These two features should guarantee that the works are indeed comparable to each other;
3. however, the interesting point is whether they concentrate on the same items or whether British and American usage were divided to such an extent at that point in time that both usage guides treat different solecisms or come to different judgements of the same solecisms.

With Edgar Schneider’s model on the evolution of Postcolonial Englishes (2007) with its five stages of foundation, exonormative stabilisation, nativisation, endonormative stabilisation and, finally, differentiation in mind, it seems likely that American English in the late nineteenth century had become stable by way of its own linguistic norms and standards. It will therefore be the aim of this paper to test this working hypothesis by comparing the two usage manuals with each other.

References

Primary sources

Secondary sources
The Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) is the largest database of eighteenth century texts to date available online, that contains more than 180,000 titles covering the following subject areas: History and Geography, Social Sciences, Religion and Philosophy, General Reference, Fine Arts, Literature and Language, Law, and Medicine, Science and Technology. Berland (2006: 392) describes ECCO as a ‘text-base’, “a large body of digital texts including books, newspapers and such that are accessible on-line, that are fully searchable and reasonably comprehensive and accurate”. Offering unique online access to full texts produced in the universe of discourse of the eighteenth century and held in major libraries around the world, this database can be used in various fields of research (such as history and literary studies). I am interested in exploring the ways in which ECCO can be used as a resource in the study of past stages of the English language.

The aim of this paper, which forms part of a larger study on the uses of English cant and slang words in the Late Modern period, is to test the potential of ECCO as a corpus. To that end, I will conduct a small-scale investigation of the distribution and relative frequencies of a small set of cant terms in this database. Based on this work, I will offer a critical review of the methodological challenges posed by using ECCO as a corpus. Unlike electronic databases such as the Helsinki corpus, or the Zurich Corpus of English Newspapers (ZEN), ECCO is not a corpus for linguistics research, because a historical corpus is designed on a set of principles, including careful sampling, and representativeness of a language or language variety (McEnery & Wilson 1996: 104). Another issue is that the texts captured in ECCO vary radically in size, and that duplicates and multiple editions of the same texts are included in the collection, which would compromise the matter of judging the status of frequency counts attempted. Furthermore, the data in ECCO are not text-searchable in the same way that electronic corpora are because the images are the result of a process called optical character recognition (OCR), i.e. the letters are made of pixels that form a picture of the text. For that reason, keyword searches may produce incorrect OCR results or invariant spelling forms, which need to be carefully scrutinised. In highlighting the methodological issues of conducting corpus research using this database, this paper will propose some alternative uses to which ECCO may be put into historical sociolinguistic research.

References

Nuria Calvo Cortés, Universidad Complutense Madrid
The struggle to survive: On the behaviour of the nominal progressive in Late Modern English

The verbal progressive form (be + verb-ing) increased its usage during the Late Modern English period. The reasons have often been connected to the disappearance of the nominal progressive (be + preposition + verb-ing) in the same period. As a result, the meaning of the progressive form became richer as it incorporated the complexity of meanings expressed by both structures in earlier periods.

The present study aims at analysing nominal progressive forms in Late Modern English. The main focus is on the frequency of usage in American English. The corpus-based study (COHA) will show that the structure was much more common in the nineteenth century than at present. It will also indicate that in American English the types of verbs present in the nominal progressive were restricted to verbs indicating motion, mainly ‘go’ and ‘come’. A comparison with British English will show that while the presence of the nominal progressive follows a similar pattern in terms of frequency of usage, structures with verbs other than ‘be’ were also still in common usage (e.g. go ashooting), whereas no examples of these could be found in American English. The similarity of these nominal structures with others, also introduced by the preposition (today prefix) a-, such as aboard or ahead, indicates a parallel evolution as regards its higher frequency in the nineteenth century as opposed to the eighteenth century. An explanation could be found in the condemnation of such a-derived forms by the prescriptive grammarians of the eighteenth century.

Although many studies have been carried out on the evolution of both structures in the history of the English language, most emphasis has been placed on the verbal progressive form and how the nominal one might have influenced it, as well as on the presence of the constructions in British English, mainly up to the
Early Modern English period. Thanks to the availability of corpora of American English today studies like this can be carried out.

The conclusion will confirm the gradual disappearance of the nominal progressive as it merges with the verbal progressive not only in British but also in American English. However, it will also show differences in usage between the two varieties and it will offer a new insight into the explanations for the booming of the structure in the nineteenth century as opposed to the eighteenth century.

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The changing fortunes of a great deal of: Distributions in grammar, time, and place

The construction a (adj) deal (of) has been in use in the English language since Middle English (OED s.v. deal n.1, 3a). It provides uses in the partitive / quantifying / degree modifying functions, thus being part of a linguistic area with considerable change in the history of English. In the form a deal of it produces a binominal quantifying construction, a type that underwent important developments and expansion in the eighteenth and following centuries (cf. a bit of, a lot of). Therefore, it is of interest to investigate how the construction fares in Late Modern English, in particular how its frequencies and realisations are potentially influenced by general developments, and by parallel or rivalling forms. While in modern English, lot is the far more common item, the relationship seems reversed in LModE, for example. The item is mentioned in standard grammars, but it has apparently not been investigated so far, either synchronically or diachronically.

Like lot and bit, deal can modify nouns, adjectives/adverbs, and verbs, as well as be used as a noun independently. These syntactic uses partly go together with different semantics, such as partitive, quantifying, and frequency- or degree-indicating meanings. We will investigate how the formal and semantic types are distributed and how precisely they interact, using insights from construction grammar and from grammaticalisation theory. The modified items and contexts will be classified and investigated as to potential restrictions, e.g. singular/noncount nouns (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 349), and assertive contexts (Quirk et al. 1985: 785). In Modern Standard English, the modification of deal by a quantifying adjective (commonly good, great) is said to be obligatory (Quirk et al. 1985: 264; Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 350), but the OED (ibid., 4) also lists bare a deal of, a form that is also found in the corpora checked so far. This form, which will have come about through implicature (cf. Traugott & Dasher 2005), seems to represent an aborted or reversed change.

Like many other nominal or open-class quantifiers, a deal is labelled informal or colloquial in Modern English (Quirk et al. 1985: 264). The speech-based Old Bailey Corpus (OBC, 1720-1913), comprising ca. 17 million words, thus is a good source for investigating the ‘recent’ history of this item in British English. As degree adverbs have been called more frequent in British than American English, albeit some specific types showing the opposite state of affairs (Algeo 2006: 153), the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA, nineteenth century parts) will provide the basis for first cross-variety insights. In order to investigate whether divergent developments can also be detected in other varieties, the Corpus of Oz: Early English (COOEE, 1788-1900) containing Australian and New Zealand data will also be employed. Both COHA and COOEE also contain some speech-based or speech-related data, thus establishing a link to the OBC.

References

Paul Cooper, University of Sheffield
“Every sentence is amusing”: The enregisterment of nineteenth-century Yorkshire dialect

Noted nineteenth-century antiquarian Joseph Hunter stated that “more attention has been paid to the verbal peculiarities of Yorkshire than of any other county” (1829: xx). This can be observed in the large amounts of Yorkshire dialect material produced over the course of the nineteenth century. Such material, as well as increased geographical and social mobility in the period, led to a greater awareness of regional dialect
features. Indeed, Beal states that there is “clear evidence in the nineteenth century of a growing awareness of the distinctive nature of certain […] dialects” and the association of these dialects with particular groups of speakers (2009: 140).

I argue here that textual data from historical periods can be evidence of indexicality (Silverstein 2003) and enregisterment (Agha 2003), and that repertoires of enregistered features can be identified in historical contexts. This is following Ruano-García, who argues that a repertoire of features used in literary representations of the northern dialect of Early Modern English is highlighted by quantitative corpus analysis, and concludes that this indicates the ‘enregisterment of some linguistic features’ (2012: 381).

Using a corpus of nineteenth-century Yorkshire dialect material, I discuss a repertoire of features that was likely enregistered as “Yorkshire” to nineteenth-century audiences. This corpus includes Yorkshire dialect literature, literary dialect (Shorrock 1996), and metapragmatic discourse, or ‘talk about talk’ (Johnstone et al. 2006: 80), from both within Britain and outside of Britain; for example, American Methodist preacher and Wesleyan University president Wilbur Fisk said of the Yorkshire dialect: “Their prepositions and conjunctions are mixed up and interchanged for each other in such grotesque order, and their vowels are sounded so queerly, that every sentence is amusing” (1838: 669) in his travel writing, which was published in America. Based on analysis of this corpus data, I go on to discuss a framework for the study of enregisterment in historical contexts.

References

**Primary sources**


**Secondary sources**


**Marina Dossena**, Università degli Studi di Bergamo

“Across the ocean ferry”:

*Point of view, description and evaluation in nineteenth-century narrations of ocean crossings*

“Ma che paura che ci fa quel mare scuro, che si muove anche di notte, non sta fermo mai”

(Paolo Conte, *Genova per noi*, 1975)

Ocean crossings could be a distressing experience for many nineteenth-century passengers who were unaccustomed with life at sea. And yet, for many of them, it was an inevitable rite of passage towards a new life in a distant country. This paper aims to discuss the main ways in which this experience is narrated in ego documents like diaries and correspondence, in which point-of-view influences subjective evaluations, while attempts are made at objective descriptions.

In addition to materials transcribed for the Corpus of Nineteenth-century Scottish Correspondence (19CSC) and those available in the Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing (CMSW), my analysis will take into consideration documents like Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Amateur Emigrant* (1895) and Edmondo de Amicis’s *Sull’oceano* (1889), in order to compare texts written by authors of varying levels of education, both in English and in Italian.
The discussion of redundancies, omissions, narrations and representations is expected to enable an outline of the ways in which solidarity from the recipients is elicited, thus favouring social network maintenance, while presenting an identity which is gradually changing as geographical distance inevitably grows. In this context, special attention will be given to the representation of dialogue and personalization strategies; the methodological framework of corpus-based discourse studies will combine with recent approaches to historical pragmatics, especially as far as ‘language history from below’ is concerned.

References

Tony Fairman, Independent Researcher
Creating data: Best practice guidelines for transcription
Hitherto, linguists have built their corpora from the printed mode – novels, textbooks, newspapers, etc – whereby all they need do to get ‘data’ is scan pages. But recently linguists have begun studying letters transcribed into print by scholars in other fields – biography, history, literary studies – and using those transcriptions as linguistic ‘data’.

I argue that best linguistic practice is for linguists to do their own transcribing, because language in print can differ significantly from its handwritten original, if transcribed for non-linguistic purposes. Baker, for example, edited out ‘antiquarian minutiae’, which are, in fact, Sites of Significant Linguistic Interest. First, I outline three ‘procedures’ (groups of assumptions and practices) in the transcription process. Then, borrowing ideas from Bowers (1976) and Tanselle (1978), who worked in pre-electronic times, I discuss what scriptal and peri-scriptal information transcribers should include in a critical apparatus, to produce a ‘foetus’ which contains, in a format suitable for corpus-linguistic use, all the data that corpus-linguists need for linguistic corpora not just of letters but of all language written before typewriters became commercially available in 1867.

In sum, transcribing is more than ‘harmless drudge’ work (Toolan 2007 and Samuel Johnson). ‘Data’ doesn’t just exist; techniques have to be learnt and principled decisions made about what and how to transcribe, in order to avoid ‘the Standard ideology’ (Milroy) and create data, which historical sociolinguists can convert into corpora that capture accurately and comprehensively in printed mode language that originated in handwritten mode.

References

Trinidad Guzmán-González, University of León
Across the Great Plains and along the Oregon Trail:
Assigned gender in letters and journals by American settlers and missionaries in the nineteenth century

The grammatical category of gender can be counted as one of the many peculiarities of English and its history, in the general context of the Germanic languages. While these have, to various extents, preserved formal systems, in English, gender moved away from linguistic criteria underlying the classification of nouns in the lexicon into the modern complex semantic system, articulated around it as the default (Siemund 2008) gender – i.e. for any referent except human males (he) and females (she) (he, she and it stand for the relevant complete sets of pronouns and collocations).

From its very origin in Indo-European, the category has been the subject of constant interaction between linguistic and cultural facts. Even in the case of languages with predominantly formal criteria for gender assignment, this interaction has contributed to the creation of archetypes – and the subsequent
exploitation of referential gender in many loaded usages (literature, emotive language…). Thus, the category performs important communicative functions, both regarding the referent of the noun (animacy, shape, texture…) and the speech community: cognitive categories, social roles and social interaction (Guzmán-González 2002: 46). This is especially noteworthy in the case of English, as a strict interpretation of the criteria mentioned above leaves ample room for assigned gender, “the use of the relevant formal resources of a language in ways deviant from those assumed as generally unmarked (i.e. deprived of register markers) for the standard” (Guzmán-González forthcoming).

In this paper I explore the use of the formal resources of English (covert marks – third person singular and relative pronouns in anaphora, and sex-sensitive collocations) for assigned gender in a corpus of letters and journals written by settlers of the Great Plains and the West of the United States between the 1830s and the end of the century. The corpus is being built specially for this research and so far it includes the journals and letters of Narcissa Whitman, a Presbyterian missionary in Washington (1836-1847) and the letters of the Oblinger family, settlers in Nebraska in the second half of the century.

Although a general approach to assigned gender is intended, particular attention will be paid to the use of she as the quasi-universal pronoun for inanimate things. The complex morphological history of the feminine subject pronoun seems to be closely related to a number of dialectal usages where it was not the choice for clearly defined classes of nouns – from there, it might have been associated to certain professional usages like she for ships, tools, machinery, etc. Both usages would have gone across the Atlantic and be “settled” to the point that many authors regard it as an indicator of colloquial American English, especially of certain groups (i.e. male workers, cf. Svartengren 1927: 83-113) and in emotional registers (Mathiot 1979: 1-48). Time permitting, I will provide a brief comparison between my results and my findings in a previous research on British English from the eighteenth century, namely the selection of letters compiled in the Corpus of Late Eighteenth-century Prose (Denison, Van Bergen & Soliva, University of Manchester).

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Jane Hodson, University of Sheffield
“Some of your words and phrases are strange and unpleasant to me”:
Transatlantic Englishes in British Fiction 1800-1836

This paper will draw on the “Dialect and British Fiction 1800-1836” database in order to explore the literary representation of Transatlantic Englishes. The “Dialect in British Fiction 1800-1836” project has surveyed all of the novels published every four years during this period, creating a database of 100 novels that contain a significant quantity of literary dialect. Overall, the story that this project reveals is one of a significant rise in the quantity of literary dialect, as well as a shift in the function and framing of that dialect. Unsurprisingly, this shift is led by novels featuring Scottish English, and the influence of both Robert Burns and Walter Scott on the development of the dialect novel is enormous, paving the way for novels featuring other language varieties. Nevertheless, the database contains a small but consistent number of novels throughout the period which represent Transatlantic Englishes: primarily Caribbean Englishes during the earlier period, with an increasing number of novels featuring American Englishes later on. These novels – all first published in Britain – provide a fascinating insight into how Transatlantic Englishes and their speakers were perceived during this period.

I will survey the findings for the period as a whole, and then focus in detail on two novels. The first is the anonymous The Woman of Colour from 1808 which is extremely interesting for its handling of its mixed-race heroine (who speaks entirely Standard English) and her faithful maidservant Dido (who speaks
Caribbean English). The second is Frances Trollope’s *The Refugee in America* (1832), in which the central characters travel through much of America, encountering immigrant Europeans, Americans and slaves. I will consider when and where direct transatlantic speech occurs in these novels, who speaks it, what its salient features are, and what kind of metalinguistic commentary frames its introduction. I will argue that while these novels cannot be read as authentic evidence for the ‘real’ language varieties, they offer a valuable insight into the discourses that were forming British perceptions of Transatlantic Englishes at this time.

**Yasuaki Ishizaki**, Nanzan Junior College  
*A historical constructional approach to the way-construction*

Since Goldberg (1995), constructional approaches to grammar, or construction grammar (CG), have drawn considerable attention in contemporary linguistics. Their focus, however, has mainly been on the study of current languages, partly because CG aims to explain the process of language acquisition. Rather, historical analyses based on CG are a new trend (e.g. Bergs & Diewald 2008).

Given these theoretical backgrounds, the historical study of the *way*-construction presented by Israel (1996) may be placed as an early attempt in the field of historical CG. Israel examines the historical development of the construction, which is illustrated in *Rasselas dug his way out of the Happy Valley*, based on the examples collected exclusively from the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) and claims that the growth of the construction is usage-based, which roughly means that grammar is formed on the basis of a cognitive ability to extract schemata from actual instances of language we come across on a daily basis. While I agree with his usage-based view of language inquiry, there are a number of theoretical problems on data collection from the *OED*. First, it is a collection of sentences stripped of their contexts and we cannot know how the examples were actually used. In addition, the *OED* is not concerned with the token frequency of items, which should be an important factor for a linguistic expression to undergo constructionalization (see Tieken-Boon van Ostade [2009] for other potential problems with data collection from the *OED*). Since CG claims that constructions grow out of actual instances associated with their context, CG analyses without considering these characteristics of the *OED* may lead to a wrong conclusion.

In this paper, I will focus on (Late) Modern English, where according to Israel (1996) the *way*-construction began to allow a wide variety of verb types. Specifically, I examine the token and type frequencies of the instances mainly taken from the *Penn Parsed Corpus of Modern British English* (PPCMBE) and I claim that the *way*-construction is a type of construction coming from grammaticalization but it is somewhat different from constructions that undergo similar types of development, such as a type of phrasal verbs in English, in their usage and frequency.

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**Sylwester Łodej**, Jan Kochanowski University, Kielce  
**John G. Newman**, University of Texas at Brownsville  
*A hell of a lot of questions arise among us: On the grammaticalization and pragmatic development of hell in Late Modern English*

Available evidence suggests that the eschatological imagery of eternal condemnation has inspired the lexeme *hell* to metaphorize and denote places or situations associated with physical torment or moral corruption. This process dates back at least to Late Middle English times (cf. the use of *hell* to signify a place of such misery in Chaucer’s *Anelida and Arcite*: *The helle That suffereth fayre Annelida*; a 1450 (1375), *Oxford English Dictionary*). By the nineteenth century *hell* is being used similarly in a number of phraseological formations such as to *raise hell*, to *give somebody hell*, and *hell to pay* which convey the meaning of ‘an unpleasant or troublesome situation’.
Concomitantly, hell has undergone semantic bleaching and has entered into novel grammatical and exclamatory constructions. Hell grammaticalizes as early as the eighteenth century to form the emphatic quantifier a hell of, which is recorded in the sentence This is a hell of a council of war (John Leacock, 1776, *OED*) and the phrase After travelling in the heat of the season in a hell of a climate (Samuel Curwen, 1778, *OED*). Interestingly, a hell of seems also to have been more common in American English than in other dialects of Modern English. The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides a relatively large number of American English illustrative quotations of the construction. Moreover, according to the same source, its progressive lexicalized form helluva (which includes the indefinite article originally modifying following nouns) evidently appeared first in the American dialect, and has occurred comparatively frequently therein. Innovative exclamatory expressions featuring hell, such as bloody hell, holy hell, and the wh-interrogatives what the bloody/goddamn/frozen hell reveal various pragmatic uses. The emphatic use of hell is found in wh-constructions like what/wh/where the hell.

Adducing data from various sources, most importantly the *Corpus of Historical American English*, this paper traces how the word hell has acquired grammatical meaning in Modern English, and it analyzes the relative pragmatic productivity of this noun in the context of semantically proximate nouns in the history of the American English dialect.

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**Gabriella Mazzon**, University of Innsbruck

**Habitual progressives in early American English**

One of the contexts of expansion of progressive forms in Late Modern English (along with others that were later equally, or even more, successful; see e.g. Fitzmaurice 2004; Smitterberg 2005; Nesselhauf 2007) is the habitual – iterative context, in which the form co-occurs with always and other markers of iterativity such as constantly, every day, etc., and seem to convey expressive pragmatic values such as irritation, impatience, and the like. This context is nowadays quite common, although it stands in contrast with the “progressive” core meaning. The precise conditions for its spread and constraints on its occurrence, however, are still debated (e.g. Killie 2004, Kranich 2008), and not much has been ascertained about its distribution.

It is known that American English shows a higher number of contexts in which be + V-ing forms are used than British English, and that the ratio of the frequency increase of this construction is also higher in Atlantic Englishes as well as in other “transplanted” varieties. The same can be said about the specific verbs that accept the construction, as these, too, seem to be in greater number in other L1 varieties than in Standard British English (see e.g. Collins 2008). Whether this has any connection with the “subjective” progressive referred to in the previous paragraph, however, still remains to be ascertained.

The present paper will therefore explore early American English texts spanning over the century 1810-1910 (from the *Corpus Of Historical American English*) for occurrences of this construction, trying to verify the hypothesis that this is one of the main loci of extension of the subjective uses of the –ing finite form in Late Modern English, and that it is therefore crucial in order to account for the present remarkable frequency of the latter in transatlantic varieties.

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Kevin McCafferty, University of Bergen

‘Everything is changed’: The be-perfect in Irish English

Retention of the be-perfect with intransitive mutative verbs of motion and process is feature widely noted as distinguishing Irish English (IrE) from other varieties (e.g., Amador-Moreno 2010). The be-perfect has been studied empirically in present-day IrE (Harris 1984; Filppula 1999; Ronan 2005), but there has to date been no diachronic study of this construction in IrE.

The present paper presents data from the developing Corpus of Irish English Correspondence (CORIECOR) (McCafferty & Amador-Moreno in preparation). It shows that IrE broadly followed the development in English generally (Rydén & Brorström 1987; Kytö 1997): use of auxiliary be declined in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it became restricted to use with particular verbs. In IrE, this appears to have occurred at a delay of about 50 years compared to BrE and AmE. However, various verbs and verb types were affected in different ways in IrE. The be-perfect with motion verbs declined sharply, with the notable exception of go (as in other varieties), while the change happened more slowly with process verbs. Certain transitive verbs – do in the sense of ‘finish’ and finish itself – must be included in a study of IrE because they are frequently noted as being used in the perfect with auxiliary be. These verbs go against the general trend, becoming more frequent with be over the two centuries studied. This seems to have been facilitated by the fact that many intransitive verbs take an object-like complement, but the influence of the Irish language, where the equivalent of the be-perfect is found with transitive verbs, may also have affected this development.

CORIECOR also permits investigation of geographical differentiation between regions that became English-speaking early – largely as a result of direct settlement from Great Britain – and regions that adopted English later – as the outcome of language shift – which may help address the issue of Irish substrate influence on the retention of the be-perfect in Irish English.

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Apparently, stance can be found in scientific writing.
A survey from the Coruña Corpus of English Scientific Writing

Stance is a pragmatic feature that has been widely studied in the last few years although the analysis of its presence in the scientific register has been more restricted to certain fields and disciplines (Salager-Meyer
One of the clearest linguistic expressions of stance is manifested through adverbs (Quirk et al. 1985; Biber et al. 1999; Huddleston & Pullum 2002) which provide a comment about the propositional content of an utterance. Thus, the information they transmit involves both participants in any speech act, speaker and hearer or, as in the case of academic prose, writer and reader. This manifestation of the interpersonal level of meaning has led some authors to name them in different ways. Consequently, in the corresponding literature, stance adverbs can also be called, for instance, “comment pragmatic markers” (Fraser 1999). In a previous study of contemporary English by Biber et al.’s (1999: 767), they have claimed that oral registers exhibit the highest number of stance adverbs, the occurrence of which is “relatively common” in “academic prose, while they show the lowest frequency in news” (Tseronis 2009). In this paper we will try to ascertain to what an extent stance adverbs were used in Late Modern scientific discourse and whether some differences in the frequency of occurrence can be traced considering both British and American authors and the text types or genres used. These genres approach orality to a certain extent, being orality or the written nature of texts a key feature in the analysis.

Samples from around one hundred and twenty authors belonging to three different sub-corpora from the Coruña Corpus of English Scientific Writing: CETA (Corpus of English Texts on Astronomy, 2012), CELiST (Corpus of English Life Sciences Texts) and CHET (Corpus of Historical English Texts), will form the research material. Each of the sub-corpora contains extracts of texts from different disciplines, namely Astronomy, Life Sciences and History which were written between 1700 and 1900. However, for the present study, only nineteenth-century authors have been chosen since eighteenth-century ones may still have very similar linguistic habits whereas one century later American writers may want to show their differences and distance from the Empire. At the same time, this selection will allow us to consider also the gender variable, in order to compare data both from male and female writings. From a methodological point of view, figures will be normalised when necessary to ensure a more rigorous study and more reliable results.

References

Fujio Nakamura, Aichi Prefectural University
A history of the third person singular present don’t: Transition from he don’t know to he doesn’t know

The first half of Nakamura (2012) tried to elucidate, amongst others, the points below, based upon 94,252 examples compiled from 129 volumes of diaries and correspondence, the OED2 on CD-ROM, electronic British English texts consisting of a heterogeneous mixture of 260 different documents such as biographies, essays, journals, letters, novels, etc., LOB and FLOB. The establishment of negative contractions was not simultaneous but varied and gradual according to auxiliaries and their functions, and the preterite-tense group with word-final treble-consonant clusters /-dnt, -znt, -snt/ (didn’t, couldn’t, wouldn’t, shouldn’t, etc.) and doesn’t became established 100 to 150 years later than did the present tense group simply with /-nt/ (don’t, can’t, won’t, shan’t).

This means that, whereas don’t emerged in the early seventeenth century and was established as early as its second half, the establishment of doesn’t was prolonged until around the mid nineteenth century, even though its first written occurrence was in a play written in 1674. This historical fact makes it presumable that don’t substituted for doesn’t until the regulation of the latter, and this is borne out by the evidence: don’t was by far more frequently used than doesn’t with a third person singular (hereafter called 3sg) subject.
The purpose of the present paper is to demonstrate, based upon 1,196 examples of doesn’t and 3sg don’t collected from the diaries and correspondence referred to above and the OED2 on CD-ROM, how the 3sg don’t became superseded by doesn’t in Late Modern English. Findings of particular interest are as follows:

a. doesn’t took precedence over the 3sg don’t in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century;
b. considering the fact that doesn’t took more than one and a half centuries before it came to be accepted, it was natural that, until its wide acceptance in the mid nineteenth century, people had recourse to the non-contracted form of does not or else to don’t;
c. even educated people seem not to have shown aversion to using he don’t know;
d. there were no particular syntactic environments in which the 3sg don’t was favoured, except for the following two points: the 3sg don’t was somewhat concentrated on the examples with the personal pronoun subject he/she/it, and it occurred exclusively in the declarative sentence;
e. the usage of he don’t know continued up to the early twentieth century, when it was finally established in its “vulgar” (OED2 on CD-ROM, s.v. do. v., 2c) or “non-standard” (Denison 1998: 195) speech-level, or “current” “conversational grammar” (Biber et al. 1999: 1123);
f. in American English, it was in the course of the second half of the twentieth century that doesn’t was established (Bloomfield & Newmark 1963: 26), except for Southern dialects and the west part of the State of New York (Mencken 1919 [1977]: 542; Trask 2004: 199). Probably because doesn’t was little known or not established when multitudes of people emigrated into the United States, people continued to have recourse to the 3sg don’t as a normal usage until the mid-twentieth century.

References

Minna Nevala, University of Helsinki

Murderer most foul: The public identity of Jack the Ripper in nineteenth-century newspapers

The actual content of group behaviour (what people actually think and do as members of a group) is shaped by more macro-level dimensions of social identity processes (Hogg 2005). In other words, groups often define their identity by their common opposition to some enemy or ‘out-group’. While this process can be very effective in strengthening the ‘in-group’, it does so by intensifying the intergroup conflict. Social stereotypes are generalizations or assumptions that people make about the characteristics of all members of a group, based on an image about what people in that group are like. Stereotypes and social beliefs are generally embedded in and part of ideological belief systems that explain and justify our place in the world and our relations to other people and groups (Hogg & Abrams 1988).

Such social stereotypes are typically used for building up the public identities of criminals and other members of the social margins. One of the most famous criminals of all time was Jack the Ripper, who committed at least five brutal murders in Whitechapel, London, in the autumn of 1888. The East End was a place of mystery and menace to respectable Londoners even before the Ripper murders: there were fears of immorality, poverty and disease (Linnane 2003). Writers and social investigators were only beginning to educate their Victorian readers about the problems in the area, when the killings began. At the time, Ripper was considered sensational, but certainly not in a good way. Even today his horrendous crimes are of great interest, mainly because the identity of Ripper still remains a mystery.

It is the purpose of this paper to study the terms used to refer to Jack the Ripper, appearing in British newspapers in 1888-89. In general, there is a rich terminology in Late Modern English that relates to crime and criminals, a vast share of which requires specific cultural knowledge to be transparent. One of my aims is to look at a set of terms used for Ripper within the wider scope of the murder descriptions and to
determine where these culturally mediated vehicles (words, word associations, metaphoric expressions) place him within the larger network of social and value relations, and whether these placements display a discernible regularity in social identification (see also Coleman 2008).

My aim is to study the terms from a socio-pragmatic perspective by looking at how the public identity and social character of Jack the Ripper are expressed in public writings of the time. Moreover, I will focus on how the terms invented are strategically used to oppose crime and keep the wrong-doers like Ripper as a group of their own outside respectable society. It is my aim to discuss how the concepts of disrepute and degradation are reflected in the terms, and how the readers’ conception of crime in general has been manipulated by the writers of the texts in question.

References

Ayumi Nonomiya, University of Sheffield

Second person singular pronouns in eighteenth-century British drama

This presentation discusses the use of second person singular pronouns (inflectional forms of you and thou (hereafter YOU and THOU) in eighteenth-century British drama. Although THOU and YOU have received significant attention, particularly in relation to the works of Shakespeare, their use in eighteenth-century drama has been comparatively neglected. To date there have been three studies that deal with second person pronouns in eighteenth-century drama: Bock (1938), Mitchell (1971) and Walker (2007). The first two were written several decades ago and therefore do not make use of more recent theoretical approaches (e.g. historical pragmatics). The third reveals some important findings, but Walker’s focus is on trials and depositions rather than fiction and she only deals with a small number of plays, all of which are comedies.

This paper will present the findings from a small pilot study focusing on four comedies and four tragedies written in the first half of the eighteenth century in order to explore the range of dramatic functions for THOU and YOU at this time. I have chosen male authors to exclude the influence of the gender of the author. Because no computer-based search can distinguish plural and singular you, this study was done by reading through all materials and collecting the data manually.

My study demonstrates that the frequency of THOU is significantly influenced by the genre of the plays. In comedies YOU is dominant (around 90% in most plays) and THOU is used to signal specific dramatic moments. When characters express strong emotions, they use THOU, but soon revert to YOU even in the middle of their speech. THOU is also used in soliloquy and aside as theatrical conventions in comedies. By contrast, in tragedies THOU is often the dominant/unmarked form. This is probably because tragedies at the time were written in grave style, often in verse (Thomson 2006). When THOU is the unmarked form, YOU conveys special meanings such as coldness or formality. Some characters in tragedies use YOU as an unmarked form, and their use of THOU is similar to that by characters in comedies. In conclusion, I argue that rather than simply disappearing in the eighteenth century, THOU had a range of functions in eighteenth-century British drama. I also consider the implications of my findings for the construction of a larger corpus.

References
Carol Percy, University of Toronto

Linguistic prescriptivism in revolutionary America:
Learning from the library of Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)

This paper will approach the subject of Late Modern English in revolutionary America by interpreting the presence of prescriptive texts in the library of Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826). Catalogued and reconstructed by the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, Jefferson’s library contained many English grammars, including those published by Robert Lowth and Lindley Murray. Jefferson was certainly not a typical citizen: his interest in Old English is well known and his library contained texts by Somner, Hickes, and Elstob. One aim of this paper is to infer the attitudes of one scholarly man to linguistic prescriptivism, by studying Jefferson’s letters and biography. I am particularly interested in identifying potential connections between the English grammars in Jefferson’s possession and his lifelong interest in public education. This paper will also sketch some transatlantic aspects of English prescriptivism, by contextualising the specific editions in Jefferson’s library to their printing history more generally.

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Shaping the world language: A particular contribution from the Oxford English Dictionary

If we assume, with McArthur, that Late(r) Modern English stretches from “c. 1700 to the present day” (2005: 384), the emergence of English as the world language is a major fact of this period. Predicted as soon as 1780 by John Adams (Algeo 1998: 182), this new function of English was nurtured in British grammars and histories of the language from the mid-nineteenth century and gave way to the present state of affairs, in which the dominance of English is unequivocal in tourism and in the “world financial system, world trade, international politics and worldwide scientific collaboration” (Watts 2011: 286).

Though such status of English surely results from its being “in the right place at the right time” (Crystal 1997: 75), a few academics have also highlighted the importance of some of its structural characteristics to such worldwide success. That is the case of Baugh & Cable, who identify the “cosmopolitan vocabulary” of English as an “asset” contributing to its “international prominence” (1993: 9-11). This mixed character of the English vocabulary is amply testified by the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), another major product of the Late Modern period. Though still duly seen as the paramount of modern lexicography (Algeo 1990; Brewer 2011), the OED may however have inflated the cosmopolitanism of the English lexicon by means of a liberal treatment of loanwords (e.g. senhor, imported from Portuguese). Though hardly discussed in literature, this fact is implicit in Stubbs (1988) and suggested in two previous studies on the Portuguese and late Romance influence on English vocabulary (Barros 2007 and 2012).

The aim of this paper is to further investigate the possibility of a sometimes too prompt inclusion of loanwords in the OED and to relate this policy to the construction of English as the global language. To this end, I will concentrate on Late Modern loanwords from diversified sources and bear in mind the mythical image of English as a superior language destined to globalization that Watts (2011) identifies in the same period.
References

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We must try to get along, as the Americans say:
The reception of Americanisms in Joseph Wright’s English Dialect Dictionary

In the Preface to the English Dialect Dictionary (EDD), Joseph Wright states that “It also includes American and Colonial dialect words which are still in use in Great Britain and Ireland, or which are to be found in early-printed dialect books and glossaries” (1898: v). In fact, the EDD contains Americanisms that Wright found in Late Modern British dialect use and were also included by contemporary American works. The dictionary lists in its impressive catalogue of bibliographic sources a total number of eighteen documents representative of American speech. They comprise both literary – Howells’ The Lady of Aroostook (1879), Westcott’s David Harum (1898) –, and non-literary material: Pickering’s A Vocabulary: or, collection of words which have been supposed to be peculiar to the United States (1816), and Dialect Notes published by the American Dialect Society (1896), amongst others.

This paper makes a preliminary approach to the reception of American words in the EDD. It focuses on one of the sources for the American material included in the dictionary: John Russell Bartlett’s Dictionary of Americanisms (1849). Considered “the far most complete glossary of Americanisms that has yet been published” by The North American Review in 1849, and “a specialized collection of distinctive national usages” by modern scholars (Bailey 2009: 283), Bartlett’s Dictionary (1848) contributed to the making of the EDD. The aim of this paper is twofold. Firstly, to evaluate the role of Bartlett’s work in the EDD by ascertaining the proportion of words that are quoted in the dictionary, and examining the treatment they are given. Secondly, to measure the importance of this work in relation to other sources of American English listed by Wright and likewise quoted in the EDD. In doing so, we hope that this paper might further our knowledge of the EDD sources and of the lexical links existing between varieties of British and overseas English in the Late Modern period.

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The Italian influence on Late Modern English

Italian has long served as a donor language in the history of English. Italian has enriched the English vocabulary with a considerable number of words down the ages. The Italian influence on the English lexicon represents the focus of linguistic concern in a number of investigations of the language and its development. Yet Italian borrowings which have been adopted into English during the last few centuries have as yet figured little in such studies.

The present study sets out to shed light on the Italian impact on English in the recent past. The results presented in this paper are based on a corpus of several hundred nineteenth- and twentieth-century Italian borrowings collected from the Oxford English Dictionary Online. On the basis of their meanings, the words under consideration were assigned to different subject fields in order to give an overview of the manifold areas and spheres of life influenced by Italian in recent times. The focus of this paper will be on the chronological distribution of the various Italian borrowings. To outline the intensity of Italian influence, the present investigation will raise the question of how many lexical items occur in each subject area and whether the proportion of Italian borrowings is constant or changing, increasing or decreasing over time.

The present paper intends to provide a socio-cultural interpretation of the Italian influence on Modern English. It will be interesting to see to what extent cultural, social or political developments and events have left their mark upon the language.

Reijirou Shibasaki, Meiji University

Negator vs. copula contractions in the history of American English

This study probes deeply into the two types of contraction i.e. we/you/they aren’t vs. we/you/they’re not, he/she/it isn’t vs. he/she/it’s not, and I am not vs. I’m not in the history of American English, based on The Corpus of Historical American English (COHA, 1810-2009). The corpus survey provides the following results. Firstly, as a whole, the copula-to-subject contraction (e.g. they’re not) has become dominant over the negator-to-copula contraction (e.g. they aren’t). Secondly, the consequence of one constructional preference over the other gives support for the view that language change is construction-based (cf. Rissanen 1998). Thirdly, this transition implies that the negative meaning may have been specified and emphasized over time by not contracting not onto the hosts.

The following give more detailed descriptions of the results. In the case of are and not, all the copula contraction forms i.e. we/you/they aren’t vs. we/you/they’re not have been used more frequently than aren’t mostly at any synchronic stage; regardless of whether grammatical subjects are singular or plural, the copula contraction ’re not has strongly been preferred over the counterpart aren’t. In the case of he, she and it, their preferred contraction patterns changed from s/he/it isn’t to s/he/it’s not around 1930s and 1940s. As to the first person singular form, no examples of the negative contraction form i.e. amn’t are found in the corpus (Hudson 2000; Dixon 2007). On the other hand, the gradual diachronic shift from I am not to I’m not is consistent with those found in the other person forms. Figure 1 summarizes the transition of he isn’t and he’s not in COHA with normalized frequencies per million.

![Figure 1: The transition of he’s not vs. he isn’t in COHA (accessed Nov. 30, 2012)](image-url)
The outcomes of this survey can be interpreted as follows. Discourse-pragmatically, the negative meaning has been strengthened with the gradual preference of the independent form not instead of the contracted form n’t. In a nutshell, the negative particle or adverb not has been actualized for discourse-pragmatic effects: a negator does not normally undergo semantic bleaching (Dahl 2010). Morphosyntactically, the ways to contract either copulas or negative particles appear to depend on types of construction. Based on the analysis of various ‘interrogative’ constructions including copula contractions, Rissanen (1998) demonstrates that the negator contraction increases over time in the history of English. However, this study demonstrates that the negator contraction in ‘declarative’ constructions in the history of American English especially with copulas turns out to decrease.

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Polina Shvanyukova, Università degli Studi di Bergamo
“A cargo of coffee, sugar, and indigo”:
Transatlantic business correspondence in nineteenth-century letter-writing manuals

The study of “letter writing as cultural practice” (Dossena & Del Lungo Camicciotti 2012: 6) has only received due attention in recent years. Such innovative volumes as Dossena & Fitzmaurice (2006), Dossena & Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2008) and Dossena & Del Lungo Camicciotti (2012) have laid out thorough theoretical and methodological frameworks for the study of familiar as well as commercial correspondence.

When it comes to (transatlantic) business transactions in the nineteenth century, the importance of correspondence for successful everyday communication cannot be underestimated. However, the potential that the study of commercial correspondence has for shedding light on the connections between the linguistic and the underlying social practices, has yet to be fully explored. For example, the nineteenth century saw the proliferation of letter writing manuals, specialized in business correspondence. In these highly popular books, specific linguistic strategies of politeness were employed and imposed on the reader/learner. Far from being mere reflections of current linguistic norms, these politeness strategies aimed at promoting strict standards of self-representation and self-conduct in the business environment. In other words, nineteenth-century letter-writing manuals bear testimony to the ongoing codification of a new politeness culture, in Andreas H. Jucker’s terms (2012: 423-424).

In this light, in my paper I will present two case studies of business letter-writing manuals, Anderson (1860) and Williams & Lafont (1860). Both volumes contain numerous examples of transatlantic business correspondence. In Anderson’s case, the sample letters are even claimed to be authentic. The main aim of my investigation is to establish whether in commercial letters purportedly written by business partners on the different sides of the Atlantic similar linguistic strategies of politeness are employed, or whether different cultural practices are shown to be emerging.

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Erik Smitterberg, University of Uppsala

Colloquialization and densification in nineteenth-century news discourse

In previous research on twentieth-century newspaper English, two important trends have been identified. On the one hand, there are tendencies towards colloquialization: newspaper writing becomes more “oral” in terms of the distribution of linguistic features such as progressive verb phrases and not-contractions (Hundt & Mair 1999; Mair 2006: 183-193). On the other hand, there is also evidence of densification: the information density of the linguistic material increases, as evidenced by rising frequencies of, for instance, noun + noun sequences (Leech et al. 2009: 233-234). However, less is known about whether these trends are also in evidence in newspaper text from the Late Modern English period.

The aim of this paper is to examine whether and to what extent colloquialization and densification occur in nineteenth-century news texts published in England. As has been shown elsewhere (Smitterberg 2012), there are indications that colloquialization is under way in the 1800s. However, it is necessary to consider each linguistic feature involved individually, as factors such as prescriptive reaction to informal options were more influential in the nineteenth century than today; for instance, while progressive verb phrases increase in frequency, newspaper writing continues to resist not-contractions throughout the century (Smitterberg 2012). In this paper, I complement these findings by considering other linguistic features that may be expected to take part in colloquialization, such as the ratio of on in relation to upon and the distribution of mutal quantifiers like much and a great deal of (see Kytö & Smitterberg 2006). In addition, I discuss the incidence of features that would indicate that densification is taking place, e.g. attributive adjectives and noun + noun sequences. As colloquialization and densification promote potentially conflicting stylistic ideals, special attention is paid to cases where the two trends can be expected to clash.

The present study is based on the Corpus of Nineteenth-century Newspaper English (CNNE), which includes newspapers published in England during the periods 1830–1850 and 1875–1895. The division of the corpus texts into two periods enables a diachronic perspective on nineteenth-century newspaper English, a genre which is of considerable interest to historical linguists for several reasons. First, the newspaper was an important medium during the 1800s (see e.g. Lee 1976: 18). Secondly, a great deal of development took place in this genre; for instance, Brown (1985: 1) claims that “‘[t]he news’ as we understand it is a nineteenth-century creation”. Thirdly, given that research on newspaper English occupies a prominent place in studies of language change in the twentieth century, it is of obvious interest to examine the extent to which developments that were in progress during the 1900s can be shown to occur in the preceding century as well.

References

Nataša Stojaković, University of Sarajevo

Diachrony and idiosyncrasy: The subjunctive in the first half of the nineteenth century

The decline of the subjunctive in Modern English has been investigated in studies by Harsh (1968) and Auer (2009), which showed that it was temporarily reversed in Late Modern English; the time of the reversal that includes the findings of both the authors spans from the second half of the eighteenth century to the second half of the nineteenth century.
The paper presents part of an investigation into the use of the subjunctive in Modern English that produced a similar result with some additional insights. The investigation covered the period from the first half of the 16th century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. It was based on the analysis of texts published in the first half of a century. The corpus consisted of two genres: plays as a primary corpus and a control corpus of non-fiction texts. Texts of two authors represented a genre and each author was represented with approximately 42,000 words. All the examples of morphologically distinct subjunctive forms were excerpted, and so were all the finite forms in a selection of dependent clauses.

Apart from the reversal in the first half of the nineteenth century, the analysis showed considerable individual variation in the number of morphologically distinct subjunctive forms, which is particularly pronounced in that part of the corpus. In most of the uses only two authors, one in either genre, contribute the instances of morphologically distinct subjunctive forms that create the reversal, and they are George Soane and Thomas Carlyle. The overall numbers for the other two authors, M.G. Lewis and Charles Lamb, are such as would be predicted from the numbers in the previous and the subsequent subperiods without the reversal.

The reversal is caused by the increase in the number of optative and hortative instances in the plays and the increase in the number of instances of were in main and dependent clauses. The overall number of the instances of the present subjunctive in dependent clauses does not show the reversal; in their case the decline is only slowed down.

All the four authors representing the first half of the nineteenth century use archaic features in their texts, but George Soane and Thomas Carlyle have more of those as well, which suggests that the use of the subjunctive in their texts may be interpreted as part of their general tendency to use archaic forms.

References

Daisuke Suzuki, Kyoto University
On modal adverbialization in Late Modern English

This study examines the processes of modal adverbialization of no doubt, doubtless, perhaps, and maybe in the history of English. In Present-day English, modal adverbs, which are used to express a speaker’s certainty about a proposition, are generally positioned medially in a clause. The four modal adverbs, however, occur more frequently in the clause-initial position. I analyze corpus data in order to discuss, stage by stage, how this development took place and how the modal adverbs have changed in function over time.

As the source of data, I selected the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpora of Historical English (PPCEME, PPCMBE) and the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (Extended Version) (CLMETEV) because of their large scale and wide range, and thus their ability to provide many instances of the development of no doubt, doubtless, perhaps, and maybe.

In my analysis I focused on information provided by the broader context in which those expressions occur, so my primary consideration was investigating the two factors regarding their patterns of occurrence: (i) whether the four adverbs co-occur with modal verbs and, if so, the frequency with which they do so; and (ii) whether they occur in an initial, medial, or final position and, if they occur within a particular position, the frequency with which they do so.

As a result, Early Modern English and/or Present-day English reveal the clear predominance of initial no doubt, doubtless, perhaps, and maybe, while the Late Modern English period witnesses a significant increase of their use in the medial position. This position, which also supports the use of the negator not and such modal adverbs as certainly and probably, indicates the four adverbs’ status as modal adverbs. In addition, a steady decline of the co-occurrence of perhaps with the modal verbs may and might can be observed in the same period. Therefore, the Late Modern English period can be viewed as a critical stage in the development of no doubt, doubtless, perhaps, and maybe as modal adverbs.

References
The medical case report is a narrative of a single case of disease or injury and it is one of the genres that have continuity throughout the history of English medical writing from the late medieval period to the present. However, its function and linguistic realisation vary in different periods: in modern medical writing case reports often focus on unusual cases, whereas the genre had a central position in medical teaching in the early periods. The eighteenth century represents a transition from the earlier thought-styles to more modern approaches to medicine with the first statistical assessments towards the end of the period. Case studies of the Late Modern English period have not been assessed before.

Our aim is to chart the uses of medical case reports in the corpus of *Late Modern English Medical Texts 1700-1800* (LMEMT) under work by the Scientific Thought-styles team. LMEMT reflects an inclusive view of medicine with a full scale of texts from academic treatises to writings targeted at heterogeneous lay people. We shall first place the genre in context with different layers of medical writing by charting the occurrence of case reports in various longer texts and fields of medical writing. In the earlier periods case reports are often embedded in various other genres and serve various functions; this practice continues in the eighteenth century, as case studies are encountered for instance in treatises on medicines and diseases and in surgical texts. The purpose of case reports is instructive, but the contents vary and show different patterns in different periods. We shall analyse case reports paying special attention to the degree of conventionalisation and the perspective through which the narrative is told. Involvement and personal affect features are of special interest: the eighteenth-century case reports vary in their degree of authorial involvement and affect from highly personal accounts to more detached styles of writing.

**References**


Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade, University of Leiden

An early American English usage guide

According to Burchfield (1991: 94), *The King’s English* by Fowler & Fowler (1906) and Fowler’s *Modern English Usage* (1926) were “written in a tradition mainly inherited from two works of the nineteenth century, one British (Alford 1864) and the other American (White 1871)”. Being preceded by Robert Baker’s *Reflections on the English Language* (1770) and others, Alford’s *The Queen’s English*, however, was not the first English usage guide by far, while an earlier American usage guide than White (1871) is Walton Burgess, *Five Hundred Mistakes of Daily Occurrence in Speaking, Pronouncing, and Writing the English Language, Corrected* (New York, 1856). This indicates that also in the US the tradition was older than Burchfield believed.

In this paper I will focus on the rise of the American usage guide during the second half of the nineteenth century, and I will analyse the extent to which the norm of usage presented in these early publications is independent from that of British English. For my material, which will consist of bibliographical and biographical data as well as a selected number of then topical usage items, I will draw on the database of usage guides and usage problems that is currently being produced for the project ‘Bridging the Unbridgeable: Linguists, Prescriptivists and the General Public’ at the University of Leiden in The Netherlands.

Reference


Matylda Włodarczyk, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

Towards the norms of nineteenth-century institutional (im)politeness in the Cape Colony: Responses of the Colonial Office to letters from the people (1819-1830)

Impoliteness has so far not been analysed in nineteenth-century letters to social superiors. Quite the opposite, a common preconception would be to look for instances of politeness or deference in this type of correspondence (e.g. Peikola 2012). Clearly, offensive behavior would be hard to reconcile within the genre’s major illocutionary point, i.e. obtaining a favourable response to a request. As recent studies show, however, politeness in the traditional understanding is too tight a perspective to comprehensively describe letters to social superiors. In petitions, for example, the framework of polit behavior (Held 2010) as well as that of self-politeness have been applied to make sense of letter-writers’ choices (Włodarczyk 2013).

In this study, the following questions are asked: what concepts may be used to capture impoliteness in letters to social superiors? Is it possible to propose a model of impoliteness here or is the analysis to be limited to one-time occurrences? In order to address these questions, the paper analyses a database covering the early British colonial period in the Cape of Good Hope based on Theal (1897-1905) and manuscripts from the South African and British National Archives. As I would like to claim, potential instances of rudeness and expressions of conflict do appear in the corpus of official letters of the British immigrants to South Africa known as the 1820 settlers. Nevertheless, evaluating these in terms of (im)politeness is only possible in reference to the responses on the side of colonial clerks.

The paper assumes that in analysing historical impoliteness, expectations and norms of a given community of practice need to be investigated alongside the actual verbal exchange. This is in line with the recent view in (im)politeness studies which emphasises the centrality of community of practice as “the optimal unit of post-modern analyses” (Kádár 2011: 247). The study thus proposes viewing the regular correspondents of the Colonial Office as expert members in a community of practice of petitioners, playing a significant part in genre innovation.

References

Primary sources

Secondary sources
Although many works have been written about adjectives, none has so far addressed the use of attributive adjectives in scientific texts. Several authors such as Bhat (1994, Moskowich (2002); Crystal (2006); Dryer (2007) or Culpeper, Katamba, Kerswill, Wodak, & McEnery (2009) define adjectives as words used to characterise other words, denoting properties or qualities of such words. Syntactically speaking, attributive adjectives are the ones which premodify the head of a noun phrase (Aarts & Aarts 1982; Quirk 1985; Greenbaum 1996; Biber 1999). From a semantic perspective, they restrict the reference of the noun (Quirk 1985) and according to Bolinger (1967) and Bhat (1994), attributive adjectives tend to denote fairly permanent properties. For Rind & Tillinghast (2008: 83) “what makes an adjective attributive is the fact that it cannot be used to make a logically complete predication unless it modifies some substantive expression”. Moreover, Borer & Roy (2010) believe that the majority of the adjectival expressions in nominal contexts are attributive adjectives.

It is the aim of this paper to compare two eighteenth-century sets of texts, taken from The Coruña Corpus: A Collection of Samples for the Historical Study of English Scientific Writing, which is one of the projects currently being carried out at the University of A Coruña (Spain) by the Research Group for Multidimensional Corpus-based Studies in English (MuStE). One of these sets contains texts from Life Sciences belonging to the field of Natural Sciences, whereas the other one contains texts from History belonging to the Humanities according to the UNESCO’s classification (1988). This comparison will enable us to depict the frequency and use of attributive adjectives in eighteenth-century scientific texts; in order to do so we will also analyse three different variables: discipline (Life Science vs. History), sex of the author and genre or text-type (thus comparing lectures, treatises, text-books, articles, dialogues, letters, etc); of all these variables comparative and superlative adjectives, as well as compound adjectives and demonyms would also be studied. Statistical tests have been carried out in order to prove the validity of our results and with the intention of checking the existence of significant differences among various categories. In addition, this study will allow us to identify differences in the use of attributive adjectives in relation to the variables under discussion. Hopefully, this preliminary study will also provide a first impression of the effects caused by the recommendations of the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge about the principles of plainness, simplicity and rigorousness with which science should be conveyed.

References
Workshop: Humour in Press News Discourse (1700-1900)

Convenors: Nicholas Brownlees, University of Florence
           Isabel Cristina Costa Alves Ermida, University of Minho, Braga

The workshop aims to examine the construction of humour in press news discourse in the Late Modern period. The scope of analysis comprises any print news texts in which the conventions of the genre, either in terms of structure or content, are parodied, satirised or simply the object of metatextual humorous commentary and a deliberate pretext for amusement. However, besides journalistic pieces proper, other genres such as reviews, letters, diaries, public documents and speeches may also provide insightful material into how features of print news were humorously perceived and constructed during the Late Modern period. Neither these genres nor the print news itself are confined to British English. The contributions focus on synchronic/diachronic aspects of texts and genres ranging from 1700-1900.

Nicholas Brownlees, Università degli Studi di Firenze
“In the Style and Phrase of the like ingenious Compositions … at the end of our News-Papers”:
Parody and humorous commentary of eighteenth-century newspaper advertising

As was sometimes the case, on 27 November 1712 the widely-read publication The Spectator began its number with a letter to the editor. In this letter the correspondent explains that he and his friends had been recently discussing topics examined in the journal. As more than one of the company had a different favourite number, “a Man of Wit and Learning” suggested in a spirit of “humour” and “mirth” that all the friends present could write an advertisement commending their own particular issue and the topic therein. The proposal was enthusiastically received, and the friends “of both sexes” retired to write down their own individual advertisements which in the words of the correspondent were “in the Style and Phrase of the like ingenious Compositions which we frequently meet with at the end of our News-Papers”.

What follows this introductory letter, which itself was fictitious, is a series of spoof advertisements highlighting some of the recognized linguistic and stylistic features of news advertisements of the day. One such advertisement reads:

Over the two Spectators on Jealousy, being the two first in the third Volume.
I William Crazy, aged Threescore and seven, having been for several Years afflicted with uneasie Doubts, Fears and Vapours, occasion’d by the Youth and Beauty of Mary my Wife, aged twenty five, do hereby for the Benefit of the Publick give Notice, that I have found great Relief from the two following Doses, having taken them two Mornings together with a Dish of Chocolate. Witness my Hand, &c.

In my paper I shall examine the construction of humour in both these spoof advertisements in The Spectator and in other early eighteenth century commentary on newspaper advertisements. Such commentary is insightful because as in modern-day society so too in the first half of the eighteenth century advertisements can be seen not just as an important feature of a newspaper’s contents and finances but more generally as a reflection of that society’s aspirations and concerns. My study, therefore, aims to contribute to recent research on the language, contents and significance of eighteenth century advertising (Barker [2000], Ferdinand [1999], Fries [1997], Görlach [2002], Gotti [2005], Heyd [2012]) by placing the focus on advertising discourse as source of humour. In the analysis of humour I shall in particular refer to Raskin’s semantic theory (1985) while in my examination of eighteenth century newspapers I shall be referring in particular to the Eighteenth-Century British Newspaper Archive.

References
Primary sources

Secondary sources
One of the periods in which historical news analysis finds much fertile ground is the nineteenth century, i.e. shortly before the whole news industry underwent a substantial transformation. The end of the century saw the development of modern patterns of news structure, the professionalization of the industry, and the advent of many technological advances ultimately affecting the news gathering and news production processes.

Operating according to a different set of news values than current papers, pre-modern newspapers also had a strikingly different content. One of such news categories – perhaps unexpected in broadsheets – was the practical joke. An analysis of The Times newspaper from the nineteenth century has revealed the existence of news articles that use this category to report humorous, though trivial incidents that happened to various people. It appears that the reporting of mischievous tricks played on unsuspecting victims was considered newsworthy even for the elitist audience of the broadsheet. The humour of the practical joke has several dimensions – while the physical trick itself may aim to ridicule or humiliate the victim (and thus be hardly considered as funny), the subsequent telling of the practical joke can be viewed as a narrative produced with the aim of amusing the audience, demonstrating the trickster’s cleverness and even passing critical social commentary.

The presentation documents the position of the practical joke at the boundary between a narrated personal story and a brief news item, both having the same narrative structure based on chronology (i.e., before the appearance of the inverted pyramid). The practical joke is interpreted as a news category through which a popular, tabloid-style agenda could find its way into a broadsheet, yet allowing for a detached critical evaluation manifesting one’s own social and moral superiority.

A study of news satire in Nineteenth-century press discourse

The construction of humour in American press news discourse of the late 1800s will be the focus of this paper. In particular, it will focus on an interesting part of Mark Twain’s career as a journalist, namely his production of hoax articles. These articles, such as “Petrified man” (1862) and “A bloody massacre near Carson” (1863), paved the way for a genre which was hitherto poorly explored: news satire. By blending together social criticism, humour and intentional deception, Twain’s inaugural pieces created entirely imaginary, mostly far-fetched, situations which satisfied the readers’ thirst for shocking sensations. At the same time, they satirised their manias, vices and folly. This paper aims to examine this curious facet of the great American writer’s production, in particular the linguistic devices he employs, such as irony, sarcasm, hyperbole and understatement, so as to create humorous effects. Also, it wishes to analyse the discursive strategies he uses in mixing reality and imagination, fact and fiction, humour and violence, at the same time as he plays with frames of reference and exploits the readers’ interpretive expectations.

News that will inform and amuse you:
The ‘António Maria’ by Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro (1879-1885 and 1891-1898)

As in several other European countries, the 19th century was marked in Portugal by an explosion in the number of newspapers, due to industrialization processes, as well as to the dissemination of newspapers in the provinces and the budding professionalization of the journalistic activity. Apart from the rhythm of creation of new titles, their diversity was also remarkable, with a huge segmentation in the type of
periodicals available, related with government and political issues, local and regional ones, publications dedicated to the dissemination of general news, periodicals focused on economic and commercial issues, hunting and fishing publications, and various types of ‘popular’ newspapers.

One of the most famous and long-living publications of the latter category was ‘O António Maria’, founded, written and illustrated by Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro, an extraordinarily multifaceted Portuguese artist, who achieved fame as a ceramist, a journalist and a political cartoonist. The newspaper had two series (1879-1885 and 1891-1898), with a total of fifteen years of intense journalistic activity, where Bordalo Pinheiro undertakes a systematic, shrewd and incisive analysis of the different sectors of the Portuguese society. It strives to maintain its independence from the political powers, debating ideas and expressing opinions in a most original form, where text, illustration and cartoon establish complex dialogic relationships, simultaneously conveying the factuality required of news items and stimulating derisive laughter that provides a comment on what is being reported.

It is the purpose of this paper to analyse the interweaving of complementary voices in this pioneer publication and the possibilities of satire and parody on the political situation provided by the use of (mainly) disparagement humour. The mode of discourse and functional use of humour will also be examined within a cross-cultural and linguistic perspective with reference to English-written news publications of the same period. Social analysis and comment, both visual and textual, will be examined within various strands of humour theory.

References

Anna Stermieri, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

“In order to appreciate such pleasantries the intelligent person must forego his privilege of intelligence for a while”: Irony and stance in newspaper theatre reviews

In the context of a study approaching the newspaper theatre review (NTR) as a genre in a historical perspective, this analysis aims to identify strategies associated with the realization of irony (Sala 2012) in the expression of evaluative meanings. The analysis is based on a small corpus of NTRs published in The Manchester Guardian and The Observer in the years between 1861 and 1891, for a total of about 60,000 words and 180 texts.

A preliminary analysis of the corpus highlights an interesting presence of premodifying adverbs expressing and modulating evaluation and stance (Hyland 2005). Preliminary results indicate that in NTRs irony is a central feature of evaluation and that evaluative meanings are intrinsically related to the exploitation of ironic resources on the part of the critic. In particular, critics seem to recur to irony when expressing negative evaluation.

The analysis of selected items (quite, much, some, such) sheds light upon the phraseology realizing evaluative meanings in NTRs and on how irony is exploited in the realization of those meanings. The conclusions relate the results to the hybrid nature of the genre examined (Bhatia 2004; Candlin & Maley 1997: 203-204), looking at the interactional framework governing NTRs both as a review genre and as instances of news discourse.

References

Laura Wright, University of Cambridge

On Victorian humour in the newspaper marketing of perfume

The paper will consider the newspaper advertisements of perfumiers Messrs Piesse & Lubin of 2, New Bond-street, London. Piesse & Lubin were in business from 1855 and the founder, a chemist called George William Septimus Piesse, was alive to the usefulness of the evocation of humour, melancholy, romance, beauty, and nobility (in the sense of ‘upper class’, that is, rather than honourable behaviour) in the titles he gave to his products.

He claimed to have hyperosmia (a word he coined himself, meaning ‘very sensitive to smell’) and he published The Art of Perfumery in 1855, which became hugely influential in the world of perfume development and marketing. Newspaper-advertising enabled him to cash in on the zeitgeist (e.g. his perfume ‘Little Dorrit’s Nosegay’, advertised for sale Christmas 1855, when Dickens’s Little Dorrit had only just begun to come out in instalments in December 1855), and to reach a readership that cut across the social classes. Piesse & Lubin used a specific kind of humour to target the working classes, but humour must have been, then as now, a great leveller, as Piesse & Lubin also employ this technique in some socially elevated spaces too. Corroborating comparative evidence for types of Victorian humour will be taken from Victorian literature, pictorial art, and the semantics of wearing apparel.

Databases
Nineteenth-Century British Library Newspapers
Times Digital Archive
**Round Table: AHRC Research Network: Digitising Experiences of Migration: The Development of Interconnected Letter Collections**

**Panelists:**
- Carolina P. Amador-Moreno, University of Extremadura
- Marina Dossena, University of Bergamo
- Tony Fairman, Independent Scholar
- Kevin McCafferty, University of Bergen

Emigrant letters are a rich resource for teaching and learning, transcending disciplinary and methodological boundaries. They are expressive and indicative of correspondents’ identities, values, preoccupations and beliefs, providing a powerful source of information and understanding about migration issues, offering a colourful picture of domestic life from an emigrant perspective, and shedding light on processes of language change and variation. Although many emigrant letter collections have now been digitised, not all are properly archived; some are reduplicated and others are in danger of being lost. The documentation and preservation of such letters is, therefore, a particularly pressing need.

Many existing digital letter collections consist of unannotated versions of original manuscripts. The digitalisation process has made the letters more accessible to academics and the general public, and has also increased their searchability, at least to a certain extent. Unfortunately, however, emigrant correspondence projects have often evolved independently of one another, and although project teams have been successful in tackling important research questions relating to social history and immigration studies they have generally not joined forces, or engaged with stakeholder groups from other disciplines.

With funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, a research network was established in April 2013 to look at ways of improving interconnectivity between existing digital collections of migrant correspondence. The network, coordinated by Emma Moreton at the University of Coventry, consists of historians, linguists, archivists and digital humanities experts from a range of institutions across Europe and the US, all of whom are currently working with (emigrant) letters in various ways and are making significant headway in tackling many of the issues described above. In this roundtable we aim to present our project and the outcome of the first two workshops held in Utrecht and Lancaster earlier this year, while inviting discussion from the audience. Themes of discussion will include: research opportunities and problems associated with the development of historical letter corpora; challenges in developing a system of markup for use across letter corpora; and the use of visualisation tools with letter corpora.