Historians and sociologists have recently taken a keen interest in studying the settlement of Irish migrants in the Old and New World (see, for example, O’Sullivan 1992-1997). They have focused primarily on demythologising the process and demonstrating that the experience of these ‘emigrants and exiles’ (Miller 1988) was not commensurate and that their impact varied considerably.

The focus of this panel will be on the impact of various waves of Irish migration to rather different locations in the British Isles, and presenters will examine potential grammatical, lexical and phonological influences using a range of historical and contemporary data-sets. Contributions will concentrate on the Irish who settled in urban centres (Liverpool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle and Sheffield), though at different periods in history and in destinations that are themselves quite dissimilar both ethnically and socio-economically.

An important theme of the panel will be to explore and assess the kinds of hypotheses and methodologies that can be used to further our understanding of socio-historical issues relating to the Irish diaspora and the extent to which these population movements have been responsible for shaping the contemporary dialects of the communities in which they permanently settled. Hence, Beal / Corrigan examine the value of ‘social network theory’ in this context. Fennell / Llamas harness notions such as ‘dialect mixing’ and ‘koinéisation’ more commonly associated with sociolinguistic investigations of contemporary urban dialects. Indeed, all of the contributions relating to historical migration engage in novel ways with well-known concepts such as the ‘founder principle’, though the underlying methodology associated with this approach was not originally developed to account for contact of this kind.

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Joan BEAL, Sheffield (UK) ‘‘Paddy’ Meets ‘Geordie’: A Prolegomenon to Investigating the Reflexes of 19th Century Linguistic Contact in the North East

Although the urban dialect of Tyneside is recognisably ‘Northern’ in its phonology (cf. Watt / Allen 2003), it is arguably more divergent at the lexical and morpho-syntactic levels, than other Northern varieties. It has been suggested that this is because North Eastern English dialects have a strong affinity with Irish-English as a result of the number of Irish migrants who settled the region in the late nineteenth century (cf. Beal 1993: 189ff.) when the demand for labour during the industrial revolution reached its peak (cf. Mess 1928). Indeed, the city of Newcastle still boasts an Irish centre which is a vehicle for the expression of a persistent Celtic ethnicity within the area (cf. Barron / Everitt 1996). Historically, the Irish born communities in Northumberland and Durham in the mid-nineteenth century represented the fourth largest concentration of Irish in England and Wales. Although Beal (1993), Cooter (1972), Mess (1928), Neal (1998) and Watt (1998) all cite the contribution of these Irish migrants to Newcastle who, “by the distinctiveness and the strength of their traditions” exercised a powerful influence on the local community (cf. Watt 1998: 116), the effect of Irish-English on the dialects of Tyneside and Northumberland has never been thoroughly investigated. Given the size of this diaspora noted earlier, it cannot be discounted, and may serve to explain some features of Tyneside English which are uniquely shared with Celtic dialects and are not found in other Northern Englishes. Beal (1993), for example, has speculatively suggested that the use of the form youse for the second person plural pronoun in both Tyneside and Irish-English may be the result of the presence of the Celtic substrate. At the phonological level, Watt (1998: 123) posits that the stereotypical pronunciation of Wells’ <NURSE> lexical set in Tyneside with considerable lip-rounding (phonetic [oː]), by comparison to the forms used in either Received Pronunciation or other Northern Englishes, may also be a Celtic English contact phenomenon rather than a result of the distinctive Northumbrian ‘burr’ to which it is usually ascribed (cf. Beal 1985: 42; Hughes / Trudgill 1987; Maguire 2004; Pålsson, 1972).

This paper will address a range of issues related to the hypotheses outlined above, namely:

- How might one expect principles of language contact established for similar situations elsewhere in the world to impact upon the nature of the contact and its outcome in the North East?
- Is there robust socio-historical evidence from the nineteenth century to demonstrate the exogenous influences claimed for Tyneside/Northumberland?
- What exactly is the geography of the region and how might this have influenced its settlement history?
- Can the contemporary dialects of Tyneside/Northumberland be differentiated from other English varieties (including Celtic ones) with regard to the extent to which they do/do not incorporate lexical, phonological and morpho-syntactic features reminiscent of Celtic Englishes in a similar manner to that articulated by Trudgill for New Zealand (Trudgill et al. 1998, 2000a/b, 2003)?
- To what extent have these features been used to “broaden the vernacular base” (Meyerhoff / Niedzielski 2003: 534) of other urban varieties of English in the British Isles making it difficult to determine their exact origins with the passage of time, coupled with the problematic nature of the historical evidence?
References

Middlesbrough, in the north east of England, was second only to Liverpool in terms of relative Irish-born population in the 19th century (Chase 1995, Willis 2003). The perceived similarity of the varieties of Liverpool and Middlesbrough, despite their geographical separation, may reflect similar migration patterns and, most particularly, the influence of the influx of Irish migrants during the 19th century. This project seeks to compare features of both northern English varieties and also relate these findings to features found in Dublin English. This paper will present findings from Middlesbrough and Dublin English. By assessing overall similarities and differences in phonetic and phonological characteristics, the relationship which may exist between them in terms of a common linguistic heritage can then be ascertained more reliably.

References

Joan BEAL, Sheffield (UK)
The Irish in Sheffield, the ‘Industrial Village’

Most, if not all, of the cities in the English North and Midlands, attracted migrants from Ireland in the 19th century, especially during and after the ‘Great Famine’ of 1840, when the ‘push factor’ of starvation coincided with the ‘pull factor’ of the demand for labour in the rapidly expanding industries of these cities. The major cities of Yorkshire are no exception, but there has been very little research into either the cultural or the linguistic influence of the Irish in these cities until very recently (see, for instance, Bolger / McGowan / Silva 2006). Certainly, there has been no suggestion that the Irish who migrated to Sheffield had the kind of linguistic influence attributed to their compatriots in Liverpool, Newcastle or Middlesbrough. That there was Irish migration to Sheffield is not in dispute: historians such as Hey (1998) provide clear evidence for this, and the opening of a new Irish Centre in Sheffield in 2005 testifies to the enduring cultural effect of this and later migrations. In this paper, I attempt to explain why the Irish in Sheffield appear to have had little or no linguistic influence on the dialect of this city, one that has been amply documented from the period of migration onwards. I argue that the nature of industrial society in Sheffield, still characterised as ‘the largest village in England’, led to close, multiplex networks which would not easily be penetrated by newcomers such as the Irish, who would therefore have little chance to influence the dialect.

References
The aim of this paper is to study the processes of borrowing and code-switching in English scientific texts from the 18th century. Both processes have been regarded in most of the studies about the enlargement of English lexicon, although not always have researchers been able to distinguish between the two.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper will be to ascertain whether the non English words found in our texts are borrowings, assimilated by the vernacular, or they were consciously chosen by the author to produce a change in the discourse. In this way, we will take into account certain extra-linguistic factors: such as the author’s intentionality, the context and of course the outlines marked by the register to which the texts belong.

References

Inés LAREO MARTÍN, A Coruña (Spain)

Collocations in nineteenth-century science and fiction

The aim of this paper is to analyse the behaviour of collocations formed by a verb plus noun in nineteenth-century texts. The study will be focussed on the verb make when functioning as a collocative. In order to check if the register or text-type determines in some way the use of these collocations, extracts from two different corpora will be used: the Coruña Corpus and the Nineteenth-century Fiction section of the Chadwyck-Healey Collection. The Coruña Corpus is a collection of scientific texts, being compiled at the University of A Coruña (Spain). The first texts compiled belong to 18th and 19th Mathematics and Astronomy, both included in the first area of the UNESCO classification, “Exact and Natural Sciences”. Since this paper will explore the behaviour of these collocations in 19th century, both disciplines will be used as a sub-corpus of this period. The same analysis will be carried out on texts from the Chadwyck-Healey Collection. We are aware that this is not a principled corpus itself but we have taken excerpts of some of the novels included to compile an appropriate counterpart. The choice of the verb make enables us to prove whether the old rivalry between make and do continues in this period. To accomplish this task the nouns involved in make-collocations will be the focus of a minute study.

Dolores Elvira MENDEZ SOUTO, A Coruña (Spain)

Complex structures in Late Modern English: Their use in English scientific writings

The aim of this paper is to carry out a preliminary approach to the use of complex predicates in 19th century English scientific writings. Thus, section one will provide a brief introduction on the situation of English scientific writing in Late Modern English. Next, two sections – corpus and analysis of data – will deal with the use of complex predicates in the period under survey. To this end, four different texts on two different subject matters – Astronomy and Mathematics – have been selected in order to contrast and compare the use of such complex structures in both disciplines. Therefore, the analysis of data will comprise, not only the level of complex structures found in the texts under survey, but also a comparison of their use in both disciplines, so as to ascertain whether their use was uniform in all scientific writings, or if, on the contrary, some disciplines resorted to a greater extent than others to the use of the above-mentioned structures, and why. Finally, the last section will show the conclusions reached

References

Marta GONZÁLEZ ORTA, A Coruña (Spain)

The device of nominalizing in English scientific register: Diachronic analysis of Late Modern English philosophical writing

Stemming from Halliday (1996)’s assumption that the grammar of scientific English has suffered a series of nominalizing processes from the foundations of scientific register onwards, this paper aims at exploring the evolution of the device of nominalizing in the field of philosophy by means of the historical study of a sample of philosophical writings published throughout the 18th and 19th centuries as contained in the Coruña Corpus (CC).

Based on the study of physical sciences, Halliday argues that the resource of nominalizing in scientific discourse emerged in the language of Newton’s Treatise on Opticks (published 1704, written 1675-1687), as a way of marking the
thematic and informational movements in the discourse patterning appropriate to the kind of argumentation that the experimental method required. Afterwards, the occurrence of this device appeared also to favour the progressive disappearance of personal projections from scientific register.

As far as philosophical writing is concerned, we attempt to examine these nominalizing processes in order to establish if they were at issue in this scientific discipline in the period under scrutiny. Following Kytö / Rudanko / Smitterberg (2000)’s claim that short-term linguistic change in diachrony can be studied over periods of thirty years, we will select from the Coruña Corpus a text per each quarter of century. Since each sample contains around 10,000 words, this will give us a 40,000 words per century, yielding a total for the sampling period of c 80,000 words.

Moreover, as the compilation principles of the CC stipulate (Moskowich / Crespo forthc.), only original philosophical texts will be considered (preferably first editions) and using more than one text belonging to the same author will be avoided. This way, our analysis not only will shed light on the nominalizing device in historical philosophical writing but also will ascertain whether a similar behaviour can be attested for both physical science and philosophy.

References
Newton, I. 1704. Opticks, or, A treatise of the reflexions, refractions, inflexions and colours of light; Also two treatises of the species and magnitude of curvilinear figures. London: Printed for Sam. Smith, and Benj. Walford.

Víctor SÁNCHEZ RIVERO, A Coruña (Spain)
Derivation and compounding in ModE:
Some morphological issues of scientific writing during the 17th century

Compounding and derivation are the two most frequent word-formation processes in early stages of the English language. In fact, compound nouns are the commonest type of compound in English (Castairis, 2002: 60) particularly in scientific texts because “Cultural and technical change produces more novel artefacts than novel activities or novel properties” (Castairs 2002: 62).

The aim of this paper is to study the processes of derivation and compounding in scientific English once the process of vernacularisation has been completed. Recent research (Taavitsainen 2000, 2001) seems to ascertain that the vernacularisation of the scientific register began in the last quarter of the 14th century. In this work, we will survey different samples of scientific texts extracted from the material contained in the Coruña Corpus (CC) once vernacularisation has, supposedly, been completed. To this end, we will work with ten 17th-century samples representative of two disciplines: on the one hand, biology (related to the field of Natural Sciences) and on the other, philosophy (related to Humanities). By focusing on the different morphological aspects of these texts we will try to find out if the process of vernacularisation and in-group markedness are similarly developed in the different scientific disciplines of the English language. In addition, we we will contrast the data obtained in this paper with other similar works, taken out both from the CC and other corpora.

References

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Towards a handbook on Late Modern English letter writing

Letters from the LModE period are increasingly the subject of attention from scholars in the field of historical (socio)linguistics. Thus, the Corpus of Early English Correspondence was recently extended to cover the eighteenth century as well, and already at ICEHL-13 (Vienna 2004) and LModE-2 (Vigo 2004), a sizeable number of speakers reported their findings on the basis their research of the CEEC Extension, while various other letter corpora were dealt with, too. At the same time, new letter collections from the period are being transcribed and published, such as the Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose (van Bergen / Denison forthc.). More such published collections are called for, as analysing their language will throw important new light on developments taking place in the English language of the Late Modern Period (e.g. Denison 2005; Dossena / Fitzmaurice 2006.; Fairman 2000; Tieken-Boon van Ostade / Faya Cerqueiro forthc.). To facilitate research, such editions will increasingly be made available in electronic format.

A research programme for making available collections of letters in a more or less systematic way for historical sociolinguistic / sociopragmatic research has been proposed in Tieken-Boon van Ostade (forthc.), and vast numbers of unpublished letters are indeed available for such research (cf. Tillyard 1994 and Vickery 1998). What is needed first and foremost, however, is a handbook on LModE letters, a book aimed at a wide audience of readers (interested in historical or genealogical research) as well as scholars (interested in the language of the letters) in order to serve as an introduction to the transcription, publication and analysis of letters from the LModE period. Such a handbook should deal with topics such as: paleography / handwriting, spelling conventions (including capitalisation and abbreviation practice), punctuation practice, structure, letters as a text type, formulaic language (opening and closing formulas), self-correction practices, electronic transcription conventions, and the like.

References
Tieken-Boon van Ostade, I. / Faya Cerqueiro, F. forthc. Saying ‘Please’ in Late Modern English. Proceedings of the 2nd Late Modern English Conference (Vigo, 2005)

CONTRIBUTORS
Anita AUER, Leiden (The Netherlands)
The letter wîhîch I wîrote—Self-corrections in Late Modern English letters

A study of self-corrections in letters written between 1700 and 1900 promises to shed some light on the English standardisation process, contemporary schooling and the influence of prescriptive grammatical rules during that period. An investigation of self-corrections is however only viable if original letters or authentic transcriptions that still include self-corrections are being used. Bearing this in mind I decided to base this study on two letter corpora. The first corpus to be investigated is the Corpus of late eighteenth-century prose (compiled by Linda van Bergen and David Denison). This 300,000 word-corpus on practical subjects from the north-west of England dates from 1761 to 1789. The letters were written by a range of people but they were all addressed to Richard Orford, who was the “steward of Peter Legh the Younger at Lyme Hall in Cheshire” (van Bergen / Denison, in press). With respect to this fairly large-scale transcribed corpus I aim to investigate self-corrections by means of a concordance. The second corpus used for this study is a self-compiled 19th-century letter corpus containing letters of an individual letter writer, which will be analysed by going through the entire corpus by hand. Overall, I hope to be able to categorise the self-corrections found in both corpora and from these results draw conclusions with respect to the effect of prescriptive grammars and/or letter writing models as found in contemporary letter writing manuals. In addition, I will evaluate the different approaches used for analysing the corpora.

Reference
Frances AUSTIN, formerly Univ. of Liverpool (UK)

A thousand years of model letter writers

Starting from letter writing as a part of rhetoric, this paper seeks to trace the development of model letter-writers in English from their origins in Latin and French formularies to the present day. The first letter writers for use in England seem to have appeared in the 13th century but not until the 16th century were they written in English. Gradually, they were aimed more at ordinary working people rather than scholars, but they still retained their rhetorical features.

In the 17th century a new development occurred with Nicholas Breton, whose model letter-writer was intended as much for amusement as for serious use and contained a rudimentary narrative. Related, but less rumbustious, were letter-writers based on French politesse and cultivation of good manners. In the late 17th century another strain emerged with model letters being incorporated in books for young men in trade and similar occupations. These were more utilitarian and it is mainly this trend which has continued up to the present day. Model letters for women of various classes were also produced and some of these will be mentioned.

The formulas for opening and closing letters, as well as others, which appeared as far back as the 14th century and earlier, survived into the 20th century among lower class writers and were taught in elementary schools. Examples of these from various periods will be given if there is time.

Conclusion: there are two main types of model-letter writer: 1) intended for serious use and, a later development: 2) aimed at entertainment. These last may have been precursors of epistolary fiction.

How much are letter-writers used today? Judging by recent publications they must be used or publishers will be losing a lot of money! Examples of some recent books may be shown.

Stefan DOLLINGER, University of British Columbia (Canada)

Periphery and core? Colonial variation in the LModE business letter

This contribution attempts to define the core characteristics of the LModE business letter by surveying letters from various colonial settings in relation to English English letters. The basic approach will be qualitative, although quantification will serve to substantiate the claims made. It is aimed to distinguish between core and peripheral features of the LModE business letter on the basis of variation in the following areas:

- the use of formulaic language: apart from opening and closing formulae, some basic building blocks, lexical chunks, of the LModE business letter will be identified, such as to take the liberty to/offer, or to beg Leave to remind/inform etc.
- elliptic constructions: ellipses seem to be guided by different principles in LModE correspondence than in PDE. In the following example, the head word is omitting (letter): Dear Cousin / The contents of your last concerned me much (CL18P).
- LModE short forms and their use across the varieties, e.g. short forms for should and would; while CanE and AmE (CONTE-pC and ARCHER-1) show no short forms, BrE (CL18P) correspondence features shd./shd and wd/wd with modest frequency.
- expressing polite requests: polite requests, which are omnipresent in official correspondence, show considerable variation in their realization, e.g. You would oblige me by sending In the order (CONTE-pC) or You’ll please to favor me with your Answer (CL18P)

While the focus of the paper will be on English English in comparison to North-American varieties, occasion reference to Southern hemisphere Englishes will be made. Evidence of writers from lower social strata, who tend to use variants presumably closer to the vernacular than found in professional writing, shed some light on the developmental stages of the varieties:

a. Please Sir Be so good to Send me A List of the vacant Lots (CanE, CONTE-pC, 1837, lower class)
b. You will be pleased to consider this communication private (CanE, CONTE-pC, 1837, upper middle class)

While (a) appears to be in colloquial use by the mid-1800s, (b) was likely the preferred epistolary choice of the skilled writer. It will be tentatively shown to what extent this colloquialization infiltrated business correspondence in British and North-American English.

By combining the evidence, we will get a first glimpse whether, and what degree, colonial varieties exhibited patterned variation in business correspondence of the LModE period.

References

CL18P = Corpus of Late Modern English Prose, compiled by David Denison, Linda van Bergen and Joana Soliva Proud
CONTE-pC = Corpus of Early Ontario English, pre-Confederation Section, compiled by Stefan Dollinger
Marina DOSSENA, Bergamo (Italy)

“We beg leave to refer to your decision”: Pragmatic traits of 19th-century business correspondence

The aim of this contribution is to discuss how pragmatic aspects of specialized discourse can be investigated through the analysis of a corpus of 19th-century business letters (19CSC – see Dossena 2004). As a matter of fact, business correspondence is a very promising branch for the study of the linguistic devices employed in order to convey the encoder’s point of view, so that the pragmatic value of the statement is expressed clearly, firmly, but consistently with the rules of politeness. This is first of all due to the fact that, in such letters, there are typically two ‘authors’ – one is the actual source of the message, e.g. a manager; the other is the scribe, e.g. a secretary, who encodes the message in such a way that it meets the stylistic requirements of business exchanges. As a result, we observe an interesting mixture of personalizing devices, aimed at involving the recipient, and of devices aimed at making the message more official and, therefore, more difficult to challenge. While in holograph letters such a mixture is perhaps more predictable, it may be interesting to analyze a broader range of texts, in order to see the extent to which the actual source message has been adapted to the constraints dictated by the kind of hierarchical discourse found in business exchanges (see Del Lungo 2005 and 2006).

In such exchanges, the need to present an acceptable image of both business partners has to account for the fact that the mutual status of the participants is not necessarily equal – indeed, it is sometimes constructed as artificially superior or inferior, for politeness purposes (see Dossena forthcoming). As a result, we come across typical formulas aimed at presenting this kind of ad hoc persona, consistently with the recommendations found in letter-writing manuals of the time. In order to test the hypothesis of any divergence from such prescriptions, we shall take into consideration instances from authentic letters encoded in a variety of business settings.

References


Richard DURY, Bergamo (Italy)
The history of the copperplate hand and the importance of noting handwriting styles in letter transcriptions

Copperplate evolved in the early 18th century due to a need for an efficient commercial hand in England. Two varieties of a new “copperplate” style became common: “round hand,” the bolder of the two, considered appropriate for business use, and “Italian,” a lighter and narrower form, considered the ladies’ hand. Such was the success of copperplate that by the end of the 18th century it had been adopted in France, Spain, and Italy, where it was known as the ‘English’ hand (corsivo inglese in Italian).

Clerks, scriveners, copyists and writers would all have a professional ability to produce this hand for legal and business documents. However, its regularity made it the equivalent of printing and it is associated especially with legal documents, contracts and other texts intended to have permanence and authority (hence its adoption as the ‘font’ for the letter-headings of Italian ministries). We will sometimes find an attached copy in copperplate and an accompanying letter in a less formal hand. The choice of handwriting and the degree of regularity gave important pragmatic clues concerning the authority of the document or the social status of the writer.

Transcriptions of letters for linguistic purposes (especially business letters) should tag significant handwriting styles such as the choice of formal copperplate. Starting from the study offered in Dury (2006), this contribution aims to discuss such tagging procedures, in order to outline what research questions may be investigated through the analysis of this feature.

Reference

Tony FAIRMAN, independent researcher (UK)

Strike-throughs: What textual alterations can tell us about writers and their scripts, 1795-1835

Studying handwritten documents (scripts) has two advantages over studying print (transcripts): 1) If the script is unconventional, the handwriting itself provides information relevant to assessing the other linguistic levels. 2) Alterations within a script, particularly a draft, embody the script’s history. If we can read the writers’ original and final versions, we can guess their assumptions and purposes in what they tried to achieve and avoid. Linguists generally research transcripts of comparatively well-documented and well-schooled upper-class writers, who comprised less than 10% of the population. But just as many, if not more writers came from the remaining 90%. Therefore, using my corpus of over 1580 handwritten letters (over 260,000 orthographic units), mostly written in unconventional English in the early 1800s, I try to show that writers altered their scripts for different reasons. First, I discuss how writers altered their scripts: rub-outs, blot-outs and strike-throughs. Then I examine strike-throughs in minimally- middlingly- and fully-schooled English. Only writers of well-schooled English (and above) aimed to write conventionally. Most of the rest, who came from classes that formed the majority of the population, and perhaps also of all writers, aimed to write truthfully, or at least plausibly. Finally, I discuss possible causes of writers’ different assumptions and purposes, such as intelligence, schooling, social background and class membership. From strike-throughs in a larger corpus of scripts written throughout the 18- and 1900s we could try to answer other questions: 1) How did the ability to write conventionally spread through the population? 2) Did writers achieve conventionality on some linguistic levels before others? 3) As conventional English was taught to more and more people in the 18- and 1900s, what factors – social, economic, pedagogical and others – contributed to its alteration?

Susan FITZMAURICE, Sheffield, UK

Epistolary identity: convention and idiosyncrasy in LModE letters

The paper will consist of a survey of the practices adopted in the presentation of letters in my NEET corpus (including handwriting, abbreviation, spelling conventions, openings and closings), and then a study of the ways in which individuals manipulate or exploit the conventions in specific ways, resulting in clear epistolary identities. I will also consider audience and the influence on variation in these practices.

Arja NURMI / Minna PALANDER-COLLIN, Helsinki (Finland)

Letters as a text type

A letter has a specific form, it is sent to a recipient, and its function is to communicate information and to maintain social relations across space and time. Often a letter serves a multiple purpose combining several goals. In this paper we attempt to identify some linguistic features typical of letters in the eighteenth century.

The linguistic features of personal letters are often said to be close to spoken language. For instance, Biber / Finegan (1989, 1997) show that letters as a text type contain features typical of popular kinds of writing for a general readership. Using the Corpus of Early English Correspondence Extension as data, we will study a selection of features associated with the different dimensions proposed by Biber & Finegan.

Since letters are not a monolithic text type but show variation and linguistic differences reflecting writer identity (often linked to the writer’s social background and stylistic literacy) as well as the relationship between the writer and the addressee (e.g. Bell 2001), it is important to relate them to a social context. In this paper we shall combine the quantitative study of linguistic features of personal letters with a qualitative, socio-pragmatic analysis placing letters in the context of the discursive and social practices of the period (cf. Fairclough 1992, Wood 2004).

References

“I am sorry I did not bring Mr Harris. I might scrape acquaintance with Hermes in this retirement”, wrote social hostess and Bluestocking Elizabeth Montagu to fellow Bluestocking Elizabeth Carter in July 1766. She refers here to the work of James Harris on the forms and logical structures of language (first edition 1751). 18th century Bluestockings were an intellectual social network of men and women formed around the London salons of Elizabeth Montagu, Elizabeth Vesey, and Frances Boscawen from the 1750s onward: education and learnedness were key ingredients in their friendships, and they provided the members a friendly environment for polite and scholarly entertainment. The 18th century can be characterized as the age of normative grammar, so it is perhaps surprising that references to contemporary works of grammar and language seem to be very rare in Bluestocking correspondence, while works of literature were frequently discussed. It is nevertheless very probable that they were conscious of the current changes in attitudes towards proper language use.

This paper will discuss the influence of normative grammars in the language use of the Bluestockings in three time periods from 1757 to 1778, with a special focus on Elizabeth Montagu. A study of the correspondence within the network attempts to demonstrate when and in whose letters certain linguistic changes of the 18th century appeared, and what this perhaps implies of the network roles of the Bluestockings. The results are thus analyzed in the context of diffusion theory and network roles. Linguistic innovators are usually marginal network contacts connected to the network by weak ties; early adopters are influential network members with strong ties; and followers adopt a feature after it has been generally accepted.

References

Ingrid TIEKEN-BOON VAN OSTDAGE, Leiden (The Netherlands)

Finding and publishing Late Modern English letters

One of the aims of the VICI-project The Codifiers and the English Language is to collect and analyse the letters of a number of 18th-century grammarians, in particular Lowth, Priestley and Murray. So far, a number of letters have already been located and transcribed; my own corpus of letters written by and addressed to Lowth consists of about three hundred letters; of Priestley’s letters recently a facsimile edition appeared (Rutt 2003 [1817-1832]), but because Rutt’s work has been characterised by Hodgson (2005) as “textually unreliable”, his search for Priestley’s letters will have to be repeated; so far, about two hundred letters by Murray have been located. Other grammarians whose letters have come down to us are Ann Fisher (Rodríguez-Gil 2002) and Kirkby (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1992), but of Ash, also an important codifier for the project, no letters appear to be available for analysis.

In my contribution I want to draw on the expertise of those participants in the workshop who have experience in locating LModE letters – as well as others – in order to present an account for the projected Handbook on Late Modern English letter writing that will enable students and scholars to set out to collect LModE letters systematically and as fully as possible. Another aim of the project is to publish the letters of the codifiers in electronic form. A proposal for the format and procedures to be adopted will be presented at the workshop, on which participants will be invited to comment.

References

VICI-project: http://www.lucm.leidenuniv.nl/index.php3?m=9&c=122 (see also <weblog.leidenuniv.nl/let/eng/codifiers/>).